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HUONG LE ; SHOU JIANG ; JEFFREY GREENHAUS

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Building cultural intelligence through supervisor support: Social exchange and subjective career success as mediators and organisational support as a moderator

Huong Le[1] | **Zhou Jiang**[2] | **Jeffrey Greenhaus**[3]

[1]School of Business and Law, CQUniversity, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

[2]Graduate School of Business and Law, RMIT University, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

[3]LeBow College of Business, Drexel University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

Correspondence
Huong Le, School of Business and Law, CQUniversity, 120 Spencer Street, Melbourne, VIC 3000, Australia.
Email: h.le@cqu.edu.au

Abstract

This study offers a new perspective on how organisational factors influence migrant workers' cultural intelligence (CQ) by examining a moderated mediation model of the mechanism underlying the relationship between perceived supervisor support and CQ. We tested our model using a survey on a sample of 462 migrants. We found that employees' social exchange and subjective career success mediated the relationship between their perceptions of supervisor support and CQ. Furthermore, perceived organisational support moderated the social exchange–CQ relationship, and this relationship was stronger among workers with perceived high organisational support than for those with perceptions of low support. We also found that the indirect effect of employees' perceived supervisor support on CQ via social exchange was stronger for those with perceived high organisational support than for those with perceptions of low support. This study contributes to a better understanding of factors that foster migrant workers' abilities to navigate diverse workplaces.

INTRODUCTION

Today's global context is characterised by culturally diverse workplaces that require employees to have high levels of cultural competence if they are to successfully adjust to and survive in competitive work environments. Cultural

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competence (also referred to as cross-cultural competence or intercultural competence in the literature) is defined as "a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enables that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations" (Cross et al., 1989, pp. iv-v). This concept is used widely in the workforce diversity literature in multicultural countries such as the USA, Canada and Australia, due to its important role in dealing with the issues involving minorities in the workplace. Indeed, cultural competency is an umbrella term for capabilities that help facilitate intercultural effectiveness (Ang et al., 2015). Despite a large literature on cultural competence, the conceptualisations and definitions of this construct are often ambiguous. Cultural competence is conceptualised as personal characteristics related to traits, attitudes/worldviews, capabilities or a mix of the above (Leung et al., 2014). However, cultural competence is conceptually distinct from cultural intelligence (CQ) in that cultural competence is a combination of ability and personality traits, which are specific to the knowledge of a country, while CQ is based on contemporary theories of intelligence, not specific to a particular culture, and distinct from personality traits (Ang et al., 2007, 2015).

This paper focuses on CQ as a dependent variable referring to an individual's capability to function, communicate, adapt and interact effectively in cross-cultural settings including new cultural environments (Ang et al., 2007; Earley & Ang, 2003). Individuals with high CQ are good at decision-making and have abilities to work and cooperate effectively with others from different cultures, which is likely to benefit their task performance (Fang et al., 2018; Lee & Sukoco, 2010; Ott & Michailova, 2018). There are a few empirical studies, and cultural competence has been discussed either conceptually or empirically from a multilevel perspective (i.e. team and firm levels) (Leung et al., 2014; Ott & Michailova, 2018). For example, Leung et al.'s (2014) review highlights that CQ plays an influential role in improving team performance, team cohesion and shared values in culturally diverse teams where there are negative interpersonal dynamics. Furthermore, firm-level CQ has a positive influence on international strategic alliances' performance and on managing and leveraging a diverse workforce. Despite the importance of a better understanding of factors that foster employees' abilities to navigate in multicultural workplaces, very little empirical research examines organisational factors that predict CQ. Furthermore, most studies on CQ in organisational contexts often employed expatriate and/or student samples (Ott & Michailova, 2018), although using migrant samples would provide new perspectives due to different circumstances of their settlement.

In this paper, we adopt the term migrant workers/employees to refer to people living and working in Australia who identify as Asian Australian, African Australian, Latinx/Hispanic, and European Australian, and were born in non-English speaking countries. The term "migrant workers" also refers to people of colour and racially and culturally diverse immigrants and refugees. Given that migration populations have grown across the globe in recent years (United Nations, 2017), migrant workers in multicultural countries often fill in labour gaps and contribute substantially to the cultural and economic developments of the host countries (Le, Nielsen, & Noblet, 2021; United Nations, 2017). Despite these contributions, many migrant workers experience poorer working conditions and more precarious and low-skilled work, discrimination and unfair treatment than their white local counterparts (Le et al., 2020; Le, Nielsen, & Noblet, 2021). Their skills and qualifications are often unrecognised (Khan-Gökkaya & Mösko, 2021; Sardana et al., 2016), and they also lack social networks with non-migrants (Le et al., 2014). These barriers hinder migrant workers from interacting effectively with people from other cultures, which often helps people (i.e. expatriates or students) to develop CQ (Ott & Michailova, 2018).

Previous research found a number of predictors of CQ. These include skills such as international work and non-work experience, cultural exposure that provides expatriates or students with opportunities to interact with people from different cultures and cross-cultural training (Fang et al., 2018; Ott & Michailova, 2018). Predictive individual factors are openness to experience (Ang et al., 2006) and language acquisition (Ott & Michailova, 2018; Shannon & Begley, 2008). To date, there have not been many empirical studies of how organisational factors influence an individual's CQ and of the mechanism that mediates or moderates those relationships among migrant workers. This oversight is problematic since these factors could accentuate or attenuate migrant workers' CQ and its influence on their work outcomes, including their ability to gain support from their supervisors to access the resources necessary

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to advance their careers. Therefore, this paper examines the organisational factors that will enable organisations and managers to facilitate the development of migrant workers' CQ and meet the challenges of multicultural workplaces.

This study contributes to the current literature in several ways. First, it extends the literature by examining a moderated mediation model of the mechanism underlying the relationship between perceived supervisor support and migrant workers' CQ. Perceived supervisor support (PSS) refers to employees' beliefs that their contributions are valued and their well-being is cared for by their supervisors (Eisenberger et al., 1986). We tested the proposed model using a sample of 462 migrants in Australia. We argue that social exchange, referring to "socio-emotional aspects of the employment relationship (i.e. feelings of obligation and trust)" (Shore et al., 2006, p. 839), is a mediator for the influence of PSS on the development of migrant workers' CQ. Drawing on organisational support theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986), our underpinning argument is that a successful development of migrant workers' CQ may be driven by the level of their social exchange in organisations, which is influenced by the level of PSS.

Second, this study advances the literature by identifying whether and how perceived organisational support (POS, defined as "employee global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being") (Eisenberger et al., 1986, p. 501) would alter the impact of social exchange on CQ (the second stage of the mediation), and how the entire mediation process varies under the conditional effect of POS. While previous studies focus on predictors of CQ such as international experiences, cultural exposure, education, cross-cultural training and personality characteristics (see a review of Ott & Michailova, 2018), it is unknown how organisational factors (i.e. PSS and social exchange) influence migrant workers' development of CQ. Based on organisational support theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986), we argue that the extent to which social exchange is fostered by PSS can affect the formation of CQ in a supportive climate in organisations (i.e. employees' perception of supervisor and organisational support).

Finally, this study extends the literature by exploring the mediating role of subjective career success in the relationship between PSS and CQ. Subjective career success is defined as individuals' subjective perceptions of their careers, their affective reactions and feelings of satisfaction (Greenhaus et al., 1990; Seibert et al., 1999), that is an employee's subjective evaluation or cognitive appraisal of their career status (Guan et al., 2014). There are many previous studies of antecedents of subjective career success, for example personal factors (i.e. educational level, personality, political knowledge and skills), proximal environmental factors (i.e. organisational, supervisor and social support, job security, salary, promotion and organisational policies; Ng et al., 2005; Ng & Feldman, 2014; Spurk et al., 2019) and contextual factors (e.g. labour market and social welfare system; Spurk et al., 2019). However, little is known of the mediating role of subjective career success in the process of capability or competence (e.g. CQ) development. We argue that if migrant workers perceive high levels of supervisor support, they are likely to have access to necessary resources and opportunities that enable them to pursue career advancements that lead to career success. Such perceptions of career success would contribute to a greater CQ. Extending our proposal of the social exchange pathway, the focus on subjective career success generates insights into a cognition-driven mediation mechanism underlying the PSS–CQ link. In examining these parallel mechanisms, our study is the first attempt to capture both relational and cognitive features of the process through which PSS fosters CQ development. The conceptual model of this study is shown in Figure 1.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Social exchange as a mediator

We draw on organisational support theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986) to explain the conceptual model for how organisational and career-related factors influence migrant workers' CQ development and the mediating mechanisms underlying this relationship. Organisational support theory concerns the beliefs of employees about the extent to which their contributions to the organisation are valued and their well-being is cared for by their organisation

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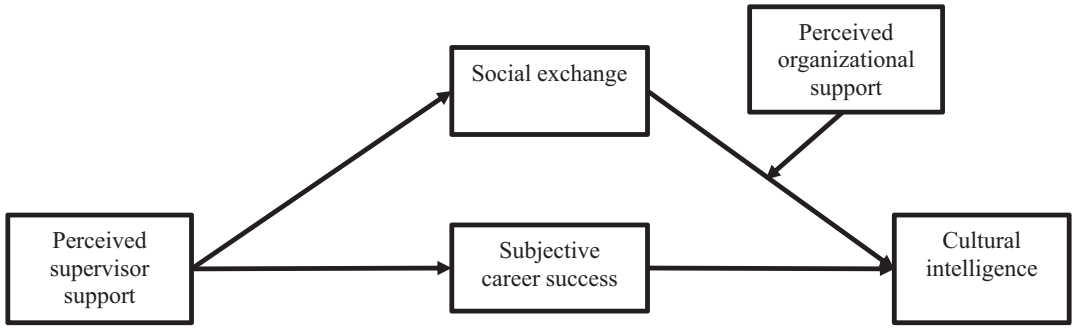


FIGURE 1 Proposed conceptual model

(Eisenberger et al., 1986). This theory has the potential to illuminate the employee–organisation relationship from the employees' point of view, positing that organisational support recognises the important role of employees in the organisation, and when this is valued, employees will work harder to reciprocate (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Organisational support theory is often mischaracterised as a social exchange theory (Kurtessis et al., 2017), which postulates that when a person does something positive or beneficial for another party, this person expects that their actions will be reciprocated (Blau, 1964). While the key aspect of social exchange theory and organisational support theory is the norm of reciprocity (Wayne et al., 2002), organisational support theory also emphasises self-enhancement processes and social exchange (Kurtessis et al., 2017).

On the one hand, if employees perceive that their organisation and/or supervisors treat them well, they feel obliged to return this reciprocal relationship by engaging in positive behaviours that are beneficial to their employers (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Mitchell et al., 2012). On the other hand, a lack of balance in the exchange relationship would potentially lead to negative work attitudes and behaviours (Blau, 1964), which might affect employees' ability to navigate and perform well at work. The strength of social exchange relationships and employee work outcomes is likely to continue whether the mutual benefits are balanced (Shore & Barksdale, 1998).

In this paper, we examine the mediating role of social exchange in the relationship between PSS and CQ. The concept of social exchange in organisations emphasises levels of trust and employee obligation and interpersonal attachments within the organisation, or in other words "socio-emotional aspects of the employment relationship," such as give and take and being cared for by the organisation (Mitchell et al., 2012; Shore et al., 2006, p. 839). There are two types of exchange: economic exchange relationships and social exchange relationships (Blau, 1964). The former tends to have a shorter term, with less interpersonal attachment or affective commitment, while the latter has a longer term with higher levels of interpersonal attachments (Mitchell et al., 2012).

Shore et al. (2006) discuss four major aspects of social exchange that are distinct from the economic exchange: (1) trust; (2) investment in the relationship; (3) long-term orientation; and (4) the emphasis on socio-emotional versus financial exchange (e.g. pay and financial rewards). As a result of high PSS, social exchange will lead to higher levels of trust, commitment and loyalty between employees and employers over time. In light of organisational support theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986), when migrant workers perceive that they are supported by supervisors, they form stronger interpersonal attachments or higher quality social exchanges with their supervisors and organisations. In other words, the more support they perceive from their supervisor, the higher quality of social exchange they will develop with their organisation, constituting a positive association between PSS and social exchange. While support from supervisors is critical for any worker, migrant workers might find it challenging to gain high levels of support from their supervisors in a white-dominant society. This is because migrant workers have challenges with language competencies, workplace culture, team members and customers (Khan-Gökkaya & Mösko, 2021). Specifically, Khan-Gökkaya and Mösko (2021) found that migrant workers often lack knowledge of the everyday and technical language of the host country, have intercultural and interpersonal differences with others and have challenges adapting to both formal

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and cultural aspects of workplaces. All of these factors might prevent migrant workers from developing effective communication and interpersonal skills as well as strong connections with colleagues, customers and their managers.

We further argue that, if migrant workers perceive high levels of trust and favourable treatment (i.e. positive social exchange) from their supervisor, in return for these good acts, they will be motivated to develop their CQ in exchange for the supervisor's commitment to them, given that higher CQ is known to help employees to perform their tasks effectively (Ott & Michailova, 2018). Specifically, PSS will influence an individual's CQ via social exchange. That is, migrant workers with high levels of social exchange will cooperate more effectively with others in the workplace and will develop greater CQ. Drawing upon the above argument for a positive association between social exchange and CQ, we propose that:

Hypothesis 1 *Social exchange mediates the relationship between PSS and CQ such that PSS positively influences social exchange, which in turn positively influences CQ.*

Subjective career success as a mediator

In addition, we propose that subjective career success mediates the PSS–CQ relationship. Previous literature suggests that one of the factors that substantially influence subjective career success is social capital, which derives from employees' exchange relationships with others (Ng & Feldman, 2014). That is, individuals, who can network and establish strong relationships with others, especially supervisors or managers within or outside the organisation, tend to have better job opportunities and receive greater support from senior colleagues (Ng & Feldman, 2014; Seibert et al., 2001). Wayne et al. (1999) argued that as managers have direct control of organisational resources as well as to whom those resources are allocated, the quality exchange relationship between employees and supervisors strengthens employees' opportunities to obtain the resources and support necessary to achieve greater career success. Conversely, employees who have strained relationships with their supervisors will be disadvantaged if they do not have access to resources and mentorship to achieve a successful career (Ng & Feldman, 2014). While less attention has been devoted in the literature to the positive relationship between PSS and career success among migrant workers, there is clear evidence that racial minorities in general (i.e. migrant workers) are disadvantaged in social networks, particularly in developing networks with culturally different people (Keeves & Westphal, 2021). This poses a further constraint for migrant workers compared with non-migrant workers.

Empirical research consistently supports the argument that PSS has an influential role in subjective career success (Ng & Feldman, 2014; Wayne et al., 1999). In light of organisational support theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986), individuals who receive favourable support from their supervisors (i.e. guidance, greater resources, mentorship and care) will feel obliged to return such support by engaging in greater work efforts, resulting in improved task performance and contributions to the organisation (Kurtessis et al., 2017) and leading to career success. In contrast, a lack of such support signals to employees that they are not valuable members of the organisation and that their prospects in the organisation and their career may not be favourable (Ng & Feldman, 2014; Wayne et al., 1997). This perception influences employee work efforts and outcomes and, in turn, reduces their career success perceptions. Therefore, we propose that PSS is positively associated with subjective career success.

We now discuss the relationship between subjective career success and CQ. We argue that when migrant workers perceive they are successful in their career as a result of having a supportive supervisor, they are more likely to invest time and energy to develop their CQ, including being more culturally sensitive in interactions and communications with others. These CQ-related behaviours are known to lead to high task performance (Lee & Sukoco, 2010; Ott & Michailova, 2018), which then enables employees to contribute even further to the organisation, with the expectation that their enhanced performance will be rewarded (Kurtessis et al., 2017). For example, rewards might include greater support from supervisors, which would then lead to greater career success. Parker et al. (2010) argue that people, in general, are motivated to pursue personal initiatives not only through their self-efficacy, but also

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through the belief that their initiatives and efforts will lead to desired outcomes. Organisational support theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986) suggests that positive perceptions of PSS are the most essential factor for employees' view of career success and, in turn, are the basis for them to develop greater CQ. We argue that, for migrant workers, this is an important motivational factor, as they might have a greater need to develop high CQ to work and function effectively in a cross-cultural workplace, given that they face various barriers, as discussed earlier. Taken together, we propose that migrant workers' subjective career success can serve as an underlying mechanism that transforms positive perceptions of supervisor support into greater levels of CQ. Therefore, we expect that.

Hypothesis 2 *Subjective career success mediates the relationship between PSS and CQ such that PSS positively influences subjective career success, which in turn positively influences CQ.*

Perceived organisational support as a moderator

POS is determined by a number of factors, including employees' perceived levels of support and trust from top management, supervisors and colleagues, as well as discretionary human resources practices, whereby the employer invests in employees and recognises their contributions to the organisation (Shore et al., 2006). POS is also influenced by the extent, sincerity and frequency of statements of praise and approval and other types of reward (i.e. promotions, pay and job enrichment); for employees, these factors contribute to positive evaluations of organisations (Blau, 1964; Eisenberger et al., 1986). Conceptually, POS and social exchange are two distinct constructs. The former emphasises employees' perceptions of how organisations treat and value them, which motivates them to reciprocate the good acts and commit to their organisation and supervisors (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger et al., 2001). The latter highlights the decree of balance, mutual obligations and trust in the social exchange relationship between the employee and the employer (Shore et al., 2006; Shore & Barksdale, 1998).

In this article, we theorise that POS is a moderator that can alter the strength of the effect of social exchange on migrant workers' CQ. That is, for people with higher POS, social exchange will have a stronger impact on CQ; in other words, social exchange will be a stronger predictor of CQ among people with high rather than low POS. Organisational support theory contends that commitment among employees and their organisations is a "two-way street" (Eisenberger et al., 1986, p. 588). Thus, when organisations are supportive of migrant workers, they develop an interpersonal and affective attachment with the organisations and engage in good acts in a positive social exchange relationship (see also Shore et al., 2006). Employees who perceive high organisational support not only feel committed to the organisation but also feel obliged to reciprocate the employer's good acts by engaging in attitudes and behaviours that align with organisational goals (Wayne et al., 1997). In such a climate, the employee and the employer achieve mutual high obligation and "a strong social exchange in which the employee perceives that they owe the organization a great deal" (Shore & Barksdale, 1998, p. 734); thus, they actively engage in developing CQ. In other words, high POS will lead to social exchange having a stronger impact on employees' CQ, which will influence their behaviours at work (e.g. they will be more active in their collaborations and cultural interactions to achieve better work outcomes).

On the contrary, when the migrant worker perceives moderate to low organisational support, feeling a "mutual low obligations relationship" (Shore & Barksdale, 1998, p. 734), they do not put much effort into maintaining this relationship and do not expect much return from the organisation. As a result, for those migrant workers with low POS, the impact of social exchange on their CQ will be lower, as they limit their efforts and motivation to reciprocate by putting less effort into developing their CQ. This argument leads us to hypothesise that:

Hypothesis 3 *POS moderates the relationship between social exchange and CQ such that this relationship is stronger when POS is high rather than low.*

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According to Hayes (2015, 2018), when a statistically significant moderator exists in any stage of the mediation process, this moderator has the potential to change the strength of the indirect effects. Thus, POS would potentially moderate the relationship between social exchange and CQ, and this is the first-stage moderation in the mediated relationship between PSS and CQ via social exchange. As indicated previously, high POS likely strengthens migrant workers' perceptions of supervisor support, which encourages them to engage in social exchange with others in organisations and impacts their CQ levels. We extend this line of argument and predict that migrant workers who perceive higher levels of POS will likely achieve high levels of CQ as an outcome of social exchange influenced by PSS. Therefore, we expect that:

Hypothesis 4 *POS moderates the indirect relationship between PSS and CQ via social exchange, such that this indirect relationship is stronger when POS is high rather than low.*

METHODS

Participants and procedures

This survey was collected from migrants working in a range of industries in Australia. We targeted participants with an email containing a Web-link through which they could access the online questionnaire. Participants completed the survey after they consented to proceed to the online survey. A total of 462 migrants completed the survey, with a mean age of 43.7 years old (*SD* = 12.45). The participants were born overseas from non-English speaking countries and had lived in Australia for an average of 21 years (Mean = 21; *SD* = 16.47). We followed all ethical procedures required to conduct this study. Participation in this study was voluntary and all responses were confidential, as noted in the letter of invitation. Fifty-seven per cent of participants (57.4%) were female, and 42.6% were male. The survey was conducted in English, as all participants were required to be proficient in English to participate in this survey. Regarding ethnicity/race, more than 50% of participants self-identified as Asian, and others were of African and European non-English backgrounds. The sample was largely employed full-time (63.2%), with the remaining participants employed part-time. A majority of participants had at least secondary education (*n* = 410, 88.74%).

Instruments

Participants used a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree) to answer all questions.

Perceived organisational support

POS was measured by the five-item scale developed by Eisenberger et al. (1986). Sample items are "My organization values my contribution to its well-being," and "My organization strongly considers my goals and values." The Cronbach's alpha for POS was 0.90.

Perceived supervisor support

PSS was measured using the five items adapted from Eisenberger et al.'s (1986) POS scale. We followed the procedures used by several studies such as Rhoades et al.'s (2001) and DeConinck's (2010) by replacing the term

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"organization" with the term "supervisor"). The sample item is "My supervisor really cares about my well-being." The Cronbach's alpha for PSS was 0.92.

Social exchange

Social exchange was measured by employing eight items developed by Shore et al. (2006). Sample items are "My organization has made a significant investment in me" and "the things I do on the job today will benefit my standing in this organization in the long run." The Cronbach's alpha for OSE was 0.84.

Subjective career success

We assessed subjective career success using five items from Greenhaus et al. (1990). Sample items are "I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career," and "I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for the development of new skills." The Cronbach's alpha for subjective career success was 0.94.

Cultural intelligence

Cultural intelligence was measured by the CQ scale (Ang et al., 2007). This is a 20-item scale that assesses four dimensions of CQ, including four items for metacognitive CQ (e.g. I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I apply to cross-cultural interactions); six items for cognitive CQ (e.g. I know the cultural values and religious beliefs of other cultures); five items for motivational CQ (e.g. I enjoy living in cultures that are unfamiliar to me); and five items for behavioural CQ (e.g. I vary the rate of my speaking when a cross-cultural situation requires it). The overall Cronbach's alpha for CQ was 0.92.

Control variables

We controlled for age, gender and the number of years living in Australia. Among these variables, gender was dummy coded (female = 0 and male = 1).

Data analysis

We first tested the measurement model using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in AMOS 22. To test the first two hypotheses, mediating effects of social exchange (Hypothesis 1) and subjective career success (Hypothesis 2) in the PSS–CQ relationship, we used hierarchical regression analysis in SPSS. We also used Hayes' (2018) PROCESS V3.4 Macrocode for SPSS, with 5000 bootstrap samples to confirm these two hypotheses. The simple moderation of POS in the relationship between social exchange and CQ (Hypothesis 3) and the moderating role of POS in the indirect PSS–CQ relationship mediated by social exchange (Hypothesis 4) were tested using PROCESS (Hayes, 2018), based on 5000 bootstrap samples.

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RESULTS

Preliminary analyses

We performed CFA to test the measurement model. Table 1 shows that the 5-factor model fits the data well, with (χ^2[314] = 1045.91, SRMR = 0.04, CFI = 0.91, RMSEA = 0.07). The 5-factor model is much better than the 1-factor model (χ^2[324] = 3888.23, $p < 0.01$, SRMR = 0.11, CFI = 0.57, RMSEA = 0.15) and the null model (χ^2[351] = 8696.36, $p < 0.01$). The CFA results indicate that the five variables in this study are distinct. Since the data were self-reported, common method variance (CMV) may have influenced the results. As suggested and used by prior researchers (Podsakoff et al., 2003), we tested the extent of CMV in the data. If CMV exists, the 5-factor model with a method factor should fit the data significantly better than the 5-factor model. After running the analysis, the CFA results show that the 5-factor model could slightly benefit from the addition of the common method factor; however, the gain in model fit was very small (SRMR change = 0.00, CFI change = 0.01 and RMSEA change = 0.00). These results suggested that CMV was not a critical issue in this study, although it is present.

Descriptive statistics

The means, standard deviations and correlations and estimate of internal consistency among all variables are presented in Table 2. There was a positive correlation between PSS and CQ ($r = 0.20$, $p < 0.01$). PSS was also significantly and positively correlated with both social exchange ($r = 0.57$, $p < 0.01$) and subjective career success ($r = 0.39$, $p < 0.01$). Additionally, social exchange ($r = 0.32$, $p < 0.01$) and subjective career success ($r = 0.26$, $p < 0.01$) were positively and significantly correlated with CQ. These correlations initially supported our proposed Hypotheses 1 and 2.

TABLE 1 Confirmatory factor analysis results for the conceptual model

Models	χ^2(df)	χ^2/df	$\Delta\chi^2$ (df)	SRMR	RMSEA	CFI
Null Model	8696.36 (351)	24.77	7650.45**	-	-	-
1 factor model	3888.23 (324)	12	2842.32**	0.11	0.15	0.57
5 factor model	1045.91 (314)	3.33	-	0.04	0.07	0.91
5 factor model with a method factor	934.70 (287)	3.26	111.21**	0.04	0.07	0.92

Note: $N = 462$; *$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$; ***$p < 0.001$.

TABLE 2 Means, standard deviations and correlations among variables

Variables	Mean	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Age	43.70	12.45							
2. Gender	0.43	0.50	0.17**						
3. Years in Australia	21.01	16.47	0.65**	0.10*					
4. PSS	3.56	0.73	−0.04	0.03	0.03				
5. SE	3.36	0.60	0.04	0.09	0.04	0.57**			
6. SCS	3.46	0.86	0.21**	0.00	0.20**	0.39**	0.51**		
7. POS	3.46	0.70	−0.01	0.02	0.02	0.64**	0.75**	0.46**	
8. CQ	3.60	0.52	−0.04	−0.09	−0.12*	0.20**	0.32**	0.26**	0.26**

Note: $N = 462$. POS = perceived organisational support, PSS = perceived supervisor support, SE = social exchange, SCS = subjective career success, CQ = cultural intelligence. Female = 0 and male = 1.
*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$; ***$p < 0.001$.

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Hypotheses testing

We then employed more rigorous analysis methods to test hypotheses. To test the mediating roles of social exchange and subjective career success, we used hierarchical regression analyses and PROCESS for SPSS. As demonstrated in Model 3 of Table 3, PSS was positively and significantly related to CQ (b = 0.60, se = 0.12, p < 0.001). PSS was also positively and significantly related to social exchange (b = 0.74, se = 0.05, p < 0.001) (the predictor is significantly related to the mediator, see Model 1). Social exchange was positively and significantly related to CQ (Model 4: b = 0.68, se = 0.12, p < 0.001) (the mediator is significantly related to the dependent variable). Finally, when social exchange was entered into the regression model, the relationship between PSS and CQ became insignificant (b = 0.09, se = 0.15) (see Model 4). Thus, Hypothesis 1 is supported.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that subjective career success would mediate the PSS–CQ relationship. We followed the same approach to test the mediating role of subjective career success. As can be seen in Table 3, PSS was positively and significantly related to subjective career success (Model 2: b = 0.47, se = 0.05; p < 0.001). Subjective career success was also positively and significantly related to CQ (Model 5: b = 0.58, se = 0.12, p < 0.001). When subjective career success was entered into the regression model, the PSS–CQ relationship was weakened but remained significant (Model 5: b = 0.33, se = 0.14, p < 0.01), supporting Hypothesis 2.

We further used the PROCESS macrocode for SPSS (Hayes, 2018) to test the mediating effects of social exchange and subjective career success, and specifically, to calculate the unstandardised indirect effects and their corresponding bias-corrected confidence interval (CI) (5000 bootstrap samples). According to previous researchers (Hayes, 2018; Preacher et al., 2007), the indirect or mediating effect is significant when the bootstrap-based CI does not include zero. Results indicated that the indirect effect of PSS on CQ via social exchange was significant (b = 0.13, se = 0.02, 95% bias-corrected CI = [0.08, 0.17]), as its confidence interval did not include zero. The indirect effect of PSS on CQ via subjective career success was significant (b = 0.07, se = 0.02, 95% bias-corrected CI = [0.03, 0.11]). Therefore, the PROCESS results further confirm the support for Hypotheses 1 and 2.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that POS would moderate the relationship between social exchange and CQ such that this relationship would be stronger under higher than under lower levels of POS. Table 4 demonstrates that the interaction term was significant without a zero between the bootstrap-based CI (b = 0.11, se = 0.04, 95% bias-corrected CI = [0.03, 0.19]). The interaction (social exchange * POS) was significant (p < 0.01) in predicting CQ, suggesting a moderating effect of POS on the relationship between social exchange and CQ. Figure 2 displays the simple slopes for the two-way interaction, employing Dawson's (2014) procedure. The relationship between social exchange and CQ was stronger when POS was high rather than low. These results support Hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that the mediating effect of social exchange on the relationship between PSS and CQ would be stronger for employees with high rather than low POS. We used Model 14 in Hayes' PROCESS V3.4 (2018) to test the moderated mediation relationship as proposed in Hypothesis 4. The PROCESS results generated a significant index of moderated mediation (index = 0.05, boot se = 0.02, CI = [0.01, 0.11]), which revealed that the indirect effect could significantly vary with the existence of POS as a moderator. The results showed that the indirect effect of PSS on CQ via social exchange was stronger for those with higher POS (effect = 0.33, se = 0.06, 95% bias-corrected CI = [0.20, 0.45]), rather than lower POS (effect = 0.21, se = 0.06, 95% bias-corrected CI = [0.09, 0.33]), confirming that POS positively moderated the indirect effect of PSS on CQ via social exchange. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 is also supported.

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TABLE 3 Results of mediation analyses

	SE		SCS		CQ					
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5	
	b (se)	*β*	*b* (se)	*β*	*b* (se)	*β*	*b* (se)	*β*	*b* (se)	*β*
Control variables										
Age	0.03 (0.02)	0.07	0.06 (0.02)**	0.14**	0.08 (0.05) $^{+}$	0.10^{+}	0.07 (0.05)	0.07	0.05 (0.05)	0.05
Gender	0.58 (0.38)	0.06	−0.42 (0.37)	−0.05	−1.97 (0.97)*	−0.09*	−2.37 (0.93)*	−0.11*	−1.73 (0.94)*	−1.83^{+}
Years in Australia	−0.01 (0.02)	−0.01	0.02 (0.01)	0.07	−0.11 (0.04)**	−0.18**	−0.11 (0.04)**	−0.17**	−0.12 (0.04)**	−0.20**
Independent variable										
PSS	0.74 (0.05)***	0.57***	0.47 (0.05)***	0.40***	0.60 (0.12)***	0.21***	0.09 (0.15)	0.03	0.33 (0.14)*	0.12*
Mediators										
SE							0.68 (0.12)***	0.31***		
SCS									0.58 (0.12)***	0.24***
R^2	0.33***		0.21***		0.07***		0.13***		0.11***	
R^2 Change	0.32***		0.16***		0.04***		0.12***		0.04***	

Note: $N = 462$; Unstandardised coefficients (b) and standardised coefficient (β) are reported.

Numbers in parentheses are standard errors (se).

Abbreviations: CQ, cultural intelligence; PSS, perceived supervisor support; SE, social exchange; SCS, subjective career success.

Gender: female = 0 and male = 1.

$^{+}p < 0.10$, $^{*}p < 0.05$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{***}p < 0.001$.

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TABLE 4 Moderator effect of POS on the relationship between social exchange and CQ

	Outcome: Cultural intelligence	
Variable	***b***	**se**
Constant	3.82***	0.45
Age	0.00	0.00
Gender	−0.11*	0.05
Years in Australia	−0.11**	0.00
Perceived organisational support	−0.33*	0.14
Social exchange	−0.13	0.15
Social exchange × Perceived organisational support	0.11**	0.04

Note: *N* = 462. POS = perceived organisational support, CQ = cultural intelligence. Female = 0 and male = 1. Unstandardised coefficients (b) are reported.

*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$; ***$p < 0.001$.

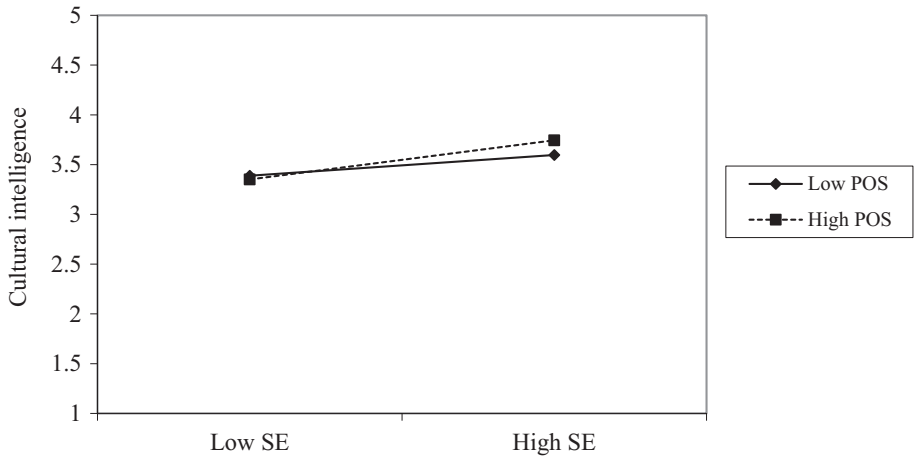


FIGURE 2 Interaction between social exchange (SE) and perceived organisational support (POS) in predicting cultural intelligence (CQ)

DISCUSSION

Theoretical implications

This present study is the first known examination of the relationships between PPS and CQ and the mediating roles of social exchange and subjective career success in the above relationships among a sample of migrant workers. It also tested the moderating role of POS in the relationship between social exchange and CQ. Consistent with our moderated mediation hypothesised model, we found that social exchange and subjective career success mediated the relationship between PSS and CQ. The results confirmed that POS moderated the social exchange–CQ relationship, with this relationship being stronger among migrant workers with high rather than low POS. Furthermore, the indirect effect of PSS on CQ via social exchange was stronger for those migrant workers with high rather than low POS. These findings provide important theoretical contributions to the literature.

First, this study is the first attempt to examine the parallel mechanisms through which PSS can shape the development of migrant workers' CQ. Although prior literature examines various individual factors that predict CQ, our study goes beyond these conventional factors in the past research by examining a new predictor of CQ (i.e. PSS) and

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a new organisational-based mediating mechanism that transmitted the influence of PSS on CQ (e.g. social exchange). Specifically, migrant workers who perceived high levels of supervisor support were likely to perceive good quality social exchange with organisations; as a result, those employees were more able to develop higher CQ to engage with other colleagues in multicultural workplaces. These findings with a sample of migrant workers were supported by the theoretical perspective of organisational support theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986), which argues that employees, in general, feel obliged to reciprocate good treatments they receive from organisations by engaging in positive acts that benefit the organisations (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Mitchell et al., 2012).

Second, this study offers a new perspective to the literature by providing empirical evidence of a career-related mediating mechanism through which PSS influences CQ among migrant workers. Specific results showed that migrant workers who perceived high levels of PSS likely obtained needed resources to progress and succeed in their career paths. This sense of career success motivated them to actively engage in CQ to enhance their ability to contribute to organisations because culturally intelligent employees tend to achieve high job performance (Ott & Michailova, 2018). These results are consistent with our theoretical argument that the perception of career success intrinsically and extrinsically motivated individuals to further engage in CQ for their benefit as well as a way of contributing to their organisation. That is, people are motivated to pursue personal initiatives in the belief that their initiatives and efforts will lead to desired outcomes (Parker et al., 2010). Very little empirical research in the literature has sought to explain why organisational support theory, including self-enhancement processes, plays a role in motivating migrant workers to develop their CQ to work effectively in cross-cultural settings.

Third, this study extends the literature by confirming that POS was a boundary condition that altered the strength of the social exchange–CQ relationship among migrant workers. Specifically, the conditional effect of social exchange on CQ was greatest among those migrants with high rather than low perceptions of organisational support. In line with organisational support theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986), these findings highlight the importance of positive perceptions of organisational support on migrant workers' culturally intelligent development. That is, when migrant workers perceived that they were treated well by the organisations, their quality social exchange with organisations exerted greater impacts on the level of CQ, inferring that they were more culturally intelligent in workplaces that had high POS conditions. In contrast, when there were low perceptions of organisational support, employees had the lowest likelihood of being culturally intelligent, as they had no feeling of obligation to reciprocate in a balanced and high-quality relationship with their employers (Shore et al., 2006; Shore & Barksdale, 1998).

Finally, POS moderated the entire mediation process; that is, the indirect effect of PSS on CQ mediated by social exchange was stronger among migrants who had higher POS. These findings were consistent with the simple moderation of POS in the social exchange–CQ relationship discussed above, indicating that migrants who perceived high levels of support from their supervisors likely had high levels of social exchange and developed their CQ. These results highlighted that organisational factors (i.e. PSS, POS and social exchange) could influence individual factors (i.e. CQ) among migrants. Although prior studies paid less attention to the impact of the exchange relationships and migrant workers' CQ (see the review of CQ by Ott & Michailova, 2018), our findings are theoretically supported by organisational support theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986) and provide useful insights into the linkage between organisational and career-related factors, and migrant workers' culture-related psychosocial resources.

In brief, these diverse groups of employees were racial minorities in multicultural countries who often were disadvantaged in gaining high skilled jobs and experienced discrimination, unfair treatment and exploitation in organisations and societies compared with white workers (Greenhaus et al., 1990; Le, Nielsen, & Noblet, 2021). Due to cultural differences and limited levels of language proficiency, they experienced challenges in having effective communication and building relationships with their team members and customers (Khan-Gökkaya & Mösko, 2021). The above challenges were exacerbated by their lack of effective social networks with non-migrants workers (Le et al., 2014). Hence, gaining support from their supervisor via career success and social exchange at work can empower migrant workers to develop their CQ. Our study contributes to theory and research on workforce diversity by revealing how organisational and career-related factors can play an influential role in developing migrant workers' CQ to combat the above challenges.

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Practical implications

This study has a number of practical implications for managers and organisations. First, at the systemic level, organisational policies and procedures need to be fair and inclusive, as research shows that perceptions of justice influence social exchange between employers and employees (Masterson et al., 2000). Inclusive and just organisations often create opportunities for employees from any background to use their voice and empower them to have a say in decisions that affect them (Le, Nielsen, & Noblet, 2021). Organisations and executives might actively engage in awareness-raising efforts, which aim at reducing discrimination, racism, unfair treatment and marginalisation in the workplace and develop inclusive work environments (Le et al., 2020). Given that CQ consists of malleable capabilities that can be developed by training (Ott & Michailova, 2018), supervisors or managers in multicultural workplaces should receive CQ training as compulsory professional development. CQ training will likely help managers to work more effectively and develop greater social exchange with their staff from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Second, the results suggest a mediating role of social exchange and a moderating role of POS in facilitating the relationship between PSS and CQ; this has an important implication for managers and organisations. Because the exchange relationship between supervisors and employees is a "two-way street" where employees only feel obliged to respond to the good deeds of supervisors when they perceive that the supervisors treat them well (Shore et al., 2006), supervisors and organisations should play a proactive role in developing this quality relationship (Le et al., 2020). For example, in addition to having a just and inclusive climate as noted above, supervisors could have an open-door policy where employees can come face to face with them and use their voice freely and safely (Le, Johnson, & Fujimoto, 2021). This strategy might help empower migrant workers and narrow the power distance between supervisors and migrant workers. Supervisors are required to have a good understanding of the cultural differences in their employees and how these differences influence the way they behave (Le et al., 2020; Le, Nielsen, & Noblet, 2021) if they are to work effectively with migrant workers.

Given the context of global workplaces, the results underscore the important role of supervisors, organisational support and social exchange in understanding CQ development among racial minority migrant workers. To facilitate CQ development, migrant workers also play a role in developing this exchange relationship. At the individual level, migrant workers could express their willingness to contribute to organisations through voluntary activities or citizenship behaviours. These activities are achievable for migrant workers and their good deeds would be recognised by the organisation and managers. At the organisational level, relevant opportunities could be provided for migrant workers to be mentored by their immediate or senior supervisors to enhance social exchange between migrant workers and their supervisors (Le, Johnson, & Fujimoto, 2021). At the national level, immigration policies need to provide short CQ training courses and various formal and informal opportunities to assist new migrants in developing their CQ and especially their social networks with other migrants and non-migrants.

Finally, since the findings confirm the influential role of PSS in subjective career success by facilitating the development of migrant workers' CQ, psychologists and career counsellors could help migrants, who often lack social capital, particularly when immigrating to a new country (Le et al., 2014; Le, Nielsen, & Noblet, 2021), to build internal and external networks with senior colleagues. For example, migrant workers could learn from career workshops or interventions and career counsellors about how to communicate, negotiate, network and collaborate effectively with colleagues and supervisors/managers who are culturally different from them. Success in identifying and developing networks may help migrant workers gain additional resources for their career management.

Limitations and implications for future research

This study has several limitations, which can be addressed in future research. First, we used a cross-sectional design, and therefore, inferences concerning the causal relationships between variables should be treated with caution, although we based the conceptual model on strong theoretical reasoning. Therefore, future research might consider

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employing longitudinal designs and/or an experimental approach to confirm these causal relationships among studied variables. Second, this study has limitations regarding common method bias because we asked participants to complete the survey at one point in time, although the analysis showed that this issue is minimal. Future research might consider collecting the survey data over multiple time waves and from multi-levels or multi-sources.

Third, we employed an adapted and shorter version of some scales (i.e. POS, PSS and social exchange), which might cause an under-representation of these scales. Future research may consider using full scales of the above constructs if time allows. Fourth, we did not measure every detail of participants' immigration status (e.g. humanitarian immigrants, skilled migrants and others). As such, we may have missed the opportunity to conduct a finer-grained analysis of how immigrants in different visa (sub)groups differ in the process of CQ development. Future research would consider collecting more detailed, targeted demographic information that allows for these analyses and comparisons to happen. Finally, we did not identify the role of participants in the organisations to see if they were employees or in managerial positions, which might limit the strength of the results. Future research could compare two sources of data (e.g. data from employees versus data from managers/supervisors) to see whether the impact of perceived supervisor support is different among employees and supervisors.

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

ORCID

Huong Le https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1806-6089
Zhou Jiang https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6249-2659

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