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## Interaction adjustment and personal development:

### Adult third culture kids and mono-culture kids

#### Abstract

**Purpose** – The aim of this study is to explore the relationship between interaction adjustment and personal development for expatriates and to examine whether this differs between adults that have, and have not, lived abroad during their adolescence.

**Design/methodology/approach** – We use survey responses from 424 business expatriates in Asia distinguishing between adult third culture kids (ATCKs) that have lived abroad during their adolescence and adult mono-culture kids (AMCKs) that have not.

**Findings** – Our results show that while interaction adjustment generally improves the experience of personal development, this effect is stronger for ATCKs. AMCKs will experience personal development almost independently of their interaction adjustment with host nationals solely due to the novelty of the international experience. For ATCKs, just being in the new country is not enough for them to feel they have developed personally; they need to engage more deeply with the local population to achieve this.

**Originality/value** – The study contributes to the literature that links international experience to adjustment and to the literature that connects adjustment to personal development. By combining the two literatures, we provide new knowledge that explains in greater detail how adjustment is linked to personal development.

#### Introduction

The emergence of new types of careers in global organizational contexts means that personal development has become central for individuals (Banai and Harry, 2004; Baluku et al., 2018; Baruch and Rousseau, 2019; Mutter and Thorn, 2019; Redondo, Sparrow and Hernández-Lechuga, forthcoming). This notion suggests that managers value expatriation for the opportunity it brings for personal development, despite that such personal development may not help them advance within their employing organization (Stahl, Miller and Tung, 2002). As such, the international experience has been shown to hold high intrinsic value and can be used by individuals as an asset to further their personal development (Doherty, Dickmann and Mills, 2011; Luring, Selmer and Jacobsen, 2014; Quer, Rienda, Andreu and Miao, 2019). Many expatriates cite as their reasons for accepting international assignments not their desire to achieve project results, to be good corporate citizens, or to advance their company careers, but their personal development (Inkson, Arthur,

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3 Pringle and Barry, 1997). Dickman, Doherty, Mills and Brewster (2008) dismissed financial  
4 rewards as being the primary source for relocation motivation; instead, development and career  
5 considerations impacted the decision the most. Similar results were found by Thorn (2009) and  
6 McNulty, De Cieri and Hutchings (2013). Although the cross-cultural context is particularly fertile  
7 ground for personal development and transformation, not all expatriates take advantage of the  
8 opportunity for their own personal growth.  
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14 It has been proposed that expatriates that have developed personally during their time  
15 abroad have the potential to become especially competent as global leaders and are therefore  
16 valuable to companies with global operations (Lam and Selmer, 2004). In this regard, Scullion and  
17 Collings (2006) noted that multinational corporations (MNCs) are facing critical challenges in  
18 attracting, retaining, and developing the necessary managerial talent for their global operations.  
19 One group that has received some attention in relation to global talent management is adult third  
20 culture kids (ATCKs). These are individuals with extended experience of living in a foreign  
21 country during their adolescence (Moore and Barker, 2012). Tarique and Weisbord (2013) predict  
22 that persons acquiring intercultural experience during their childhood are better able to adjust to  
23 new cultural settings. Selmer and Luring (2014) found that ATCKs had a higher extent of general  
24 adjustment (but not interaction or job adjustment) than adults with no significant intercultural  
25 experiences during their childhood. The above makes it relevant to link expatriate adjustment to  
26 personal development because earlier studies have demonstrated personal development as a  
27 positive outcome from having acquired international experience before becoming an adult (cf. Lam  
28 and Selmer, 2004; Haslberger, Brewster and Hippler, 2013).  
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40 In this study, we explore the effect of ATCK status on the relationship between interaction  
41 adjustment and (experienced) personal development during a relocation abroad for work. We focus  
42 on interaction adjustment that includes socializing and interacting day-to-day with host nationals  
43 because this is where ATCK status could have a particularly strong impact (cf. Waxin, 2004). The  
44 assumption is that ATCKs are more sensitive and competent dealing with other cultures and that  
45 they adjust better, compared to AMCKs, because of their early international experiences (see  
46 Selmer, McNulty and Luring, forthcoming). Empirical research has not, however, proven the  
47 accuracy of this statement. While a number of studies have assessed the specific qualities of TCKs  
48 and ATCKs (Dewaele and van Oudenhoven, 2009; Lytle, Barker and Cornwell, 2011; Melles and  
49 Schwartz, 2013), and others have directly compared ATCKs with AMCKs (Selmer and Luring,  
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2014; Abe, 2018), few (if any) studies have yet explored ATCK status as a boundary condition for the role of adjustment in relation to experienced personal development. In this study, we aim to examine if ATCKs and AMCKs experience interaction adjustment in the same way and the extent to which it impacts on personal development.

Our research provides a relevant and novel contribution to the developing literature that links global talent management to individuals' personal characteristics, which few studies have (so far) explored empirically (Lauring, Selmer and Kubovcikova, forthcoming). This brings value for work organizations in terms of what types of individuals they would want to recruit, develop and retain. Few prior studies have focused on differential effects of adjustment between expatriates with and without significant intercultural experiences during their childhood; that is, between ATCKs and AMCKs. As such, our findings contribute to the ongoing discussion about the relationship between international experience and expatriate adjustment (Froese and Peltokorpi, 2013; Takeuchi and Chen, 2013). In addition, we provide new insights for understanding the mechanisms linking expatriate adjustment and personal development that have so far received little empirical attention (Haslberger et al., 2013).

## Background

In general, scholars seem to agree that developmental learning experiences gained through interactions with the foreign location in various situations influence expatriate adjustment and thus expatriate success (Caligiuri and Tarique, 2012). The earlier these experiences are introduced to and experienced by the individual, the longer-lasting and deeper the learning and impact are likely to be (Tarique and Weisbord, 2013). Hence, the experience obtained in a foreign culture may trigger 'personal development', defined in a work context as a purposeful, specifiable and structured activity, which seeks to develop discrete skills or qualities, whose effects can either be 'positive', 'negative' or 'transitory' (Irving and Williams, 1999). Others define personal development as having an improved awareness and identity, and the development of talent and potential that enhances the quality of life and contributes to the realization of dreams and aspirations (Aubrey, 2010).

Personal development in an international context has been examined most often in the study broad literature. Kauffman and Kuh (1984) determined that a study abroad experience was associated with changes in selected aspects of personal development for those that went abroad

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3 but not for those that stayed behind. Using the challenge-response theory (Sanford, 1967), they  
4 argued that college students' development occurred in response to novel situations and ideas,  
5 which were difficult to assimilate given an individual's current worldview. Personal development  
6 arises from the realization that previously learned responses become non-functional in a foreign  
7 setting and that to retain 'situational mastery' (Kauffman & Kuh, 1984, p. 2), the individual must  
8 learn to develop new response mechanisms. Early research suggests that, for overseas students,  
9 outcomes related to personal development includes increased self-confidence, enhanced  
10 interpersonal communication, an increased capacity for critical thinking, and greater tolerance for  
11 ambiguity (McGuigan, 1958; Nash, 1976; Hensley and Sel, 1979; Pyle, 1981; Baker, Perkins and  
12 Comber, 2014). However, Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1966) found in their study of 400 US college  
13 students and over 5,000 scholarship grantees that not all outcomes are positive: participants that  
14 reported more extensive interaction with host country nationals (HCNs) and greater personal  
15 development and satisfaction were also less settled and less committed to their professional goals,  
16 whereas those that furthered only their professional (but not personal) development were older and  
17 more focused on integrating their experience into future job opportunities (see also Nadeem and  
18 Mumtaz, 2018).

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31 In this study, the argument by Haslberger, Brewster and Hippler (2013) that personal  
32 development can be considered as an adjustment outcome is central to our explorations. We focus  
33 in particular on interaction adjustment because it is strongly related to a deeper involvement with  
34 local individuals at work or outside of it (cf. Mahajan and Toh, 2014; Chen and Shaffer, 2018;  
35 Gudmundsdottir et al., 2019). For example, interaction adjustment has been found to correlate with  
36 a large social network (Claus, Maletz, Casoinic and Pierson, 2015). Compared to experiences that  
37 do not involve communication, it has been argued that interaction with dissimilar others is a more  
38 central source for personal development (Rogoff, 1990).

## 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 **Hypotheses**

### 47 48 *Interaction adjustment and personal development*

49 For decades, personal development has been connected to international experience (e.g. Gullahorn  
50 and Gullahorn, 1966). Inkson and Myers (2003) describe how a large number of Australians and  
51 New Zealanders make a tour to Europe as their great 'overseas experience', which is defined by  
52 significant personal development. They argue that the greater the cultural extension and  
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3 uncertainty of overseas experience, the greater the potential for personal development of the  
4 individual, suggesting that intercultural experience and interaction with host nationals can result  
5 in positive personal development (Mendenhall, Kuhlmann, Stahl and Osland, 2002). In relation to  
6 adjustment, Nicholson (1984) defines work role transitions as a change in job content and argues  
7 that such transitions could have a profound impact on the future development of individuals, if not  
8 also their organizations. Personal change and the development involved is absorbed through the  
9 person altering his or her frame of reference, values, or other identity-related attributes in  
10 interactions with locals (Lauring, 2008). In this way adjustment, and in particular interaction  
11 adjustment, becomes an important aspect of personal development (Brandtstaedter, 2009). Based  
12 on the above, we argue that international experiences and the intercultural adjustment involved  
13 may lead to feelings of personal development among expatriates.  
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24 *Hypothesis 1.*                      There is a positive association between interaction adjustment and  
25 experienced personal development.  
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#### 29 *The effect of being an ATCK*

30 TCKs have been found to possess distinct personal characteristics in terms of flexibility,  
31 international awareness and cross-cultural experience (Cockburn, 2002; Lam and Selmer, 2004).  
32 Walters and Auton-Cuff (2009) argue that due to disruption to their identity development during  
33 childhood as a result of moving abroad, TCKs become used to adjusting and readjusting to new  
34 environments. As such, they are used to adapting to new contexts and they often develop greater  
35 sensitivity and tolerance towards the unknown (Selmer and Lam, 2004; Sheard, 2008; Lyttle et al.,  
36 2011; Melles and Schwartz, 2013). By extension, Abe (2018) found that ATCKs show normative  
37 changes in personality such as greater maturity and adjustment during adulthood. Those who  
38 reported higher levels of multicultural engagement generally exhibited a more resilient personality  
39 profile and more adaptive cognitive and affective styles. Hence, ATCKs, it is assumed, should find  
40 it relatively easy to live and function in a new country (Gerner, Perry, Modelle and Archbold,  
41 1992; Hayden, Rancic and Thompson, 2000).  
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51                      A number of studies have found that a substantial feeling of accomplishment emerges from  
52 the mastering of difficult encounters with host nationals (Bankston and Zhou, 1995; Portes and  
53 Hao, 2002), which has been well-documented in the literature related to goal setting theory (Locke  
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and Latham, 1990). The theory predicts that the outcomes will be higher if goals are challenging, yet attainable. Consequently, individuals' efforts will be positively associated with the level of challenge in their goals – as long as it is within their reach. In other words, when confronted with a very difficult goal, the few individuals who take up the challenge and who are actually able to achieve it will be more dedicated (Selmer and Luring, 2015). Gong and Chang (2007) found that expatriates who had set higher interaction adjustment goals were more likely to exert intense and persistent efforts than their counterparts with lower goals. When related to host country language acquisition, for example, which is closely linked to socio-cultural adjustment, expatriates that make the effort to learn a foreign language could be expected to feel greater personal development from the overall international experience (cf. Selmer and Luring, 2015; Tenzer, Terjesen and Harzing, 2017; Luring and Jonasson, 2018). We propose that ATCKs will experience more positive personal development compared to AMCKs, because it should be relatively easier for them to set (and achieve) higher and more challenging goals in the foreign culture, given they have attempted it in their adolescence. Moreover, by interacting more deeply with individuals from a foreign culture, we suggest ATCKs will experience higher levels of achievement and personal development. This leads to our second hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 2*                      The relationship between interaction adjustment and experienced personal development is moderated by ATCK status, so that for ATCKs there will be a stronger association between interaction adjustment and personal development than for AMCKs.

## **Method**

In this study, we targeted European business expatriates working in Asia, a region that is known to differ substantially in cultural and linguistic contexts from most European countries, which makes Asia especially challenging for expatriates (Shi and Franklin, 2013). The aim was to explore the moderating effect of ATCK vs AMCK status on the direct relationship between interaction adjustment and experienced personal development. Participants were obtained from a list of names and e-mail addresses acquired from embassies and other databases of white-collar foreign workers in Asia. Data were collected using an English language online survey. Responses came mainly from Singapore (23.32%), Indonesia (17.31%), Malaysia (12.72%), China (11.66 %) and Hong

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3 Kong (9.54%). Other host countries included Thailand, Philippines, Vietnam, India, Bangladesh,  
4 Lao and Pakistan. Expatriates originated from Sweden (13.07%), Denmark (13.07%), Norway  
5 (12.01%), Germany (10.25%) and the United Kingdom (8.83%). In total, 455 survey responses  
6 were received from an original database of 2007 potential participants (a 22.7 per cent response  
7 rate), from which a pool of 424 respondents was obtained after screening for incomplete surveys.  
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12 ATCK expatriates (n=86) had an average age of 48.3 years (SD=11.1), had spent 11.5 years  
13 in their host location (SD=9.6), 6.8 years in their current job (SD=6.0) and had worked abroad as an  
14 expatriate for 17.2 years (SD=10.5), including in their current job. The majority were male (83.7%),  
15 married (84.9%), and almost half had a master's degree. AMCK expatriates (n=338) had an average  
16 age of 50.5 years (SD=11.0), had spent 9.9 years in their host location (SD=9.6), 6.7 years in their  
17 current job (SD=6.8), and had worked abroad as an expatriate for 15.2 years (SD=11.1), including in  
18 their current job. The majority were male (82.5%), married (81.4%) and 45 per cent had a master's  
19 degree.  
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26 *Interaction adjustment* was gauged by a four-item, seven-point scale developed by Black and  
27 Stephens (1989). Response categories ranged from (1) "very unadjusted" to (4) "neutral" to (7)  
28 "completely adjusted". A sample item is: "Interaction with host nationals outside of work"  
29 (alpha=.89). *Experienced personal development* was assessed by a self-developed four-item, seven-  
30 point scale ranging from (1) = "Strongly disagree" to (7) = "Strongly agree", with a sample item:  
31 "During expatriation I have matured personally." (alpha=.82) (see Appendix 1). To validate the two  
32 identified dimensions, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the full measurement model was  
33 conducted showing that all variables and indicators were distinct and appropriate for inclusion in the  
34 analysis (see Appendix 2).  
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42 As a moderator, ATCK/ AMCK status was assessed by the question "As an adolescent (age  
43 10-20), did you live in a foreign country for at least 6 months?" (e.g. Melles and Schwartz, 2013;  
44 Selmer and Luring, 2014). In order to control for potential bias, five control variables were  
45 included in the analysis. *Gender* was assessed by the question: "Are you male or female?". *Time*  
46 *in current job in host location* was estimated by a direct question to the respondents: "How long  
47 have you had your current job in the host location?". *Number of different jobs as an expatriate*  
48 was gauged by the question: "How many different jobs as an expatriate have you had before your  
49 current job?". *Education* was assessed by: "What is your educational level?". *Size of subsidiary*  
50 was measured by a direct question: "How many employees work in your current workplace?". In  
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Table 1, sample means, standard deviations and zero-order Pearson correlations are given for all variables.

Insert Table 1 about here

## Results

Our two hypotheses were investigated using hierarchical multiple regression analysis with results in Table 2. Control variables were included in Step 1 resulting in significant relationships with three of the five control variables. *Number of different jobs* had a positive association with *personal development* ( $\beta=.06$ ;  $p<.01$ ), while *Gender* had a negative association with *Personal development* ( $\beta=-.26$ ;  $p<.05$ ). In Step 2, the interaction adjustment variable was added. *Interaction adjustment* had a positive association with *Personal development* ( $\beta=.08$ ;  $p<.05$ ). In Step 3, the moderator variable *ATCK/ AMCK* was included ( $ATCK=1$  and  $AMCK=0$ ). The moderator variable was weakly and negatively associated with the criterion variable ( $\beta=-.17$ ;  $p<.10$ ). In Step 4, the interaction term was entered. *Interaction adjustment x ATCK/ AMCK* was negatively associated with *Personal development* ( $\beta=-.17$ ;  $p<.05$ ). All  $F$  values were statistically significant, indicating a proper fit between the regression model and the data.

Insert Table 2 about here

To explore the moderating relationships further, the significant interaction was plotted in Figure 1. For the ATCK group, *Interaction adjustment* had a weaker positive association with *Personal development* than for the AMCK group in the case of low interaction adjustment. However, as Figure 1 illustrates, *Interaction adjustment* has a much stronger effect on *Personal development* for ATCKs. Hence, both hypotheses of our study were supported.

Insert Figure 1 about here

## Discussion

In this study, we have examined the relationship between interaction adjustment and experienced personal development among ATCKs and AMCKs. As predicted, our findings show a positive

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3 association, which may be related to arguments that intercultural experience leads to personal  
4 development (Bankston and Zhou, 1995; Portes and Hao, 2002), but the effect of interaction  
5 adjustment varies. On the one hand, AMCKs experience personal development almost  
6 independently of their interaction adjustment with host nationals solely due to the novelty of the  
7 international experience. In contrast, while ATCKs experience less personal development when  
8 there is low interaction adjustment and more personal development when interaction adjustment  
9 increases, just being in the new country is not enough for them to feel they have developed  
10 personally; given their prior international experience as adolescents, they need to engage more  
11 deeply with the local population to experience personal development as the foreign setting in itself  
12 is not challenging enough. This finding could be explained by goal setting theory (Locke and  
13 Latham, 1990) predicting that relatively easy endeavors will not lead to much personal  
14 development.  
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### 26 **Theoretical Implications**

27 This research contributes to the literature on the relationship between adjustment and  
28 personal development and between international experience and adjustment, thus combining the  
29 two fields. In the first instance, the study supports the theoretical argument that adjustment leads  
30 to personal development (Haslberger et al., 2013), by empirically demonstrating a link between  
31 interaction adjustment and personal development. Second, prior studies (e.g., Takeuchi and Chen,  
32 2013) have suggested there is a negative relationship between prior international experience and  
33 expatriate adjustment. In our research, while we have not focused on a direct effect of international  
34 experience but the moderating effect of having an early international experience indicated by  
35 ATCK status, we nonetheless find little direct effect of ATCK status. More interesting, however,  
36 is that early international experience in the form of ATCK status has an *indirect* effect influencing  
37 the relationship between interaction adjustment and personal development. In other words, the role  
38 of interaction adjustment changes for those with early international experience in that higher levels  
39 of interaction are required for ATCKs, than for AMCKs, to achieve a similar impact.  
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50 Our findings provide a more detailed picture of the relationship between international  
51 experience during adolescence and expatriate interaction adjustment. This should be considered in  
52 future attempts to build theory in the described line of enquiry. Future research might further  
53 explore if there are different effects of early vs late international experience. Similarly, the  
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3 distinction between AMCKs and ATCKs is an important one, because the point at which the  
4 individual experiences mobility for the first time (adolescence versus adulthood) could impact on  
5 the types of global work experiences they are likely to pursue (e.g., international business travel,  
6 commuting, short-term assignments, or long-term assignments). Bushong (2013) argues that it is  
7 not the geography of the ATCK experience, but the complex interplay of international experiences,  
8 that explains individuals' behavior.  
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14 Other theories and concepts may also be useful to explore the link between international  
15 experience and adjustment. For example, social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) posits that  
16 individuals develop from interacting with people or observing their behavior. The social learning  
17 process can thus explain why ATCKs, in particular, acquire a desire for interaction adjustment at  
18 an early age arising from repeated exposure to, and mastery of, a variety of cultural settings.  
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24 The early acquisition of dynamic cross-cultural competencies by ATCKs (Tarique &  
25 Weisbord, 2013), which is similarly acquired through the social learning processes, can further  
26 explain why ATCKs potentially seek locally-embedded cultural experiences for personal  
27 development: working with HCNs can provide them the opportunity to hone and refine ('put into  
28 practice') their cross-cultural skills by testing out the behaviours that are likely to result in success  
29 in a particular cultural environment. Both are worthy of further research.  
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Lastly, further research is needed to determine which *sets* of shared experiences and  
*characteristics* of shared experiences among AMCKs are more likely to enhance their performance  
during expatriation compared to ATCKs. An understanding of outcomes from shared experiences  
across AMCKs and ATCKs can benefit in the talent management process. The integration of  
shared experiential learning with professional development can clarify and identify how  
expatriation facilitates or obstructs changes in an individual's personal development (Kauffmann  
and Kuh, 1984; Hutchins, 1996); for example, to determine what the changes are in relation to the  
individual and whether these changes arise as a result of program design or a particular type of  
global work experience.

### Practical Implications

We still know very little about ATCKs and about how expatriation during their adulthood  
develops them personally. Our study contributes to the growing literature linking global talent  
management to individuals' personal characteristics (Caligiuri, Tarique and Jacobs, 2009; Tarique

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3 and Weisbord, 2013) by demonstrating differences in perceived personal development among  
4 ATCKs and AMCKs. This has implications in practice for the depth of contact expatriates should,  
5 or could, have with host nationals in the international work environment. For example, ATCKs  
6 may be the 'preferred' type of expatriate when the nature of the job abroad requires close contact  
7 (interaction) with HCNs to fulfill its purpose. As ATCKs' personal development is closely linked  
8 to higher levels of HCN interaction, the likelihood of their success abroad increases when personal  
9 development correspondingly increases. Alternatively, when close contact with HCNs is not  
10 required, the talent pool can be widened to include AMCKs, with no perceived drawback.

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17 A second implication is the location of the assignment. AMCKs appear to experience  
18 personal development solely due to the novelty of the international experience, thus *where* they  
19 are sent and/ or work is less important than them *actually going abroad*. In contrast, ATCKs  
20 require significant HCN interaction to achieve similar levels of personal development, which is  
21 unlikely to be achieved by sending them, for example, as AEs to locations where the majority of  
22 colleagues will be other expatriates of the same or similar ethnicity. The same would apply for  
23 ATCKs employed locally as SIEs. ATCKs may thus be better suited to smaller subsidiaries in  
24 emerging economies where new businesses are needed to be established and which requires  
25 working closely with HCNs for expansion into local markets.

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33 Third, personal development is enhanced for expatriates when appropriate learning  
34 experiences are made available to them (Caligiuri et al., 2009). AMCKs and ATCKs require  
35 development programs that are designed differently. Whereas AMCKs are likely to benefit from  
36 standard development programs available to all expatriates, ATCKs will require tailored programs  
37 that cater, for example, to technical competencies rather than cross-cultural competencies (that  
38 many already possess; Tarique & Weisbord, 2013). Moreover, Caligiuri (2006) argues that people  
39 will benefit in different ways from a developmental experience based on their individual aptitudes,  
40 such as knowledge, skills, abilities and other personal characteristics. Thus, offering the right  
41 developmental experience to ATCKs that is high on HCN interaction is likely to produce more  
42 effective performance, as a result of personal development, than offering them the same  
43 developmental experience as AMCKs.

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51 Based on our study of ATCKs' international experience and global talent management,  
52 three avenues of future research are proposed that can impact on practice. First, deeper  
53 understanding could be obtained by comparing intercultural exposure that is acquired in similar vs  
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3 very different cultures. Second, to avoid relying solely on self-referential data, future studies where  
4 colleagues are used as peer-raters are encouraged and where intercultural performance is more  
5 objectively assessed comparing ATCKs and AMCKs in the workplace. Lastly, as research has  
6 argued that personal development can vary between different types of expatriates (AEs vs. SIEs)  
7 (e.g. Doherty et al., 2011; Guttormsen, Francesco and Chapman, 2018; Luring and Selmer, 2018),  
8 future studies could explore the varying roles of ATCK status in relation to adjustment and  
9 personal development for each type. For example, ATCKs are likely to constitute a higher  
10 proportion of SIEs, given their preference for independence and a free-agent career model (Trabka,  
11 2015), which arises (one would assume) from an early life of necessary adaptability (Selmer et al.,  
12 forthcoming). Applying AE-specific approaches to their adjustment and personal development is  
13 unlikely to be adequate given the differences in competencies and motivation for each.  
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### 24 **Limitations**

25 As in all studies, ours has several shortcomings that limits generalizability. Cross-sectional  
26 self-reports, for example, may have created common method variance (CMV). However, we took  
27 a number of measures such as preventing respondents to go back to previous pages of the survey,  
28 and assuring confidentiality (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee and Podsakoff, 2003). Most importantly  
29 it has been argued that moderation effects also cannot be caused by CMV (Chang, van  
30 Witteloostuijn and Eden, 2010). As our main finding relates to the moderating effect of ATCK vs.  
31 AMCKs, it could be argued that CMV is not a serious problem.  
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38 The control variable used to classify the respondents as either ATCK vs AMCK could be  
39 questioned, given we set the minimum time requirement at 6 months for ATCK status and used  
40 only a single item. While noting that studies outside expatriation have used time requirements of  
41 one year (Useem, 1976), two years (Hoersting and Jenkins, 2011) and even three years (Lyttle et  
42 al., 2011; Moore and Barker, 2012), we relied on the 6-month single item measure used in other  
43 expatriate studies (Selmer and Luring, 2014; Melles and Schwartz, 2012) to justify the time  
44 requirement. Had we used a longer time requirement, the sample size of ATCKs may have been  
45 smaller, making a comparison between ATCKs and AMCKs more difficult. The fact that we  
46 actually *did* find an effect of ATCK status at just 6 months indicates that even a short time in a  
47 foreign culture during adolescence is potentially sufficient for altering adjustment patterns. Our  
48 findings thus support the use of the 6-month measure. Another issue is that culture has been argued  
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3 to been more complex and dynamic than what can be assessed from nation state boundaries  
4 (Lauring, Bjerregaard and Klitmøller, 2018). The discussion about cultural dynamics in relation to  
5 ATCKs should be further included in future research.  
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8 We only used interaction adjustment for this study as we see this as the most theoretically  
9 relevant. While we also conducted analyses of job adjustment and general adjustment, there was  
10 no moderation effect found in relation to ATCK status; we have thus not included the analysis in  
11 this article. However, future studies could explore the relationship between other dimensions of  
12 adjustment, personal development and early international experience.  
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## Tables and Figures

Table 1: Means, standard deviations, and correlations among the variables<sup>1</sup>

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Personal development	6.10	.76	1.00							
2. Interaction adjustment	5.42	1.25	.16**	1.00						
3. ATCK/AMCK <sup>2</sup>	.20	.40	-.06	.12*	1.00					
4. Gender <sup>3</sup>	.83	.38	-.11*	.04	.01	1.00				
5. Time in current job in host location	6.70	6.65	.06	.27***	.01	.12*	1.00			
6. Different jobs	3.48	2.13	.14**	.14**	.05	.11*	-0.08 <sup>†</sup>	1.00		
7. Education	2.81	1.00	-.03	.06	-.03	.03	.17***	.07	1.00	
8. Size of Subsidiary	693	4273.85	-.04	.03	.08	.06	-.03	.05	-.01	1.00

<sup>†</sup>  $p < .10$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$  (2-tailed); <sup>1</sup>  $392 \leq n \leq 424$  due to missing values; <sup>2</sup> ATCK=1, AMCK=0; <sup>3</sup> male=1, female=0.

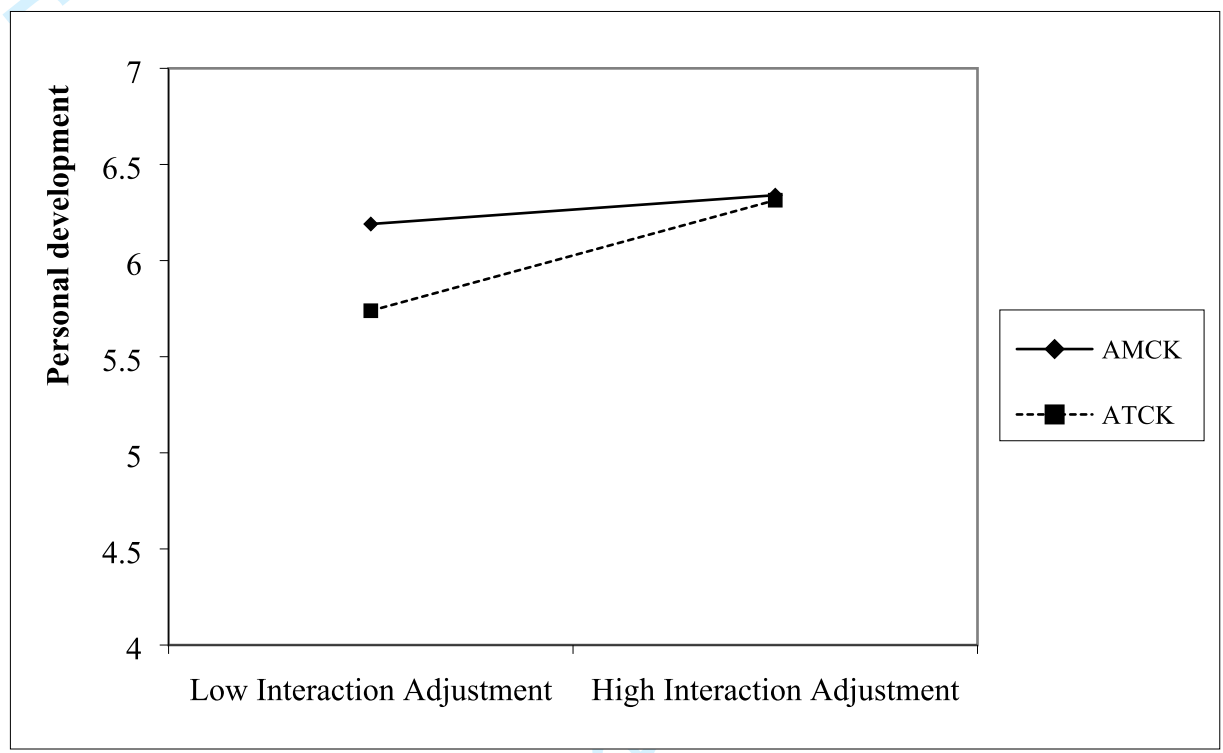
Table 2. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis of the pooled sample data

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	Personal	Personal	Personal	Personal
	Development	Development	Development	Development
<i>Control variables</i>				
Gender <sup>1</sup>	- 0.26 *	- 0.25 *	- 0.25 *	- 0.25 *
Time in current job	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Number of jobs	0.06 **	0.05 **	0.05 **	0.06 **
Education	- 0.04	- 0.04	- 0.04	- 0.05
Size of subsidiary	- 0.00	- 0.00	- 0.00	- 0.00
<i>Moderators</i>				
ATCK vs. AMCK status <sup>2</sup>			- 0.17	- 0.16 *
<i>Antecedents</i>				
Interaction Adjustment		0.08 *	0.08 *	0.06
<i>Interaction terms</i>				
Interaction Adjustment x ATCK vs. AMCK status				0.17 *
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.033	0.045	0.051	0.059
<b>Notes:</b> $n = 384$ . * $p < 0.05$ ; ** $p < 0.01$ .				

<sup>1</sup>Male=1, female=0; <sup>2</sup>ATCK=1, AMCK=0

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Figure 1: Moderation of the effect of interaction adjustment on personal development by ATCK/AMCK Status.



Strategic Management



**Appendix 1.**Items Used in the Two Dimensions

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Personal development

Item 1	During expatriation I have developed my professional skills
Item 2	During expatriation I have matured personally
Item 3	I have developed my perspective on life
Item 4	I have become psychologically more resilient

Interaction Adjustment

Item 5	Interacting with host nationals outside work
Item 6	Interacting with host nationals on a day-to-day basis
Item 7	Speaking with host nationals
Item 8	Socializing with host nationals

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## Appendix 2.

In order to evaluate model fit, five different goodness-of-fit indices were used: The  $\chi^2$ -test was performed against the saturated model with  $p \geq 0.05$  demonstrating a good model fit. The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) were considered to indicate good model fit with values less than 0.06 and 0.08, respectively. Additionally, the comparative fit index (CFI) and the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) were assessed with values above or close to 0.95 indicating good model fit (Hu and Bentler, 1999).

Initially, a CFA on the full model was performed. Apart from the  $\chi^2$ -test ( $\chi^2(19) = 89.773, p = 0.000$ ), all of the fit-indicators indicated a good model fit of the latent variable construct (RMSEA=0.097; SRMR=0.036; CFI = 0.964; TLI = 0.933). As the  $\chi^2$ -test suffers from several drawbacks, e.g. sample size sensitivity (Hox and Bechger, 2007), the model was considered to fit the data well. Moreover, in the measurement model, all standardized loadings were considerably (with the smallest being 0.55) and highly statistically significant. I.e. both latent factors explained the observed indicators with large statistical significance. Moreover, since the factor correlation was 0.18, discriminant validity was demonstrated in the full measurement model. To validate the measurement model further, the full measurement model was compared to a nested model with only one factor. As illustrated in Table 1, results of the goodness-of-fit indices and  $\chi^2$ -difference test revealed that the full measurement model displayed significantly better fit than the nested measurement model. Based on this, all variables and indicators were distinct and appropriate for inclusion in the analysis.

### Goodness-of-fit indices of Models

Model	Model $\chi^2$ (d.f.)	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	TLI	$\chi^2$ -diff. (d.f. diff.)
Full Measurement Model (2 factors)	89.773 (19)	0.097	0.036	0.954	0.933	-
Model A (1 factor)	649.331 (20)	0.283	0.195	0.593	0.431	559.558 (1)

Notes:  $n = 392$ . The  $\chi^2$ -difference tests compare to the full measurement model.  
Model A: Personal development and Interaction Adjustment combined into one factor.