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A comparative study on tolerance of ambiguity and self-confidence among parent country's nationals, host country's nationals, and internationally experienced workers[1]

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Abstract

The aim of this study had twofold. The first aim was to compare tolerance of ambiguity in two aspects, emotion and abilities, and self-confidence for cross-cultural adaptation concerning three groups: parent country's nationals (PCNs), host country nationals (HCNs) and internationally experienced workers. The third group was applied as a benchmark to understand a developmental level of the tolerance of ambiguity and the self-confidence concerning the first and second groups. The second aim was to explore the impact of the tolerance of ambiguity on the self-confidence by applying those three groups. For this study, two scales were newly developed: an ability to tolerate ambiguity and self-confidence for cross-cultural adaptation. We employed a sample of 617 participants: (1) 104 internationally experienced workers of graduate school's alumni from 37 countries, (2) PCNs: 454 Japanese employees working for a Japanese multinational enterprise (MNE), and (3) HCNs: 59 Indonesian employees working for its subsidiary in Indonesia. Results of the ANOVA with a post-hock test revealed significant differences in the two aspects of tolerance of ambiguity among those three groups: the internationally experienced workers showed the highest scores; the Indonesian HCNs, the second highest; and the Japanese PCNs, the lowest. Concerning self-confidence, the results showed a significant difference among them, while Japanese PCNs were a significantly lower level compared with the other two groups. Results of regression analysis indicated a significant relationship between those two aspects of the tolerance of ambiguity and the self-confidence with regard to all of three groups. Based on the results, we discussed implications and limitations.

Keywords: tolerance of ambiguity, self-confidence for cross-cultural adaptation, international human resource management, PCNs, HCNs, internationally experienced workers, a Japanese MNE

Introduction

The international business of the volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity (VUCA) world increases the risk and pressure of multinational enterprises (MNEs), requiring them to redefine the content and context of MNEs (Cavusgil, et al., 2021, van Tulder, Jankowska, & Verbeke, 2020). Their employees experience new demands created by the VUCA world where they have to manage themselves for their effective business operation. However, because of rapidly changing the international environment they engage in, it could be stated that their acquired knowledge and skills sometimes come to be outdated (Horney, Pasmore, & O'Shea, 2010). To update themselves properly, the MNE employees would have to control their emotions, minds, and behaviors (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001). They would be required to particularly manage a way of responding to cross-cultural ambiguous situations evoked by their international counterparts and business partners overseas. To wit, we could say that a developmental level of their tolerance of ambiguity in cross-cultural situations must be a pivotal key for such a management of the responding. Moreover, to effectively perform and achieve employees' own goals in international work settings, their self-confidence for cross-cultural adaptation is also a crucial attribute (Bikos, Forman, & Patton, 2021; Briones, Tabernero, Tramontano, Caprara, & Arenas, 2009; Cooper, 2021). Accordingly, this study focused on employee's two traits: tolerance of ambiguity in two aspects, emotion and abilities, as well as self-confidence for cross-cultural adaptation.

International human resource management typically describes three significant groups of employees (Briscoe, Schuler, & Claus, 2009): parent country's nationals (PCN), who can potentially become a resource of expatriates; host country's nationals (HCN), who are the largest group in MNEs' employees (Singh, Pereira, Mellahi, & Collings, 2019); and third country's nationals (TCN). It was documented that there have been a great number of studies on expatriates in the area of international and cross-cultural studies (Yamazaki, 2014), indicating that expatriates are a central engine for the success of MNEs as an international staffing issue. When considering the role of HCNs, Michailova, Fee, and DeNisi (2023) pointed out that "the business justification for MNE workers to undertake international assignments becomes more complex" so that the study on HCN will become more crucial (p.15). Thus, it seems necessary to more investigate HCN employees in various aspects (Michailova, et al., 2023). Among many different studies on HCNs, most researches have dealt with study on relationships with expatriates (Michailova, et al., 2023). It was suggested that studies on those with the others groups might be lacking. It would thereby be meaningful to highlight the two groups of PCNs and HCNs and then to research the two groups in terms

of cross-cultural differences in tolerance of ambiguity and in self-confidence for cross-cultural adaptation.

To define a developmental level of PCN's and HCN's tolerance of ambiguity in cross-cultural situations and self-confidence for cross-cultural adaptation, the present study utilized internationally experienced workers who had stayed oversea. We referred to the developmental level of their two traits as a benchmark to see to what extent those two nationals develop such traits. Moreover, our study explored the impact of the tolerance of ambiguity on the self-confidence for cross-cultural adaptation. Accordingly, we had two research questions as follows:

(1) To what extent do PCNs and HCNs differ from internationally experienced workers in terms of emotional and ability aspects of tolerance of ambiguity and self-confidence for cross-cultural adaption?

(2) How do these two aspects of tolerance of ambiguity affect self-confidence for cross-cultural adaptation among the three groups: PCNs, HCNs, and internationally experienced workers?

Literature Review

Tolerance of Ambiguity and Cross-Cultural Situations

Over half a century, tolerance of ambiguity has been studied in multidisciplinary areas including "clinical psychology", "medicine", and "organizational behavior" (Furnham & Ribchester, 1995; Furnham & Marks, 2013, 717). Ambiguous situations represent an occasion that remains unusual, complex, unsolved, and unpredictable (Budner, 1962). According to Furnham and Ribschester (1995), tolerance of ambiguity is defined as "the way an individual (or group) perceives and processes information about ambiguous situations or stimuli when confronted by an array of unfamiliar, complex, or incongruent clues" (179). Furnham and Ribschester (1995) indicated that those with low tolerance of ambiguity tend to feel stressful and threatened (Norton, 1975), respond overhastily, and take away from ambiguous stimuli, while those who experience high tolerance of ambiguity tend to look at ambiguous situations more positively (Budner, 1962) as desirable, challenging, and interesting. Grenier, Barrette, and Ladouceur (2005) discussed that tolerance of ambiguity refers to individual's emotional, cognitive, and behavior responses to ambiguous situations. Furnham and Marks (2013) congruently pointed out that tolerance of ambiguity entails individual human functioning such as emotion, perception, cognition, and behavior, while it can be also regarded as a personality trait in general (Budner, 1962).

Since cross-cultural situations often provide unfamiliarity, complexity, and unpredictability to internationally unexperienced people, these situations will typically turn to ambiguous ones towards those people. Several previous studies documented the magnitude of tolerance of ambiguity in relation to cross-culture learning and international management that includes

global leadership (Caligiuri & Tarique, 2012; Bird, Mendenhall, Stevens, & Oddou, 2010), cross-cultural work teams (Lloyd & Härtel, 2010), expatriates (Albrecht et al, 2018), multilingualism (Dewaele & Wei, 2013), and foreign language learners (Dewaele & Ip, 2013). More specifically, tolerance of ambiguity is involved with one of important dynamic cross-cultural competencies that determine supervisors' evaluations of global leadership effectiveness (Caligiuri & Tarique, 2012). Bird et al. (2010) presented tolerance of ambiguity as a cross-cultural competency, which is related to perception management. These two studies indicated that tolerance of ambiguity may be conceived as a competency. In fact, review research on cross-cultural learning competencies of expatriates showed that it is critical to have an ability to tolerate ambiguity in cross-cultural situations, suggesting that such an ability should be developed and acquired for expatriate effectiveness (Yamazaki & Kayes, 2004). The study of Lloyd and Härtel (2010) identified also tolerance of ambiguity as cross-cultural competence in terms of the affective dimension for effective cross-cultural work teams. When focusing on research on expatriate management, tolerance of ambiguity had a small association with expatriate work adjustment and management performance, suggesting that MNEs may need to consider other constructs rather than tolerance of ambiguity for the process of expatriate selection (Albrecht et al, 2018). In the domain of multilingualism and foreign language, an empirical study revealed that tolerance of ambiguity was increased after people stayed over three months abroad but the increase stopped at one year (Dewaele & Wei, 2013), whereas people who more tolerated ambiguity about foreign language exhibited less anxiety in their ELF classes and more proficiency about the language (Dewaele & Ip, 2013). Overall, past studies suggested that tolerance of ambiguity is involved with cross-cultural matters, though there might be undecisive concerning relationships between tolerance of ambiguity and expatriates' adjustment and performance.

Finally in this section, we discussed a cultural dimension as a theoretical analogy of tolerance of ambiguity in cross-cultural studies. Furnham and Marks (2013) argued that the concept of uncertainty avoidance theorized by Hofstede (1997, Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov, 2010) is similar to that of tolerance of ambiguity. The definition of uncertainty avoidance relates to a feeling that people are threatened by ambiguous situations, trying to avoid the situation as a group's level of analysis such as countries, societal units, or organizational and institutional entities (Hofstede et al., 2010). Thus, a certain country may exhibit a higher level of uncertainty avoidance tendency than other countries.

Self-Confidence for Cross-Cultural Adaptation

Self-confidence is an important concept in the area of business, management, and organization. Like one angle of tolerance of

ambiguity, the concept is also considered as a personality trait that relates to the effectiveness of leaders (Cremer & van Knippenberg, 2003; Mowday, 1979) and business managers (Swan & Futrell, 1990). Besides, self-confidence concerns a positive psychological attribute that results in good job performance (Bandura, 1997; Luthans, Luthans, & Luthans, 2004; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998) as well as the success of individuals and organizations (Luthans et al., 2004). McCarty (1986) explained that self-confidence is related to perception that individuals can succeed in their endeavor as a course of action. Several researchers and scholars discussed that self-confidence is described as self-efficacy (Maurera, 2001; Luthans et al., 2004; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as an individual's belief that individuals can achieve their goals and effectively complete specific assignments by using their motivation, cognition, capabilities, and behavior. In the early age when self-efficacy was introduced in the literature, it entailed a particular assignment, a specific job, or a certain task. Later, self-efficacy was applicable in a more general case or situation with a broad scope of behavior (Eden & Zuk, 1995; Luszczynska, Gutierrez-Dona, & Schwarzer, 2005), including an overall judgement for effective performance (Eden & Zuk, 1995), and effective control for individual's stress using abilities (Schwarzer & Born, 1997).

However, some researchers advocated that self-confidence is different from self-efficacy (Cramer, Neal, & Brodsky, 2009; Suh et al., 2018). Suh et al. (2018) with a definition study illustrated that self-confidence is a belief of individual's own worth expressed as a combination between self-efficacy and self-esteem. Cramer et al. (2009) argued that two terms of self-confidence and self-efficacy differ. Morony, Kleitman, Lee, and Stankov (2013) discussed that both constructs include the word self-confidence and they are a self-belief construct, but "whereas self-efficacy refers to a person's perception of their ability to conduct a particular behavior, self-confidence reflects a degree of certainty about a perception, event, or outcome" (81).

Self-confidence has been investigated in the area of cross-cultural studies in terms of cross-cultural differences in self-confidence (Morony et al., 2013; Suh et al., 2018; Yamazaki, 2016; Zlata, 2013). For example, Morony et al. (2013) found that self-confidence was not a big difference between Confucian Asia and Europe countries but it was "most important predictor of math accuracy" among each of country's reasons (79). Suh et al. (2018) revealed that American students had a greater level of counselor activity self-efficacy than Korean students. Additionally, there was a positive relationship between counselor activity self-efficacy and age with regard to students of both countries (Suh et al., 2018). The study of Yamazaki (2016) showed significant differences in self-confidence of employees between Japan, Malysia, and Thailand and found that there was a strong relationship between job-related self-confidence and job satisfaction

concerning all three countries. Finally, Zlata (2013) investigated confidence structures using the sample from China, Ecuador, Guinea-Bissau and Russia based on a system-functional approach to personality study. They showed that comparative analysis of factor structures of self-confidence clarified the magnitude of ethnopsychological specificity (Zlata, 2013). Overall, we would say that most cross-cultural studies on self-confidence presented differences in it across countries.

This study attempted to extend a review process concerning self-confidence for cross-cultural adaption to self-efficacy relevance due to very little research on the concept of self-confidence for cross-cultural adaptation. Several cross-cultural studies were conducted in terms of research on relationships between cross-cultural adaptation or adjustment and self-efficacy beliefs (Jian-hua, Wen-hua, Hua-dong, & van Oudenhoven, 2009; Li & Gasser, 2005; Wilson, Ward, & Fischer, 2013; Zhang & Goodson, 2011), well as research on measures of self-efficacy for sociocultural adaptation (Bikos et al., 2021). The study of Jian-hua et al. (2009) showed that intercultural communication self-efficacy had an impact on most multidimensional facets of cross-cultural adaptations. Li and Gasser (2005) confirmed a positive relationship between cross-cultural self-efficacy and socio-cultural adjustment. Zhang and Goodson (2011) conducted a systematic review of the predictors of psychological adjustment concerning, indicating that self-efficacy was an influential predictor of sociocultural adjustments. The meta-analysis conducted by Wilson et al. (2013) documented that cross-cultural self-efficacy was strongly associated with sociocultural adaptation. Since previous cross-cultural and international studies supported the relationship between self-efficacy and cross-cultural adjustment or adaptation, Bikos et al. (2021) invented a scale of self-efficacy for sociocultural adaptation, referring to competencies that are based on behavior and necessary for cross-cultural transitions (Wilson, Ward, Fetvadjiev, & Bethel, 2017). The scale was designed to measure such an efficacy belief in a domain-specific manner and it was characterized as multidimensional factor structures including emotion, cognition, and behavior with regard to environments and tasks (Bikos et al., 2021). Depending on researcher's interests in cross-cultural situations and issues, the invented scale can be applied with flexibility due to the its multidimensional nature (Bikos et al., 2021). The scale allows them to make a combination among factors with contexts (i.e., self-efficacy for cognitive tasks in an environment; Bikos et al., 2021).

Finally, this study sought for an answer to a research question of relationships between tolerance of ambiguity in cross-cultural situations and self-confidence for cross-cultural adaption. The management literature suggested a relationship between tolerance of ambiguity and self-efficacy (Endres, Chowdhury, & Milner, 2009; Lane & Klenke, 2004). To support this view, if persons have a low tolerance of ambiguity, they tend to perceive that they

cannot control tasks and environment (Budner, 1962). Actually, empirical studies reported that those who have a higher tolerance of ambiguity showed higher self-efficacy (Endres et al., 2009). Since there is very few research on the relationship between the tolerance of ambiguity and self-confidence across cultures, the present study attempted to pursue this research question.

Methods

Sample and Sampling Procedures

A sample of this study was totally 617 participants: (1) 104 internationally experienced workers of graduate school's alumni from 37 countries; (2) PCNs: 454 Japanese employees working for a Japanese MNE; and (3) HCNs: 59 Indonesian employees working for its subsidiary in Indonesia. Table 1 depicts demographic characteristics of the three groups of participants with regard to age, gender, and management vs. non-management in a Japanese MNE. Each group of the participants differed in average ages (internationally experienced workers, 42.86; Japanese, 39.21; Indonesian, 29.59) and in gender ratios (internationally experienced workers, 61% of male vs. 39% of female; Japanese, 89% vs. 11%; Indonesian, 100% vs. 0%). These demographic variations might be an influential component when conducting comparative studies.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of three groups' participants

	Internationally experienced workers	Japanese PCNs	Indonesian HCNs
N	104	454	59
Age			
Mean	42.86	39.21	29.59
S.D.	8.81	13.53	8.90
Gender			
Male	63	406	59
Female	41	48	0
Management position			
Manager	–	108	5
Non manager	–	346	54

The whole group of international experienced workers was composed of 37 countries. As shown in Table 2, the subgroup of Indonesia consisted of 13 participants as the largest, that of USA had 10 as the second, and that of Japan and Uzbekistan was equally 8 as the third. Among the 37 countries, 25 countries showed one or two participants. Overall, the sample distribution in this study was diversified in terms of countries, which led us to consider this sample as a microcosm of different countries, but not particular country's representativeness.

Table 2. Countries and regions of internationally experienced workers (N=104)

Country/ region	Participants	Country/ region	Participants
Australia	1	Laos	3
Bangladesh	1	Malaysia	2
Bhutan	1	Mali	1
Cambodia	2	Mongol	3
Chile	1	Myanmar	5
China	2	Nepal	3
Congo	1	Peru	1
Djibouti	1	Philippines	6
Egypt	1	South Africa	2
Eswatini	1	Sri Lank	3
Finland	1	Swiss	1
Ghana	2	Thailand	2
Hong Kong	2	Timor-Le	1
India	4	Turkey	1
Indonesia	13	UK	2
Italy	1	USA	10
Japan	8	Uzbekistan	8
Jordan	1	Vietnam	5
Kyrgyzstan	1		

To collect data from 617 participants, we approached two different institutions: an international graduate school in Japan and a Japanese MNE whose headquarter is in Japan operating an Indonesian subsidiary to produce automobile parts. These institutions agreed to cooperate with our study. After getting a permission of research ethics from our department of university, we conducted data collection.

Instruments

An Emotional Aspect of Tolerance of Ambiguity

There were three key variables to be measured in this study: tolerance of ambiguity in two aspects, emotion and abilities, and self-confidence for cross-cultural adaptation. In terms of the emotional aspect of tolerance of ambiguity, we applied and modified part of subcomponents of "Revised Interpersonal Intolerance of Ambiguity Scale" that was created by Tomono and Hashimoto (2005). Their scale was composed of three factors with 17 items using a 6-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 6=strongly agree). To meet the intention of our study focusing on the emotional aspect of tolerance of ambiguity, we applied only five items from six ones relevant to one subcomponent of intolerance of ambiguity at first encounters. Also, we reversed its numbers to be selected in the scale (original: 1= strongly agree to 6= strongly disagree), the modification of which allowed us to interpret the greater scores, the more people tolerate in ambiguous situations.

An Ability Aspect of Tolerance of Ambiguity

The rest of two important variables represented the ability aspect of tolerance of ambiguity and self-confidence for cross-cultural adaption. We newly developed two scales for this study. In terms of scale development for the tolerance of ambiguity, we designed one-factor structure to investigate the ability aspect of it, including four items using 7-point Likert scale (1=cannot do at all to 7=extremely excellent). In order to analyze the one facture structure using four items, we first applied the maximum likelihood method of an exploratory

factor analysis (EFA) employing 104 internationally experienced workers. Results of the EFA indicated a single factor, as shown by eigenvalues greater than 1, explaining 68.14% of the total variance. To validate this one configuration, a confirmatory factory analysis (CFA) was conducted on the same sample. Results of the CFA revealed the fit indices fell within an acceptable range (χ^2= 0.76, p> 0.05; goodness-of-fit index [GFI] = 1.00; comparative fit index [CFI] = 1.00; incremental fit index [IFI] = 1.01; root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = 0.00; standardized root mean square residual = [SRMR] = 0.01), indicating that the data of 104 participants fit the one structure model well.

Then, we further investigated whether structural discrimination exists between the two components of tolerance of ambiguity: emotion (5 items) and ability (4 items). Results of the EFA on the same sample applying the guideline of an eigenvalue >1 illustrated that two factors were dominant, accounting for 69.84% of the total variance. Subsequently, results of the CFA on the same sample exhibited, except the chi-square score, the fit indices stayed mostly within an acceptable range (χ^2= 48.17, p < 0.01; GFI = 0.91; CFI = 0.96; IFI = 0.96; RMSEA = 0.09; SRMR = 0.07). Tables 3 and 4 summarized results of EFA and CFA respectively in terms of tolerance of ambiguity: emotion and ability.

Table 3. Results of EFA concerning tolerance of ambiguity: emotion and ability (N=104)

No. of Factor	One		One		Two		
Tolerance of ambiguity Items		h^2		h^2	1	2	h^2
Emotion 1	0.69	0.48			**0.66**	0.07	0.48
Emotion 2	0.92	0.84			**0.93**	-0.04	0.84
Emotion 3	0.84	0.70			**0.89**	-0.12	0.72
Emotion 4	0.66	0.44			**0.57**	0.21	0.48
Emotion 5	0.84	0.71			**0.84**	0.00	0.71
Ability 1			0.65	0.42	0.15	**0.57**	0.42
Ability 2			0.74	0.55	-0.11	**0.79**	0.57
Ability 3			0.83	0.69	0.08	**0.78**	0.67
Ability 4			0.81	0.66	-0.02	**0.84**	0.69
Eigenvalue	3.50		2.73		4.41	1.88	
% of total variance	69.98		68.14		48.96	20.88	
Total variance	69.98		68.14			69.84	

Table 4. Results of CFA concerning tolerance of ambiguity and self-confidence (N=104)

Variables	No. of items	EFA	CFA						
		No. of factor	χ^2	CMIN/DF	GIF	CFI	IFI	RMSEA	SRMR
Tolerance of ambiguity									
Emotion	5	1	9.16	1.83	0.97	0.99	0.99	0.09	0.03
Ability	4	1	0.76	0.38	1.00	1.00	1.01	0.00	0.01
Emotion & Ability	9	2	48.17**	1.85	0.91	0.96	0.96	0.09	0.07
Self-confidence	6	1	47.19**	5.24	0.88	0.89	0.89	0.20	0.08
	4	1	6.50*	3.25	0.97	0.98	0.98	0.15	0.03

Note. CMIN/df=minimum discrepancy per degree of freedom; GFI=goodness-of-fit index; CFI=comparative fit index; IFI=incremental fit index; RMSEA=root mean square error of approximation; SRMR=standardized root mean square residual; N=04; **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$.

Self-Confidence for Cross-Cultural Adaption

We also newly developed a scale for self-confidence for cross-cultural adaption. As discussed earlier, there was an existing instrument invented by Bikos et al. (2021): a scale of self-efficacy for sociocultural adaptation that is characterized as being multidimensional with a large number of question items, and it was designed to measure detailed facets of human functioning in cross-cultural situations. For our study, we attempted to create a unidimensional scale that investigates self-confidence in cross-cultural adaption, which might reduce the work-load of employees' answering questionnaires. We designed 6 question items in relation to self-confidence for cross-cultural adaption and tested them using EFA and CFA on the same sample of 104 internationally experienced workers. As depicted in Table 5, results of the EFA revealed one factor structure by applying the guideline of eigenvalues greater than 1, explaining 63.78% of the total variance. Then, to verify this one configuration, the CFA was performed. However, results of the CFA revealed that the fit indices did not reach an acceptable range (χ^2=47.19, $p < 0.01$; GFI = 0.88; CFI = 0.89; IFI = 0.89; RMSEA = 0.20; SRMR = 0.08). Thus, we closely analyzed correlation matrix among the 6 items and found that two items (i.e., items 4 and 5) were not so strongly correlated with the others. After these two items were eliminated, we again carried out the EFA and CFA on the same sample. Statistics of both factor analysis were improved and fell within the acceptable levels, as illustrated in Tables 4 and 5 (i.e., EFA results: 75.39% of the total variance; CFA results: the fit indices except the score of χ^2 = 6.50 ($p < 0.05$) and that of RMSEA = 0.15. Researchers generally apply the fit index of RMSEA in order to evaluate a model fit. Although it is considered to use RMSEA for the evaluation, the methodological research of Kenny, Kaniskan, and McCoach (2015) and

that of Chen, Curren, Bollen, Kirby, and Paxton (2008) indicated the performance of RMSEA varied with degree of freedom (i.e., sample sizes and question items), suggesting that other fit indices need to be evaluated properly if a degree of freedom was small. Since the degree of freedom in our study was two, it should be important to look at other indices. In fact, as illustrated in Table 4, the four values fell within an acceptable range: GFI = 0.97; CFI = 0.98; IFI = 0.98; SRMR = 0.03. Accordingly, we concluded that four items model of self-confidence for cross-cultural adaptation would be an adequate measure.

Finally, Cronbach's alphas of three scales used for this study were 0.84 or over as shown in Table 6. Additionally, Appendix A presented each question of two newly developed scales for this study.

Table 5. Results of EFA concerning self-confidence for cross-cultural adaption (N=104)

Self-confidence for cross-cultural adaptation	Factor 1	h^2	Factor 1	h^2
Item 1	0.73	0.53	0.73	0.54
Item 2	0.85	0.72	0.88	0.77
Item 3	0.91	0.82	0.90	0.81
Item 4	0.60	0.36		
Item 5	0.59	0.35		
Item 6	0.78	0.61	0.78	0.60
Eigenvalue	3.83		3.02	
% of total variance	63.78		75.39	
Total variance	63.78		75.39	

Table 6. Cronbach's alphas of three scales used for this study

Variables	Groups	Internationally experienced workers	Japanese PCNs	Indonesian HCNs
	N	104	454	59
	No. of items	Cronbach α		
Tolerance of ambiguity				
Emotion	4	0.84	0.89	0.87
Ability	5	0.89	0.91	0.86
Self-confidence	4	0.89	0.91	0.88

Results

This study raised two research questions: (1) To what extent do PCNs and HCNs differ from internationally experienced workers in terms of emotional and ability aspects of tolerance of ambiguity and self-efficacy for cross-cultural adaption? (2) How do those two aspects of tolerance of ambiguity affect

self-confidence for cross-cultural adaptation among the three groups: PCNs, HCNs, and internationally experienced workers?

Tolerance of Ambiguity among PCNs, HCNs, and Internationally Experienced Workers

Results of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) indicated significant differences in both aspects of emotion and abilities of cross-cultural tolerance of ambiguity among three groups (emotion: $F = 90.74$, $p < 0.01$, $\eta^2 = 0.23$; abilities: $F = 149.38$, $p < 0.01$, $\eta^2 = 0.33$), suggesting a large effect of group differences on both variables of the tolerance of ambiguity ($\eta^2 > 0.14$). Results of the post hoc examination: Tukey test, illustrated that a mean difference of each group was significantly different from that of each other, indicating that internationally experienced workers had the highest degree of both variables; Indonesian HCNs exhibited the second highest; and Japanese PCNs showed the lowest level. Table 7 summarized statistical test results of the ANOVA with the post hoc investigation.

Table 7. Results of ANOVA and a post hoc test of tolerance of ambiguity among three groups

	Tolerance of ambiguity: Emotion					Tolerance of ambiguity: Ability				
Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	η^2	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	η^2
Between groups	203.28	2	101.64	90.74**	0.23	388.37	2	194.18	149.38**	0.33
Within groups	687.76	614	1.12			798.17	614	1.30		
Total	891.04	616				1186.53	616			
	Mean differences					Mean differences				
	Mean	SD	1	2		Mean	SD	1	2	
1. Internationally experienced workers	4.46	0.98				5.01	0.93			
2. Japanese PCNs	2.91	1.09	1.55**			3.05	1.20	1.97**		
3. Indonesian HCNs	3.26	0.97	1.20**	-0.35*		4.49	0.95	0.52*	-1.44*	

Note. **$p < .01$, *$p < 0.05$. Tukey test was used as a post hoc examination.

It can be assumed to say that internationally experienced workers have well developed the tolerance of ambiguity of both emotion and abilities through staying long in foreign countries where they have been required to interact with cross-culturally different peoples. In the meantime, it could be assumed that the other two groups would not have had sufficient time to develop the tolerance of ambiguity compared with the internationally experienced workers. Also, it may be necessary to consider a country's culture, particularly with regard to uncertainty avoidance of the two countries. According to Hofstede's cultural comparison (Hofstede, 1997; Hofstede et al., 2010), Japanese have a very high score of uncertainty avoidance in general, while Indonesians exhibited a lower score than Japanese and a middle score in general. Based on this notion, Japanese PCNs tend to have lower tolerance of ambiguity compared

with Indonesian HCNs. Employees of those two countries would need to develop more tolerance of ambiguity towards a level of internationally experienced workers.

Self-Confidence for Cross-Cultural Adaptation among Those Three Groups

Results of the ANOVA revealed a significant difference in self-confidence for cross-cultural adaptation among those three groups (F= 230.72, p < 0.01, η^2= 0.43), and the value of the eta-square was interpreted as a large effect of group differences on the self-confidence. Results of the Tukey test showed a significant difference between Japanese PCNs and the other two groups, Indonesian HCNs, and internationally experienced worker, while no significant difference between the other two groups. Like the tolerance of ambiguity of three groups in order, the self-confidence showed the same order among them: internationally experienced workers had the highest level; Indonesian HCNs exhibited the second highest; and Japanese PCNs showed the lowest level. Table 8 summarized statistical test results of the ANOVA with the post hoc investigation.

Table 8. Results of ANOVA and a post hoc test of self-confidence among three groups

	Self-confidence for cross-cultural adaptation				
Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	η^2
Between groups	389.11	2	194.56	230.72**	0.43
Within groups	517.76	614	0.84		
Total	906.87	616			
	Mean differences				
Groups	Mean	SD	1	2	
1. Internationally experienced workers	4.95	0.69			
2. Japanese PCNs	3.06	0.98	1.89**		
3. Indonesian HCNs	4.68	0.78	0.26	-1.89**	

Note. **p < .01, *p < 0.05. Tukey test was used as a post hoc examination.

Relationships between Tolerance of Ambiguity and Sel-Confidence

This study examined how emotion and abilities of tolerance of ambiguity respectively has an impact on self-confidence for cross-cultural adaptation by controlling age and gender. Since three groups showed a significantly different level of two aspects of the tolerance of ambiguity, we analyzed each three groups in terms of the effect of the tolerance of ambiguity on the self-confidence. Table 9 illustrated results of correlation analysis concerning the three groups. As a demographic characteristic, age was significantly, differently related with three key variables according to the three groups, while gender had no relation with the variables. In the group of internationally experienced workers, age had a positively significant relationship with all

of the three key variables. However, it was negatively significantly related to them in the group of Japanese PCNs, while there was no association in that of Indonesian HCNs. The results might be explained according to possible traits of aged employees, particularly with regard to internationally experienced workers and Japanese employees because their results were opposite. As internationally experienced workers get older, they may obtain more cross-cultural experiences that more develop a level of those cross-cultural competence such as tolerance of ambiguity. In case of Japanese HCNs, it is thought that their cross-cultural experiences are limited generally, though younger people seem more open, flexible and adaptable towards foreigners and their cultures. This perspective might suggest that younger generation can perceive themselves to have more tolerance of ambiguity and self-confidence for cross-cultural adaptation.

Table 9. Results of correlation analysis concerning tolerance of ambiguity and self-confidence based on three groups

		Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
Internationally experienced worker (N=104)							
1	age	42.86	8.81				
2	gender	–	–	0.14			
3	Tolerance of ambiguity: Emotion	4.46	0.98	0.27**	-0.02		
4	Tolerance of ambiguity: Ability	5.01	0.93	0.26**	0.07	0.40**	
5	Self-confidence	4.95	0.69	0.27**	-0.04	0.45**	0.58**
Japanese PCNs (N=454)							
1	age	39.21	13.53				
2	gender	–	–	0.04			
3	Tolerance of ambiguity: Emotion	2.91	1.09	-0.11*	-0.04		
4	Tolerance of ambiguity: Ability	3.05	1.20	-0.24**	0.03	0.45**	
5	Self-confidence	3.06	0.98	-0.12*	-0.01	0.49**	0.62**
Indonesian HCNs (N=59)							
1	age	29.59	8.90				
2	gender	–	–	–			
3	Tolerance of ambiguity: Emotion	3.26	0.97	0.06	–		
4	Tolerance of ambiguity: Ability	4.49	0.95	0.19	–	0.38**	
5	Self-confidence	4.68	0.78	-0.08	–	0.47**	0.67**

Note. **$p < .01$, *$p < 0.05$.

Like a way of the correlation analysis, that of regression analysis was also conducted by a separate examination based on three groups; however, results on the three groups were very similar except a significant effect of age on the self-confidence in Indonesian HCNs. Both emotional and ability's variables of cross-cultural tolerance of ambiguity significantly affected self-confidence for cross-cultural adaption in terms of all three groups: emotion (internationally experienced workers, β= 0.17; Japanese PCNs β= 0.24; Indonesian HCNs, β= 0.20) and abilities (internationally experienced workers, β= 0.34; Japanese PCNs β= 0.42; Indonesian HCNs, β= 0.51) as shown in Table 10. These results of the relationships between them were consistent with those of the correlation analysis. Overall, those results suggest that both emotion and ability aspects of tolerance of ambiguity tend to have an effect on self-confidence for cross-cultural adaption.

Table 10. Results of regression analysis on relationships between tolerance of ambiguity and self-confidence based on three groups

Groups	Internationally experienced workers	Japanese PCNs	Indonesian HCNs
N	104	454	59
Variables entered	Self-confidence in cross-cultural adaptation β		
Age	0.01	0.00	-0.02*
Gender	-0.12	-0.06	–
Tolerance of ambiguity			
Emotion	0.17**	0.24**	0.20*
Ability	0.34**	0.42**	0.51**
F	16.96**	90.15**	21.48**
R^2	0.41	0.45	0.54

Note. $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{*}p < 0.05$.

Discussion

Results of Summary

Based on the study results relevant to tew research questions, a level of emotional aspect of tolerance of ambiguity differed among three groups: internationally experienced workers showed the highest, Indonesian HCNs did a middle, and Japanese PCNs did the lowest. Similar results were made with regard to a level of ability aspect of it. Also, a level of self-confidence for cross-cultural adaptation was varied with the three groups, while a difference in the self-confidence between Indonesian HCNs and internationally experienced workers was insignificant. All of those results confirmed that internationally experienced workers greatly developed the two personality traits of tolerance of ambiguity and self-confidence

for cross-cultural adaptation, compared with domestic employees of MNEs. Second, both emotion and ability aspects of the tolerance of ambiguity significantly affected self-confidence for adaptation within all three groups. It can be interpreted that the more employees tolerate ambiguous situations in cross-cultural contexts, the more they feel confident that they adapt themselves to there.

Implications

This study offered three implications. The first implication concerns trainings of MNE organizations. PCNs' and HCNs' developmental levels of emotion and abilities of the tolerance of ambiguity were much lower than those of internationally experienced workers. MNEs may need to provide cross-cultural training opportunities for both PCNs and HCNs to develop the tolerance of ambiguity in cross-cultural situations. This notion seems critical to Japan and other developing countries where foreigners are expected to increase within their labor market. To PCNs and HCNs equipped with more developmental level of it, they would be able to work more effectively with co-workers or counterparts who possess different cultural backgrounds. As a consequence, it can be expected that they would enhance their confidence for cross-cultural adaptation, which may lead to increase their performance. Also, such PCNs with the adequate development would potentially become an important candidate of expatriates, while the HCNs may become that of inpatriates or transpatriates. In turn, these kinds of staffing in international HRM might also allow them to increase their motivations to work for their MNEs.

Next implication may lead to find out other cross-cultural variables that affect self-confidence for cross-cultural adaptation. Since self-confidence is very important for success, achievement, and performance in organizations as discussed earlier (Bandura, 1997; Luthans, 2004; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998), a way of developing and increasing self-confidence seems a critical research theme. This study provided evidence of how the two aspects of tolerance of ambiguity affect self-confidence for cross-cultural adaptation; thus, other personality traits like self-esteem, locus of control, a big five element (Bono & Judge, 2003) might also be influential on the self-confidence. If those traits can be improved or even developed, MNEs would expand a way of strengthening the self-confidence through training sessions of MNEs. A question will be raised: which personality traits are associated with the self-confidence for cross-cultural adaptation. This question would also be able to positively contribute to the area of international HRM.

The third implication concerns cross-cultural investigation as to an effect of country's culture to tolerance of ambiguity. As discussed in the result section, uncertainty avoidance of country's or national culture might have an effect on a level of tolerance of ambiguity. Our study results revealed that Japanese PCNs had a lower level of two variables of tolerance of ambiguity than Indonesian HCNs.

Coincidentally, a score of uncertainty avoidance of Japanese (92; Hofstede, 1997; Hofstede et al., 2010) was higher than that of Indonesia (48; Hofstede 1997; Hofstede et al., 2010), indicating that Japanese tend to avoid ambiguity than Indonesians. There was theoretical discussion between tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty avoidance (Furnham & Marks, 2013), but it will not be confirmed by empirical study, yet. Although a unit of analysis may need to be adjusted (i.e., individual level vs. country/national level), this empirical investigation would add the contribution on international and cross-cultural studies.

Limitations

This study will point out several limitations on methodological concerns. The first limitation was participants. We applied three groups to compare cross-cultural variables. Although the participants of internationally experienced workers were characterized as those who already highly developed cross-cultural traits and competencies, it is clear that they did not belong to a Japanese MNE as their expatriates who may have a certain level of the competence and attribution for effectiveness of its international business operations. Thus, expatriates of the same MNE would be a better sample for comparative studies. Also, Indonesian participants in this study did not contain female employees who are critical workforce in organizations. The study results based on an Indonesian subsidiary from the Japanese MNE might be gender biased. The second limitation was a scale development process. This study developed two measures: an ability of tolerance of ambiguity and self-confidence for cross-cultural adaptation. For this scale development, we applied internationally experienced workers because they were eligible in light of their background. However, this study used them for both analyses of EFA and CFA. It should be better to use a different sample for CFA. Although this study verified those two scales, the scales should be checked with different sample.

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Appendix A: Two newly developed scales used for this study

Scales	Item No.	Descriptions
Tolerance of ambiguity: Ability	1	Without problems, tolerate the behaviors and gestures of people I have never seen before.
	2	Tolerate a situation where I am not familiar with the meaning of people's story and behavior.
	3	Tolerate ambiguity, even when I'm with someone I meet for the first time.
	4	Tolerate ambiguous situations, even though I don't clearly understand what people say.
Self-confidence in cross-cultural adaptation	1	I am skillful at being flexible in adapting to the manners of a different culture and foreign country.
	2	I can adjust myself to the requirements or norms of another culture.
	3	I am confident that I can adapt to a different culture.
	4	It is difficult for me to adapt myself to a way or behavior required by a foreign or different country.
	5	I'm not confident in adapting to the way of life and customs of other countries.
	6	I am confident that I can blend in with life in a foreign country or different culture and adapt to the lifestyle there.

Note. The term "people" in this questionnaire refers to those who have a different cultural background and/or those who are different nationalities.

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本国社員、海外現地社員、国際経験に富むワーカーに関する曖昧さへの寛容性と異文化適応への自信に関する比較研究

山崎佳孝
遠山道子

概要

この研究の目的は2つある。第1の目的は、本国社員（PCN）、海外現地社員（HCN）、国際経験に富むワーカーを研究対象とし、感情と能力の両側面における曖昧さへの寛容性と、異文化適応への自信を比較研究することである。国際経験に富むワーカーは、特に他2グループの曖昧さへの寛容性と自信に関する発達レベルを把握するためのベンチマークである。第2の目的は、曖昧さへの寛容性がどの程度異文化適応の自信に影響するかを調査することである。この研究では、①曖昧への寛容性の能力面と②異文化適応への自信に関して2つの尺度を新たに開発した。研究対象者は合計で617人である。(1) 37か国の国際経験豊富なワーカー104名、(2) PCN－日本の多国籍企業に勤務する日本人社員454名、(3) HCN－インドネシア支社の現地社員59名である。分散分析の結果、曖昧さへの寛容の2面性は有意であることが示された。国際経験に富むワーカーが最も高い値を示し、次にインドネシアの現地社員、日本の本国社員が最も低い結果となった。異文化適応への自信も有意差が示され、日本の本国社員は他2グループに比べて低い結果となった。重回帰分析の結果、3グループとも同様に、曖昧さへの寛容性の感情と能力の両側面とも異文化適応への自信に対して有意であった。最後に研究結果がもたらす意義について議論した。

キーワード：曖昧さの寛容性、異文化適応の自信、国際人的資源管理、本国人材、現地国人材、国際経験ワーカー、日系多国籍企業

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