ENERGY-BOOST IN CROSS-CULTURAL INTERACTIONS: A Moderated Mediation Model

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ABSTRACT
Organizations nowadays acknowledge the importance of energy at the work floor, since energy from interaction increases job performance and job satisfaction. However, an increasing number of organizations make use of expatriates working at their company, but, with high failure rates and unexpected costs. Individuals classify themselves into social categories to highlight differences between groups and minimize differences within groups. The Social Identity Theory argues that people strive to interact with similar people over dissimilar people. Therefore, people with dissimilar backgrounds won’t get involved in interaction with each other and low levels of relational energy will follow. In this study we build on the Social Identity Theory to explain the negative relationship between cultural distance and relational energy. In new cultures, people tend to act anxious and don’t adjust to the values of the other culture, therefore we propose the mediating role of cross-cultural adjustment in the relationship between cultural distance and relational energy. Additionally, using the Social Identity Theory, it was expected that ethnocentrism could act as a moderator since it reinforces in-group favoritism and it reduces motivation to interact with other cultures. Lastly, empathy was also taken into consideration as a moderator since it can reduce prejudices against out-groups. I present the results of two studies aimed at testing the relational energy construct. Study 1 suggests that cultural distance is associated with increased relational energy. In contrast, in Study 2 I found the opposite. I discuss theoretical and practical implications of my findings and highlight areas for future research.

Keywords: Relational energy; cultural distance; cross-cultural adjustment; ethnocentrism; empathy
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Recent developments that multinational companies Ahold Delhaize and Schneider Electric have invested in energy-increasing training programs show that energy is an emerging topic of interest within organizations. These companies try to enhance energy among workers to create cultures of high performance and where the management of energy can fuel well-being (Loehr & Schwartz, 2003). Energy is becoming increasingly important as subject of research. According to Quinn, Spreitzer & Lam (2012), employee energy increases employees’ ability for action and motivation, empowering workers to execute their work and achieve their goals. We know already that people can be energized by other people, what refers to relational energy. Relational energy is reinforcing, which implies that people want to maintain interactions with people who give them energy (Baker, Cross & Wooten; Collins, 1993). Due to shared experiences with others, people develop positive feelings, emotional arousal (Quinn & Dutton, 2005) and people who are energized by others are more motivated to put effort towards performing ideas and actions (Welbourne, Andrews, & Andrews, 2005). It is highly important to stimulate relational energy in organizations, since relational energy increases job satisfaction and job performance (Owens, Baker, Sumpton & Cameron, 2016).

Despite the importance of energy in organizational settings, little is understood about relational energy related to cross-cultural contexts. For example, over 100,000 American people work abroad each year (Baruch and Altman, 2002) and this number is still rising (Brookfield, 2015). However, the failure rate of cross-cultural employment ranges between 40 and 55 per cent (Black et al., 1999) and incur substantial costs to organizations (Harzing & Christensen, 2004). It is highly beneficial for organizations to boost relational energy in organizations (Owens et al., 2016), and therefore it is important to study the link between cultural distance and relational energy. Individuals classify themselves into groups or social categories, such as nationality, culture, or religious affiliation (Tajfel &
Turner, 1985), and people obtain value and meaning from identification by perceiving a feeling of oneness with other people of a group they belong to (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Furthermore, people aspire to keep perceived distinctiveness to out-groups granted by membership from the in-group (Stets & Burke, 2000). People tend to seek interactions with similar others (Tajfel, 1982), which implies that cultural differences lead to less interaction, and therefore, less relational energy. Dissimilar people can be perceived as de-energizing and will be avoided (Casciaro & Lobo, 2008). People tend to develop negative stereotypes towards out-groups to maintain social distance between in-group and out-group. Therefore, I thus employ the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1985) to examine the link between cultural distance and relational energy.

To address the gap between cultural distance and relational energy it is relevant to look at factors that influence this relationship. The inability to adjust in new environments is the main reason for failure of cross-cultural assignments (Tung, 1982). In new environments, people tend to act anxious and don’t socially interact with out-groups (Osland & Osland, 2005). This corresponds to the Social Identity Theory, which implies that people have the tendency to avoid interaction with out-group members (Tajfel, 1982; Casciaro & Lobo, 2008), and therefore is destructive for high relational energy. The ability to adjust effectively in cross-cultural contexts is highly dependent on the ability to form social interactions and relationships with other cultures (Thomas & Inkson, 2009). Therefore, I thus examine the indirect effect of cultural distance on relational energy through cross-cultural adjustment in this paper.

Social identity is to a large extent acquired through group memberships. Individuals aim to arrive at positive levels of social identity, in which they can boost their self-esteem. Positive social identity is primarily derived from cultural identification in which people distinguish their social in-group and out-groups. This self-categorization process causes that people from the in-group are being seen as more similar and feeling higher-ranked compared
to members from out-groups (Tajfel, 1982). People who believe that their own in-group or
culture is superior over other cultures may decrease motivation to communicate with other
cultures (Arasaratnam & Banerjee, 2007) and they interfere in anti-social behavior (Neuliep,
Chaudoir & McCroskey, 2001). Ethnocentrism is a personal belief held by someone who
believes that one’s own culture is superior to other cultures and is destructive in cross-cultural
interactions (Pocovnicu & Vasilache, 2012; Reichard, Dollwet & Louw-Potgieter, 2014).
Ethnocentrism reinforces in-group favoritism, because ethnocentric people perceive in-group
as superior and discriminate out-groups (Young, Haffejee & Corsun, 2018). The Social
Identity Theory demonstrates that self-categorization into social groups has a strong effect on
how people interpret understand and react to social events. People respond different to in-
group and out-group members, which is motivated by the need to maintain positive social
identity. Some people are more able to connect emotionally and interact in different ways
with others (Galinsky, Maddux, Gilin & White, 2008). Empathy is conceived as sympathizing
and answering to others’ feelings and can function as a constructive component of relational
energy (Decety & Jackson, 2004; Batson, Fultz, & Schoenrade, 1987). High empathic people
reduce their negative prejudices and feelings towards out-groups and is most likely to be
faced when other people are in perceived need (Batson, 1991). High empathetic skills allow
people to anticipate to others, easing more fluent and more rewarding interpersonal
relationships, which is conditional to adjust, and thus derive energy from others (Young et al.,
2018). I thus examine the role of empathy and ethnocentrism that moderates the indirect
impact of cultural distance on relational energy via cross-cultural adjustment.

This study contributes to the empirical literature on relational energy in the workplace,
by examining individual differences that may or may not predispose individuals to derive
energy from interactions. The purpose of this paper is to examine the mediating role of cross-
cultural adjustment and the moderating role of ethnocentrism and empathy on cultural
distance and relational energy. Building on the Social Identity Theory, I will offer an
explanation to what extent cultural differences influence relational energy. Since relational energy is one relatively new examined concept, this paper will extend the body of literature by linking relational energy with cross-cultural literature. In order to create more consistency among this literature, I will conduct a field study and an experimental study for external validity.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

Cultural distance and relational energy

Relational energy is defined as a heightened level of psychological resourcefulness generated from interpersonal interactions that enhances one’s capacity to do work (Owens et al., 2016). According to Collins (1993), people can get energized by others through interactions and create shared experiences. Shared experiences create positive feelings, emotional arousal and excitement (Quinn & Dutton, 2005). Cognitively speaking, relational energy is created through an interactional process between people to focus attention and exclude distractions (Lykken, 2005). Interaction provides people motivation to maintain social interactions with “energizers” and avoid interactions with people who don’t energize them. People who engage in social interactions derive intrinsic motivation from the feelings of excitement of this interaction (Collins, 1993).

The extent to which people can get energized by others is dependent on their cultural distance. Cultural distance is defined as an overall degree of cultural value dissimilarity between two individuals (Shenkar, 2001; Kossek, Huang, Piszczek, Fleenor & Ruderman, 2017). Cultural distance between individuals is conceptualized in terms of dissimilarities between cultures like traditions, norms, customs and local business environments (Shenkar, 2001; Tihanyi, Griffith & Russel, 2005). High levels of cultural distance causes that people feel uncertain to engage and succeed in social interaction and decrease in self-efficacy (Shin, Hasse & Schotter, 2017).
In general, people tend to organize the social world surrounding them into categories (such as culture) to underline differences between and reduce differences within social categories (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Those social categories give people a sense of belonging to in-groups. The Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1982) argues that people are motivated to seek interactions with similar others over dissimilar others. According to this theory, in-group members discriminate out-groups while enhancing their own self-image. Consistent with this theory, individuals who perceive themselves as more similar will be more attracted to each other (Byrne, 1971). Furthermore, people who are more culturally similar are more likely to have positive relationships (Goldberg, Riordan & Shaffer, 2010).

People tend to avoid interactions with out-group cultures, even if they require help and information from them (Casciaro & Lobo, 2008). These people can be perceived as de-energizing and the negative aspects of this culture will be exaggerated (Casciaro & Lobo, 2008; Tajfel, 1982). To create a desire to “make good things happen” and think constructively together, discriminating out-group cultures functions destructive in deriving relational energy (Cole, Bruch & Vogel, 2011). In sum, higher levels of cultural distance create less interactions between in- and out-group members. Interactions with perceived de-energizing out-group cultures will enhance in-group culture favoritism and reduce the possibility that relational energy will be derived.

_Hypothesis 1: Cultural distance is negatively related to relational energy_

**The mediating role of cross-cultural adjustment**

The Social Identity Theory argues that people tend to prefer interactions with similar others which leads to in-group favoritism, discrimination and stereotyping of out-groups (Tajfel, 1982). Individuals’ behavior is the consequence of reciprocal action between personal and environmental factors (Cable & Edwards, 2004; Tak, 2011). According to Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov (2010), cultural differences are one of the key external predictors of successful alignment and interaction of mutual values that makes cross-cultural adjustment
possible (Haslberger & Dickman, 2016). Favorable outcome of alignment of values with other cultures contributes to easily adaptation and growth of psychological comfort to reduce strain (Jun & Gentry, 2005). Therefore, the main cause of poor performance in other cultures is the ability of people to adjust to the demands of the new environment (Tung, 1982). Cross-cultural adjustment is defined as the degree to which people are psychologically familiar and comfortable with different aspects of other cultures (Black, 1988). When people are unable to adjust, they do not reach cognitive and emotional levels of satisfaction with the values, norms, and attitudes of the other culture (Black, Mendenhall & Oddou, 1991).

Feelings of stress, anxiety and uncertainty in other cultures result in increased in-group favoritism which obstructs social interaction with out-groups (Osland & Osland, 2005). High levels of cultural distance between people cause job and personal problems in other cultures and well-adjustment is threatened. Cultural distance increases the likelihood to discriminate and avoid out-groups. Therefore, cultural distance counteracts social interaction and thus, cross-cultural adjustment. Due to cultural distance, people will underperform in the new culture and are unable to integrate to the cultural habits and adapting to the different communication environment (Nolan & Morley, 2014). To receive energy from people in other cultures, cross-cultural adjustment is required to optimize the quality of social interaction, reduce stress and perform well (Collins, 1993). In other cultures, mal-adjusted people will not develop shared experiences and feelings with out-groups, and therefore, low relational energy follows.

Hypothesis 2: The relationship between cultural distance and relational energy is negatively mediated by cross-cultural adjustment.

The moderating role of ethnocentrism on the indirect effect

Personal beliefs, such as ethnocentrism, can influence to what extent people adjust to different cultures and ultimately determine how much people will be energized (Quinn et al., 2012). Ethnocentric people believe that their own culture is superior to other cultures and few
political and social interests are shared (Hall & Gudykunst, 1989). Ethnocentrism can function destructive in interaction, since ethnocentrism reinforces in-group favoritism and ethnocentric people are less willing to interact with out-groups. Furthermore, ethnocentrism in social interactions creates feelings of mistrust, insecurity, prejudice and discrimination. It therefore makes sense to examine ethnocentrism as a moderator on this indirect effect of cultural distance on relational energy.

At a high level of ethnocentrism, people tend to decrease in motivation to communicate with other cultures, because they believe that their own culture is superior (Arasaratnam & Banerjee, 2007). People shape cognitive perceptions of other cultures in such a way that they hold contemptuous assumptions and opinions about people who are not of the same culture. People foster emotional feelings of superiority, and because of this feeling they engage in anti-social behavior towards out-groups which obstructs intercultural communication (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003; Neuliep et al., 2001; Pocovnicu & Vasilache, 2012).

At a low level of ethnocentrism, people will increase in interpersonal and intercultural communication with others, since they are capable to adapt to other cultures and experience positive emotions in new environments (Young et al., 2018).

High ethnocentrism may decrease the ability of cultural distant people to adjust well in other cultures, since high ethnocentric people view other cultures as inferior and unattractive (Pocovnicu & Vasilache, 2012). This will prevent social interactions and will result in lower levels of relational energy. The opposite is expected for low levels of ethnocentrism. In such cases, cultural distant individuals will increase in motivation to interact with other cultures (Arasaratnam & Banerjee, 2007), leading to higher levels of cross-cultural adjustment, and will also result in higher relational energy. Therefore, the following hypothesis is being proposed.
Hypothesis 3: Ethnocentrism moderates the indirect impact of cultural distance on relational energy via cross-cultural adjustment.

The moderating role of empathy on the indirect effect

People differ in the way they respond to other people’s thoughts, experiences and actions (Galinsky et al., 2008). Empathy is a critical aspect of the social life of people and is conceptualized as the capacity to experience the emotional condition and take the viewpoint of another individual (Davis, 1980). Empathic people perceive similarities in emotions and are motivated to reduce other’s suffering which leads to helping behavior (Batson, 2009). Furthermore, empathy is considered as one of the key drivers of prosocial behavior (Batson & Powell, 2003), such as sharing, helping, cooperating and volunteering (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986).

However, when people are from different cultural groups, failure of empathy is likely to occur. People are unsuccessful in detecting emotional experiences of out-groups which leads to indifferences towards out-group members and may even cause further impairment against them (Sirin, Valentino & Villalobos, 2016). Empathic behavior is more likely to be expressed towards in-groups, because these people are perceived more similar (Cialdini, Brown, Lewis, Luce & Neuberg, 1997). Therefore, I examine empathy as a moderator on the indirect effect of cultural distance on relational energy.

At a high level of empathy, people tend to decrease stereotype biases and reduce in-group biases, which results in more perceived similarity between groups (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000). Furthermore, high-empathic people tend to reduce prejudices and negative feelings towards out-groups, which makes them more willing to cooperate with others (Aronson & Patnoe, 1997).

At a low level of empathy, people may fail to connect their antisocial behavior to the emotional responses of other people (Hare, 1999). Additionally, low empathetic people tend to engage more in bullying and discriminating behavior (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006).
High empathy may increase the ability of cultural distant groups to adjust well in the other culture, since more similarities will be perceived. This will result in more social interactions between cultures and leads to higher levels of relational energy. I expect the opposite for low levels of empathy. In these cases, people will show less empathic behavior towards other cultures, and they tend to ineffectively interact with each other (Galinsky et al., 2008). People fail to take the perspective of others and this will lead to poor cross-cultural adjustment, which in turns causes low levels of relational energy.

*Hypothesis 4: Empathy moderates the indirect impact of cultural distance on relational energy via cross-cultural adjustment.*

**Analytic strategy**

I intend to test this model in a mixed-method approach to provide a rigorous and comprehensive investigation of the hypotheses. See Figure 1 for a visual representation of the model. First, I examine the causal link between cultural distance and relational energy in the laboratory setting for internal validity in Study 1. Then, in Study 2, I will conduct a cross-sectional online study to examine the entire model for external validity (Allen & Rush, 1998; Joslin & Müller, 2016).

**STUDY 1**

**METHOD**

**Participants and procedures**

Participants were 202 students of the University of Groningen who were compensated by course credits or a small amount of cash (8 euro per hour). The experiment has taken place in the FEB research lab on the first floor of the Duisenberg building. Students individually signed up for this lab experiment through an online platform. In this platform, I asked explicitly for specific cultural background. After registration, I emailed all participants to confirm their cultural background by email. In this 1-hour study, students came to work in pairs, selected on their cultural background. I have manually composed 100 pairs consisting...
of 32 low cultural distance pairs, 34 medium cultural distance pairs, and 34 high cultural distance pairs. In other words, the independent variable ‘cultural distance’ was manipulated as of three conditions. In this experiment, participants have first individually answered questions online about their personal traits which took them approximately 20 minutes. After finishing this first questionnaire, they have performed a 15-minute offline team task together (Meslec & Corșeu, 2013). After they finished this task, participants have individually answered questions online about relational energy, which took them again 15 minutes.

Data from these 202 participants (98 females, \( Mage = 21.45 \) years, \( SDage = 2.60 \)) was used to test hypothesis 1.

The low cultural distance participants consisted of 64 participants (28 females, \( Mage = 20.50 \) years, \( SDage = 2.08 \)). Ages of the low cultural distance participants ranged from 18 to 27 and they all have Dutch ethnical background.

The medium cultural distance participants consisted of 69 participants (38 females, \( Mage = 21.51 \), \( SDage = 2.29 \)). Ages of the medium cultural distance participants ranged from 18 to 30. Half of the participants was of Dutch ethnical background and the other half had other European ethnical background.

The high cultural distance participants consisted of 69 participants (32 females, \( Mage = 22.26 \), \( SDage = 3.04 \)). Ages of the high cultural distance participants ranged from 18 to 33. Half of the participants in this group had Dutch ethnical background and half of the participants had Asian ethnical background.

**Measures**

**Relational energy.** Participants were asked to rate the activity they performed in the test on the relational energy scale (Owens et al., 2016). This scale consists of five items rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Example item is: “I feel invigorated when I interact with this person”, \( \alpha = .80 \)
**Cultural distance.** Cultural distance was measured as of three conditions: 64 low cultural distance individuals, 69 medium cultural distance individuals, and 69 high cultural distance individuals. Low cultural distance is coded as 1 (n = 64), medium cultural distance is coded as 2 (n = 69), and high cultural distance is coded as 3 (n = 69).

**Manipulation check.** I have sent emails to participants who signed up for this study in which they had to confirm their ethical background. After confirmation, I manually manipulated the pairs, in such a way that I created 32 low-cultural distance pairs, 34 medium cultural distance pairs and 34 high cultural distance pairs. When participants entered the lab experiment, I have confirmed by observation whether their ethical background looked different from each other and therefore I guaranteed the success of the manipulation.

**RESULTS**

The descriptive statistics associated with relational energy across the three levels of cultural distance groups are reported in Table 1. I conducted one-way ANOVA analysis to determine if the degree of perceived relational energy was different for groups with different cultural backgrounds. Data was normally distributed for each group, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk test (p > .05), and there was homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene’s test for equality of variances (p = .43). The independent between-groups ANOVA yielded a marginal statistically significant effect of cultural distance on relational energy, (F (2,199) = 2.47, p = .08, η² = .02). Relational energy score increased from low cultural distance (M = 4.34, SD =

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1 I included extra control variables in Study 1, such as gender, age, empathy and extraversion, but none of them yielded a significant result. In other words, the variables did not impact relational energy and therefore, I dropped them.

2 I included the two outliers I found in the data, but I decided to keep them. Notably, excluding these cases from the main analysis reported below, did not alter the pattern of the results or influence the reported conclusions.
I run Tukey’s post hoc to test all possible group comparisons, since this test is a valid (Westfall, Tobias & Wolfinger, 2011) and recommended (Kirk, 2013) test when the data is normally distributed and there is homogeneity of variances. First, Tukey’s post hoc analysis revealed that the mean increase from low cultural distance to high cultural distance was statistically marginally significant (.33, 95% CI [-.03, .70], p = .08). Furthermore, there was a mean increase in relational energy from the low cultural distance group to the medium cultural distance group (.23, 95% CI [-.13, .59], p = .30), which was not statistically significant. Lastly, the analysis showed that there was a mean increase from medium cultural distance to high cultural distance, which was also not significant (.10, 95% CI [-.25, .46], p = .77). Concluding on this, I did not find support for my first hypothesis. I found that cultural distance is associated with increased relational energy, which is the opposite of my hypothesis 1.

SUPPLEMENTARY ANALYSIS STUDY 1

Study 1 showed that high cultural distance groups perceived more relational energy from interaction than low cultural distance groups, which was contradictory with my assumptions. Therefore, I also measured the variable empathy among the participants of Study 1. According to the Trait Activation Theory (Tett & Burnett, 2003), some personality traits are more likely to be expressed in situations relevant to that trait. Situations are relevant to traits if it’s closely connected with the providing of signals that indicate one’s standing on the trait (Tett & Burnett, 2003). In situations of high cultural distance, empathy could explain the positive relationship between cultural distance and relational energy. Research already showed that high empathetic people hold less stereotypes against other groups and reduced in-group bias, what is resulting in more equality between groups (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000).
In this supplementary analysis I will provide further explanations concerning the impact of cultural distance on relational energy.

I measured the descriptive statistics of the three cultural distance groups with regard to empathy to find out whether this variable could have influence on the relationship between cultural distance and relational energy. I assume that empathy could explain why the first hypothesis is not supported. In other words, I propose that cultural distance and relational energy is mediated by empathy, such that cultural distance is associated with increased empathy, which in turns predicts participants’ relational energy. In line with the above assumptions, I found differences in mean and standard deviations between the three cultural distance groups, see Table 2. Table 3 depicts results of the mediated regression analysis using PROCESS v3.0 model 4 by Andrew Hayes (2013). As Table 3 shows, I found support that the relation between cultural distance and relational energy is mediated by empathy. I did find evidence that cultural distance is associated with increased empathy (B = .10, SE = .04, p = .01). I also found a significant relationship between empathy and relational energy (B = .47, SE = .14, p = .00). Moreover, I also found support for the direct effect between cultural distance and relational energy (B = .17, SE = .08, p = .03). Therefore, I can conclude that I found support since the confidence interval I found (indirect effect = .05, SE = .02, 95% CI [.01, .09]) does not include zero, so mediation has occurred, see Figure 3.

To conclude, I now found that the relationship between cultural distance and relational energy is mediated by empathy, in such a way that cultural distance is associated with increased empathy, which in turns leads to more relational energy.

**DISCUSSION STUDY 1**

I hypothesized that cultural distance is associated with decreased relational energy, and I did not find support for this hypothesis. Specifically, these results suggest that high cultural distance groups perceive more energy than low cultural distance groups. The study sample consists of students from different cultures. The low cultural distance group consists
of participants from high individualistic culture, in terms of Hofstede (1980). The high
cultural distance group consists of participants both of high individualistic cultures and high
collectivistic cultures (Hofstede, 1980). People from individualistic cultures focus more on
their own interests, ignore goals of the group, and they put more emphasis on the
informational process in communication. On the other hand, people high in collectivism
emphasize relationships more, are motivated to enhance relatedness and are group-oriented,
which is conditional for relational energy.

I have run supplementary analysis to further explore the filed context and find
evidence why the first hypothesis wasn’t supported. I found that cultural distance is associated
with increased empathy, which in turn leads to more relational energy. To seek for
explanation for this outcome, I build on the trait-activation theory (Tett & Burnett, 2003).
This theory suggests that some traits are more likely to be showed in different types of
Situations are of relevance for traits when it provides signals for the showing of relevant trait
behavior. Situations where high cultural distant people are present cause feelings of
uncertainty and anxiety (Gudykunst, Chua & Gray, 2016). In such cases, it is rewarding to
show empathic behavior to reach higher levels of relational energy.

STUDY 2

METHOD

Participants and procedures

To understand how relational energy may function in a real work context, I
administered a survey to 174 people gained cross-cultural experience by working in the
Netherlands. The survey took participants about 10-15 minutes to fulfill and they were not
paid or given rewards. In this study, I recruited participants in two distinct ways. First, I
recruited participants via several ‘Expats in the Netherlands’ Facebook groups. I used
Facebook to post my survey link in groups where the target group is active in. Second, I used
the online database with expatriate members working in the Netherlands of Connect International Groningen (CIG). CIG circulated my survey by email to their members. For this study, prescreening conditions consisted of cultural background and their cross-cultural experience in the Netherlands. Participants answered questions relating cultural distance, cross-cultural adjustment, ethnocentrism, empathy, and relational energy.

The total response of the questionnaire consisted of 174 participants (131 females, $M_{age} = 33.48$ years, $SD_{age} = 9.77$). Participants of this questionnaire had various continents of origin, respectively European ($n = 106, 60.9\%$), Asian ($n = 22, 12.6\%$), African ($n = 4, 2.3\%$), North American ($n = 21, 12.1\%$), South American ($n = 18, 10.3\%$), and Oceanic ($n = 3, 1.7\%$). The highest degree or level of education varies among participants, ranging from less than a high school degree ($n = 1, 0.6\%$) to high school degree ($n = 19, 10.9\%$), bachelor’s degree ($n = 59, 33.9\%$), master’s degree ($n = 84, 48.3\%$), and doctorate degree ($n = 11, 6.3\%$). Participants’ stay in the host country ranged from 1 month to 456 months ($M_{stay} = 67.65, SD_{stay} = 77.36$) and their organizational tenure ranged from 1 month to 300 months ($M_{tenure} = 40.82, SD_{tenure} = 55.69$).

Measures

Relational energy. Participants were asked to rate the activity they performed in the test on the relational energy scale (Owens et al., 2016). This scale consisted of five items rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Example item is: “I feel invigorated when I interact with this person”, $\alpha = .93$

Cultural distance. Participants were asked to indicate their continent of origin. I followed Kogut and Singh (1988) to build this variable as a composite index based on the four cultural dimensions (i.e. power distance, individualism, masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance) from Hofstede (1980, 2001) and I adapted this index to measure ethical continent of origin. The following formula is used to calculate cultural distance between the Netherlands and the continent of origin of the participants:
\[ CD_j = \sqrt{\sum_{i=j}^{4} \left( I_{ij} - I_{it} \right)^2 / V_i} \]

where \( CD_j \) stands for the cultural distance between continent of origin \( j \) and the Netherlands, \( I_{ij} \) for the index for the ith cultural dimension of the jth continent of origin, \( I_{it} \) stands for the index for the ith cultural dimension of the Netherlands, and \( V_i \) is the variance of the index of the ith cultural dimension.

**Cross-cultural adjustment.** Cross-cultural adjustment was measured using the scale by Black (1988). This scale consisted of 11 items measuring three dimensions: work (3 items), interaction (2 items) and general adjustment (6 items) and is rated from 1 (not adjusted at all) to 7 (very well adjusted). Example item is: “*How adjusted are you to your job and responsibilities?*, \( \alpha = .83 \)

**Ethnocentrism.** Ethnocentrism was measured using the GENE Scale (Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997) composed of 22 statements concerning feelings about one’s own culture and other cultures. Ethnocentrism was rated on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Example item is: “*My culture should be the role model for other cultures*, \( \alpha = .78 \)

**Empathy.** Empathy was measured using the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis, 1980) consisting of 28 items and is rated from 0 (least empathic) to 4 (most empathic). Example item is: “*I am often quite touched by things I see happen*, \( \alpha = .78 \)

**Control variables.** I controlled for participants’ organizational tenure in the host country, since Chao, Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, and Gardner (1994) found some interesting results in the relationship between organizational tenure and the socialization process. Their research showed that longer employed workers become easier socialized due to experience. Short-employed people may perceive the socialization process as provocative and they won’t
contribute to shared experiences within the organization (Zenger & Lawrence, 1989). Exhanging this, I also considered months of stay in the host country as a control variable. Longer stay in organization and country assumes that people pursue more experiences and social interactions that enhance their energy level (Collins, 1993)

RESULTS

Table 4 provides descriptive statistics and intercorrelations for all study variables.³ To test hypothesis 1, a simple linear regression was conducted to predict relational energy based on cultural distance. The results of the regression indicated that cultural distance was negatively associated with relational energy, \( F(1, 172) = 3.75, p = .05 \) and cultural distance accounted for 2.1% of the explained variability in relational energy. The results show that larger cultural distance between people leads to a decrease in relational energy. In this case, I can conclude that I found support for my first hypothesis.

Table 5 depicts results of the mediated regression analysis using PROCESS v3.0 model 4 by Andrew F. Hayes (2013), controlling on organizational tenure and months of stay. To test hypothesis 2, that cultural distance and relational energy is mediated by cross-cultural adjustment, such that cultural distance is associated with decreased cross-cultural adjustment, which in turn predicts participants’ relational energy I build on the regression analysis I did. As Table 5 shows, I found no support that the relation between cultural distance and relational energy is mediated by cross-cultural adjustment. I found no evidence that cultural distance is associated with decreased cross-cultural adjustment \( (B = -.08, SE = .20, p = .70) \). However, I found a significant relationship between cross-cultural adjustment and relational energy \( (B = \)

³ I included the single outlier I found on cross-cultural adjustment, the three outliers on age, the two outliers on ethnocentrism, and the single outlier I found on empathy. Notably, excluding these cases from the main analysis reported below, did not alter the pattern of the results or influence the reported conclusions.
.41, SE = .12, p < .01). In general, I can conclude that I found no support for the second hypothesis, since the confidence interval I found (indirect effect = -.03, SE = .08, 95% confidence interval [-.19, .12] includes zero, so I found no support for the second hypothesis, see Figure 4.

Furthermore, to test hypothesis 3, such that ethnocentrism moderates the impact of cultural distance on relational energy via cross-cultural adjustment, the PROCESS macro model 7 of Hayes (2013) was run, see Table 6. Likewise, also these confidence intervals surrounding the indirect effect of cross-cultural adjustment did span zero, which indicates that no significant indirect effect has been found at low levels of ethnocentrism (B = -.33, SE = -.19, 95% confidence interval [-.50, .14]), moderate levels of ethnocentrism (B = .03, SE = -.04, 95% confidence interval [-.21, .15]), and high levels of ethnocentrism (B = .35, SE = .09, 95% confidence interval [-.12, .38]). I found that the confidence intervals include zero, so therefore I can conclude that I found no support in favor of the hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that cross-cultural adjustment moderated by empathy, would mediate the relationship between cultural distance and relational energy. To test this hypothesis the PROCESS v3.0 model 7 (Hayes, 2013) was run again, see Table 7. Notably, the confidence intervals surrounding the indirect effect of cross-cultural adjustment did include zero, which indicates that no significant indirect effect has been found at low levels of empathy (B = -.38, SE = -.03 95% confidence interval [-.25, .27], moderate levels of empathy (B = -.03, SE = -.05, 95% confidence interval [-.24, .13], and high levels of empathy (B = .33, SE = -.07, 95% confidence interval [-.41, .19]. As zero is present in the confidence intervals, the results show no evidence of conditional indirect effect which is different from zero with 95% confidence interval. Therefore, I can conclude that I found no support for the fourth hypothesis.
DISCUSSION OF STUDY 2

The first hypothesis I predicted is the relationship between cultural distance and relational energy. I assumed that cultural distance is associated with decreased relational energy and in the results, I found support for this first hypothesis. This result suggests that high cultural distance people perceive less relational energy than low cultural distance people. Additionally, I found no support for the second hypothesis. I proposed that the relationship between cultural distance and relational energy is negatively mediated by cross-cultural adjustment, but I found no evidence for this. Furthermore, I found no support for the third and fourth hypothesis, such that respectively ethnocentrism and empathy moderate the indirect impact of cultural distance on relational energy via cross-cultural adjustment.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

In Study 1, I first set out to understand the causal relationship between cultural distance and relational energy. In present research I found several interesting outcomes which I did not expected. I found that cultural distance is associated with increased relational energy instead of decreased relational energy. I will use Hofstede’s cultural dimensions to explain this finding. In my data, the low cultural distance group possesses a high score on the individualism dimension of Hofstede (1980). In the low cultural distance condition, this means that this group prefers their own preferences over group interests, they strive for reaching their own goals and they put emphasis on the task to be performed and the informational process of the communication. On the other hand, in the high cultural distance condition, both individualistic and collectivistic cultures were present. When collectivism is high in one’s culture, they put more emphasis on people, and they put collective goals over individual goals. Furthermore, they are motivated to enhance mutual relatedness and the success is dependent of the relationship (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In addition to that, people high in individualism are good at meeting outsiders, form new in-groups and getting
acquainted with new people. This theory could explain why the first hypothesis isn’t supported. In this study, we composed groups based on ethnical background. Based on the results of this first study, we can assume that relational energy not only is affected by cultural distance but also by the norms and values of one’s culture. The current findings open windows for future research to take cultural norms into account as possible predictors of relational energy.

Supplemental analysis of Study 1 showed that empathy mediates the positive relationship between cultural distance and relational energy. In the laboratory experiment, when people are less similar, they have the tendency to act more anxious. In this case, the expression of empathy is anxiety reducing, people seek to search for opportunities for reciprocal expression of traits, and it intrinsically pays off to reach higher levels of relational energy. I already know from previous literature that high empathetic people behave more prosocial to people who are less similar (Eisenberg & Miller, 1987) and the quality of their lives is rewarded higher (Beck, Daughtridge & Sloane, 2002; Derksen, Bensing, Lagro-Janssen, 2013). Furthermore, people high in empathy have decreased prejudices to stereotyped people from other ethnical background, which enhances the probability to help these people, increase in social interaction, and perceive more energy from this interaction (Batson, Chang, Orr & Rowland, 2002). In other words, higher cultural distance people perceive more energy from interaction by triggering their empathetic state.

In Study 2, I take cross-cultural adjustment into account as a mediator in the relationship between cultural distance and relational energy moderated by the individual differences’ ethnocentrism and empathy. In this study, I found support for the first hypothesis. Unfortunately, I did not found support for the second, third, and fourth hypothesis. I thus found discrepancies for hypothesis 1 in Study 1 and Study 2. The first study was an experiment consisting of university student participants and the second study consisted of field employees. This might explain the opposite directions in my two studies, since students
can be characterized through interpersonal connectedness between them, other than employees in organizations (Ware, Hopper, Tugenberg, Dickey & Fisher, 2008). Moreover, international students report high levels of appreciation regarding the opportunities to interact with different cultures to enhance their adjustment (Smith, Morley & Teece, 2002). International students have a lot of contact with ‘weak ties’, which are people with whom they have less frequent contact, less emotional intensity and weaker intimacy (Granovetter, 1973) and students report higher levels of energy after interactions with ‘weak ties’ (Sandstrom and Dunn, 2014). In sum, the choice of participants could have had influence in the results of this study and future research can further explore the role of sample differences on relational energy.

**Theoretical Implications**

My research makes several contributions to the literature on relational energy including a different view than expected. First of all, I hypothesized that, in all cases, cultural distance would lead to decreased relational energy. The Social Identity theory argued that people strive to keep distinctiveness to out-groups, and they avoid interaction with dissimilar others (Tajfel, 1982; Casciaro & Lobo). This paper contributes to empirical literature by advancing energy literature, specifically by examining cultural distance that may predispose the amount of energy people receive from interaction. I found contradictory results in my two studies. In the first study, I unexpectedly found support that cultural distance is associated with increased relational energy. By way of contrast, in Study 2, I found that cultural distance is negatively related to relational energy. Numerous studies put emphasis on the outcomes of relational energy (Atwater & Carmeli, 2009; Fritz, Lam & Spreitzer, 2011; Owens et al., 2016). Little research focuses on what drives relational energy at work. Collins (1993) already showed that people can get energized by interactions and shared experiences with others. Study 1 adds a new perspective on energy literature, as such that interaction with out-groups leads to higher levels of energy among university students. My results show that the negative
relationship between cultural distance and relational energy does not hold for all groups. Students are characterized by interpersonal connectedness and openness to interact with other cultures (Ware et al., 2008). The discrepancies between study samples in my two studies are worthwhile to explore further in future research.

Second, relational energy is a construct that could comprise various types of relationships, my use of the relationship between home country worker and host country worker specifically links cross-cultural literature to energy literature. This advances literature by identifying specific groups that are influenced by cultural distance affecting their perceived energy.

Third, I hypothesized that the relationship between cultural distance and relational energy would be mediated by cross-cultural adjustment. I found no support for this hypothesis. However, I did find that cross-cultural adjustment is positively associated with relational energy in expatriates working in the Netherlands. Notably, this finding highlights the need for adjustment in the host-country to get involved in energetic interactions. Previous literature already suggests that well-adjustment of people working abroad is positively correlated with behavioral and individual outcomes. Namely, cross cultural adjustment leads to higher job satisfaction, which in turn predicts turnover intentions of expatriates (Ramos, Mustafa & Haddad, 2017; Pinto, Cabral-Cardoso & Werther Jr, 2012; Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). The current finding contributes to cross-cultural literature by linking it to energy literature.

**Practical Contributions**

From a practical perspective, the research presents interesting implications for organizations. These findings provide guidance to organizations how to boost energy, how to manage expatriates inside their company and how to deal with intercultural communication.

First of all, there is a huge task reserved for organizations and specifically HR-departments to boost energy within their organization among expatriates and local employees.
If expatriates perceive themselves more similar to employees of the host-country firm, their energy level can be enhanced. The organization should initiate shared experiences between the two groups to anticipate on cultural barriers, such as intercultural team tasks or team building activities to get to know each other better. Accordingly, negative prejudices and stereotypes against out-groups can be removed and energy can be boosted.

Second, organizations that take in expatriates can benefit from this research in order to manage the planned arrival of expats. I found that cross-cultural adjustment is associated with increased relational energy, and therefore organizations should give multifarious attention to the adjustment of expatriates. First, HR-departments should prepare expatriates on beforehand, so no unexpected surprises would happen. Organizations may offer provision of information about the host-country culture on beforehand. This is important, since expatriates face many uncertainties when they arrive in the new country (Toh & DeNisi, 2005). Moreover, Toh & DeNisi (2005) also found that assigning buddies or mentors to expatriates and that local employees are an important factor in successful adjustment, as well conditional for boosting energy in the organization.

Lastly, critical to cross-cultural success is how organizations deal with social inter-cultural interactions. To boost energy in organizations HR departments should offer cross-cultural training possibilities to unite host and home country employees. These training programs should consist of tailor-made programs based on the situation of the individual (Harris & Brewster, 1999; Caligiuri, Phillips, Lazarova, Tarique & Biirgi, 2001). Critical factors in this program are the location of the assignment, family situation, and role within the organization to enhance effective communication. As such, organizations may benefit from understanding how cultural distance affects energy in these situations and how to manage this.

**Possible Limitations and Future Research**

There are several limitations that should be taken into account when interpreting the findings of this study. In the second study, I ask participants questions regarding their
experiences with home-country nationals and to describe these people. At that point, there could occur a selective memory bias. Participants possibly remember or do not remember experiences that occurred in the past (Brutus, Aguinis & Wassmer, 2013).

Moreover, in Study 2, I used Kogut and Singh’s index (1988) to calculate cultural distance. In my questionnaire, I only asked participants for their continent of origin, so I needed to adapt the index to fit within my research, since the index is based on cross-country scores. I calculated the scores based on ethnical continent of participants instead of country of origin. Therefore, the results of Study 2 are based on continent instead of country.

Lastly, the questionnaire I collected can be characterized as a single self-report survey, and therefore common method variance is a potential limitation in this research. Common method variance is the variance that is to be appointed to the measurement method rather than to the constructs the measures represent (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee & Podsakoff, 2003). Participants tend to react in a way that make them look better and overestimate behaviors viewed appropriate (Donaldson & Grant Vallone, 2002), which can be defined as a type of self-report bias. This bias can affect social desirability, consistency of answers and mood state (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Future research on relational energy may build on my thinking and findings to resolve the discrepancy between the two studies. Future research may reconsider the study samples that may explain why both studies give different outcomes. This study invites researchers to rule out the possibility that there both can be a negative and positive effect of cultural distance on relational energy.

Present findings suggest that cultural characteristics play a role in cross-cultural interactions between people. I found in Study 1 that in the low-cultural condition people are more individualistic, and in the high cultural condition people are more collectivistic. Therefore, future research can examine the role of Hofstede’s cultural dimensions on cross-cultural interaction between people.
CONCLUSION

Relational energy, measured as one’s level of psychological resourcefulness generated from interpersonal interactions enhancing one’s capacity to do work, is as I had expected affected by level of cultural distance between groups. However, on first sight, not in the way I expected. After supplementary analysis I found that high cultural distance groups report higher levels of empathy, which indicate a trait-activation in this specific situation among university students. Furthermore, among expatriates working in the Netherlands, I found support that cultural distance is negatively associated with relational energy. In this case, there is a huge task for organizations to bridge this gap and to reach higher levels of energy in organizations. But in the end, present research adds new insights to existing energy literature that there at first is an unexpected relationship between cultural distance and relational energy and future research can build on this to resolve discrepancies.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A: TABLES AND FIGURES

TABLE 1
Descriptive Statistics for Relational Energy across Different Cultural Distance Groups of Study 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of cultural difference</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 2
Descriptive Statistics for Empathy across Different Cultural Distance Groups of Study 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of cultural difference</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 3  
Results of the Mediated Regression Analysis of Study 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>B (SE)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Distance - Empathy</td>
<td>.10 (.04)</td>
<td>2.73**</td>
<td>.01**</td>
<td>[.03, .18]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy – Relational energy</td>
<td>.47 (.14)</td>
<td>3.39**</td>
<td>.00**</td>
<td>[.03, .18]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Distance – Relational energy</td>
<td>.17 (.08)</td>
<td>2.17**</td>
<td>.03**</td>
<td>[.01, .32]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indirect effect                     | .05     |     |      | [.01, .09] |

R²                                   | .03     |     |      |           |

Notes. N = 202. Values are unstandardized regression coefficients; standard error estimates are in parentheses. *p < .05, **p < .01. CI = Confidence Interval
TABLE 4  
Means, Standard Deviations and Bivariate Correlations of Study 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Cultural distance</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Empathy</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>-.15*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ethnocentrism</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Cross Cultural Adjustment</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.10.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Organizational tenure</td>
<td>40.82</td>
<td>55.69</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.26**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Months of stay</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>-.28**</td>
<td>.82**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Relational energy</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>-.15*</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.26**</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. N = 174. Organizational tenure in months. *p < .05, **p < .01.
### TABLE 5
Results of the Mediated Regression Analysis of Study 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>B (SE)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural distance – Cross-cultural adjustment</td>
<td>-.08 (.20)</td>
<td>-.40</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>[-.47, .31]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-cultural adjustment – Relational energy</td>
<td>.41 (.12)</td>
<td>3.50**</td>
<td>.00**</td>
<td>[.18, .65]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural distance – Relational energy</td>
<td>-.63(.32)</td>
<td>-193*</td>
<td>.05*</td>
<td>[-1.27, .01]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect effect</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[-.18, .12]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes.** N = 174. Values are unstandardized regression coefficients; standard error estimates are in parentheses. *p < .05, **p < .01. CI = Confidence Interval
TABLE 6
Results of the Moderated Mediation Regression Analysis of Study 2: Ethnocentrism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mediator variable model</th>
<th>Outcome variable: Cross-cultural adjustment</th>
<th>B(SE)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>2.70 (.08)</td>
<td>32.68**</td>
<td>.00**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural distance</td>
<td>-.12 (.19)</td>
<td>-.62</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnocentrism</td>
<td>-.12 (.15)</td>
<td>-.78</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>.80 (.60)</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variable model</th>
<th>Outcome variable: Relational energy</th>
<th>B(SE)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>1.94 (.37)</td>
<td>5.30**</td>
<td>.00**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural distance</td>
<td>-.58 (.32)</td>
<td>-1.83†</td>
<td>.06†</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-cultural adjustment</td>
<td>.45 (.12)</td>
<td>3.55**</td>
<td>.00**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conditional Indirect Effects Relational Energy</th>
<th>Indirect effect (SE)</th>
<th>CI 95%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-1 SD (Ethnocentrism)</td>
<td>-.33 (.15)</td>
<td>[-.47, .11]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+1 SD (Ethnocentrism)</td>
<td>.35 (.11)</td>
<td>[-.14, .33]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes.** N = 174. Interaction: cultural distance x ethnocentrism. Standard Errors between parentheses. †p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, CI = Confidence Interval
TABLE 7
Results of the Moderated Mediation Regression Analysis of Study 2: Empathy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mediator variable model</th>
<th>Outcome variable: Cross-cultural adjustment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B(SE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>2.71 (.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural distance</td>
<td>-.13 (.20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>-.15 (.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>-.09 (.50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variable model</th>
<th>Outcome variable: Relational energy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B(SE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>1.94 (.37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural distance</td>
<td>-.58 (.31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-cultural adjustment</td>
<td>.45 (.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conditional Indirect Effects Relational Energy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Indirect effect (SE)</th>
<th>CI 95%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-1 SD (Empathy)</td>
<td>-.38 (.11)</td>
<td>[-.25, .21]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+1 SD (Empathy)</td>
<td>.32 (.14)</td>
<td>[-.39, .16]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes.** N = 174. Interaction: cultural distance x empathy. Standard Errors between parentheses. †p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, CI = Confidence Interval
FIGURE 1
The Hypothesized Model

Hypothesized Model:

- **Empathy**
- **Ethnocentrism**

**H1**

**Cultural distance**

**H2**

**Cross-cultural adjustment**

**H3**

**H4**

**Relational energy**
FIGURE 2
Simple Bar Means of Relational Energy by Level of Cultural Distance

Cultural distance
Error Bars: 95% CI
FIGURE 3
Overview of the Mediation Model of Cultural Distance on Relational Energy, Mediated by Empathy: Study 1

Notes: ** indicates significance at p < .01, * indicates significance at p < .05 Note that this model is depicted in table 3.
FIGURE 4
Overview of the Mediation Model of Cultural Distance on Relational Energy, Mediated by Cross-Cultural Adjustment: Study 2

Notes: ** indicates significance at p < .01, *indicates significance at p < .05 Note that this model is depicted in table 5.
APPENDIX B: MEASUREMENT ITEMS

Ethnocentrism (Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997)

1. Most other cultures are backward compared to my culture.
2. My culture should be the role model for other cultures.
3. People from other cultures act strange when they come to my culture.
4. Lifestyles in other cultures are just as valid as those in my culture.
5. Other cultures should try to be more like my culture.
6. I am not interested in the values and customs of other cultures.
7. People in my culture could learn a lot from people in other cultures.
8. Most people in my culture could learn a lot from people in other cultures.
9. I respect the values and customs of other cultures.
10. Other cultures are smart to look up to our culture.
11. Most people would be happier if they lived like people in my culture.
12. I have many friends from different cultures.
13. People in my culture have just about the best lifestyles of anywhere.
14. Lifestyles in other cultures are not as valid as those in my culture.
15. I am very interested in the values and customs of other cultures.
16. I apply my values when judging people who are different.
17. I see people who are similar to me as virtuous.
18. I do not cooperate with people who are different.
19. Most people in my culture just don’t know what is good for them.
20. I do not trust people who are different.
21. I dislike interacting with people from different cultures.
22. I have little respect for the values and customs of other cultures.
Cross-cultural adjustment (Black, 1988)

1. How adjusted are you to your job and responsibilities?
2. How adjusted are you to working with host-country workers?
3. How adjusted are you to the transportation system in the host-country?
4. How adjusted are you to working with host-country nationals outside your company?
5. How adjusted are you to the food in the host-country?
6. How adjusted are you to the weather in the host-country?
7. How adjusted are you to interacting with the host-country people in general?
8. How adjusted are you to shopping in the host-country?
9. How adjusted are you to supervising host-country subordinates?
10. How adjusted are you to generally living in the host country?
11. How adjusted are you to the entertainment available in the host-country?

Empathy (Davis, 1980)

Note. PT = Perspective Taking, FS = Fantasy, EC = Emphatic Concern, PD = Personal Distress

1. I daydream and fantasize, with some regularity, about things that might happen to me. (FS)
2. I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me. (EC)
3. I sometimes find it difficult to see things from the “other guy’s” point of view. (PT)
4. Sometimes I don’t feel very sorry for other people when they are having problems. (EC)
5. I really get involved with the feelings of the characters in a novel. (FS)
6. In emergency situations, I feel apprehensive and ill-at-ease. (PD)
7. I am usually objective when I watch a movie or play, and I don’t often get completely caught up in it. (FS)
8. I try to look at everybody’s side of a disagreement before I make a decision. (PT)
9. When I see someone being taken advantage of, I feel kind of protective towards them. (EC)

10. I sometimes feel helpless when I am in the middle of a very emotional situation. (PD)

11. I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective. (PT)

12. Becoming extremely involved in a good book or movie is somewhat rare for me. (FS)

13. When I see someone get hurt, I tend to remain calm. (PD)

14. Other people’s misfortunes do not usually disturb me a great deal. (EC)

15. If I’m sure I’m right about something, I don’t waste much time listening to other people’s arguments. (PT)

16. After seeing a play or movie, I have felt as though I were one of the characters. (FS)

17. Being in a tense emotional situation scares me. (PD)

18. When I see someone being treated unfairly, I sometimes don’t feel very much pity for them. (EC)

19. I am usually pretty effective in dealing with emergencies. (PD)

20. I am often quite touched by things that I see happen. (EC)

21. I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both. (PT)

22. I would describe myself as a pretty soft-hearted person. (EC)

23. When I watch a good movie, I can very easily put myself in the place of a leading character. (FS)

24. I tend to lose control during emergencies. (PD)

25. When I’m upset at someone, I usually try to “put myself in his shoes” for a while. (PT)

26. When I am reading an interesting story of novel, I imagine how I would feel if the events in the story were happening to me. (FS)

27. When I see someone who badly needs help in an emergency, I go to pieces. (PD)
28. Before criticizing someone, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place.

(PT)

Relational energy (Owens, Baker, Sumpton & Cameron, 2016)

1. I feel invigorated when I interact with this person.

2. After interacting with this person, I feel more energy to do my work.

3. I feel increased vitality when I interact with this person.

4. I would go to this person when I need to be “pepped up”.

5. After an exchange with this person I feel more stamina to do my work.