Sylvia Freitas Mello

Bringing Humility to Global Mobility

Tese de Doutorado

Thesis presented to the Programa de Pós-Graduação em Administração de Empresas of PUC-Rio in partial fullfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doutor em Administração de Empresas.

Advisor: Prof. Patricia Amelia Tomei

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

Mello, Sylvia Freitas; Tomei, Patricia Amelia (Advisor). **Bringing Humility to Global Mobility**. Rio de Janeiro, 2023. 187. Tese de Doutorado – Departamento de Administração, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro.

The global economy is promoting an increasingly ambiguous and competitive environment for companies operating across borders. To support the demand for this globalization, multinational companies need competent expatriates for the success of their operations abroad. These international assignments can provide unique opportunities for growth and development, but they also require expatriates to adapt effectively to new environments. The purpose of this study was to describe how expatriate humble behavior operates in corporate international assignments. Semi structured interviews were conducted with 19 managers, being senior assigned expatriates (AEs) and Human Resources/Global Mobility experts. The questions that made up the interview script were divided into the following categories: 1. Expressed humble behaviors, 2. Relevance of humble behavior, 3. Context in which expatriate humble behaviors are more required in international assignments; and 4. Outcomes: humility infusing expatriate adaptation. The analysis process was based on content analysis, to extract expatriate and HR perceptions about the categories covered. Results suggest that humility is important to all, but lack of humility in Global Mobility can be a road blocker. Humility builds connections, trust and reliable and long-term relationships, and highly contributes to expatriates´ adaptation on international assignments. The study also shows that humility needs favorable conditions to flourish, and it may be associated with weakness, in certain contexts, such as those where the leader is seen as a hero, or in cultures that value competition, individualism, high power distance, confrontation and in moments that require agency. The research highlights that cultural humility is fundamental to assigned expatriates, who lead with a global mindset. Therefore, organizations should improve the selection procedure, emphasizing the contribution of a humble behavior to candidates for an international assignment, and offer Cross-cultural training programs that include the behavioral aspect, with a focus on the three dimensions of expressed humility: self-awareness; appreciation of others and teachability.

Keywords

Resumo

Mello, Sylvia Freitas; Tomei, Patricia Amelia. **Trazendo humildade para a Mobilidade Global**. Rio de Janeiro, 2023. 187. Tese de Doutorado – Departamento de Administração, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro.

A economia global está promovendo um ambiente cada vez mais ambíguo e competitivo para empresas que operam além-fronteiras. Para suportar a demanda dessa globalização, as empresas multinacionais precisam de expatriados competentes para o sucesso de suas operações no exterior. Essas designações internacionais podem oferecer oportunidades únicas de crescimento e desenvolvimento, mas também exigem que os expatriados se adaptem efetivamente a novos ambientes. O objetivo deste estudo foi descrever como o comportamento humilde do expatriado opera em designações internacionais corporativas. Foram realizadas entrevistas semiestruturadas com 19 gerentes, incluindo expatriados sênior (Assigned Expatriates - AEs) e gerentes de Recursos Humanos /Mobilidade Global. As questões que compuseram o roteiro de entrevista foram divididas nas seguintes categorias: 1. Comportamentos humildes expressos, 2. Relevância do comportamento humilde, 3. Contexto em que comportamentos humildes de expatriados são mais exigidos em designações internacionais; e 4. Efeitos: humildade contribuindo para a adaptação do expatriado. O processo de análise foi baseado na análise de conteúdo, para extrair as percepções dos expatriados e do RHs sobre as categorias abordadas. Os resultados sugerem que a humildade é importante para todos, mas a falta de humildade na Mobilidade Global pode ser um obstáculo. A humildade constrói conexões, confiança e relacionamentos confiáveis e de longo prazo, e contribui muito para a adaptação do expatriado em designações internacionais. O estudo também mostra que a humildade precisa de condições favoráveis para florescer, podendo estar associada à fraqueza, em determinados contextos, como aqueles em que o líder é visto como um herói, ou em culturas que valorizam a competição, o individualismo, a alta distância do poder, o confronto e em momentos que exigem agência. A pesquisa destaca que a humildade cultural é fundamental para expatriados, que lideram com uma mentalidade global. Portanto, as organizações devem aprimorar o processo de seleção, enfatizando a contribuição de um comportamento humilde para os candidatos a uma designação internacional, e oferecer programas de treinamento intercultural que incluam o aspecto

comportamental, com foco nas três dimensões da humildade expressa: autoconsciência; valorização dos outros e capacidade de aprendizado.

Palavras-chave

Mobilidade global; humildade; expatriado; mentalidade global; comportamento humilde

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1
Introduction

1.1.
Research problem

The global economy is promoting an increasingly ambiguous and dynamic competitive environment for companies operating across borders. To support the demand for this globalization, multinational companies need competent expatriates for the success of their operations abroad, but while these international assignments can provide unique opportunities for growth and development, they also require expatriates to adapt effectively to new environments. Work, responsibilities, and expectations, while learning and adapting to different social and cultural standards (TAKEUCHI, 2010). Research from (DELOITTE INSIGHTS, 2019) presented that around 80% of interviewed companies reported a need for leaders who can deal with greater complexity and ambiguity, including managing national and cultural differences (DELOITTE INSIGHTS, 2019).

Intercultural competencies are vital for national and international organizations (ex: BÜCKER & POUTSMA, 2010; FITZSIMMONS, 2013; JOHNSON, J.; LENARTOWICZ, T.; APUD, 2006) as managers from all companies have to deal with intercultural differences (ANDRESEN; BERGDOLT, 2017).

Global Mindset and Cultural Intelligence are the most studied multicultural skills in the field of International Administration. Cultural intelligence is a sufficient cross-cultural competence in culturally complex environments, but a global mindset is necessary when it comes to situations characterized by high cultural and strategic complexities (ANDRESEN; BERGDOLT, 2017). The concept of cultural intelligence (EARLEY; ANG, 2003) addresses individual capabilities to effectively adapt to a new cultural setting, while the concept of global mindset (GUPTA, A. K.; GOVINDARAJAN, 2002) puts more emphasis on managerial capabilities to integrate across cultures (ROMANI *et al.*, 2018).

Only complex cognition and behavior can face challenges and demands in a complex global environment (ASHKENAS, R.; ULRICH, D.; JICK, T.; KERR, 2015) and according to a systematic literature review, from 1992 to 2015, barely 40% of the Global Mindset descriptions refer to Behavior (ANDRESEN; BERGDOLT, 2017), demonstrating that there is a lack of behavioral studies in Global Mindset. Based on theoretical references, among the four dimensions of intercultural competencies (1. Personal attributes, 2. Cognitive attributes and skills, 3. Motivation, and 4. Resources for adapting behavior), Global Mindset lacks a behavioral ability (ANDRESEN; BERGDOLT, 2017), as shown in figure 1.
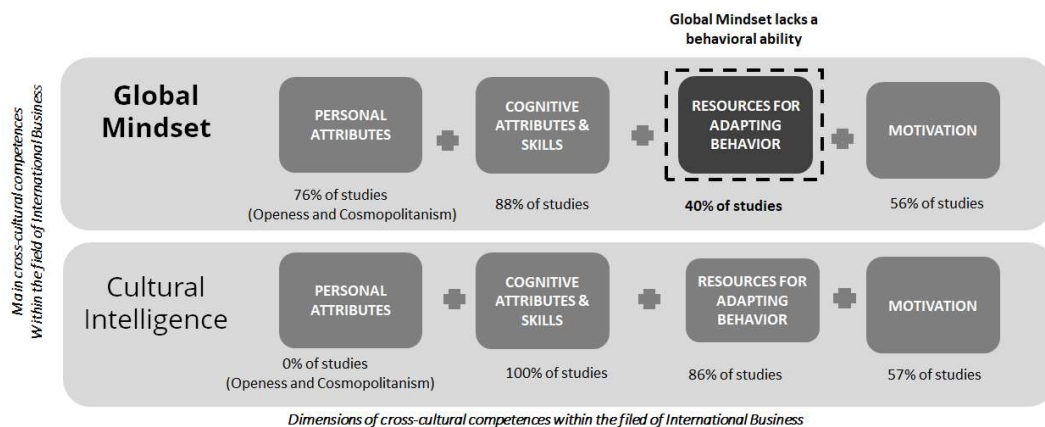
Figure 1 – Main cross-cultural competencies and dimension in International Business
Source: Based on (ANDRESEN; BERGDOLT, 2017)

Humility is little studied in the organizational literature (CUENCA, R.; TOMEI, P. A.; MELLO, 2022) especially about the behavioral characteristics demanded by those with a global mindset. The growing approach to the issue has increased in the last decade, in parallel with ethical scandals and corporate fraud (e.g., Lehman Brothers, Parmalat, WorldCom, Enron) that have shown that values such as humility, integrity, transparency and honesty are essential for decision making (VERA, D.; RODRIGUEZ-LOPEZ, 2004). Even in this new context, among the reasons mentioned in the literature that make it difficult to study humility in organizations is the conceptual diversity and the methodological challenges of evaluating humble behaviors (ANAND, A.; WALSH, I.; MOFFETT, 2019; DAVIS *et al.*, 2010 WEICK (p. 106. 2001)) anticipated that the increasing unpredictability and unknowability faced by organizations in the 21st century would require leaders to have "more humility and less hubris". Transcendence, plasticity of the mind, mindfulness, curiosity and humility are vital characteristics of global leaders that lead to a global mindset (CSEH; DAVIS; KHILJI, 2013). The organizational literature regarding expatriates has shown that studies that associate their behaviors

with humility are rare (CUENCA, R.; TOMEI, P. A.; MELLO, 2022), but Caligiuri and Bonache (2016) reinforce that expatriates´ humility impacts their perceptions of support and feedback in the host national environment, affecting their ability to succeed in their international assignments.

In view of what has been exposed, there was a gap in the literature to be explored that leads to the below question:

HOW DOES EXPATRIATE HUMBLE BEHAVIOR OPERATE IN CORPORATE INTERNATIONAL ASSIGNMENTS?

1.2.
Goals

The purpose of this study was to describe how expatriate humble behavior operates in corporate international assignments.

From the premise that a humble behavior contributes to Global Mobility, I defend that global mindset is a cross-cultural competence which is fundamental for international management and to expatriate leaders; specially when we consider humility as an important resource for adaptation.

To reach the above main goal, this research had the below secondary four goals:

1. Describe what is considered an expatriate humble behavior.
2. Describe (i) how humility can contribute to expatriate behavior in international assignments; (ii) what humble behavior adds to the set of competences that stand out in the life of a successful expatriate.
3. Describe (iii) in what contexts expatriate humility is most needed, (iv) in what contexts participants report humble behavior associated with weak or ineffective leadership.
4. Describe (v) how a humble behavior contributes to expatriates´ adaptation to the host culture.

The aims of the study were realized by:

(1) Reviewing the literature based on four topics: (i) Expatriates: Concepts, Competencies and Behavior (ii) Humility: Concepts and behavior, (iii) Humility and expatriates and (iv) Expatriates' adaptation.

and

(2) Collecting data through online interviews with International HR and GM managers, and expatriates themselves.

1.3.
Study delimitation

From the main two intercultural competencies within the field of international management: global mindset and cultural intelligence (ANDRESEN; BERGDOLT, 2017), this dissertation focused only on global mindset. And from the four dimensions of cross-cultural competencies: Personal attributes, Cognitive attributes and skills, Resources for adapting behavior and Motivation (ANDRESEN; BERGDOLT, 2017), this dissertation only focused on resources for adapting behavior.

Several diversity concepts reflect not only the dynamic and multidimensional nature of culture but also the numerous ways in which culture has been conceptualized in social work. Examples of Cross-cultural practice concepts are cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, cultural appropriateness, cultural safety, cultural competence, cultural humility (DANSO, 2018) and cultural agility, which also highlights cross-cultural interactions (CALIGIURI, P. 2012), presenting additional options to adaptation, such as "minimizing" and "integration". This thesis will not approach the above-mentioned cultural concepts; except for cultural humility, a subdomain of humility, which has been also applied to international assignments (i.e., CALIGIURI, P.; BAYTALSKAYA, N.; LAZAROVA, 2016). Likewise, this thesis refers to intellectual humility but does not focus on other subdomains of humility, such as relational humility, religious humility, political humility nor clinician humility (i.e., WORTHINGTON JR, E. L.; DAVIS, D. E.; HOOK, 2017).

This research targeted leaders with a global mindset, represented by company-sponsored long-term senior assigned expatriates (AE´s), on assignments of at least 18 months, and Human Resources / Global Mobility (HR/GM) managers, with at least 10-year experience in the field. All working for global organizations. Assignees with a global mindset were considered those with company responsibilities at the strategic and normative levels; developing management programs, structures, and systems in order to achieve competitive advantage; and

determining company standards and culture (St. Gallen management Model - (BLEICHER, 2011; ANDRESEN & BERGDOLT, 2017)

1.4.
Relevance of the study

Social / economic relevance: The practice of humility is fundamental for those seeking a world of greater cooperation, integration and learning. Exploring humility from a behavioral perspective in the context of international assignments is of social and economic relevance, as the success of expatriates' international assignments is fundamental in a globalized world where the development of entrepreneurial activities requires a global mindset, directly affecting their ability to succeed in their international missions.

Scientific / academic relevance: From an academic point of view, humility is still little explored in management, and, in particular, as an organizational behavior (CUENCA, R.; TOMEI, P. A.; MELLO, 2022) and research on Global Mindset shows that it lacks a behavioral ability (ANDRESEN; BERGDOLT, 2017), which is fundamental within the new culture. The thesis fills an academic gap in behavioral studies in Global Mindset, and on studies on humility in international assignments, contributing for the global mobility literature.

Relevance for organizational management: Based on my experience of more than 20 years of work in global mobility, I realized the importance of humble behavior in executives for the success of their international assignments, favoring interpersonal relationships, and the openness for constant learning, which justifies the practical gap.

Humility is more and more important for the BANI ('brittle', 'anxious', 'nonlinear' and 'incomprehensible') world, and for organizations that demand, every day, more sharing, cooperation (WRIGHT *et al.*, 2017) and continuous learning, to achieve their goals and objectives (CALIGIURI, 2021).

The concept of Global Mindset, among expatriates, is restricted to cognitive knowledge and skills, and personal attributes, lacking a behavioral ability (ANDRESEN; BERGDOLT, 2019). This project extended the research on behavioral skills and global mindset. It filled an academic gap that identified the lack of behavioral studies in Global Mindset, therefore being relevant for the organizational literature.

2
Literature review

2.1.
Expatriates: concepts, competencies and behavior

2.1.1.
Expatriates: concepts

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 managers deal with other people 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).

Kraimer *et al*. (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 (whether self-or corporate initiated).

In the globalized work context, more people are expected to live and work in more than one culture, be it their home culture and host culture, or the global cultural context more generally, and this global work context contributes to the development of global identities independent of any national local identity (EREZ *et al*., 2013). 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.

Organizations that operate across borders have to deal with a competitive environment that is increasingly complex and dynamic (CALIGIURI, P.; TARIQUE, I, 2016) and there is a need for a globally mobile workforce to perform boundary-spanning roles that come in the form of social network building and facilitation of old and newly generated knowledge necessary to support global organizations (FARNDALE, E.; PAAUWE, J.; MORRIS, S. S.; STAHL, G. K.; STILES, P.; TREVOR, J.; WRIGHT, 2010; MOELLER *et al*., 2016a; STAHL; BJÖRKMAN; MORRIS, 2012).

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 (YI-YING CHANG; YAPEMG GONG; MIKE W. PENG, 2012). Expatriate managers transferring to a foreign subsidiary often have the status as a headquarter representative, accompanied by the position/perception of having power and experience not to mention knowledge about the parent company (HARZING, A. W.; PUDELKO, M.; SEBASTIAN REICHE, 2016). 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. Power renders influence (MOELLER *et al*., 2016b). Developing management talent through expatriate assignments helps organizations develop their skills base and their ability to succeed in a global marketplace. In such context, expatriates are strategic assets, as well as globally competent leaders who can effectively manage employees from diverse cultural backgrounds (CALIGIURI, P. 2012).

International experience offers expatriates not only skills to dealing with cross-cultural differences but also the ability to process complex information, and the increased complexity in thinking will provide them with better ability to distinguish between the best responses to cultural and business demands. Expatriates need to understand the demands of the cultural context in which they are working and respond to it effectively (CALIGIURI, P.; CAPRAR, 2022).

Expatriates have been defined in the Merriam-Webster dictionary since 1812. According to (GREEN, 2009), the first documented reference to the word 'expatriate' was found in the Expatriation Act in the USA in 1812, referred to as a 'suspicious citizen', in contrast to the modern definition of 'a person who lives in a foreign country', as in the current definition in the Merriam-Webster dictionary ("Merriam-Webster dictionary"). The word expatriate is often used to describe any employee chosen to work in a location outside their country of origin, that is, in an international assignment for a specified time (BIEMANN; ANDRESEN, 2010). Perhaps, as a response to the initial challenges, research focused the attention on cultural differences between country of origin and host country (OBERG, 1960), and then evolved along with current challenges that multinationals face. Expatriates are employees with a track record of high potential and high performance who have the capacity to have a significant impact on the business.

Global forms of work have been of increasing interest over the past years. Researchers have identified and explored several 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 transferees, commuters) as well as the nonmobile forms of the global work experience, such as global virtual teams and global domestics (SHAFFER, *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.

Corporate assigned expatriates (AEs) 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.

Corporate assigned expatriates (AEs) 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, D. A.; SHAFFER, M. A.; BHASKAR-SHRINIVAS, 2004; SHAFFER, *et al*., 2012). They can be perceived as those employees who fill strategic roles with high performance goals, which leads to knowledge transfer and knowledge sharing capabilities (MOELLER, *et al*., 2016a; REICHE, B.; HARZING, A.-W.; KRAIMER, 2009). They 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. They 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. The managers that are sent to the newly expanded countries need not only to be talented and competent but also need to understand about strategic processes and structures and how they are organized in the country of destination. It is important that such managers are engaged into understanding diversity of thought to improve employee satisfaction due to the fact that the country of destination may have different mindset and therefore a different approach is required.

Andresen and Bergdolt (2017), based on the St. Gallen Management Model Bleicher (2011) presented the matrix below where they identify those expatriates and international managers who must execute control and coordination tasks abroad and deal with different stakeholders in international business, those at the strategic and normative level are the ones who face the highest cultural and strategic complexity.
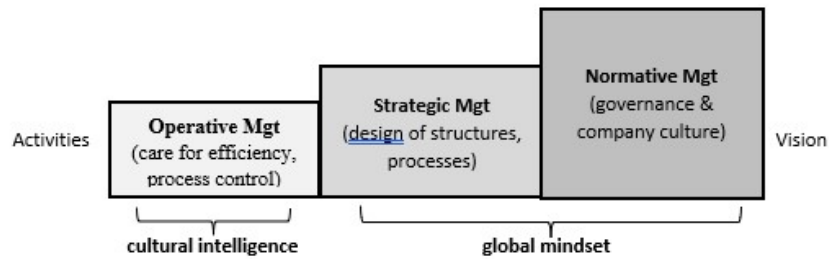
Figure 2 – St. Gallen management Model (BLEICHER, 2011) and associated cross-cultural competences
Source: ANDRESEN & BERGDOLT (2017).

Despite 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 focused specifically on corporate assigned (AEs), on assignments of more than 18 months, involved in strategic or normative international decision-making, such as top management members, business unit managers, and heads of departments.

After introducing the corporate expatriate managers, in the next session I will present the main intercultural competencies in the field of international business, and focus more specifically on global mindset, a competence for leaders who work in high cultural and strategic complex context.

2.1.2.
Main cross-cultural competences in int´l management: global mindset and cultural intelligence

Since the early 1990s, an increasing number of scholars have been studying effective global leaders and attempting to delineate the competencies that are critical to their success (BIRD *et al.*, 2010). Intercultural competencies are vital as employees and managers across all companies (domestic, internationalizing or int´l organizations) have to deal with cross-cultural differences (FITZSIMMONS, 2013). According to Andresen and Bergdolt (2017), the main cross-cultural competencies in international management and management fields are Global Mindset and Cultural intelligence, which will be described further in this session.

Intercultural management and its importance for companies with international activities and their collaborators is increasingly becoming the center of interest for research and management education (BARMEYER; DAVOINE, 2012) and intercultural competence is each time more necessary in today's global

workplace, as collaborative and coordinating demands increasingly stretch leaders' capacities to perceive, interpret and act in ways that achieve organizational goals. (BÜCKER; POUTSMA, 2010) define "competencies" as the potential capacity of an individual to successfully handle certain situations or complete a certain task or job. Global management competencies can be translated as the specific knowledge and skills, within an international management context, and are described in international management literature under various constructs with various labels, such as "cross-cultural competence" (GERTSEN, 1990), "global mindset" (RHINESMITH, 1992), "cultural intelligence" (EARLEY, 2002) and "intercultural sensitivity" (HAMMER; BENNETT; WISEMAN, 2003); being cultural intelligence and global mindset the main ones, according to (ANDRESEN; BERGDOLT, 2017).

All the reviews agree that a major dimension of global leadership involves the mastery of intercultural competencies (OSLAND, 2013; OSLAND, J. S.; BIRD, A.; MENDENHALL, M.; OSLAND, 2006). These different constructs are used for similar competencies and appear to show overlap. Besides, there is a stream of research around the construct of leadership and "global leadership skills". This stream brings in the elusive construct of leadership, which has a long history of continuously changing definitions. There is no consensus about the exact meaning and operationalization of these constructs in the international management literature (BÜCKER; POUTSMA, 2010). To add to inconsistency is the fact that the field of global management and leadership competencies is characterized by regularly upcoming new definitions and new constructs. The research, leading to conceptual diversity, is done in a non-cumulative way. Furthermore, the constructs and its building blocks are not systematically related to the behavioral aptitudes, the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other personality characteristics (BÜCKER; POUTSMA, 2010).

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.

As previously mentioned, according to Andresen & Bergdolt (2017), the main cross-cultural competencies in international management and management fields are Global Mindset and Cultural intelligence. The clarification on the differences between cultural intelligence and global mindset are important for proper decision making concerning the application of the more pertinent cross-cultural competence to the business environment.

Cultural intelligence is defined as an individual's capabilities to cope with and function effectively in an intercultural situation (EARLEY; ANG, 2003); this covers the cultural component of a global mindset; and global business orientation describes "an individual's attitude towards inter-nationalization and the ability to adjust to a new business environment" (LEVY, O.; BEECHLER, S.; TAYLOR, S.; BOYACIGILLER, 2007); this covers the second, strategic component of a global mindset (BÜCKER; POUTSMA, 2010). Cultural intelligence is a sufficient cross-cultural competence in solely culturally complex environments, but a global mindset is necessary when it comes to situations characterized by high cultural and strategic complexities. Cultural intelligence with cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, and behavioral components does not relate to the business context and its complexity, but rather stays at a purely cross-cultural level (ANDRESEN; BERGDOLT, 2017).

Cultural intelligence is a useful general framework of cross-cultural competence for intercultural settings, while the global mindset construct combines an openness to and awareness of diversity across cultures and markets with a propensity and ability to synthesize across this diversity and provides a cross-cultural framing which is particularly tailored to the complex context of international business (ANDRESEN; BERGDOLT, 2017; KONYU-FOGEL, 2011).

Global mindset is a part of the global model of competence (MENDENHALL, M. E. *et al*., 2012). From the point of view of these researchers, global mindset is one of the competencies in the group of competencies related to the cognitive and attitudinal processes of the global leader's mind. Companies' internationalization processes often imply that the organization that is expanding may wish to send an expatriate manager to the countries in which the firm is

expanding to. There are endless cases of failure related to the managers that has been expatriated and in most of the cases, the perceptions and the mindset of the expatriate are the main reason for such failure: they lack global mindsets.

Global mindset is defined as a strategic construct, as a cultural construct and as an integrative construct, the capacity to function effectively within environments that are characterized by high cultural and business complexity. Clarification of a global mindset relies on how international managers perceive and interpret their environment, leading to a decision-making process, to finally act meaningfully and with an awareness of the cross-cultural context.

Levy and colleagues postulated that global mindset is a construct integrating cultural and strategic realities and (JAVIDAN; BOWEN, 2013) emphasize the ability to understand and respond to the complexities and rapid changes caused by globalization. Most studies conceptualize global mindset as having a cultural, strategic and multidimensional perspective as "a highly complex structure characterized by an openness to and articulation of multiple cultural and strategic realities on both global and local levels, and the cognitive ability to mediate and integrate across this multiplicity" (LEVY *et al*., 2007).

Global mindset is the essence of 21st century leadership and requires people who can think globally, understand global challenges and opportunities and how to address them (JAVIDAN; WALKER, 2012). The global mindset literature explicitly includes a strategic aspect, represented by Doz and colleagues (1981) in their focus on national responsiveness and global rationalization and, according to Ghoshal and Bartlett (2012), a global mindset is particularly necessary for strategic decisions in transnational companies, where such international positions can be found as global integration and local responsiveness are both high. Leaders with a global mindset are expected to facilitate flexible organizational structures, processes, and shared communications by empowering, inspiring, and motivating across different cultures, political, economic, and legal/ethical environments (CAVAZOTTE; MELLO; OLIVEIRA, 2020; KEDIA; MUKHERJI, 1999).

According to Bowen and Inkpen (2009), global mindset is an important factor for success for organizations that engage in businesses in countries other than their original home country and become more needed and desired in the organizations, not only because of their capacity to bridge gaps overseas, but also in a world where

business does not stop and has no understanding of nationalities, languages, culture and religion.

Andresen and Bergdolt (2017)´s theoretical framework shows that:

(i) Cultural Intelligence is a cross-cultural competence tailored appropriate for those on the Operative level, those who are applying and monitoring processes directly relating to performance, but not yet on strategic management. Those are characterized by demand driven assignments. Developmental international assignments, designed for employees who do not operate within strategic management, for instance, are typically sited within operative management. In addition, many demand-driven international assignments, which include communication, knowledge transfer, and problem-solving abroad (STAHL, G. K.; CHUA, C. H.; CALIGIURI, P.; CERDIN, J. L.; TANIGUCHI, 2009) are primarily operative in nature.

(ii) Global mindset would be more appropriate to those on the strategic and normative levels, for the strategic management and strategic assignments. On the strategic level are those developing management programs, structures, and systems, to achieve competitive advantage; and on the normative level, the 3rd highest one, are those determining company standards, guiding principles and company culture.

Expatriate managers face not only increased cultural complexity during their assignments, but also high strategic complexity. Whereas the cultural research stream is based on an increasing degree of cultural diversity, the strategic perspective is based on the increase in environmental and strategic complexity that is accompanying globalization (ANDRESEN; BERGDOLT, 2017). The rise in the number of different stakeholders in international business is one example for increasing strategic complexity. In addition, the relationships and networks between these stakeholders are becoming ever more complex and this is leading to increased strategic uncertainty for all players in the field (CALIGIURI, P.; TARIQUE, 2012).

Expatriates may benefit from international assignments, as they develop a global mindset, enhanced intercultural and interpersonal skills, and foreign language fluency (SHAFFER *et al.*, 2012; TAKEUCHI, 2010). Nevertheless, they also face several challenges related to personal and professional demands. They must adapt to unfamiliar locations, adjust effectively to new work requirements, and are often overwhelmed with different social and cultural standards, including behaviors, values, and rituals (ANDRESEN; GOLDMANN; VOLODINA, 2018; CAVAZOTTE; MELLO; OLIVEIRA, 2020; MELLO; TOMEI, 2021; SHAFFER *et al.*, 2012).

Now that Global mindset has been presented, the next session discusses the cross-cultural dimensions in international business, from different author´s point of view, and focuses on Andresen and Bergdolt (2017)´s summary of main dimensions, as demonstrated in figure 1, centering the attention on the behavioral dimension.

Throughout this work, the text will refer to the terms "intercultural" and "cross-cultural", as forms of cultural interactions. Many authors, such as González (2011) and Croucher and Kelly (2019) consider them as different, clarifying that "cross-cultural" means a comparison and contrast between two cultural groups, while "intercultural" refers to what happens when people from these two groups come together, interact and communicate; but in the Literature Review of this work, both terms appeared referring to cultural interactions (i.e. ANDRESEN. BERGDOLT, 2017; BÜCKER, POUTSMA, 2010; EXLINE, J. J.; HILL, 2012; FITZSIMMONS, 2013; HAMMER, 2011; PAINE *et al.*, 2016) reason why both terms are used in this dissertation (BARNEY, 1986).

2.1.3.
Cross-cultural expatriates' competencies and behavioral dimensions

Cross-cultural expatriates' competencies are relevant for distinct management purposes. The demands on individuals alter depending on the internationalization strategy of the company and job/role management level. Internationally operating expatriates require different cross-cultural competencies to succeed, depending on their tasks and their management level. But there are different approaches about which are the most important cross-cultural competencies required by an expatriate.

Mendenhall (2006) categorized the global leadership literature as exhibiting six core dimensions of competencies (Dispositions, Cognition, Relationship, Organizing Expertise, Business Expertise, and Visioning), with numerous facets within each dimension that are important to living and working in a foreign country as an expatriate (OSLAND, 2013; OSLAND, J. S.; BIRD, A.; MENDENHALL, M.; OSLAND, 2006). As per Bird *et al.* (2010), these six dimensions could be divided between those that involve competencies directly related to intercultural interaction at the person and small group level (which are critical to expatriate effectiveness and global leadership), and those that involve the mastery of more macro, global business knowledge and skills. These authors focused more specifically on traits, attitudes and knowledge skills; and Johnson, Lenartowicz and Apud (2006), in dimensions such as personal attributes (values, beliefs, and personality traits), personal skills (including abilities), and cultural knowledge (comprising culture-general as well as culture-specific knowledge).

The pyramid model of leadership global competence development of (MENDENHALL, p. 424, 2006), and that of Bird *et al.* (2010), both include humility and global mindset as important attributes for the global leader. Ananthram and Nankervis (2013; 2014) claimed that the literature review suggests that definitions of global mindset encompass qualities or personal attributes, knowledge and skills, behaviors or a combination of these. (GERTSEN, 1990) analyzed the affective, cognitive, communicative and behavioral dimensions. Bücker and Poutsma (2010) followed Gertsen (1990)´s conceptualization and stressed the importance of a behavioral component that Andresen and Bergdolt (2017) labeled as resources for adapting behavior. All these approaches share some commonalities: they refer to cross-cultural competencies as a combination of personal attributes (e.g., personality traits, values, etc.) and cognitive knowledge and skills (such as cognitive abilities and cultural knowledge).

Andresen and Bergdolt (2017) grouped the cross-cultural competences in four dimensions: Personal attributes, Cognitive Knowledge and skills, Resources for adapting behavior, and Motivation. On their systematic review from 1992 to 2015, when comparing literature on cultural intelligence and global mindset, they identified that while cultural intelligence refers to the behavioral and cognitive dimensions, emphasizing more the behavior perspective, global mindset had a greater focus on personal attributes as well as cognitive knowledge and skills,

missing studies on the behavior perspective. The authors emphasized that having a repertoire of appropriate behaviors in cross-cultural interactions is critical, as it is conceivable that, for instance, individuals could have the relevant cognitive knowledge and skills and personal attributes to function effectively within another culture yet fail to translate those skills and attributes into effective behavior within the new culture. Renkl and colleagues (1996) referred to the phenomenon of knowledge that is not transferred into practical contexts as inert knowledge. When this happens, a successful interaction would not happen. In this sense, functioning effectively within another culture, always also involves behavioral aspects (ANDRESEN; BERGDOLT, 2017).

Other researchers as Ashkenas and colleagues (2015) and Bucker and Poutsma (2010) refer behavior as an important competence and stated that only complex cognition and behavior can tackle challenges and demands of a complex global environment. Kefalas (1998) considers that Global mindset establishes boundaries and provides explanations of why things are the way they are, while at the same time establishing a guide for ways in which we should behave. Goldsmith and research colleagues (2003) note that effective global leaders exhibit distinguishing behaviors that seem to indicate a relationship to global mindset. Bouquet (2005) refers to a behavioral approach to measure global mindset focusing on real (and more readily observable) time and effort that the executive team devotes to communicating the meaning of international issues, both for themselves and for the benefit of the multinational as a whole. Gundling, Hogan and Cvitkovich (2011) showed evidence that behaviors as strong cultural self-knowledge, openness to the unexpected, and preserving balance while remaining true to its basic values are important competencies from successful global leaders. Bird *et al*. (2010) emphasized behavioral dimensions from cross-cultural expatriates' competencies such as: non judgementalness (the extent to which one is inclined to withhold or suspend judgment about persons or situations or behaviors that are new or unfamiliar), inquisitiveness (openness towards, and an active pursuit of understanding, ideas, values, norms, situations, and behaviors that are new and different), self-awareness (the degree to which people are aware of their strengths and weaknesses in interpersonal skills; their own philosophies and values; how past experiences have helped shape them into who they are as a person; and the impact their values and behavior have on relationships with others), social flexibility (the

extent to which individuals present themselves to others in order to create favorable impressions and to facilitate relationship building.

Kealey (1996) refers to social flexibility as "the ability to modify ideas and behavior, to compromise, and to be receptive to new ways of doing things". This is commonly manifested in both the global leadership research literature (OSLAND, J. S.; BIRD, A.; MENDENHALL, M.; OSLAND, 2006) and the expatriate research literature as being important to intercultural effectiveness (WARD; KENNEDY, 2001; MENDENHALL, M. E.; WEBER, T. J.; ARNARDOTTIR, A. A.; ODDOU, 2017). Scholars have operationalized social flexibility in a variety of ways. One approach is via the constructs of self-monitoring or impression management (MENDENHALL; WILEY, 1994). Mendenhall & Wiley (1994) hypothesized a relationship between impression management and expatriate adjustment, and Montagliani (1996) found that it significantly correlated with cultural adjustment scores, suggesting that individuals who use behavioral cues in the social environments of new cultures will increase their potential to enhance their ability to adjust and be effective in those new cultures. Similarly, in their metanalysis of the expatriate literature, Hechanova *et al.* (2003) reported that Caligiuri (1995) found that self-monitoring correlated with general expatriate adjustment and Harrison *et al.* (1996) found it was associated with interactional adjustment on the part of expatriates.

In the following pages I will discuss the features of humility and what this means for the task of managing, followed by a brief presentation of how humility impacts managers with a global mindset, in this case, expatriates.

2.2.
Humility: concepts and behavior

2.2.1.
Conceptualizing humility

The word humility comes from the Latin *humilitas*, which translation reminds us of the earth beneath us, referring to something fundamental within the individual (ARGANDONA, 2015). Humility is considered an ethical and a moral value of individuals (MURRAY, 2001) and, according to Morris *et al.* (2005), it does not involve self-humiliation or excessively positive self-esteem, presenting itself in three connected and distinct dimensions: self-awareness, openness to others, and

the transcendence of oneself to others. In this sense, humility reveals a greater human sensitivity to oneself and to the relationship with others, reflecting the desire to acquire a sophisticated awareness of one's own strengths, as well as weaknesses, in an active engagement in relationships with others and in consideration of something greater than the self or beyond personal interests (MORRIS; BROTHERIDGE; URBANSKI, 2005).

Some researchers view humility as an adaptive strength, more than being modest, it´s being aware of one´s imperfections, open to new ideas, holistic and appreciative (TANGNEY, 2000). Authors such as Tangney (2000) and Ou *et al.* (2014) sustained that humility can be a positive human trait, which is both stable and long-lasting, based on a self-perception that something greater than the self exists. But both the word humility and the word humiliation are related to the term humus, which means "ground and earth", to lower someone to the earth. To humiliate is a verb from the Latin *humiliare*, which means to make humble, to abate, to oppress, to degrade, to vex, reason why some associate humility with humiliation, negative self-views and a sense of worthlessness (EXLINE, J. J.; GEYER, 2004; GRENBERG, 2007). Neither it should be confused with lack of strength, passivity, anonymity, self- deprecation, lack of self-esteem or self-confidence, nor, of course, with lack of will or ambition (ARGANDONA, 2015).

From some modern definitions, such as that of Davis *et al.* (2010) and, Nielsen *et al.* (2010), Hoekstra *et al.* (2008) state that "Humility is an appropriate self-awareness that avoids thinking too highly of ourselves, bended with a healthy self-respect that avoids thinking too little of ourselves - allowing us to realistically access our own accomplishments while continuing the pursuit of our own personal development".

Humility considers the intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions (ARGANDONA, 2015; DAVIS; WORTHINGTON; HOOK, 2010). These dimensions can be observed in an interconnected way, since humble persons have high self-knowledge, as they can understand their own strengths and weaknesses (NIELSEN; MARRONE; SLAY, 2010), in allusion to the intrapersonal approach; as well as when they have an aptitude for emotional management, showing ability for self-control, in other words, how they react to how others see them and they sees others, in line with the interpersonal or expressed approach (ARGANDONA, 2015; MORRIS; BROTHERIDGE; URBANSKI, 2005). The interdependence of

visions holds that humility is practiced for the development or improvement of the agent and for the service to others (DAVIS *et al*., 2011).

In the organizational literature, there is a greater consensus to what relates to the intrapersonal dimension of humility. Most researchers agree that, in this dimension, humility involves a precise vision of oneself, of one´s limitations. The core of humility, based on this dimension, is the self-awareness. The humble person is aware of his status, knowledge, abilities, strengths and weaknesses (DRIVER, 2001). However, authors differ when searching to delineate the main interpersonal aspects of humility (DAVIS; HOOK, 2014) which is the dimension involving being driven to others. Although humility is considered to be inside the individual, it is mainly perceived by others (DAVIS *et al*., 2011).

In order to better understand the objective analysis of this interpersonal dimension, Owens *et al*. (2013) have analyzed the literature based on the different definitions of humility, used in the previous 10 years, and created "expressed humility", which highlights only behaviors that can be observed by others, putting aside the intrapersonal aspects of humility (cognitions and emotions). Based on the authors, "expressed humility" is behavior based, it arises in social contexts in which individuals demonstrate the ability to correctly self-assess themselves and to understand their strengths and weaknesses (self-conscience), show appreciation for the strengths and contributions of others, and are open to new ideas and to learning from others.

Owens and Hekman (2016) considered three components in the definition of Expressed Humility: **(i)** Manifested Willingness to See the Self Accurately, **(ii)** Appreciation of Others' Strengths and Contributions, and **(iii)** Teachability. These interrelated themes are essential for defining humility in an organizational context.

(i) Manifested Willingness to See the Self Accurately

The first component of expressed humility captures a willingness to engage in an ongoing process of achieving accurate self-awareness through interactions with others. (NIELSEN; MARRONE; SLAY, 2010) suggested that "people with humility are actively engaged in utilizing information gathered in interactions with others, not only to make sense of, but also, when necessary, to modify the self. That is, their self-views are focused on their interdependence with others rather than their independence from others". Humble individuals are aware of human limitations and accept that they have

both strengths and weaknesses (MORRIS; BROTHERIDGE; URBANSKI, 2005; OWENS; JOHNSON; MITCHELL, 2013). Such self-acceptance allows them to escape egoism, put their accomplishments and abilities in perspective, and willingly acknowledge their mistakes or limitations (OWENS; HEKMAN, 2016). Such inclinations are often grounded in accepting something greater than the self (OU *et al.*, 2014), connecting with the larger community, appreciating the value of all creation (TANGNEY, 2009) and lacking superiority (DAVIS *et al.*, 2011; OU; WALDMAN; PETERSON, 2018). Humility fosters a more objective appraisal of personal strengths and limitations that is manifested by acknowledging mistakes, admitting personal limits, and seeking realistic feedback about the self (OWENS; HEKMAN, 2016).

(ii) Appreciation of Others' Strengths and Contributions

The second component involves appreciation of others' strengths and contributions (OU *et al.*, 2014; VERA, D.; RODRIGUEZ-LOPEZ, 2004), appraising others generously (MORRIS; BROTHERIDGE; URBANSKI, 2005; TANGNEY, 2009). Such appreciation is based on the understanding of their own strengths and, thus, rises above the need for entitlement or domination over others (OU; WALDMAN; PETERSON, 2018; PETERSON, C.; SELIGMAN, 2004). Expressed humility reflects attitudes that are other enhancing rather than self-enhancing (MORRIS; BROTHERIDGE; URBANSKI, 2005) and leads one to acknowledge and show that he/she values others' strengths (OWENS; HEKMAN, 2016; TANGNEY, 2009).

Humility allows one to transcend the comparative–competitive response when interacting with others and, instead, acknowledges and admires the strengths and contributions of others without feeling threatened by them (EXLINE, J. J.; GEYER, 2004). Expressed humility entails the behavioral manifestation of possessing an exalted view of the capacities of others rather than a negative view of oneself (OWENS; HEKMAN, 2016).

Humble managers, by attending to their qualities, will be less likely to hold simplistic, dualistic evaluations of others (i.e., competent versus incompetent) and by so doing, they are more readily able to identify in others valuable resources for social modeling and learning (OWENS; HEKMAN, 2016).

(iii)Teachability

The third main component of expressed humility is teachability, which is manifested by showing openness to learning, feedback, and new ideas from others. Humility involves a tendency to keep an open mind and continuously learn and improve (MORRIS; BROTHERIDGE; URBANSKI, 2005; TANGNEY, 2009). With the awareness of their limitations and weaknesses, humble individuals are eager to improve themselves. They are open to new information, ideas, or paradigms (VERA, D.; RODRIGUEZ-LOPEZ, 2004), and they are willing to take contradictory advice or even criticism (OU; WALDMAN; PETERSON, 2018; OWENS; JOHNSON; MITCHELL, 2013). Tangney (2000, p. 72) argued that "humility carries with it an open-mindedness, a willingness to . . . seek advice, and a desire to learn." Similarly, (TEMPLETON, 1997, p. 162), noted, "Inherent in humility resides an open and receptive mind . . . it leaves us more open to learn from others" (OWENS; HEKMAN, 2016).

The ability of leaders to learn is fundamental for companies competing in the present knowledge world. The rapid advance of technology and fast changes in the global environment suggest that companies are in greater need of leaders (TEMPLETON, 1997, p. 162) and employees who are teachable and have a willingness to acquire new skills, absorb new information, and learn from others. Humble individuals afford others a sense of voice, which has been shown to foster greater trust and motivation. A thirst for learning is one of the most critical capacities of effective leaders (OWENS; HEKMAN, 2016).

Now that humility has been conceptualized, the next session specifically focuses on how humility is being discussed in management.

2.2.2.
Humility in management

Studies on the topic of humility have historical roots and are present in several fields of knowledge such as Psychology, Philosophy, Theology, Ethics, and Management, among other areas (FROSTENSON, 2016). The term has lost its luster in the modern era due to its possible unworthy connotation and association with low self-esteem (TANGNEY, 2000), but recently, new theories started to portray humility as a strength and a talent (ARGANDONA, 2015).

Business interactions provide the professionals with the ability to understand and appreciate the perspectives of others and move to focus from self to a broader consideration of the context, reason why humility has been documented as important in business interactions (CALIGIURI, P.; CAPRAR, 2022; (OU; WALDMAN; PETERSON, 2018).

The importance of humility in management has been grounded in recent studies (ARGANDONA, 2015; FROSTENSON, 2016). Identifying the humble behaviors expressed within the organizational environment, in the interpersonal dimension, and as a measure of general construct, means recognizing: **(i)** manifested willingness to see the self accurately **(ii)** appreciation of others' strengths and contributions and **(i**ii) teachability: showing openness to learning, feedback, and new ideas from others (OWENS; JOHNSON; MITCHELL, 2013).

Many empirical studies (e.g.: CALIGIURI, P.; CAPRAR, 2022; DAVIS *et al*., 2017; OU *et al*., 2014; OWENS, B. P.; HEKMAN, 2012; OWENS; HEKMAN, 2016; REGO *et al*., 2019; ROWATT *et al*., 2006; TOMEI, P. A.; CUENCA, R.; MELLO, 2022); provide support for considering humility as a positive and effective quality for individuals, teams and organizations. In these works, the authors analyze the role of humble leadership in engagement and learning (NIELSEN; MARRONE, 2018; OWENS, B. P.; ROWATT, W. C.; WILKINS, 2011), as well as in motivation (OWENS, B. P.; HEKMAN, 2012), and in resilience (ZHU; ZHANG; SHEN, 2019). They also assess its effect in their responsiveness (PRAYAG, 2018), on the well-being of followers (ZHONG *et al*., 2019), on innovation and creativity (CHEN *et al*., 2021; HU *et al*., 2018; MALLÉN *et al*., 2019; WANG, X., LI, H., & YIN, 2020) and adaptability (FORTH, 2020; MORRIS; BROTHERIDGE; URBANSKI, 2005). Additionally, these studies consider the effect of humility on interpersonal

relationships, and on cooperative relationships in the workplace (OWENS; JOHNSON; MITCHELL, 2013; REGO; CUNHA; SIMPSON, 2018).

A relevant aspect for the understanding of humility in management is associated with the leader's behavior towards his followers (ARGANDONA, 2017). The leader humble behavior is contagious to the team (OWENS; HEKMAN, 2016), by promoting information sharing and joint decision-making (OU; WALDMAN; PETERSON, 2018), in addition to a more constructive organizational climate, and teamwork (ALI *et al*., 2020). As for followers, regarding humility in organizations, those who express a genuine humble behavior are considered more competent and trustworthy by their leaders (YANG; ZHANG; CHEN, 2019). At the same time, followers' confidence in their leaders tends to diminish when the first perceive that their leaders´ speeches and humble behaviors are misaligned (BHARANITHARAN *et al*., 2019; SWAIN, J.; KORENMAN, 2018).

Literature reviews on humility in organizations are rare and have started to present themselves to the field from the last ten years. In Table 1, the main works of literature review in organizations, published from 2000 to 2020, are presented, in chronological order, with their respective objectives.

Table 1: Major literature review publications on humility in organizations from 2000 to 2020

References	Objetive of Works
Morris, Brotheridge, Urbanski (2005)	Explore the potential nexus between humility and leadership, offering an accurate conceptualization of the phenomenon of humility, identifying the predictive traits, as well as presenting specific leadership behaviors that are probably the results of high levels of humility.
Owens, Rowatt, Wilkins, (2011)	Discuss the historical roots, meaning and antecedents of humility; discuss the growing relevance of humility in organizations; highlight existing research on humility; consider the possible disadvantages of humility in organizations.
Chiu, Huang, Hung (2012)	Provide a definition of humility that allows to explore the differences between Western and Chinese views of humility.
Argandoña, (2015)	Explain the basic traits of humility in general, and how they are manifested in the manager's life and profession; to show, within the ethics of virtues, that humility is not only a personal desire, but a fundamental quality of a good manager and good management.

Frostenson (2016)	Argue that humility reflects the interdependent nature of business; contextualize the virtue of humility together with economic, cognitive and moral aspects of business practice, and managerial work; link the intra-personal and intra-organizational perspective on humility to an inter-organizational perspective.
Wallace, Chiu, Owens (2016)	Create a new theoretical view on how leader´s humility and the characteristics of the team members promote conditions for a shared leadership, and when shared leadership relates to the effectiveness of the team.
Argandoña (2017)	Determine the role of virtues in general, and humility, when applied to managerial work; explain what makes the humble manager "different".
Nielsen, Marrone (2018)	Seek greater consensus on the definitions and concepts of humility, considering the progress that has been made in measuring humility, specifying key measurement strategies, and also synthesizing the existing empirical findings on humility, to illuminate the singularity of the construct.
(McElroy-Heltzel *et al.*, 2019)	Present a critical review of 22 measures of humility, including (a) measures of general humility, (b) measures of humility subdomains, (c) indirect measures of humility, and (d) state measures of humility

Source: CUENCA, R.; TOMEI, P. A.; MELLO, 2022.

Humility is particularly important for those who hold positions in management or who are vested with authority and power (ARGANDONA, 2015), which is the case of senior assigned expatriates (AE´s), who manage with a global mindset. Humility is often disdained, as inappropriate in someone who holds a position of leadership (TANGNEY, 2000) but this opinion emerges from a mistaken understanding of what it means to be humble (ARGANDONA, 2015; TOMEI, P. A.; CUENCA, R.; MELLO, 2022).

2.2.3.
Humility and organization behavior

Exline (2012), Peters (2011), Owens (2013) and colleagues on their research, have associated humility to human generosity, promoting improvement in the quality of social relations, in the emotional well-being of individuals, as well as on one´s own performance at the organizational level. Some other empirical studies show the negative effects of lack of humility on interpersonal relationships, conflicts, and the lack of social acceptance (PAULHUS, 1998; VAZIRE;

FUNDER, 2006), as well as the role of humility in the disposition to help and cooperate (EXLINE, J. J.; GEYER, 2004; HILBIG; ZETTLER, 2009; LABOUFF *et al.*, 2012).

Humility has also been associated to the increase of individual´s commitment to social justice (JANKOWSKI; SANDAGE; HILL, 2013) and a greater willingness of groups to learn from each other (OWENS; JOHNSON; MITCHELL, 2013). According to Owens and colleagues (2013), the power of humility in improving individual´s performance comes from the fact that accepting the weaknesses, and recognizing the strengths of others, favor opportunities of growth. The authors emphasized that strengths-based view of humility supported the positive relationships between expressed humility and positive attitudes, traits, and adaptive behaviors (i.e., self-esteem via core self-evaluation, emotional stability, self-efficacy, performance improvement, learning orientation, and engagement). They have analyzed the relation between leaders´ expressed humility and employees´ retention and concluded that expressed humility presents a compensatory effect on the development of those with less general mental ability and favors teamwork. Expressed humility is an important component of effective leadership in modern organizations and humble leaders promote teams led to learning, involve employees, maximize work satisfaction and foster employee retention (OWENS; JOHNSON; MITCHELL, 2013). Anand, Walsh and Moffett (2019) have done an exploratory investigation to analyze the role of humility on knowledge sharing among employee and propose a new conceptual model, in which humility is an important variable to be considered.

Until the early century, a humble behavior was frequently disregarded and considered inadequate to someone in a leadership position (TANGNEY, 2000). However, theoretical, and empirical approaches in work psychology and ethics considered humility as one´s strength, and not a weakness. The popularity of Collins (2001) in this period was fundamental to the change of perspective on the importance of humility in leadership. Collins (2001) proposed that the leadership of those who have the true humility may bring significant benefits to the organization and demonstrated that leaders´ humility may influence sustained performance. His studies focused on eleven companies which performance changed from "good" to "great", and he identified a common denominator: an excellent leader, named by the author as level 5, gathers the skills from all the other four types

of leaders: level 1 (individual skills), level 2 (team skills), level 3 (administrative skills), level 4 (leadership skills); and, additionally, humility. According to the author, level 5 leaders are modest, constantly talking about the company, emphasizing, and praising the contributions of others to its success and avoiding highlight his own role. They have unwavering determination, take difficult decisions, look at the mirror when they search for responsibility for bad results, accept personal responsibility and never put blame on other people, other factors, or bad luck. At the same time, they look out of the window to assign good results to other people, other factors or to good luck.

The discussions on humble leadership currently permeate not only recent academic publications but also business research (DELOITTE, 2016; KDVI, 2020; KORN FERRY, 2020a). Humility in leadership is a topic that is each time more important as markets continue to globalize and companies grow more complex and diverse (CUENCA; TOMEI; MELLO, 2022). In such uncertain, unpredictable and dynamic world, it becomes increasingly difficult for any single leader to "figure it all out from the top," (SENGE, 1990, p. 7; OWENS, B. P.; HEKMAN, 2012) so humility is becoming more critical for leaders who manage their organizations in increasingly turbulent times (i.e., MORRIS *et al.*, 2005; VERA, D.; RODRIGUEZ-LOPEZ, 2004); thus, emphasis has shifted to leaders engaging in more "bottom-up" humble approaches to leadership (OWENS, B. P.; HEKMAN, 2012). A humble leader is open to new paradigms; is anxious to learn from others; recognizes his own limitations and errors and try to correct them; accepts failures with pragmatism; asks for advice; coaches others; has a genuine desire to serve. He is not narcissist, and rejects adulation and self-complacency (VERA, D.; RODRIGUEZ-LOPEZ, 2004).

According to Mallén and colleagues (2019), recent studies pointed out the importance of humility and contributed to add more theoretical and empirical rigor to the concept, reasoning that humility is extremely important in leadership and specially necessary in times of crisis, allowing leaders to practice empathy, listen carefully to people, and involve all parties (e.g. ARGANDONA, 2015; NIELSEN; MARRONE, 2018; WANG; LIU; ZHU, 2018). The studies on humble leadership provide new ideas on collaborative behavior, sharing of information and joint decision making, which are necessary to good performance in the complex and dynamic business environment of today. Humble leaders have different visions of

themselves and their abilities and admit their mistakes and limitations, which also include accepting their failures and weaknesses to their superiors (OU *et al.*, 2014). Ashford and colleagues (2018) argued that the behavior of CEO´s seeking feedback – a core component of humble leadership – encourages other members of the leadership team to exhibit more humility. In line with Ashford and colleagues, similar studies of Peng *et al.* (2020) and Ye *et al.* (2020) demonstrated that leader´s humility positively influences the team´s humility, generating a ripple effect. When summarizing the literature on why leaders fail, Burke noted that it is "not what [leaders] know or how bright they are that leads to success or failure; [rather] how well they work with others, and how well they understand themselves" (BURKE, 2006).

Finally, in order to analyze the genesis of humility in leadership, Hoekstra and colleagues (2008) identified visible behaviors of leaders through expressions of their deeply held internal beliefs, values and concepts emphasizing the importance of teachability, accountability and feedback to make humility last.

2.2.4.
Cultural and intellectual humility

Over the last two decades, with the growing of literature on humility, several types of humility have been proposed. Worthington and colleagues (2017) on their *Handbook of Humility: Theory, Research, and Applications*, present a collection of research on humility in various context, showing the current discussions on (a) *cultural humility*, which manifests in the context of engaging cultural differences (b) *intellectual humility*, which concerns humility in the context of different ideas, opinions, and viewpoints (c) *relational humility*, which involves one person's view of another person's humility within a relational context; (d) *religious humility*, which concerns the ways that individuals and groups engage around religious beliefs, values, and practices; (e) *political humility*, which is interested in negotiating and respecting others' political, philosophical, and pragmatic ideas, and (f) *clinician humility*, which is the degree to which a counselor/ psychotherapist exhibits humility in a clinical setting.

With so many types of humility, the conceptual relationships between them and whether they are subdomains of general humility or not remain unknown

(WORTHINGTON JR, E. L.; DAVIS, D. E.; HOOK, 2017). While the various definitions and the expansion of the concept may be a natural maturation process of the field of study, there is a danger that the various definitions of humilies may risk of not converging on a common ground (DAVIS; HOOK, 2014). Various researchers have proposed that the above-mentioned types of humility are sub-domains of general humility, but this is questioned by some, such as Davis *et al*. (2016), as there is limited empirical evidence to support this claim. There are also arguments in which one type of humility in a larger construct can contain other types of humility, which can be the case of intellectual humility having political humility and religious humility as sub-types of intellectual humility (WORTHINGTON; ALLISON, 2018), or cultural humility being considered sometimes a special case of intellectual humility that manifests in cross-cultural occasions (DAVIS; HOOK, 2019).

The suggestion from Worthington and Allison (2018) was that the conceptual differences among various types of humility should be based on a practical standpoint, with the purpose, for example, of enriching the understanding of humility in various contexts, rather than a hard, philosophical commitment. Therefore, there is a risk of labeling the same construct different names or labeling different construct same names (DAVIS; HOOK, 2019). Given that the research on subdomains of humility is still in its early stages, these claims are lacking in empirical evidence (DAVIS; HOOK, 2019).

Cultural humility, as a proposed subdomain of humility, has emerged in recent decades concerning the manifestation of humility in multicultural and cross-cultural encounters (HOOK, J. N.; DAVIS, D.; OWEN, J.; DEBLAERE, 2017; MOSHER, D. K.; HOOK, J. N.; CAPTARI, L. E.; DAVIS, D. E.; DEBLAERE, C.; OWEN, 2017). Tervalon and Murray-García (1998) first proposed the term cultural humility in the context of medical practice and education. The authors described cultural humility as the life-long process of engaging in self-reflections and self-examinations as practitioners, and presented this concept in their seminal work in the medical field: "a lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and critique, to redressing the power imbalances in the physician-patient dynamic (TERVALON; MURRAY-GARCÍA, 1998, p. 117) and introduced cultural humility as a desirable goal of multicultural education.

Cultural humility involves issues that concern both intrapersonal and interpersonal performance, so that an individual becomes aware of their own worldview, and intentionally engages with people from different cultures (HOOK, 2014). Foronda and colleagues (2016) analyzed the concept of Cultural Humility, reviewing 62 articles found in the disciplines of education, nursing, medicine and anthropology to identify antecedents, attributes and consequences of cultural humility and identified that the antecedents were: diversity and power imbalance; the attributes were: openness, self-awareness, egoless, supportive interactions, and self-reflection and critique; and the consequences were mutual empowerment, partnerships, respect, optimal care and lifelong learning. The authors described cultural humility as "a process of openness, self-awareness, being egoless, and incorporating self-reflection and critique after willingly interacting with diverse individuals" (FORONDA *et al*., 2016, p. 213). It focuses on a lifelong learning process, through constant self-reflection on their own values and the growth of a relationship with the other individual, to reduce power imbalances.

The theory of cultural humility is based on a set of evidences that borrow concepts from the medicine, nursing, and education, and it has five main premises:

"1. All humans are different from each other in some way, but yet part of a global community; 2. Human beings are inherently altruistic; 3. All humans have equal value; 4. Cultural conflict is a normal and expected part of life and 5. All humans are lifelong learners" (FORONDA, 2020, p. 8), and its practice involves (i) a flexible mindset, (ii) a focus on others and self (not only on 'self'), and (iii) a perspective of all human beings being on a horizontal plane, meaning that all human beings are of equal value. Cultural humility is a process of self-reflection and lifelong learning that involves supportive interactions, which may include verbal and/or non-verbal communications.

The Rainbow model of cultural humility (FORONDA, 2020, p. 10), reproduced in the below image (Figure 3) summarizes the procedures to guide the practice of cultural humility, providing a breakdown of the items that should be taken into account when cultural conflicts arise (diversity, context, political climate, personal beliefs and values, situation and physical environment), as explained further down.
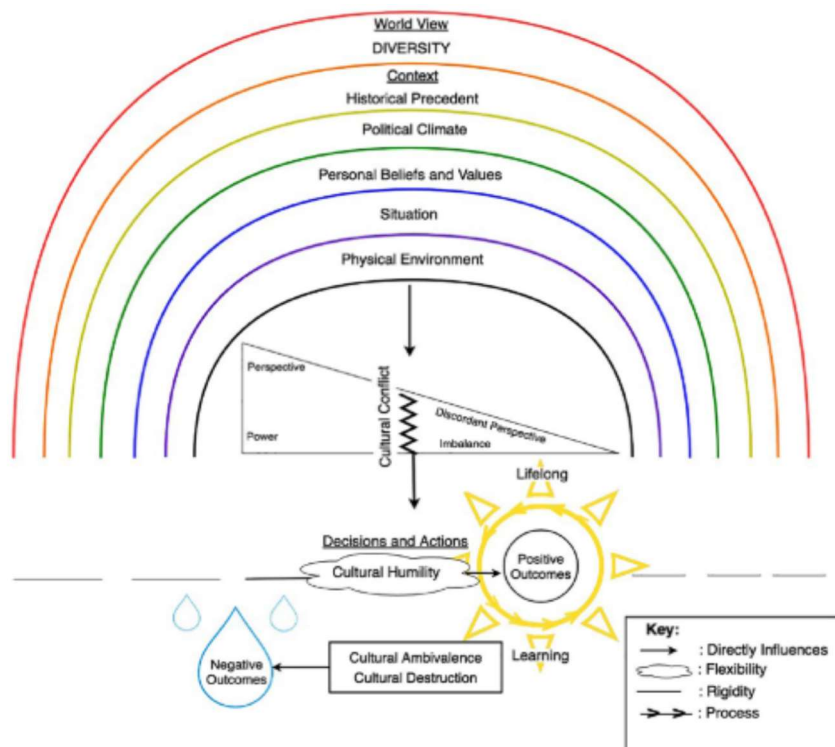
Figure 3: Rainbow Model of Cultural Humility
Source: FORONDA, 2020, p. 10.

The author clarifies some definitions to facilitate the understanding of her model (FORONDA, 2020, p. 9).

1. Diversity refers to the differences in humankind.

2. Historical precedent refers to consideration of past shared or social events that contribute to perspectives.

3. Political climate refers to the recent and current state of political affairs that contribute to perspectives

4. Personal beliefs and values refer to a person's religious and spiritual beliefs, as well as individual personal preferences, values, and past experiences that contribute to one´s perspectives

5. Situation refers to the immediate circumstances.

6. Physical environment refers to the surrounding atmosphere, space or proximity.

7. Power imbalance refers to an inequality between one individual, group or community compared to another.

8. Cultural conflict refers to a difference in perspective on an issue.

9. Perspective refers to the point of view, belief or lifestyle of an individual, group or community.

10. Discordant perspective refers to an individual, group or community that holds a different or opposing perspective.

11. Flexibility refers to being open-minded regarding the impact of cultural conflict on oneself and others.

12. Rigidity refers to being closed-minded considering only the impact of cultural conflict on oneself.

13. The horizontal plane refers to a vision of all humankind having equal value and importance.

14. Cultural humility refers to the recognition of diversity and power imbalances between individuals, groups or communities, and the actions of being open, self-aware, egoless, flexible, exuding respect and supportive interactions, focusing on self and others to formulate a personalized response. Cultural humility is a process of critical self-reflection and lifelong learning, resulting in mutually positive outcomes.

15. Cultural ambivalence refers to the decision and action to neglect to consider and recognize diversity and power imbalances (i.e., treat all individuals alike).

16. Cultural Destruction

17. Self-reflection refers to thinking about past events with the intention of identifying opportunities for future improvement and learning.

18. Lifelong learning refers to critical self-reflection and lifelong perspective transformation. Such lifelong learning is both an attribute and a result of cultural humility.

19. Positive outcomes refer to pleasant consequences such as mutual empowerment, mutual respect, ideal partnerships and care, as well as some negative outcomes which refer to harmful or destructive consequences,

20. Negative outcomes refer to harmful or destructive consequences such as discrimination, exclusion, inequality, disparities, prejudice, oppression, intolerance, stereotypes, stigma and marginalization.

According to the model, like the rays of a rainbow that merge, all these factors listed in the model also overlap and merge to present an overall context that influences the primary and discordant perspective of the individual, group or of the community.

The model presents three alternatives that an individual has in the face of a cultural conflict:

(i) apply cultural humility, which leads to positive outcomes (as described in item 19), including the learning process, – symbolized by the positive symbol of the sun. The cloud shape of cultural humility means the flexibility involved in this decision and action and the dashed horizontal line means placing humankind on a plane where every human being has the same value.

(ii) be culturally ambivalent, and

(iii) be culturally destructive.

Both the second and third alternatives lead to decisions and actions which are below the horizontal level, and place most of the focus on the needs of the individual, group, or community. These alternatives can lead to negative results, as described in item 20, which are symbolized by raindrops and unfavorable weather.

In intrapersonal relations, an individual who is culturally humble must constantly engage in self-reflection and criticism, investigating their own cultural values and their limitations in understanding another person's cultural norms (ISAACSON, 2014). This includes becoming aware of unintentional cultural prejudices and stereotypes (such as stemming from racism) and other similar attitudes.

Cultural humility is fundamental for the development of flexibility and growth of individuals, as it favors people to realize, for example, that issues of ethnocentrism are the result of a lack of understanding of the differences found when we engage with people from other cultures (YEAGER; BAUER-WU, 2013). Individuals with a higher level of ethnocentrism tend to have difficulties critically examining other cultures, and their own culture. Cultural humility offers an accurate self-perception that helps individuals not to idealize their own cultural virtues and to recognize their own limitations without cultural bias (PAINE; JANKOWSKI; SANDAGE, 2016). In interpersonal relations, culturally humble individuals must

show respect and openness to the worldview of others, reducing power imbalances where they are identified.

In the last decade, several studies have linked cultural humility to organizational practices, as the following studies illustrate: (i) Hook *et al.* (2013) found that cultural humility was associated with a strong therapeutic alliance, an expectation that the therapy would be effective, and that clients would be less likely to end therapy early; (ii) in a cross-sectional study of 45 university students seeking services at their local university counseling center, Owen *et al.* (2014) found that clients' perception of their therapist's cultural humility had a significant effect on therapy outcomes; (iii) Hook *et al.* (2016) carried out an empirical study in the clinical area, and concluded that the client's perceived cultural humility towards the clinician was the most significant predictor of the frequency of racial insensitivity on the part of the clinician; (iv) Prasad *et al.*, 2016), after analyzing the effects of cultural insensitivity on the performance of activities, suggested a variety of activities such as reading and group discussion of a book that explores cultural differences.

All human beings long for interaction,and as society advances in terms of globalization, and expectations of new demands for work and efficiency arise, conflict will become more and more common, and we will benefit from knowing how to understand each other (FORONDA, 2020).

The theory of cultural humility presents a new approach to diversity and conflict, and its application of the theory can promote a better understanding of the diverse considerations involved in being culturally humble. Many organizations describe issues related to expatriations such as lack of teamwork, toxic environments, incivility, and misunderstandings and, by analyzing the many variables that lead to diversity and power imbalances, one can seek to identify common goals, to collaborate and to empower each other (FORONDA, 2020), valuing humanity and flexibility to resolve conflicts in a positive way.

When we talk about knowledge and learning we need to introduce a sub-dimension of humility: intellectual humility. According to McElroy and colleagues (2014), intellectual humility refers to the knowledge or intellectual influence of someone who has: (a) insight into the limits of one's own knowledge, marked by openness to new ideas; and (b) control of arrogance, marked by the ability to present one's ideas in a non-offensive way and receive contrary ideas without being

offended, even when confronted with alternative points of view. It refers to recognizing how wrong our personal beliefs or opinions can be. The lower the intellectual humility, the greater the tendency to assume that people who think differently from us are intellectually and morally inferior (KRUMREI-MANCUSO; ROUSE, 2016). Intellectual humility defines the way you position yourself in the face of knowledge: unreceptive, curious, available, being open to new experiences, and its relationship with the willingness to learn (DAVIS *et al*., 2017), therefore intellectual humility is relevant to understand the different ways that individuals acquire knowledge, approach information and exchange ideas (BAEHR, 2016; JARVINEN, M. J.; PAULUS, 2017). This assumes that intellectually humble people understand and accept that their cognitive faculties are not perfect and that their views can sometimes be wrong.

The characteristics of intellectual humility are: an openness to reviewing your beliefs and opinions and to obtaining new information, a healthy independence between intellect and ego, (which means that people will not feel threatened by intellectual disagreements), an attitude that avoids excess of confidence in their knowledge and a respect for the points of view of others (KRUMREI-MANCUSO; ROUSE, 2016). According to Baehr (2016) and Elder and Paul (2012), it is closely linked to learning because it allows individuals to better understand their areas of ignorance, clearly define what they understand and what they do not understand about a subject, avoid allegations of knowledge they do not have, admit errors in their understanding, discover their false beliefs and misconceptions, and change their mind. Successful teams need humility and an understanding of their members' strengths and weaknesses to develop a psychologically safe culture that favors error as a learning tool (EDMONDSON, 2011; SCHEIN, 2013). Humble team members have more space to say what they don't know, to ask others for help and to maintain the necessary openness to new ideas (CROSSMAN; DOSHI, 2015; ZAWODNIAK, 2010). Hence, humble behaviors underpin the learning attitude exhibited by high-performing teams, while arrogance is considered to be a major cause of lack of group productivity (EDMONDSON, 2012).

Recent media is full of stories of arrogant, overconfident, and narcissistic leaders who lack empathy and ignore feedback from their teams (KAPLAN, 2021; MANGAN, 2018). Often the best way to understand a concept is to better understand its antithesis. In the case of humility, this suggests a further exploration of arrogance.

Arrogance is described as excessive pride or selfishness, and in classical Greek tragedies it often led to the downfall and death of those who possessed it (DOVER, 1994). Leaders who possess extreme arrogance are often faced with flaws that their arrogance prevents them from identifying or addressing (CAMPBELL, W. K.; FOSTER, 2007), especially when they consider their own opinions and perspectives far above those of others, sometimes generating disastrous results (Schein, 2016). Tiberius and Walker (1998) describe arrogant individuals as those who expect other people to submit to them and who have a disdainful attitude towards the opinions of others. According to the authors, arrogant individuals see themselves as having much to offer others but little to gain from them, consider themselves more perfect, and tend to consider their own concerns more important than the interests of others.

Research done with different age groups indicated that, in general, participants expressed more sympathy and respect when dealing with people who displayed humble behaviors than arrogant people, who tried to demonstrate their competence and ability, their degree of self-importance, their inflated self-view and their desire for credit and prestige (COPPOLA, 2021).

After having presented cultural and intellectual humility, the next session focuses on humility and expatriates, starting with reviewing the literature on humility and global mindset, followed by humility and cultural context, and finally by cultural humility, humble behavior and expatriates.

2.3.
Humility and expatriates

2.3.1.
Humility and global mindset

As demonstrated by Andresen and Bergdolt (2019) in their analysis of antecedents of a global mindset, leaders need to overcome language barriers and adapt to unaccustomed activities and behavior in order to collaborate with people

coming from different national and cultural backgrounds, and this raises the complexity of thoughts and actions to a higher level.

In the management literature, Mendenhall (2006) and Bird *et al*. (2010) had already brought humility and global mindset as important attributes of a global leader. Other relevant studies that emphasize the relationship between humility and global mindset are: (i) KJAR (2007); (ii) KEYS, D. T.; WELLINS (2008); (iii) KONYU-FOGEL (2011) and (iv) CSEH; DAVIS; KHILJI (2013), which are summarized below:

(i) Kjar (2007) identified six characteristics for individuals with a global mindset: including contextual sensitivity, deep listening, personal learning orientation, humility, self-reflection, and entrepreneurial enthusiasm.

1. Contextual sensitivity – Learn enough about language and culture to react appropriately in unplanned situations and build trust.

2. Deep listening – Listen actively searching for the deeper meaning of words, the nuances of local expressions.

3. Personal learning orientation – Be more careful about not making mistakes, knowing they will be in this cultural setting for some time. Try to become more like the local culture.

4. Humility – See fallibility in their own position; more eager to compromise to show trustworthiness. Self-efface in social situations. Seek advice, demonstrate willingness to accommodate differences, to understand personal limitations, seek success for others, graciousness.

5. Self-reflection – Take time to ask questions, think before speaking, weigh ethical dilemmas more carefully.

6. Entrepreneurial enthusiasm - Build relationships to establish reputation for future work. Concerned with preserving local flavor while considering the firm's vision.

(ii) Keys and Wellins (2008) study implies that global leaders must be people-skilled, good at outsmarting competitors, able to protect assets, contend with complex regulations and environments, able to take and manage risks and uncertainty, and have the ability to gain trust and the respect of their followers. In summary, global leaders must possess a mix of international understanding, experience, and global competencies (p.

37-38). The authors describe the DNA of global leaders as exhibiting the following ten behaviors:

1. People black belt: able to bring out the best in people, show authenticity, build trust, motivate, and inspire individuals across cultures

2. Master mobilizer: flexible, organized, and influences people and resources expeditiously

3. Visionary: think conceptually, able to navigate ambiguity, take entrepreneurial initiative

4. Contextual chameleon: adaptable and poised with cultural sensitivity

5. Intellectual grunt: able to think conceptually and make strategic decisions, deal with both complexity and ambiguity at the same time

6. Humility: receptive to feedback, shows willing to adjust strategy, maintains a learning orientation, and possesses accurate self-insight.

7. Global explorer: show learning agility and a passion for seeking information, ask questions and are interested in understanding foreign concepts and culture

8. Solid as a rock: exhibit resilience and sound operational decision-making judgment

9. Company poster child: able to balance culture with results and lead with vision and values while displaying executive disposition

10. Unbridled energy: demonstrate capacity for focus and productivity and possess energy to act fast

(iii) Konyu-Fogel (2011) her studies on Global mindset identified, thru qualitative research, that Humility was a necessary attribute to conducting global business. The eight additional characteristics of those with a global mindset, noted by respondents in her research, imply that in addition to possessing intellectual and cultural intelligence, leaders also need certain personal attributes such as patience, tolerance, curiosity, and humility, in addition to knowledge of global product, of other cultures and of the economic, socio-political, and ethical environment of conducting global business.

(iv) Cseh *et al.* (2013) identified transcendence, plasticity of the mind, mindfulness, curiosity, and humility as vital characteristics of global leaders that lead to a global mindset." In their research, the learning journeys from the global leaders were characterized by informal learning during everyday work and life experiences including learning from mistakes, and from others, like clients, mentors, employees, media, friends, reading and travelling. At the core of learning and developing the global mindset is self-reflection, leading to the "self-awareness of otherness" as well as reflection with others. Global mindset reflects self-confidence balanced by humility and generosity, and like cultural competence and intelligence including skills such as flexibility and adaptability, collaboration and listening.

The above studies showed how humility has been previously treated as an important element for those with a global mindset. The next session focuses on humility, most specifically on the humble behavior of expatriates being impacted by the cultural context.

2.3.2.
Humility and cultural context

Culture is a shaping force of humility, and, as like any virtue, humility needs favorable cultural conditions to thrive, such as: cultural endorsement of humble role models, and opportunities to cultivate values related to humility (TOMEI, P. A.; CUENCA, R.; MELLO, 2022). The humble manager may be humbler in certain circumstances or at certain times than in others. As per Argandona (2013), it is possible that someone´s humility can be more appreciated among friends than with people one does not know, and it is possible that young people may assume apparently arrogant behaviors when they want to impress people with more experience. Additionally, the humble leader will feel more comfortable in a culture that promotes dialogue and participation than in a culture that is clearly hierarchical, or which is based on competition and rivalry, or which encourages a heroic vision of the leader as a special person with unique capabilities (ARGANDONA, 2013). Zapata and Hayes-Jones (2019) expressed that humility may be appropriate in some contexts but ineffective in others. Specially, humility is perceived as less suitable

in a situation that requires agentic leadership. Additionally, Schein wrote three books (SCHEIN, 2013, 2016; SCHEIN; SCHEIN, 2018) emphasizing the idea that leaders should accept their ignorance, and the books present several humble behaviors which should be adopted by the leaders, and how they should learn how to align them based on the intercultural interpretation of others.

The field of cross-cultural management is increasingly recognizing that successful management goes beyond acknowledging cultural differences, and that there is need to establish "how best to manage cross-cultural interactions and interdependence (ADLER, N. J.; AYCAN, 2020).

Culture differentiates members of one society from those of another; it is based on the shared beliefs, behaviors, and values of the individuals in a particular social group (HOFSTEDE, 1997) and researchers have studied humility in different cultural environments. The understanding of cultural dimensions helps the comprehension of the reactions and consequently, a better use of differences (TROMPENAARS, 1993).

When talking about Hofstede's (1997) dimension masculinity/femininity, within a masculine society, success, money and personal achievement are coveted, so people need to be competitive and show aggression and ambition to succeed. On the contrary, quality of life takes precedence in a feminine society. Caring for others, modesty and a humble attitude are therefore more valued (ZHANG *et al*., 2007).

In relation to Hofstede's (1997) dimension individualism/collectivism, in a collectivistic culture people are integrated into very cohesive groups and base their self-understanding on the reactions of others. When making group decisions, this type of culture focuses on keeping harmony within a group and the relationships among group members prevail over tasks. The maintenance of harmony within the group and the ability to forge consensus are highly regarded, therefore group members tend to employ indirect means for conflict resolution. When there is conflict between personal and collective goals, collective goals prevail over personal ones and are helpful in promoting values such as harmony, humility, courtesy, patience, and obedience (ZHANG *et al*., 2007). These cultures prefer group harmony and consensus to individual achievement: "flowery language, humility, and elaborate apologies are typical" (HALL, E. T.; HALL, 1990). More individualistic cultures triggered narcissistic behaviors, excessive competitiveness,

obsession with appearance and attention seeking (FOSTER; CAMPBELL; TWENGE, 2003; TWENGE, J. M.; CAMPBELL, 2009). The role of cultural factors in the formation of humility in North American reality in recent decades is an example, when analysts have witnessed a shift towards radical individualism and the glorification of a self-oriented worldview (MYERS, 2001; PUTNAM, 2000). In this cultural context, scholars report a general decline in humility as a value (BROOKS, 2015) that is also manifested in cultural products as an average drop of 44.33% in the frequency of appearance of the words 'humility' and 'humble' in American books in this period (KESEBIR, P.; KESEBIR, 2012). In high collectivist cultures, users tend to focus more on the community to which they belong: for example, peers tend to unconditionally support superiors' opinions. In such countries members are expected to look after each other. By contrast, people from high individualist countries like the U.S. are in a more loosely knit social network and are generally expected to take care of themselves or of immediate family members (ABBAS; WU, 2021; HOFSTEDE, G.; HOFSTEDE, G. J.; MINKOV, 2010).

High-context cultures (including much of the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and South America) are relational, collectivist, intuitive, and contemplative. People in these cultures value interpersonal relationships, tend to be less governed by reason than by intuition or feelings, and developing trust is an important first step to any business transaction. According to Hall and Hall (1990), these cultures are collectivist, preferring group harmony and consensus to individual achievement.

Referring to cultural ideologies, western countries like the United States emphasize individual uniqueness, self-expression, and personal sufficiency. The self is considered an autonomous entity that is essentially well-bounded, distinct, and separate from other people or social contexts (GEERTZ, 1973). Opposed to that, in many East Asian cultures, like China, the self is viewed as part of ongoing relationships, and as containing significant social roles, duties, and responsibilities. These cultures emphasize the importance of interpersonal connectedness, group solidarity and personal humility. A study by Wang (2001) showed that Americans also frequently gave more positive evaluations of themselves than did Chinese, who reported proportionally more negative self-evaluations. The self- assured, individual-focused self-descriptions of Americans reflect a cultural emphasis on individuality and self-enhancement, whereas the group-oriented, modest self-

descriptions of Chinese reflect a cultural emphasis on interconnectedness and personal humility. Chinese culture promotes interdependence among people, especially among kinship members. The existence of an individual is viewed as being realized through the process of reciprocal relating to significant others. A Chinese person is born into a web of human relatedness, his/her identity is predetermined by his/her relations to others. Self-criticism and humility are highly encouraged and regarded as a drive for an individual to better serve the benefit of the collective (WANG, 2001).

Schwartz (1999) autonomy dimension concentrated attention on social relationships and cultural values, seen as the basis for "the ways that societal institutions (e.g., the family, education, economic, political, religious systems) function, their goals and their modes of operation" (SCHWARTZ, 1999, p. 25). For example, in societies where individual ambition and success are highly valued, the organization of the economic system is likely to be competitive, while, in contrast, a cultural emphasis on group well - being is likely to be expressed in more cooperative economic systems. The author considered three critical issues: The first one is embeddedness/autonomy. In autonomous cultures, people are seen as entities that express their own feelings, thoughts, and ideas and find meaning in their uniqueness. In embedded cultures, actions that might disrupt group solidity or traditional order are restrained. The meaning of life depends on social relationships and identification with the group. The second Schwartz's (1999) dimension is egalitarianism/hierarchy. In cultural egalitarian societies, people feel an interest in social justice, freedom, the welfare of others, and tend to recognize each other as equals who share basic interests. On the other hand, cultural hierarchy defines the unequal distribution of power and resources. In these cultures, values such as social power and authority are very important. The third is mastery/harmony. Harmony emphasizes fitting harmoniously into the environment and understanding it rather than changing it, whereas mastery emphasizes changing the natural and social environment in order to achieve personal and group goals; an emphasis on getting ahead by being self-assertive (ambition, success, daring and competence) (SCHWARTZ, 2012; YAHYAGIL; ÖTKEN, 2011).

When researching on non-verbal (silent) language, Loosemore and Muslmani (1999) explain that Kinesics refers to body movements, postures, gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact. While there may be some kinesics which transmit universal messages, there are many which are a potential source of misunderstanding, as humility is a major aspect of Islamic religion, eye-to-eye contact is often avoided in Arabic cultures, while a lack of eye contact in western societies is likely to be interpreted as a sign of submission and weakness.

2.3.3.
Cultural humility, humble behavior and expatriates

When we approach the topic of cultural humility in management, we cannot fail to mention its relevance in international assignments. Organizations are increasingly experiencing a globalized world that daily imposes relationships with different national cultures. In this context, cultural humility is an important instrument in the processes of expatriation and cultural adaptation (CSEH; DAVIS; KHILJI, 2013; JAVIDAN; BOWEN, 2013).

Caligiuri, Baytalskaya and Lazarova (2016) apply the concepts of cultural humility to expatriates, presenting it as a construct, which is linked to a context and rooted in one's general humility. Humility is defined as "an interpersonal characteristic that emerges in social contexts that connotes (a) a manifested willingness to view oneself accurately, (b) a displayed appreciation of others' strengths and contributions, and (c) teachability" (OWENS; JOHNSON; MITCHELL, 2013, p. 1518). Authors have related individual humility, in a business context, to a variety of benefits, such as performance, enhanced leadership skills, satisfaction, learning goal orientation, engagement, and retention (MORRIS; BROTHERIDGE; URBANSKI, 2005; OU *et al.*, 2014; OWENS, B. P.; HEKMAN, 2012). Caligiuri and colleagues (2016) stated that cultural humility, based on the definition of humility (OWENS; JOHNSON; MITCHELL, 2013) is the extent to which expatriates are viewed as accurately self-aware and respectful of the fact that they have something to learn in the host country, appreciative of host national contributions, and teachable with respect to learning from the host national environment. Those with cultural humility recognize that their abilities, skills and knowledge are culture-bound (CALIGIURI, P.; BAYTALSKAYA, N.; LAZAROVA, 2016) and are open to appreciate ideas that come from other cultures

and manifest a respectful desire to learn from other cultures (PAULA CALIGIURI, 2012). In order to measure expatriates' cultural humility, Caligiuri and colleagues (2016) asked supervisors to read the definition of cultural humility and then to rate the expatriate based on the definition. The definition stated that "cultural humility is the belief that great ideas can come from anywhere in the world and are not a function of belonging to one's own country. Those who possess cultural humility are perceived as collegial and respectful by colleagues from different cultures." Supervisors then rated the expatriate on a five-point scale, ranging from 1=a low-level of cultural humility, through 5=a high-level of cultural humility. The mean of this item was 3.67 (SD=0.70). Caligiuri and colleagues (2016) suggested that expatriates' cultural humility can influence their assignment performance. When expatriates are perceived to be open to ideas from other cultures, they are likely to accept the support and feedback offered and, in turn, perform better on the assignment.

Humble individuals tend to be more open to accepting new ideas, feedback, and criticisms from others. Based on the findings of Owens *et al*. (2013, p. 1533) "[…] expressed humility captures a person's receptivity to the positive social modeling of others and responsiveness to feedback in taking remedial action after events of poor performance (i.e. performance improvement over time)". Therefore, because of their likely willingness to accept support offered by those in the host national work environment, they should be able to perform better in their assignments. Contrary to that, ethnocentrism is 'the general belief or attitude in the superiority of one's own country or ethnic identity group' (CALIGIURI, P.; BAYTALSKAYA, N.; LAZAROVA, 2016) which translates into negative impressions that one´s home country culture, ideas and traditions are 'better' or 'more correct' than that of others. In this case, expatriates with high levels of ethnocentrism will be less likely to interact with host country nationals (HCNs), who may be considered as less credible or less competent. On the other hand, expatriates with higher levels of cultural humility will demonstrate self-awareness, respect for other cultures and willingness to learn from other cultures. Additionally, the researchers found that the performance of expatriates with higher levels of cultural humility benefited from this support more than the performance of expatriates with lower levels of humility.

In a recent study from Hutt and Gopalakrishnan (2020), the authors expose that the notion of expatriate courtesy toward HCNs follows suit with the concept of humility, as well, reminding that in any international assignment expatriates must always remember that they are a guest in the country and not fall into the expatriates' trap of thinking they know best or of criticizing certain issues around the nationals of the country. Being humble, appreciating and celebrating diversity and avoiding stereotypes around nationalities is important to leaders. A lack of adaptation to local culture can be a major reason for expat failure.

Humility and cross-cultural competence both require a pro-social orientation rooted in openness to the concerns of others (EXLINE, J. J.; HILL, 2012; HAMMER, 2011; PAINE; JANKOWSKI; SANDAGE, 2016) and is contradictory to the excessive self-focus associated with narcissism. Similarly, intercultural competence is not compatible with narcissism related to one's culture, as both extremes tend to deform the perception of one's own and another's culture and respect for cultural complexities. Individuals with a higher level of ethnocentrism tend to have difficulty in critically examining polarizing views of cultures, including their own. Idealizing one's own cultural virtues and accentuating weaknesses in other cultures is incompatible with accurate self-perception, a characteristic of humility (JANKOWSKI; SANDAGE; HILL, 2013). The ability to acknowledge one's limitations without prejudice means humility and intercultural competence (PAINE; JANKOWSKI; SANDAGE, 2016).

A sense of humility, one of the by-products of the competence of self-awareness, is an important competence for successful intercultural interactions (BIRD *et al*., 2010). Humility enables expatriates to successfully manage their relationships while working in different countries and with different people form diverse cultures (CALIGIURI, P.; CAPRAR, 2022). Humility is particularly important for those holding positions in management or who are vested with authority and power (ARGANDONA, 2015), which is the case of expatriate managers, but still, humility has been very little studied with expatriates.

Many times, leaders, including expatriates, have been referred to as idols (THE ECONOMIST, 2002), heroes ((RAELIN, 2003); saviors (KHURANA, 2002), warriors (TALLMAN, 2003) and omnipotent and omniscient demi-gods (DE VRIES, 2011; GABRIEL, 1997). This glorification of leaders has increased

regardless the continuing evidence that the actions of many leaders are far from heroic (MORRIS; BROTHERIDGE; URBANSKI, 2005).

Positive self-appraisal is often associated with mental health and success, and counselors, self-help gurus and business schools have devoted extraordinary effort to maximize self-esteem and inspire individual pride (BROWN, S. L.; CHOPRA, P. K.; SCHIRALDI, 2013). This glorification of leaders has increased regardless the continuing evidence that the actions of many leaders are far from heroic (MORRIS; BROTHERIDGE; URBANSKI, 2005).

In the competitive and economic realities of the corporate environment, leaders who show weakness, hesitate, admit mistakes, and lean on others are very often left behind. Throughout much of the modern western industrialized world, the attributes that get leaders (especially young leaders) noticed are usually attributes of independence, determination, quick thinking and pioneering spirit – which form the backbone of a Darwinian selection process that separates high-potential leaders from their peers. Too often, however, these very attributes that define early leadership potential (independence, determination, quick thinking, and pioneering spirit) become the seeds of later destruction, putting leaders on a self-destructive course that ends up in derailment at some point later on their careers (HOEKSTRA; BELL; PETERSON, 2008). But now, there is a major mindset shift. Nothing was crystal clear before but leading through the gray will be a new normal for today´s leaders. The most effective leaders, including expatriates, and the highest-performing companies will possess a totally different mindset – a view that this new degree of disruption provides opportunity for transformation and reinvention. The next generation of leaders who adopt this mindset will set the stage for the next new normal (KORN FERRY, 2020b).

Top leaders, such as expatriate managers, for the future will need to demonstrate different behaviors, such as inquisitiveness, agility, humility, and an insatiable appetite for learning, like no generation before. These leaders are more visible in terms of their public persona, and need to be comfortable with employees, citizens, customers, and shareholders, as all are projecting their hopes and expectations onto them. All of this requires courage, intelligence and, mostly, self-awareness, since they simultaneously drive results and execute strategy (KORN FERRY, 2020b).

International assignments are a learning opportunity for the expatriate and for the organization. The experience abroad transforms their way of behaving with others (BLACK, J. S.; MORRISON, A. J.; GREFERSEN, 1999). The so-called interpersonal skills are subjective and linked to individuals, sometimes very close to fundamental attitudes such as openness to novelty, empathy, or flexibility. These interpersonal skills make the expatriation experience a real are difficult to acquire through training seminars (BARMEYER; DAVOINE, 2012; CALIGIURI, P.; SANTO, 2001). Expatriates learn several skills abroad: Skills related to market knowledge, interpersonal skills, skills specific to the position, skills related to networking, general management skills, technical skills, understanding the organization and intercultural skills. "Leaders who maintain this commitment to humility are committed learners" (HOEKSTRA; BELL; PETERSON, 2008), so they never feel they have arrived, and they are constantly open to fresh ideas, fresh input, and fresh stimulation, whatever the source. As in the case of negotiation skills with local clients, the expatriate learns how to behave with local collaborators, just as he learns when and in what context he must use the new professional "routines", in other words the procedural and conditional knowledge he has acquired (BARMEYER; BAUSCH, 2018; BARMEYER; DAVOINE, 2012).

Leaders with a global mindset need to go beyond just acknowledging the presence of differences and continuously evaluate and select the best way to respond to situations and shift their approach based on a good understanding of the context. One example is a manager working in a culture in which employees have a more fluid time orientation (a cultural difference) but must motivate them to adhere to deadlines (a cultural response). Another example is a consultant who is working in relationship-oriented culture (a cultural difference) and engages in a greater level of social interactions to preserve trust among clients (a cultural response) (CALIGIURI, P., & CAPRAR, 2022; CALIGIURI, 2012, 2021). Certain responses are needed in certain cross-cultural business situations and using a given cultural response in the wrong cultural context or at the wrong time may lower the chance of an expatriate´s success. These responses vary to the extent to which individuals adjust their behaviors to fit the expected norms of the cultural context (CALIGIURI, P.; TARIQUE, I, 2016).

2.4.
Expatriate adaptation

2.4.1.
Adaptation: concepts and typologies

To get the benefits of a global economy, it is undeniable that organizations need to be able to function successfully across new business environments and cultural boundaries. But organizations themselves are not the units participating in business meetings, managing conflicts, delivering constructive comments, building international networks, managing international teams, and conducting cross-national negotiations. It has become the new normality to have peers from different countries into what nowadays is becoming an inclusive, diverse, and multicultural corporate environment. If organizations want to succeed, the managers who work for them must function successfully in foreign cultural settings, and most importantly, in foreign cultural interactions (MOLINSKY, 2007).

Cross-cultural adaptation has long enjoyed the attention of researchers and theorists (HASLBERGER, 2005). In 1908, Georg Simmel wrote his classic work "The Stranger", which refers to an individual who comes from a different place but, although he is a member of a social system, he is not attached to it (SIMMEL, 1987). In this essay, the author reflects about the nature of being a stranger. Later, in 1952, SIU uses his work to mention that rather than 'strangers', some individuals are 'sojourners', defined as "... a type of stranger who spends many years of his lifetime in a foreign country without being assimilated by it" (SIU, 1952). Siu suggests 'the sojourner' does not become assimilated, instead he experiences an alternative cycle of 'adjustment', which can be summarized as 'accommodation', 'isolation' and 'unassimilation' (SPURLING, 2007).

Cross-cultural adaptation can be analyzed as a state or as a process (BERRY, J. W.; KIM, U.; BOSKI, 1988). When defined as state, adaptation is the degree of fit between individual and environment (GUDYKUNST, W. B.; HAMMER, 1988), and when defined as process, adaptation is the acculturation of the newcomer, or the convergence (KINCAID, 1988) over time of behaviors, values, norms and underlying assumptions (SCHEIN, 1984) of the individual with those more evident in the environment (HASLBERGER, 2005).

Adaptation can be imagined as consisting of three different dimensions: behaviors, cognitions and emotions and it is unclear what is the 'desirable' level of adaptation to the local culture. The management literature discusses this in terms of dual allegiance (BLACK, J. S.; BLACK, S.; GREGERSEN, H. B.; MENDENHALL, 1992) and the conflict of blending in while maintaining strong ties to home (BREWSTER, 1993). The process of adaptation most widely discussed is the one that follows a U-curve, where expatriates' paths to effective functioning lead them through a stage of "shock". The term "shock" is commonly used to describe some of the experiences of a stranger entering a new cultural environment and it has a long history e.g. (SCHUETZ, 1944). The U-shaped adjustment process was first described by Lysgaard (1955) in a study of Norwegian Fulbright grantees studying in the United States. After an initial period of happiness and excitement about the "adventure of being "abroad," the foreigner enters an "adjustment" crisis" (LYSGAARD, 1955, p. 50). Since the person finds him or herself unable to integrate into groups and to establish close personal relationships, he or she may develop feelings of loneliness and homesickness.

The term 'culture shock' was established by Oberg (1960), referring to the second stage of the adaptation process, when only after a period of six months or more, the foreigner will be entirely comfortable with the new environment and be able to function "normally". Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) pointed out that this type of process is not exclusive to cross-cultural moves. Rather 'when one is seriously engaged in creative efforts or is deeply involved in a learning experience of emotional significance, the U-curve appears' (GULLAHORN, J. T.; GULLAHORN, 1963) as the main characteristic of culture shock is the feeling of negative emotions. Therefore, the original U-curve was later extended on time to include not only the period overseas but also repatriation adjustment and called it the W-curve (GULLAHORN, J. T.; GULLAHORN, 1963, p. 35).

Lysgaard (1955) found the U-curve of adaptation by dividing students in three groups by length of stay: up to six months, more than six up to eighteen months, and more than eighteen months. The results were interesting, but to this day the U-curve hypothesis has raised doubts on the theoretical formulation that would allow prediction with any kind of accuracy. Right after its initial appearance and over the years many authors have questioned the accuracy of the U-curve hypothesis (LUNDSTEDT, 1963) and criticized the simply descriptive nature of U-curve and

culture shock (BLACK, J. S.; MENDENHALL, 1991; CHURCH, 1982); Black and Mendenhall (1991) suggested that adaptation could follow a J - or a linear pattern.

"Culture shock" as the central concept of adaptation as process is not clearly defined, including many different aspects. Taft (1977) identified that the term had a negative connotation, been used to mean strain; rejection; confusion; a sense of loss and feelings of deprivation, anxiety, anger and feelings of impotence. Scholars also had another point of disagreement with the negative connotation of the word "shock" in the description of cross-cultural experiences (ADLER, 1987; ELLINGSWORTH, 1988). Adler (1987) considered that by de-emphasizing the hardship and suffering that might come with cross-cultural moves, the learning experience was not valued. For him, culture shock is "a profound learning experience that leads to a high degree of self-awareness and personal growth. Rather than being only a disease for which adaptation is the cure, culture shock is likewise at the very heart of the cross-cultural learning experience. It is an experience in self-understanding and change" (ADLER, 1987, p. 29).

In 2002, Mendenhall and colleagues developed a rough typology of expatriate adjustment models and classified the theoretical models in the field in the broad categories of: 1) Learning models; 2) Stress-Coping Models; 3) Developmental models; and 4) Personality-based models (HASLBERGER, 2005). Glanz *et al*. (2001) considered that the variables that affect the process are situational and often relate to chance-type outcomes of singular interaction sequences. (ELLINGSWORTH, 1988) suggests the self-examination dimension of crossing cultures: "Adaptation involves confronting not only the other, but also the self" (ELLINGSWORTH, 1988, p. 269). The sensemaking literature takes these ideas by focusing on the individual's processing of experiences to establish absence of coherence and suggests that, instead of seeing the expatriation process with a negative "pathogenic" approach, it is, instead, interpreted with a neutral "salutogenic" approach (GLANZ; WILLIAMS; HOEKSEMA, 2001; HASLBERGER, 2005).

Having introduced the concepts and typologies of adaptation, the next session focuses on the expatriate adaptation, which is essential to enhance individual performance in the global workplace.

2.4.2.
Expatriate adaptation

Global business presents many opportunities, but it is the adaptation of the management team to their global realities that will impact how big and how fast a company can succeed in a global business (JAVIDAN; BOWEN, 2013). Expatriates on international assignments find themselves in need of establishing and keeping a relatively stable working relationship with the host environment (KIM, 2017) but many times they underestimate the challenges posed by those countries' cultural differences with their own, due to oversimplification of what is an extremely complex topic. Cultural differences tend to be presented as inevitable as the characteristic of a given group, and a situation to which one should adapt (ROMANI *et al.*, 2018). Expatriates are advised to acknowledge the challenges posed by cultural differences to seek positive aspects of other management cultures and to continually adjust their management styles as they gain new insights (MEYER, 2014). If expatriates "do not understand their environment and behave appropriately, they may not be able to achieve their performance targets" (ANDRESEN; BERGDOLT, 2019, p. 4).

With the constant and growing demand for global managers, much research is being done on identifying the different challenges and characteristics that differentiate expatriate managers from domestic employees. It has been shown, at an individual level, for example, that adjustment processes, job satisfaction or career concepts are different for domestic and international employees (OSLAND, 2000). International employees, such as assigned expatriates (AE´s), face significantly higher demands for social and perceptual skills, reasoning ability, and adjustment requirements in their work (OSLAND, 2008). Further, from an organizational point of view, selection, training, and career management issues have been shown to substantially differ between expatriates and domestic employees (BONACHE; BREWSTER; SUUTARI, 2007; SUUTARI, 2003). Different from the domestic business environment, international assignments include a further level of complexity, as there is an involvement with different cultural realities. Collaborating with people coming from different national and cultural backgrounds requires language barriers to be surmounted and adaptation to unaccustomed activities and behavior; this raises the elaborateness of thoughts and actions to a higher level (ANDRESEN; BERGDOLT, 2019). Therefore,

international assignments include an additional layer of difficulty in the form of cultural complexity.

Black and Mendenhall (1990) defined expatriate adaptation as the degree of psychological comfort and familiarity that an individual feels in the new host environment. Typically, expatriate adaptation is considered to consist of three dimensions (BLACK; STEPHENS, 1989): (a) work adaptation, that refers to an expatriate's degree of psychological comfort within a work setting, (b) interaction adaptation, that is the level of psychological comfort in terms of interactions with host country nationals (HCNs), as distinguished from general adjustment, and (c) general adaptation (e.g. food, housing, accommodation, and cost of living) which is the degree of psychological comfort with a host cultural environment (YOON, 2011). To date, the theoretical model of international adaptation of Black and Oddou (1991) is one of the most comprehensive and significant works on expatriate adaptation (BHASKAR-SHRINIVAS *et al*., 2005; TAKEUCHI, R.; SHAY, J. P.; JIATAO, 2008). It presents the Intercultural Development continuum, with the following phases: Denial, Polarization, Minimization, Acceptance and Adaptation, going from a monocultural mindset to an intercultural/global mindset. Additionally, Takeuchi and his colleagues (2008) found that expatriates' decision autonomy was notably related to all three facets of expatriate adaptation.

Expatriates face cultural and cognitive diversity, confronting not only with acculturation difficulties concerning a national culture and a new environment, but also with the need to be socialized into the corporate culture of the host location, therefore, these higher adjustment challenges expose the expatriate to a greater risk of status inconsistency and reduce their adequate adjustment to the host location and role execution (MOELLER *et al*., 2016a). It is important to highlight that the constructs of expatriate adjustment, adaptation, and acculturation are concepts that are usually used interchangeably by scholars (MENDENHALL *et al*., 2002).

Y. Y. Kim (2017) posits that the process of adapting to an unfamiliar culture is manifested through the stress-adaptation-growth dynamic, a process that is profoundly embedded in the natural human tendency to achieve an internal equilibrium when facing unique and adverse environmental conditions. The adaptation process typically begins with the commonly known symptoms of culture shock, which represent the psychological and physiological experiences of dislocation and threat. Over time, most people can reach increasing levels of

functional and psychological efficacy in the host environment, through continuous activities of new cultural learning.

The cross-cultural adaptation process is supported by two interrelated experiences, which are the deculturation of some of the original cultural habits and behaviors, on the one hand, and the acculturation of new ones, on the other. The accumulated result of the acculturation and deculturation experiences is an internal transformation in the direction of assimilation into the conventional culture (KIM, 2017). Expatriates also tend to undergo an identity transformation, a tenuous and largely unconscious shift from a largely monocultural to an increasingly intercultural self-other orientation, in which normal, ascription-based cultural categories diminish in relevance, while common humanity plays an increasingly important role in one's daily existence.

The ability to communicate and behave in accordance to the norms and practices of the host culture, and the continuous and vital engagement in the interpersonal and mass communication activities of the host society are central to the expatriate adaptation process (KIM, 2017).

Empirical studies highlight a positive relationship between expatriates' intercultural competencies and their adjustment to work abroad, that consequently has positive effects on expatriates' (MALEK, M. A.; BUDHWAR, 2013; ROMANI *et al.*, 2018). Past research has also demonstrated that high quality contacts abroad promote intercultural competencies, and a local host may positively influence attitudinal and behavioral aspects of expatriates' intercultural competence (VAN BAKEL; GERRITSEN; VAN OUDENHOVEN, 2014).

The ability to adjust to social, work, and general cultural dimensions of a new culture has been shown to influence subsequent productivity in an overseas assignment (HARRISON, D. A.; SHAFFER, 2005; KRAIMER; WAYNE; JAWORSKI, 2001). Since successful expatriate adjustment predicts task completion and relationship building effectiveness during the overseas assignment (HARRISON, D. A.; SHAFFER, 2005), it is essential to understand what competences influence expatriate adjustment, in order to enhance individual performance in the global workplace (BIRD *et al.*, 2010). Mendenhall and Oddou (1985) undertook a review and categorization of competences associated with expatriate adjustment. They found that factors influencing expatriate adjustment could be grouped into one of three categories: (a) the self-oriented dimension, (b)

the others-oriented dimension, and (c) the perceptual dimension. The self-oriented dimension including "activities and attributes that serve to strengthen the expatriate's self-esteem, self-confidence, and mental hygiene" (MENDENHALL, M.; ODDOU, 1985, p. 40–42). The others-oriented dimension including "activities and attributes that enhance the expatriate's ability to interact effectively with host-nationals", while the perceptual dimension contains cognitive processes that facilitate an expatriate's "ability to understand why foreigners behave the way they do", thus enhancing their "ability to make correct attributions about the reasons or causes of host-nationals' behavior". These three dimensions formed the Individual Dimension of the International adjustment model, which focuses on competencies that had been shown in the literature to positively influence heightened levels of success in interacting with people from other cultures abroad or cross-culturally significant settings. The Individual dimension constituted one of four dimensions of direct determinants of expatriate adjustment, the others were job, organizational, and nonwork (BIRD *et al*., 2010).

Self-awareness refers to the level expatriates are aware of their strengths and weaknesses in interpersonal skills; their own philosophies and values; how past experiences have helped shape them into who they are as a person; and the impact their values and behavior have on relationships with others. High self-awareness provides a foundation for strategically acquiring new competencies and behaviors, whereas low self-awareness promotes self-deception and arrogance. Jokinen (2005) considers self-awareness as being one of the primary intercultural competencies fundamental to effective global leadership. Similarly, Varner and Palmer (2005, p. 1) argue from a theoretical standpoint that "conscious cultural self-knowledge is a crucial variable in adapting to other cultures" and (BIRD, A.; OSLAND, J. S.; LANE, 2004) concluded that one of the byproducts of the competence of self-awareness, a sense of humility, is a relevant competence for successful intercultural interaction (BIRD *et al*., 2010).

Cross-cultural code-switching is the act of intentionally modifying one's behavior in an interaction in a foreign setting in order to accommodate different cultural norms for appropriate behavior (MOLINSKY, 2007). An interaction can simply be a brief interpersonal communication of an expatriate giving feedback to his superior in the office corridor or a long and complex negotiation. Interactions happen in behavior settings, such as in leisure environments or in board meeting

rooms. The norms vary in different behavior settings, therefore, an expectation for appropriate behavior within an interaction depend not only on the norms for the type and setting of the interaction but also on the role the individual plays within the interaction (e.g., in a major negotiation, the expatriate may be the buyer or the seller). To produce a cross-cultural code-switch, the expatriate must act in a role-appropriate manner for that particular interaction (MOLINSKY, 2007). "People must be interested in other cultures, be sensitive enough to notice cultural differences, and then also be willing to modify their behavior as an indication of respect for the people of other cultures" in order to effectively bridge across cultural differences and commonalities (HAMMER, 2011). Selmer (2007) suggests that it could be as difficult for business expatriates to adjust to a similar as to a dissimilar host culture, due to several types of adjustment, including the interaction adjustment, work adjustment, psychological adjustment, and general adjustment. The degree of culture similarity/dissimilarity may not be relevant when determining how easily expatriates adjust.

Decision making in complex environments, reading cultural nuances and adapting leadership style at different locations accordingly is considered key to successful global leaders. Cross-cultural intelligence is not enough, as while the differences in national cultures are critical, the expatriate targets of influence may come from different institutional systems, social structures and legal frameworks that are different from those of his home context (JAVIDAN; BOWEN, 2013).

Story and colleagues (2014) proposed that a global mindset consists of the two indicators: cultural intelligence (EARLEY; ANG, 2003) and global business orientation (e.g. (NUMMELA; SAARENKETO; PUUMALAINEN, 2004). Therefore, individual with a global mindset, such as assigned expatriates (AEs), need to be culturally adaptable and have a good sense of their global business environment (ANDRESEN; BERGDOLT, 2019; KEDIA; MUKHERJI, 1999). Managers who have a global mindset are regarded by their organizations as more effective managers in general, more effective in influencing and motivating others and building relationships. Additionally, they are believed to be better able to build trust and show a more open and adaptive approach (JAVIDAN; BOWEN, 2013). A person rooted in more than one culture is usually able to identify and reconcile differences in understanding and communication, serving as a moderator both within teams and more broadly in the organization. In addition, he or she will

probably be more open to adapting to multiple mindsets and communication modes (DOZ; HAE-JUNG, 2013).

More and more, organizations must deal with several offices located abroad, different cultures, beliefs, behaviors, and multicultural mindsets, with the difficulty such situation entails. Very often, the failure of business is related to the lack of adaptation into the new scenario, therefore a global mindset approach, is necessary to bridge the existing cultural and strategic gaps (ALIMBAU-COMAS, 2020). Paul and research colleagues (2011) studied global mindset focusing on organization social performance and cultural sensitivity, to identify that culturally adaptable individuals are adherent to organizational expectations and requirements. The more complex the adjustment impediments the more it triggers the need for a diverse organizational support (MOELLER *et al*., 2016a).

This session reviewed the literature on expatriate adaptation. The next one will focus on what previous researchers have discussed about humility as a facilitator of expatriate adaptation.

2.4.3.
Humility as a resource for expatriate adaptation

Scholars and practitioners have argued about the need for today´s and tomorrow´s leaders to address their roles with more humility (CALIGIURI, P.; CAPRAR, 2022; KERFOOT, 1998; MORRIS; BROTHERIDGE; URBANSKI, 2005; VERA, D.; RODRIGUEZ-LOPEZ, 2004). In face of the increasing general workplace complexity and requirements for adaptability, recent leadership theories have begun to place greater emphasis on the bottom-up aspects of leadership. Researchers have suggested that leaders should move beyond the hero myth or "great man" perspectives on leadership, and instead show their humanness by being open about their limitations in knowledge and experience (KORN FERRY, 2020a; WEICK, 2001) and focus more on how others influence the process of leadership (UHL-BIEN, 2011). Leadership authors are giving more attention to the virtue of humility as being core of many of these bottom-up approaches to leadership (COLLINS, 2006; OWENS, B. P.; HEKMAN, 2012; WEICK, 2001).

The strengths-based view of humility (OWENS; JOHNSON; MITCHELL, 2013) supported the positive relationships between expressed humility and positive attitudes, traits, and adaptive behaviors (i.e., self-esteem via core self-evaluation, emotional stability, self-efficacy, performance improvement, learning orientation, and engagement). The fact that "the willingness to see oneself accurately" component of expressed humility was positively related to these positive attitudes, traits, and adaptive behaviors supports the notion that realistic self-views are more beneficial than exaggerated/inflated ones (COLVIN; BLOCK; FUNDER, 1995). Expatriates have a need to adjust successfully to new work contexts and this makes expressed humility an even more meaningful behavior in the context of research on expatriates with a global mindset.

Far from being a sign of unassertiveness, stooped-shouldered meekness (see (TANGNEY, 2000), humility keeps individuals in a state of continual adaptation. Humility appears to encourage individuals to aspire to their highest potential and allows them to make the additional improvements necessary to progress toward that potential (OWENS; HEKMAN, 2016). Still, Exline and Geyer (2004) searched to identify if people perceived humility as a strength or a weakness. Although participants in their study associated humility with good psychological adjustment and with a quality of religious seekers, they did not identify humility as a quality of leaders.

It's sort of naïve to say that these days you have to be adaptable, but today adaptability goes beyond the tactical, like working from home, to the strategic. Deloitte Insights (2021) reported that the top priority of companies is the ability of their people to adapt, reskill and assume new roles, and by giving organizations the opportunity to work in more human ways, leveraging technology to elevate the ability to learn, create and perform in new ways to achieve better outcomes. Strategic adaptability is what is needed (FORTH, 2020). In his article, Forth (2020) exposes that the keys to Adaptation are Humility, Curiosity and Experimentation. First, as an adapter, individuals need to be tuned to what´s happening around them and flex more easily to new circumstances and, as an apprentice, they need to understand they have needs that are beyond their current expertise. Recognizing that gap and being humble about it, is the starting point. Second, individuals need curiosity, openness, and the desire to learn. Managers need the drive and the curiosity. Third, individuals need a certain willingness to experiment. Every action

has a certain amount of risk, that you don't get in a formal training model where one first learns and then applies. In an apprenticeship model, you apply as you learn, so you are destined to make mistakes and have to accept them (FORTH, 2020). Humility is fundamental in this sense. It is a multifaceted, adaptive strength (TANGNEY, 2000).

At the individual level, research investigates how individuals effectively operate in cross-cultural environments, addressing individual capabilities to effectively adapt to a new cultural setting. Research indicates that individuals, who are humble and seek advice from host country nationals (HCNs), report better adjustment, and that social support and feedback provided by locals can facilitate expatriates' performance on the assignment (e.g. MALEK; BUDHWARB; REICHE, 2015; SOUSA *et al.*, 2017; TOH, S. M.; DENISI, 2007). The process of cross-cultural adaptation is complex: first, because of its internal and external dynamics and, second, because of the variety of significant variables (HASLBERGER, 2005). The level of social support expatriates can receive from the HCNs work environment can facilitate expatriates' adaptation and performance on the international assignment (BRUNING, N. S.; SONPAR, K.; WANG, 2012; CHEN, G.; KIRKMAN, B. L.; KIM, K.; FARH, C. I.; TANGIRALA, 2010). In an expatriate context, there are three conditions needed for social support to occur (CHEN, G.; KIRKMAN, B. L.; KIM, K.; FARH, C. I.; TANGIRALA, 2010). One, the expatriates must be receptive to support and feedback from those in the host work environment. Two, colleagues in the host location must perceive the expatriates' willingness to be supported and to receive feedback. Three, colleagues in the host nation must be willing to offer support and provide feedback (CALIGIURI; BONACHE, 2016). This research indicates that support and feedback from colleagues in the host country help reduce uncertainty and stress by providing information about cultural norms and socially accepted behaviors, practical assistance with language and broader communication problems, and help with job-related tasks. Such support enables expatriates to make sense of and become comfortable in the new work environment, which can help expatriates perform more successfully in their international assignments (CALIGIURI, P.; TARIQUE, 2012; CALIGIURI; BONACHE, 2016).

Expatriates' adaptation paths take different directions depending on variables that facilitate or hampers adaptation. Each new challenge may cause an

unforeseeable change in the adaptation process. In the end, there is a limit to the number of challenges that can be digested. Beyond this limit, breakdown may occur, resulting in early repatriation, psychological withdrawal or some other form of disengagement (HASLBERGER, 2005).

Based on the review of the main topics and theoretical models of: Expatriates, Global Mindset, Behavior, Humility and Adaptation, I will present in the next session the methodology used to support my research.

3
Method

Chapter 3 will begin with a reiteration of the statement of the problem, the research questions, and a brief discussion on why a descriptive, qualitative content analysis was chosen for the methodology of this study, followed by a detailed description of the research process. The research questions designed to guide the study in exploring the problem are also outlined. The chapter describes the research design, the target population and sample selection and a discussion of ethical considerations. This chapter also places great emphasis on data collection and data analysis; and a detailed explanation of how these processes were applied throughout the research lifecycle.

3.1.
Introduction

The overall methodological framework used in this research was that of descriptive, qualitative content analysis (MAYRING, 2014) to understand and describe how expatriate humble behavior operates in corporate international assignments. As there are very few studies on expatriate´s humble behavior, and the perceptions of humility impacting assigned expatriates (AE´s) appears to be singular, the qualitative approach was chosen, favoring a more in-depth analysis, to allow the understanding of the phenomenon.

The research approach was to discover the "lived meaning" of expatriate humble behavior by learning from senior company-sponsored long-term assigned expatriates (AEs) and organizational HR/GM managers, about how expatriate humble behavior operates in international assignments. The intent was not to reconstruct every expatriate humble behavior our participants reported, nor to suggest a definitive theory of expatriate humble behavior. Instead, expatriates and Human Resources/Global Mobility managers, from many different contexts, have been selected with the goal of providing ingredient for the understanding of the meaning they attached to the idea of humility in global mobility, of gathering the contexts they considered as determinant to the effectiveness of expatriate´s humble

behaviors, as well as of identifying the important outcomes of this approach, especially in terms of adaptation. The research was based on primary data, collected via semi-structured interviews with GM/HR managers and the expatriates themselves, using an interview script which was outlined based on academic literature, source for content analysis.

In addition, a discussion will be offered on the use of Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS), which was used to analyze data in the present research. This chapter will conclude with a summary of the ethical issues involved in research of this nature and potential shortcomings and limitations of the methodology.

Many studies of humility in organizations have been published in recent years (CUENCA, R; TOMEI, P. A.; MELLO, 2022), however, although there is a preponderance of studies into the use of humility in organizations, many of these studies neglect to consider the role of humility in global mobility. It is proposed that the present dissertation will advance the understanding of how expatriate humble behavior operates in corporate international assignments. The qualitative method was used to provide rich descriptions of expatriate´s and HR/GM lived experiences in relation to the topic.

3.1.1.
Statement of the problem

Although there are several studies under this discipline of research (ANDRESEN; BERGDOLT, 2017; ATHAYDE, A. L. M.; SILVA, 2019; CUENCA, R.; TOMEI, P. A.; MELLO, 2022; DABIC; GONZÁLEZ-LOUREIRO; HARVEY, 2015; MOTT, M.; TEIXEIRA, M. L. M.; NAKASHIMA, C.; DE ARAÚJO, 2012; TSENG; CHOU; YU, 2010; ZAGO; DOMINGUES; SILVA, 2019), the majority of these studies do not address humility in global mobility. Andresen and Bergdolt (2017) reported that there was a lack of research that addressed behavioral studies in Global Mindset. The research aimed to fill this gap in the literature and to understand how expatriate humble behavior operates in international assignments. The unit of analysis for the study was individual company-sponsored senior assigned expatriates (AEs) describing their experiences while on international assignments and HR/GM managers managing them. The study was designed to understand and describe the perceptions of participants;

therefore, studying the individual manager was more suitable, as each expatriate and HR/GM manager have their own unique experiences and perceptions (Guest *et al.*, 2017). The researcher employed purposive sampling and snowballing strategy techniques to identify nineteen qualifying managers who had experienced international assignments or managed them. Exploring and describing how humble behavior operates in corporate international assignments contributes to the gap in the literature, about the lack of behavioral studies in Global Mindset and helps expatriates and the Global Mobility community understand the impacts of humble behavior that may help develop a means to facilitate effective international assignments, while also developing and implementing sustainable Human Resources and Global Mobility policies.

3.1.2.
Research questions

The research questions were developed based on the intent of the study which sought to understand and describe the phenomenon of how expatriate humble behavior operates in corporate international assignments, by hearing expatriates and GM/HR managers perceive and describe humble behaviors in international assignments. According to Agee (2009, p. 422), "Good questions do not necessarily produce good research, but poorly conceived or constructed questions will likely create problems that affect all subsequent stages of a study". Therefore, the research questions were designed to emphasize the strength of the study using a descriptive, qualitative content analysis research methodology.

The researcher used a purposive sampling method (ROSENTHAL, 2016) to target a population of nineteen managers with company responsibilities at the strategic and normative levels (BLEICHER, 2011). Based on previous research, purposive sampling was the preferred sampling method because, unlike other sampling methods, it requires and identifies study participants that possess the necessary experience for the study under investigation (Rosenthal, 2016). Through the lens of expressed-humility theory, which provides a useful framework for exploring how expressed humility is manifest (OWENS; JOHNSON; MITCHELL, 2013), the study aimed, using the descriptive, qualitative content analysis method, to examine how expatriate humble behavior operates in corporate international assignments.

The research was guided by the main research questions:

HOW DOES EXPATRIATE HUMBLE BEHAVIOR OPERATE IN CORPORATE INTERNATIONAL ASSIGNMENTS?

From the premise that a humble behavior contributes to Global Mobility, the study examined the following five secondary research questions:

(a) What is considered as expatriate humble behavior (HB)?

(b) What HB adds to the set of competences that stand out in the life of a successful expatriate?

(c) In what contexts expatriate humility is most needed?

(d) In what contexts participants report humble behavior associated with weak or ineffective leadership?

(e) Is humble behavior just another competence or does it play a superior role in the adaptation process of expatriates – or, in general, in the behavior of good managers?

3.2.
General methodology

For this study, the methodological framework used was that of descriptive, qualitative content analysis (MAYRING, 2014). The main purpose of the study was to describe how humility can contribute to expatriate behavior on international assignments. The study population was nineteen qualifying managers who had experienced international assignments or managed them. Park and Park (2016, p. 1) recommend researchers to "first consider the nature of the investigated phenomenon and thereafter address the question of which method is adequate to describe, explain, or understand the phenomenon". This recommendation was taken, and the nature of the phenomenon was considered, therefore current literature was reviewed in search of the best and most effective methodology for exploring and understanding the phenomenon. Since the purpose of the study was to understand and describe how humility can contribute to expatriate behavior on international assignments, a qualitative methodology approach was best suited for exploring and understanding the results of the study (PARK, J.; PARK, 2016).

According to Park and Park (2016), there are two types of research associated with qualitative research and quantitative methodology, namely justification and discovery. Unlike the quantitative method which focuses on numerical data and measured variables, the qualitative method focuses on observation, exploration, and interpretation of the phenomenon where uncontrolled data is collected (PARK, J.; PARK, 2016). Since the study did not aim to quantify data and generalize the findings from the sample to the target population but to gain an understanding of the phenomenon and describe it, the qualitative method approach was more suited. The qualitative research method, which is considered a powerful research tool for learning and understanding the lives of others, aims to deepen the understanding of the phenomenon (MERRIAM, S. B.; GRENIER, 2019).

According to Yin (2013), the qualitative descriptive design is ideal for gaining an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon, therefore a suitable design for this study. Choosing a qualitative descriptive methodology allowed the researcher to develop a thorough understanding of the study population's experiences (PATTON, 2014; YIN, 2013). Because expatriate humble behavior is new to the organizational landscape, this study asked organizational HR managers, and expatriate managers themselves for humble expatriate behaviors that they had observed or personally enacted.

The research was based on primary data, collected via semi-structured interviews with Human Resources / Global Mobility managers and expatriates, using an interview script which was outlined based on academic literature, source for content analysis. Interviews were conducted in person, when possible, or by zoom, and the participants' selection criteria was based on purposive sampling (ROSENTHAL, 2016). Personal contacts were used to access all respondents: senior assigned expatriates (AEs), supported by their employers while working outside their home of origin, on a long-term assignment (more than 18 months) (ANDRESEN, M.; DICKMANN, M.; SUUTARI, 2018; BREWSTER, C.; DICKMANN, M.; MÄKELÄ, L.; SUUTARI, 2017), and Global Mobility/Human Resources Managers.

The interviews were in English, or Portuguese, when preferred by the respondent, generally lasted around 50 to 70 minutes, and were transcribed verbatim. Data coding and analysis process was based on content analysis which was used to extract perceptions about the topics covered (BARDIN, 2009). Categories were created, with semantic criteria and quotes were selected based on the categories. Thus, the themes that referred to the same concept came together in the same category.

The questions that make up the interview script were divided into the following categories: 1. Expressed humble behaviors, 2. Relevance of humble behavior, 3. Context when expatriate humble behaviors are more required in international assignments; and 4. Outcomes: humility infusing expatriate adaptation. Using the conceptual framework which is presented below (Figure 4), an interview protocol was designed which aimed at eliciting anecdotes or critical incidents of humble expatriate behavior and its contributions, context, and outcomes.
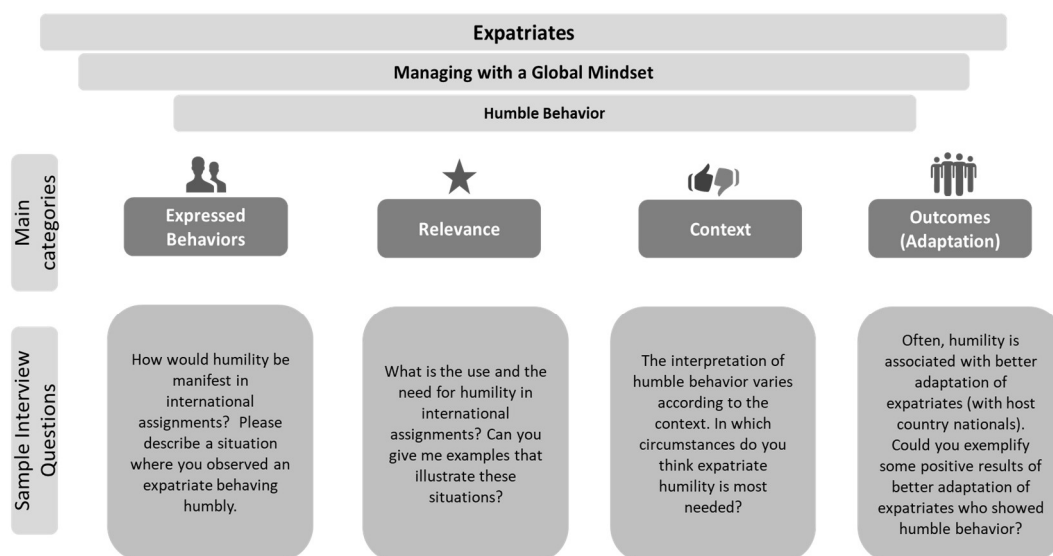
Source: Author. Based of Data Reduction Process - Owens et al (2012)

Figure 4 – Conceptual framework of Data reduction Process
Source: elaborated by author

This study employed qualitative enquiry with content analysis as the main method in analyzing the interview data, obtained from online semi-structured interviews, and video/audio-recorded were subjected to in depth content analysis (MAYRING, 2014) in order to answer the research questions of the study. All the responses and answers were transcribed and were read many times to understand the content and the message, then it was revisited and revised to add more detail.

The research involved semi-structured interviews with nineteen managers (ten expatriates and ten HR/GM managers), using the interview script outlined in **Table 2,** with questions designed to address the six research questions, as demonstrated below.

Table 2 - Research Questions, Semi-structured Interview Script, Objective and Categories

Research Questions	Semi-structured Interview Script	Objective	Categories
(a) What is considered as expatriate humble behavior (HB)?	(a) How would humility be manifest in international assignments? (b) Describe a situation where you observed an expatriate behaving humbly.	(i) Describe what is considered an expatriate humble behavior.	**Expressed Behaviors** (Expressed humble behavior)
(b) What HB adds to the set of competences that stand out in the life of a successful expatriate?	(c) What is the use and the need for humility in international assignments? Can you give me examples that illustrate these situations?	Describe (ii) how humility can contribute to expatriate behavior in international assignments; (iii) what humble behavior adds to the set of competences that stand out in the life of a successful expatriate.	**Relevance** (Relevance of humble behavior)
(c) In what contexts expatriate humility is most needed? (d) In what contexts participants report humble	(d) The interpretation of HB varies according to the context. In what contexts do you think expatriate humility is most needed? (e) And, in which contexts HB do not fit?	Describe (iv) in what contexts expatriate humility is most needed, (v) in what contexts participants report humble behavior associated with weak or	**Context** (Contingencies when humility contributes to international assignment)

behavior associated with weak or ineffective leadership?		ineffective leadership.	
(e) Is humble behavior just another competence or does it play a superior role in the adaptation process of expatriates – or, in general, in the behavior of good managers?	(f) Often, humility is associated with better adaptation of expatriates (with HCNs). Could you exemplify some positive results of better adaptation of expatriates who showed HB?	Describe (vi) how a humble behavior influences the expatriates´ adaptation to the host culture.	**Outcomes** (Humility infusing expatriate adaptation)

Source: elaborated by author

3.2.1.
Research design

The research was based on a descriptive, qualitative content analysis design to understand and describe how expatriate humble behavior operates in corporate international assignments. To effectively collect the necessary data, the study used semi-structure interviews, one of the most common qualitative data methods, therefore, the sources of data for the study were achieved with the use of semi-structured interview questions as the primary source of data collection. Qualitative descriptive designs widely used to summarize a specific situation experienced by individuals or groups of individuals in everyday terms (LAMBERT; LAMBERT, 2012). The phenomenon under examination for this study required a qualitative descriptive approach to thoroughly examine each research question. In contrast to the quantitative research method, generalizability is not a guiding principle. Qualitative research intends to achieve an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences and perceptions (PATTON, 2014; RITCHIE, J.; LEWIS, J.; NICHOLLS, C. M.; ORMSTON, 2013) where the emphasis is placed on gaining thorough knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon. Merriam and Grenier (2019) posited that qualitative descriptive research is a powerful research tool when it concerns learning about the lives of others and the context in which they live.

Mayring (2014) states that content analysis is a systematic and replicable research methodology that uses texts, images, recordings, and other media as data. The author identified four broad content analysis research designs, based on the kinds of research questions being asked: explorative, descriptive, relational, and causal (MAYRING, 2014). For this study, the descriptive approach was chosen because the research questions required that specific theoretical constructs related to humility be examined and described within the context of international assignments. Broadly, content analysis was a good match for this study because it allowed the collection of rich descriptive features of these manager´s experiences as they were analyzed through the expressed-humility lens.

The unit of analysis for the study was nineteen managers (ten expatriates and nine HR/GM managers). According to Guest and colleagues (2017) it is important to note that each expatriate and Human Resources / Global Mobility manager will have their own unique experiences and perception; therefore, studying the individual manager was more suitable than doing group interviews. The data collection for the researcher was semi-structured interviews. The study was conducted with managers working for multinational organizations. A total of nineteen interviewees were targeted, using purposive sampling. The semi-structured interviews with individual managers were audio-recorded and manually transcribed by the researcher. Atlas TI qualitative analysis software was used for identifying major themes and for further qualitative data analysis.

In the beginning of the research, informed consent was sought from participants thru agreement to participate in the interviews.

3.2.2.
Population and sample selection

Sampling decisions were shaped to get different perspectives in relation to how expatriate humble behavior operates in corporate international assignments: Expatriate managers bringing their own lived experiences during their assignments abroad and Human Resource / Global Mobility managers bringing their experiences of managing international assignments. The perspectives from these two groups, by proximity, allowed the multiplication of lived experiences and perspectives.

Sample selection is central to the practice of qualitative methods. To maintain the study limitation, participants were only purposefully selected, thru purposive sampling method (ROSENTHAL, 2016), and invited to participate in the study. Rosenthal (2016) posited that when sample selection is performed through purposive sampling, unlike convenience sampling, it results in data that is specific to the phenomenon which is under investigation. Personal professional contacts were used to access all respondents, and snowball sampling technique was applied to secure further interviews.

The general population examined for the research was nineteen managers with a global mindset, in other words, those with company responsibilities at the strategic and normative levels; developing management programs, structures and systems in order to achieve competitive advantage; and determining company standards and culture (ANDRESEN; BERGDOLT, 2017; BLEICHER, 2011). From the nineteen managers with a global mindset, ten of them were senior company-sponsored assigned expatriates (AEs), supported by their employers while working outside their home of origin, on a long-term assignment (more than 18 months) (ANDRESEN, M.; DICKMANN, M.; SUUTARI, 2018; BREWSTER, C.; DICKMANN, M.; MÄKELÄ, L.; SUUTARI, 2017) and ten Human Resource / Global Mobility managers with more than ten year experience in Global Mobility management.

A diversity of countries of origin, company headquarters locations, and areas of responsibility was purposely sought so that this diversity enriched the information for the analysis. Of the nineteen participants who were interviewed in the study, 58% were females and 42% were males. The research participants ranged in age from 34 to 62 years of age, being 85% between 40- and 60-year-old and, on average, the HR/GM managers had 19 years of experience in international Human Resources. In relation to research participants, on average, they were 49 years old and have worked in 26 different countries: Argentina, Brazil, Brunei, China, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, France, Holland, Hong Kong, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Oman, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Scotland, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UAE, USA and Venezuela. Expatriates have experienced from one to nine international assignments, 53% of them with regional responsibility, 36% with country and 11% with global responsibility. A summary of demographic information for the groups of participants is given in Table 3. The

level of international experience between the expatriates varied vastly; however, there were more than 80 years of combined international assignment experience among the study participants. In average expatriates experienced five years on international assignments and Human Resource and Global Mobility managers had 19 years of experience in managing international assignments. It is important to note that some HR/GM managers have worked in different locations, on international assignments. In this case, they shared not only their rich experience in managing expatriates but also their own lived experience as expatriates, which is the case of interviewees 11, 12, 17, 18 and 19.

Table 3 – Demographic Information

Interviewee #	Title	Years of Experience	Home Country	Company Headquarter	Assignment Locations	Area of Responsibility	Age Range
1	Manager	12	China	Holland	USA, Brazil, China	Country	50-60
2	Marketing Manager	9	UK	Holland	Singapore, Holland	Region	40-50
3	Client Manager	4	Germany	Germany	Japan	Region	50-60
4	Vice President - AsiaP	8	USA	USA	Brazil, Costa Rica, Hong Kong	Region	50-60
5	Finance Manager	6	Brazil	Brazil	USA	Country	30-40
6	President	9	France	France	Brazil	Country	60-70
7	CFO	9	Germany	Germany	USA, Switzerland, Singapore	Region	40-50
8	Head of Sales	6	France	France	Mexico, Brazil, S. Africa	Region	40-50
9	Director	12	USA	UK	Oman, Brunei, S. Korea	Country	50-60
10	VP Sales	6	Brazil	France	USA, Spain, France, France	Region	50-60
11	GM Manager	21	Brazil	USA	Dominican Republic, Mexico	Global	40-50
12	GM Manager	14	Brazil	France	Brazil, Sweden	Country	40-50
13	Head of HR	13	Brazil	Germany	Brazil	Country	50-60
14	Head of HR	29	USA	France	USA	Country	50-60
15	CHRO	22	Brazil	Switzerland	USA, Switzerland	Region	40-50
16	GM Manager	11	Brazil	China	Brazil, China	Region	30-40
17	GM Manager	20	Germany	Germany	France, USA	Region	40-50
18	HR Strategy and Planning Manager	17	Brazil	Doha, Qatar	Argentina, Venezuela, USA, Russia, USA, UAE, USA, Saudi Arabia, Qatar	Global	40-50
19	HR VP	28	Brazil	France	USA, Scotland, Italy, Mexico	Region	50-60

Source: Elaborated by author

3.3.
Data collection and management

This qualitative, descriptive, content analysis design study used semi-structured interviews to examine how expatriate humble behavior operates in corporate international assignments. The intention was to use the most effective and efficient data collection method to yield meaningful data for the study.

Invitation letters to participate in the research were sent to pre-selected expatriates and Human Resource / Global Mobility managers, giving details of the research. Because past research suggests some people associate humility with humiliation (EXLINE, J. J.; GEYER, 2004; GRENBERG, 2007) and as humility is

seen from several dimensions (i.e. Psychology, Philosophy, Theology, Ethics, and Management, among other areas (FROSTENSON, 2016), it was important to provide a common definition of humility for participants by giving each manager the general definition of "expressed humility" by Owens and Hekman (2016), which highlights only behaviors that can be observed by others, and which arise in social contexts, when individuals demonstrate: (i) Manifested Willingness to See the Self Accurately (the understanding of one´s strengths and weaknesses); (ii) Appreciation of Others' Strengths and Contributions, and (iii) Openness to new ideas and to learning from others. These interrelated themes are essential for defining humility in an organizational context. From reply of these emails and agreement to participate in the research, the interview date was set.

According to Mayring (2014), there are many forms of interviews one can use for qualitative data collection (e.g., narrative interview, deep interview, focus interview, biographical interview, and semi-structured interviews). Semi-structured interviews, according to Park and Park (2016), are most suitable for collecting qualitative data because this instrument is highly effective at collecting data that provides a deeper understanding of the research phenomena. Therefore, the primary data source and main instrument for data collection was semi-structured, opened-ended recorded interviews approach, common to qualitative descriptive research (DESPINS, 2017) which is considered very flexible and can yield large amounts of information (FARRELLY, 2013). Semi-structured interviews were open dialogue guided by an interview schedule and protocol while retaining a high level of flexibility as necessary (PATTON, 2014) for data collection.

The elaboration of the interview script, presented in table 2 (Session 3.3.1), with the intention of collecting perceptions about how expatriate humble behavior operates in corporate international, was based on the Literature Review (Chapter 2), as summarized in table 4 below.

Table 4 – Categories, Constructs and Authors

Categories	Constructs	Authors
Expressed Humble Behaviors (EHB) (Behaviors, emerging in expatriate assignments, that expatriates and HR/GM Managers observed).	(1) EHB and Self-awareness (2) EHB and Appreciation of others (3) EHB and Teachability (4) EHB and Humiliation (5) EHB and Arrogance (6) EHB and Cultural Humility	ALI *et al.* (2020); ANAND, A., WALSH, I., & MOFFETT (2019); ARGANDONA (2015); ASHFORD *et al.* (2018); BAEHR (2016); BURKE (2006); CALIGIURI, P, (2012); CALIGIURI, P., BAYTALSKAYA, N., & LAZAROVA (2016); CALIGIURI P.; BONACHE (2016); CHEN, G., KIRKMAN, B. L., KIM, K., FARH, C. I., & TANGIRALA (2010); COPPOLA (2021); CSEH; DAVIS; KHILJI (2013); DAVIS; WORTHINGTON; HOOK (2010); DAVIS *et al.*, (2011); DAVIS *et al.*, (2017); DOVER (1994); ELDER, L., & PAUL (2012); (EXLINE, J. J., & GEYER (2004); FORONDA *et al.* (2016); FORONDA, 2020); GRENBERG (2007); HOOK *et al.* (2013); JAVIDAN; BOWEN (2013); JANKOWSKI; SANDAGE; HILL (2013); KAPLAN (2021); KRUMREI-MANCUSO; ROUSE (2016); MCELROY *et al.* (2014); MANGAN (2018), MORRIS; BROTHERIDGE; URBANSKI (2005); OWENS, B. P., ROWATT, W. C., & WILKINS (2011); OWENS; JOHNSON; MITCHELL (2013); OWEN *et al.* (2014); OWENS; HEKMAN (2016); OU *et al.* (2014); OU; WALDMAN; PETERSON (2018); PAUL; MEYSKENS; ROBBINS (2011), PETERSON, C., & SELIGMAN (2004); ROWATT *et al.* (2006); TANGNEY (2000); TANGNEY (2009); TEMPLETON (1997); SCHEIN (2016); TIBERIUS, V., & WALKER (1998); VERA, D., & RODRIGUEZ-LOPEZ (2004); YEAGER; BAUER-WU (2013).
Relevance (RHB) (The use and the need of humble behaviors in expatriate assignments, identified by expatriates and HR/GM Managers).	(1) RHB and International Assignments (2) RHB and Leadership (3) RHB and Team Management (4) RHB and Cultural interactions	ALI *et al.* (2020); ANAND, A., WALSH, I., & MOFFETT (2019); ANDRESEN; BERGDOLT (2017); ANDRESEN; BERGDOLT (2017); ANDRESEN; BERGDOLT (2019); ARGANDONA (2015); ARGANDONA (2017); ATHAYDE, A. L. M., & SILVA (2019); BADER *et al.* (2019); BIRD *et al.* (2010); BONACHE; BREWSTER; SUUTARI (2007); CALIGIURI, P., BAYTALSKAYA, N., & LAZAROVA (2016); CALIGIURI, P., & CAPRAR (2022); CHEN *et al.* (2021); CSEH; DAVIS; KHILJI (2013); COLLINS

	(5) RHB and COVID Pandemic (6) RHB in Global Mobility	(2001); CUENCA, R; TOMEI, P.A. & MELLO (2022); DAVIS; WORTHINGTON; HOOK (2010); DAVIS *et al.* (2017); GUNDLING, E., HOGAN, T., & CVITKOVICH (2011); DABIC; GONZÁLEZ-LOUREIRO; HARVEY (2005); EXLINE (2012); EXLINE, J. J., & HILL (2012); FUSTER; VARIEUR TURCO (2020); FORONDA *et al.* (2016); FROSTENSON (2016); HOOK, J. N. (2014); HAMMER (2011); HOOK, J. N., DAVIS, D., OWEN, J., & DEBLAERE (2017); HU *et al.* (2018); HUTT; GOPALAKRISHNAN (2020); ISAACSON (2014); JANKOWSKI; SANDAGE; HILL (2013); JAVIDAN; BOWEN (2013); KJAR (2007); KEYS, D. T., & WELLINS (2008); KONYU-FOGEL (2011); MALLÉN *et al.* (2019); MENDENHALL (2006); MORRIS; BROTHERIDGE; URBANSKI (2005); MOSHER, D. K., HOOK, J. N., CAPTARI, L. E., DAVIS, D. E., DEBLAERE, C., & OWEN (2017); MOTT, M., TEIXEIRA, M. L. M., NAKASHIMA, C., & DE ARAÚJO (2012); NIELSEN; MARRONE (2018); OSLAND (2008); OU *et al.* (2014); OU; WALDMAN; PETERSON (2018); OWENS, B. P., ROWATT, W. C., & WILKINS (2011); OWENS, B. P., & HEKMAN (2012); OWENS; HEKMAN (2016); PAINE; JANKOWSKI; SANDAGE (2016); PETERS; ROWAT; JOHNSON (2011); PRAYAG (2018); REGO *et al.* (2019); ROWATT *et al.* (2006); SCHEIN & SCHEIN (2018); SENGE (1990); SUUTARI (2003); TANGNEY (2000); TOMEI, P.A.; CUENCA, R; & MELLO (2022); TSENG; CHOU; YU (2010); VERA, D., & RODRIGUEZ-LOPEZ (2004); WANG, X., LI, H., & YIN (2020); ZAGO; DOMINGUES; SILVA (2019); ZHONG *et al.* (2019); WEICK (2001); YEAGER; BAUER-WU (2013).
Context (CHB) (The situational context that determines	(1) CHB - Importance (2) CHB and Leadership (3) CHB and Pressure	ABBAS; WU (2021); ARGANDONA (2013); ARGANDONA (2017); BROOKS (2015); CHANCELLOR; LYUBOMIRSKY (2013); CUENCA; TOMEI; MELLO (2022); MEYER (2016); EXLINE, J. J., & GEYER (2004); FORONDA (2020);

the effectiveness of humble leader behaviors and when it is most needed).	(4) CHB and Hierarchy (5) CHB and Short-term orientation and Individualism (6) CHB and Power distance and Confrontation	FOSTER; CAMPBELL; TWENGE (2003); GEERTZ (1973); HALL, E. T., & HALL (1990); HOEKSTRA; BELL; PETERSON (2008); HOFSTEDE, G., HOFSTEDE, G. J., & MINKOV (2010); HOFSTEDE (1980) ; KAPLAN (2021); GABRIEL (1997); RAELIN (2003); KHURANA (2002); TALLMAN (2003); DE VRIES (2011); Brown *et al.* (2013); LIN *et al.* (2019); MORRIS; BROTHERIDGE; URBANSKI (2005); OU *et al.* (2014); MYERS (2001); OWENS, B. P., & HEKMAN (2012); PETERSON, C., & SELIGMAN (2004); PUTNAM (2000); SCHEIN (2013; 2016); SCHEIN & SCHEIN (2018); SCHWARTZ (1999); (TWENGE, J. M., & CAMPBELL (2009); ZHANG *et al.*, 2007); ZAPATA; HAYES-JONES (2019); WANG (2001).
Outcomes (OHB) (Important perceived outcomes of humble behavior, focusing on adaptation to the host culture)	(1) OHB - Adaptation and International Assignments (2) OHB – Humility as a Resource for Expatriate Adaptation 2a. Self-Awareness and Adaptation 2b. Appreciation of others and Adaptation 2c. Teachability and Adaptation (3) OHB – Humility and the flexibility to change behavior (4) OHB – Humility, Trust and	ALIMBAU-COMAS (2020); ANDRESEN; GOLDMANN; VOLODINA (2018); ANDRESEN; BERGDOLT (2019); BADER *et al.* (2019); BLACK, J. S., & MENDENHALL (1990); BHASKAR-SHRINIVAS *et al.* (2005); BIRD, A., OSLAND, J. S., & LANE (2004); BIRD *et al.* (2010); BRUNING, N. S., SONPAR, K., & WANG (2012); CALIGIURI, P (2012); CALIGIURI, P., & TARIQUE (2012); CALIGIURI P. & BONACHE (2016); CALIGIURI P. (2021); CALIGIURI, P., & CAPRAR (2022); CAVAZOTTE; MELLO; OLIVEIRA (2020); CHEN, G., KIRKMAN, B. L., KIM, K., FARH, C. I., & TANGIRALA (2010); COLVIN; BLOCK; FUNDER (1995); CSEH; DAVIS; KHILJI (2013); DOZ; HAE-JUNG (2013); EXLINE (2012); FORTH (2020); GUDYKUNST, W. B., & HAMMER (1988); HAMMER (2011); HARRISON, D. A., & SHAFFER (2005); JAVIDAN; BOWEN (2013); KINCAID (1988); KJAR (2007); KERNIS (2003); KEYS, D. T., & WELLINS (2008); KRAIMER; WAYNE; JAWORSKI (2001); MALEK; BUDHWARB; REICHE (2015); MEYER (2014); MENDENHALL, M., & ODDOU (1985); MOELLER *et al.* (2016a); MOLINSKY (2007); MORRIS; BROTHERIDGE; URBANSKI (2005); NIELSEN; MARRONE (2018); OWENS;

		JOHNSON; MITCHELL (2013); OWENS, B. P., & HEKMAN (2012); OWENS; HEKMAN (2016); PAUL; MEYSKENS; ROBBINS (2011); PAULHUS (1998); PETERS; ROWAT; JOHNSON (2011); REGO, A., OWENS, B., LEAL, S., MELO, A. I., E CUNHA, M. P., GONÇALVES, L., & RIBEIRO (2017); REGO; CUNHA; SIMPSON (2018); ROMANI *et al.* (2018); ROWATT *et al.* (2006); SHAFFER *et al.* (2012); SELMER (2007); SOUSA *et al.* (2017); TAKEUCHI (2010); TANGNEY (2000); THIELMANN; HILBIG (2014); THIELMANN; HILBIG (2015); TOH, S. M., & DENISI (2007); VAN DER LAKEN *et al.* (2019); VARNER, I. I., & PALMER (2005); VAZIRE; FUNDER (2006); WANG; LIU; ZHU (2018); WRIGHT *et al.* (2017); YANG; ZHANG; CHEN (2019); KIM (2017); ZAWADZKA, A. M., & ZALEWSKA (2013); ZHONG *et al.* (2019).
	Adaptation (5) OHB – Humility, supportive relationships, and well-being	

Source: Elaborated by author

The researcher took care in not asking the interviewees about their own behaviors, but instead, they were asked to describe the humble behaviors that they have observed in other expatriates, or, in general, during their international assignments, for the following reasons:

(i) It is not easy to distinguish the sincere answers from those in which the interviewee tries to give a distorted image of his own behavior;

(ii) humility, or its contrary vices, is present in all people´s actions, in one way or another, so that it is not simply a professional trait, but an important component of the character of the people. Although not asked for, many interviewees also shared examples of times when they observed the opposite of a humble behavior.

The researcher also understands that humility, like all virtues, admits of various levels in its development and in its application. For example, it may be different in assessing the capabilities and strengths of the agent and other people. Or it can increase or decrease over time and circumstances. This was considered when conducting the interviews, and when opting for a purposive sampling.

The length of each interview ranged from 50 to 70 minutes based on informant responses. The main purpose of research interviews was to gain a deeper insight into the perceptions, attitudes, and motivations of managers (PATTON, 2014). The semi-structured interviews contained open-ended questions and also some questions relating to the demographic characteristics of the participants, however, to protect and maintain the privacy of the respondents their names and their companies´ names were not collected for use in the study (WHITING, L. S. 2008). While conducting the semi-structured interviews, the researcher listened and recorded each response (PATTON, 2014; WHITING, L. S. 2008).

Before data collection, researcher thoroughly explained the nature of the study to each participant and asked them, at the beginning of the interview, for their informed consent to record it. Each interviewee had to personally authorize recording. (DAYAL *et al*., 2018) stated that informed consent is the process by which the researcher informs the study participants of the purpose, activities, and associated risks and benefits associated with the study. The researcher took the following steps to protect the identity of all participants.

• The researcher used code names on all interview transcripts.

• The researcher only performed interviews after interviewees 'approval.

• The researcher protected and secured all data collected in an electronic confidential base to avoid any unnecessary exposure to participants' personal information.

• All information collected during the data collection period of the study remained secured in a cloud storage system (Dropbox).

• The researcher will safely keep all research-related data only for not more than three years.

The researcher used the following protocol to conduct the semi-structured interviews with participants for gaining the necessary information as guided by the research questions. At the start of the interview, the researcher welcomed each of the study participants, explained the purpose of the study and asked study participants if they had any concerns and questions that they had concerning the study, before data collection. The researcher then proceeded to address all concerns and questions, if any, that the study participants had. After all concerns and questions had been fully addressed to every participant's satisfaction, the researcher

asked the study participants to verbally state if they agreed or did not agree to a voice recorded interview. Only if the participants agreed to the recorded interview, the researcher proceeded to explain the ground rules governing the data collection process which involved semi-structured interviews to the study participants. If the study participants agreed to the ground rules and all questions and concerns were thoroughly addressed to the participants' satisfaction, the researcher turned on the recording equipment to begin the semi-structured interviews. Post data collection, all recorded interviews were safely secured in dropbox online storage for transcription and further analysis. The semi-structured interview recordings were transcribed and reviewed by the researcher.

Then, the transcribed recordings were entered into Atlas TI qualitative software for further analysis, identifying patterns in the data set.

3.4.
Data analysis procedures

The descriptive, qualitative study with a content approach to data analysis (MAYRING, 2014) was performed to examine how expatriate humble behavior operates in corporate international assignments. According to Kumar Astalin (2013, p. 119), "The design of qualitative research is probably the most flexible of the various experimental techniques, encompassing a variety of accepted methods and structures". Qualitative research is an important research method used to focus research questions on discovering and gaining insights into a poorly understood phenomenon (KIM; SEFCIK; BRADWAY, 2017). Qualitative data analysis was suitable for the study because it fundamentally assists researchers in making sense of their qualitative data; therefore, it is the most important step in the qualitative descriptive research process (ONWUEGBUZIE, A. J.; LEECH, 2007).

The researcher used purposive sampling to recruit nineteen participants with the requisite experience under investigation. Purposive sampling for the necessary data resulted in data that is specific to the study questions (ROSENTHAL, 2016). Coding of the transcribed interviews was used as the main method of data analysis when utilizing semi-structured interviews to answer the five qualitative research questions. According to Mayring (2014, p. 78) the purpose of content analysis is "to reduce a large volume of material to a manageable level, but in so doing, retaining the essential content" (p. 78). Therefore, data transcribed from recorded

interviews and questionnaires were coded for further analysis based on respondents' answers during the interview.

The collected data was organized for analysis according to the research questions informed in the study. The researcher used a combination of codes and themes to examine participants' responses to each of the interviews. The coding process was employed by the researcher to enable the researcher to organize the collected data by categorizing similar phrases that allowed the development of patterns and themes. After conducting and recording the semi-structured interviews, the researcher transcribed the recorded narratives, then interview transcripts were proceeded with multiple readings for familiarization, coding, and identify patterns (themes) using Atlas TI qualitative data analysis software.

The researcher employed manual coding using Atlas TI software. Codes were applied to each interview and questionnaire transcripts (GUEST *et al.*, 2017) as the various elements associated with coding helped the researcher demonstrate the credibility and truthfulness of the research data. The researcher used a general analysis of the qualitative data and derived common themes to help characterize the experiences of the study participants.

Data analysis via hand-coding of text can be very time consuming; however, as suggested by Grbich (2012) and Yin (2013), computer programs can be used to assist the researcher in data coding and developing themes. Therefore, the interview transcripts were then uploaded into Atlas TI software, a qualitative analysis software, to further manage the coding process of the interview for analysis. This process also heightens the rigor of the research based on data analysis.

The above steps and procedures as outlined by the researcher are aligned with the qualitative descriptive methodology. Since our intent was to understand how expatriate humble behavior operates in corporate international assignments, all interview statements were organized into coded categories, as presented in Table 2.

3.4.1.
Using Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS)

It can be said that technological advancements have changed the way data is collected and analyzed. For example, as data from recorded interviews which can be transcribed into a text document, with the use of computer tools; this eliminates

the need for manual transcription. Software packages are available to aid the process of qualitative analysis in the sense of managing large quantities of qualitative data. However, obviously the software package cannot interpret the data for the researcher, therefore the process of manually coding data and data interpretation remains the same when using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis.

In the context of this dissertation, the entire interviews were recorded, transcribed into plain text documents, and transferred to Atlas.ti 9, after informed consent from participants was received. Participants were given the opportunity to review the interviews and were assured statements would not include identifying information. All names and pseudonyms were changed in the transcripts before the data analysis phase and each participant was represented by a number to ensure confidentiality.

The researcher performed initial coding of the text documents and constructed a code list, which included definitions and examples from the corpus.

CAQDAS tools are designed with the specific aim of supporting the process of coding and analysis. Kaefer and colleagues (2015) cite the main key advantages provided by CAQDAS, as faster and more efficient data management; their ability to handle large volumes of data; and their ability to improve methodological rigor, consistency, and analytical transparency.

3.5.
Ethical considerations

The descriptive, qualitative, content analysis study followed all ethical standards to ensure truthfulness and validity of the study. The researcher ensured that the study was always conducted ethically, and that the protection of the data collected was always maintained. The researcher informed the participants of the study via invitation letter that participation in the research was voluntary and confidential, and that the interviewees name nor company's name would be requested, except if they wanted to provide their contact information; that no individual analysis would be done, and that the results of this study could be published but would not include any information that could identify them, as stated in the Invitation Letter (Attachment 1).

Participating managers were not exposed to any unnecessary risk. Privacy and confidentiality of all participants in the study were maintained and protected. Study participants received all necessary information concerning the study and the researcher ensured that the study participants fully understood it. Before starting the interviews, participants personally and voluntarily gave permission for recording, by clicking on "Allow Record".

The researcher worked in Global Mobility for more than 20 years and has known some of the GM/HR managers and expatriates of other organizations. The familiarity and professional relationships with those managers could have resulted in bias in the research process, and changes in the dynamics of the relationships within the community upon the completion of the study. Therefore, names of the organizations and manager´s names were not used in the study.

Code names were used in all interview transcripts to protect the identity of the participants. All data collected from the participants was stored in a password-protected folder on a cloud storage system (Dropbox), to avoid unauthorized access to the study and will be discarded within three years from collection.

3.6.
Method limitations and delimitations

According to Yin (2013), no study is without limitations and delimitations. However, the researcher should be aware of these aspects of the study as they may restrict the research conclusions. Both limitation and delimitation can significantly reduce the scope of the study; therefore, it was important that the researcher was aware of these elements and all attempts were made to address them.

There are issues with using expatriates as participants in humble behavior studies as the variety of nationalities and host country locations is enormous However, it is believed that the benefits of studying humble behavior in this particular context of international assignments outweigh the disadvantages of having unequal numbers of nationalities and host locations and this may create a possible sampling bias. This also has implications for the generalizability of the results, as the variety of country cultures may mean that the results may not be the same as would be obtained in a different context such as other cultures not represented in this research. However, it should be noted that most of the participants had a long experience in global mobility: either being HR/GM

managers for at least 10 years, and managing a variety of expatriate moves, or being an expatriate themselves with a large international experience, by having moved to several different locations around the globe.

While limitations are normally considered beyond the control of the researcher, delimitations, on the contrary, are usually self-imposed constrains that may limit the scope of the study. The abovementioned limitations forced the researcher to delimit the scope of the study; different from the limitations, the researcher had varying control over the delimitations. For example, the researcher delimited the study by making it a requirement for study participants to be senior assigned expatriates (AEs) and HR/GM managers with a minimum 10-year experience in managing global mobility. The choice of study methodology and design also produced its limitations and delimitation.

The study used a qualitative descriptive design, a method that requires a description of the phenomenon (SANDELOWSKI, 2000), which has its limitations. For example, the following are limitations based on qualitative research methodology:

1. Findings are usually biased because of the researcher's influence over the study.
2. Research quality is usually based on the skills and experience of the researcher.
3. Unlike other research methods, rigor is more difficult to establish in qualitative research.
4. The research can be time-consuming especially during the data collection and data analysis process.
5. Replicating a qualitative study is very challenging because repeating the elements associated with the study is almost impossible.

4
Results and analysis

Empirical Findings by Category

4.1.
Category 1: Expressed Humble Behaviors (EHB)

"Expressed humility" arises in social contexts in which individuals demonstrate the ability to correctly assess themselves and understand their own strengths and weaknesses (self-awareness), show appreciation for the strengths and contributions of others with openness to new ideas and recognition of the value of others and teachability, showing that humility makes individuals more willing to learn from others. These characteristics of "expressed humility" help us to identify humble behaviors (OWENS; JOHNSON; MITCHELL, 2013) supporting the understanding of humility in international assignments.

4.1.1.
EHB and self-awareness

Expatriates with a humble behavior admit it when they don't know how to do something, do not exaggerate their strengths, nor underestimate their weakness which can lead to poor management decisions and even expatriate failures (OU; WALDMAN; PETERSON, 2018). A precise norm of awareness refers to the expatriate´s clear, unbiased assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of themselves and others.

Admit when they don´t know how to do something

Humble expatriates admit their mistakes and limitations, which also include accepting their weaknesses and failures to their superiors (OWEN *et al*., 2014). Humble leaders do not exaggerate their strengths nor underestimate their weaknesses, as presented in the Humility scale of Owens *et al*. (2013), a scale which is presented in several top business magazines and seems to be the measure of choice for studying humility among organizational members. The below statement reflects the acceptance of not knowing something:

I sat with the CEO thinking… I have no idea how we're going to do this. This is the CEO, person to person, and from the vulnerability, we were both humble in our approach to the conversation, that we had to listen to each other. We were okay to be wrong and to walk back on what we first said. (Interviewee 15)

Here, the assignee is conscious about not anticipating assumptions of things he does not know yet.

In my first three months, I'm doing my LLL: I'm looking, listening, and learning because I don't want to make assumptions about things that I don't know. (Interviewee 18)

In the example below, the expatriate recognized he had no knowledge on the subject (COVID) and sought to learn from someone who knew more than he did:

As soon as the COVID pandemic started in Brazil, I was heading an organization of 500 people. And I remember that, back there, an employee of mine asked me for help to be expatriated to China. And I said, wow... so-and-so is in the middle of the hurricane, let me call him. And he started to keep me informed. And this humility that I had, of consulting him and learning from him, allowed me to anticipate a series of problems that everyone experienced after that. (Interviewee 10)

Unbiased assessment of the strengths and weaknesses

The understanding of humility considers the intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions (DAVIS; WORTHINGTON; HOOK, 2010). These dimensions can be observed in an interconnected way, since the humble person has high self-knowledge, as he/she can understand his/her own strengths and weaknesses (NIELSEN; MARRONE; SLAY, 2010), in allusion to the intrapersonal approach, as well as when he has an aptitude for emotional management, showing ability for self-control (MORRIS; BROTHERIDGE; URBANSKI, 2005), in line with the interpersonal approach. The interdependence of visions holds that humility is practiced for the development or improvement of the agent and for the service to others (DAVIS *et al.*, 2011).

Sometimes I'm right. Sometimes I'm wrong. And when I'm right, the work goes on, when I'm wrong it's also a great thing because, if I'm wrong, it means I've learned something today. When I am wrong, one of my beliefs has been debunked. But it means that we will probably have to do some extra work. And that's all right because we've learned from that exercise. (Interviewee 13)

During COVID, specifically in 2020 and 2021, with both teams, in Dubai and here in Doha, I had a relationship built of: "I don't know everything, so, I'm going to do my best to hold the pressure and not crack, but I need you to continue delivering on your end. (Interviewee 18)

In the following example, the HR manager shares a situation of a CFO who had a severe panic attack on his first visit to the USA, before he started his assignment. In this case, he openly shared his weakness with his team. After he went through that and got himself situated, he said:

> *I was very excited about coming, but I had a severe panic attack when I got here because I went: 'Oh my gosh, what am I doing?' So that was a behavior that showed he was weak, but in no way, shape, or form, it showed he wasn't a good and competent boss.* (Interviewee 14)

4.1.2.
EHB and appreciation of others

Identifying the humble behaviors expressed within the organizational environment, in the interpersonal dimension, and as a measure of general construct, means recognizing the appreciation of others' strengths and contributions (OWENS; JOHNSON; MITCHELL, 2013). Expatriates with a humble behavior acknowledge when others have more knowledge and skills than him or herself, take notice and compliment others on their strengths and appreciate others´ contributions and ideas.

Acknowledge when others have more knowledge and skills

Humility allows expatriates to transcend the comparative–competitive response when interacting with others and, instead, acknowledges and admires the strengths and contributions of others without feeling threatened by them (EXLINE, J. J.; GEYER, 2004; OWENS; HEKMAN, 2016; TANGNEY, 2009), as mentioned by the HR manager below:

> *I realized that to deliver and to be better as a professional and as a person, I needed to surround myself with people that were smarter than me. I can never know it all.* (Interviewee 18)

Take notice and compliment others on their strengths

Both expatriates and HR recognized that complimenting others on their strengths is an example of humble behavior (OWENS; JOHNSON; MITCHELL, 2013), which is important for a more constructive organizational climate (ALI *et al*., 2020).

> *This senior director was a person who knew how to recognize others in front of his peers, when someone did a good job or something nice. He explicitly used to say, in meetings or more informally, the value of each person.* (Interviewee 13)

Below, the HR manager gives an example which shows that the president of the company recognized the expertise (the strength) of his successor and therefore took a step back so that the future leader started to take responsibility. The president did not think that he alone had all the knowledge for his position. He recognized the value of the other.

> *I had some that were so good at it that after two years they even said: "okay, I'm going to stop being the boss, I'm going to put the ones who are supposed to take over after me, in charge. Let them do it, and I'm going to be their support. I will watch and give feedback."* (Interviewee 14)

Appreciate others´ contributions and ideas

This component involves appreciation of others' strengths and contributions (OU *et al*., 2014; VERA, D.; RODRIGUEZ-LOPEZ, 2004) and appraising others generously (MORRIS *et al*., 2005; TANGNEY, 2009). Such appreciation is based on the understanding of their own strengths and, thus, rises above the need for entitlement or domination over others (OU; WALDMAN; PETERSON, 2018; PETERSON, C.; SELIGMAN, 2004). Expressed humility reflects attitudes that are other enhancing rather than self-enhancing (MORRIS; BROTHERIDGE; URBANSKI, 2005) and leads one to acknowledge and show that he/she values others' strengths (OWENS; HEKMAN, 2016; TANGNEY, 2009), as in the example below, given by an HR manager, who saw a senior leader appreciating the contribution of his team:

> *I saw this leader say, "It's not my success. I didn't contribute much to this project. It was my team who developed it". This way, the leader put his team in the frontline…, giving back.* (Interviewee 7)

4.1.3.
EHB and teachability

Teachability is manifested by showing openness to learning, feedback, and new ideas from others. Humility involves a tendency to keep an open mind and continuously learn and improve (MORRIS; BROTHERIDGE; URBANSKI, 2005; TANGNEY, 2009). With the awareness of their limitations and weaknesses, humble individuals are eager to improve themselves. They are open to new information, ideas, or paradigms (VERA, D.; RODRIGUEZ-LOPEZ, 2004) and they are willing to take contradictory advice or even criticism (OU; WALDMAN; PETERSON, 2018; OWENS; JOHNSON; MITCHELL, 2013).

Expatriates with a humble behavior look for learning from others, are receptive to the ideas and advice of others; actively seek feedback, even if it is critical (OWENS; JOHNSON; MITCHELL, 2013), they value knowledge sharing (ANAND, A.; WALSH, I.; MOFFETT, 2019), mutual empowerment, partnerships, and lifelong learning (BURKE, 2006).

As individuals become aware of and accept their limitations, they are faced with two alternatives: a conformist choice, which considers their level of learning adequate, or a choice of personal development, which seeks to learn more. In this way, many researchers associate humble individuals with the desire to learn and grow, and highlight that humility makes people better learners (MORRIS; BROTHERIDGE; URBANSKI, 2005; OWENS; JOHNSON; MITCHELL, 2013). Humility is strongly associated with curiosity, the ability to reflect and an open mind being essential to promote involvement in the learning process and obtain new knowledge, as the recognition of one's own limitations helps in the perception that there is something to learn (ROWATT *et al.*, 2006). The most humble people have a "more teachable spirit", favoring the receptivity of feedback and performance (TANGNEY, 2000).

Below are examples on those who manifest teachability and are identified by: a) willing to learn from others; b) being open to the ideas and advice of others; and c) actively seeking feedback.

Willing to learn from others

Tangney (2000, p. 72) argued that "humility carries with it an open-mindedness, a willingness to . . . seek advice, and a desire to learn." Similarly, Templeton, (1997, p. 162) noted that humility is knowing that you are smart, but you don't know everything, "Inherent in humility resides an open and receptive mind . . . it leaves us more open to learn from others.", and a tendency to continuously improve (MORRIS; BROTHERIDGE; URBANSKI, 2005).

Humble managers will be less likely to hold simplistic, dualistic evaluations of others (i.e., competent versus incompetent) and by so doing, they are more readily able to identify in others valuable resources for social modeling and learning (OWENS; HEKMAN, 2016). The humble leader is not narcissist, and rejects adulation and self-complacency (VERA, D.; RODRIGUEZ-LOPEZ, 2004).

This director demonstrated that he really wanted to learn, to understand. He wanted to be a part of the culture and really live the culture, not just come, and do a job. (Interviewee 14)

I had a president, a French expat who looked like a 3-year-old child. He wanted to know everything and understand why. He didn't judge. He asked the mechanic about screws.... he was really interested in everything. (Interviewee 19)

Expatriates learn several skills abroad: Skills related to market knowledge, interpersonal skills, skills specific to the position, skills related to networking, general management skills, technical skills, understanding the organization and intercultural skills. "Leaders who maintain this commitment to humility are committed learners" (HOEKSTRA; BELL; PETERSON, 2008), as supported by the HR manager below:

Although he is nearly 50, he approaches things with a beginner 's mind, which is very nice. I think it is a sign of humbleness. (Interviewee 18)

No matter how good you are, no matter how brilliant things you have done, you should be prepared to step in some other person´s shoes and be humble sufficiently to put it away all you know and listen to what this person is saying... should be prepared to rip your handbook because you listened to something else. And if you are not humble, you will not do that. (Interviewee 2)

Open to the ideas and advice of others

A humble being is someone receptive to new ideas (MORRIS; BROTHERIDGE; URBANSKI, 2005; TANGNEY, 2000), who has behaviors that allow them to deal constructively with the environment (OWENS, B. P.; ROWATT, W. C.; WILKINS, 2011) and are open to new information or paradigms (VERA, D.; RODRIGUEZ-LOPEZ, 2004).

The excerpts from the interviewees' testimonies, listed below, corroborate with the above authors:

In my role, when I connect to my leaders from a point of curiosity and trying to understand where they are coming from, dialog happens at a different level. And it's not the level of brain, it's beyond brain. And this makes a big, big difference. So, I think that this belief system of "I don't have the answers, that the answers are out there" enable us to co-create answers. And there's so much power in answers that are co-created, that are not one person's reality or the other person's reality. (Interviewee 15)

When we talk about knowledge and learning we need to introduce a sub-dimension of humility: intellectual humility (IH) which defines the way you position yourself in the face of knowledge: unreceptive, curious, available, open to new experiences, and its relationship with the willingness to learn (DAVIS *et al*., 2017). Intellectual humility (IH) refers to recognizing how wrong our personal beliefs or opinions can be. It is identified as a non-threatening awareness of one's intellectual fallibility. The lower the IH, the greater the tendency to assume that people who think differently from us are intellectually and morally inferior (KRUMREI-MANCUSO; ROUSE, 2016). The expatriates below gave examples of not being intellectually humble, and the negative impact of that:

> *If you think you know everything, you have tips on your shoulders, or if somebody brings an idea which is different from yours, you shut them up and they will not open to you anymore* (Interviewee 9)

> *You arrive, you know everything, you teach the others: "Now it is like that. You just follow, you just do it", or you give orders. It is not humble, not appropriate* (Interviewee 8)

According to McElroy *et al*. (2014), while humility refers to a variety of meanings, intellectual humility (IH) refers to the knowledge or intellectual influence of someone who has: (a) insight into the limits of one's own knowledge, marked by openness to new ideas; and (b) control of arrogance, marked by the ability to present one's ideas in a non-offensive way and receive contrary ideas without being offended, even when confronted with alternative points of view.

> *It's a belief where you approach the other believing that the other has something I don't have, that I am very curious for. So, it can't go wrong.* (Interviewee 15)

According to Baehr (2016) and Elder and Paul (2012), intellectual humility is closely linked to learning because it allows individuals to better understand their areas of ignorance, clearly define what they understand and what they do not understand about a subject, avoid allegations of knowledge they do not have, admit errors in their understanding, discover their false beliefs and misconceptions, and change their mind, as supported by testimony below:

> *I was not always like this, but I am a person who seeks continuous improvement. Whether in the processes, or for myself, in my personal life. I have two guys, who today are my "role models", and they both have this characteristic: both are humble people and listen. So, I think humility is very important, especially for leaders at the top.* (Interviewee 10)

Actively seeking feedback

Humility fosters a more objective appraisal of personal strengths and limitations that is manifested by seeking realistic feedback about the self (OWENS; HEKMAN, 2016). Ou and colleagues (2014) proposed important characteristics on a CEO, including being receptive to feedback. In this sense the authors emphasize that humble leaders have realistic views of themselves and their capabilities and are open to admit their mistakes and limitations. Ashford *et al*. (2018) argued that the behavior of CEO´s seeking feedback – a core component of humble leadership – encourages other members of the leadership team to exhibit more humility.

Several stories are revealed in the media of arrogant, overconfident, and narcissistic leaders who are not empathetic to their teams and who ignore their feedback (see (KAPLAN, 2021; MANGAN, 2018), but the examples given below reinforce how seeking feedback is helpful to global leaders. When expatriates are perceived to be open to ideas from other cultures, they are likely to accept the support and feedback offered and, in turn, perform better on the assignment. (CALIGIURI, P.; BAYTALSKAYA, N.; LAZAROVA, 2016).

> *This expatriate director, when we questioned his position, sharing different arguments, he looked at us and said: "I understand. I accept what you're saying. I learned".* (Interviewee 13)

In an expatriate context, there are three conditions needed for social support to occur (CHEN, G.; KIRKMAN, B. L.; KIM, K.; FARH, C. I.; TANGIRALA, 2010). One, the expatriates must be receptive to support and feedback from those in the host work environment. Two, colleagues in the host location must perceive the expatriates' willingness to be supported and to receive feedback. Three, colleagues in the host nation must be willing to offer support and provide feedback (CALIGIURI, P.; BONACHE, 2016). Expatriates´ humility impacts their perceptions of support and feedback in the host national environment, affecting their ability to succeed in their international assignments, reducing uncertainty and stress by providing information about cultural norms and socially accepted behaviors (CALIGIURI, P.; BONACHE, 2016).

When I arrived, I compared and complained about everything. Until a friend called me. The humility at that moment of listening to a friend's feedback helped me a lot. He said: it's not that the French are arrogant. People who, in relation to their way, think they are arrogant, but it's their way. They like to teach everybody, they think France is the best country in the world, they think their way of doing it is the only one, etc. Is this bad, is it good? No. For their country, that's good. Again, we are the guests here. And that helped me a lot. (Interviewee 10)

4.1.4.
EHB and humiliation

During the interviews, few interviewees misunderstood the concept of humility, associating it to humiliation.

The word humility comes from the Latin *humilitas*, which translation reminds us of the earth beneath us, referring to something fundamental within the individual (ARGANDONA, 2015). Both the word humility and the word humiliate are related to the term humus, which means "ground and earth", referring to the earth that remains beneath us, to lower someone to the earth. To humiliate is a verb from the Latin *humiliare*, which means to make humble, to abate, to oppress, to degrade, to vex, reason why some associate humility with humiliation (EXLINE, J. J.; GEYER, 2004; GRENBERG, 2007). Humility is considered an ethical and a moral value of individuals and, according to Morris *et al*. (2005), it does not involve self-humiliation.

The testimonies below reflect this misunderstanding of concepts:

We, Brazilians, already have a characteristic of a colony, of thinking "you are the highest authority... you are the one who knows, I will respect, I will do what you want." even a somewhat inferior view." Wow, if they chose me as a Brazilian to go abroad, it's because I must deliver." So, because Brazilians have this inferiority complex, I see them humiliating themselves (Interviewee 12)

In certain positions of command, I don´t think humility will work. I associate it with insecurity (Interviewee 5)

4.1.5.
EHB and arrogance

Humble behavior is related to a capacity for self-regulation that protects expatriates against excess and promotes prosocial tendencies (JANKOWSKI; SANDAGE; HILL, 2013; OWENS, B. P.; ROWATT, W. C.; WILKINS, 2011), which mitigate human vices such as arrogance, self-aggrandizement, and pride (PETERSON, C.; SELIGMAN, 2004).

Humility is not the direct opposite of arrogance, but a powerful balancing force between the two undesirable extremes of arrogance and deference (HOOK, J., DAVIS, D.; OWEN, J.; WORTHINGTON, E.; UTSEY, 2013; KRUMREI-MANCUSO; ROUSE, 2016). Research done with different age groups indicated that, in general, participants expressed more sympathy and respect when dealing with people who displayed humble behaviors than arrogant people, who tried to demonstrate their competence and ability, their degree of self-importance, their inflated self-view and their desire for credit and prestige (COPPOLA, 2021).

Although not asked, assignees and HR/GM managers gave numerous examples of arrogant behaviors and indicated how they could harm their assignments. In fact, it was easier for them to identify arrogant behaviors than humble ones.

> *It is so much easier to remember those leaders who are not humble, right? and I have so many examples!* (Interviewee 2)

> *I have seen so many cases of arrogant behaviors in expats!* (Interviewee 13)

They also shared their thoughts on the reasons why arrogant behaviors could arise during international assignments:

> *Usually, the assignees come with a higher value and are paid more, so there is a natural tendency they perceive themselves as more valued and are seen also as more valued".* (Interviewee 1)

> *As an expat, you are naturally in a powerful position, you are more senior, and I think there is another layer which is: you want to prove that you deserve that position. So, that can be quite easily mistaken, and you end up being arrogant in a particular environment* (Interviewee 2)

Interviewees were aware that "the opposite of humility is arrogance - the belief that we are wiser or better than others. Arrogance promotes separation rather than community. It looks like a brick wall between us and those from whom we could learn" (TEMPLETON, 1997, p. 163).

The examples below show that arrogant behavior causes rejection of the leader:

> *You cannot be arrogant. It doesn't work. You would be rejected. Rejected immediately, whatever your skill* (Interviewee 8)

> *If you are the CEO as an expatriate, most of your directors are local, or hybrid of local and expatriate people, if you are arrogant, soon you will find that you are being isolated. Your voice doesn't matter.* (Interviewee 9)

Arrogance is described as excessive pride or selfishness, and in classical Greek tragedies it often leads to the downfall and death of those who possess it (DOVER, 1994). Humble individuals remain open to the possibility that they may be wrong or have misinterpreted a situation, and in this sense, leaders who possess extreme arrogance are often faced with flaws that their arrogance prevents them from identifying or addressing (CAMPBELL, W. K.; FOSTER, 2007), especially when they consider their own opinions and perspectives far above those of others, sometimes generating disastrous results (SCHEIN, 2016).

> *If he arrives arrogant, people will make that first contact, give a thumbs up and walk away.* (Interviewee 12)

> *These arrogant expats are the ones who have the most difficulties in having relationships and making progress, because people avoid having contact with these guys.* (Interviewee 13)

Tiberius and Walker (1998) describe arrogant individuals as those who expect other people to submit to them and who have a disdainful attitude towards the opinions of others. According to the authors, arrogant individuals see themselves as having much to offer others but little to gain from them, consider themselves more perfect, and tend to consider their own concerns more important than the interests of others.

> *Arrogance doesn't work. I've seen some expats with arrogance, and it works, 1 time, 2 times. And it's over. Afterwards, no one follows.* (Interviewee 6)

According to research by Davis *et al.* (2011) less humble people are more likely to push others away and create interpersonal friction through toxic qualities such as selfishness, arrogance, or contempt, for the formation of unhealthy personal relationships. The excerpt from the interviewees' testimonies below illustrates these points:

> *If the peers reject the leader, when he is an arrogant person, when he closes the working day, he is alone because people don't receive him/her, and if people don't receive him/her, his/her life will stop. He will simply have little chance of social relationships.* (Interviewee 13)

> *As an expat, you are coming there as a foreigner, so being very tough, direct, and showing force and power, might get people to be afraid, and maybe, that's not the best leadership environment.* (Interviewee 7)

4.1.6.
EHB and cultural humility

When we approach the topic of cultural humility in management, we cannot fail to mention its relevance in international assignments. Organizations are increasingly experiencing a globalized world that daily imposes relationships with different national cultures. In this context, cultural humility is an important instrument in the processes of expatriation and cultural adaptation (CSEH; DAVIS; KHILJI, 2013; JAVIDAN; BOWEN, 2013).

Caligiuri and colleagues (2016) stated that cultural humility, based on the definition of humility (OWENS; JOHNSON; MITCHELL, 2013) is the extent to which expatriates are viewed as accurately self-aware and respectful of the fact that they have something to learn in the host country, appreciative of host national contributions, and teachable with respect to learning from the host national environment. The authors also identified that the cultural humility of expatriates can influence the performance of their duties, and that expatriates who have cultural humility are perceived as more respectful by colleagues from different cultures. Those with cultural humility recognize that their abilities, skills, and knowledge are culture-bound (CALIGIURI, P.; BAYTALSKAYA, N.; LAZAROVA, 2016) and are open to appreciate ideas that come from other cultures, manifest a respectful desire to learn from other cultures, are more receptive to support and feedback (CALIGIURI, P. 2012).

The practice of cultural humility involves: (i) a flexible mindset, (ii) a focus on others and self (not only on 'self'), and (iii) a perspective of all human beings being on a horizontal plane, which means that all human beings are of equal value. Cultural humility is a process of self-reflection and lifelong learning that involves supportive interactions, which may include verbal and/or non-verbal communications (FORONDA *et al*., 2016). The relationship between humility and learning is evidenced in some excerpts of interviews such as the following ones.

> *The greatest sign of humility for me is curiosity, it is wanting to know about the other, about the other culture, without judging* (Interviewee 19)

Cultural humility is fundamental for the development of flexibility and growth of individuals, as it favors people to realize, for example, that issues of ethnocentrism are the result of a lack of understanding of the differences found when we engage with people from other cultures (YEAGER; BAUER-WU, 2013).

> *I think they lose a lot, in the sense that they don't know about everything, quite the contrary, they know a lot about China, maybe about the United States, but not about Latin America. So, they lose opportunities due to not listening to the people who are here, who were raised in this cultural, political context, who really can give them a good vision.* (Interviewee 16)

Ethnocentrism is 'the general belief or attitude in the superiority of one's own country or ethnic identity group' (CALIGIURI, P.; BAYTALSKAYA, N.; LAZAROVA, 2016)) which translates into negative impressions that one´s home country culture, ideas and traditions are 'better' or 'more correct' than that of others. In this case, expatriates with high levels of ethnocentrism will be less likely to interact with host country nationals, who may be considered as less credible or less competent. The example below shows an extreme consequence of ethnocentrism. Expatriates with higher levels of cultural humility would demonstrate respect for other cultures and willingness to learn from them (CALIGIURI, P.; BAYTALSKAYA, N.; LAZAROVA, 2016).

> *If you are invited to give a speech in a very important event, and you put lots of effort, and it happens during your critical moment of giving your most important message, that the mosque starts to announce loudly, it's prayer time. You get very irritated, and mumble out: "What's going on? This time?" The next day, or even the same day in the evening time, you may be politely asked to leave. You know, the most important thing to you is a minor one in the world.* (Interviewee 9)

Cultural humility offers an accurate self-perception that helps individuals not to idealize their own cultural virtues and to recognize their own limitations without cultural bias (PAINE; JANKOWSKI; SANDAGE, 2016). In interpersonal relations, culturally humble individuals must show respect and openness to the worldview of others, reducing power imbalances where they are identified.

> *Humility is recognizing that you don't know everything, that there is another way besides yours, there is another culture besides yours, and you accept that.* (Interviewee 10)

FORONDA (2020) presents three options in face of a cultural conflict: to be culturally destructive, culturally ambivalent or to apply cultural humility, which leads to positive outcomes, as demonstrated in the testimony below, where there is appreciation for the host culture:

> *I had expatriate painters and presidents, who said... "The croissant is not the same as in France, but there are other good things here".* (Interviewee 19)

4.2.
Category 2: Relevance of Humble Behavior (RHB)

Humility a vital characteristic of leaders with a global mindset (BIRD *et al*., 2010; CSEH; DAVIS; KHILJI, 2013; MENDENHALL, 2006) and considered a relevant ability for expatriates to succeed in international assignments. It is particularly important for those who hold positions in management or who are vested with authority and power (ARGANDONA, 2015) and is a necessary attribute to conducting global business (KONYU-FOGEL, 2011). Weick (2001) had also anticipated that the 21st century requires leaders to have more humility and less hubris.

4.2.1.
RHB and international assignments

As anticipated in Category 1, construct 5 (EHB and arrogance), both HR/GM managers and expatriates mentioned they had many examples of arrogant behaviors in expatriates. Hence the importance of understanding, thru the testimony of this group of interviewees, their perceptions on why humble behavior is so relevant in international assignments, as supported by several authors.

International employees, such as company-sponsored assigned expatriates (AE´s), face significantly higher demands for social and perceptual skills, reasoning ability, and adjustment requirements in their work (OSLAND, 2008). Further, from an organizational point of view, selection, training and career management issues have been shown to substantially differ between expatriates and domestic employees (BONACHE; BREWSTER; SUUTARI, 2007; SUUTARI, 2003). The testimonies below reflect how, both HR/GM managers and expatriates themselves, agree that Humility is vital for leaders at management level but is even more important for expatriates.

I don't think this kind of behavior is unique to expats. But I do realize that because the expats are already thinking and behaving with a different mindset about how to do things, it's even more critical for their success to be good at those skills. (Interviewee 11)

If the purpose of your assignment is to become a better whatever: a leader, an engineer…. It's no different than a non-expat assignment, but if the purpose is to learn and grow, the only way you're going to do that is to demonstrate self-awareness, to value others and to be open to constantly learn new things from others. (Interviewee 14)

Different from the domestic business environment, international assignments include a further level of complexity, as there is an involvement with different cultural realities. It requires the elaborateness of thoughts and actions to a higher level (ANDRESEN; BERGDOLT, 2019). Therefore, international assignments include an additional layer of difficulty in the form of cultural complexity, as supported by the interviewees below.

The stakes are higher for assignments as there are more variables from an international perspective, because you are not only dealing with company differences but also with cultural differences, language differences, a whole range of differences that would simply not exist in a national setting. (Interviewee 4)

The problem of being an expatriate is that, in addition to having to learn from others, you don't know what everyone else does". A basic example: I lived in Scotland and tried hard to find a mailbox. I asked where to find it. People explained me several times, and I still could not find it. So, I was about to give up. Finally, they showed me the mailbox, and it was totally different from the one I knew. To me, that one looked like a fire hydrant. In this case, everyone knew it, but me. (Interviewee 19)

Humble behaviors, such as strong cultural self-knowledge, openness to the unexpected, and preserving balance while remaining true to its basic values are important competencies from successful global leaders (GUNDLING, E.; HOGAN, T.; CVITKOVICH, 2011). New theories started to portray humility as a strength and a talent (ARGANDONA, 2015) and consider humility as a positive and effective quality for individuals, teams and organizations (CALIGIURI, P.; CAPRAR, 2022; DAVIS *et al.*, 2017; OU *et al.*, 2014; OWENS, B. P.; HEKMAN, 2012; OWENS; HEKMAN, 2016; REGO *et al.*, 2019; ROWATT *et al.*, 2006; TOMEI, P. A. ; CUENCA, R.; MELLO, 2022) In line with what researchers have found, the interviewees below shared their views on the importance of humility for international assignments.

Humility is very important, because the person opens up, so he begins to look at himself and consider others, and it favors the chance of success in that position, of not aborting the expatriation, of having a better integration, and having a more enjoyable life. (Interviewee 13)

I do believe humble behaviors are needed and are valuable because when you are humble, people open to you. (Interviewee 9)

Humility is key. If you arrive in a foreign country with arrogance it doesn't work. (Interviewee 6)

4.2.2.
RHB and leadership

Authors have raised the difficulty to study humility in organizations for its conceptual diversity and the methodological challenges of evaluating humble behaviors (ANAND, A.; WALSH, I.; MOFFETT, 2019; DAVIS; WORTHINGTON; HOOK, 2010). The term has lost its luster in the modern era due to its possible unworthy connotation and association with low self-esteem, and is, therefore, frequently disregarded and considered inadequate to someone in a leadership position (TANGNEY, 2000). Humility is often disdained, as inappropriate in someone who holds a position of leadership; but this opinion emerges from a mistaken understanding of what it means to be humble (ARGANDONA, 2015).

Humility is not welcomed in the practice of expatriate leadership (Interviewee 12)

I think leaders interpret humility as an act of submission, of putting your head down for everything. But it is not. It is a feeling of great value, even more so for an executive to recognize this. (Interviewee 11)

Unfortunately, I don´t think it is applied explicitly when we chose who goes where. We look for leadership attributes: Is this person good to lead people? We don´t put humility as a visible attribute to access. Maybe subconsciously, but not consciously, as a defined criterion. (Interviewee 1)

The importance of humility in management has been grounded in recent studies (ARGANDONA, 2015; FROSTENSON, 2016). Additionally, studies that associate expatriate´s behaviors with humility are rare (ANDRESEN; BERGDOLT, 2017; ATHAYDE, A. L. M.; SILVA, 2019; DABIC; GONZÁLEZ-LOUREIRO; HARVEY, 2015; MOTT, M.; TEIXEIRA, M. L. M.; NAKASHIMA, C.; DE ARAÚJO, 2012; TSENG; CHOU; YU, 2010; ZAGO; DOMINGUES; SILVA, 2019). Therefore, the above mentioned may be some of the reasons why

expatriates do not recognize the value of humility, as expressed in the below testimonies.

> *Companies focus a lot on leadership courses, but little on self-awareness. I often see the person "with a full cup"– You must empty yourself to learn new things. (9_Ana HR)* (referring to the old Chinese Zen proverb -see (MELISSA CHU, 2018).

> *When you talk about humility, I end up linking it a lot with vulnerability. I think it's such a new term, something so new that you're studying that it goes like this: "Wow, it's like breaking a cliché to talk about humility in professional relationships and, especially, in international ones, which has to do with moving to different cultures ...."* (Interviewee 12)

In such uncertain, unpredictable, and dynamic world, it becomes increasingly difficult for any single leader to "figure it all out at the top" (SENGE, 1990, p. 7). Humility is becoming more critical for leaders who manage their organizations in increasingly turbulent times (MORRIS; BROTHERIDGE; URBANSKI, 2005; VERA, D.; RODRIGUEZ-LOPEZ, 2004), and this relevance has been attested by interviewees.

> *The higher your position, the more humility you should demonstrate. If you are the boss in that local organization, as an expatriate, you lead the biggest leadership role already, so you must demonstrate extra humbleness to the local culture. Otherwise, you won't last long in that location.* (Interviewee 9)

As anticipated by Collins (2001), true humility may bring significant benefits to the organization and leaders´ humility may influence sustained performance. Humility promotes improvement in the quality of social relations, in the emotional well-being of individuals, as well as on one´s own performance at the organizational level (EXLINE, 2012; OWENS; JOHNSON; MITCHELL, 2013; PETERS; ROWAT; JOHNSON, 2011), as agreed by the HR managers below.

> *The humble behavior, in an expatriate that comes from outside and lands with a lot of people that they need to lead, opens doors, and increases and speeds up leadership impact: easier to listen to potential challenges and easier to value potential strengths.* (Interviewee 15)

> *Our job is to get things done through other people, as a leader. And the only way to get that on the long term is by willing to listen to them, by making sure they know you value their opinion and what they do, and by willing to accept that there are other ways to do things than just your way.* (Interviewee 14)

Kjar (2007) listed six characteristics of individuals with a global mindset, including contextual sensitivity, deep listening, personal learning orientation, humility, self-reflection, and entrepreneurial enthusiasm. On humility, he emphasizes the leader seeing fallibility in his own position; seeking advice, demonstrating willingness to accommodate differences, to understand personal limitations and seeking success for others. Similar to Kjar (2007), Keys and Wellins (2008) have listed 10 behaviors, which form the DNA of a global leader, also recognizing the relevance of Humility: being receptive to feedback, willing to adjust strategy, maintaining a learning orientation, and possessing accurate self-insight. The HR managers below corroborate with these thoughts.

> *Humility is critical. I can never know it all.* (Interviewee 18)

> *Humility is a belief system that powers stronger connection and potentially stronger outputs and outcomes.* (Interviewee 15)

> *When leading on an international assignment, you need people who are motivated, and the best way you're going to get that is by demonstrating a humble behavior* (Interviewee 14)

4.2.3.
RHB and team management

Expatriates manage international teams, working in a diverse and multicultural corporate environment. The ability to learn from the ideas of others is an attribute that is a source of competitive advantage for the organization, and positively affects teams, as illustrated by the testimonial of the expatriate managers reproduced below:

> *Expats come to expand business and are normally surrounded by more local staff. It is important that they come with a humble mind, as you want to have a good relationship with the local team, because local people make a significant contribution to the business.* (Interviewee 1)

> *Humility is very important especially when you arrive, in a more senior role and you have local people reporting to you in your team. You may know more than they do, in terms of business tasks, but you don´t have the culture experience. I think you need humility to recognize that: "I know my job, but I know there are areas I don´t understand and I can learn from you.".* (Interviewee 4)

As anticipated in the Literature Review of this dissertation, several studies seek to understand humility in the organization, associated with the behavior of the leader with his team (ARGANDONA, 2017; SCHEIN; SCHEIN, 2018), which state that: (i) the behavior of the humble leader impacts the team (ALI *et al.*, 2020; OWENS; HEKMAN, 2016), promoting information sharing and joint decision-making (OU; WALDMAN; PETERSON, 2018).

> *A humble behavior helps me enable people. I recognize and value their strengths. I enable them. I tell them: here are the priorities that have been given to me, let's talk about how we can do this, divide, and conquer. So, I think recognizing their strengths is relevant, especially in environments where performance is top priority.* (Interviewee 18)

Humble leadership plays a key role in team´s resilience (ZHU; ZHANG; SHEN, 2019), motivation (OWENS, B. P.; HEKMAN, 2012), engagement and learning (NIELSEN; MARRONE, 2018; OWENS; HEKMAN, 2016; OWENS, B. P.; ROWATT, W. C.; WILKINS, 2011) in their responsiveness (PRAYAG, 2018), in well-being (ZHONG *et al.*, 2019), and in innovation and creativity (CHEN *et al.*, 2021; HU *et al.*, 2018; MALLÉN *et al.*, 2019; WANG, X.; LI, H.; YIN, 2020). Both managers below recognize how humble behavior is valuable for them, while leading a team:

> *We go on assignment because we want to add value to the company. It is all about relationship with the local team. We want to motivate the staff around us. They must be respected and valued. This is key. Even though we have our unique experience and value, everybody else is valued.* (Interviewee 1)

> *Every single situation that I have been put in my career thus far, as an expatriate leading a team, has required certain levels of humbleness.* (Interviewee 6)

Many organizations describe issues related to expatriations, such as lack of teamwork, toxic environments, incivility, and misunderstandings, which may occur when you picture yourself as a superior person:

> *If you picture yourself like a God, then you are not reachable by your team. People cannot identify with you, but if you are humble (not pretending to be humble), you will be able to relate. This is key!* (Interviewee 3)

By analyzing the many variables that lead to diversity one can seek to identify common goals, collaborate, and empower each other (FORONDA, 2020), valuing humanity and flexibility to resolve team conflicts in a positive way.

4.2.4.
RHB and cultural interactions

Expatriates with a humble behavior can more easily integrate with the host country locals and the host country culture, as they understand their culture´s strengths and weaknesses, are open to value the host country culture and have a respectful desire to learn from other cultures, which facilitates business and cultural interactions (CALIGIURI, P.; CAPRAR, 2022; CALIGIURI, P.; BAYTALSKAYA, N.; LAZAROVA, 2016; OU; WALDMAN; PETERSON, 2018), as stated by the below expatriate manager.

> *Humility is important in life, but I think that if it does not exist in assignments, this can be a road blocker, due to the difficulty of not getting into the culture. (Interviewee 19)*

> *If you are international staff, you are dealing with a lot of different cultures and the moment you are humble you are prepared to understand the other´s diversity, you are prepared to put yourself in other shoes and to understand that environment, to understand that although you worked very well in your home country, it does not mean everything is the same in another country. (Interviewee 2)*

Cultural Humility is a subdimension of humility in multicultural and cross-cultural encounters (HOOK, J. N.; DAVIS, D.;OWEN, J.; DEBLAERE, 2017; MOSHER, D. K.; HOOK, J. N.; CAPTARI, L. E.; DAVIS, D. E.; DEBLAERE, C.; OWEN, 2017), where an individual becomes aware of their own worldview, and intentionally engages with people from different cultures (HOOK, J. N. 2014). It is critical as it enables expatriates to successfully manage their relationships while working in different countries and with different people form diverse cultures (CALIGIURI, P.; CAPRAR, 2022). It is relevant as it promotes openness, self-awareness, egoless, supportive interactions, and incorporates self-reflection and critique after willingly interacting with diverse individuals (FORONDA *et al*., 2016).

A sense of humility, one of the by-products of the competence of self-awareness, is an important competence for successful intercultural interactions (BIRD *et al*., 2010). It helps individuals not to idealize their own cultural virtues and to recognize their own limitations without cultural bias (PAINE; JANKOWSKI; SANDAGE, 2016).

The most important thing on an assignment is that you recognize that you are going to another country, to another culture. You're not going there to change their culture; you're going there to mold yourself to their culture. And I think humility is vital to the success of expatriation because if you leave your country with the hope that you're going to change something in the host culture to make your life more pleasant, or easier, you're going to be frustrated and you're going to suffer on your assignment. (Interviewee 10)

Humility is a requirement of leading in the global environment (CSEH; DAVIS; KHILJI, 2013). The ability to connect, communicate, and collaborate with people from other countries is an important instrument in the processes of expatriation (JAVIDAN; BOWEN, 2013).

The value of humility contributes to the success of an expatriation because if I leave my culture and go to the culture of others, I must be open. (Interviewee 13)

Expatriates' cultural humility can influence their assignment performance. When expatriates are perceived to be open to ideas from other cultures, they are likely to accept the support and feedback offered by those in the host national work environment and, in turn, perform better on the assignment (CALIGIURI, P.; BAYTALSKAYA, N.; LAZAROVA, 2016).

When you arrive in a new country, you have your own values, but you must consider the local atmosphere, people culture, people reaction. Often you find skilled people working for the same company. So, it is important that you value their culture and learn from it. (Interviewee 8)

Being humble, appreciating and celebrating diversity and avoiding stereotypes around nationalities is important in cultural interactions (HUTT; GOPALAKRISHNAN, 2020). An individual who is culturally humble must constantly engage in self-reflection and criticism, investigating their own cultural values and their limitations in understanding another person's cultural norms (ISAACSON, 2014) as shown in the example below.

You must have a humble mind, in which you look at a multicultural environment and can understand and respect what is happening, without stereotyping and judging. (Interviewee 10)

Humility and cross-cultural competence both require a pro-social orientation rooted in openness to others (EXLINE, J. J.; HILL, 2012; HAMMER, 2011; PAINE; JANKOWSKI; SANDAGE, 2016).

For an expatriation, you must respect the culture of that country. It's not where you were born, that's why you must be open to learn, to respect: the culture will be different, the team will be different, that's why humility is necessary. (Interviewee 11)

Ethnocentrism is 'the general belief or attitude in the superiority of one's own country or ethnic identity group' which translates into negative impressions that one´s home country culture, ideas and traditions are 'better' or 'more correct' than that of others (CALIGIURI, P.; BAYTALSKAYA, N.; LAZAROVA, 2016). Individuals with a higher level of ethnocentrism tend to have difficulty in critically examining polarizing views of cultures, including their own (JANKOWSKI; SANDAGE; HILL, 2013).

> *When the French go to Brazil, they say: "Because in France we do it like this and like that ". But what do I care if it's done like that in France? If you have a modus operandi that you can share to improve things, ok, let's share and we'll improve. But if the intention is not to contribute, it won't help. The feeling of superiority is not good. (Interviewee 10)*

Humility is fundamental for the development of flexibility and growth of individuals, as it favors people to realize, for example, that issues of ethnocentrism are the result of a lack of understanding of the differences found when we engage with people from other cultures (YEAGER; BAUER-WU, 2013).

> *I find humility as a cornerstone for this ability to listen and to understand how the other one is thinking as, when you do that, you can move together, and you grow as a person. (Interviewee 2)*

When merging contexts and different perspectives, an imbalance of power and a cultural conflict often arises, presenting opportunities for various decisions and actions (FORONDA, 2020). When the expatriate is faced with different perspectives, which are often misunderstood or not adequately considered, conflict arises, and it can interfere in the achievement of assignment goals, and in relationships.

The attributes of cultural humility include recognizing and minimizing power imbalances, promoting respect, individual focus not only on others but on oneself, flexibility, and an ongoing life process. The idea of flexibility is a fundamental point and attribute of cultural humility (FORONDA *et al.*, 2016).

The testimonies below from both HR/GM managers and expatriates express certain contexts where they identify power imbalances, such as between parent company and subsidiaries, home and host country cultures and bigger and smaller companies.

I see a thought like: "We are from the headquarter, we have to catechize the others." So, I see that they put themselves in a more superior way, but this way is very indirect and very subtle. (Interviewee 16)

I've heard from expatriates who went to the head office that they struggled for perhaps arriving with a very humble position. They had to arrive with a formed opinion: One of them said: "It was hard, because I was nominated by someone from there and in the meetings, I was undermined. They didn't listen to me; they kept that poker face. After all, I was a subsidiary guy". (Interviewee 12)

I would say that the French and German very much perceive the Spanish humility as a weakness, and it showed a lot in how my Spanish colleagues were treated. They were treated even worse than the Americans, they were perceived as stupider. And so, I can imagine that unless you are really driven, if you're in that environment, you are not going stay long. And if you are good, you must learn how to hide your natura. (Interviewee 14)

The statement below highlights another context where humility is fundamental: when a big company provides services to a small one in a host location, but in this specific project the smaller company has more shares.

When you have a foreigner working inside another local national company that is even more important, and it takes time to learn. Our company is globally well known, but in this specific project we have less shares than the host local national company, who is our client. They are the decision makers; therefore, it is even more important to respect their decisions (Interviewee 1)

When power imbalance happens, and cultural humility is not present, negative outcomes can happen, such as discrimination, exclusion, inequality, prejudice, intolerance, stereotypes, and marginalization. On the other hand, cultural humility leads to positive outcomes, bringing pleasant consequences such as mutual empowerment, respect, partnership, and care. Cultural humility is necessary for the development of flexibility as it helps people notice that ethnocentrism happens when we don´t understand that differences exist when we deal with people from other cultures (YEAGER; BAUER-WU, 2013).

4.2.5.
RHB and COVID pandemic

During the pandemic, Fuster and Varieur Turco (2020, p. 2625) wrote an article stating: "*The world will change as a result of this pandemic. This current uncertainty has been incredibly humbling, which may be the change we needed."* In this article, the authors consider that we should use this time to become more human and humbler, recognizing that our hubris makes us weaker and that we have

an opportunity to be less reactive and more reflective. We should remember the importance of being humble and sagacious, both as a person and as a society.

> *The pandemic changed how people value relationships, how they value others. People who are more empathetic are more valued. (Interviewee 5)*

Katz (2021) wrote an article to the media company Stat, named "How humility can save us from Covid-19" affirming that the statement "I was wrong" should have been at the top of the soundtrack during the first pandemic year, as admitting "I was wrong", and the humility it reflects, could help save us from Covid-19. This speech was endorsed by the media the following year, and magazines such as (FORBES, 2022) again identified humility as an important value for us to get to the new post-Covid normal. Coaches also shared that to thrive in these complex times, the true leaders had the courage to say, "I don't know…." and the humility to ask "can we work together to find a better way?" (KDVI, 2020). With the COVID pandemic, expatriates understood the importance of reinventing themselves, of being flexible and of developing new skills to adapt to the demands of the environment (MELLO; TOMEI, 2021). Interviewees have also manifested that the Covid Pandemic brought a change on people´s mindset and that Humility is now even more important:

> *The pandemic has changed people´s attitudes dramatically, and leadership. Before the pandemic, they started meetings only talking about business. Now, they are more respectful for people´s feelings, more focused on the psychological aspect of their team (Interviewee 1)*

> *There is now a change in paradigm. For example, our CEO (German Company) is a humble guy, and he emphasizes that, even having the highest position in one of the largest companies of the world. I saw him saying: "I make mistakes…. I am a human being…. Please excuse me…, but we have this mission, we have this ambition for our Group, so please…" (Interviewee 3)*

Nothing was crystal clear before but leading through the gray will be a new normal for today´s leaders. The most effective leaders will possess a totally different mindset – an understanding that this new degree of disruption provides opportunity for transformation and reinvention. (KORN FERRY, 2020b) considers that the next generation of leaders who adopt this mindset will set the stage for the next new normal. Top leaders, such as expatriate managers, for the future will need to demonstrate different behaviors, such as inquisitiveness, agility, humility, and an insatiable appetite for learning, like no generation before. They, each time more,

are a public persona, and need to be comfortable with employees, customers, and shareholders, as all are projecting their hopes and expectations onto them. All of this requires intelligence, courage, and, mostly, self-awareness, since they simultaneously drive results and execute strategy. The testimony of the HR manager below corroborates this thought:

> *Different from the command-and-control, humility opens a connection right away that is a lot easier to live in than in these ones of "you need to be right", of judgment…, and you trigger a completely different set of expectations. It's a completely different way to approach it. (Interviewee 15)*

4.2.6.
RHB in global mobility

According to the interviewees, the relevance of humility in Global Mobility is not explicitly mentioned in the agenda of expatriates' intercultural programs, which reproduces the gaps in studies on humble behaviors in management, identified in the organizational literature (CUENCA, R.; TOMEI, P. A.; MELLO, 2022). However, when a reflection on the role of humility in Global Mobility is encouraged, they recognize that it is a topic not much discussed in the field.

> *I think the discussion on humility is lacking in organizations. Companies started to build policies later, because they started to realize that the process is expensive, and they can lose that person's skills. They started doing intercultural training, and all these things to better ensure this integration, understand how people abroad think, and, intrinsically, work on this value of humility, but explicitly, I've never seen it. (Interviewee 13)*

> *I don't see the company, an HR professional or a company manager, in an interview, analyzing whether the candidate has humility, if he has self-knowledge. I see this part of humility being put on the back burner for an expatriate executive. The first is if he has the business strategies, if he will bring profit, if he will bring the return on investment. I don't see it being discussed in Global Mobility, I really don't see, the word "humility" framed in expatriations. (Interviewee 11)*

Interviewees are aware of the importance of dealing with forgotten issues related to challenges and difficulties of international assignments. Topics such as adjusting to a new environment, stress, the risks of expatriation in hostile environments, discrimination and hostility, expatriate divorce, abuse leadership, with global employee as potential passive victim or active abuser, failed assignments, personal crisis like burnout and work life crushing one´s private life are considered as the "dark side" of Global Mobility (BADER *et al.*, 2019). These issues could be better managed with a humbler behavior of expatriates, however, as

emphasized by Bader and colleagues (2019), most researchers on Global Mobility have focused on the positive side of working abroad, while some few others have dedicated their studies to the "dark side" of expatriation.

The internalization of humble practices in Global Mobility programs is a rich tool to help expatriates, as, by recognizing their limitations and becoming aware of their own strengths and weaknesses, can increase their openness and availability to deal with these neglected aspects of expatriations.

> *This is a topic that I never spoke about it. But I totally recognize how much it opens. (Interviewee 5)*

4.3.
Category 3: Context Humble Behavior (CHB)

4.3.1.
CHB - importance

Culture differentiates members of one society from those of another; it is based on the shared beliefs, behaviors, and values of the individuals in a particular social group (HOFSTEDE, 1997). Humility needs favorable cultural conditions to thrive, such as: cultural endorsement of humble role models and opportunities to cultivate values related to it (CUENCA; TOMEI; MELLO, 2022) and it may be appropriate in some contexts but ineffective in others (ZAPATA; HAYES-JONES, 2019). Expatriates recognized the importance of analyzing the context, as per statements below:

> *Humility is very useful. It depends on the culture you are going to.* (Interviewee 3)
> *There are some scenarios where humility might be misinterpreted. So, I think that part of the issues, as you become more senior in the organization, managing how you express humility is important. There is a context within the organization, within the job, within your function, so expressing humility in the wrong way might not be beneficial even though is the right thing, how you express it may not ultimately seem positive, that is why you need to manage up as well as manage down.* (Interviewee 4)
>
> *In all cultures there are many humble people, but in some there is a general assumption that what one has is better. This permeates the culture and impacts the issue of humility.* (Interviewee 19)

The following statements are aligned to the thoughts that a manager may be humbler in certain circumstances or at certain times than in others (ARGANDONA, 2013).

> *Having worked in different nations, I compare the US, Europe, and Asia, and it can be quite different from country to country and continent to continent. It might be that in parts of the US, it may be a disadvantage, but in Asia, in general, I would say it would be a good advantage to be a humble leader, as they like this, this is the only way you get information, you get more connected to people and you understand why they work and act like this.* (Interviewee 7)

> *Expressed humility must be nuanced. It can't be the same expression to everyone. You must figure out with whom you are talking to and what the potential impact will be of how you say something.* (Interviewee 4)

According to the Rainbow Model of Cultural Humility (FORONDA, 2020, p. 10), like the rays of a rainbow that merge, factors such as diversity, historical precedents, political climate, personal beliefs, immediate circumstances, physical environment overlap and merge to present an overall context that influences the primary and discordant perspective of the individual, group or the community, as also shared in the statements below:

> *A behavior that may be natural in your country may be offensive in the destination, so you must be very careful. Therefore, the first thing is to learn to respect the country where you are going to live with your family. I had employees who went to Dubai thinking it would be wonderful. And the costumes? Do you know your wife won't be able to go out in the clothes she normally wears? It is essential for the expatriate to know and respect the host culture.* (Interviewee 11)
> *In India, it is normal to eat with the hands. Is this bad, is it good? No! For their country, that's good.* (Interviewee 10)

> *You may say: This may be dump to me because of where I am coming from, but in this context, it has a meaning and an importance that you need to understand why.* (Interviewee 4)

4.3.2.
CHB and leadership

The media is full of stories of overconfident and arrogant and leaders who lack empathy and ignore feedback from their teams (KAPLAN, 2021; MANGAN, 2018). Leaders, including expatriates, have been referred to as idols (THE ECONOMIST, 2002), heroes (GABRIEL, 1997; RAELIN, 2003); saviors (KHURANA, 2002), warriors (TALLMAN, 2003) and omnipotent and omniscient demi-gods (DE VRIES, 2011; GABRIEL, 1997); Self-help gurus and business schools have devoted extraordinary effort to maximize self-esteem and inspire

individual pride (BROWN, S. L.; CHOPRA, P. K.; SCHIRALDI, 2013). This glorification of leaders has increased regardless the continuing evidence that the actions of many leaders are far from heroic (MORRIS; BROTHERIDGE; URBANSKI, 2005).

In research by Exline and Geyer (2004), participants did not identify humility as a quality of leaders, and prior research also suggests that CEO's expression of humility may be perceived to be weak (OU *et al.*, 2014).

In the example below, Elon Musk is seen as a hero, even when his behavior may negatively affect others. In cultures which have a heroic vision of the leader, a humble behavior may not be seen as a quality of leaders.

> *Elon Musk is viewed globally as super successful, and one of the richest people in the world. So, he is heroic. In the US, he usually does not behave humbly, and his words can be very hurtful to people.* (Interviewee 9)

In line with Argandona (2013), the testimony below corroborates the thought that the humble leader will feel less comfortable in a culture which is based on competition and rivalry, or which encourages a heroic vision of the leader, as a special person with unique capabilities:

> *I think it's tougher to behave humbly in cultures that value competition and promote this heroic vision of the leader. I think it would depend on what your inner motivation is in one way or another, because probably you are going to compensate for things. So, in principle, I think humility fits everywhere. But when you have a collective contract, where for you to be perceived as valuable you need to come across in a certain way, regardless of where your belief system is, it can come across in contradiction to your actions* (Interviewee 15)

The expatriate below does not consider a hero as a person who is perfect and who does not fail, but, on the contrary, someone who recognizes his/her weaknesses and therefore is even more considered as a hero.

> *You can be a hero and you can be humble. This means you assume you did something wrong, you adapt, and you can openly say that that happened; and that hero becomes even a bigger hero. For me this is the essence of the leadership. The essence of leadership is being humble, and you see that in companies, in religions, in politics. All these big names we see are those personalities who are humble.* (Interviewee 2)

4.3.3.
CHB and pressure

Prior research suggests that humility could be less effective in times marked by extreme threat or time pressure (OWENS, B. P.; HEKMAN, 2012). Additionally, as mentioned in category 2, humility is perceived as less suitable in a situation that requires agentic leadership (ZAPATA; HAYES-JONES, 2019). The testimonies below support that in moments of pressure, agentic leadership is required and therefore a humble behavior may be less effective.

> *Sometimes you have the company in crisis, in growth, with mergers and acquisitions, you can have a key campaign, and you must prioritize. At a certain time, you have to say "Stop", not being humble, and in 3,4,5 months you realize this was the right decision even though at the beginning they disagreed with it.* (Interviewee 8)

> *The problem needs to be solved. What you don´t want is humility getting in the way of solving the problem (Interviewee 4)*

> *It might be that if you are in a crisis, with bad results, and you need to turn the business in a very short time, humble behavior maybe would be too nice. In this situation, being more direct, tough, giving clear instructions, very tough deadlines would be more successful than being a little more relaxed, nice to the people. This you can do in a different environment."* (Interviewee 7)

However, other interviewees disagreed with the statement that humility is perceived as less suitable in a situation that requires agentic leadership (ZAPATA; HAYES-JONES, 2019), expressing that decision must be taken quicker, but humility is still necessary, in line with the considerations of Argandona (2017).

> *I think you must be even more humble in times of pressure, to the point of saying: "We are totally in unchartered waters, but that´s the way we are going." You just make it quicker. You almost put your shoes beforehand, you show that you are not there because you know the path, nor how to get out, you are there because you decided to go that way. Better than saying: "I know the way", and everybody will panic because everybody knows you don´t know the way, because this never happened before. But if you are humble, you say it.* (Interviewee 2)

Others, focused on the impact of pressure on subordinates and considered a humble behavior necessary in times of pressure, when leaders need more cooperation of subordinates and partners.

> *In times of pressure, there´s a natural tendency, due to the stress, for one to think there is no time for humility: "I have to deliver, so to hell with everything and everyone." However, I still think you need to understand that to deliver you need the cooperation of your subordinates and/or your partners. The relationship will suffer if you put too much pressure on others, or, if you beat on them hard you will be boycotted and get little or no cooperation as a result.* (Interviewee 13)

Normally, when people find themselves under pressure, by rush or by a crisis, they become more authoritarian, more directive, and more arbitrary. And in my opinion, it should be the other way around. That's when we must stop and listen to everyone. At the time of COVID, for example, that's what we did. We created a crisis committee, with HR, Finance and Infrastructure, and each problem or decision that we had to make was shared with the collegiate and the decision was submitted for approval. And I tell you, it worked very well. (Interviewee 10)

The need of a humble behavior was also highlighted for moments of change. As per Argandona (2017), following Aristotle´s ethics, the exercise of virtue has four dimensions: Intellectual, emotional, motivational, and behavioral. At the conclusion of the process, at the behavior dimension, a virtuous person chooses the action, as he or she has the necessary strength of will to overcome short-term pressures. Virtues enable us to overcome the dangers, temptations and distractions encountered, and will promote increasing self-knowledge and knowledge of the good.

I think it is more [useful] when you need to analyze certain situations in moments of crisis or time pressure, with your foreign eyes on the topic. Understanding, for example, the ways of doing things in the host country that are not the best, perhaps you need to see how you present, to bring in the change. I think leaders need to be very humble when they want to bring it to a change in the organization. (Interviewee 17)

4.3.4.
CHB and hierarchy

It is possible that young people may assume apparently arrogant behaviors when they want to impress people with more experience (ARGANDONA, 2013). The impressions shared by the HR managers below are aligned with Argandona´s research:

When a person is identified abroad as a potential, especially when they have completed their postgraduate or doctoral studies, there is a tendency for these people to be less humble because they are proud of having obtained the title. We see that many people at this career level are eager to get new positions and new experiences, so in this type of audience it is rarer to find people who recognize their weaknesses and value others. (Interviewee 13)

I see humility linked to maturity rather than hierarchy. Working with expats, and generally they are more senior people, I find that older people have a much easier time teaching, listening, and guiding, than a person who is young. The young manager is more worried about competing. (Interviewee 16)

The expatriate below shares that this happened in her generation and explains why:

If I think of my generation, of course the less senior you were the more assertive you needed to be. Because of the whole culture of that time. You were afraid of making mistakes. "You have to do it right, otherwise you are not the best". So, there was much more difficulty in the middle, lower level, whilst I think in other generations, for the millennials, for example, it became much more open. (Interviewee 2)

Still, Hoekstra and colleagues (2008) alert that attributes that define early leadership potential (independence, determination, quick thinking, and pioneering spirit) may become the seeds of later destruction, putting leaders on a self-destructive course that ends up in derailment at some point later on their careers. While some interviewees expressed that humble behaviors were more observed in higher levels, others, as the ones below, expressed that it is uncommon to identify humble behaviors in top management.

I find it difficult to have senior leaders who are truly humble. All organizations have their values, and when they look for their executives, they look for bold people, who know how to take risks in the right measure, which correspond to the values of the organization, and normally these people have vanity, and even for passing on knowledge (Interviewee 10)

The interviewees below, on the other hand, expressed that a humble behavior contributes regardless of people´s level in the hierarchy, following Schein´s advice (2012, 2016; 2018) that leaders should accept their ignorance.

The higher your position, the more humility you should demonstrate. (Interviewee 9)

Hierarchy is not incompatible with being humble. (Interviewee 8)

Sometimes the assignees come with a higher value and are paid more, so there is a natural tendency they perceive themselves as more valued, and therefore a humble attitude is even more necessary for expatriates in senior positions. (Interviewee 1)

4.3.5.
CHB and short-term orientation and individualism

Lack of humility may work for a short period of time, but not on a long-term basis. Schein (2013, 2016; 2018) proposes that humble leaders should focus on asking/questioning/listening/being willing to learn rather than talking. We often focus on "talking" rather than "asking" and alerts that when you speak rather than ask, you imply that people don't have anything to contribute, which makes it difficult to create long-term, productive interactions.

If an assignee is working on a project basis, delivering a project with very specific tasks, this may not be as critical, but if he is working in a large team, with more local team, and staying for many years, that is critical (Interviewee 1)

You could survive as an expat with no humility in a short assignment, and particularly if there are things that must be directed and must change immediately, for whatever reason. But you're not going to build a culture of trust and you're not going to build a culture of motivation. So, by default, if you need trust and you need people who are motivated, the best way you're going to get that is to demonstrate the humble behaviors (Interviewee 14)

Individualistic cultures trigger narcissistic behaviors, excessive competitiveness, obsession with appearance and attention seeking (FOSTER; CAMPBELL; TWENGE, 2003; TWENGE, J. M.; CAMPBELL, 2009). Western countries like the United States emphasize individual uniqueness, self-expression, and personal sufficiency. The self is considered an autonomous entity that is essentially well-bounded, distinct, and separate from other people or social contexts (GEERTZ, 1973). Individual ambition and success are highly valued, and the organization of the economic system is likely to be competitive (SCHWARTZ, 1999). Myers (2001) and Putnam (2000) reported that the US witnessed a shift towards radical individualism and the glorification of a self-oriented worldview, and, in the US, scholars report a general decline in humility as a value (BROOKS, 2015).

In more individualistic cultures, humility would be recognized as a weakness, even associated to humiliation, so the guy would have little chance of success. In these cultures, sometimes you need to be more like a warrior, a fighter, and that, in my perception, requires some arrogance. But a person who has humility in his own life will have a hard time winning this war, because he will always think he is going against himself if he has to use a little more arrogance to win in the work. This is the situation where I think humility can be harmful. (Interviewee 13)

So, I think in individualist cultures there will be humble people and they will contribute a lot more effectively to the process. But probably, they will be ignored from the onset because they don't speak up. (Interviewee 18)

In a collectivist culture people are integrated into very cohesive groups and base their self-understanding on the reactions of others. High-context cultures (including much of the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and South America) are relational, and when there is conflict between personal and collective goals, collective goals prevail over personal ones (ABBAS; WU, 2021; HOFSTEDE, G.; HOFSTEDE, G. J.; MINKOV, 2010). These cultures prefer group harmony and consensus to individual achievement: flowery language, humility, and elaborate

apologies are typical (HALL, E. T.; HALL, 1990), and promote values such as harmony, humility, courtesy, patience, and obedience (ZHANG *et al.*, 2007), as reported by the expatriate below:

> *Humility is very useful. It depends on the culture you are going to. Maybe in America, it is not so much needed, because they are more outgoing, like, presenting very flashy…. In Japan, there is an absolute need for humbleness. If you don't' have a humble character, an understanding of yourself, a humble mindset, you will totally fail there.* (Interviewee 3)

In many East Asian cultures, like China, the self is viewed as part of ongoing relationships, and as containing significant social roles, duties, and responsibilities. These cultures emphasize the importance of interpersonal connectedness, group solidarity and personal humility (GEERTZ, 1973). Chinese culture promotes interdependence among people. The existence of an individual is viewed as being realized through the process of reciprocal relating to significant others (WANG, 2001). Self-criticism and humility are highly encouraged and regarded as a drive for an individual to better serve the benefit of the collective.

> *There is a cultural difference. You hardly see a Chinese with an arrogant behavior here in the US, like I saw a few Americans in China. I worked with people from Holland, UK and Argentina, in China. Except for this American, everyone else was humble* (Interviewee 1)

4.3.6.
CHB and power distance and confrontation

Power distance is a dimension which deals with the extent to which individuals in a society accept inequality of power and consider it normal. In countries with high power distance, there are people who consent, without question, to the orders of those with greater authority. In labor relations, in societies that accept inequality in the distribution of power, hierarchy amounts to an existential inequality and subordinates expect to be told what to do, with the ideal boss being characterized as a benevolent autocrat, or a 'father'. These are essentially paternalistic and hierarchical societies. Power distance can thus be seen as how a society handles inequality among people (HOFSTEDE, 1980). Cultures that have an emphasis on hierarchy accept the legitimacy of an unequal distribution of power, roles, and resources (social power, authority, wealth). As opposed to an egalitarian society, members accept that they are inferior to some as well as superior to others

(SCHWARTZ, 1999). The statements of the below interviewees reflect that a humble behavior may be misinterpreted in cultures with high power distance.

> *In Japan, a leader must be strong and give clear guidance. Sometimes it is even hard because you must give like an order. I would never do this in Germany, because here we work more in a cooperation mode, but there, there is strong hierarchy. The top says what is to do. So, to manage people, humility in Japan is wrong. But with customers, clients, you need to be humble. Definitely.* (Interviewee 3)

Humble people exhibit egalitarian beliefs, focusing on one´s beliefs about oneself, others and the larger word (CHANCELLOR; LYUBOMIRSKY, 2013). Humility is seeing others as having the same value and importance of oneself (PETERSON, C.; SELIGMAN, 2004). Therefore, a manager who has a more egalitarian way of managing may have much difficulty in countries with high power distance, as reported by the HR manager below.

> *In the environments where I'm working right now, there's a lot of command and control. So, you're talking about managing people. I probably manage the expectations of my bosses more than I must manage my team. My team, I just enable and empower them. With my boss, I must be always managing his expectations because he wants to get very strong solid face type to manage my team. And that's difficult. That's more difficult than having to battle* (Interviewee 18)

Research by Lin and colleagues (2019) showed that the sense of power mediates the relationship between leader humility and employee voice, and such relationship was found to be stronger when employees' power distance was lower rather than higher. Therefore, leaders should be attentive to their subordinate´s cultural values. With a lower power distance, leaders will be more successful in obtaining constructive opinions by enhancing their personal sense of power.

Different cultures have different views on how productive confrontation is to relationships. Some have more tolerance for open disagreement, considering it helpful while others have less tolerance, as they want to be nice to people, and may consider confrontation as harmful. For Erin Meyer (2016), cultures which avoid confrontation believe that the idea expressed by a person is not separated from that person, therefore disagreeing with an idea is like disagreeing with the person; so, open confrontation can disrupt the harmonious setting of a group. Hence, in cultures where confrontation is avoided, the individuals tend to have more difficulty in expressing that they don´t know something, as exemplified by the interviewees below.

If you're afraid to say you don't know, if the boss expects me not to say I don't know, I'm not going to show that I don't know. This happens repeatedly in Brazil and Mexico because people are afraid to say: "I don't know". Mexicans don't question their bosses and the boss doesn't expect employees to show their weaknesses either. The Mexican hides his weakness. It's part of the "look good in the picture" culture. I believe that where there is an excess of hierarchy, humility can indeed be a problem." (Interviewee 19)

Brazilians have difficulty in saying "no". Then they get tangled up and that creates a breach of trust for the Chinese. But for the Chinese this is very common too as you hardly get to a clear yes or no. It's always a very ambiguous thing. (Interviewee 16)

At the same time, the expatriate below considers that in cultures where confrontations are avoided, like in Latin America, humility may be even more necessary:

When you are worried about something bigger, like a company project, at a certain moment you will notice that avoiding confrontation is not the best way to go forward, and you will even need to be humbler to understand that the other person´s way is better than yours, or to convince the other person that your way is better than his/hers. So, perhaps you may need even more humbleness to pass this moment of confrontation, in this culture, whilst in another context like the Netherlands, I can easily say: "I dislike that, and this is alright". It is about the listening and learning. (Interviewee 2)

4.4.
Category 4: Outcome Humble Behaviors (OHB) – adaptation

4.4.1.
OHB – adaptation and international assignments

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 (SHAFFER *et al*., 2012). Cultural differences are inevitable as the characteristic of a given group, and a situation to which one should adapt (ROMANI *et al*., 2018). Expatriates on international assignments find themselves in need of establishing and keeping a relatively stable working relationship with the host environment (KIM, 2017), but although expatriation is often related to positive outcomes such as knowledge gain and personal development (BADER *et al*., 2019) it is not easy to adapt, as confirmed by the expatriate below:

It is not that easy to adapt in the country which is not yours. (Interviewee 8)

As per the theory previously presented in the Literature Review session, adaptation is the degree of fit between individual and environment (GUDYKUNST, W. B.; HAMMER, 1988), it is the degree of psychological comfort and familiarity that an expatriate feels in the new host environment (BLACK, J. S.; MENDENHALL, 1990) and the acculturation of the newcomer (KINCAID, 1988) who must adapt to unfamiliar locations (ANDRESEN; GOLDMANN; VOLODINA, 2018; CAVAZOTTE; MELLO; OLIVEIRA, 2020; SHAFFER *et al*., 2012). Since successful expatriate adjustment predicts task completion and relationship building effectiveness during the overseas assignment (HARRISON, D. A.; SHAFFER, 2005), it is essential to understand what behaviors influence expatriate adjustment, in order to enhance individual performance in the global workplace (BIRD *et al*., 2010).

Expatriates face cultural and cognitive diversity, confronting not only with acculturation difficulties concerning a national culture and a new environment, but also with the need to be socialized into the corporate culture of the host location, therefore, these higher adjustment challenges reduce their adequate adjustment to the host location and role execution (MOELLER *et al*., 2016a).   It is the adaptation of the management team to their global realities that will impact how big and how fast a company can succeed in a global business (JAVIDAN; BOWEN, 2013). This was the reason for selecting adaptation, as a potential outcome of humble behavior, and understanding that adaptability goes beyond the tactical, to the strategic (DELOITTE INSIGHTS, 2021).

If organizations want to succeed, the expatriates who work for them must function successfully in foreign cultural settings, and most importantly, in foreign cultural interactions (MOLINSKY, 2007). Culturally adaptable expatriates are adherent to organizational expectations and requirements (PAUL; MEYSKENS; ROBBINS, 2011), as stated by expatriate below:

> *When you have different cultures together, difficulties of adaptation happen. It is something that happens all the time, whether you are on assignment or not, it is just that the assignment aspect makes it much more expressive. The outcome is financially more significant for the company in the sense that if it does not go well, the investment that has been made is a bit more significant.* (Interviewee 4)

The top priority of companies is the ability of their people to adapt, reskill and assume new roles, by giving organizations the opportunity to work in more human ways, leveraging technology to elevate the ability to learn, create and perform in new ways to achieve better outcomes (DELOITTE, 2021). Strategic adaptability is what is needed! (FORTH, 2020).

In the following topic, I will present the findings from the research, based on the interviewees´ testimonies, and associate it to previous research.

4.4.2.
OHB – humility as a resource for expatriate adaptation

Mendenhall and Oddou (1985) have written about the factors that influence expatriate adjustment. As per the authors there are four dimensions that are direct determinants of expatriate adjustment: the self-oriented dimension, the job dimension, the organizational dimension and the nonwork one.

On the individual dimension, the factors could be grouped into one of the three following categories: (a) the self-oriented dimension, (b) the others-oriented dimension, and (c) the perceptual dimension. The self-oriented dimensions covers the "activities and attributes that serve to strengthen the expatriate's self-esteem, self-confidence, and mental hygiene", the others-oriented dimension covers: "activities and attributes that enhance the expatriate's ability to interact effectively with host-nationals and the third dimension is the perceptual dimension: cognitive processes that facilitate an expatriate's "ability to understand why foreigners behave the way they do", thus enhancing their "ability to make correct attributions about the reasons or causes of host-nationals' behavior. These categories constituted the Individual dimension of the International Adjustment model, which focused on competencies that had been shown in the literature to positively influence heightened levels of success in interacting with people from other cultures abroad or cross-culturally significant settings (BIRD *et al*., 2010). These individual dimensions are very much associated with the three dimensions of expressed humility: self-awareness; appreciation of others and openness for learning, emphasizing how a humble behavior facilitates adaptation. This corroborates with studies from other researchers, who emphasize that cultural humility is an important instrument in the processes of expatriation and cultural adaptation (CSEH; DAVIS; KHILJI, 2013; JAVIDAN; BOWEN, 2013).

Reviewing the three pillars of expressed humility, which focuses on those behaviors that can be effectively observed by others, each of these pillars is analyzed below, based on their contribution to the adaptation process, supported by theory and inputs received from the interviewees.

4.4.2.1.
Self-Awareness and adaptation

Self-awareness refers to the level expatriates are aware of their strengths and weaknesses in interpersonal skills; their own philosophies and values; how past experiences have helped shape them into who they are as a person; and the impact their values and behavior have on relationships with others. High self-awareness provides a foundation for strategically acquiring new competencies and behaviors, whereas low self-awareness promotes self-deception and arrogance (BIRD *et al.*, 2010), therefore conscious cultural self-knowledge is a crucial variable in adapting to other cultures (VARNER, I. I.; PALMER, 2005). The testimonies below reflect how interviewees see the impact of self-awareness in the adaptation process, in line with the above theory.

> *Today on my 4th time as expatriate, it was much easier for me and my family, because we came with the mentality that "we are going to adapt to a new culture". We know it's not forever, so let's enjoy what's good, and what's bad, let it go. We know we are the guests here,* (Interviewee 10)

The fact that "the willingness to see oneself accurately" component of expressed humility is positively related to adaptive behaviors supports the notion that realistic self-views are more beneficial than exaggerated/inflated ones (COLVIN; BLOCK; FUNDER, 1995). The HR manager below expresses, based on her experience, that some expatriates have an inflated view of themselves, instead of an accurate one, which would be more positively related to adaptation.

> *Not always expatriates have the accuracy of their self-Assessment. Some people never know where to situate themselves or where to integrate, feeling superior to others. I mean, if you go out of your country, you need to adapt. It is different and that is good.* (Interviewee 17)

These statements support the theory, which shows that humility not only implies an accurate assessment of oneself, but also an orientation toward a world in which one is just part of it, and that psychological maladjustment is associated with the degree to which people rate themselves more favorably than others rate them. Self-awareness, a sense of humility, is a relevant competence for successful intercultural interaction (BIRD, A.; OSLAND, J. S.; LANE, 2004) and is an adaptive strength (TANGNEY, 2000).

4.4.2.2.
Appreciation of others and adaptation

Recent studies have emphasized the importance of humility in interpersonal relationships and in cooperative relationships in the work environment (MORRIS; BROTHERIDGE; URBANSKI, 2005; OWENS; JOHNSON; MITCHELL, 2013; REGO; CUNHA; SIMPSON, 2018; ROWATT *et al.*, 2006). Both expatriates and HR, thru their testimonies below, agree that having a humble behavior towards others facilitates the interpersonal relationships and, consequently, the adaptation process.

> *To be humble is a way to be accepted faster, quicker. Again, you put yourself in their shoes. We are all equal. We are in the same boat, the same challenge. So, humility is a key quality.* (Interviewee 8)

> *Humble people adapt earlier because they get easier contact to local people, they get help if needed, people show that they like to work with them (which is a feedback people would like to get). I think regarding adaptation it is a better way.* (Interviewee 7)

> *We came already with this view that, look, if we are coming to Switzerland, we're going to the local school and we're going to enjoy this culture. So, we came with this principle, and it was such a nice surprise and a nice gift to be integrated in the community.* (Interviewee 15)

Humility is more and more important for the BANI ('brittle', 'anxious', 'nonlinear' and 'incomprehensible') world, and for organizations that demand, every day, more sharing, cooperation (WRIGHT *et al.*, 2017) and continuous learning, to achieve their goals and objectives (CALIGIURI, 2021). Individuals who are humble and seek advice from host country nationals report better adjustment, and the social support and feedback provided by locals can facilitate expatriates' performance on the assignment (MALEK; BUDHWARB; REICHE, 2015; SOUSA *et al.*, 2017; TOH, S. M.; DENISI, 2007). At the same time,

appreciating the HCN´s and being receptive to this social support can facilitate their adaptation, as reported by the interviewee below:

> *When I moved to the US, the fact that I demonstrated explicitly that I was interested, that I had a deep appreciation for what they were doing, what was different, what was not, opened immediate emotional doors. So, this was not really about what I was learning, what they were offering, but it was about this openness of connection, which helped me on my adaptation process.* (Interviewee 15)

4.4.2.3.
Teachability and adaptation

As we stated in session 2.1.2, international assignments require expatriates to adjust effectively to new work requirements, responsibilities, and expectations, all while learning new cultural forms. As expatriates become aware of and accept their limitations, they are faced with two alternatives: (i) a conformist choice, which considers their level of learning adequate, or (ii) a choice of personal development, which seeks to learn more about their new environment and to adapt. In this way, many researchers associate humble individuals with the desire to learn and grow, and highlight that humility makes people better learners (MORRIS; BROTHERIDGE; URBANSKI, 2005; OWENS; JOHNSON; MITCHELL, 2013). These studies concluded that humility is strongly associated with curiosity and an open mind.

A recent article from Forth (2020) reinforces that individuals need curiosity, openness, and the desire to learn. The testimonies below agree that expatriates need the drive, the curiosity, and a certain willingness to experiment. As an apprentice, they need to understand they have needs that are beyond their current expertise and, as an adapter, they need to be tuned to what´s happening around them and flex more easily to new circumstances. The three HR managers below agree that thru curiosity, openness and willing for learning, humility keeps expatriates in a state of continual adaptation (OWENS; HEKMAN, 2016).

> *When you really show the need and the curiosity, it's almost like a door opener and it's a permission for that exchange that comes. For me, there is something with the humility and our ability to open for true connection that it's just magic. I mean, if you try to project manage it, you probably don´t get the results and the experiences that we have a chance to get because we create those opportunities for ourselves. So, the curiosity for me is almost like a passport for connection, and connection is everything, regardless of the culture.* (Interviewee 15)

> *Somehow, adaptability comes preceded by humility: If you are proud enough not to want to try something: "I already know", "I already have an opinion about this", then adapting becomes more difficult.* (Interviewee 12)

One of the topics brough by the interviewees during the conversations was the relevance of speaking the foreign language, as a major resource for adaptation, which is in line with theory, which supports that collaborating with people from different national and cultural backgrounds requires overcoming language barriers and adapting to unusual activities and behaviors. Overcoming language barriers is one of the antecedents of leaders with a global mindset (ANDRESEN; BERGDOLT, 2019) and the desire to learn is one of the characteristics of a humble leader.

On session 2.3.1, I also mentioned that Kjar (2007) identified six characteristics for individuals with a global mindset; among them contextual sensitivity, which is described as learning enough about language and culture to react appropriately in certain situations. The interviewees below support these studies when highlighting the relevance of learning a language in the process of adaptation.

The most important thing for adaptation is being able to speak the language. Every expatriate who tries to speak more easily integrates more quickly, not only because it is easier to communicate but also as this is a demonstration of trying to integrate. (Interviewee 6)

When I show my willing to speak German, connections happen. So, I try to stick to this principle that, as much as I can, I try to speak the local language. Language is the bridge to adaptation. (Interviewee 15)

Humility helps in adapting because the expatriate will respect. He won't arrive without knowing the country... the language mainly, the cultural life of that country, the history... He must do this homework, of researching, studying, learning, having a training with a professional.... He must do his homework. Not just him but the whole family. (Interviewee 11)

Following the testimonies above, the ability to communicate and behave in accordance to the norms and practices of the host culture, and the continuous and vital engagement in the interpersonal and mass communication activities of the host society are key to the expatriate adaptation process (KIM, 2017). If expatriates do not understand their environment and behave appropriately, they may not be able to achieve their performance targets (ANDRESEN; BERGDOLT, 2019). The ability to adjust to a new culture has been shown to influence subsequent productivity in an overseas assignment (HARRISON, D. A.; SHAFFER, 2005; KRAIMER; WAYNE; JAWORSKI, 2001). The HR manager below shares his experience in managing expatriates, by showing that, if expatriates do not

understand the new culture, it will be harder for them to adapt, and that may eventually impact their performance in the international assignment, which is in line with the above referred researchers:

> *They usually say that the more you resist it persists, the more you resist that culture, the more it is going to annoy you, the more it is going to take away your peace of mind. And then you're going to carry this to the office and you're going to carry this home, and it's going to be a living hell.* (Interviewee 18)

Failure of business is related to the lack of adaptation into the new scenario, therefore a global mindset approach is necessary to bridge the existing cultural and strategic gaps (ALIMBAU-COMAS, 2020).

Above, we have shared the three pillars of expressed humility and shown how each of them contribute to the process of adaptation, but that does not mean an expatriate cannot adapt if he does not have these characteristics. Although this point of view has not been found in the literature researched, the expatriate below shared her point of view, which is a valid one. Although expressing that a humble behavior may help in the adaptation process, this behavior is not imperative for the adaptation to a new culture. Below is what she said:

> *I have seen several people that don´t touch the ground. They go, they do what they must do and move to some other place. They may have lived 10 years in Nepal, but they really had no idea of what it was about. So, I think they will adapt the same, but they will have a shallower experience, and will grow less as leaders, because they will not really understand the other.*
> *I used to have a boss in the East, and he was not humble whatsoever and he was absolutely adapted there. It is like you go like a mercenary; you take what it gives to you. You really don´t give anything back. And what you don´t understand is that what you are giving could be much less that what you could be having, your experience could be much bigger, because you could be learning much more, you could be adapting and growing yourself and your mind much more. But you can easily go, tick the boxes, do everything that you want and carry on, as a grasshopper.* (Interviewee 2)

This is certainly an opportunity for future research!

4.4.3.
OHB – humility and the flexibility to change behavior

Expatriates are advised to recognize the challenges posed by cultural differences and to repeatedly adjust their management styles as they gain new insights (MEYER, 2014). Certain responses are needed in certain cross-cultural business situations and using a determined cultural response at the wrong time or in the wrong cultural context may reduce the chance of an expatriate´s success.

These responses vary to the extent to which individuals adjust their behaviors to conform with the expected standards of the cultural context (Paula Caligiuri & Tarique, 2016).

Global leaders must be interested in other cultures, be sensitive enough to notice cultural differences, and then also be willing to modify their behavior as an indication of respect for people of other cultures in order to effectively cross-cultural differences and commonalities (HAMMER, 2011). The act of intentionally modifying one's behavior in an interaction in a foreign setting to accommodate different cultural norms for appropriate behavior is called cross-cultural code-switching, as referred in session 2.4.2. Some interviewed expatriates agree with the above authors, by understanding that they need to change their leadership style and code-switch when leading globally, as per the example below.

> *You need to adapt your behavior to the situation.* (Interviewee 6)

> *When you are managing people as a new manager in a new culture, a new country, you need to be humble and learn what is going on and adapt. You can´t simply impose all your norms on that situation and expect a long-term success. You create frictions and outcomes that are maybe no desirable.* (Interviewee 4)

As the norms vary in different behavior settings, an expectation for appropriate behavior within an interaction depends not only on the norms for the type and setting of the interaction, but also on the role the individual plays within the interaction and therefore, the expatriate must act in a role-appropriate manner for that interaction to code switch. Example: when in a business negotiation, the role of a seller is different from the role of a buyer in the interaction. Expatriates need not only to go beyond recognizing the presence of differences but continuously evaluate and select the best way to respond to that situation and change their approach based on the understanding of the context, as anticipated by Paula Caligiuri (2022; 2012, 2021), and as supported by both expatriate and HR below:

> *In Japan, people are very sensitive, they can feel you character. So, even if you don't say a word, only by your gesture, by your mimics, you can transport content. They easily recognize how you appear in a business negotiation. So, for example, when you start a conversation in Japan, if you do it in a typical German way: you make a short introduction, and just go to the matter, to the negotiation, this does not work. You must introduce yourself very lengthy, to bow down…. So that you show respect to other´s position… in this way you show humility and kind of sensitivity to the other.* (Interviewee 3)

I'm also always very mindful of how I may come across if I'm talking to someone who doesn't feel comfortable in English, how do I try to stay very centered in what impact might I have to the other if I approach in one way or another and it usually works. (Interviewee 15)

This other expatriate below, also agrees that reading cultural nuances and adapting leadership style at different locations accordingly is considered key to successful global leaders, as also emphasized by (JAVIDAN; BOWEN, 2013):

I've told the CEO several times, when he complains about the clients' lack of planning in Latin America: If you want to do business in Latin America, you must adapt to the culture of Latin America. And to prove my point, I always keep an updated table with the business from the last years, because that way I show him that the forecast was "x" but in Latin America we always do more than "X". So, if you want to do business with Latin America, you must adapt to the customer! (Interviewee 10)

The cross-cultural adaptation process is manifested by the stress-adaptation-growth dynamic (KIM, 2017), which is supported by two interrelated experiences: the deculturation of some of the original cultural habits and behaviors, on the one hand, and the acculturation of new ones, on the other. In the testimony below, this HR managers expressed how he experienced that himself:

I want to reassess; I want to have a second look at this. I want to look at this from a different perspective. So, I guess it is to contextualize everything that you think you know in a new environment, in a new place, and then see if it works. And if it doesn't work, you're going to have to be constantly adapt yourself. (Interviewee 18)

A person rooted in more than one culture is usually able to identify and reconcile differences in understanding and communication and will probably be more open to adapting to multiple mindsets and communication modes (DOZ; HAE-JUNG, 2013), which was supported by the testimonies above mentioned.

4.4.4.
OHB – humility, trust, and adaptation

In the interviews, participants expressed that trust was an important factor in international assignments and that expatriate´s humble behavior promotes the development of trust. Literature shows that managers who have a global mindset are regarded by their organizations as more effective managers in general, more effective in influencing and motivating others and building relationships. Additionally, they are believed to be better able to build trust and show a more open and adaptive approach (JAVIDAN; BOWEN, 2013). The testimonies below

demonstrate how expatriate´s humble behavior help promote trust, and therefore, facilitate the adaptation process, in agreement with the above authors:

> *When you manage in the host location, you discover new people. They need to be accepted, they evaluate what you can bring to them, they need to trust you. So, humility is sitting with the team, working together... We understand each other. We see the value of each other and after, there is trust.* (Interviewee 8)

> *In my opinion, humble behaviors are most needed when there's no trust, when the trust is low for whatever reason. Because thru humble behavior you get to know people and build trust.* (Interviewee 14)

The study by Kjar (2007) identified six characteristics for individuals with a global mindset: including contextual sensitivity, deep listening, personal learning orientation, humility, self-reflection, and entrepreneurial enthusiasm. Under contextual sensitivity, the author emphasized the importance of learning about language and culture to react appropriately and build trust, as reported by the assignee below.

> *If you want to do business in Japan, they must trust you. And trust, you can only gain thru humble behavior; showing you are open to learn from their culture. At a dinner, you should never start to drink first. The guest should drink first. If you do it first, it is very rude. Or... if you are 5 minutes late, it is a "no go"* (Interviewee 3)

Research has identified that humble individuals are more likely to trust others, demonstrate greater cooperation in relationships (THIELMANN; HILBIG, 2014, 2015) and are less defensive, making them more pleasant to relate, therefore being more accepted in social groups (KERNIS, 2005) and therefore contribute to the business.

> *People come to expand business and are normally surrounded by more local staff. It is important that people come with a humble mind, because you want to have a good relationship with the local staff, to build trust, because local people make a significant contribution to the business."* (Interviewee 1)

Viewing oneself accurately can not only help to build a good quality of relationship with people around them, but also to earn others' trust (OWENS; JOHNSON; MITCHELL, 2013). By seeing fallibility in his/her own´s positions, the HR manager below, also an expatriate, showed he was eager to show trustworthiness.

> *During COVID, specifically in 2020 and 2021, with both teams I had a relationship built of trust, a relationship of "I don't know, everything".* (Interviewee 18)

Keys and Wellins (2008) imply that global leaders must be people-skilled, good at outsmarting competitors, able to protect assets, contend with complex regulations and environments, able to take and manage risks and uncertainty, and could gain trust and the respect of their followers, as shared below:

A lot of people are respected for their position, but we need to be respected as individuals. When a senior leader is a humble leader, and respected as an individual, people will trust him more (Interviewee 1)

Building trust is important to everyone. I just think it's magnified for expatriates, because there's already a belief that "they are coming to do something to us." So, we're already not trusting, you know, kind of like college grad engineers who come in to tell all the mechanics how to do stuff. You just must build the trust. (Interviewee 14)

Humble individuals afford others a sense of voice, which has been shown to foster greater trust (OWENS; HEKMAN, 2016). Yang and colleagues (2019) stated that humble behavior is in tune with building a network of trust with the members, and the interviewees below raised the difficulties and risks of relationships which are not built on trust.

When they come arrogant, they end up losing, because in the end we are people, we are human. Good communication, transparency, relationship, and trust: that's too hard for you to build. (Interviewee 16)

Sometimes I see there's a lot of jealousy between local employees and expats. When they come as the big stars, for example, If they show themselves not humble about the great opportunity they have, and do not create a relationship of trust, it can also cause problems for the business because they may not be integrated or information will eventually not be given, because: "Oh, it's an expatriate, he's paid so much, now let him show what he really can offer to the company." (Interviewee 17)

4.4.5.
OHB – humility, supportive relationships, and well-being

Expressed humility has psychological benefits for oneself, including psychological freedom. Humble people see themselves objectively and improve themselves by exposing their own limits and mistakes to others or seeking feedback from others. This process manifests a low ego-defense system and self-enhancing tendencies (OWENS; JOHNSON; MITCHELL, 2013), meaning that people with humility hold an open attitude toward themselves rather than wasting psychological resources on packaging themselves or underestimating themselves, which can help to conserve psychological resources (OWENS, B. P.; HEKMAN, 2012) which is helpful for improving one´s own overall well-being. Leaders with humility are

relational (NIELSEN; MARRONE, 2018) and a supportive relationship with others can help lessen emotional exhaustion (WANG; LIU; ZHU, 2018). These leaders also enhance employees´ humility which helps to improve employee well- being (REGO, A.; OWENS, B.; LEAL, S.; MELO, A. I.; CUNHA, M. P.; GONÇALVES, L.; RIBEIRO, 2017; ZHONG *et al*., 2019). The expatriate below expresses her adaptation to the countries she was assigned to, reflecting her general well-being during her international assignments:

> *I was an expatriate in two countries which are very culturally different from China and the U.S, but both were very enriching to me. I really enjoyed* them (interviewee 9)

Humble people learn to identify others' unique strengths without feeling threatened by others (OWENS; JOHNSON; MITCHELL, 2013). In this case, people can learn from others openly and thus boost their own growth efficiently, which can enhance well-being (ZAWADZKA, A. M.; ZALEWSKA, 2013). In addition, people tend to understand others' limits or mistakes and express more inclusiveness. Finding others' strengths and being inclusive of others can also make one happier (KERNIS, 2003). The HR manager below shares what she heard from a senior manager, prior to his repatriation, showing how adapted his family was, and their enriching experience:

> *My wife and children don't want to leave. They created deep roots, authentic friendships. I must negotiate with my children that they will have puppies, rabbits in the new country to accept that they will leave. This country has a warm way of being that you don't find out there, and that makes us admirers of this culture.* (Interviewee 12)

Humble managers are willing to pursue self-growth by learning and openly seeking feedback or good ideas from others (Wang *et al*., 2018), they tend to have a good relationship with others because they seek help, feedback or new ideas from others and engage more in behaviors relating to the pursuit of personal growth, which is helpful to improve well-being (ZAWADZKA, A. M.; ZALEWSKA, 2013).

Exline (2012), Peters *et al*. (2011) and Owens *et al*. (2013), on their researches, have associated humility to human generosity, promoting improvement in the quality of social relations, in the emotional well-being of individuals, as well as on one´s own performance at the organizational level.

Humility will be a success factor, because it will help me read the environment, realize that the environment demands relationships, and, to have good relationships with peers, with those above, I need to be a more open person, who recognizes the values of others, who listens, not only to those above, but also to peers.... so, a humble person has a greater chance of success (Interviewee 13)

Humble behavior generates working with more joy, being more productive, having a balanced life. It will open the way for this professional to work in other countries, pursue a career, with well-being for the executive, consequently for the family and, above all, for the company. He will be, well-liked and a highly recommended executive. (Interviewee 11)

Some other empirical studies show the negative effects of lack of humility on interpersonal relationships, conflicts and the lack of social acceptance (PAULHUS, 1998; VAZIRE; FUNDER, 2006). Being humble, appreciating and celebrating diversity and avoiding stereotypes around nationalities are important aspects for leaders. The level of social acceptance and support expatriates can receive from the host country environment can facilitate their adaptation and performance on the international assignment (BRUNING, N. S.; SONPAR, K.; WANG, 2012; CHEN, G., KIRKMAN, B. L.; KIM, K.; FARH, C. I.; TANGIRALA, 2010). Support and feedback from the host country help decrease stress and uncertainty by providing information about socially accepted cultural norms and behaviors, practical assistance with communication problems, and with job-related tasks, hence enabling the expatriates to becoming comfortable and experiencing well-being, which can help them perform more successfully in their international assignments (CALIGIURI, P.; TARIQUE, 2012; CALIGIURI; BONACHE, 2016).

Unsuccessful expatriation may hurt expatriates' personal career and well-being, as well as that of their family, who may have made personal sacrifices for the assignment (BHASKAR-SHRINIVAS *et al*., 2005; VAN DER LAKEN *et al*., 2019). In the examples below, interviewees share situations in which expatriates did not experience well-being on assignment, and even worse, suffered from it.

Years ago, I was responsible for receiving about 90 expatriates, and there was one of the high-level people, with a high salary, who one day came home, and his wife had left a note, who had left with the children because she couldn't bear to live there anymore, but the manager had been expatriated for 2 years and she left with her 2 children in 4 months. So, that was a crisis that I had to manage, because neither the expatriate nor the organization had the humility to think about the adaptation of his wife. (Interviewee 10)

The negative psychological feelings that family members experience may affect the expatriate, changing, in turn, his/her feelings of adjustment and well-being (SHAFFER *et al.*, 2012; TAKEUCHI, 2010; VAN DER LAKEN *et al.*, 2019), as per the testimony of this HR manager:

> *I've seen executives who have had health problems, strokes, heart problems and so on, and the family too: depression, serious problems, even a wife who started drinking to disguise the whole situation They use emotional crutches and go to other addictions, and unfortunately, they don't face the truth because of their position.* (Interviewee 11)

It is important to mention that the degree of culture similarity/dissimilarity may not be relevant when determining how easily expatriates adjust (SELMER, 2007) but a person rooted in more than one culture is usually able to identify and reconcile differences in understanding and communication and will probably be more open to adapting to multiple mindsets and communication modes (DOZ; HAE-JUNG, 2013).

Lack of adaptation to the local culture can be one of the main reasons for expatriates' failure. Adjustment and performance are closely intertwined, and both relate strongly to the interpersonal relationships expatriates have (VAN DER LAKEN *et al.*, 2019). The testimony below demonstrates that expatriate´s adaptation to the host culture is fundamental, as it will impact the company´s business:

> *When you leave the subsidiary for the headquarters, humility is also essential for you to quickly adapt to the culture and start producing for the company what it expects from you.* (Interviewee 10)

When looking at important skills and behaviors expatriates should have, this HR manager, summarized her thoughts, recognizing that a humble behavior can contribute to the success of and international assignment:

> *Humble behavior adds to the set of skills that stand out in the life of a successful expatriate. It could be helpful for more success in the mission of the expat, for sure.* (Interviewee 17)

5
Conclusion

5.1.
Introduction

In this chapter, I address the research questions and summarize the main finding of this study, including the originality and the contributions to knowledge, considering the implications of the study and its limitations, before making recommendations for future research that might need to be considered.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the aim of the study was to describe how expatriate humble behavior operates in corporate international assignments. The literature presented a gap of studies on behavior in those with a global mindset; for the purpose of this study, expatriates; as demonstrated in the literature review, and brought to light that humble behavior in Global Mobility was under researched. Data was generated using this to explore the research questions with 19 managers from a range of nationalities, backgrounds, and organizations.

5.2.
Addressing the research questions

This study examined five secondary research questions, which will be answered below.

5.2.1.
What is considered as expatriate humble behavior (HB)?

In line with the main characteristics of expressed humility (OWENS; HEKMAN, 2016), interviewees were questioned about the behaviors emerging in expatriate assignments that they observed; and considered an expatriate behavior as: admitting when they did not know how to do something, assessing their strengths but also weaknesses, acknowledging when others had more knowledge and skills, complimenting others, appreciating other´s contributions and ideas, willing to learn from others, open to the ideas and advice of others and seeking feedback. When the expatriate recognizes his skills and the areas where he must improve, he has a self-consciousness of himself, as a person.

It was observed that self-awareness was the dimension which had less examples, meaning that expatriates seem to have difficulty in taking notice of their own limitations and errors and on accepting them with realism, in addition to expressing their owns strengths, which presents an opportunity for the development of such skills for expatriates´ future international assignments.

When talking about knowledge, intellectual humility was also referred to, with examples of recognizing the limits of expatriate knowledge, recognizing that their thoughts can be wrong, and controlling arrogance, by presenting the expatriate´s ideas without offending, and accepting the ideas of others, which are contrary to his/her own, without feeling offended.

Although the definition of expressed humility was presented to interviewees in advance, on some occasions the term "humility" seemed to be confused with "humiliation", with examples showed in the analysis session.

One important aspect was that research participants, both expatriates and, mainly HR/GM managers had several examples of expatriates being arrogant, causing unhealthy personal relationships and the rejection of the leader.

Since expatriates deal daily with people from other cultures, several examples of humble behavior towards the other culture were given, which is referred to as cultural humility; a sub dimension of humility, as explained in the literature review session. Examples of cultural humility showed expatriates respecting and valuing the foreign culture, not judging, recognizing there are other cultures than their own and being curious about the host national environment. It is expressed when the expatriate understands his/her background and recognizes that other people have different backgrounds from his/hers. This does not make them better or worse than the other person, just different. This characteristic at the individual level can be upscaled to the country level, when the expatriate recognizes that his country has certain positive characteristics, but it does have negative ones, and problems, as well; and he/she can recognize both. He understands that this does not make his country better nor worse from that other country: they are simply different. Additionally, it is important to highlight that what can be considered as a positive characteristic of a country to one person may not be perceived as so, to someone else.

Expatriates demonstrate a humble behavior when they interact with other people and recognize they have many skills they want to learn from. So, it is "me together with you, learning, so that I can improve and be a better person". At the same time, at the national level, it happens when the expatriate goes to a host country and wants to learn from the host country nationals (HCN´s), being open to learn things that he does not know and taking this opportunity to grow.

5.2.2.
What HB adds to the set of competences that stand out in the life of a successful expatriate?

When questioned about the relevance of humble behavior, and the use and the need of humble behaviors in expatriate assignments, they agreed that Humility is vital for leaders at management level, but it is even more important for expatriates, as, different from the domestic business environment, international assignments include a further level of complexity, since there is an involvement with different cultural realities. Humility is important to all, but humble behavior plays a significant role in the lives of expatriates It is a different type of work, different types of behaviors, values, backgrounds, therefore being humble in an international assignment plays a significant role because the expatriate does not go as a superior person, in this case, he aggregates to his mindset of teaching, the mindset of learning. Therefore, among other competences which are important for an international assignment, humble behavior can significantly contribute for those with a global mindset. But, most importantly, the lack of humility can be a road blocker for global mobility.

Humility is becoming more critical for expatriates who manage in the current uncertain, unpredictable, and dynamic world, where it is increasingly difficult to figure it all out. Additionally, humility improves the quality of social relations, it opens for connections, and motivates people. It helps expatriates to manage their relationships, it promotes openness, self-awareness, and supportive interactions, it fosters the development of flexibility and growth, it helps connect, communicate, and collaborate with people from other cultures, it eases power imbalances and facilitates the acceptance of help from others.

But interviewees have also expressed that humility is often disdained, as inappropriate in someone who holds a position of leadership, which comes from a mistaken understanding of what it means to be a humble leader.

In terms of team management, research participants also demonstrated that, as expatriates manage international teams, working in a diverse and multicultural corporate environment, it is important that they come with a humble mind, to develop a good relationship with the local team, as they bring a significant contribution to the business. Expatriates knows about their jobs but should be humble to recognizes that they may not have the cultural experience, that there are areas they do not understand and, therefore, they can learn from locals. Research participants have also shared that when leaders picture themselves like a God, that promotes lack of teamwork, toxic environments, incivility, and misunderstandings.

Interviewees have also emphasized the relevance of humble behavior for cultural interactions, expressing that humility is important in life but if it does not exist in international assignments, it can be a road blocker, due to the difficulty of not getting into the culture. Expatriates deal with a lot of different cultures and the moment they are humble they are prepared to understand and respect the other´s diversity, without stereotyping and judging, and to understand that although they worked very well in one country, it does not mean everything is the same in another.

One other point that came up during the interviews was the changes occurred with the COVID pandemic, when the general feeling of uncertainty has been incredibly humbling. People recognized they did not know what to do and had to work together to find better ways. Based on the research participants´ testimonies, the Covid Pandemic brought a change on people´s mindset, it changed how people value relationships, how they value others. People who are more human are more valued and humility is now even more important than before. Different from the command-and-control, humility opens a connection right away that is a lot easier to live in than in these ones of "you need to be right", of judgment…, and you trigger a completely different set of expectations. It's a completely different way to approach. This degree of disruption provided opportunity for transformation and reinvention.

Although many of the interviewees identified the relevance of humble behavior in international assignments, as a behavior which adds to the set of competences that stand out in the life of a successful expatriate, the consensus from the research participants was that this is not a topic much discussed in the Global Mobility field. Additionally, most researchers on Global Mobility have focused on the positive side of working abroad, but there is also a "dark side" of expatriation, which analyzes the difficulties of adjusting to a new environment, the stress, the risks of expatriation in hostile environments, discrimination and hostility, expatriate divorce, abusive leadership, failed assignments, personal crisis, like burnout and work life crushing one´s private life. I contend that adding humble behavior to the set of competences that stand out in the life of expatriates, would be a way to better manage "the dark side" of expatriation. As anticipated by (BURKE, 2006) "it is not what leaders know or how bright they are that leads to success or failure, rather how well they work with others, and how well they understand themselves".

5.2.3.
In what contexts expatriate humility is most needed?

Research participants highlighted the importance of analyzing the context when applying a humble behavior, as humility needs favorable cultural conditions to thrive (CUENCA; TOMEI; MELLO, 2022; TOMEI, P. A.; CUENCA, R.; MELLO, 2022) and it can be appropriate in some contexts but ineffective in others.

Expatriate humility is most needed when the expatriate must build connections, trust, and reliable relationships. Respondents have shared that Humility could work for a short period of time but not on a long-term basis, giving examples that one could survive, as an expatriate, with no humility in a short assignment, or when working on a project basis, but it is difficult to build a culture of trust and motivation. Therefore, when the expatriate is working in a large team, with more local staff, and staying for many years, a humble behavior is critical. Humility is also much needed when expatriates must develop good social relationships, and most importantly when interacting and dealing with people form multiple cultures. It is fundamental in complicated environments and when openness for learning and continuous improvement is required.

It is also much needed in times of pressure, when the expatriate manager will need cooperation from subordinates and partners. Excess of pressure may cause the expatriate to be boycotted. It is true that you need agentic measures at these times, but you need to be humble to understand that you do not have all the answers, you do not know everything and need to count on other people before you take a decision. Because if you pretend you have the answer, and your followers, know that you don´t, because nobody knows it, which was the situation of the COVID pandemic, for example, they will be insecure in following you. While, when in an unknown situation of pressure, you say "I do not know everything, I still do not have the answer, but this is the way we are going, come with me."; more people will follow you. Pressure may lead to a more authoritarian and directive behavior, when, in fact, you need to listen to others and get cooperation.

Although I support the idea that humility is needed in times of pressure, this was not a consensus among interviewees, and it is clearly not known to what extent this reflects the views and experiences of other expatriates and HR/GM managers. But the fact that half of the research participants noted and identified that humility may not be important in times of pressure shows that there are different points of view, as further exposed below.

5.2.4.
In what contexts participants report humble behavior associated with weak or ineffective leadership?

Humble behavior is associated with ineffective leadership in many ways:

Several authors refer to the fact that traditionally leaders have been referred as idols and saviors, as referred in session 2.3.3., and this was reinforced by half of the HR/GM managers, who also raised that the business schools have maximized individual pride, promoting a heroic vision of the leader, therefore causing humility not to be associated to leadership, and a humble behavior being often considered as a weakness. In cultures where the expatriate is considered as a hero, someone who should know everything, the expatriate who shows a humble behavior could be seen as a weak leader. A couple of interviewees raised a different perspective, expressing that they consider a hero not someone who is perfect and who does not fail, but, on the contrary, someone who recognizes his/her limitations. These leaders who are brave to accept their limitations should be considered even more as heroes.

Half of the interviewee raised that in situations of pressure, and which require agentic leadership, humility is perceived as less suitable, therefore in this case, a humble behavior may be less effective, as supported by Owens and Hekman (2012) and Zapata and Hayes-Jones (2019). Some interviewees, including expatriates and HR/GM managers, expressed that in moments when action was necessary, a humble behavior could be associated with a weakness, as manifested by a couple of interviewees who said that "problems need to be solved and a humble behavior should not be on the way for this to happen, it should not delay a decision", considering that when a leader practices a humble behavior, he listens to more people, he tries to get a consensus, which may delay the decision-process. This way, being associated with ineffective leadership. The other 50%, on the other hand, supported that humble behavior is necessary in times of pressure, in line with the considerations of Argandona (2017), citing that even when decision must be taken quicker, humility is still necessary, for the leader to accept that he is totally in unchartered waters, not knowing exactly what the best decision is, but still aware that he/she has to take one decision and move forward.

A large number of research participants also expressed that in countries with a more individualistic culture, which highly value competitiveness, individual ambition and success, humility would be recognized as ineffective, or as a leader´s weakness, in agreement with Argandona (2013) who states that, the humble leader feels less comfortable in cultures that are more focused on competition and rivalry. 10% of the expatriates expressed that, in these cultures, the expatriate needs to be more like a warrior, and in their perception, even requiring some arrogance. In this case, a person who has humility in his own life will have a hard time winning this war, because he will always think he is going against himself if he must use a little more arrogance to win in at work.

Half of the HR/GM managers raised the point on expatriate´s level in the hierarchy of the organization, reporting that young people may assume apparently arrogant behaviors when they want to impress people with more experience, in line with Argandona (2013)´s research. Based on their experience, young managers are eager to get new positions and, therefore, in this stage, it is rarer to find people who accept their failures, and value others. Still many research participants noted that humble behavior contributes regardless of people´s level in the hierarchy, supporting the findings of Schein (2013, 2016; 2018) whose advice is that people

should accept their ignorance. In the case of expatriates, it was expressed that sometimes the assignees come with a higher value and are paid more, so there is a natural tendency they perceive themselves as more valued, and therefore a humble attitude is even more necessary for expatiates in senior positions.

Power distance and confrontation were also raised as a topic during the interviews, being a topic not much associated with humble behavior in the academic literature. Interviewees expressed that in cultures where the distance of power is more accepted, an expatriate who behaves in a humble way may be seen as a weak leader. Still, in lower power distance cultures, leaders will be more successful in obtaining constructive opinions, increasing in others their personal sense of power.

Also, what came up during the interviews was how a humble behavior can be interpreted in cultures where confrontation is avoided. Following Meyer (2016) different cultures have different views on how productive confrontation is to relationships. Some have more tolerance for open disagreement while others, as people want to be nice to others, may consider confrontation as harmful. In this case, individuals tend to have more difficulty in expressing that they don´t know something, such as in Latin America, where people prefer not to say "I don´t know" because they don´t want to be in an opposite position to their manager, people tend to agree, but at the same time there is another point of view which shows that in cultures which do not like confrontation it may even be more important as if you are working on a big project, for example, as a leader, you cannot agree with everything and therefore you need to expose your disagreement, that you have a better solution for the company. And the other person also needs to be humble to accept that his idea is not the best. So, it may be a moment where humility may even be more required for one to notice that avoiding confrontation is not the best way to go forward, and the person will even need to be humbler to understand that the other person´s way is better than yours, or to convince the other person that your way is better than his/hers. So, in this case, the expatriate may need even more humbleness to pass this moment of confrontation, in this culture, whilst in another context like the Netherlands, one can easily say: "I dislike that, and this is alright."

The role of different generations is each time more important in Global Mobility. Millennials are the youngest expatriate employees in organizations today (MCNULTY, Y.; SELMER, 2017) and their competencies, motivations and expectations differ from previous generations. Despite this being discussed in the theory, and its association with the humble behavior making sense, surprisingly, only one expatriate identified that. This one expatriate raised the generational aspect, stating that in her generation, the less senior you were the more assertive you needed to be, because of the whole culture of that time. She said: You were scarred of doing wrong. The culture of the time was: "You have to do it right, otherwise you are not the best". So, there was much more difficulty in the middle, lower level, whilst for the millennials, for example, it became much more open. For previous generations it was more difficult to say, "I don't know", while millennials are freer to say that.

5.2.5.
Is humble behavior just another competence or does it play a superior role in the adaptation process of expatriates – or, in general, in the behavior of good managers?

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, all while learning new cultural forms that impact their work. Even though expatriation is often related to positive outcomes such as knowledge gain and personal development, it is not easy to adapt.

Humble behavior surely plays a superior role in the adaptation process of expatriates.

Black and Mendenhall (1991) presented the individual dimensions that influence expatriate adjustment, which are (a) the self-oriented dimension, (b) the others-oriented dimension, and (c) the perceptual dimension, which positively influence heightened levels of success in interacting with people from other cultures abroad or in cross-culturally significant settings.

I also found that the above-mentioned individual dimensions that influence expatriate adjustment process are very much associated with the three dimensions of expressed humility: (a) self-awareness; (b) appreciation of others and (c) openness for learning, which is further detailed below, emphasizing how a humble behavior facilitates adaptation. This corroborates studies from other researchers,

who reinforce that cultural humility is an important instrument in the processes of expatriation and cultural adaptation, as detailed earlier in session 2.4.

Several consulting firms, such as Deloitte (2016), KDVI (2020) and Korn Ferry (2020a) recognize that humility is an important component of effective leadership in modern organizations, which operate in a complex and dynamic business environment, where things change very fast, and, as Peter Senge (1990) said it is difficult "to figure it all out at the top", so we must recognize and be open to learn from others, have a collaborative behavior, share information and value joint decision making.

Self-awareness refers to the level expatriates are aware of their strengths and weaknesses and understand the impact their values and behavior have on relationships with others. Realistic self-views are more beneficial than inflated ones, being positively related to adaptation. In relation to Appreciation of others, both expatriates and HR/GM managers agreed that having a humble behavior towards others facilitates the interpersonal relationships and, consequently, the adaptation process. Valuing others and being receptive to their social support can facilitate expatriate´s adaptation. Teachability was also recognized as a way for adaptation. Authors say that humility is more and more important for in the current BANI ('brittle', 'anxious', 'nonlinear' and 'incomprehensible') world, and for organizations that demand, every day, more sharing, cooperation (WRIGHT *et al*., 2017) and continuous learning, to achieve their goals and objectives (CALIGIURI, 2021). Humble individuals have a desire to learn and grow, and humility makes people better learners. This has been supported by the interviewees. As one assignee said," when an expatriate shows curiosity, it's almost like a door opener" and humility is related to the ability to open for true connection, for learning with the other.

As mentioned above, several reasons were given to prove that a humble behavior helps in the adaptation process, but one assignee brought a very interesting point, which may be a topic for future research: Although humble behavior helps the adaptation process, it is not imperative for the adaptation to a new culture. As per her experience in many assignments, she gave a good example: "I used to have a boss in the East, and he was not humble whatsoever and he was absolutely adapted there. It is like you go like a mercenary; you take what it gives to you. You really don´t give anything back. And what you don´t understand is that

what you are giving could be much less that what you could be having, your experience could be much bigger, because you could be learning much more, you could be adapting and growing yourself and your mind much more. But you can easily go, tick the boxes, do everything that you want and carry on, as a grasshopper."

Aligned with the theory (BARMEYER; BAUSCH, 2018), the large majority of interviewees have also recognized that expatriates need flexibility to change behavior according to cultural differences, and   HR/GM managers emphasized during the interviews that expatriates should be advised to recognize the challenges posed by cultural differences and to be willing to modify their behavior and adjust their management styles. They need to select the best way to respond to that situation and change their approach based on the understanding of the context. They need to be humble and learn what is going on and adapt. They can´t simply impose all their norms on that situation and expect a long-term success. Expatriates need to look at things from a different perspective, contextualize everything that they think they know in a new environment and then see if it works. And if it doesn't work, they must constantly adapt themselves.

One topic that was mentioned in several interviews was that trust is an important factor in international assignments. Literature shows that managers who have a global mindset are regarded by their organizations as more effective in motivating others and building relationships. They are believed to be better able to build trust and show a more open and adaptive approach (JAVIDAN; BOWEN, 2013). Interviewees have expressed that thru humble behavior you get to know people and build trust, showing you are open to learn from their culture. Many HR/GM manager shared that when expatriates come as the big stars, for example, not being humble and creating a relationship of trust, this can also cause problems for the business because they may not be integrated.

Another interesting topic that emerged in the interviews was about humility promoting supportive relationships, and well-being, in accordance with theory, as presented in session 4.4.5. Humble managers tend to have a good relationship with others (WANG; LIU; ZHU, 2018), they are willing to pursue self-growth by learning and openly seeking feedback or good ideas from others which is helpful to improve well-being (ZAWADZKA, A. M.; ZALEWSKA, 2013). The level of social acceptance and support expatriates can receive from the host country

environment can help decrease stress and uncertainty by providing information about socially accepted cultural norms and behaviors, practical assistance with communication problems, and therefore enabling the expatriates to becoming comfortable and experiencing well-being, which can help them perform more successfully in their international assignments. As anticipated by Tangney (2000), and reinforced during the interviews, humility keeps individuals in a state of continual adaptation. The large majority of research participants, and mostly HR/GM managers, based on their professional experience, highlighted that the lack of adaptation to the local culture can be one of the main reasons for expatriates' failure, hence expatriate´s adaptation to the host culture is fundamental, as it will impact the company´s business.

In summary, humble behavior plays a superior role in the adaptation process of expatriates and, in general, in the behavior of good managers. If organizations want to succeed, the expatriates who work for them must adapt and function successfully in foreign cultural settings. If it does not go well, the investment that has been made is normally significant, therefore one of the top priorities of companies is the ability of their people to adapt.

In view of what has been exposed above, I summarize on table 5 below the main topics to answer my research question:

HOW DOES EXPATRIATE HUMBLE BEHAVIOR OPERATE IN CORPORATE INTERNATIONAL ASSIGNMENTS?

Table 5 – Categories, Constructs, and items to be observed to infuse a global mobility culture with humility.

Categories	Constructs	Items to be observed
Expressed Humble Behaviors (EHB) (Behaviors, emerging in expatriate assignments that expatriates and HR/GM Managers observed).	(1) EHB and Self-awareness (2) EHB and Appreciation of others (3) EHB and Teachability (4) EHB and Humiliation (5) EHB and Arrogance (6) EHB and Cultural Humility	(1) Admitting when they do not know how to do something, making clear, unbiased assessments of the strengths and weaknesses of oneself and others, not self-centered, tolerating errors and using them as an important learning lever, (2) Being oriented towards others, acknowledging when others have more knowledge and skills, complimenting others, appreciating other´s contributions and ideas, (3) Willing to learn from others, open to the ideas and advice of others and seeking feedback, Intellectual humility: recognizing the limits of expatriate knowledge, recognizing that their thoughts can be wrong, and controlling arrogance, by presenting their ideas without offending, and accepting the ideas of others, which are contrary to their own, without feeling offended. (4) Not confusing humility with humiliation, which should be fought (5) Being arrogant causes unhealthy personal relationships and the rejection of the leader. (6) recognizing there are other cultures than their own, respecting and valuing the foreign culture, not judging, being curious about the host national environment and willing to learn from it

Relevance (RHB) (The use and the need of humble behaviors in expatriate assignments identified by expatriates and HR/GM Managers).	(1) RHB and International Assignments (2) RHB and Leadership (3) RHB and Team Management (4) RHB and Cultural interactions (5) RHB and COVID Pandemic (6) RHB in Global Mobility	(1) Opens for connections Helps expatriates manage their relationships Helps develop flexibility and growth Lack of humility can be a road blocker for expatriations. Recognize there is no culture better than the other. (2) Helps to connect, communicate, and collaborate with people from diverse cultures Expatriate does not go as a superior person, only with the mindset of teaching, but also with the mindset of learning Eases power imbalances (3) Fosters acceptance of help from others, promotes connections, and motivates people. (4) Promotes openness, self-awareness, and supportive interactions Expatriate goes to value other people, he goes open to learn from other people, Promotes willingness to constantly learn Improves the quality of social relations Fosters the development of a good relationship with the local team Fosters cultural interactions Promotes and respects the other´s diversity, without stereotyping and judging Lack of humility promotes lack of teamwork, toxic environments, incivility, and misunderstandings. (5) COVID general feeling of uncertainty has been incredibly humbling; change on how people value relationships, opportunity for transformation and reinvention (6) Humility is not a topic much discussed in Global Mobility, opportunity for better managing "the dark side" of expatriation

Context (CHB) (The situational context that determines the effectiveness of humble leader behaviors and when it is most needed).	(1) CHB - Importance (2) CHB and Leadership (3) CHB and Pressure (4) CHB and Hierarchy (5) CHB and Short-term orientation and Individualism (6) CHB and Power distance and Confrontation	Most needed: (1) build connections, build trust, and build reliable and long-term relationships, times of pressure Associated with weakness or ineffective leadership: (2) Leader as a hero; High competition and rivalry, agentic leadership (3) Pressure (4) Hierarchy (5) Short-term orientation and Individualism (6) Power distance and Confrontation

| Outcomes (OHB) (Important perceived outcomes of humble behavior, focusing on adaptation to the host culture) | (1) OHB - Adaptation and International Assignments (2) OHB – Humility as a Resource for Expatriate Adaptation 2a.Self-Awareness and Adaptation 2b. Appreciation of others and Adaptation 2c. Teachability and Adaptation (3) OHB – Humility and the flexibility to change behavior (4) OHB – Humility, Trust and Adaptation (5) OHB – Humility, supportive relationships, and well-being | (1) adaptation plays a superior role in the adaptation process of expatriates (2a) self-awareness and respect for the fact that they have something to learn in the host country, demonstrate a low level of ethnocentrism when critically examining polarizing views of cultures, including their own, avoid idealizing their own cultural virtues and accentuating weaknesses in other cultures (2b) being grateful for contributions from HCN´s, open to appreciating ideas that come from other cultures; presenting appreciative receptivity to unfamiliar values, beliefs, and worldviews; appreciate and celebrate diversity and avoid stereotypes around nationalities (2c) open to learning from the host national environment, desire to learn from other cultures (3) recognizing that their skills and knowledge are linked to the culture and need of flexibility to change behavior, demonstrate humility to deculturate some of the original cultural habits and behaviors, and to acculturate new ones (4) humble behavior promotes connecting with people and building trust, (5) acceptance of support offered by those in the host country, demonstrate high level of cultural humility, establish meaningful relationships with culturally distinct others, demonstrate a high level of psychological comfort and familiarity in the new environment; support expatriates can receive from the host country environment can help decrease stress and uncertainty, enabling the expatriates to becoming comfortable and experiencing well-being |

Source: Elaborated by author

5.3.
Originality and contribution

Based on the research findings to date, this research study is an original study that has uncovered examples of expressed humble behaviors; the relevance of humble behavior and the use and the need of humble behaviors in corporate expatriate assignments; the situational context that determines the effectiveness of humble leader behaviors and when it is most needed; and the perceived outcomes of humble behavior, focusing on adaptation to the host culture. In this study, I bring new information about Humility in Global Mobility, and I provide evidence that a humble behavior contributes to the success of international assignments, but it can also be misinterpreted in some cultural contexts.

The study has a social and economic contribution, since it described humility of leaders with a global mindset from a behavioral perspective, in the context of corporate international assignments. The success of expatriates' international missions is fundamental in a globalized world where the development of entrepreneurial activities requires a global mindset, enriched by a humble behavior. As shown in this research, the practice of humility is fundamental for those seeking a world of greater cooperation, integration, and learning.

From an academic point of view, humility is still little explored in management, and, in particular, as an organizational behavior (CUENCA, R.; TOMEI, P. A.; MELLO, 2022) and research on Global Mindset showed that it lacked a behavioral ability (ANDRESEN; BERGDOLT, 2019), which is fundamental within the new culture. This project extended the research on behavioral skills and global mindset. The study has been able to consolidate a wide range of articles relating to expatriates, humility and expatriate adaptation and disclosed the views of a group of managers with a global mindset, in this case assigned expatriates (AE's), who shared their personal experiences, as well as the views of a group of HR/GM managers who shared their experiences while managing international assignments; therefore, the study significantly adds to the literature covering these areas. The thesis filled an academic gap that identified the lack of behavioral studies in Global Mindset, and on studies on humility in international assignments, therefore being relevant and contributing for the global mobility literature.

In terms of practical contribution and based on my experience of more than 20 years of work in global mobility, I realized the importance of humble behavior in executives for the success of their international assignments, favoring interpersonal relationships, and the openness for constant learning, which justifies the practical gap. As anticipated by Wright *et al.* (2017) humility is more and more important for the BANI ('brittle', 'anxious', 'nonlinear' and 'incomprehensible') world, and, in line with (CALIGIURI, 2021), for organizations that demand, every day, more sharing, cooperation and continuous learning, to achieve their goals and objectives.

The study also advanced in the decoding of an abstract concept, as it presented humble behaviors in a more tangible spectrum, capable of being trained, developed and fostered within the organization´s Global Mobility, supporting the expatriates in the internalization of a humble behavior.

In summary, considering the intended contribution of this work, in the sense of stimulating organizational literature and decoding the behaviors, relevance, context and outcomes of humble behavior during international assignments, this present qualitative study brings some advances in terms of contribution, by: (i) shedding light on the association between expatriate behavior and the value of humility, a link little explored in the field of administration, fostering the organizational literature in this field (ii) offering insights so that the value of humility - complex and abstract - can be internalized in the Global Mobility routine and (iii) pointing out aspects that can be considered in everyday practices in order to contribute to international assignment excellence. The study can have a positive impact on the selection, training, work and success of expatriate managers, and probably also in other fields: for example, migrant and displaced workers, athletes who carry out their activity in other countries, expatriate journalists, diplomats, teachers and researchers.

It can be concluded that the research findings provide real and important insights into how expatriate behavior operates in corporate international assignments.

5.4.
Practical recommendations for global mobility management

The researcher believes that companies are a suitable environment to learn and develop a humble behavior, which can contribute to the success of international assignments. Based on that, future direction is given for expatriate selection and cross-cultural training, with a focus on the behavioral dimension:

Recommendation 1: Improve the selection procedures of multinational companies (MNCs) from the current focus on cognitive attributes and skills (technical competence), personal attributes and motivation, to include the focus on the behavioral aspect, emphasizing the contribution of a humble behavior to candidates for an international assignment, especially on the dimensions of self-awareness, appreciation of others and teachability (willingness to learn from others).

Recommendation 2: Recommendation 2 is a natural development of recommendation 1. Cross-cultural training programs, offered for those in preparation of expatriates for living and working abroad, should include the behavioral aspect with a focus on the three above mentioned dimensions of expressed humility: self-awareness; appreciation of others and teachability.

5.5.
Limitations

The present work has methodological limitations as it works with an intentional sample, selected by convenience, and based on the testimonies and reports of participants who are the protagonists of being expatriates themselves or managing international assignments, as anticipated in topic 3.6. (Method Limitations).

Additionally, as the topic of the thesis was a sensitive one, the participants might have been reticent in voicing critical opinions pertaining to the institutions and the culture both within the institution and the country. However, during the interviews the participants were made to feel comfortable and were provided confidentiality and anonymity to allow them to provide original answers, without feeling the need to regulate responses.

At the practical level, the findings of this research are based on the living meaning of a group of expatriates and expert HR/GM managers, and so are limited in their generalizability to the wider field. The collected data is not representative of all; however, I believe that the testimonies of the research participants in the study are insightful and of great interest and this suggests that a broader data set of more expatriates and HR/GM managers, working in a wider range of locations and institutions would afford further investigation.

5.6.
Recommendations for future research

Finally, this research has provided a springboard for future research on the interesting and important topic of how humble behavior operates in international assignments. This study drew attention to four main categories of humble behavior: expressed humble behavior, relevance, context and outcome, however it would be interesting to explore some new avenues of research: (i) quantitatively applying humility scales in a sample segmented by different demographic profiles, with the intention of understanding how the perceptions of other interviewees are presented in different cultures; (ii) creating an expatriate humble behavior model in such a way that it is possible to have an important instrument for the training and development of human resources, with a view to global mobility excellence, through the internalization of the humble behavior; (iii) expanding the sample of target expatriates and HR/GM managers in order to cover the multicultural spectrum and its impact and (iv) investigating why self-awareness was the dimension with less examples, reflecting that expatriates seem to have difficulty in taking notice of their weaknesses in addition to their owns strengths, which presents an opportunity for the development of such skills for expatriates´ future international assignments and (v) exploring circumstances when expatriates do not express a humble behavior but adapt to the new culture.

I suggest the collection of data from more people to support the findings of this study or if it will reveal additional different perspectives. It would also be interesting to get respondents from different regions. larger number of people to validate this information and select by culture, to see the cultural differences and demographic or levels of management. Eventually find different answers from different age groups and gender groups.

The study could also be extended by comparing the expatriates working in different countries to understand how they construct core meaning of being expatriates and behaving humbly and shed light on humble behaviors in specific cultures.

Another way the study could be extended would be to compare the lived experiences and perceptions of expatriates and their subordinates, to better understand the differences and similarities from these two different perspectives.

In this study, I have concentrated on the lived experiences and perceptions of expatriates who are on a long-term assignment. It might be unlikely for other types of assignments, such as short-term assignments, permanent transferees or commuters and it would be interesting to evaluate if those also share the same experiences and perceptions as those in this study.

To conclude, the findings of my study draw attention to the behavioral ability of leaders with a global mindset. The contribution of this thesis adds to the existing body of research on the cross-cultural competences within the field of international business.

The distinctive findings of this study indicate how expatriate humble behavior operates in Global Mobility. Ultimately, the study that I have undertaken can be regarded as an initial step into a much wider endeavor towards understanding important behaviors of leaders with a global mindset and the impact of humble behavior, which is an important and complex phenomenon in Global Mobility.

6
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Appendix 1

Dear ………

I am writing to you because you are an assigned expatriate manager, with a global mindset; in other words, with company responsibilities at the strategic and normative levels.

OR (to HR/Global Mobility Managers):

I am writing you because you have an extensive experience in expatriate management.

As a doctorate candidate, I would like to invite you to participate in research a study I am conducting on behavior of those with a global mindset, more specifically on humble behavior, to tell me your views, in a one-off interview of 30 minutes. There are no right or wrong answers to this – I am keen to gain a wide variety of opinions.

As Humility is seen from several dimensions, and I have chosen Owens & Hekman (2016)´s definition of" expressed humility", which highlights only behaviors that can be observed by others. It arises in social contexts in which individuals demonstrate:

(i) Manifested Willingness to See the Self Accurately (the understanding of one´s strengths and weaknesses)

(ii) Appreciation of Others' Strengths and Contributions, and

(iii) Openness to new ideas and to learning from others

These interrelated themes are essential for defining humility in an organizational context.

During our conversation we will cover the below topics:

• how expatriate humility operates in corporate international assignments

• what expatriate behaviors are viewed as humble and what are their outcomes in different contexts

• in what settings humility is associated with weak or ineffective leadership

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and confidential. Your name nor your company's name are 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.

If you have questions about this research study, please let me know by reply of this message or please contact Dr. Patricia Tomei, Dissertation Chair at patomei@iag.puc-rio.br, IAG Business School, Pontificia Universidade Católica - RJ.

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

Sincerely,
Sylvia Mello
PhD Candidate
Pontificia Universidade Catolica do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil