

Influence of Cross-Cultural Competences on Adaptive Performance of United Nations Peacebuilding Practitioners

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Abstract Given the complexity and challenging nature of environments in which peacebuilding practitioners operate, their Cross-Cultural Competences (CCCs) are very crucial for them to effectively adapt and function in foreign countries. The ability to effectively maintain positive interactions with local people is so vital that the overall success of a peacebuilding mission is every so often considerably affected by it. Therefore, in order to gain an understanding on how peacebuilding practitioners successfully navigate in local culture and achieve successful performance in competitive environments, adaptability is an essential measure of their performance to be analysed. Despite heightened interest by both scholars and practitioners in studying and better understanding the importance of expatriate adjustment, limited research has so far been conducted on adaptive performance in United Nations peacebuilding context. A review of the literature in this regard revealed a research gap that culminated in the following research question: “*what is the influence of Cross-Cultural Competence (CCC) on Adaptive Performance (AP) in United Nations missions?*” Hence, an empirical study of 100 staff members of the Integrated Peacebuilding Mission in Guinea-Bissau was designed to answer this research question.

Keywords Adaptive performance, Cross-cultural competence, United Nations, Peacebuilding practitioners

1. Introduction

Peacekeeping/peacebuilding missions have gradually increased following the establishment of the United Nations Security Council. Adaptive Performance is considered as a key dimension of job performance for peacebuilding personnel in these contemporary peacebuilding missions. Peacebuilding practitioners not only work in new cultural settings, but also have frequent interactions with local people with different expectations, beliefs, and cultural values. The lack of ability to appropriately deal with stress mainly resulting from cultural differences can generate harmful consequences to peace-building personnel (Abbe, Gulick, & Herman, 2007).

Traditionally, the success of peacekeeping/peacebuilding missions was measured by their ability to restore peace and harmony with the least number of injured and deceased peacebuilding/peacekeeping personnel.

This means that the effectiveness of the peacebuilding

practitioner was not properly measured; instead, the effectiveness of a peacebuilding mission was measured from the overall performance of the whole unit assigned to a specific country. Recent research conducted among peacekeepers on foreign assignments underlines that the assessment of peacekeepers' effectiveness should include their adaptability to local culture and living conditions (McFarland, 2005). Contemporary and future United Nations operations require peacebuilders to interact with people from diverse regions and cultures. Throughout their various current reports, peacekeeping leaders have emphasized cross-cultural aspects as crucial factors for the effectiveness of peacekeepers. Adjustment and adaptability are differently impacted by cross-cultural aspects, especially among peacebuilding practitioners; thus, studying these aspects is indispensable.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Adaptive Performance

The necessity for adaptive employees is becoming more and more essential in contemporary organizations which are characterized by forever altering, dynamic environments (Edwards & Morrison, 1994; Hollenbeck, LePine, & Ilgen, 1996; Ilgen & Pulakos, 1999; Smith, Ford, & Kozlowski,

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1997). For many work assignments, especially peacebuilding, it is a requirement for individuals to learn to function efficiently in various countries or regions that are characterized by diverse cultures and other challenging environments (Black, 1990; Noe & Ford, 1992). Employees need to develop adaptability, versatility, and tolerance of uncertainty to be able to effectively function in these multifaceted environments.

Considered as the latest construct of job performance, AP is increasingly gaining special attention. This new job performance dimension takes into account the nature of contemporary organizations which are characterised by constant change (Ilgen & Pulakos, 1999). Today, individuals' effectiveness depends on their speedy adaptability to new tasks and work roles (Burke, Stagl, Salas, Pierce, & Kendall, 2006), making AP a crucial aspect for employees (Jundt, Shoss, & Huang, 2015). Moreover, a positive relationship has been evidenced between AP and task performance (Shoss, Witt, & Vera, 2012).

Many scholars argue there is a difference between AP and task performance and organizational citizenship behaviour (Han & Williams, 2008). According to Johnson (2001, p.984) AP refers to "the ability to adjust one's behaviour with the requirements of the environment in a new situation." On their part, Allworth and Hesketh (1999) maintain that AP embraces aspects that enable employees to cope with change, job requirements and knowledge transfer from one task to another. A number of definitions have been advanced by researchers recently. Griffin, Neal and Parker (2007) define AP as one's adaptability level to work system or work role change. This definition is also echoed by Jundt et al. (2015, p.54) who advance that AP is "a behaviour that individuals enact in response to or in anticipation of changes relevant to job-related tasks." The task changes relate to the task nature, approaches for the task implementation, and the way of maintaining effectiveness (Campbell, McCloy, Oppler, & Sager, 1993). For Krischer and Witt (2010, p.2) AP is "the recognition of need or opportunities to actively increase the competence and good behaviour in response to existing or anticipated changes and development of qualifications and ability to adapt effectively in the workplace." On their part, Charbonnie-Voirin, Akremi, & Vandenberghe (2010) identify five characteristics of AP, namely the ability to cope with emergencies and unexpected situations, manage work stress, solve problems creatively, learn from the change, and ensure effective interpersonal compatibility.

The dimension is concerned with one's ability to respond rapidly and find the best alternatives when faced with problems and new circumstances. This refers to the degree of coordination ease and use of appropriate approaches within such circumstances (Charbonnie-Voirin et al., 2010). This also includes responding appropriately to risks, threats and emergencies; maintaining a focused thinking and emotional control. The second dimension is concerned with ensuring adequate stress management and remaining calm with composure and self-confidence in stressful situations (Charbonnie-Voirin et al., 2010). The third relates to one's

ability to use appropriate techniques and information to solve the problems at hand (Charbonnie-Voirin et al., 2010). The fourth aspect refers to one's ability to learn new ways to do a job or to adapt/learn different skills associated with a new job (Charbonnie-Voirin et al., 2010). This is particularly important in contemporary organizations that are characterised by rapid technological changes and continuous organizational learning. The fifth component is concerned with one's ability to main effective interactions and communication with other colleagues in the face of ambiguity (Charbonnie-Voirin et al., 2010).

From all these different definitions, it can be deduced that AP is realised with the adoption of new roles, acquisition of novel skills or modification of current work practices in order to ensure appropriate response to actual or expected work changes and meet pre-defined objectives (Jundt et al., 2015). For this study, AP is defined as an effective adjustment as a result of a changed/new situation, in which it is required to change existing behaviours (Chan, 2000; White, Mueller-Hanson, Dorsey, Pulakos, Wisecarver, & Deagle, 2005). Based on the literature, six dimensions of AP have been identified and are discussed below.

2.2.1. Problem-solving Creativity

To be able to adapt to new and/or changing situations, one's ability to solve novel and unfamiliar hitches is frequently required. Hence, the effectiveness with which employees solve unusual, complex, and ill-defined problems is one aspect of adaptive performance that many scholars have emphasized (Holyoak, 1991; Hatano & Inagaki, 1986). This aspect of adaptive performance is concerned with designing innovative solutions to new and challenging problems or ensuring that multifaceted matters or situations are effectively brought to their desired end.

2.2.2. Unpredictable Work Situations Management Skills

Several scholars (such as Dix & Savickas, 1995; Goodman, 1994; Hall & Mirvis, 1995) have stressed that these situations can originate from various factors, such as joining a new organization or group, revised organizational priorities, organizational restructuring, or changes/reduction in available resources. This aspect of adaptive performance focuses on how employees effectively adjust to and deal with the volatile nature of these situations, how resourcefully and easily they can reprioritize when needed, and the extent to which they take realistic and effective steps, despite the fact that the situation may be characterized by inherent uncertainty and ambiguity.

Despite the fact that this aspect of adaptive performance is without doubt related to the problem-solving aspect discussed in section 2.2.1 above, constructs such as general intelligence, problem-understanding, and problem solving make exclusive contributions to creative problem-solving performance (Hoover & Feldhusen, 1990; Krietler & Krietler, 1987; Owens, 1969). On the other hand, as demonstrated by scholars (such as Andersen, 1977; Jones, 1986; Callan, Terry, & Schweitzer, 1994), dealing with

uncertain and impulsive situations is effectively predicted by personality constructs such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, and locus of control.

2.2.3. New Tasks, Technologies, and Procedures Learning Ability

This aspect of adaptive performance has also been emphasized by the literature (Kinicki & Latack, 1990; Noe & Ford, 1992; Thach & Woodman, 1994), and has increasingly become crucial because of the fast pace of technological innovation and the resulting need for constant learning in organizations. In contemporary organizations, rapid technological changes are increasingly forcing employees to learn new ways to perform their jobs (Hesketh & Neal, 1999). Moreover, continuous learning entails preparation for potential future job requirements through an enduring process of planning for and participating in development (London & Mone, 1999). For effective performance in today's organizations, one has to anticipate forthcoming needs and adapt to changing job requirements by learning new tasks, technologies, procedures, and roles.

2.2.4. Interpersonal Adaptability

As a result of current work situations that are ever more characterized by work or project teams (Hollenbeck, LePine, & Ilgen, 1996; Kozlowski, Gully, & Salas, 1996) and constant increase in service-oriented organizations (Schneider, 1994; Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996), the need for this aspect of adaptive performance is becoming significant. Its aspects that have been discussed by scholars include the ability to demonstrate interpersonal flexibility; to easily adapt interpersonal behaviour to work excellently with a new team, co-workers, or customers; to adjust interpersonal style for the achievement of an objective; to successfully anticipate and live up to customer expectations (Aronoff, Stollak, & Woike, 1994; Spiro & Weitz, 1990).

2.2.5. Cultural Adaptability

The literature underlines the importance of being able to function effectively in different cultures and environments, given the factors such as globalization, as well as the extent to which today's employees change jobs and organizations (Ilgen & Pulakos, 1999; Noe & Ford, 1992). This does not simply involve the ability to learn about a new culture or setting. Most importantly, this aspect of adaptive performance involves the ability to effectively *integrate* into a new culture or environment by gaining a full understanding and willingness to behave in line with the established rules, values, customs, and structures operating within it.

2.2.6. Physically Oriented Adaptability

This aspect of adaptive performance is becoming an essential requirement in many different jobs and importantly so in military and related jobs. Many scholars have discussed and emphasized its importance. It involves the ability to adapt to different physical factors such as heat, noise,

uncomfortable climates, and difficult environments (Edwards & Morrison, 1984). Contemporary missions have a distinctive nature in terms of quality compared to missions in the past, as they often involve a variety of operations that are performed by small intervention units in many diverse cultures and climates. The ability to speedily adapt to these many different and difficult physical conditions is a crucial aspect of effective performance in these types of jobs.

2.3. Cross-Cultural Competence (CCC)

Cross Cultural Competence (CCC) is defined as "a set of cognitive, behavioural, and affective/motivational components that enable individuals to adapt effectively in intercultural environments" (Abbe et al., 2007, p.3). It refers to one's competency that enables intercultural efficacy irrespective of the specific cultural intersection. While some cognitive or behavioural aspects may be of particular relevance in a specific unique context of a country or region, scholars have stressed that the ability to adapt to any culture is allowed by a core set of competencies (Hammer, 1987). The literature reviewed for this study identifies four components of CCC, namely Culture Intelligence (CI), Emotional Intelligence (EI), Social Intelligence (SI), and Language Proficiency (LP) which are discussed below.

2.3.1. Culture Intelligence (CI)

International assignments are characterized by cultural diversity and one's ability to understand and adapt to this culturally diverse environment is imperative (Stone-Romero, Stone & Salas, 2003), especially for peacebuilding/peacekeeping practitioners.

The literature identifies four dimensions of CI: meta-cognitive, motivational, cognitive, and behavioural dimensions. It has a particular significance in helping one to function in environments characterized by cultural diversity (Earley & Ang, 2003). Thus, CI is defined as one's ability to function successfully in culturally diverse environments (Ang, Van Dyne, Koh, Ng, Templer, Tay, & Chandrasekar, 2007). It is also defined by Earley and Ang (2003, p.4) as "a person's capability to adapt effectively to new cultural contexts".

The cognitive aspect of CI refers to knowledge acquired through both formal education and experience about different cultural practices, conventions, and customs, both culture-specific and universal (Ang et al., 2004; Ang et al., 2007). This involves the understanding of different cultures and sub-cultures' values as well as their social, legal and economic aspects. Individual with high levels of cognitive CI have high understanding of cultural similarities and differences (Brislin, Worthley, & MacNab, 2006).

The meta-cognitive aspect of CI refers to an individual's understanding or control over awareness that enables to deeply process information that relates to culture (Ang et al., 2004). It involves the intellectual stratagems that are used for coping strategy acquisition and generation (Ng & Earley, 2006). Individuals with high meta-cognitive CI are culturally

conscious and aware and hence have the ability to question assumptions about culture (Ang et al., 2004). Capabilities related to this construct include the ability to plan, monitor, and revise mental models of countries' or groups of people's cultural norms (Ang et al., 2007).

The motivational aspect of CI goes beyond the ability to recognize differences and similarities of cultures. It involves the individual's willingness to adapt to other people's culture and interest to engage with others (Ang et al., 2007). This aspect of CI is motivated by three factors: desire to feel good about oneself (enhancement); desire to challenge and advance oneself (growth); and aspiration for continuity and predictability in one's life (continuity) (Earley, Ang, & Tan, 2006). This aspect of CI is crucial in directing and motivating an individual's ability to adapt to new cultural environments (Earley & Ang, 2003; Ng & Earley, 2006).

The behavioural aspect of CI refers to one's ability to demonstrate adaptive conduct in line with motivation and cognition grounded on specific settings' cultural values. This involves possessing a flexible comprehensive behavioural repertoire. Individuals with high levels of this behavioural aspect of CI have the ability to display wide-ranging appropriate verbal and nonverbal capabilities through gestures, facial expressions, words, and tone that are culturally suitable (Earley and Ang, 2003).

As noted by Earley & Ang (2003, p.7) "expatriates with high levels of CI have the specific abilities for information gathering and manipulation, drawing inferences and enacting on cognitive, emotive, and behavioural actions in line with host country cultural cues thereby minimizing the expectation-perception gap of role to perform in novel cultural settings." They have the exceptional competency to elaborate cultural schemes, and thus should be precisely knowledgeable of role expectations in new assignments. They have the ability to make appropriate decisions about how and when their cultural knowledge can be used (Earley & Ang, 2003; Earley et al., 2006). For appropriate accommodation of the specific context's expectations, they make an effective choice from several structures of knowledge, as opposed to simply counting on usual structures knowledge (Ang et al., 2007). The ability to display culturally appropriate conduct during interactions in a culturally diverse setting is likely to foster a positive influence on peacebuilders' performance by enhancing their knowledge about culturally suitable conducts and norms. This also supported by Fakhreldin (2011) who stresses that high-CI individuals have exhibited high levels of performance.

According to Earley & Ang (2003, p.5), high-CI individuals "have the capabilities to gather and manipulate information, draw inferences and enact on cognitive, emotive or behavioural actions in response to cultural cues of the host country." Pertinent intercultural skills such as cultural schemes elaboration (cognitive CI), cultural assumptions questioning (meta-cognitive CI), devotion to learning about how to function in culturally diverse settings (motivational CI) and demonstrating a flexible range of

verbal and non-behaviours (behavioural CI), are all likely to mitigate the risk of misunderstandings in role expectations, thereby resulting enhanced adaptive performance knowledge (Ang et al., 2007).

For this study, CI is defined as a "multifaceted competency consisting of cultural knowledge, the practice of mindfulness, and the repertoire of behavioural skills" (Thomas and Inkson, 2004, p.182-183). CI has been emphasized by scholars as an essential factor in aiding effective adaptive performance in culturally diverse settings (Amiri, Moghimi, & Kazemi, 2010; Ang et al., 2007; Fakhreldin, 2011; RezaieeKelidbari, RezaieeDizgah, & RajabiJourshari, 2012; Sri Ramalu, Rose, & Uli, 2010).

2.3.2. Emotional Intelligence (EI)

A stream of literature defines EI as a range of skills, competences, and capabilities that influence one's coping ability in the face of environmental demands (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Schutte, Malouff, Hall, Haggerty, Cooper, Golden, & Dornheim, 1998). On their part, Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey (1999, p.268) define EI as "an enduring personal trait, which underlines an individual's ability to adaptively identify, understand, manage, and harness the emotions of self and others and use these emotions to facilitate cognitive processing."

The EI concept was first advanced by Salovey and Mayer (1990), who identified three dimensions in this regard: the ability to appraise and express emotions (self and others); the ability to regulate emotions (in self and others); and the ability to utilize emotions to problems (i.e. flexibility in planning, creativity in thinking, redirection of attention, and motivation). This proposition was supported by Schutte, Malouff, Hall, Haggerty, Cooper, Golden, & Dorheim (1998) who later developed and validated a 33-item measure of EI as a homogeneous construct.

According to Bar-On (2000), EI is a set of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills which include general mood (e.g., optimism and happiness), adaptability (e.g., flexibility), interpersonal skills (e.g., empathy and emotional self-awareness), and stress management (e.g., impulse control and stress tolerance), that influence one's ability to deal with environmental demands and pressures. It is defined as a group of social and personal competencies that include empathy, motivation and persistence, self-awareness and control, and relationship-building ability (McCullum & Broadus, 2007). This type of skill can be learned and enhanced. It changes one's behaviour and ultimately enables the improvement of personal adaptive performance. CI also enhances managers' decision-making and problem-solving abilities (Weston, 2010).

The influence of EI on expatriates' AP has been under-researched, to the exception of a few scholars (such as Gabel, Dolan, & Cerdin, 2005; Lii & Wong, 2008). This literature gap is surprising. First, as emphasized by Alon & Higgins (2005, p.502) "the success of the expatriation process often depends on choosing a culturally attuned and emotionally sensitive person who can respond appropriately

to the host environment of another country and different interpersonal work situations.” Second, in other streams of scholarly studies, EI has been proven to be a determinant of success in emotionally intensive areas of human activity, such as leadership (Humphrey, Pollack, & Hawver, 2008), work, and education (Van Rooy & Viswesvaran, 2004). It therefore stands to reason that EI is positively related to peacebuilders/peacekeepers’ AP.

This aspect of CCC is greatly influenced by prior experiences. It indicates one’s ability to understand oneself, to effectively interact with others, and adjust behaviour in line with situational needs to accomplish his/her objectives (McFarland, 2005).

The literature demonstrated a positive influence of EI on job satisfaction (Najafi & Mousavi, 2012), wellbeing (Austin, Saklofske, & Egan, 2005), optimism (Schutte et al., 1998), and positive mood and high self-esteem (Schutte, Malouff, Simunek, McKenley, & Hollander, 2002). Individuals with higher EI have been proven to possess enhanced social skills, ability to self-monitor in social circumstances, and heightened cooperative behaviours with others (Schutte, Malouff, Bobick, Coston, Greeson, Jedlicka, Phodes, & Wendorf, 2001). Also, several organizational behaviour researchers have evidenced EI to be a vital determinant of job performance (Joseph & Newman, 2010; Boyle, Humphrey, Pollack, Hawver, & Story, 2011), leadership (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002; Humphrey, Pollack, & Hawver, 2008) and stress (Jordan, Ashkanasy, & Hartel, 2002).

Overall, the literature underlines the vital role of EI in enhancing several competencies generally required for any assignment. However, little studies have been carried out to assess the influence of EI on peacebuilders’/peacekeepers AP.

2.3.3. Social Intelligence (SI)

SI is defined as “one’s ability to have an effective understanding of people behaviour, feelings, and thoughts, including oneself, in interpersonal environment and to take appropriate action upon that understanding” (Marlowe, 1986, p.53). Scholars have defined SI in many different ways, but two general elements are shared by all these definitions: awareness of others, as well as response and adaptation to others in social circumstances (Goleman, 2006).

As argued by Goleman (2006), SI puts focuses on others’ best interests rather than on just self-interest. It refers to the ability to understand and get along with others, beyond interaction and cooperation skills (Albrecht, 2009). In the words of Emmerling and Boyatzis (2012, p.5) “social intelligence competency as the ability to be aware of, understand and act on emotional information about others that leads to effective performance.” Elaborating on SI, Albrecht (2009) identifies five major dimensions, namely: situational radar, empathy, clarity, authenticity, and presence/ bearing. Nevertheless, the common dimensions of SI gathered from the literature include the ability to understand the social setting, accurately interpret the social

environment and display appropriate conduct in that social setting. As SI involves one’s ability to get along with others (Riggio & Reichard, 2008), low-SI individuals are referred to as “toxic people as they make others feel angry, inadequate, frustrated and devalued through their toxic behaviours that directly contribute to conflict, alienation and worse, animosity in the workplace” (Albrecht, 2009, p.5). In contrast, high-SI individuals have a personality that seems to magnetically attract others to them (Albrecht, 2009).

According to Joseph and Lakshmi (2010) one’s level of SI is dependent on a life-long learning process. Individuals with high SI are confident in social circumstances, are genuinely interested in their fellow colleagues, demonstrate assertiveness and appropriateness in the expression of their emotions and feelings, have the ability to effectively adapt, understand, and respond, and display a high level of self-awareness (Joseph and Lakshmi, 2010).

A positive relationship exists between SI and individual performance in team environments (Zaccaro, Zazanis, Diana, & Gilbert, 1995). Furthermore, the literature has demonstrated a positive association between SI and enhanced social problem-solving capabilities (Jones & Day, 1997), between SI and experienced leadership (Kobe, Reiter-Palmon, & Rickers, 2001), and between SI and positive interpersonal skills. SI is multi-dimensional and different from general intelligence domains (Marlowe, 1986). The significance of SI for effective expatriates’ performance has been underlined (Schneider, Ackerman, & Kanfer, 1996; Jones & Day, 1997; Cheng, Chiu, Hong, & Cheung, 2001; Goleman, 2006).

2.3.4. Language Proficiency (LP)

Many scholars have confirmed that language is a significant element in understanding culture (Jackson, 2005). Moreover, the literature emphasizes the importance of language ability in predicting interaction adaptation (Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Harrison, Shaffer, & Luk, 2005) and adaptive performance (Mol, Born, Willemsen, & Van der Molen, 2005). Researchers have also underlined that Expatriates with their host country’s language proficiency have shown better adaptability and better performance (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). Language skills play a crucial role in cross-cultural adjustment (CCA) and research has shown that language and performance are positively correlated (Takeuchi, Yun, & Tesluk, 2002).

3. Research Model and Hypotheses

Based on literature reviewed and the research questions, this study seeks to deepen our understanding of Cross-Cultural Competences and Adaptive Performance by proposing and testing a model that advances Cross-Cultural Competences as determinants of peacebuilding practitioners’ Adaptive Performance in United Nations. Figure 3.1 presents the **research model**.

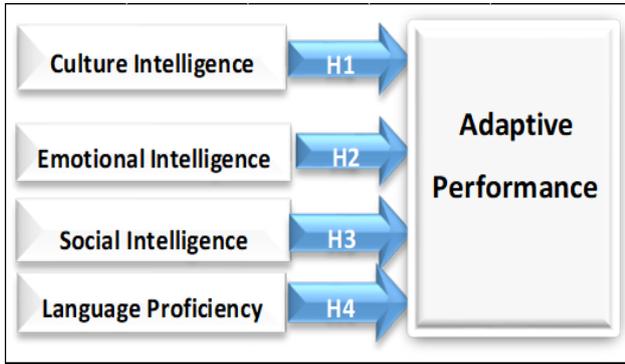


Figure 3.1. Research Model (adapted from Nzitunga, 2015)

Given that successful adaptive performance has been characterized by openness to experience in environments characterized by cultural diversity (Ang et al., 2007) and that an expatriate's job performance is significantly influenced by his/her CI (Kumar, Rose, & Subramaniam, 2008), the first hypothesis is therefore developed:

- **H1:** *Adaptive Performance (AP) is positively influenced by a peacebuilding practitioner's Culture Intelligence (CI).*

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is a set of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills which include general mood (e.g., optimism and happiness), adaptability (e.g., flexibility), interpersonal skills (e.g., empathy and emotional self-awareness), and stress management (e.g., impulse control and stress tolerance), that influence one's ability to deal with environmental demands and pressures (Bar-On, 2000). Research shows a positive relationship between organizational commitment and EI (Khalili, 2011), and between EI and job satisfaction (Najafi & Mousavi, 2012). It therefore stands to reason that adaptive performance is the product of job satisfaction and job commitment. Hence the second hypothesis:

- **H2:** *There is a positive relationship between Adaptive Performance (AP) and a peacebuilding practitioner's Emotional Intelligence (EI).*

Social Intelligence (SI) is defined as one's ability to have an effective understanding of people behaviour, feelings, and thoughts, including oneself, in interpersonal environment and to take appropriate action upon that understanding (Marlowe, 1986). The literature has noted that a positive association exists between SI and enhanced social problem-solving capabilities (Jones & Day, 1997), experienced leadership (Kobe et al., 2001), and positive interpersonal skills. Given that the significance of SI for effective expatriates' performance has been underlined by many scholars (Schneider et al., 1996; Jones & Day, 1997; Cheng et al., 2001; Goleman, 2006), the third hypothesis is developed:

- **H3:** *A peacebuilding practitioner's Social Intelligence positively influences his/her Adaptive Performance (AP).*

Many scholars have confirmed that language is a significant element in understanding culture (Jackson, 2005).

Moreover, the literature emphasizes the importance of language ability in predicting interaction adaptation (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005) and adaptive performance (Mol et al., 2005). Since researchers have also underlined that Expatriates with their host country's language proficiency have shown better adaptability and better performance (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005), the fourth hypothesis is deduced:

- **H4:** *There is a positive relationship between Adaptive Performance (AP) and a peacebuilding practitioner's Language Proficiency (LP).*

4. Methodology

This was a quantitative study. This approach was preferred as it is an appropriate approach for a study designed to analyse the theory through narrow hypotheses proposition and data-gathering in order to prove or disprove these hypotheses. Moreover, this is a suitable approach for a cost-effective collect large-scale data collection and analysis thereof at a reasonably low cost and effort, including provision of statistical analysis (Leedy and Omrod, 2010).

The population for this study comprised employees from the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Mission in Guinea-Bissau. A sample of 100 employees were selected using *purposive sampling* method. According to Palys (2008, p. 396), a "purposive sample is a non-probability sample that is selected based on characteristics of a population and the objective of the study." A *homogeneous purposive sampling* was used for this study as the selected respondents had a shared characteristic or set of characteristics (Palys, 2008) – they were all UN peacebuilding practitioners.

An e-mail self-administered 6-point Likert scale questionnaire was used to measure the different research variables. Culture Intelligence (CI) was measured by the peacebuilder's understanding own cultural identity; checking cultural lenses; global consciousness; shifting perspectives; intercultural communication; managing cross-cultural conflict; multicultural teaming; managing bias; and understanding the dynamics of power.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) was assessed by the peacebuilding practitioner's self-awareness and self-control; empathy; social expertness; personal influence; and mastery of purpose and vision.

Social Intelligence (SI) was evaluated by the peacebuilding practitioner's ability to understand contexts within which she/she is called upon to interact; ability to navigate within and between various contexts; and to know how to behave in various contexts so as to achieve his/her objectives.

Language Proficiency (LP) was as assessed by the respondent's fluency level in the host country's language; propensity to learn foreign languages; and ability to speak at least one more international language.

4.1. Validity and Reliability

For this study, *face validity* was ensured through the use of previously validated measures (Pulakos, Arad, Donovan, & Plamondon, 2000), which were refined where necessary. According to Waters (2011, p.38), “face validity is established when the measurement items are conceptually consistent with the definition of a variable, and this type of validity has to be established prior to any theoretical testing.”

Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was used as a measure of internal *consistency-reliability* of the scale used in this study. Cronbach’s alpha is a measure of internal reliability for multi-item summated rating scales. Its values range between 0 and 1, where the higher the score, the more reliable the scale. According to Cooper and Schindler (2011), satisfactory reliability is indicated by alpha value of above 0.70. The research instrument used for this study was reliable as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Reliability statistics for the scale used in this study

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Adaptive Performance	0.84	9
Culture Intelligence	0.83	9
Emotional Intelligence	0.81	5
Social Intelligence	0.77	3
Language proficiency	0.75	3

5. Findings and Discussion of Results

The findings of the study are reported in this section. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, are presented in the first part of the section. The study made use of Spearman’s correlation as ordinal data was collected. Then *Partial Least Squares* (PLS) regression analysis was utilized to test the four hypotheses in the study.

5.1. Descriptive Statistics

Table 5.1. Descriptive statistics of the composite variables (n=100)

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.	Average %
Adaptive Performance	100	3.000	5.667	4.142	0.520	73.08
Culture Intelligence	100	3.000	5.444	4.054	0.466	74.46
Emotional Intelligence	100	3.000	5.400	4.102	0.519	75.96
Social Intelligence	100	3.000	5.333	4.063	0.454	76.19
Language Proficiency	100	4.333	6.000	5.547	0.422	92.44
Valid N (list wise)	100					

The description of the perceptions about adaptive performance, culture intelligence, emotional intelligence, social intelligence, and language proficiency is provided in this sub-section. First, the computation of a composite score was done for each variable by totalling the individual scores and calculating an average score. Descriptive statistics of the composite variables are summarized in Table 5.1.

As it can be seen in Table 5.1, the average maximum scores were above 4 for all the variables. This means that the average mean score percentage presented in the table represent the respondents that showed **high satisfaction** levels for each variable.

5.2. Correlations

Spearman’s correlation was used to describe the connexions between the variables and the correlation coefficients (ρ) and p-values thereof are presented in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2. Spearman correlation coefficients and p-values (n=100)

Variable 1	Variable 2	Spearman correlation (ρ)	P-value
Culture Intelligence	Adaptive Performance	0.956**	<0.01
Emotional Intelligence	Adaptive Performance	0.753**	<0.01
Social Intelligence	Adaptive Performance	0.894**	<0.01
Language Proficiency	Adaptive Performance	0.007	0.944

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The findings presented in Table 5.2 show statistically significant positive correlation between Culture Intelligence and Adaptive Performance ($\rho = 0.956$); Emotional Intelligence and Adaptive Performance ($\rho = 0.753$); and Social Intelligence and Adaptive Performance ($\rho = 0.894$). However, no statistically significant correlation was found between Language Proficiency and Adaptive Performance.

5.3. Partial Least Squares (PLS) Regression Analysis

Partial Least Squares (PLS) regression analysis was used to test the research hypotheses (Maitra & Yan, 2008; Abdi & Williams, 2013). Partial Least Squares (PLS) is a method for constructing predictive models when the factors are many and highly collinear. This method was favoured as “it is an appropriate method when the study variables are numerous and characterized by high levels of collinearity. Moreover, the method does not necessitate a vast sample or data which is normally distributed” (Abdi & Williams, 2013, p. 567).

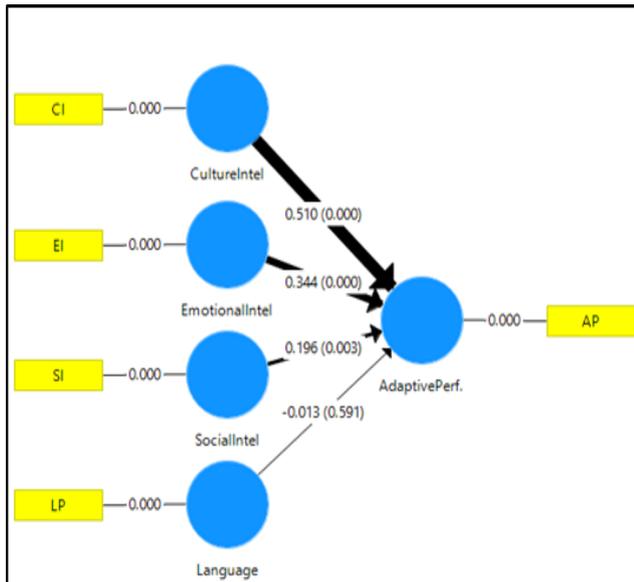
To measure the statistical significance for the paths and path coefficients in the PLS model, the bootstrap confidence intervals were used as presented in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3. Bootstrap confidence intervals and paths coefficients (PLS, n=100)

Path	Bootstrap lower (2.5%)	Bootstrap mean	Bootstrap upper (97.5%)	Path coefficients
CI -> AP	0.316	0.509	0.660	0.510
EI -> AP	0.245	0.341	0.431	0.344
SI -> AP	0.069	0.199	0.331	0.196
LP -> AP	-0.060	-0.012	0.038	-0.013

The bootstrap concept has been developed based on comprehensive mathematical notions, but this is outside the scope of this study. Abdi and Williams (2013) underscore that lower and upper limits of the bootstrap intervals should not include 0.”

A depiction of the paths and path coefficients is presented in figure 5.1. below.

**Figure 5.1.** Path, strength and significance of the path coefficients assessed by PLS (n=100)

5.4. Summary of Key Findings

5.4.1. Influence of Culture Intelligence on Adaptive Performance

The first hypothesis, which advanced that a peacebuilding practitioner’s Culture Intelligence (CI) likely to positively influence his/her Adaptive Performance (AP), is confirmed significant path coefficients ($\gamma = 0.510$). This implies that the development - by peacebuilding practitioners - of their understanding - by peacebuilding practitioners - of their understanding of own cultural individuality; scrutinizing cultural lenses; inclusive mindfulness; shifting perspectives; ability to communicate adequately intercultural settings; effective cross-cultural conflict management; ability to effectively function in culturally diverse teams; bias management; and awareness the dynamics of power, will greatly contribute to their Adaptive Performance. These findings are consistent with the literature reviewed in Section 2.

5.4.2. Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Adaptive Performance

Consistently with the literature reviewed in Section 2, the second hypothesis, namely that a peacebuilding practitioner’s Emotional Intelligence (EI) will positively influence his/her Adaptive Performance (AP), is confirmed by significant path coefficients ($\gamma = 0.344$). This means that a peacebuilding practitioner’s empathy, motivation and persistence, self-awareness and control, and relationship-building ability will lead his/her enhanced Adaptive Performance.

5.4.3. Influence of Social Intelligence on Adaptive Performance

The third hypothesis, which postulated that there is a positive relationship between a peacebuilding practitioner’s Social Intelligence and his/her Adaptive Performance (AP), is also confirmed by relatively statistically significant path coefficients ($\gamma = 0.196$). The implications are that a peacebuilding practitioner’s ability to have an effective understanding of people’s behaviour, feelings, and thoughts, including himself/herself, in relational settings and to take appropriate action in line with that understanding will result in improved Adaptive Performance. These findings are also in line with the literature reviewed in Section 2.

5.4.4. Influence of Language Proficiency on Adaptive Performance

However, contrarily to the literature reviewed in Section 2 and the fourth hypothesis formulated – which posited that there is a positive association between a peacebuilding practitioner’s Language Proficiency (LP) and his/her Adaptive Performance (AP) – the results show that there is no significant relationship between Language Proficiency and Adaptive Performance. This means that, for peacebuilding practitioners in Guinea-Bissau, Adaptive Performance is achieved irrespective of their level of LP. The three other main components of CCC are sufficient to achieve successful AP in Guinea-Bissau.

6. Summary

This study had four objectives and they have all been accomplished. The first objective was to determine the influence of Culture Intelligence on Adaptive Performance for United Nations peacebuilding practitioners in Guinea-Bissau. In this regard, the findings indicated a positive influence of Culture Intelligence on Adaptive Performance which was confirmed by statistically significant PLS path coefficients. These findings are consistent with the literature reviewed in Section 2.

The second objective was to establish the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Adaptive Performance for United Nations peacebuilding practitioners in Guinea-Bissau. A positive association was found in this

regard, which was also evidenced by statistically significant PLS path coefficients. These results are in line with the literature reviewed in Section 2.

The third objective was to determine the influence of Social Intelligence on Adaptive Performance for United Nations peacebuilding practitioners in Guinea-Bissau. The results revealed a positive influence in this regard, which was confirmed by relatively statistically significant PLS path coefficients. These findings are consistent with the literature reviewed in Section 2.

Finally, the fourth objective was to assess the link between Language Proficiency and Adaptive Performance for United Nations peacebuilding practitioners in Guinea-Bissau. Contrarily to the literature reviewed in Section 2, the study found no relationship between Language Proficiency and Adaptive Performance for United Nations peacebuilding practitioners in Guinea-Bissau.

7. Conclusions

Peacebuilding practitioners work in an extremely-charged crisis environment that concomitantly requires both instantaneous action and attentive efforts to produce change to root causes. In peacebuilding missions, the notion of Cross-Cultural Competence (CCC) is important in enhancing peacebuilding practitioners' understanding of cross-culture, accordingly playing a pivotal role during their decisions about the relevance of culture when they interact with the locals. Hence, to easily adapt to foreign countries, this skill is indispensable. Peacebuilding practitioners frequently interact with people from diverse cultures and CCC is an important element in this regard.

The findings of this study underline the importance of CCCs for effective Adaptive Performance in peacebuilding missions. Peacebuilding practitioners should therefore

ensure the development of their CI, EI, SI, and LP. Although the results show no statistically significant association between AP and LP in Guinea-Bissau, several other studies have proven their positive relationship and hence peacebuilders should strive to enrich their language abilities for enhanced adaptive performance.

For peacebuilding/peacekeeping organizations, they may consider using staff selection methods that include testing for CCCs. They may also consider providing training support for the enhancement of CCCs in preparation of potential candidates for peacebuilding assignments.

8. Opportunities for Future Research

Only United Nations peacebuilding practitioners operating in Guinea-Bissau were studied, and therefore the findings cannot be generalized to all expatriates operating in and/or outside Guinea-Bissau. Future research should cover other organizations and sectors in and/or outside Guinea-Bissau. The questionnaire developed and used in this study was shown to be reliable. However, future research should refine the measurement. Improved measures and larger samples for verification could lead to better model specification. Future research should also include personal characteristics such as marital status, spouse support, and gender as potential other determinants for peacebuilders' adaptive performance.

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Appendix 1: Research Questionnaire

INFLUENCE OF CROSS-CULTURAL COMPETENCES ON ADAPTIVE PERFORMANCE OF UNITED NATIONS PEACEBUILDING PRACTITIONERS

The objective of this research is to enrich the body of knowledge in the field peacebuilding by determining the influence of Cross-Cultural Competences (CCC) on peacebuilders' Adaptive Performance, and thereby serving as a tool for peacebuilding mission managers to design effective policies and programmes to improve adaptive performance in peacebuilding missions through enhanced CCC. Your responses will be treated as confidential and the information will not be used for commercial purposes.

For each of the statements below, please rate your answer and mark with (x) the appropriate box as follows:

Strongly disagree (1); Disagree (2); Disagree moderately (3); Agree moderately (4); Agree (5); and Strongly agree (6).

There are no "right or wrong" answers to these questions; so please be as honest and thoughtful as possible in your responses. All responses will be kept strictly confidential.

		1	2	3	4	5	6
Adaptive Performance							
At my duty station:							
AP1	I solve every problem creatively.						
AP2	I am able to effectively deal with uncertain/unpredictable work situations.						
AP3	I easily learn new tasks, technologies, and procedures.						
AP4	I demonstrate interpersonal flexibility.						
AP5	I adjust interpersonal style to achieve a goal.						
AP6	I adapt interpersonal behaviour to work effectively with a new team, co-workers, or customers						
AP7	I can effectively anticipate and fulfill client needs.						
AP8	I easily adapt to the organizational culture.						
AP9	I adapt quickly and effectively to different physical conditions such heat, noise, uncomfortable climates, and difficult environments.						
Culture Intelligence							
At my duty station:							
CI1	I understand how I think about myself as well as the people and ways of life with which I identify.						
CI2	I recognize the ways in which cultural backgrounds differ and how they influence thinking, behaviour, and assumptions.						
CI3	I can move across boundaries and see the world from multiple perspectives.						
CI4	I put myself in others' shoes and cultures.						
CI5	I exchange ideas and feelings and create meanings with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.						
CI6	I deal with conflict among people from differing cultural backgrounds in an effective and constructive manner.						
CI7	I enjoy working with others from diverse cultural backgrounds to accomplish certain tasks.						
CI8	I am able to recognize bias in myself and others and to respond to it effectively.						
CI9	I grasp how power and culture interrelate and the effect of power on how we see the world and relate to others.						
Emotional Intelligence							
At my duty station:							
EI1	I have the ability to fully understand myself and my impact on others and to use that information to manage myself productively.						
EI2	I understand the perspective of others.						
EI3	I build genuine relationships and bonds and express caring, concern, and conflict in healthy ways.						
EI4	I am able to positively lead and inspire others as well as myself.						
EI5	I have the ability to bring authenticity to my life and live out my intentions and values.						
Social Intelligence							
SI1	I have the ability to understanding contexts within which I am called upon to interact.						
SI2	I know how to navigate within and between various contexts.						
SI3	I know how to behave in various contexts so as to achieve my objectives.						
Language Proficiency							
LP1	I speak the host country's language.						
LP2	I always seek to learn local languages.						
LP3	I speak at least one more international language						

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