



Global Journal of Business, Economics, and Management: Current Issues



Global Journal of
Business, Economics and
Management: Current Issues

Volume 14, Issue 2, (2024) 129-142

www.wjbem.eu

Expatriate humble behavior in corporate international assignments

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Suggested Citation:

Mello, S.F. & Tomei, P.A. (2024). Expatriate humble behavior in corporate international assignments. *Global Journal of Business, Economics, and Management: Current Issues*. 14(2), 129-142. <https://doi.org/10.18844/gjbem.v14i2.9398>

Received from January 1, 2024; revised from May 18, 2024; accepted from July 2, 2024.

Selection and peer review under the responsibility of Prof. Dr. Andreea Claudia Serban, Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies, Romania.

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Abstract

The global economy is promoting an increasingly competitive environment for companies operating across borders. To support the demand for this globalization, multinational companies need competent expatriates to succeed in their operations abroad. This paper aims to explore and describe the value of humility in Global Mobility, analyzing how expatriate humble behavior operates in corporate international assignments, based on the perspective of a group of experts in the field. A qualitative approach with semi-structured interviews was conducted with 19 senior managers. Content analysis was used to understand expatriates and HR's perceptions of Expressed humble behaviors (EHB), Relevance of humble behaviors (RHB); Context of Humble behavior (CHB), and Outcomes of humble behavior (OHB) with a focus on – Adaptation. Results suggest that humility is important to all, but lack of humility in Global Mobility can be a roadblocker; Humility builds connections, trust, and reliable and long-term relationships, highly contributing to expatriates' adaptation to international assignments. Additionally, humility needs favorable conditions to flourish, and it may be associated with weakness, in certain contexts. The study sheds light on the association between the value of humility and expatriate behavior, a link little explored in the field of Global Mobility. The distinctive findings of this research bring a contribution to assigned expatriates (AEs), and, consequently, to organizations that demand, every day, more sharing, cooperation, and continuous learning, to achieve their goals and objectives.

Keywords: Behavior; expatriate; humble behaviour; humility; international assignments

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1. INTRODUCTION

The global economy is promoting an increasingly dynamic competitive environment for companies operating across borders. To support the demand for this globalization, multinational companies need competent expatriates for the success of their operations abroad (Caligiuri et al., 2016; Anthony, 2021; von Pezold, 2024), but while these international assignments can provide unique opportunities for growth and development, they also require corporate expatriates “employees who are temporarily relocated by their organization to another country, usually for several years, to complete a specific task or accomplish an organizational goal” (Shaffer et al., 2012 p. 1287), to adapt and learn effectively to different social and cultural standards (Bhatti, Rehman & Rumman, 2020; Mello et al., 2023).

According to Brewster et al. (2017), these corporate expatriates, also known as assigned expatriates, or AEs, can be thought of as workers who hold high-performance positions in strategic roles that facilitate knowledge transfer and exchange (Moeller et al., 2016). They should be globally competent leaders who can effectively manage staff members from a variety of cultural backgrounds. They also need to have intercultural abilities to deal with various situations in a complicated global environment (Caligiuri et al., 2016). Furthermore, they are chosen from a pool of candidates based on their skills and competencies, and they frequently hold the status of head office representative, giving them the appearance of power (Harzing & Reiche, 2016). Frequently, this rigorous selection process confers a superior status on the expatriate, making it challenging for them to act modestly while on an international assignment.

Humility and humble behavior (HB) had not been a popular topic in Human Resource Management, especially in the area of global mobility, although it is more important for the BANI (‘brittle’, ‘anxious’, ‘nonlinear’, and ‘incomprehensible’) world, and for organizations that demand, every day, more sharing, cooperation, and continuous learning, to achieve their goals and objectives (Caligiuri & Caprar, 2022). Research in the field of organizations revealed that practicing humility is a critical success factor and a source of competitive advantage. Humility is also identified as a core value that is essential for decision-making (Vera & Rodriguez-Lopez, 2004), learning (Nielsen & Marrone, 2018), and genuine engagement in relationships with others (Maldonado et al., 2018). The international experience offers expatriates not only skills to deal with cross-cultural differences but also the ability to process multiple pieces of information and distinguish between the best responses to cultural and business demands (Caligiuri & Caprar, 2022).

1.1. Literature review

1.1.1. Conceptualizing humility

The Latin word *humilitas*, which translates to "reminds us of the earth beneath us," is the source of the English word *humility*. It alludes to a fundamental aspect of the human condition (Argandona, 2015). But both the word *humility* and the word *humiliation* are related to the term *humus*, which means "ground and earth", to lower someone to the earth. To *humiliate* is a verb from the Latin *humiliare*, which means to make humble, to abate, to oppress, to degrade, to vex, reason why some associate *humility* with *humiliation*, negative self-views and a sense of worthlessness (Exline & Geyer, 2004). To show *humility*, you don't have to *humiliate* yourself or subject a person to *humiliation*. *Humility* is the opposite of *humiliation*: is linked to the cultivation and practice of love, and should not be associated with a lack of strength, passivity, anonymity, self-deprecation, lack of self-confidence, will, or ambition (Argandona, 2015).

Owens et al. (2013) conducted a literature analysis of various definitions of *humility* that have been used over the past ten years. Based on their analysis, they created a concept known as "expressed

humility," which ignores the intrapersonal (cognitions and emotions) aspects of humility and only emphasizes behaviors that are visible to others. According to Owens et al., (2013), "expressed humility" is behavior based and it arises in social contexts and implies:

(1) Manifested Willingness to See the Self Accurately:

- taking part in a continuous process to develop precise self-awareness through social interactions (Nielsen & Marrone, 2018),
- being aware of human shortcomings and accepting that one has both strengths and weaknesses (Morris et al., 2005; Owens et al., 2013),
- escaping egoism and acknowledging one's mistakes or limitations (Owens & Hekman 2016),
- accepting something greater than the self (Tangney, 2000),
- connecting with the larger community, appreciating the value of all creation (Tangney, 2000), and,
- lacking superiority (Ou et al., 2018).

(2) Appreciation of Others' Strengths and Contributions:

- appraising others generously (Morris et al., 2005; Tangney, 2000),
- acknowledging and admiring the strengths and contributions of others without feeling threatened by them (Vera Rodriguez-Lopez, 2004; Anand et al., 2019);
- rising above the need for entitlement or domination over others (Ou et al., 2018);
- transcending the comparative-competitive response when engaging with others (Exline & Geyer, 2004).

(3) Teachability, demonstrating receptivity to: (i)

- instruction, criticism, and fresh perspectives from others (Morris et al., 2005; Tangney, 2000),
- new information, ideas, or paradigms (Vera & Rodriguez-Lopez, 2004),
- taking contradictory advice or even criticism (Ou et al., 2018; Owens et al., 2013).

1.1.2. Humility in management

Numerous empirical studies (e.g., Rego et al., 2019; Tomei et al., 2022; Caligiuri & Caprar, 2022; Owens & Hekman, 2012; 2016; Shakhmurov, Kurulay, - Sahmurova, Gursesli & Lanata, 2023) support the idea that humility is a beneficial trait for people in groups as well as for individuals. The authors of these works examine how HB affects motivation (Owens & Hekman, 2012) and engagement and learning (Nielsen & Marrone, 2018). Additionally, they evaluate its impact on adaptability (Morris et al., 2005), responsiveness, and the tendency to help and cooperate (Owens et al., 2013; Rego et al., 2019; Exline & Geyer, 2004), as well as on wellbeing (Zhong et al., 2019). According to Owens and colleagues (2013), humility has been linked to bettering interpersonal relationships and an individual's performance within an organization. This is because humility fosters growth opportunities by acknowledging and accepting others' strengths and weaknesses. Vazire and Funder (2006) found that additional empirical research demonstrates the detrimental impact of a lack of humility on interpersonal interactions, disputes, and social acceptance.

An HB was usually ignored and viewed as insufficient by someone in a leadership role until the early 20th century (Tangney, 2000; Sahmurova, Aylak, Bedirhanbeyoglu & Gulen, 2017). However scientific approaches in ethics and work psychology see humility as an asset rather than a deficit. These days, it's thought that humility plays a key role in effective leadership during these more difficult times (Morris et al., 2005; Owens et al., 2013; Sahmurova & Gursesli, 2020). The way a leader treats his followers is a

relevant factor in understanding humility in organizations (Argandona, 2015). Humble leaders welcome new ideas, are eager to pick up knowledge from others, are aware of their shortcomings and mistakes and work to overcome them, accept setbacks with pragmatism, seek guidance from others, mentor others, and genuinely want to help others. They reject flattery and self-complacency (Vera & Rodriguez-Lopez, 2004), seek criticism (Armon et al., 2023), and have diverse ideas about who they are and what they can do (Ou et al., 2018). They are not narcissistic.

1.1.3. Humility, cultural humility, and expatriates

Expatriates who exhibit cultural humility, which is a sign of humility in multicultural and cross-cultural interactions (Hook et al., 2017), acknowledge that their knowledge, skills, and abilities are culturally specific. They also show a respectful desire to learn from others and are open to appreciating ideas from other cultures. According to Armon et al. (2023), expatriates who are viewed as receptive to ideas from different cultures are more likely to accept the help and feedback provided, which would enable them to adapt and perform better on the assignment. On the other hand, ethnocentrism refers to the widespread mindset that suggests one's own culture, beliefs, and customs are "better" or "more correct" than those of other countries (Caligiuri et al., 2016). Low cultural humility among expatriates is associated with prejudice, stereotyping, and judgment (Foronda et al., 2016).

The modest manager could be more modest under some conditions or at particular moments than under others, and modesty might be useful in some situations but not in others (Yeager & Bauer-Wu, 2013; Zapata & Hayes-Jones, 2019; Tomei et al., 2022). It is possible, according to Argandona (2015), that friends will value someone's humility more than strangers. In addition, young people who wish to impress those with greater life experience may adopt behaviors that appear haughty. Furthermore, narcissistic behaviors, excessive competitiveness, fixation with beauty, and attention-seeking tend to be triggered by more individualistic cultures. Additionally, humility may be less effective in situations involving severe threats or time constraints (Owens & Hekman, 2012) and viewed as less suitable when the leader must exercise agency (Zapata & Hayes-Jones 2019). Furthermore, people tend to find it harder to admit when they don't know something in societies that shun conflict because they see it as bad (Meyer, 2016).

A sense of humility, one of the by-products of the competence of self-awareness, is an important competence for successful expatriate adjustment (Moeller et al., 2016). Humility enables expatriates to successfully manage their relationships while working in diverse countries with different people from various cultures, and communicate and behave according to the norms and practices of the host culture (Caligiuri & Caprar, 2022). Humility, according to Tangney (2000), is not a sign of weakness or insecurity; rather, it puts people in a condition of constant adaptation, enabling them to make the required changes to reach their full potential (Owens & Hekman, 2016).

1.2. Purpose of study

Given what has been exposed, and to explore and describe the value of humility in global mobility, that led to the following question: How does expatriate humble behavior (HB) operate in corporate international assignments? To respond to the above question, we explored the five secondary questions: (a) What is considered expatriate HB? (b) What does HB add to the set of competencies that stand out in the life of a successful expatriate? (c) In what contexts expatriate HB is most needed? (d) In what contexts do participants report HB associated with weak or ineffective leadership? (e) Does HB serve merely as a competence or does it play a more significant role in the adaptation process of expatriates, and potentially in the behavior of effective managers"? Each of these questions will help decode the expressed behaviors,

relevance, context, and outcomes of humility in international assignments, based on the perceptions of a group of expatriates, and Human Resources and Global Mobility (HR/GM) managers.

2. METHODS AND MATERIALS

2.1. Participants

This study employed 19 managers, among them 10 senior AEs, on assignments of at least 18 months, and 9 Human Resources / Global Mobility (HR/GM) managers, with a minimum of 10 years experience in the field. A diversity of countries of origin, company headquarters locations, and areas of responsibility were purposely sought so that this diversity enriched the information for the analysis. The participants' selection criteria were based on a purposive sample and the level of interviewees' international experience combined, which totaled more than 80 years of experience in international assignments, in 23 different countries.

2.2. Data collection instrument

This study employed qualitative, descriptive analysis based on online semi-structured interviews. The elaboration of the interview script was based on the Literature Review, and the length of each interview ranged from 50 to 70 minutes.

2.3. Data analysis

Content analysis (Mayring, 2014; Sahnurova & Gursesli, 2020) was the main method in analyzing the interviews, and the researchers selected four thematic categories, a priori aligned with the literature review and interview questions: (i) Expressed HB - HB emerging in expatriate assignments, (ii) Relevance HB - the use and the need of HB in expatriate assignments, (iii) Context HB - the situational context that determines the effectiveness of HB and when it is most needed, (iv) Outcomes HB - important perceived outcomes of HB, focusing on adaptation to the host culture.

Inter-coder reliability checks were used, by coding the same transcripts, and then comparing the results. When the level of reliability was low, the exercise was repeated until an adequate level of reliability was achieved. To avoid the limitations related to this sampling approach, the researchers took care not to ask the interviewees about their behaviors, but instead, they were asked to describe the humble behaviors that they have observed in other expatriates, or, in general, during their international assignments, for the following reasons: it is not easy to distinguish the sincere answers from those in which the interviewee tries to give a distorted image of his/her behavior; and, as humility is present in all people's actions, in one way or another, so that it is not simply a professional trait, but a crucial component of the character of the people. For ethical reasons, before the interviews, consent was given by respondents, who also received results, helping identify any errors or biases in the research, and also reviewed with outside peers.

3. RESULTS

Here are the findings and discussions, based on the four categories associated with the research questions. The session ends with a table summarizing key findings.

3.1. Expressed HB

Expatriates with an expressed HB admit their limitations, do not exaggerate their strengths, and are receptive to the ideas and advice of others (Ou et al., 2018; Anand et al., 2019):

I sat with the CEO thinking I had no idea how we were going to do this. Person to person, we were both humble in our approach to the conversation, listening to each other. We were okay to be wrong and to walk back on what we first said. (Interviewee 15)

Humility allows expatriates to go beyond the comparative–competitive response when interacting with others and, instead, acknowledge the contributions of others without feeling threatened by them (Exline, 2012; Vera & Rodriguez-Lopez, 2004), as mentioned by the HR manager below:

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

Expatriates with low levels of humility assume that people who think differently from them are intellectually and morally inferior (Krumrei-Mancuso & Rouse, 2016). Arrogant behaviors may cause rejection and harm (Vazire & Funder, 2006):

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

When you arrive, as if you know everything, and giving orders: “You just follow, you just do it”, this is not humble, and people will reject you. (Interviewee 6)

Cultural humility is fundamental for the development of flexibility and growth of individuals, as it favors people to realize that issues of ethnocentrism are the result of a lack of understanding of the differences found when we engage with people from other cultures (Yeager & Bauer-Wu, 2013; Foronda, 2020).

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

Certain responses are needed in specific cross-cultural business situations and using a certain cultural response in the wrong cultural context or at the wrong time may lower the chance of an expatriate’s success. (Caligiuri et al., 2016).

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

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

3.2. Relevance of HB

Both HR/GM managers and expatriates mentioned they had many examples of arrogant behaviors in expatriates and emphasized their perceptions on why HB is so relevant for expatriates who face significantly higher demands for social and perceptual skills, adjustment requirements in their work, and involvement with different cultural realities (Argandona, 2015):

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

If the purpose of your assignment is to become a better whatever: a leader, an engineer.... It's no different than a non-expat assignment, but if the purpose is to learn and grow, the only way you're going to do that is to demonstrate self-awareness, value others, and to be open to constantly learn new things from others. (Interviewee 17)

Humility is often disdained, as improper in someone who holds a position of leadership (Argandona, 2015; Tangney, 2000), as illustrated in the testimony below:

I think leaders interpret humility as an act of submission, of putting your head down for everything. But it is not. It is a feeling of great value, even more so, for an executive to recognize this. (Interviewee 15)

Interviewees have also emphasized the relevance of HB to avoiding toxic environments, incivility, and misunderstandings, connecting, communicating, to collaborating with people from other countries, to be integrating with the host country's locals and the host country culture (Yeager & Bauer-Wu, 2013).

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

However, the interviewees affirm that HB is not explicitly mentioned in the agenda of expatriates' intercultural programs, nor it is a topic much discussed in the field of Global Mobility.

I think the discussion on humility is lacking in organizations. Companies started doing intercultural training, and all these things to better ensure this integration, understand how people abroad think, and, intrinsically, work on this value of humility, but explicitly, I've never seen it. (Interviewee 13)

3.3. Context HB

Expatriates and HR managers recognize that humility needs favorable cultural conditions to thrive, and it may be appropriate in some contexts but ineffective in others (Cuenca et al., 2022; Tomei et al., 2022).

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

Some expatriates support that in moments of pressure, HB may be less effective, but is necessary because leaders need more cooperation from subordinates and partners (Owens & Hekman, 2012; Zapata & Hayes-Jones, 2019).

In times of pressure, there's a natural tendency, due to the stress, for one to think there is no time for humility: "I have to deliver, so to hell with everything and everyone." However, I still think you need to understand that to deliver you need the cooperation of your subordinates and/or your partners. The relationship will suffer if you put too much pressure on others, and you may be boycotted and get little or no cooperation as a result. (Interviewee 19)

Additionally, what came up during the interviews that different cultures have different views on how productive confrontation is to relationships, and HR managers confirmed that young expatriates may assume arrogant behaviors when they want to impress people with more experience (Meyer, 2016):

"In more individualistic cultures, humility would be recognized as a weakness, even associated with humiliation, so the guy would have little chance of success. In these cultures, sometimes you need to be more like a warrior, a fighter, and that, in my perception, requires some arrogance". (Interviewee 16)

3.4. Outcome HB

Interviews confirmed that the adaptation of expatriates to their global realities will impact how big and how fast a company can succeed in a global business (Moeller et al., 2016):

When you have different cultures together, difficulties of adaptation happen. It is something that happens all the time, whether you are on assignment or not, it is just that the assignment aspect makes it much more expressive. The outcome is financially more significant for the company in the sense that if it does not go well, the investment that has been made is a bit more significant. (Interviewee 1)

Also, supporting the theory, high expatriates' self-awareness provides the basis for strategically acquiring new skills and behaviors, and this self-awareness, a sense of humility, is crucial for the adaptation to other cultures (Armon et al., 2023), in successful intercultural interaction and cooperative relationships in the work environment (Owens et al., 2013; Rego et al., 2019).

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

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

The adaptation of expatriates will be easier when they are open to learning, recognize the presence of cultural differences, and are humble enough to accept social support and feedback (Morris et al., 2005):

When you are managing people as a new manager in a new culture you need to be humble and learn what is going on and adapt. You can't simply impose all your norms and expect a long-term success. You create frictions and outcomes that are maybe not desirable. (Interviewee 3)

One-third of the expatriates, when questioned about humble behaviors during the assignments, seemed to have never thought about it, manifesting low self-awareness, i.e. not manifesting their strengths and their difficulties in interpersonal skills; their values and own philosophies; how previous experiences have shaped them into who they are as an individual; and the impact their values and behavior have on others. On the other hand, HR/GM managers, based on their long experience in managing expatriates, manifested more clarity in observing such behaviors and alerted that low self-awareness may promote self-delusion and arrogance, as anticipated by Nielsen & Marrone, 2018. Also, given the diverse cultural contexts expatriates operate in, it was observed that "teachability", the curiosity and openness for learning, was the behavior considered most relevant, across different cultures.

Interviewees reported that very often, the failure of business (unsuccessful assignments, early repatriation) is related to the lack of adaptation to the new scenario, therefore a cultural humility (Caligiuri et al., 2016; Armon et al., 2023) approach is necessary for bridge the existing cultural and strategic gaps. Culture indeed plays a significant role in promoting and valuing humility, and, in some cultures, humility is considered an essential virtue, encouraging respect, collaboration, and the pursuit of the common good (Krumrei-Mancuso & Rouse, 2016). However, stating that humility is ineffective in other contexts is a simplistic generalization that does not adequately consider the complexity and applicability of this quality in different situations and individuals. The effectiveness of humility as a personal trait of leadership approach depends on various factors, including individual values,

organizational culture, and the nature of business, for example, but while humility may not be emphasized in some cultures, it does not mean that it is ineffective.

Finally, in Table 1, we summarize how expatriate HB operates in corporate international assignments.

Table 1

Expatriate HB in corporate international assignments

Questions	Results
<p>(i) What is considered expatriate humble behavior (HB)?</p>	<p>In line with the main characteristics of expressed humility (Owens & Hekman, 2016), HBs are those demonstrated by expatriates who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess their strengths but also weaknesses and acknowledge when others have more knowledge and skills. Compliment others, are open to the ideas and advice of others, and seek feedback. Recognize the limits of their knowledge, and that their thoughts can be wrong. Control arrogance, by presenting their ideas without offending. Accept the ideas of others, which are contrary to their own, without feeling offended. Interact, respect, and learn with other cultures.
<p>(ii) What humble behavior (HB) adds to the set of competencies that stand out in the life of a successful expatriate?</p>	<p>Humility is important to all, but HB plays a significant role in the lives of expatriates because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expatriates don't go as superior people, in this case, they add to their mindset of teaching, the mindset of learning. It helps them face a further level of complexity of IA, that involves different cultural realities. Humility helps expatriates to manage their relationships, connect, communicate, and collaborate with people from other cultures. Expatriates know about their jobs but should be humble enough to recognize that they may not have the cultural experience, that there are areas they do not understand and, therefore, they can learn from locals. A lack of humility can be a roadblock for global mobility.

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

Research participants highlighted the importance of analyzing the context when applying an HB, as humility needs favorable cultural conditions to thrive. It is most needed:

When the expatriate must build connections, trust, and reliable relationships.

When working in a large team, with more local staff, and staying for many years.

When interacting and dealing with people from multiple cultures.

In complex environments where openness for learning and continuous improvement is required.

In times of pressure, demanding cooperation from subordinates and partners.

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

HB is associated with ineffective leadership in many ways:

In cultures where the expatriate is viewed as a hero.

In times of pressure, which require action.

In individualistic cultures, they value competitiveness, individual ambition, and success.

In cultures where the distance of power is more accepted and where confrontation is avoided.

In situations of generational gaps, where the less senior you were the more assertive you needed to be.

(v) Does humble behavior serve merely as competence or does it play a more significant role in the adaptation process of expatriates, and potentially in the behavior of effective managers?

The HB competence of expatriates is related to several relevant reasons for adaptation, and, consequently, for the success of international assignments as:

Improved interpersonal relationships.

Increasing desire to learn and grow.

Flexibility to change behavior according to cultural differences.
Openness for true connection.

Promotion of well-being, supportive and trusting relationships.

Although the research has interesting findings, it also has methodological limitations as it works with purposive sampling and is based on the testimonies and reports of participants.

4. CONCLUSION

When taking into account the intended contribution of this work, which is to decode the expressed behaviors, relevance, context, and outcomes of humility in international assignments, this study makes some advances in terms of academic and managerial contributions by: (i) illuminating the relationship between the value of humility and expatriate HB, promoting the organizational literature in this field; (ii) providing constructive criticism so that the value of humility, which is abstract and complex, can be

internalized in the expatriate's routine; and (iii) highlighting factors that can be taken into account in daily practices to contribute to the excellence of international assignments.

The present work delineates several potential directions for further investigation. (i) a quantitative analysis of the HB of expatriates in a probabilistic sample of organizations divided by various demographic profiles, to cover the multicultural spectrum of national culture and its influence on the HB of expatriates, as well as to comprehend how the value of humility is presented in various subcultures, To better understand the differences and similarities between these two distinct viewpoints, (ii) extend the study to compare the lived experiences and perceptions of expatriates and their subordinates; (iii) conduct a new round of interviews with this same elite group of decision-makers to more precisely identify the influence of the humility value on organizational practices. In conclusion, this research can be seen as a first step in a much larger effort to comprehend significant expat behaviors and the significance of modest behavior, which is an important and intricate issue in global mobility.

Bauman, in his book “Liquid Love: On the Frailty of Human Bonds” (2013) warns that without humility and courage, there is no love, and that these two qualities are required in huge and continuous scales when one enters an unexplored and unmapped land. As an analogy to Bauman’s thoughts (2013), when an expatriate enters an unexplored and unmapped land, he needs skills, competencies, and humility.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval: Before the interviews, consent was given by respondents, who also received results, helping identify any errors or biases in the research, and also reviewed with outside peers.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

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