



**Sylvia Freitas Mello**

**Leadership in a Global World:  
Attributes that affect Expatriate's  
Engagement and Burnout**

**Dissertação de Mestrado**

Dissertation presented to the Programa de Pós-graduação em Administração de Empresas da PUC-Rio in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Mestre em Administração.

Advisor: Prof. Flavia de Souza Costa Neves Cavazotte

Rio de Janeiro  
February 2019



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To my husband Roberto, and  
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## Abstract

Mello, Sylvia Freitas; Cavazotte, Flavia de Souza Costa Neves (Advisor). **Leadership in a Global World: Attributes that affect Expatriate's Engagement and Burnout.** Rio de Janeiro, 2019. 75p. Dissertação de Mestrado - Departamento de Administração, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro.

This study aims to understand if leader attributes influence the attitudes and experiences of professionals working in international cultural settings. I propose and analyze the impact of purpose-led leadership and leaders' cultural intelligence on engagement and burnout of corporate expatriates currently undertaking long term international assignments. Twenty-six companies were invited to participate in the survey. A total of 112 expatriates, from 18 nationalities, and working in 20 countries fully answered the questionnaire. Results indicate that corporate expatriates working with leaders with higher cultural intelligence demonstrated lower levels of burnout, and that expatriates who perceived that their superiors were guided by a purpose demonstrated higher levels of engagement.

## Keywords

Leadership; cultural intelligence; purpose; engagement; well-being; burnout.

## Resumo

Mello, Sylvia Freitas; Cavazotte, Flavia de Souza Costa Neves (Orientadora). **Liderança em um mundo global: Atributos que afetam o engajamento e burnout em expatriados.** Rio de Janeiro, 2019. 75p. Dissertação de Mestrado - Departamento de Administração, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro.

Este estudo tem como objetivo entender se atributos do líder influenciam as atitudes e experiências de profissionais trabalhando em ambientes internacionais multiculturais. Propomos e analisamos o impacto da liderança com foco em propósito e da inteligência cultural do líder no engajamento e burnout de expatriados corporativos, atualmente em designações internacionais de longo prazo. Vinte e seis empresas foram convidadas a participar da pesquisa. Um total de 112 expatriados de 18 nacionalidades, e trabalhando em 20 países responderam ao questionário. Os resultados indicam que expatriados corporativos que trabalham com líderes com alta inteligência cultural demonstraram baixos níveis de burnout, e que expatriados que perceberam que seus líderes são movidos por um propósito demonstraram níveis mais altos de engajamento.

## Palavras-chave

Liderança; inteligência cultural; propósito; engajamento; bem-estar; burnout.

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1. Statement of the Problem

The global economy is producing a competitive environment that is becoming increasingly more complex, dynamic and ambiguous for firms operating across borders. Globally competent business leaders are critical for a company's ability to succeed internationally. There is a growing demand for globally competent business leaders who can operate successfully in today's global environment and improve organizational performance across all geographic markets (Caligiuri, 2012).

One key for global success is the ability of global organizations to select, develop and place effective global leaders at all organizational levels (Lisak & Erez, 2015). Global leaders need to impact the attitudes and behaviors of global employees to work together toward a common vision and common goals and they have an important contribution to the success of companies in accomplishing their organizational goals.

Acknowledging how to effectively lead people within diverse cultural contexts has become crucial for international business research. In the large majority of multinational companies, leaders may have expatriates reporting to them and thus they can contribute to a healthy exchange and good support in a way that they generate good results for the company.

Globalization has dramatically changed the environment within which leaders operate today and there is currently a variety of forms of global work (Allen, Lee Reiche, 2015). Corporate expatriates, one of these forms, help their organizations establish operations in other countries, enter new markets or transfer skills and knowledge to their companies' subsidiaries or business partners.

At the same time, they face several challenges, related to personal, work and non-work demands: Expatriates must adapt to new environments in unfamiliar locations and are often inundated with different social, cultural standards, and customs have monetary and career-related costs of failing to succeed in an overseas assignment (Schafer et al., 2012). The literature on leader-member exchange theory suggests that leaders tend to develop an exchange with each of their subordinates, and that the quality of these relationships influences subordinates (Anand et al., 2011). A favorable exchange relationship is more likely when a subordinate is perceived to be competent, reliable, and, more importantly, similar to the leader in values and attitudes. However, in the case of expatriates, there is a natural difference among them, their leaders and co-workers, which might pose challenges to that relationship.

Research on leadership shows that today's leaders need to acquire a challenging set of competencies if they intend to be effective in present day global societies, and that both cultural competence and focus on purpose are important attributes for leaders to manage in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world (Caligiuri, 2012, Craig & Snook, 2014 ). Global leaders need the capability to relate and work effectively across cultures, they need to develop communication competencies that will enable them to articulate and implement their vision in a diverse workplace. According to Lisak & Erez (2015) researchers should focus on cross-cultural interactions more than on cross-cultural differences and study how global leaders achieve success in the global context.

In a global or multicultural context, valuing cultural differences, increased cultural flexibility and greater tolerance of ambiguity will improve the leader's success in global leadership activities (Caligiuri & Tarique (2012). Therefore, cultural intelligence (CQ) is proposed in this study as an important attribute for expatriate's leaders, due to its relevance to contemporary globalization, international management and workforce diversification.

In addition, although concerns of profit and loss are still central in the corporate environment, many business leaders are now looking for a deeper meaning. Purpose includes inspiring positive change, providing employees with a sense of meaning and fulfillment, creating value for the customer, and making a positive impact on their community (EY Beacon Institute, 2016). However, studies have shown that fewer than 20% of managers have a strong sense of their

own leadership purpose (Crag & Snook, 2014). Another study found that 48% of executives surveyed thought their purpose was better understood in some areas of the company than others, while 13% said it was neither well-understood nor clearly communicated (Harvard Business Review Analytic Services and EY, 2015). In this study, purpose-oriented leadership (P-OL) is also proposed as a relevant leader attribute for the experiences and attitudes of expatriates.

Many organizations believe that building well-being and engagement is critical to their employees. The literature reveals that work plays a major role in determining physical health and psychological well-being and that leaders have a key role in building and sustaining an enthusiastic workforce and ensuring that employee's behavior aligns with the goals of the organization (Cartwright & Cooper, 2009). Particularly in the case of expatriates, who face many challenges due to the stress associated with their assignments, mental fitness rather than mere physical fitness is of relevance in today's world (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2014). In addition, a Tower Watson research (2015) shows that one of the main drivers of engagement among expatriate employees is the good communication with the host organization line manager. Therefore, this thesis focus on the role of the abovementioned leader attributes on two expatriate outcomes: engagement and burnout.

There is a lack of empirical studies on leadership attributes in regards to the experiences of expatriates, and on the effect of leader's cultural intelligence and purpose on expatriate's engagement and burnout. Hence there is a need to further understand the relationships between leaders' cultural intelligence and purpose and expatriate's engagement and burnout.

The findings of this study will help organizations understand which attributes they may search in leaders who will receive expatriates and the better management of the expatriate experience, which may further help improve expatriate's engagement and well-being, and consequently increase the chances of a successful expatriation while reducing the chance of early repatriation and loss of company's investment. Good health can be considered the most valuable of personal assets and a healthy and positively engaged workforce is also a valuable organizational asset (Cartwright & Cooper, 2009). Hollensbe (2014) supports that "businesses not only produce goods and services, they produce people" and that

work environments affect employees as well as the business culture that forms them.

Therefore, it is important to identify the specific leaders' attributes which are critical for successful engagement and well-being. Assigning expatriates to leaders that are not supportive of their teams may promote a bad assignment experience to them and even hurt subsidiary performance because expatriates are often more expensive than other sources of staffing.

## **1.2. Goal of the Study**

One of the main requirements of today leaders is to be able to work effectively with people with different cultural values, norms, attitudes and business practices. This study analyzes how leadership attributes in expatriate's superiors affect their experiences and attitudes, as this will assist leaders and organizations to address the challenges of globalization more successfully.

Specifically, the goal of this study is to investigate if purpose-oriented leadership (P-OL) and leader cultural intelligence impact the level of engagement and burnout in a sample of corporate long term expatriates.

By examining the relationship between certain leadership attributes and corporate expatriate outcomes, the study seeks to identify how leaders contribute to the engagement and well-being of corporate expatriates.

## **1.3. Delimitation of the study**

The object of this study are corporate, long term expatriates from different organizations and countries of origin, who have been working in different parts of the world for a period of 18 months or more.

## **1.4. Relevance of the study**

Global leadership involves inspiring and influencing the thinking, attitudes and behaviors of people from different parts of the world (Adler & Bartolomew, 1990).

Knowledge is systemic, although changeable. The study contributes to the field of leadership by examining the impact of two leader attributes, cultural intelligence and purpose, on specific expatriate's outcomes, engagement and well-being, which are critical to organizational performance. Therefore, it fosters insights into better understanding the phenomenon of leadership.

Companies face pressures to continually realign their human resource (HR) systems with strategies aiming at operating in a global context. Therefore, identifying, attracting, developing, managing, and retaining talent capable of effectively handling global complexity is extremely important for multinational companies and their HR management (HRM) systems. (Allen, Lee Reiche, 2015, BGRS, 2017). It is critical to examine how people manage cross-cultural interactions in the global work context, as cross-cultural interactions tend to be more frequent, unstructured, and across global locations. Therefore, cross-cultural interactions should be more researched than cross-cultural differences (Gelfand *et al.*, 2017).

Furthermore, this study addresses the impact of leaders on expatriates, and not on the expatriate himself/herself, which is usually the most common focus of studies in the HR literature. Thus, this study helps organizations understand which attributes they may search in leaders who will receive expatriates, as well as offer them training.

This work also helps on the better management of the expatriate experience, increasing the chances of a successful expatriation and reducing the chance of early repatriation and loss of company's investment, as the expatriate may be on assignment but not benefitting from it or contributing to it. Therefore, it is important to understand this risk, so that the expatriate can take the best from the international assignment and the leader can benefit from the expatriate's engagement and well-being, and, consequently, the company, by the results generated by them.

## 2 Literature review

The literature review first introduces global work and its different types of experiences. It then defines corporate expatriation, which is one of the forms of global work and the one which will be specifically focused on this Master's Thesis, and the many challenges expatriates face while on assignment. In the following sections, I review the literature on two expatriate outcomes: engagement and burnout, together with the role of leaders' cultural intelligence and focus on purpose to promote or undermine such outcomes. Then, I discuss the concept of leadership, more specifically how the exchanges between leaders and followers might affect expatriates. There, two leadership attributes are emphasized: cultural intelligence and focus on purpose, particularly their role in a multicultural context. Finally, I present the conceptual model and hypotheses investigated in this study.

### 2.1. Global Work and Corporate Expatriates

As today's business activities have largely gone beyond national borders, and global markets continue to expand, global forms of work become an increasingly common phenomenon in multinational companies. Firms in today's global economy rely on international work assignments in which managers are expected to identify and manage new global opportunities. Such type of global work arrangements is defined as situations in which employees deal with leaders who are not only culturally diverse but often also geographically distant from one another and therefore involved in different national cultures and contexts (Allen, Lee Reiche, 2015). The variety of cultural and linguistic distances involved in global work, as well as the variety of political, economic, and societal institutions make the management of work and people within multinational companies particularly challenging.

The increasingly globalized, networked world impose that we understand how the global context of a culturally diverse and geographically dispersed workforce changes our theories, research questions, and methodologies.

Kraimer, Takeushi & Freese (p. 6, 2014) defined global work context to include:

*any job-related activities that involve interacting with people from any other countries. Examples include interacting with customers or coworkers from foreign countries, working in cross-national teams, having extensive international travel requirements as part of the job, and living and working in a foreign country for extended period of time (whether self-or corporate initiated)*

In the globalized work context, we expect more people to live and work in more than one culture, be it their home culture and host culture, or the global cultural context more generally. Erez and colleagues argue that the global work context contributes to the development of global identities independent of any national local identity (Erez & al., 2013).

Global forms of work have been of increasing interest over the past years. Researchers have identified and explored a number of global work experiences, including corporate and self-initiated expatriates as well as more recent forms of corporate global employees (flexpatriates, short-term assignees, international business travelers, permanent transfers) as well as the nonmobile forms of the global work experience, such as global virtual teams and global domestics (Schafer et al., 2012).

In spite of the trend for corporations to increasingly rely on alternative staffing options of global work to conduct business globally and provide employees with global work experience, this study will focus specifically on corporate long-term expatriates, on assignments of more than 18 months.

Corporate expatriates have been defined as “employees who are temporarily relocated by their organization to another country, usually for several years, to complete a specific task or accomplish an organizational goal” (Harrison et al., 2004, Schafer et al., 2012). Despite worldwide changes, multinational companies focus on mobile workforces to support career growth and ensure competitiveness. There are numerous personal and organizational advantages for sending employees overseas, whether for long-or short-term assignments, including career development by obtaining global experience, the creation and transfer of skills, and the re-allocation of resources (Mercer, 2017).

Expatriates help their organizations establish operations in other countries, enter new markets and transfer skills and knowledge to their subsidiaries or business partners. By getting familiar with local business practices, they can also help the companies reduce the risk and avoid mistakes when doing business in a new market (Mercer, 2017).

Expatriates work closely with overseas distributors and partners to ensure they understand the headquarters' culture, standards, and values. With their understanding of cultural differences, they can modify some factors to adjust to the local business practices. At the same time, while reinforcing the headquarters' culture and practices, expatriates may help ensure customers receive a consistent standard of service in all territories abroad.

An important competitive advantage of multinational companies lies in their ability to create and transfer knowledge from headquarters to subsidiaries and vice versa and such knowledge transfer is believed to be vital (Chang, Gong & Peng, 2012).

When companies appoint expatriates to manage business abroad, these employees can increase local business and have better financial control over local operations. Expatriates can also ensure that local partners comply with policies and procedures and quality service standards.

Developing management talent through expatriate assignments helps organizations develop their skills base and their ability to succeed in a global marketplace.

Corporate expatriates are different from self-initiated expatriates (SIEs), who are individuals who initiate and usually finance their own expatriation (Tharenou, 2013). Rather than being transferred by organizations, they relocate to a country of their choice to search for cultural, personal, and career development experiences, often with no definite time frame in mind. This work specifically focuses on the first type of expatriate.

The evolution of global communications and technology was anticipated by many to reduce the need for expatriates, with the expectation that many future operations would be managed remotely but the reality has proved very different (ECA International, 2016).

Although international assignments can provide firms and managers with unique growth and developmental opportunities, they also require expatriates to adjust effectively to new work requirements, responsibilities, and expectations, all while learning new cultural forms that impact work tasks.

The research of Shaffer *et al.* (2012) has found that many expatriates perceive career benefits regarding the development of career competencies. Such career competencies include personal benefits such as a global mindset, enhanced intercultural and interpersonal skills and foreign language fluency.

International assignments play a central role in building global and international skills for organizations. Global management skills are highly sought after in the labor market and an expatriate experience at some time in an employee's career may even be a necessary criterion for his or her advancement to the "executive suites" (Takeushi, 2010). On the other hand, there can be a number of negative consequences, including poor performance due to difficulties in adjusting to the foreign environment or disillusionment with parent company support.

The next section will discuss the challenges that expatriates face during their international assignments.

### **2.1.1. Expatriates' Challenges**

Overseas assignments remove employees from regular routines, colleagues, friends, and the security of home (Zhu et al., 2016). Expatriates must adapt to new environments in unfamiliar locations and are often inundated with different social, cultural standards and customs and have monetary and career-related costs of failing to thrive in an overseas assignment.

Shaffer *et al.* (2012) presented three sources of demands that expatriates face while doing global work, focusing on the difficulties they face and how they respond to them to more effectively manage this work experience as a part of their career. The three sources of demands are: Personal Demands (e.g., stress, identity transformation), Work Demands (e.g., career transition concerns, structural and perceptual barriers), and Nonwork demands (i.e., Work family conflict, Maintaining friendships and personal life).

Personal Demands involve stress and coping strategies. Expatriates must struggle with a variety of work role stressors and situational stressors originating from both the organization and the foreign culture as well as uneasy interactions with host country nationals. Another personal demand facing employees in global work roles is identity transformations. Such transformations are challenging for employees because they affect their sense of self and their subsequent attitudes and behaviors toward their organization. Job roles may also interfere with an individual's normal activities and disrupt daily routines (i.e., length of time that expatriates are separated from their family, friends, or time needed for maintaining the household, spending time with family and significant others, and keeping a normal diet or an exercise routine).

Work Demands are related to career transition concerns and structural and perceptual barriers. For corporate expatriates, managing the transition from expatriate to repatriate assignments represents one of the greatest concerns. For those with multiple assignment experience, time and geographical distance weaken internal organizational network ties, resulting in a lack of opportunities for getting a good position upon repatriation. In general, organizations tend to pay much attention to the impact of prior experience with assignments and the financial and family considerations, and they underestimate the importance of cultural adaptability, work/life considerations, and career development issues.

Another work-related demand uncovered by Shaffer *et al.* (2012)'s review is structural and perceptual barriers to obtaining global work experience and succeeding in global work. Although corporate expatriates can rely on their organizations for support, many structural barriers, (e.g., obtaining visas and work permits) are encountered and they still face some perceptual barriers, which is the case of some female expatriates expressing gender bias in some cultures.

Finally, Nonwork Demands are also a concern. Even though families may contribute to the success of assignments, managing family problems that arise during the international assignment is still a challenge for expatriates. Dual-career expatriate couples, spouse job/career considerations are a concern. Another family issue that is also problematic for many expatriates is work-family conflict.

Shaffer and collaborators (2012) revealed that all global work experiences are associated with various personal and nonwork demands, including stress induced by the work role and travel requirements as well as concerns with work-family issues. Expatriates also have challenges related to the development of effective working relationships with host country nationals; adjustment to the foreign facility, the foreign culture, and interacting with host nationals (Takeuchi, 2010); family adjustment and spousal job opportunities in the foreign country. The authors believe that differences in the nature of challenges experienced by different types of workers can be attributed to the degree to which the global work experience requires physical mobility, cognitive flexibility, and disruption in their nonwork life.

Expatriates and repatriates also express concerns about returning home to a job that leaves them feeling underemployed, a job that does not benefit from their international experience, that does not match their skill levels and that is not as challenging as the international assignment (Schaffer et al, 2012).

Takeushi (2010) also does a critical review of expatriate adjustment research through multiple stakeholder view, with the goal of highlighting the existence of groups or individuals who can influence or can be influenced by expatriates and examining their importance. While a stakeholder can be any group or individual that can affect or be affected by an expatriate's achievement of the objectives set forth by an international assignment, including managerial development or subsidiary control and coordination, Takeushi (2010) argues that the primary stakeholders for expatriates include (a) spouses and family members, whose inability to adjust to foreign environments has been noted as one of the most critical reasons leading to expatriate lack of success; (b) the parent organization, whose support can increase expatriates' adjustment levels and subsequent performance; and (c) host country nationals, whose support can be instrumental in expatriates succeeding in their objectives or whose resistance can lead to failure.

While expatriate's face several challenges, the next chapter will explain how the relationship between the leader and the expatriate can be so important to the expatriate's international assignment.

### **2.1.2. Expatriate Outcomes**

The way employees feel has not only to do with their personality but also with their jobs. Employee well-being results from the interactions between person and work environment. It depends on the interaction of person-related factors, such as job characteristics and interpersonal relations at work (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2014).

Many organizations now believe that building well-being and engagement is critical to keeping employees. Organizations are considering more than in previous decades the psychological, emotional, and even the spiritual needs of modern day employees to get them more engaged.

Organizations are changing, and work changes in the direction that the mental capital of employees becomes more and more important (Cartwright & Cooper, 2009). Organizations are moving from stability to continuous change and to the need to deal with uncertainty. Nowadays, there is more diversity within corporations, different languages, cultures, and people are required to adapt to this social reality and be emphatic to understand others. Employees also used to retire earlier and are now moving to a late retirement. The vertical hierarchy, seen so far, is becoming more horizontal, which requires more social skills to negotiate with different departments within the company. Organizations are also moving from fixed schedules and formal patterns to be limitless. People can work everywhere, anywhere and with all types of other professionals, which requires self-control. Therefore, psychological resources to deal with such change are becoming more and more important.

Jobs are also changing from a less intensive work rhythm to more intense, from a separation from work and home to a work-home interaction, from individual work to team work, from life-time jobs to uncertain relations which requires that employees apply different psychological skills.

For modern organizations, employee's mental fitness, rather than their mere physical fitness, provides a decisive competitive advantage (Schaufeli and Salanova, 2014). Therefore, they do not need a merely "healthy" workforce but a motivated workforce that is prepared "to go the extra mile". Given such context, this study focus on two expatriate outcomes: engagement and burnout.

## 2.2. Engagement

Kahn (1990) defines engagement as to how employees behaviorally apply themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performance, with the level of engagement on each dimension reflecting the level of their overall personal engagement and disengagement. People can use varying degrees of their selves, physically, cognitively, and emotionally, in the roles they perform. To be physically engaged, employees devote their physical and mental energies and resources wholly into their role performances. To be cognitively engaged, employees are deeply aware of their mission and role in their work environment, have the resources to do their work, opportunities to feel and impact and fulfillment in their work, and perceive chances to improve and develop. To be emotionally engaged is to form meaningful connections to others like co-workers, supervisors, and customers, and to experience trust, empathy and concern for other's feelings.

Personal engagement, as stated by Kahn (1990) is the simultaneous employment of a person's preferred self in tasks behaviors that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence (physical, cognitive, and emotional) and full role performances. People have dimensions of themselves that they prefer to use in the course of role performances. To employ these dimensions is to drive personal energies into physical, cognitive, and emotional labors.

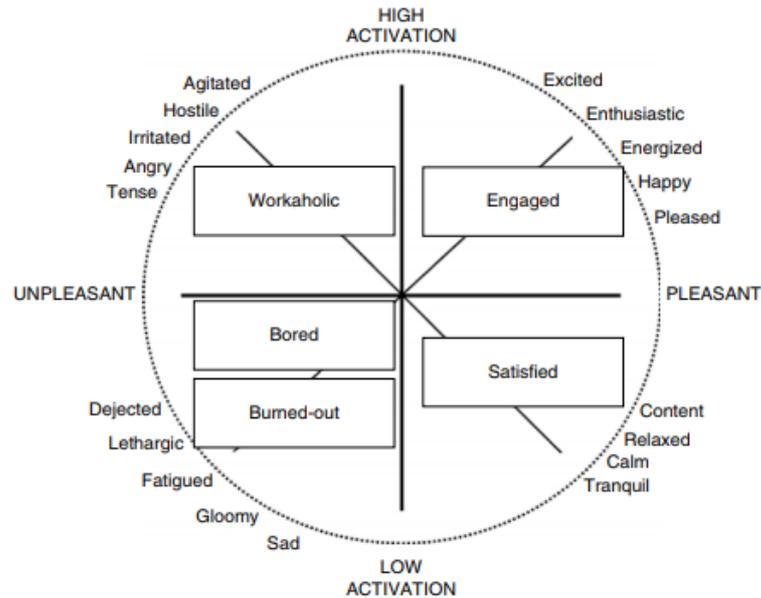
The combination of employing and expressing one's preferred self produces behaviors that bring alive the relation of self to role. People who are personally engaged keep their selves within a role, without sacrificing one for the other. People become physically involved in tasks, whether alone or with others, cognitively vigilant, and empathically connected to others minding for the work they are doing in ways that exposes what they think and feel, their creativity, their beliefs and values, and their personal connections to others.

Personal disengagement, instead, is the simultaneous withdrawal and defense of a person's preferred self in behaviors that contribute to a lack of connections, physical, cognitive, and emotional absence, and incomplete role performances. To withdraw preferred dimensions is to remove personal, internal energies from physical, cognitive, and emotional labors. To defend the self is to hide true identity, thoughts and feelings during role performance. Disengaged

people become physically uninvolved in tasks, cognitively unvigilant, and emotionally disconnected from others in ways that hide what they think and feel, their creativity, their beliefs and values, and their personal connections to others (Kahn, 1990).

Schaufeli, Salanova Gonzalez-Romá & Bakker (2002) define engagement as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. They state, engagement as a high energy, resilience, a willingness to invest effort on the job, the ability to not be easily fatigued and persistence in the face of difficulties. Rather than a momentary and specific state, engagement refers to a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or behavior. *Vigor* is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties. *Dedication* is characterized by a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge. Vigor and dedication are the direct positive opposites of exhaustion and cynicism, respectively. The third dimension of engagement, *absorption*, is characterized by being fully concentrated and deeply involved in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2014). Engagement is as a positive experience in itself which has positive consequences for the organization (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

In the following taxonomy of employee well-being, Schaufeli & Salanova (2014) present engagement as the opposite to burnout, at least in terms of vigor and dedication, when the person feels tired, deactivated and with an unpleasant feeling. Engagement and burnout are negatively related (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, Schaufeli & Salanova, 2014).



**Figure 1:** A Taxonomy of work-related well-being.

Source: SCHAUFELI, W.; SALANOVA (2014). Burnout, boredom and engagement at the workplace (p302).

This taxonomy presents two dimensions: Activation and deactivation, and pleasure and displeasure. Work addiction and burnout are presented as negative aspects. The concepts of engagement and satisfaction are related. Satisfaction seems to be the most desired state but it lacks a kind of drive. So, it is more satiation than it is activation (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2014).

Although there is general agreement within the occupational domain that engagement with work represents a fulfilling state, there are differences in its definition. Maslach & Leiter (2016) present that for some burnout researchers engagement is the opposite of burnout and defined based on the same three dimension of burnout, but the positive end of those dimensions. In this case, engagement is considered a state of high energy, strong involvement and a sense of efficacy, measured by the opposite pattern of scores on the three MBI (Maslach Burnout Inventory) dimensions.

However, a different perspective has defined work engagement as a persistent, positive, affective-motivational state of fulfillment that is characterized by the three components of vigor, dedication and absorption. On this perspective, work engagement is an independent and distinct concept, which is not the opposite of burnout (although it is negatively related to it). A new measure, the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), was developed to assess this positive

state and in the last decade extensive research has been carried. (Maslach & Leiter, 2016).

Kahn (1990) found that workers were more engaged in situations that offered them more psychological meaningfulness and psychological safety, especially when they were more psychologically available. Bhatnagar (2012) examined the literature on work engagement, concluding that engaged workers are more creative, more productive and more willing to go the extra mile. Engagement is related to outcomes such as job performance, client satisfaction and financial returns. Engaged employees take care of their own work engagement by proactively shaping their work environment.

Following this section, the next one will review the role of the leaders on expatriate's engagement.

### **2.2.1. Effects of leadership on expatriate engagement**

Approaches used by organizations are often intended to build a workforce that is highly engaged and working positively towards the goals and mission of the organization. Organizations need an engaged and positive approach from their people, otherwise changes needed, or whatever they are intended to achieve, will not produce a positive reaction from the workforce and will therefore be less effective (Cartwright & Cooper, 2009). Leaders have a central role in building and sustaining an engaged and enthusiastic workforce, and managing processes intended to ensure that employee's behavior is aligned with the goals of the organization.

Some of the resources that may lead to engagement are social support from the leader, performance feedback, task variety, opportunities to develop and transformational leadership (Schaufeli, 2014).

Engagement measures the level of connection expatriate employees feel about their host organization, as demonstrated by their willingness and ability to help their host company succeed, largely by providing discretionary effort on a sustained basis. It also takes into account the rational part of the engagement equation, how employees connect with their host company's goals and values, and

their emotional connection, such as the employee's pride of the host organization. (Towers Watson, 2015).

The Clemmer Group (2016), which provides services on Leadership, Culture and Organizational development, states that in order to avoid reducing engagement levels, many organizations look at pay, benefits, working conditions, flexible schedules or work-life balance. These factors are relevant for engagement but their report shows that, for engagement of employees, the biggest variable is the immediate manager or supervisor. According to their report, the role of immediate managers is certainly not the only factor, but it is considered the single most powerful force for engagement. Coming next is the organization itself, its mission, its culture and how it treats people. This suggests that the single biggest employee engagement variable is the manager. When levels of his or her leadership effectiveness are improved, engagement is likely to increase. People join a company but quit their boss. Also, many people, rather than quitting the organization and leaving, quit and stay. By staying and doing the least required to stay employed carries a huge cost for companies.

Expatriate employees seem to pay more attention to all factors related to a company's future and actions of senior leadership, and their engagement tends to be more driven by one's individual outlook and future prospects compared to non-expatriate employees. A Tower Watson research of 2015 shows that engagement among expatriate employees is particularly high, 92% agree with the goals and objectives of their host organization, 84% would recommend their host organization as a good place to work, and 97% would be willing to offer discretionary effort to help their host organization succeed. These scores outperform those of non-expatriate employees in similar positions in their home organizations. The Towers Watson survey shows that one of the main drivers of engagement among expatriate employees is the good communication with the host organization line manager, their leader. Other drivers reported are: recognition of personal contributions in the host organization, cooperation and teamwork within the host organization, adequate use of the expatriate employee's skills and competencies by the host organization.

The relationship with the line manager in the host country has also been one of the company benefits that have contributed the most to the expatriate experience and subsequent levels of engagement and productivity during the assignment, as stated in the same research. General logistical support (housing, car, schooling), allowance for flights to the home country, administration support (tax, medical, visa), introduction to new work environment (stakeholders, culture, markets) and co-ordinated HR support from home and host countries are also important but the leader does have an influence on the expatriate and impacts on the success of the assignment.

In summary, work engagement is associated with positive individual and organizational outcomes and should therefore be fostered. If organizations intend to build a workforce that is highly engaged and that works positively towards its goals, their leaders have a central role to accomplish that.

### **2.3. Well-Being / Burnout**

Although the concept of well-being has a long history, going back to the ancient Greeks, it is not an easy idea to define. There is certainly no widely agreed definition that all psychologists would accept.

Mental health is an integral and essential component of health. The World Health Organization (WHO) constitution declares: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." An important implication of this definition is that mental health is more than just the absence of mental disorders or disabilities. Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, he can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.

A range of social, psychological and biological factors drive physical health, mental health and well-being, which is a resource that allows people to lead individually, socially, and economically productive lives. Mental health is fundamental to our collective and individual ability as humans to think, interact with each other, earn a living and enjoy life. Given this, "the promotion, protection and restoration of mental health can be regarded as a vital concern of individuals, communities and societies throughout the world" (WHO, 2018).

Decades of research evidence has reinforced the major role that work plays in determining physical health and psychological well-being. When people are higher on psychological well-being their organization do better. Healthy workplace are those in which individuals flourish and organizations prosper (Cartwright & Cooper, 2009).

The few articles about burnout appeared in the mid-1970s in the United States. Burnout first emerged as a social problem, not as a scholarly construct. Thus the initial conception of burnout was shaped by pragmatic concerns rather than academic ones. This is given that practitioners are more likely to be dealing directly with the problem of burnout on a daily basis (Marek, Schaufeli & Maslach, 2017).

Burnout is a metaphor that is commonly used to describe a state of mental weariness. When burnout occurs, the individual experiences a depletion of energy which leaves the individual emotionally drained and withdrawn.

Burnout has been defined as a psychological syndrome which consists of three components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and feelings of decreased accomplishments (Maslach, 1982), later renamed as exhaustion, cynicism and inefficacy. Exhaustion, refers to being fatigued, drained and worn out with loss of energy, feeling, concern, interest or spirit. The individual may experience low morale, a sense of inefficiency, reduced productivity and inability to cope, which results in a feeling of decreased personal accomplishment. In an attempt to cope, an individual may demonstrate a negative attitude toward others, irritability, detached concern, or distance himself or herself from others. The individual may become apathetic, rigid and cynical; and lose concern or empathy for other people. The individual may feel that actions no longer mean anything or make a difference. Thus, the individual may experience a decline in feelings of competence or successful achievement on the job (Maslach, 1982).

Pines & Aronson (1988) defined burnout as a state of exhaustion—emotional, mental, and physical—resulting from long-term exposure to emotionally demanding situations. Although its intensity, duration, frequency and consequences may vary, burnout always has these three basic components: emotional, mental and physical.

*Emotional exhaustion* primarily involves feelings of helplessness, hopelessness and entrapment. In extreme cases, these feelings can lead to emotional breakdown or serious thoughts about suicide. In some people the emotional exhaustion of burnout causes uncontrollable crying; in others it causes paralyzing depression. People who reach this stage often don't care anymore about their goals or the people they interact with. Family and friends become just one more demand upon them, in terms of time and their flexibility to this apparent pressure.

*Mental exhaustion* is characterized by the development of negative attitudes towards one's self, work and life itself. People who burn out also develop negative attitudes toward others. They often discover in themselves a coldness and nastiness they never knew existed.

*Physical exhaustion* is characterized by low energy, chronic fatigue and weakness. People in the process of burnout report increased susceptibility to illness, frequent attacks of virus or flu, headaches, nausea, muscle tension in shoulders and neck, back pains, and psychosomatic complaints. Changes in eating habits involve both eating too much and eating too little. It is thought to be experienced as a "gradual erosion" of the spirit resulting from the effects of daily chronic stressors at work (Pines & Aronson, 1988).

Originally, burnout was assumed to occur in individuals in the human service professions, for instance in health care, social services, or education. These individuals seemed to experience a common set of symptoms because of their intense relationship to people in need or in trouble (Maslach, 1982; Pines & Aronson, 1988). However, research and practice have demonstrated that burnout is experienced by individuals in a variety of occupations, but it is especially evident among human service professionals and managers (Pines & Aronson, 1988). Therefore, the concept of burnout and its measurement were broadened to include all employees and not only those who deal with people. The focus on the susceptibility of managers to burnout comes from the likelihood that the pressures and "person" dependencies experienced by managers are similar to those experienced by human service professionals. The concept of burnout was then broadened and defined as a crisis in one's relationship with people at work (Pines & Aronson, 1988).

Schaufeli & Salanova (2014) agree that burnout is a multidimensional construct that includes a stress reaction (exhaustion or fatigue), a mental distancing response (depersonalization or cynicism) and a negative belief (lack of accomplishment or efficacy). These three components are related: Exhaustion results from exposure to chronic stressors at work (e.g. work overload, emotional demands, interpersonal conflicts). In an attempt to prevent further energy depletion, employees distance themselves mentally from their work by developing depersonalizing or cynical attitudes. In doing so, their work performance is likely to diminish and, consequently, they may feel incompetent and inefficacious.

The etiology of burnout has been attributed to stresses engendered in the work environment (Maslach, 1982; Pines & Aronson, 1988). Certain person-related and organizational variables have also been found to influence burnout among some occupations. However, not all individuals in a given occupation will experience burnout. Individual factors help to determine how quickly an individual will burnout, to what degree, and what consequences the individual may suffer as a result of burnout (Pines, 1982).

In several workshops managed by Pines & Aronson (1989) for corporate managers, they noticed that the stresses mentioned by the managers were very closely related to their hopes and expectations to their work. More precisely, the stress involved frustrated hopes and expectations. The managers expected success at work to do something of great value to give their life a sense of meaning. When such a frustration is chronic, and especially when it leads to failure, the result is burnout.

Maslach & Leiter (2016) present that, initially the focus was on the relationships between the three dimensions of burnout, described in sequential stages. Exhaustion was assumed to happen first, as a result of high overload, then this would engender detachment from the people and the job (depersonalization or cynicism), followed by the feeling of inadequacy and failure (reduced personal accomplishment or professional inefficacy). More recently, burnout has been based on theories about job stress, and the notion of imbalance leading to strain. Two development models of the demands-resources imbalance have, then, emerged: The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, Schaufeli & Taris, 2014) and the Conservation of Resources (COR) model (Hobfoll, 1989). The JD-R model emphasizes the notion that burnout arises when

individuals experience incessant job demands and do not have adequate resources available to deal with those demands, and the COR model assumes that burnout arises as a result of insistent threats to available resources. Individuals make great effort to maintain the resources they value when they perceive they are being threatened. The loss or even the imminent loss of resources may intensify burnout. The authors also explain that a different variation of an imbalance model of burnout is the Areas of Worklife (AW) model (Leiter & Maslach, 2003), which formulates job stressors in terms of person-job imbalances or mismatches, but identifies six key areas in which these imbalances take place: workload, control, reward, community, fairness and values: The greater is the mismatch between the person and the job, the greater is the possibility of burnout.

Attention is to be given to the area of values, which is impacted by the cognitive-emotional power of job goals and expectations. People are initially attracted to their jobs for their values, which are their ideals and motivations. Such values create a motivating connection between the employee and the organization that goes beyond the purely exchange of time for money. When individual values are not aligned with organizational ones, employees may feel they are trading-off the work they want to do for the work they have to do, and this can aggravate burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2016).

Now that burnout has been introduced, the following section will review the impact that leaders may have on the expatriate's well-being/burnout.

### **2.3.1. Effects of leadership on expatriate well-being/burnout**

Organizations have a broad responsibility to ensure that employees are not at risk of injury or made ill by their work which is reflected in the growth in Health and Safety legislation across the industrialized countries. More and more, organizations are being encouraged to regularly assess the physical and psychosocial risks that present a potential risk to employee health and to take steps to ensure that individuals are not injured or made ill by their work. However, in adopting a wider more encompassing concept of health, there is much that organizations can do to intensify the meaning of work and improve the well-being of their employees. Leadership and management have a key role in determining employee psychological well-being (Cartwright & Cooper, 2009).

Line managers have a central role in building and sustaining an enthusiastic workforce and management processes, intended to ensure that employee's behavior is aligned with the goals of the organization. Organizations and their leaders need people with a positive perspective in order to respond to the changes they want to promote and to accomplish the goals they have, otherwise they will not produce a positive reaction from their subordinates and will therefore be less efficient. The behavior of the line managers and leaders in the organization is important to enhancing and sustaining high levels of psychological well-being. The line manager relationship is the most important relationship for anyone in an organization. The Clemmer Group (2016) declares that when people leave an organization over one-third cite their line manager as a key reason for wanting to leave. The line manager is the link between the goals and mission of the organization and the day-to-day behavior of the employee.

As far as psychological well-being is concerned, the core issue in this relationship is the success of the leader in managing the extent to which the employee is challenged and supported. Feeling suitably challenged and being able to reach goals is a critical factor in building psychological well-being and self-confidence, both within the workplace and elsewhere. However, when challenge is too great or the goals are really unachievable people need support. Balancing challenge and support is a core, perhaps the most important managerial skill (Cartwright & Cooper, 2009).

Burke (2006) lists a number of “derailers” that have obvious consequences for the psychological well-being of others. Examples include “an insensitive, abrasive, or bullying style, “micromanagement”, “intemperate” leaders, and “callous” leaders. Also, included in the review are many factors with less obvious but potentially important connections to psychological well-being such as “inability to take a long-term perspective,” “aloofness,” and “being rigid or difficult to influence-”

In the so-called strain coping mode, the maximum effort budget is further increased to accommodate the high level of demand. The target performance is maintained, but only at the expense of an increase in compensatory costs that are manifested psychologically (e.g. fatigue and irritability) as well as physiologically (e.g. increased excretion of cortisol). An alternative response to excessive demands is to adopt a so-called passive coping mode, which involves downward

adjustment of performance targets, for instance by reducing levels of accuracy and speed. By leaving the maximum effort budget as its usual level, further psychological and physiological costs are prevented, however, at the expense of performance targets. In extreme cases, complete disengagement from the pursuit of task goals may be observed (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Leadership has been referred to as one of many possible sources of stress at the workplace, but the importance of its impact varies across studies. Passive or active management-by-exception has also been found to create increased levels of emotional exhaustion among subordinates. These are cases when the leader applies a correction or punishment as a result of unacceptable performance (passive) or when the leader actively monitors the work and uses corrective methods to ensure the work is completed and meets accepted standards (Nyberg, Bernin & Theorell, 2005). The authors also refer to one study which showed that when athletes perceived that their coaches provided good social support, positive feedback, democratic decisions and less autocratic style, there were more positive psychological outcomes, such as perceived competence and enjoyment, and less negative ones, such as anxiety and burnout.

Leaders have an impact on their subordinates' wellbeing and burnout and their leadership can also be impacted by such outcomes. Burnout has been associated with several forms of negative reactions such as job dissatisfaction, low organizational commitment, absenteeism, intention to leave the job and turnover (Maslach & Leiter, 2016)

As mentioned before, the experience of expatriation can be in and of itself a source of stress and challenge for individuals. Therefore, we can assume that expatriates are at greater risk to experience some level of burnout. This study focus on leaders and their role in mitigating such risks and in promoting expatriate engagement.

## 2.4. Leader-Follower Relationships: Dissimilarity as an Issue

Several leadership theories emphasize leadership from the perspective of the leader (e.g., trait approach, skills approach, and style approach) or the follower and the context (e.g., situational leadership, contingency theory, and path-goal theory). Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory takes still another approach and addresses leadership as a process that is centered on the interactions between leaders and followers. Effective leadership processes occur when both leaders and followers can develop mature relationships that allow access to the many benefits that these relationships bring (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991). The leader-member relationship becomes the central concept in the leadership process. Defining leadership as a process means that it is not a trait or characteristic that resides in the leader, but rather a transactional event that occurs between the leader and the followers. The process implies that a leader affects and is affected by followers. It emphasizes that leadership is not a linear, one-way event, but rather an interactive event (Northouse, 2018).

While LMX per se is not the focus of this study, the literature on the topic is relevant to analyze the challenges that may affect the dynamics between expatriates and their leaders. LMX theory is also rooted in the concept that “each leader-follower relationship within a group is unique, varies in quality and should be studied as a dyad” (Armand *et al.*, 2011). Thus, the same leader may have poor interpersonal relations with some subordinates and open and trusting relations with others. The relationships within these dyads may be of a predominantly in-group or out-group nature. Lunenburg (2010) exposes that leaders tend to invite members of the in-group to participate in decision making and give them added responsibility. The leader allows some flexibility in the role of these in-group members; in effect, the leader and key followers negotiate the follower’s responsibilities in a non-contractual exchange relationship. Basically, an in-group member is elevated to the unofficial role of “trusted subordinate.”

In-group members in many aspects appreciate the benefits of the extent to which they can make decisions and exercise control over their job (influence in decision making, open communications, and confidence for the member). In this case the follower typically responds with greater than required expenditures of effort and time, the assumption of greater responsibility, and commitment to the

success of the organization. In reverse, members of the out-group are supervised within the narrow limits of their formal employment contract. Leaders enforce the authority by the implicit contract between the member and the organization. The leader provides the support and assistance assigned by duty but will not go beyond these limits. Basically, the leader is being influenced by legitimate authority and practicing a contractual exchange with such followers, rather than true leadership. In return, out-group members will essentially do what they have to do and little beyond that (Lunenburg, 2010).

Similar to the fact that leaders have different values and motivations, resulting in different leadership styles, followers have different needs, benefitting from different types of leader. That is, leadership effectiveness should be contingent upon the factors within the situation, specifically, upon the fit with the follower. The fit between leaders and followers can be crucial in enhancing or mitigating the effects of leadership practices on employees' attitudes and behaviors. It is important to highlight that the leader-follower relationship has not only consequences to the leader, but also to the expatriates and to the company.

#### **2.4.1. Challenges of Leader-Follower Dissimilarity**

Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory describes how leaders develop exchange relationships over time with different subordinates. A favorable exchange relationship will be more likely when a subordinate is perceived to be competent and reliable, but also more *similar* to the leader regarding values and attitudes (Yukl, 1994). Similarity between individuals promotes attraction and mutual liking. Individuals tend to be more comfortable in dyadic interactions with partners who share similar interests, values, and attitudes. In work contexts, perceived similarity on work issues, such as how to best accomplish tasks, as well as nonwork topics enhances communications that are critical for developing strong relationships.

Contrarily, differences between leaders and followers may create barriers, disinterest, distance, and interpersonal conflict, thereby leading to conditions that are unfavorable for high-quality interpersonal relationships. Although "actual" similarity is positively related to attraction and relationship quality, "perceptions"

of similarity are relatively more important with respect to attraction and high-quality LMX relationships (Dulebohn *et al.*, 2012).

Followers also consider the extent to which the leader appears to be similar to them in terms of values, beliefs, and other qualities they consider important (e.g. religion, gender, ethnic background). Followers who identify strongly with the group or organization are likely to have more trust in a leader who appears to be “one of them” and will make more favorable attributions about the leader (Anan *et al.*, 2011; Dulebohn *et al.*, 2012). In addition, follower beliefs about desirable leader qualities are influenced by gender role expectations, ethnic stereotypes, and cultural values. The same type of leader behavior may be evaluated more or less favorably depending on the identity of the leader (e.g. male vs female) and the cultural values of followers (e.g. individualism vs. collectivism).

Anan *et al.* (2011) observed that one of the determinants of LMX is perceived similarity and showed that individuals with similar leader-member exchange quality reported greater social closeness with similar peers. Dulebohn and colleagues (2012) identified that followers perceived similarity with leaders was positively related to follower perceptions of good leader-member exchange. Furthermore, perceived similarities between the leader and the follower seems to lead to greater liking of subordinates and higher quality in leader-member exchanges (Lunenburg, 2010).

As mentioned, theoretical assumptions and empirical findings have supported the similarity-attraction theory whereby persons who perceive themselves as similar to each other will be inclined to like each other, thereby enhancing their working relationship. Previous research has confirmed that individuals are more likely to have better relationships with those who are similar to themselves (Barbuto & Giffort, 2012).

Living as expatriates can be exciting and present a great opportunity for career advancement and global business exposure, but it can also be an emotionally difficult transition, mainly when there is a natural difference between the expatriates and the leaders. Considering that similarity between the leader and the follower is a lever for the good relationship between them, and understanding that expatriates face a totally different environment, culture and behaviors while moving to a foreign location, this environment of the expatriation may pose

challenges to the relationship between the leader and the expatriate, since “similarity” is a rare word to be used during international assignments. Based on these premises, we wonder which leader attributes can foster high-quality relationships between the leader and the expatriate? This work aims to verify if specific leader attributes, i.e. cultural intelligence and focus on purpose, can positively impact the expatriate assignments, as well as their levels of engagement and burnout.

The following section will discuss how leaders can manage in a multicultural context.

## **2.5. Leadership in a multicultural context**

Since World War II, globalization has been advancing throughout the world and has created the need for leaders to become competent in cross-cultural awareness and practice. Therefore, today’s leaders need to acquire a challenging set of competencies if they intend to be effective in present day global societies. According to Adler and Bartholomew (1992), global leaders need to understand business, political and cultural environments worldwide. They need to learn the perspectives, tastes, trends and technologies of many cultures, to be able to work simultaneously with people from different cultures, to adapt to living and communicating in other cultures, and, above all, to relate to people from other cultures from a position of equality rather than superiority (Adler & Bartholomew, 1992, p. 53).

Related to culture are the terms *multicultural and diversity*. Multicultural implies an approach or a system that takes more than one culture into account. It refers to the existence of multiple cultures such as African, American, Asian, European, and Middle Eastern. Multicultural can also refer to a set of subcultures defined by race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or age. *Diversity* refers to the existence of different cultures or ethnicities within a group or an organization (Northouse, 2018).

Culture has been the focus of many studies across a variety of disciplines. In the specific area of culture and leadership, the GLOBE studies (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness research program) and the studies by House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, and Gupta (2004) offer the strongest body of findings to date, as published in the 800-page book: *Culture, Leadership, and Organizations: The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies*. These studies have generated a very large number of findings on the relationship between culture and leadership.

The overall goal of the GLOBE Project was to determine how people from different cultures viewed leadership. They wanted to find out how differences in cultures were related to differences in approaches to leadership. Leadership refers to what people see in others when they are exhibiting leadership behaviors. One of the most interesting outcomes from the Globe project was the identification of a list of leadership attributes that were universally endorsed as characteristics that facilitate outstanding leadership.

Based on the list of endorsed attributes, a portrait can be drawn of a leader whom almost everyone would see as exceptional. Clearly, people from most cultures view good leadership as based on integrity, charisma, and interpersonal ability. The other way around, they see bad leadership emerging from leaders who are self-focused, dictatorial, and asocial. These lists of positive and negative attributes provide a useful picture of how people around the world conceive leadership.

As per Caligiuri & Tarique (2012), the three competencies unique to leadership in a global or multicultural context are: 1) reduced ethnocentrism or valuing cultural differences, 2) cultural flexibility or adaptation, and 3) tolerance of ambiguity, and each of them is described in greater detail below:

*Ethnocentrism* Ethnocentric individuals interpret and evaluate other's behavior using their own standards and make little effort to modify their own behavior to suit different cultural values. Ethnocentric tendencies inhibit the individual in coping effectively with new social norm and values. Ethnocentric attitudes are especially damaging to the development and maintenance of cross-cultural interpersonal interactions. A global leader's ethnocentrism can harm intergroup relations with co-workers, clients, and subordinates and reduce success in tasks where a locally-responsive approach would be more appropriate. As global business requires greater collaboration and coordination among people

from different cultures, reducing ethnocentrism is a worthwhile developmental goal for future global leaders.

*Cultural flexibility* is defined as the capacity to replace activities appreciated in one's home country with existing, and usually different activities in the host country. The presence of greater cultural flexibility can improve global leader's effectiveness when they are living and working internationally for extended periods of time (i.e., on expatriate assignments). Cultural flexibility remains an important competence for all those who are working in multicultural situations: global leaders will often need to substitute their preferred way of doing things with a culturally different way. Thus, increasing cultural flexibility is an important development goal, especially among people who may manage expatriates in the future or accept international assignments themselves.

*Tolerance for ambiguity* is the ability to manage ambiguous, new, different, and unpredictable situations. People with greater tolerance for ambiguity are more likely to effectively manage the stress presented by uncertain environments and to be more receptive to change and rapidly changing conditions. Given the many uncertainties and the complexity of the global economy, it is appropriate for global leadership programs to seek to develop certain tolerance for ambiguity.

Caligiuri & Tarique (2012) believe that three dynamic cross-cultural competencies should collectively produce a repertoire of behaviors in leaders related to their success in global leadership activities and that multiple cross-cultural experiences will increase individual's cross-cultural competencies (i.e., reduced ethnocentrism, increased cultural flexibility, and greater tolerance of ambiguity) and, in turn, these competencies will improve their success in global leadership activities.

### **2.5.1. Leadership and Cultural Intelligence**

Traditionally, the study of intelligence focused mainly on the academic or cognitive factor of intelligence. Later, multiple intelligence theory proposed other forms of intelligence, nonacademic ones, including the capability to adapt to others (Gardner, 1983). Interpersonal intelligence, emotional intelligence and social intelligence are examples of other forms of intelligence.

With the aim to understand why some individuals are more effective than others in culturally diverse settings, Earley and Ang (2003) developed the multidimensional construct of cultural intelligence.

Cultural intelligence (CQ) is a complementary form of intelligence that explains adaptability to diversity and cross-cultural interactions. In sum, CQ differs from other types of intelligence, such as interpersonal intelligence and emotional intelligence, because it focuses specifically on settings and interactions characterized by cultural diversity (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008). Cultural intelligence has gained increasing attention from researchers due to its contemporary relevance to globalization, international management and workforce diversification.

Lisak & Erez (2015) state that most of the research on leadership and culture has assumed a cross-cultural perspective to examine differences and similarities in leadership characteristics across cultures and that this approach may not work in multicultural teams, where leaders must manage a culturally diverse workforce. Hence, global leadership research in particular should try to identify the personal characteristics and behaviors of leaders that enable them to effectively lead followers who are culturally different and frequently located in different geographical areas. The authors also examined three global characteristics of emerging leaders on multicultural teams, by analyzing *cultural intelligence*, *global identity* and *openness to diversity*, and noted that these characteristics enable the global leader to better navigate the team in the global context.

*Cultural intelligence* (CQ) is defined as an individual's capability to function effectively in culturally diverse settings (Earley & Ang, 2003; Ang & Van Dyne, 2008); it pertains to the cognitive aspects of cultural awareness and cultural knowledge, as well as to the motivation to adapt to various cultural contexts and to behave accordingly. It is culture-free and refers to a general set of capabilities that is relevant to situations that are characterized by cultural diversity (Earley & Ang, 2003).

*Global identity* pertains to a person's self-concept, and as such, it reflects an individual's identity as shaped by a sense of belongingness to the global work context. Members of multicultural teams in global organizations who share a common interest to accomplish a team goal are motivated to overcome cultural barriers and maintain positive relationships with other team members. This sense of belongingness to others with diverse cultural backgrounds who are working in the same global organization reflects a person's global identity.

*Openness to cultural diversity* is the degree of receptivity to perceived differences, it reflects the basic attitude of the individual toward diverse others. Individuals with high levels of openness to cultural diversity view differences as positive and are open to learning from dissimilar others and make an effort to understand different perspectives. In contrast, individuals low on this dimension regard differences as negative and are not open to understanding dissimilar others. Thus, individuals who are open to cultural diversity are motivated to actively seek new cultural experiences, they are curious about other national cultures and they are non-judgmental about other cultural behaviors and expectations. These individuals are willing to adopt and express behaviors that indicate and harmonize with tolerance, they respect dissimilar individuals, and they are motivated to reduce the possible negative effects of cultural misunderstandings. Openness to cultural diversity serves as an important intercultural competency among multicultural team members.

Multicultural team members who are culturally intelligent, who perceive themselves as members of the global work context and who accept their team members diversity, are more likely to emerge as leaders of these teams than other team members (Lisak & Erez, 2015). Therefore, this study focus on cultural intelligence as an important antecedent to drive positive expatriate experiences and attitudes.

The knowledge about culture can help leaders understand their own cultural biases and preferences and understanding their own preferences is the first step in recognizing that people in other cultures might have different preferences (Northouse, 2016).

Global leaders have an impact on the global community on their thinking attitudes and behaviors, to work together toward a common vision and common goals and they are contributing significantly to the accomplishment of company's goals and its success (Lisak & Erez, 2015).

In addition to cultural intelligence, purpose-oriented leadership might also have an important role in mitigating burnout and promoting engagement, as discussed in the next section.

## **2.6. The role of purpose-oriented leadership**

The current business environment poses challenges which are unique, such as competitive pressures, rapidly emerging technologies, increasing regulations, threat of terrorism, recent natural disasters, climate chaos, conflict zones, refugees, changes in the economy, and the worldwide movement toward globalization. At the same time, consumers have new expectations and the new generations are aiming for more meaning in their work. Companies suffer from a decline of trust on themselves and there is a wider debate about the role that business should pay in the society and this is reshaping expectations of organizations (EY Beacon Institute, 2016).

Business today needs a new paradigm because "Business as usual" is just not working any more. Business distrust had never been so high and many employees, customers, and other stakeholders of businesses are disconnected from the companies they interact with, and at the same time that the companies' reputation is deteriorating, the reach and impact of business in the world is growing. Business today has greater power than ever before to enhance or diminish overall well-being in society (Sisodia, 2009). The author considers that a new approach to business should emerge, one that reflects rising levels of consciousness among customers and employees, as well as multiple and deepening challenges facing the world today. Business should get on the right side of society rather than continuing to add to societal burdens, as is too often the case. A conscious approach to business is based on the adoption of a higher purpose that transcends profits, with an orientation towards the stakeholder rather than to the shareholder, and with a conscious, service-oriented leadership (Sisodia, 2009).

Purpose is a far more familiar concept now than it was just a few years ago. Recognizing that there is no universal working definition for purpose, in the business sense, the EY Beacon Institute (2016) describes purpose as “an aspirational reason for being that is grounded in humanity and inspires a call to action“. Purpose often means slightly different things to different companies, in the same way that people define their individual purposes in slightly different ways. Nonetheless, the common theme is that business can — and many say should — create value for its full set of stakeholders.

Purpose, that is defined by the common good provides a basis for organizations and its stakeholders to reflect on the scope of business activities and the implicit contract they have with their employees, communities, and society. Purpose provides an overarching framework to substantiate the need for businesses in society, and to amplify the positive impact they generate in the communities where they operate (Hollensbe et al., 2014).

The spectrum of purpose includes the humanistic focus on well-being in the workplace — helping employees thrive and rethinking notions of meaningful work. At the macro level, these conversations fall under the broader banner of “inclusive capitalism” or “conscious capitalism”, movement led by John Mackey (Mackey & Sisodia, 2014) and which concepts have increased in strength since the 2008 financial crisis. It recognizes that companies can not only “do good while doing well” but can truly act to maximize value for everyone — shareholders, employees, customers and society as a whole — over the long term. The movement believes that “while making money is essential for the vitality and sustainability of a business, it is not the only or even the most important reason a business exists. Conscious businesses focus on their purpose beyond profit and that by focusing on its deeper purpose, a conscious business inspires, engages and energizes its stakeholders (Mackey & Sisodia, 2014). Purpose is a force for and a response to transformation (EY Beacon Institute, 2016).

Whether they recognize it expressly or not, most companies already have a clear purpose. Though the word may have fallen out of common usage in the business sense for several decades, many examples of corporate purpose were found dating back to the 1940s or well before. Its re-emergence marks perhaps both the impact of new forces and the desire to develop a more agile response to the demands business faces today. The concept of a general purpose became

unpopular in the 1970s and 1980s as the credo of management's responsibility to maximize shareholder value spread. But during the 1980s, purposeful ideas began to reappear into business conversations. Initially, this took the form of corporate social responsibility (CSR), with many business leaders drawn to the idea that their company could have a positive impact on society and the environment. In more recent years, the concepts of sustainability, corporate social impact, blended value, shared value and the "triple bottom line" elaborated on this view of business, giving companies new ways to think about how they run their business and build trusted relationships while performing well (EY Beacon Institute, 2016).

Over the past five years, there's been an explosion of interest in purpose-driven leadership. Academics argue persuasively that an executive's most important role is to be a steward of the organization's purpose. Business experts make the case that purpose is a key to exceptional performance, while psychologists describe it as the pathway to greater well-being.

Doctors have even found that people with purpose in their lives are less predisposed to disease. Purpose is increasingly being proclaimed as the key to navigating the volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world we face today, where strategy is ever changing and few decisions are right or wrong (Craig & Snook, 2014).

In a research from the EY Beacon Institute with Harvard Business Review Analytics Services (2015), executives at companies said that corporate purpose includes inspiring innovation and positive change, providing employees with a sense of meaning and fulfilment, creating value for the customer, and making a positive impact on their community.

This reflects the growing understanding among scholars that business leaders everywhere are revising the social contract with society. The report cites a statement from Marc Ventresca, associate professor of strategy and innovation, University of Oxford's Saïd Business School, who said "Corporate leaders today have the challenge of envisioning how to renew the corporate-society contract in the twenty-first century, such that firms contribute in distinct, relevant ways to societal well-being" (2015, p. 8).

An editorial from the *Academy of Management Journal* (2014) calls for greater attention to the (re)discovery of purpose. The authors identify themes that link purpose to larger values that promote the well-being of society and individuals within and outside of business. Although adding shareholder value might be seen as part of the purpose of most businesses, shareholder value might be seen as a legitimate expectation of one segment of society; from a broader society perspective, purpose would also include broader goals such as “making a difference,” or “improving lives,” or “reducing harm.” (Hollensbe et al., 2014).

Managing purely for profit still is the most common way of doing business, managing with purpose gives a new perspective to it, which is an opportunity for a change in mindset and the signature of new contracts with society (EY Beacon Institute, 2016).

Otto Scharmer (2009, 2016) urges the leaders to suspend superficiality, judgmental attitudes, and preconceptions. The author encourages leaders to deeply explore the self and unravel the ‘blind spot’ of leadership to reveal the true source of the inner self.

Mercer’s 2018 Global Talent Trends Report exposes that one of the main trends is “Working with Purpose”. The report shows how the employee value proposition (EVP) has been developing over the last years. On the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was a contract of loyalty with focus on basic needs such as: Salary, benefits and security. Today there is a contract of commitment, with focus on psychological needs such as achievement, camaraderie and equity. The next step is a contract of prosperity, with focus on growth needs such as purpose, meaning and impact. The report also states that 75% of employees who prosper have three times more tendency to work for companies that have a clear purpose. However, only 33% of companies present a differentiated EVP (Employee value proposition) for having a mission guided by purpose.

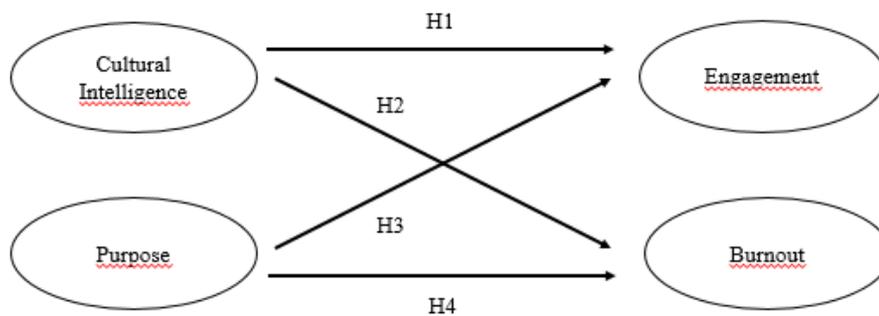
A focus on purpose acknowledges the interdependence of business and society-one cannot flourish without the other. It engages exploration of how corporate purpose and the values that drive it might best be brought together in the service of society. Further, it assumes that business success can be intertwined with the success of the society in a way that allows business to thrive (Hollensbe et al., 2014).

Although the well-known concerns of profit and loss still dominate the daily agenda, many business leaders are now looking for a deeper meaning. They want to build a business that exists not only to serve their stakeholders, but also to contribute to something valuable to society (EY Beacon Institute, 2016).

## 2.7. Conceptual Model

As seen so far, leaders have an important role in contributing to the expatriate's well-being and helping avoid a potential burnout. This study proposes that the cultural intelligence of leaders and their ability to lead oriented by a purpose are important leader attributes to those effect, ideas that are summarized in Figure 2.

The conceptual framework consists of four main elements. The first two elements on the left consist of two leadership attributes that may influence expatriates' outcomes. The other two elements on the right refer to outcomes that expatriates may feel during their international assignment. According to the model, certain leadership attributes may influence expatriate's outcomes.



**Figure 2.** The conceptual model

### Research Hypotheses

H1: Leader cultural intelligence is positively associated with expatriate's engagement

H2: Purpose-oriented leadership is positively associated with expatriate's engagement.

H3: Leader cultural intelligence is negatively associated with expatriate's burnout

H4: Purpose-oriented leadership is negatively associated with expatriate's burnout

In the next chapter, the methodology of this study is described.

## **3 Research Methodology**

### **3.1. Research Design**

To carry out the current study, a survey research design was applied in order to assess demographic and organizational characteristics of the study sample, the sample's perceptions on leader attributes and the sample's self-reported expatriate outcomes.

The study used an online survey that was administered to a sample of long-term expatriates, who worked at organizations in different geographic locations and in diverse work environments. The survey was developed and hosted in the Qualtrics web site, remaining active for 5 months, while participants were being recruited. Confidentiality was assured by direct and anonymous access. The entire survey was in English.

Participants were given the informed consent that contained the link to the survey at the bottom. They agreed with continuing with the survey by clicking on the link, thereby opening the questionnaire. As shown in Attachments 6.1, the survey consisted of five sections: in two sections, expatriates evaluated their immediate leader's cultural intelligence and purpose-oriented leadership and two other sections assessed their levels of engagement and burnout. The final section of the survey was comprised of background information.

### **3.2. Instruments and Measures**

In order to conduct this study, all the variables were measured by participant responses to questions on a one to five or one to seven-point Likert-type scales. The specific measures are described below, along with the results of calculation of Cronbach alpha coefficients for the various measures. When a measure is described as having dimensions, the dimensions (items averaged) were used as indicators for their construct (described under "Analysis"). Otherwise, items were averaged into an overall scale score.

### ***Cultural Intelligence***

To assess cultural intelligence (CQ), the Cultural Intelligence Scale of Ang *et al.* (2006, 2007) was used. This 20-item scale assesses cultural intelligence on the following four sub-scales: metacognitive, cognitive, motivational and behavioral. The CQS was answered using a 7-point Likert-type scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 7=Strongly Agree). In this study, the total score was used on two sub-scales, motivational and behavioral, as the CQ measure: Motivational, which is the level of the leader interest, persistence and confidence to function in culturally diverse settings (Ang *et al.*, 2008) and behavioral, which is the extent of the leader flexibility and appropriate use of a broad set of behaviors and skills during multicultural interactions. (Ang *et al.*, 2008).

### ***Purpose***

For Leader Purpose, Pearce and Sims (2002) leadership questionnaire was used. Vision and Idealism have been selected from the six leadership factors (Performance expectations, Challenge to status quo, Inspirational communication, and Intellectual stimulation, Vision and Idealism), as these two dimensions focus on purpose-oriented aspects of transformational leaders (House, 1977; Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985).

### ***Work engagement***

For work engagement UWES 9 (Utrecht Work Engagement Scale), Schaufeli *et al* (2002) was selected. This 9-item measure assesses engagement on three dimensions: Vigor, Dedication and Absorption. An aggregate score of the subscales was used in the analyses, since a 1-factor solution of the measure has acceptable goodness of fit (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002)

### ***Burnout***

For burnout, the Burnout Measure (Pines & Aronson, 1988) was used. This measure assesses physical and emotional states by asking respondents to rate how frequently they experience 21 stress-related occurrences. The Burnout Measure focuses on exhaustion, shown to be a central aspect of burnout.

### **3.3. Participant Selection**

This study involved employees that work in several large companies that operate in different industries. Initially, two professional Human Resource groups that manage expatriates were contacted: *Grupo de Designados Internacionais (GDI)* and *Grupo de Administração de Expatriados (GADEX)*. These groups are composed of more than 35 organizations in sectors such as pharmaceutical, heavy engineering, oil and gas, consumer goods, IT, electronics, telecommunications, and chemicals. Companies which are members of these Groups are: Airswift, Bayer, Cargill, Chevron, Dow, Gas Natural, GSK, LafargeHolcin, Loreal, Michelin, Ocyan, Petrobras, Praxair, Repsol, Shell, SBM Offshore, Subsea 7, TechnipFMC, Telefonica/Vivo, WEG, among others. IBM, Merckgroup Model, MCD, OilStates, Syngenta and Vale were also contacted for the survey.

The web-based survey was presented to company representatives that participate in the professional groups, during a meeting. Using their contact information, an e-mail was sent to the HR managers in their companies, along with an URL survey link, requesting they forwarded the link to their expatriates. In some cases, expatriates also received an email from the HR contact in their company supporting the study and encouraging participation. In the second step, snowball sampling was also applied to contact additional expatriates.

This survey included an explanation of the goal of the study, emphasized that participation was voluntary and that their individual responses would be kept strictly confidential. Additionally, participants were allowed to leave the study at any point where they felt uncomfortable.

### **3.4. Data Collection**

Data collection began in June 2018 by sending an *Informed Consent and Invitation Letter* by email to Corporate HR representatives of the GDI and GADEX groups and later to other expatriates (See Appendix 1). The letter of invitation explained the purpose of the study, assured confidentiality of the responses, asked participants to voluntarily participate in the study, and provided the survey link upon voluntary consent to participate. As invitations were initially sent to corporate HR representatives, approximately two weeks after the first

email, a reminder email was sent to HR asking for their support in sending out the survey. After this phase, other contacts were made directly to recommended expatriates.

Expatriates were given information regarding the study and by clicking on the link were directed to the online survey which was designed by the researcher so that participants could complete the five measurement tools for the study at one sitting in an online format.

After enough participants completed the surveys (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2012), the data was extracted from the survey website and analyzed. Data was kept and stored via the online survey and data collection systems. This online system had security measures in place that ensured the information concerning each participant member was kept secure.

## 4 Results and Analysis

### 4.1. Demographic and Organizational Characteristics of the Sample

From the invitations to participate that were e-mailed to more than 40 Human Resources leaders requesting they sent the survey out to their organizations' expatriates, 112 participants submitted responses. The participants worked at various organizations that were headquartered in different countries and operated in a variety of global industries. While 154 people accessed the survey tool, 112 expatriates submitted completed questionnaires and 42 of these respondents (27%) were excluded because of incomplete responses. As a result, all subsequent results for this study were conducted on the final sample of 112 participants.

Participants comprising the final sample were managers (52%) and professionals (48%). The average age of the participants was 43 years and the sample consisted of respondents from an age group varying between 26 and 61 years. The average years of professional experience was 19 years and 59 % have gone on a previous assignment. Among the 112 respondents, 61% were male; 47 % held master degrees 31 % held bachelor's degrees, 18 % PhD and 4% other. 69 % were accompanied by the family. Expatriates came from 18 different countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Ecuador, France, Germany, Hungary, Korea, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, UK, Uruguay, USA and Venezuela and were on assignment in 20 different countries (Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Kuwait, Mexico, Netherlands, Panama, Portugal, Switzerland, Thailand, UK, Uruguay, USA). 74 % of expatriates had a different nationality from their leaders and 23% per cent reported to leaders in a different location from theirs.

Age: The average age of the participants was 43 years and the sample consisted of respondents from an age group varying between 26 and 61 years.

Gender. A larger portion of respondents were male (61%).

Education. The respondents' education was significantly distributed (number of participants in the individual categories was found to be unequal) across three education levels. The majority of expatriate's had a Master's degree (47%), showing a high level of education among the respondents. The second largest group was of those with a Bachelor's degree (31%). 18% held a PhD diploma, and 4% reported having other level or type of education.

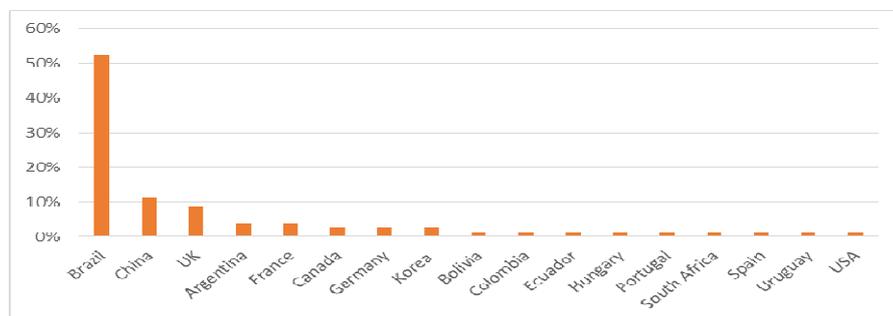
Professional Level. About half of the participants (52%) had managerial level and 48% were professionals. There was a minimum difference between the professional level of the expatriates.

Years of Professional Experience. The average years of expatriate's professional experience was 19 years.

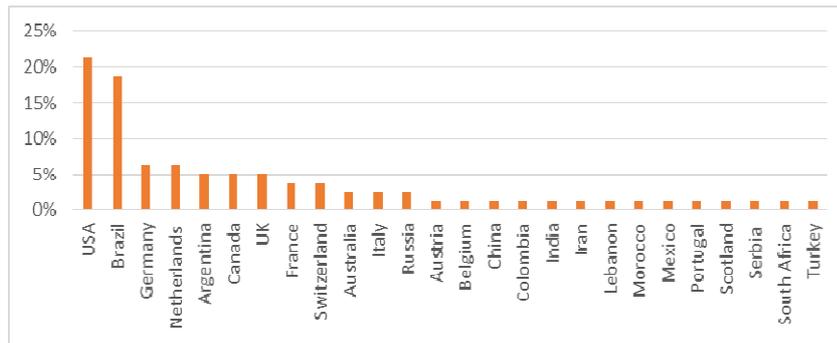
Previous International Assignment (more than 18 months). A little more than half of the expatriates (59%) indicated they had worked abroad on a Long term expatriate assignment before.

Family Accompaniment. About half of the expatriates (52%) reported that they were accompanied by the family.

Country of Origin. As the survey was initiated in Brazil, more than half of the respondents reported Brazil as their country of origin (53%), followed by China (11%) and UK (9%) and reported leader's country of origin as USA (21%), Brazil (19%) and Germany and the Netherlands (6% each).

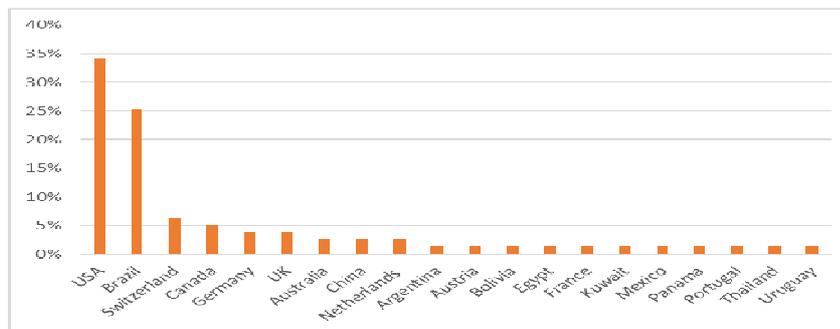


**Figure 3.** Country of origin – Expatriate

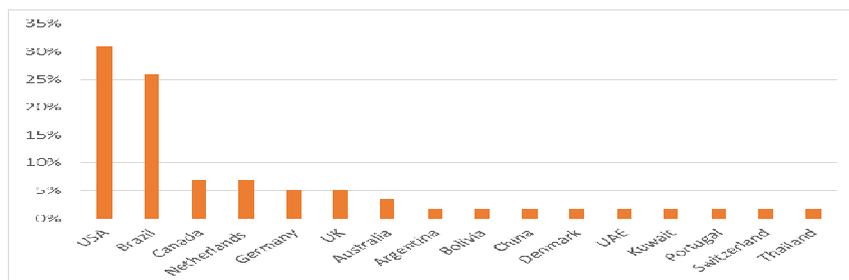


**Figure 4.** Country of origin – Leader

**Work Location.** One third of the expatriates indicated the USA (34%) as the location of their assignments, followed by Brazil (25%), Switzerland (6%) and Canada (5%) and reported leader's work location as USA (31%), Brazil (26%) and Canada and Netherlands (7% each). Some expatriates (23%) reported working in different location from their leaders.



**Figure 5.** Work location– Expatriate



**Figure 6.** Work location– Leader

## 4.2. Reliability of Survey Instruments

Before the five main constructs of the study could be analyzed (i.e., Cultural intelligence, Purpose, Engagement and Burnout), the reliability of the scales that measured each construct was tested.

The alpha coefficient for the five scales is .941, suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency. Note that a reliability coefficient of .70 or higher is considered “acceptable” in most social science research situations (Hair, Black, Babim, Anerson, & Tatham, 2006).

	<b>Cronbach's Alpha <math>\alpha</math></b>
Cultural Intelligence	0,940
Purpose	0,944
Engagement	0,944
Burnout	0,936
	<hr/>
	0,941

**Figure 7.** Reliability coefficient.

### 4.3. Analysis

Table 1 presents means, standard deviations, and Pearson correlations of variables in the study. As shown in the table, both cultural intelligence and purpose were correlated with engagement ( $r=.32$ , and  $r=.53$ , respectively). Cultural intelligence and purpose were both negatively correlated with burnout ( $r=-.43$ , and  $r= -.25$ , respectively). In addition, Engagement was negatively correlated with burnout ( $r= -.50$ ).

**Table 1.** Means, standard deviations and Pearson correlations

Variables	Means	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Age	42,93	9,49							
Gender	1,39	0,49	-0,21						
Years of professional experience	18,78	9,85	0,83**	-0,23 *					
Family accompaniment	1,30	0,46	-0,26	0,18	-0,15				
Cultural Intelligence	4,62	1,35	0,13	0,00	0,32 **	0,19			
Purpose	3,32	0,95	0,07	-0,04	0,21	0,10	0,55 **		
Engagement	5,35	1,22	0,12	-0,30 **	0,20	0,03	0,32 **	0,53 **	
Burnout	2,69	0,82	-0,19	0,34 **	-0,30 **	-0,08	-0,43 **	-0,25 *	-0,50**

Note: N= 112, gender coded "0" Male, "1" Female, two-tailed tests.

\* $p<.05$ , \*\* $p<.01$ .

Hierarchical multiple regression analyses was used to test the hypotheses for the antecedents of expatriate engagement, entering the control variables first and the independent variables of interest next (cultural intelligence and purpose). The combined effect of all predictor explained 48% of the variance of expatriate engagement.

**Table 2.** Hierarchical regression analysis for engagement.

Variables	Model 1		Mode 2	
	Demographic		CI & PURPOSE	
	$\beta$	t	$\beta$	t
Age	-0,118	-0,584	-0,007	-0,041
Gender	-0,286	-2,551 *	-0,266	-3,001 **
Years of professional experience				
	0,250	1,248	0,016	0,097
Family Accompaniment	0,085	0,748	0,023	0,258
CI			0,027	0,257
PURPOSE			0,604	6,040 **
$R^2$		.125		.480
$\Delta R^2$		.125		.355
$\Delta F$		2.67		24.939

Note: N=112; standardized coefficients reported; two-tailed tests

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$

Hypothesis 1 predicted that perceived cultural intelligence would be positively related to engagement but that was not supported ( $\beta = .03$ ).

Hypothesis 2 predicted that perceived purpose would positively affect engagement and was supported ( $\beta = .60$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

Table 3 presents results for the hierarchical regression analysis for burnout. In order to test the remaining hypotheses, first the control variables were entered in the model, followed next by the independent variables of interest (cultural intelligence and purpose), all in separate successive blocks.

**Table 3.** Hierarchical regression analysis for burnout.

Variables	Model 1		Model 2	
	Demographic		CI & PURPOSE	
	$\beta$	t	$\beta$	t
Age	0,090	0,458	0,001	0,003
Gender	0,316	2,896 **	0,308	3,071 **
Years of professional experience	-0,350	-1,818	-0,121	-0,652
Family Accompaniment	-0,167	-1,492	-0,100	-0,969
CI			-0,370	-3,029 **
PURPOSE			-0,084	-0,705
$R^2$		.207		.356
$\Delta R^2$		.207		.149
$\Delta F$		4.570		7.857

Note: N=112; standardized coefficients reported; two-tailed tests

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$

Hypothesis 3 predicted that perceived cultural intelligence would be negatively related to burnout and was supported ( $\beta = -.37$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

Hypothesis 4 predicted that perceived purpose would be negatively related to expatriate burnout and was not supported ( $\beta = -.084$ ). Overall, the predictor variables explained 36% of variance in expatriate burnout.

### Results of Hypothesis Test

This study's research question was: Does perceived Cultural intelligence and Purpose in leaders impact expatriate's engagement and burnout?

Research results:

H1	Leader cultural intelligence is positively related to expatriate engagement	Not supported
H2	Purpose-oriented leadership is positively related to expatriate engagement	Supported
H3	Leader cultural intelligence is negatively related to expatriate burnout	Supported
H4	Purpose-oriented leadership is negatively related to expatriate burnout	Not supported

## 5 Discussion and Conclusion

### 5.1. Discussion

This study proposed and tested the hypothesis regarding the relationship between Leader's Cultural Intelligence and Purpose and Expatriates' Engagement and Burnout. Results indicate that corporate expatriates working with leaders with higher cultural intelligence demonstrated lower levels of burnout, and that expatriates who perceived that their superiors led by a purpose demonstrated higher levels of engagement.

Businesses not only produce goods and services but they produce people, and expatriates are affected by their work environments and the business culture that forms them. In the LMX literatures (e.g. Anand et al., 2011 and Dulebohn et al., 2012), evidence shows that the quality of the relationship between the employee and her/his leader is an important determinant of engagement and well-being. Leaders play a critical role in determining various conditions that influence employee engagement, and in turn their health and retention.

The study started with the assumption that both cultural intelligence and purpose would positively impact engagement and negatively impact burnout but results of the study shows that the roads are different.

The research indicates that there seems to be two different ways to affect the expatriate's daily life and well-being. There is one way for which the concern is with the well-being of the expatriate during his international assignment. In this case, it is the cultural intelligence of the leader that is important. It is the sensibility of the leader to understand what is specific to the living experiences of the expatriate.

Burnout is an important indicator of well-being. The fact that cultural intelligence negatively impacts burnout is the most important attribute for the quality of the expatriate's international experience, at a personal level, maybe because this attribute of the leader is what guarantees, day-by-day, that the leader-

member relationship is smoother and more free of tensions in the multicultural context. Expatriates must, for example, be willing to cope with cultural difficulties during the transfer process and leaders must be able to establish relationships with expatriates and use their cultural intelligence skills to facilitate the well-being of expatriates. Hajro, Gibson and Pudelko (2017) studied the knowledge exchange in multicultural teams and their findings revealed that diversity enhances work processes based on the assumption that cultural differences give rise to different knowledge, insights, and alternative views.

The other way is when the concern is with the expatriate's engagement with his work in an international environment and outside of his culture. In this case, purpose is what matters. In order to feel engaged, the expatriate does not necessarily need a leader who is open to other cultures, but he will need a leader who can give a sense of purpose to the work being done jointly, one who knows how to communicate a sense of mission, a higher purpose which is greater than their individual ones.

And there seems to be an explanation to that, which is when a leader has a clear sense of purpose, this brings the leader closer to the follower (the expatriate) for a common vision of what needs to be done, and therefore it is easier for the expatriate to be engaged in his work. "The way in which business leaders describe the purpose of the business, and the commitment and the dedication they inspire in their people, can have a great effect on the wider sense that those people have of their responsibility for one another and to the wider community" (Hollensbe et al, 2014, p. 1229).

Rebecca Henderson, the John and Natty McArthur University Professor at Harvard Business School states that "The sense of being part of something greater than yourself can lead to high levels of engagement, high levels of creativity, and the willingness to partner across functional and product boundaries within a company, which are hugely powerful" (Harvard Business Review Analytic Services and EY (2015,p.4) and exposes that many people, when passing a certain financial threshold, are as motivated by intrinsic meaning and the sense that they are contributing to something worthwhile as much as they are by financial returns or status.

The study has a contribution on how international assignments and expatriates are thought of, since there seems to be a need to work two different attributes of leaders who have expatriates on their teams: One is the ability of the leader to understand someone who is different from himself/herself, and the other is his or her ability to pass a sense of higher purpose at work. The identity, in the case of burnout is between the leader and the follower (expatriate) and, the identity, in the case of engagement, is with the purpose this leader is envisioning and communicating to the expatriate. In summary, one is at the interpersonal level and the other is relative to the organization and the work which is being done.

The cultural intelligence and purpose framework suggests that cultural intelligence is one of the primary blocks to avoid burnout and that purpose is important to promote engagement. The intention of the proposed model is to have contributed not only to a better understanding of burnout but also to the positive concept of job engagement and that selection is not the only way to obtain leaders with such attributes. The necessary attributes can be taught. For example, organizations can train leaders in relationship-building skills and culturally sensitive ways of coaching and teaching. Such training may smooth the leader-member exchange process and make it more effective. Overall, companies must go beyond the focus of a leader's technical skills and attend to attributes in generating team's engagement and well-being.

These findings show that leaders with cultural intelligence and purpose are able to meet the challenges of working in a complex global environment. They are more likely to meet the expatriate's needs and expectations and the higher the likelihood of responding effectively to global challenges.

## **5.2. Implications for Practitioners**

The results of this study should be interesting for scholars and practitioners alike who are interested in the attributes needed to be successful in a global environment. As this study showed the effects of cultural intelligence and purpose of leaders on expatriate's engagement and burnout, it helps value the work of leaders who are working with international assignees. And, aligned with Caligiuri & Tarique (2012), this work joins the many scholars who are encouraging companies to use a combination of selection and well-designed developmental

experiences to build the pipeline of future global leaders who are critical for the competitiveness of organizations.

This work suggests that leaders high in cultural intelligence and purpose are more likely to engage expatriates on their international assignments. Thus, companies might survey potential leaders to select those who exhibit higher cultural intelligence and purpose. Additionally, organizations can take specific actions to improve cultural intelligence and purpose on their leaders prior to have them receive expatriates in their teams. Examples would include providing information and helping leaders acknowledge positive and constructive benefits of having international assignees.

Information on culture and leadership has also been used to design new employee orientation programs, conduct programs in relocation training, improve global team effectiveness, and facilitate the implementation of multinational merger processes (Northouse, 2018). By understanding cultural differences, leaders can become more empathic and accurate in their communication with others.

Furthermore, nothing could be found in the leadership literature that sought to consider the two constructs of cultural intelligence and purpose simultaneously, in an effort to consider whether they might be antecedents of employee engagement and burnout. In light of the points mentioned above, the need to study the antecedents of employee engagement becomes quite clear and is corroborated by the findings of Shuck *et al* (2014), who discussed the practical relationships between employee engagement and turnover intention. Therefore, better understanding the antecedents of employee engagement with the aim to utilize its desired positive consequences is extremely important for practitioners, and this importance is beginning to be also recognized by scholars (Xu & Thomas, 2011)

These positive consequences of engagement are results that organizations desire, and this fact makes the study of expatriate engagement extremely relevant because it attempts to bridge the scholar-practitioner divide.

Each person deserves human dignity as a who, not a what, as a someone, not a something, yet much of the language of business subtly objectifies people generally as “human capital” or “human resources” (Holander, 2014). Leaders have a responsibility to be responsive, to treat people with respect and dignity, and to promote their fulfillment. Demonstrating respect means setting a purpose and

seeking outcomes that enable people to reach their full potential, which means to contribute fully to building relationships within the workplace and beyond that can ultimately promote trust between people and between business and society (Holander, 2014)

### **5.3. Study Limitations**

Although some interesting findings have come from this research, it is important to recognize its limitations.

This study has utilized a survey methodology and the use of survey questionnaires has its proper weaknesses. For example, difficulties have been reported in collecting primary data from high level managers, especially from across countries and from global organizations (Kjar, 2007). Similarly, this study faced difficulties in collecting primary data from expatriates from across countries and from global organizations.

Research indicates that surveys are often limited in collecting proper representation of certain industries (Kjar, 2007). Therefore, this study attempted to draw participants from a wide range of global industry sectors to assure a varied representation of industries and global organizations. The findings of this study are based on the perceptions of the respondents and may not be applicable to other organizations and expatriates not represented in this study.

Researchers have also noted a social desirability effect as a possible problem in self surveys (Zickmund, 2007). Participants may give socially desirable and popular responses when asked about their attitudes and behaviors, which may not reflect their true actions or beliefs on leadership behavior (Paulhus, 1991).

In terms of burnout, response rates tend to be rather low, which could indicate that particularly burned out respondents do not fill out the questionnaires because they feel embarrassed or threatened (Marek et al., 2017).

This study was limited by the small sample size. Readers should note that this is an introductory study limited in respect to its sample, the level of analysis and the organizations represented. The results of this study should not be deemed generalizable in all countries, cultures or companies, given that the study was specific to this group of respondents. The perceptions and experiences of these

expatriates may differ from those of other expatriates as well as from other countries. In light of the aforementioned, the results of the study will serve as a precursor to other studies on the subject.

#### **5.4. Recommendations for Future Research**

Based on the limitations experienced when collecting data, it is important for researchers to bear in mind that the expatriate population deal with high work-demands and cultural adjustment on a daily basis. This seems to make it very challenging to motivate enough participants to take the time to respond to a study. For this reason, it may be more helpful to offer participants an incentive they could use abroad such as gift cards, raffle tickets, or monetary compensation (e.g., \$5.00 per participation).

Expatriates perception of leaders' attributes could be complemented by leader self-report on the respective concepts. Multi-level designs employing large number of employees working in different teams could also clarify variation of expatriate's perception of the leader. In this case, the impact of the leaders' attribute is no longer a person-level variable but it is measured as a team-level variable with variation between different leaders' teams.

Gender had an important impact in both engagement and burnout and it would be important to understand why, as the analysis of the study have shown that male expatriates tend to be more engaged and female expatriates are more subject to burnout.

Although this model was tested in 112 independent samples that were drawn from different types of organizations, there is still an apparent need for replication in other samples using a larger number of expatriates and organizations. Other studies can be carried out, with a larger number of expatriates and organizations evaluated, analyzing the particularities of each specialty, allowing the comparison of groups originating from different regions and realities, with the assumption that significant differences can be analyzed, contributing to the advancement of knowledge about the impact of leadership on engagement and burnout among expatriates.

There is a growing understanding among scholars that business leaders everywhere are revising the social contract with society, and corporate leaders have the challenge of envisioning how to renew such contract so that companies can contribute in distinct and relevant ways to societal well-being (Harvard Business Review Analytic Services and EY ( 2015) and there is significant potential for scholars to explore ways in which businesses can be purpose driven and engage purpose to meet societal needs. Purpose might be linked to broader values, and there are areas that require consideration by researchers and practitioners in integrating purpose in management. (Hollensbe, 2014).

The findings of this work, however, are not an “answer” but rather a place to start a discussion on how to conceptualize the effects of purpose-oriented leadership and cultural intelligence on expatriates and better understand it cross culturally, triggering further advance of theoretical and practical research to the field of leadership.

Although much remains underexplored in the “leadership puzzle”, this study and the results obtained so far have contributed to a better understanding of the impact of leadership on expatriate’s engagement and burnout, as well as the contingencies and attributes that enable leadership effectiveness.

## 6

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## Attachments

### Informed Consent and Invitation Letter to Participate in a Global Leadership Study

Dear Business Leader,

As a master candidate at Pontificia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, I'm inviting you to participate in a research study I am conducting on "Leadership".

Participants include corporate expatriates currently on a long term international assignment (more than 18 months) at corporations in various industries and headquartered in many countries. We are asking you to participate because of your current role as a business leader in global business.

Participation in this study is completely **voluntary and confidential**. **Your name nor your company's name are not requested**, except if you want to provide your contact information. **No individual analysis will be done**. The results of this study may be published, but will not include any information that would identify you.

Please note that there is no monetary compensation for participating in this study. However, the results of the study will be made available to you upon request.

**If you** understood this informed consent, and **agree to participate in this study, please complete an online survey by clicking on the link:**

[https://pucRio.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3OurmHx4LzcWpNz](https://pucRio.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3OurmHx4LzcWpNz)

We expect this survey to take **10 minutes to complete**.

If you have questions about this research study, please contact Sylvia Mello at mello.sylvia@hotmail.com, phone: +55-21-99766.3474 or Dr. Flavia Cavazotte, Dissertation Chair at flavia.cavazotte@iag.puc-rio.br, IAG Business School, Pontificia Universidade Catolica.

Thank you for your participation and valuable input in the study.

Sincerely,

Sylvia Mello

Master Candidate

Pontificia Universidade Catolica do Rio de Janeiro.

Rua Marquês de São Vicente, 225, Gávea - Rio de Janeiro, RJ - Brasil - 22451-900

## Leadership Survey Questions

This questionnaire is part of a scientific research for a Master thesis and your responses are anonymous. The data is confidential and will only be assessed by the researchers. The survey will take 10 minutes to complete. We greatly value your participation in our study. Thank you in advance for providing this importante feedback!

### 1 Before we start, we would like to know how you have been feeling in the last few weeks.

Never Once in Rarely Sometimes Often Usually Always  
a great  
while

I am being tired  
I am feeling depressed  
I am having a good day  
I am being physically exhausted  
I am being emotionally exhausted  
I am being happy  
I am being "wiped out"  
"Can't take it anymore"  
I am being unhappy  
I am feeling run-down  
I am feeling trapped  
I am feeling worthless  
I am being weary  
I am being troubled  
I am feeling disillusioned and resentful  
I am being weak and susceptible to illness  
I am feeling hopeless  
I am feeling rejected  
I am feeling optimistic  
I am feeling energetic  
I am feeling anxious

### 2 This section refers to your leader

Definetely Not Neither True Definitely  
not true True True nor True  
Untrue

My leader expects me to perform at my highest level.  
My leader encourages me to go above and beyond what is normally expected  
My leader expects me to give 100% all of the time.  
My leader isn't afraid to "buck the system" if he/she thinks it is necessary.  
My leader is non-traditional type that "shakes up the system" when necessary.  
My leader isn't afraid to "break the mold" to find different ways of doing things  
My leader provides a clear vision of who and what our team is.  
My leader provides a clear vision of where our team is going.  
Because of my leader, I have a clear vision of our team's purpose.  
My leader is driven by higher purposes or ideals.  
My leader has a strong personal dedication to higher purposes or ideals.  
My leader strives towards higher purposes or ideals.

My leader shows enthusiasm for my efforts  
 My leader approaches a new project or task in an enthusiastic way.  
 My leader stresses the importance of our team to the larger organization  
 My leader emphasizes the value of questioning team members.  
 My leader encourages me to rethink ideas which had never been questioned before.  
 My leader questions the traditional way of doing things.  
 My leader seeks a broad range of perspectives when solving problems.  
 My leader looks at problems from many different angles

### 3. This section refers to how you feel about your current assignment

Never	Almost Never	Rarely (Once a month or Less)	Sometimes (A few times a day)	Very Often (A few times a month)	Always (Every a week)
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At my work, I feel bursting with energy.  
 At my job, I feel I feel strong and vigorous.  
 I am enthusiastic about my job.  
 My job inspires me.  
 When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.  
 I feel happy when I am working intensely.  
 I am proud of the work that I do.  
 I am immersed in my work.  
 I get carried away when I am working.

### 4. This section refers to how your leader manages cultural differences.

1. Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7. Strongly agree
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My leader enjoys interacting with people from different cultures  
 My leader is confident that he/she can socialize with locals in a culture that is unfamiliar  
 My leader is sure he/she can deal with the stresses of adjusting to a culture that is new  
 My leader enjoys living in cultures that are unfamiliar  
 My leader is confident that he/she can get accustomed to the shopping conditions in a different culture  
 My leader changes his/her verbal behavior (i.e., accent, tone) when a cross-cultural interaction requires it.  
 My leader uses pause and silence differently when a cross-cultural situation requires it.  
 My leader varies the rate of his/her speaking when a cross-cultural situation requires it.  
 My leader changes his/her nonverbal behavior when a cross-cultural situation requires it  
 My leader alters his/her facial expressions when a cross-cultural interaction requires it

## 6. Demographics

(This is a scientific research and all the data will be analysed in a collective way, therefore no individual answers will be evaluated.)

Age			
Gender		Male	Female
My country of origin			
My LEADER's country of origin			
My current work location (country)			
My LEADER's current work location (country – if different from mine)			
Years of professional experience			
Previous international assignment (more than 18 months)		Yes	No
My position		Professional	Managerial
Educational background	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Ph.D. Other
Is your family with you?		Yes	No

Feel free to add any comments to your assignment or to this survey.

All your answers will remain anonymous.

The data is confidential and will only be assessed by the researchers.