Integrating international migrants into the workplace: The role of HRM practices and cross-cultural competencies

Prof. Dr. Sven Hauff

Helmut Schmidt Universität

Holstenhofweg 85

22043 Hamburg

Germany

Prof. Dr. Nicole F. Richter

University of Southern Denmark

Campusvej 55

5230 Odense

Denmark

Background

- Considerable increase in international migration in recent years

- In 2017, the number of international migrants reached 258 million, compared to 220 million in 2010 and 173 million in 2000 (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2017)

- Manifold reasons
  - Majority of international migration is related to work, family and study
  - Many people leave their country because of violence, conflict, persecution or environmental changes and disaster (refugees as part of international migration)

Background & Research Aim

- Integration of international migrants into local labor markets poses a **great opportunity** but also a **great challenge** for organizations and society

- However, despite the increasing importance of international migration, there is very little research on the topic

- **Huge research gaps** regarding the individual-level, organizational-level, and societal-level antecedents of acculturation, coping and integration success of international migrants (Hajro et al. 2018)

➡ **Our research aim:** Analyze the role of HRM and cultural competencies for the integration of international migrants

International Migrants

- Typically moving from developing/emerging to developed country
- Intention to stay for an indefinite period of time (sometimes permanently)
- Initiate their own mobility / no organizational support
- Motivated by a variety of factors: political, economic, societal, family or personal reasons (chosen / forced nature of the movement)
- Usually high vulnerability, low status and low power (underemployed, in precarious job situations, high likelihood of discrimination)

Source: Hajro et al. (2018)

Integration Success

	Subjective	**Objective**
Personal/ family life domain	▪ Life satisfaction ▪ Subjective well-being ▪ Desire to repatriate ▪ Deviant behaviors ▪ Identity uncertainty	▪ Physical health ▪ Mental health ▪ Development of social networks ▪ Host-country embeddedness
Workplace/ career domain	▪ **Organizational commitment** ▪ **Subjective career success (e.g., job/career satisfaction)** ▪ **Work engagement**	▪ **Job performance** ▪ **Objective career success (e.g., salary, promotions)** ▪ **Entrepreneurial success** ▪ **Social integration**
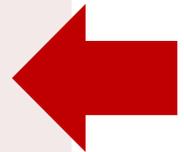
Source: Hajro et al. (2018)

HRM: A Systems Perspective

- **Basic idea of strategic HRM**: firms use different HRM practices that don't function in isolation

- Multiple HRM activities must be accounted for in order to make clear and informative statements about their effects

- Study of HRM systems or HRM configurations

- Underlying assumption: The whole is more than the sum of it's individual parts

➡ Promising perspective:

  - Allows to **identify different HRM strategies**

  - Can **reveal the specific circumstances** in which different HRM strategies are used

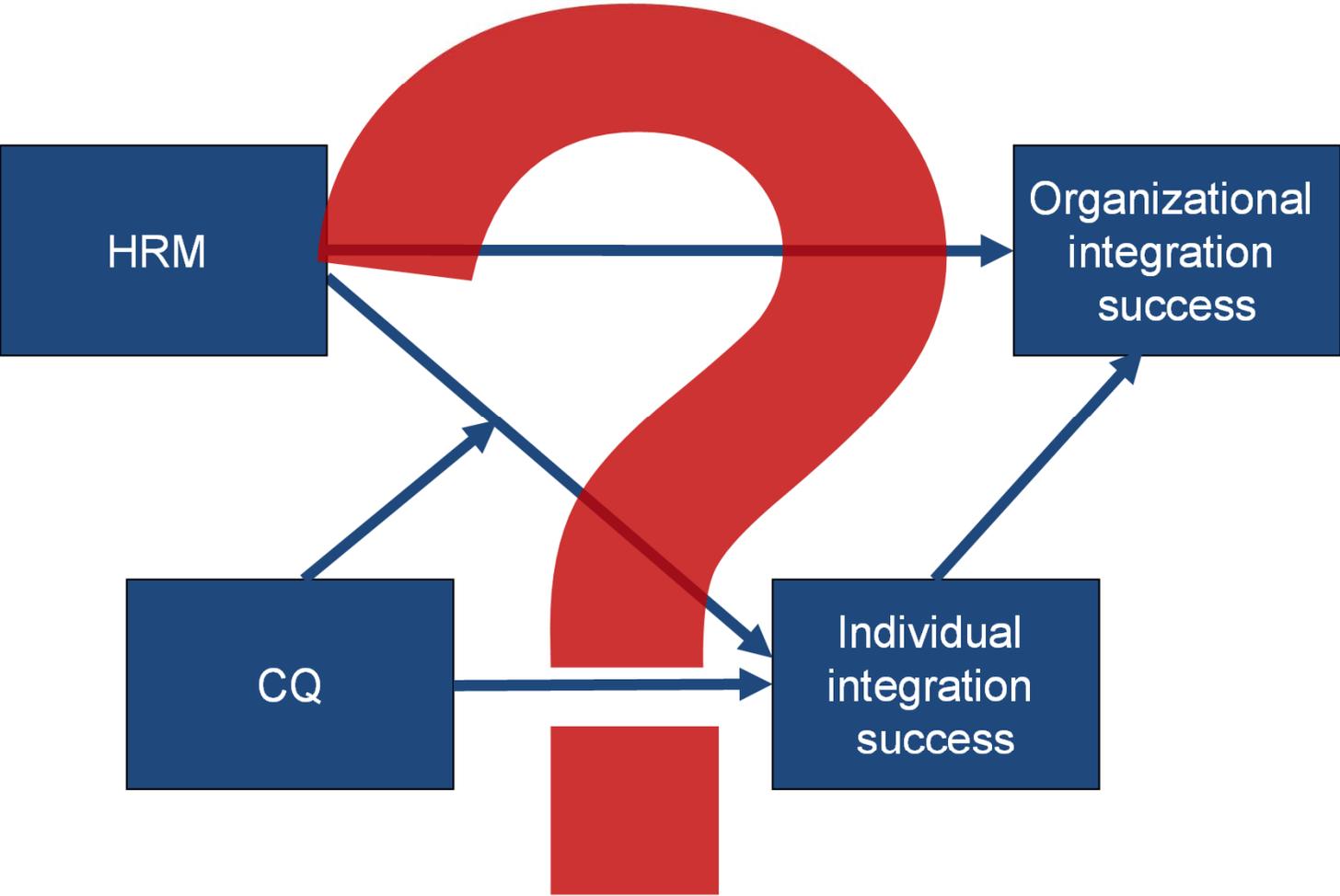 - Allows to capture the **effects of single HRM practices and the overall HRM system**

Well-being Oriented HRM (Guest 2017)

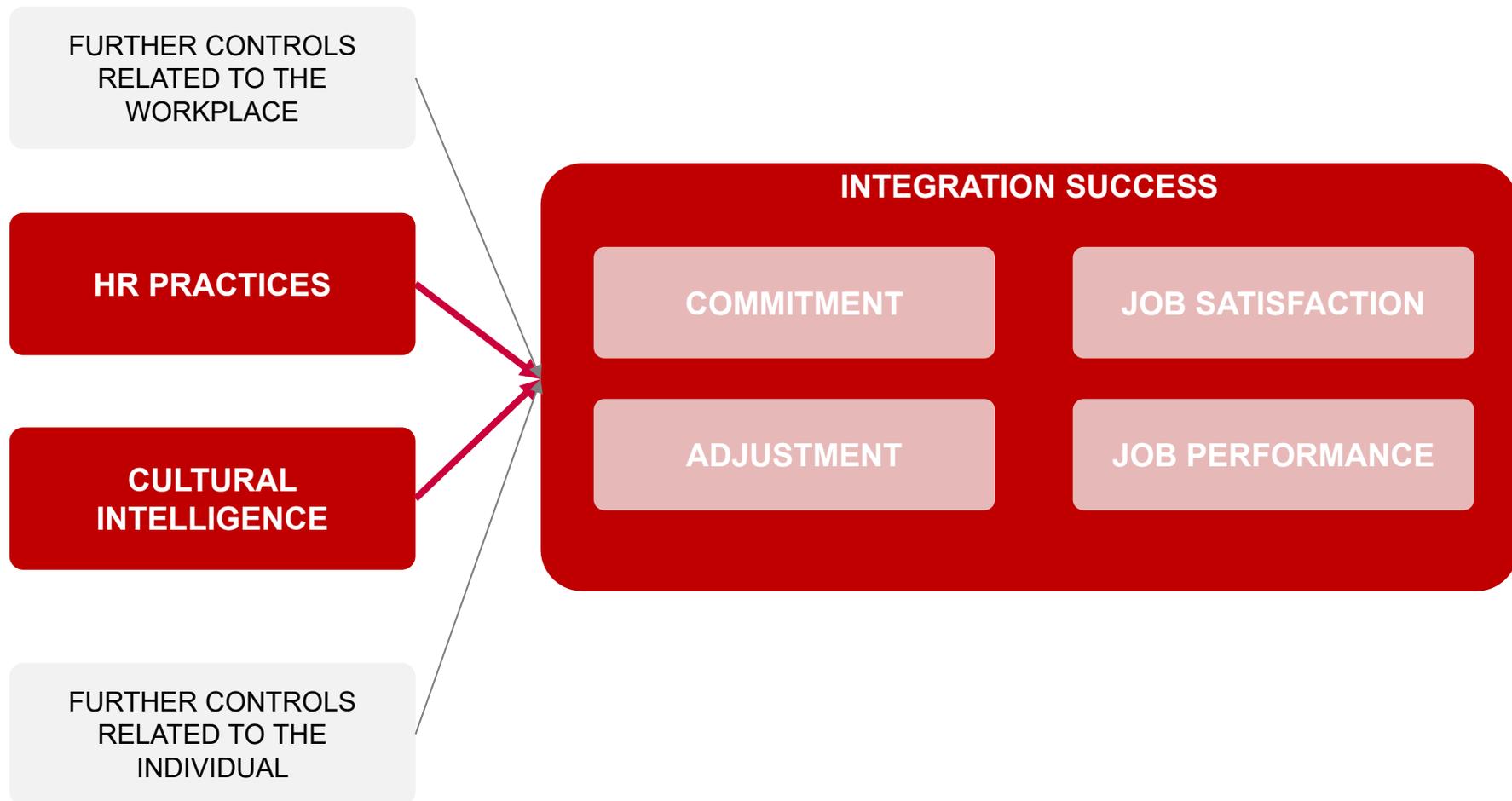| Sets of HRM practices	HRM practices
Investing in employees	Recruitment and selection Training and development Mentoring and career support
Providing engaging work	Jobs designed to provide autonomy and challenge Information provision and feedback Skill utilization
Positive social and physical environment	Health and safety a priority Equal opportunities/diversity management Zero tolerance for bullying and harassment Required and optional social interaction Fair collective rewards/high basic pay Employment security/employability
Voice	Extensive two-way communication Employee surveys Collective representation
Organizational support	Participative/supportive management Involvement climate and practices Flexible and family-friendly work arrangements Developmental performance management

Cultural Intelligence

- **Cultural intelligence** (CQ) is "a person's capability to adapt effectively to new cultural contexts" (Earley and Ang, 2003, p. 59)

- Four dimensional CQ scale offered by Ang et al. (2007) most utilized instrument for assessing CQ

- **Dimensions**

  - Metacognitive CQ – mental capability to acquire and understand cultural knowledge

  - Cognitive CQ – knowledge about cultures and cultural differences

    Intercultural judgment & decision making

  - Motivational CQ – the capability to direct and sustain effort toward functioning in intercultural situations

  - Behavioral CQ – the capability for behavioral flexibility in intercultural interactions

    Sociocultural adjustment

Relations and Dynamics

A Conceptual Model

FURTHER CONTROLS RELATED TO THE WORKPLACE

HR PRACTICES

CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

FURTHER CONTROLS RELATED TO THE INDIVIDUAL

INTEGRATION SUCCESS

COMMITMENT

JOB SATISFACTION

ADJUSTMENT

JOB PERFORMANCE

The Survey

- **To test the influence that HRM practices and cultural competencies assert on integration success, a quantitative survey is designed.**

- A pilot study shall be conducted in Germany.

- Further countries may follow.

➡ The survey is available in five different languages to ensure understanding of questions among the major language groups of recent international migrants and can be accessed here:

https://ww2.unipark.de/uc/HSU/migrants/

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE GET IN TOUCH:

Prof. Dr. Sven Hauff

hauff@hsu-hh.de

+4940 6541 2883

Helmut Schmidt Universität

Holstenhofweg 85

22043 Hamburg

Germany

Prof. Dr. Nicole F. Richter

nicole@sam.sdu.dk

+45 65502436 / +49 17624193287

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Denmark