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Fostering assigned expatriates' innovativeness via culturally intelligent supervisors: a resource gain perspective

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ABSTRACT

Assigned expatriates play a role in the innovations of multinational companies (MNCs). Yet, we still know little about how MNCs can help their expatriates towards being more innovative. In this study, we draw on conservation of resources theory to propose that perceived host country national (HCN) supervisor cultural intelligence (CQ), as a contextual resource, positively influences expatriates' innovativeness via two personal resource pathways. Specifically, we suggest that expatriates' work engagement and subsidiary socialization, as corresponding personal energy and personal knowledge pathways, positively mediate between perceived HCN supervisor CQ and expatriate innovativeness. We further hypothesize that expatriate cultural metacognition, as a key resource, helps expatriates utilize contextual resources more effectively to generate personal resources to innovate, and thus, it positively moderates the two mediation pathways. We use time-lagged data collected from assigned expatriates to test our hypotheses. We discuss our theoretical and practical contributions to the international human resource management literature.

KEYWORDS

Expatriate innovativeness; perceived HCN supervisor cultural intelligence; work engagement; subsidiary socialization; conservation of resources theory

Innovative ideas are paramount to the survival of multinational companies (MNCs) in a hypercompetitive business environment (Harvey et al., 2011), and expatriates who are assigned to MNCs' subsidiaries play an important role in generating and implementing innovative solutions (Caligiuri & Bonache, 2016; Elenkov & Manev, 2009; Harvey & Novicevic, 2002; Un, 2016). In fact, expatriates can bring fresh perspectives to MNC subsidiaries that local employees do not possess, such as ideas to improve work practices or introduce major changes such as new products (Dabic et al., 2015; Lorenz et al., 2018; Moeller et al., 2016; Tippmann et al., 2012).

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Specifically, expatriates can be conduits of knowledge within the MNC, and hence be a source of new ideas for subsidiaries (Stoermer, Davies, & Froese, 2020). Yet, innovation is a difficult endeavour for expatriates, since individuals may face unexpected challenges or cultural impediments when they attempt to change the status quo in a foreign subsidiary. It is thus important for MNCs to provide relevant contextual resources (Froese et al., 2021) so that expatriates can come up with their novel perspectives and transform their ideas into solutions that fit in with the reality of the subsidiary (Strutzenberger & Ambos, 2014).

Research has so far focused on expatriates' personal attributes as a driver of their innovativeness (Dabic et al., 2015). Studies suggest and demonstrate that some expatriates are more innovative than others thanks to their own intercultural competencies (Levy et al., 2007; Lorenz et al., 2018). However, this stream overlooks the role of subsidiary-related factors that facilitate expatriate innovativeness, even though the literature contends that any individual can be innovative provided that relevant factors are in place in a work context (Amabile, 1997; Scott & Bruce, 1994). This idea is pertinent to a challenging intercultural work setting such as expatriation. Scholars have proposed that local colleagues, and in particular supervisors who are host country nationals (HCNs), influence expatriates' effectiveness at work (Feldman & Bolino, 1999; Kang & Shen, 2018; Liu & Shaffer, 2005; Toh & DeNisi, 2005; 2007; Vance et al., 2014; Van Bakel, 2018; Zhuang et al., 2013). In a similar vein, HCN supervisors can foster expatriates' innovativeness (Vance et al., 2009), although we lack knowledge about how this influence takes place.

In this paper, we address the question of how *perceived HCN supervisor CQ* (i.e. the extent to which expatriates perceive their HCN supervisors in the subsidiary as competent to effectively interact with culturally different individuals—Thomas et al., 2015) is related with *expatriate innovativeness* (i.e. the extent to which expatriates generate and implement novel and useful ideas—Oldham & Cummings, 1996). Specifically, we aim to explain the mechanisms through which and the conditions under which this relationship takes place. To that end, we draw on the resource gain principle of conservation of resources theory (COR) (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll, 1989; Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012) to conceptualize perceived HCN supervisor CQ as a contextual resource from which expatriates can gain two types of personal resources to innovate: personal energies and personal knowledge. More precisely, first, perceived HCN supervisor CQ should positively influence expatriate innovativeness via *work engagement* (i.e. the extent to which expatriates are psychologically and physically present in their jobs, hence are energized to bring their whole selves to work) (Kahn, 1990; Lazarova et al., 2010). Second, it should cultivate innovativeness via *subsidiary*

socialization (i.e. the extent to which expatriates are transformed from outsiders into participating members, and hence have a comprehensive knowledge of the subsidiary) (Feldman & Bolino, 1999; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). We focus on the overall CQ construct as opposed to its specific facets as the predicting variable since we are conceptually interested in HCN supervisors' intercultural competences.

Further, expatriates can differ in their ability to effectively gain personal resources from available contextual resources. To address this contingency, we propose *expatriate cultural metacognition*, or expatriates' knowledge of and control over their own thinking and learning activities in the domain of cultural experiences (Thomas et al., 2015) as a key resource for expatriates that strengthens the relationship between perceived HCN supervisor CQ and the two mediators. As opposed to our independent variable, we focus on cultural metacognition as the moderator since this is the core facet of CQ that allows expatriates to regulate their affective and cognitive states, thereby strategically leveraging the resources made available to them in intercultural work contexts. We test the model in Figure 1 on a group of assigned expatriates.

The theoretical implications of this study are threefold. First, we propose HCN supervisors' intercultural competence as perceived by expatriates as a factor that fosters expatriate innovativeness, and thus we shift the focus to the role of contextual enablers. By using the resource gain principle and distinguishing between contextual and personal resources, we provide further clarity to the logical link between different types of resources and explain how expatriates acquire personal resources to innovate. We

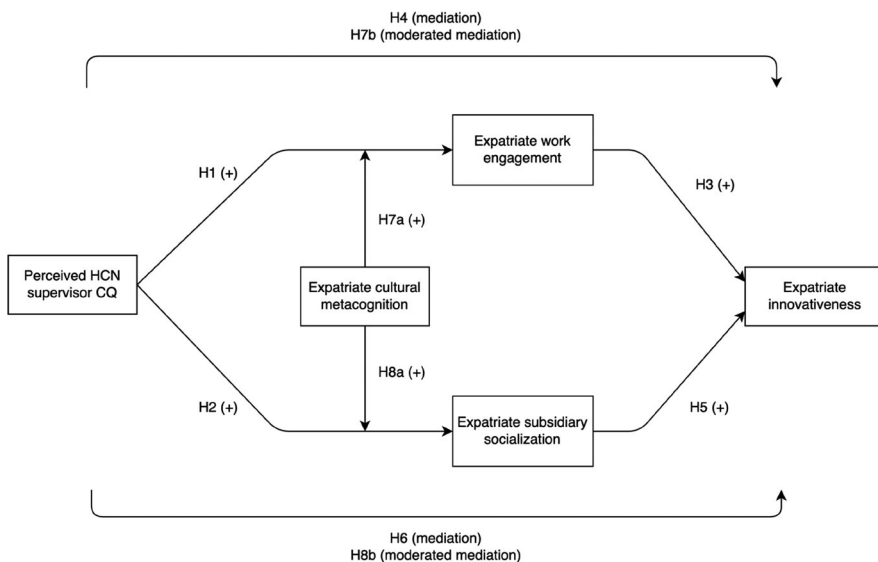


Figure 1. Theoretical model.

therefore answer the calls for understanding *how* local actors' effectiveness in intercultural interactions impacts expatriates' work-related outcomes such as their innovativeness (Adler & Aycan, 2018). Second, we use the resource caravans corollary to discuss two conceptually distinct ways (i.e. personal energies and personal knowledge) through which perceived HCN supervisor CQ influences expatriate innovativeness. By simultaneously focusing on these two paths, we underline the importance of providing expatriates with a context in which they can both bring their 'foreign' perspectives, yet also overcome their liability of foreignness (i.e. diminish the disadvantages associated with being a non-local employee), so that they become an innovative asset to the subsidiary (Harvey et al., 2005).

Third, we introduce expatriate cultural metacognition as a key resource that enables expatriates to acquire subsidiary-related knowledge from perceived HCN supervisor CQ. This finding implies that key resources allow expatriates to 'unlock' contextual resources in a foreign environment by converting them into personal resources to innovate. From a practical perspective, our findings suggest that MNCs can enhance the innovativeness of their expatriates by integrating intercultural effectiveness as an important selection criterion not only for expatriates, but also for their corresponding local supervisors.

Theoretical background

COR theory and the relevance of resource gain for expatriate innovativeness

COR theory broadly suggests that people strive to accumulate and retain resources (Hobfoll, 1989), where resources are defined as anything that serve as means to attain one's goals (Halbesleben et al., 2014). Individuals with surplus resources are better positioned for further resource gains, whereas those who lack relevant resources make defensive attempts to conserve their remaining resources (Halbesleben et al., 2014). Notably, Ten Brummelhuis and Bakker (2012) distinguished between resource types as contextual and personal resources, based on their origin. Contextual resources are those things located outside the person and in the environment (e.g. social support), while personal resources exist within the individual (e.g. energies or knowledge). People tend to monitor their environment and seek to identify contextual resources that can be converted into personal resources (i.e. resource gain), which in turn put themselves in a position for future resource gains (Ellis et al., 2015).

When expatriates start working in a new subsidiary, they take part in a culturally unfamiliar context in which business methods, values or norms may differ from what they are used to (Adler, 2008). They may also encounter difficulties in accessing subsidiary-related knowledge and face opposition from local colleagues when they attempt to bring or

implement new ideas (Bonache et al., 2016; Feldman & Bolino, 1999; Vance et al., 2009). These challenges can pose critical barriers to expatriates' innovativeness for two reasons. First, high levels of stress and anxiety associated with being a newcomer might deplete individuals' energy at work. When expatriates cannot fully utilize their cognitive capacities and bring their true selves to work (Lazarova et al., 2010; Ren et al., 2015) they may fail to generate innovative ideas (Harris et al., 2014). Second, since novelty and usefulness are the criteria for innovativeness, expatriates need to have a broad understanding of the subsidiary context. When expatriates lack subsidiary-related knowledge, they may have difficulty assessing the novelty and usefulness of their ideas (Feldman & Bolino, 1999; Vance et al., 2009). Not having sufficient knowledge about who is influential in a subsidiary may also hinder local gatekeepers' support for implementing ideas (Hocking et al., 2007; Vance et al., 2009).

In this context, the resource gain principle of COR theory is highly relevant for expatriates' innovativeness. Specifically, a supportive environment can both make newcomers feel energized at work and provide them with pertinent subsidiary information for being innovative (Dufour et al., 2020; Harris et al., 2014). Further, while endorsement of ideas can yield positive outcomes such as higher levels of well-being or a status gain, a backlash can result in increased stress levels or interpersonal conflicts (Janssen et al., 2004; Yuan & Woodman, 2010). Thus, generating and implementing innovative ideas requires acquiring a surplus of personal resources from contextual resources (Ng & Feldman, 2012; Van de Ven, 1986).

COR theory proposes that personal resources do not exist individually, but travel in packs or *caravans* (Hobfoll, 2011). Since multiple resources can concurrently emerge from supportive environmental conditions (Hobfoll et al., 2018), contextual resources should help expatriates gain different types of personal resources to innovate. Two such types of personal resources are personal energy (e.g. the cognitive or physical capacity to dedicate to work) and personal knowledge (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll et al., 2018). The expatriate literature in fact hints that being energized to bring oneself to work and having the subsidiary-related knowledge to gauge what is novel and useful can be relevant personal resources for positive work outcomes such as innovativeness (Froese et al., 2021; Lazarova et al., 2010; Vance et al., 2009). Thus, we focus on work engagement and subsidiary socialization as two constructs corresponding to these two personal resource gain pathways.

Perceived HCN supervisor CQ and expatriate work engagement

Supervisors are prominent organizational actors that affect expatriates' effectiveness (Kraimer & Wayne, 2004; Toh & DeNisi, 2005; Yamazaki, 2014).

Psychosocial and vocational support received from local supervisors positively affect expatriates' attitudes towards the subsidiary environment and decrease tensions between expatriates and local colleagues (Carraher et al., 2008). While supervisors who share nationality with expatriates (e.g. supervisors back in the MNC headquarters) can also help expatriates steer through challenges, intercultural competencies of supervisors are particularly crucial when the two parties are from different cultural backgrounds. Specifically, relationships between expatriates and supervisors from different cultures are more likely to suffer from potential misunderstandings due to their different ways of thinking and behaving. Here, perceived HCN supervisor CQ should be a pertinent contextual resource that can endow expatriates with personal resources to innovate, as the knowledge, skills, and metacognition dimensions jointly tap into the intercultural competencies of supervisors.

Perceived HCN supervisor CQ is associated with effective communication and interaction with people from different cultural backgrounds (Bücker et al., 2014; Thomas et al., 2008). Such effectiveness in communication implies that HCN supervisors can convey their goals to expatriates more clearly than those who lack such competencies (Earley, 2002). When people have clear goals, they can focus on work and devote less effort to clarifying the requirements of their jobs. Further, when expatriates perceive their HCN supervisors as culturally intelligent, then the former should conceive the latter as able to grasp the issues that foreigners may face in the host country, as well as sensitive to the actions of people from other cultural backgrounds, and flexible in adapting cognitive and behavioural scripts when interacting with foreigners (Thomas et al., 2008). Thus, perceived HCN supervisor CQ should be associated with effectively taking the perspective of the expatriate. As a result, such supervisors can build close relationships with their subordinates, which eases misunderstandings and reduces tensions between the two sides (Chua et al., 2012). In turn, expatriates can be more present in their jobs, and thus be attentive and energized at work. In other words, expatriates have higher levels of personal energies in the form of work engagement. Thus, we posit the following:

Hypothesis 1: Perceived HCN supervisor CQ is positively related with expatriate work engagement.

Perceived HCN supervisor CQ and expatriate subsidiary socialization

Resource caravans corollary suggests that individuals can gain multiple personal resources from contextual resources. COR theory also proposes knowledge as another important personal resource that people can generate from contextual resources (Hobfoll, 2002; Ten Brummelhuis &

Bakker, 2012). One central aspect of expatriate socialization is having deep knowledge about how things work in a subsidiary (Feldman & Bolino, 1999). Expatriate literature suggests that local colleagues, and specifically supervisors can facilitate expatriates' socialization (Mezias & Scandura, 2005; Vance et al., 2014). The main argument is, the more expatriates receive assistance and information regarding the new work environment the more knowledge they acquire about the subsidiary, ultimately becoming an insider in the subsidiary (Carraher et al., 2008). To that end, expatriates' perceptions of their HCN supervisors' intercultural effectiveness should play a role.

Perceived HCN supervisor CQ is associated with effectively conveying information about the subsidiary and building strong relationships with expatriates (Chua et al., 2012). Consequently, expatriates can develop a deeper understanding of the subsidiary's values and culture (Mezias & Scandura, 2005). Perceived HCN supervisor CQ also allows expatriates to comprehend how to get work done efficiently in the subsidiary and provides them with information regarding intra-organizational politics and informal rules (Vance et al., 2009). Further, it helps expatriates overcome cultural barriers between locals and themselves (Harvey et al., 2005). As a result, expatriates can build social connections with local peers, which helps them gather further information from different local sources. In sum, perceived HCN supervisor CQ allows expatriates to socialize into the subsidiary.

Hypothesis 2: Perceived HCN supervisor CQ is positively related with expatriate subsidiary socialization.

Expatriate work engagement and innovativeness

According to COR theory, personal resources engender positive work-related outcomes. Specifically, the resource gain principle suggests that when individuals acquire and possess surplus personal resources, they can invest these surplus resources in challenging activities such as innovation (Halbesleben et al., 2014). Since work engagement is a relevant personal resource denoting having the energy to put into one's work, it should trigger expatriates' innovativeness.

Work engagement is related with broadening one's action repertoire as it promotes the willingness to try new things and experiment with ideas. As such, engaged expatriates take more personal initiative at work (Hakanen et al., 2008). Being absorbed at work also drives expatriates to push cognitive boundaries by facilitating imagination (Mainemelis, 2001). A deep interest or involvement in an activity triggers innovative thinking (Amabile, 1983). In addition to being cognitively present,

engaged expatriates also bring their physical energies at work (Rich et al., 2010). People who are engaged can overcome the fear of failure, and hence feel less threatened at work (Mainemelis, 2001). Low levels of felt threat should spur expatriates to be behaviourally involved at work, and implement their ideas (Christian et al., 2011; Janssen, 2003). These arguments echo with previous research, which shows that work engagement enhances innovativeness (Alfes et al., 2013; Hakanen et al., 2008).

Hypothesis 3: Expatriate work engagement is positively related with expatriate innovativeness.

While personal resources can lead to positive outcomes such as innovativeness, COR theory explains how contextual and personal resources influence work-related outcomes in more detail. Specifically, Ten Brummelhuis and Bakker (2012) propose personal resources as the mediating paths through which contextual resources engender positive outcomes. Additionally, the resource gain perspective suggests that the surplus resources individuals acquire put them in a position for further resource gain. Therefore, contextual resources should result in innovativeness—an activity that requires individuals to take personal initiative—to the extent that they provide expatriates with personal resources.

We have contended that perceived HCN supervisor CQ affects work engagement. Further, the quality of relationship stemming from effective intercultural interactions should help expatriates generate new ideas and put these ideas into action (Harvey & Novicevic, 2002). Expatriate work engagement therefore denotes a personal resource gain in the form of personal energies, which translates perceived HCN supervisor CQ (i.e. a contextual resource) into expatriate innovativeness.

Hypothesis 4: Expatriate work engagement mediates the positive relationship between perceived HCN supervisor CQ and expatriate innovativeness.

Subsidiary socialization and expatriate innovativeness

As discussed earlier, COR theory proposes that having relevant personal resources result in positive work-related outcomes (Hobfoll, 2002). As a personal knowledge resource, subsidiary socialization should help expatriates to more accurately assess whether their novel ideas will gain acceptance in the subsidiary. More specifically, socialized individuals have a better understanding of which ideas are more relevant for the local market (Feldman & Bolino, 1999) and whether their approach will bring performance improvement to the organization (Yuan & Woodman, 2010). As a result, they have a clearer assessment of whether new ideas have legitimacy in the local context. Understanding the legitimacy of

potential ideas results in expatriate innovativeness for a few reasons. First, as expatriates build familiarity with the context, they should perceive themselves as more efficacious for generating useful ideas, which triggers creativity (Tierney & Farmer, 2011). Second, the knowledge individuals acquire reduces the need for putting effort towards experimenting with irrelevant options, and hence, going into a deep—as opposed to superficial—exploration mode, which facilitates generation of novel and useful ideas (Rietzschel et al., 2007). Third, socialized expatriates become a part of information networks that convey knowledge and meaning to their endeavours in the subsidiary. When individuals have a clear judgment regarding the applicability of their ideas, they become more effective in assessing and implementing alternative solutions (Akkan & Guzman, 2022; Harris et al., 2014). In sum, subsidiary socialization implies having pertinent personal knowledge to innovate.

Hypothesis 5: Expatriate subsidiary socialization is positively related with expatriate innovativeness.

According to COR theory, personal resources are the paths through which contextual resources trigger positive outcomes at work. Because perceived HCN supervisor CQ facilitates expatriates' acquisition of subsidiary-related knowledge, expatriates have an accurate idea of what is legitimate and relevant in the local context, and as a result, they dedicate their cognitive efforts towards what would be considered as innovative. In other words, perceived HCN supervisor CQ should be a contextual resource that triggers expatriate innovativeness since it yields knowledge-related personal resources for expatriates. Therefore, we suggest the following:

Hypothesis 6: Expatriate subsidiary socialization mediates the positive relationship between perceived HCN supervisor CQ and expatriate innovativeness.

A moderating key resource: expatriate cultural metacognition

We have so far suggested that contextual resources can result in personal resources to innovate. Yet, individuals may differ in their capacity for gaining personal resources from contextual resources. COR theory provides a more nuanced explanation for this link. Specifically, individuals possess certain *key resources*, or personal attributes that help individuals to select, alter, and ultimately utilize contextual resources most optimally (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). As such, key resources can play a facilitating role in converting contextual resources into personal resources. For expatriates who regularly interact with their HCN supervisors, their

cultural metacognition should be one relevant key resource. Metacognition dimension of CQ is a particularly pertinent key resource because it is the strategic dimension that helps individuals regulate knowledge and monitor their personal goals (Thomas et al., 2008; 2015). Further, it helps individuals take the perspective of people from other cultures (Mor et al., 2013) and it facilitates learning process in intercultural settings (Morris et al., 2019). Thus, while perceived HCN supervisor CQ can result in a gain of personal resources, cultural metacognition, as a key resource, should help expatriates more strategically attend to the contextual resources made available by their supervisors and generate personal resources more effectively.

Expatriates' cultural metacognition can play a pivotal role in translating contextual resources to personal resources in at least two ways. First, people with high levels of cultural metacognition have control over their learning activities (Thomas et al., 2015). The goal-directed and future-oriented aspect of metacognition (Flavell, 1979) helps expatriates effectively evaluate how the information they receive is instrumental in attaining their goals in the subsidiary. For instance, a culturally intelligent HCN supervisor may convey precise information regarding the culturally different ways in which local colleagues work. Expatriates with high levels of cultural metacognition have the capability to leverage this knowledge such as by choosing when to emphasize or to downplay these differences in their interpersonal interactions. Second, cultural metacognition helps people regulate their cognitive and affective states (Thomas et al., 2008). For example, expatriates may think that the cultural information they receive from a culturally intelligent HCN supervisor is clashing with their own cultural background. In such cases, cultural metacognition allows expatriates to inhibit their own undesirable responses such as emotional or behavioural outbursts.

The regulatory role of expatriate cultural metacognition is relevant to fostering work engagement from perceived HCN supervisor CQ. Even when culturally intelligent HCN supervisors effectively convey what is expected from expatriates, expatriates may differ in their ability to make sense of this information. If expatriates cannot attend to such information accurately, they might focus on irrelevant tasks. On the other hand, if expatriates make sense of this information in an effective way, then they have more time and energy to put into their work, and better concentrate on their jobs. In the latter case, expatriates would also be less frustrated at work. When unpleasant feelings are reduced, expatriates are less distracted. In sum, expatriates with high levels of cultural metacognition can make use of perceived HCN supervisor CQ, resulting in higher levels of mental energy and psychological availability at work. Thus, we posit:

Hypothesis 7a: Expatriate cultural metacognition positively moderates the positive relationship between perceived HCN supervisor CQ and expatriate work engagement.

The resource gain principle of COR theory proposes personal resources as the mediating mechanism between contextual resources and work-related outcomes. Specifically, key resources should strengthen the personal resource gain paths through which contextual resources are translated into constructive work-related outcomes such as expatriate innovativeness. Thus, expatriates' cultural metacognition should allow them to be engaged at work, which in turn boost their innovativeness. We thus propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 7b: Expatriate cultural metacognition moderates the mediating effect of expatriate work engagement between perceived HCN supervisor CQ and expatriate innovativeness such that the mediating effect is stronger at high levels of expatriate cultural metacognition.

As a key resource for facilitating the personal resource gain from contextual resources, cultural metacognition should also have an impact on the extent to which expatriates can acquire subsidiary-related knowledge from perceived HCN supervisor CQ. Expatriates can effectively utilize the advice received from local supervisors to the extent that they can put the available information to use in a strategic manner (Nebus, 2006; Parker et al., 2010). Since cultural metacognition is a key resource regulating one's cognition in a strategic way, it helps expatriates translate the information received from the supervisor to a form that is applicable to the subsidiary reality. Specifically, expatriates with high levels of cultural metacognition can apply the precise guidelines received from their culturally intelligent HCN supervisors to their relationships with other stakeholders such as their colleagues or customers. Further, in cases where cultural clashes are inevitable, cultural metacognition helps expatriates control their emotions in interpersonal relationships such that their negative affective states do not manifest in their behaviours (Thomas et al., 2008). Thus, expatriates can leverage the cultural knowledge received from their HCN supervisors to build stronger relationships with local colleagues, and therefore have further access to insider knowledge about the subsidiary.

Hypothesis 8a: Expatriate cultural metacognition positively moderates the positive relationship between perceived HCN supervisor CQ and expatriate subsidiary socialization.

As discussed earlier, key resources positively strengthen the extent to which individuals acquire personal resources to innovate, from contextual

resources. We proposed that expatriate subsidiary socialization is a mediating personal knowledge pathway between perceived HCN supervisor CQ and expatriate innovativeness. Further, cultural metacognition is a key resource that helps expatriates more effectively translate cultural information from their local supervisors so that expatriates have a more grounded idea of what is novel and useful in the subsidiary. Taken together, we suggest the following:

Hypothesis 8b: Expatriate cultural metacognition moderates the mediating effect of expatriate subsidiary socialization between perceived HCN supervisor CQ and expatriate innovativeness such that the mediating effect is stronger at high levels of expatriate cultural metacognition.

Methods

To test our hypotheses, we collected time-lagged data from assigned expatriates. Initially, we used convenience sampling to have access to assigned expatriates from multiple MNCs, by sending out emails to our acquaintances on expatriate missions. Upon completion of the first surveys, we also asked expatriates to provide us with the names of other colleagues who might be interested in participating in the study. Therefore, we complemented convenience sampling approach with snowball sampling. We sent all potential participants an email clearly explaining the aim of the project to obtain their consent to participate in the research. Second surveys were administered with a time lag of about one month. We asked our participants to respond to the survey questions taking into consideration their current expatriation job. We sent three reminders to potential participants at both time points. Items to the scales used in this study can be found in the [Appendix](#). All scales ranged from (1: strongly disagree, 7: strongly agree) except cultural distance (1: not similar at all, 5: extremely similar) and language fluency (1: none, 5: excellent).

A total of 232 expatriates shared their emails with us. 177 out of 232 people filled in the first survey in full (76% response rate). Among these 177 individuals, 131 filled in the second survey that was administered about one month after the first one (56% overall response rate). We excluded the answers of 16 expatriates whose supervisors did not originate from the host country. Therefore, our final sample consists of 115 expatriates from 57 different companies. The mean age of participants was 37.4, and males comprised 61% of the sample. 24 participants define their roles as 'professional', 34 as 'expert', 29 as 'manager', and 28 as 'senior manager'. Participants were of 30 different nationalities (67 from Asia, 30 from Europe, 7 from Africa, 3 from North America, and 8 from South America) and resided in 28 different countries.

Measures

Perceived HCN supervisor CQ (time 1 survey)

We administered a modified version of the 10-item CQ scale of Thomas et al. (2015), in which we shifted the referent from 'self' to 'supervisor'. Prior to the administration of the scale, we asked expatriates whether their supervisor originated from the host country. Only expatriates with a local supervisor were provided with the perceived HCN supervisor CQ scale. One sample item was 'my supervisor knows the ways in which cultures around the world are different'. The alpha reliability is 0.94.

Expatriate cultural metacognition (time 1 survey)

This construct was measured by the three items that tap into cultural metacognition dimension of Thomas et al., (2015) CQ scale. The alpha reliability is 0.75.

Expatriate work engagement (time 2 survey)

We measured this construct with 7 items from the scale devised by Rothbard (2001), which consists of attention and absorption dimensions of work engagement. 'I focus a great deal of attention on my work' and 'When I am working, I am totally absorbed by it' are sample items that correspond to these two dimensions. The alpha reliability is 0.86.

Expatriate subsidiary socialization (time 2 survey)

Because there is no prior scale that taps into this construct, we used a 4-item modified version of the organizational socialization scale by Haueter et al. (2003). Instead of 'organization' we used 'host country organization' in the wording of the items. One sample item was 'I know the policies, rules, and procedures of this host country organization'. The alpha reliability is 0.83.

Expatriate innovativeness (time 2 survey)

We used six items related with idea generation and idea realization from Janssen's (2000) innovative work behaviour scale. Sample items are 'I generate original solutions for problems' and 'I transform innovative ideas to useful applications'. The alpha reliability is 0.90.

Control variables

Following the recommendations of Becker (2005), we considered variables that are theoretically relevant to our model. We controlled for

participants' length of service in the subsidiary (in months—up to 25 months) to account for its potential influence on both regression equations, since longer periods spent in a subsidiary might have positive impact on work engagement, subsidiary socialization, and innovativeness. We controlled for local language fluency using a single item, as lack of fluency may deplete cognitive resources and make it difficult to acquire subsidiary-related knowledge. As cultural differences may make it more difficult to understand local norms and behaviours and hinder immersion into work, we also controlled for perceived cultural distance between home and host cultures. We used four items from Chen et al., (2010) scale ($\alpha = 0.90$). We also controlled for expatriates' age and gender (female = 1, male = 2).

Preliminary analyses

We first conducted a CFA to test for the discriminant validity of scales. The best fit was a six-factor model consisting of perceived HCN supervisor CQ, expatriate cultural metacognition, expatriate innovativeness, expatriate subsidiary socialization, the two dimensions of expatriate work engagement (attention and absorption) loading as a second-order factor, and cultural distance ($\chi^2/df = 1.50$, RMSEA = 0.07, CFI = 0.90, TLI = 0.90), compared to other models with smaller numbers of factors (Table 2). We also compared this model with another one in which we loaded all work engagement items into one factor, and we observed that this model is nested in the former $\chi^2(2) = 149.30$, $p < 0.001$. These findings gave us confidence that the items of work engagement can be aggregated as a second-order construct. The values for the average value extracted by were above 0.5 for all latent variables, which implies that there were no issues with discriminant validity.

Since all data were collected from a single source (i.e. expatriates), we ran a marker variable analysis to investigate whether common method bias was a concern (Williams et al., 2010). We used uncertainty avoidance scale (Blodgett et al., 2001) consisting of five items as the latent marker variable. In a first step, we let all six factors to load on their corresponding factors ($\chi^2 = 1147.66$, $df = 661$). Then, in a second step, we added another factor for which all scale items loaded on a common method factor ($\chi^2 = 1371.02$, $df = 700$). The difference between the fit of the two models was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). However, the amount of variance accounted to the common method factor was 13.0%, which is lower than the 25% threshold discussed by Williams et al. (1989). Therefore, common method variance is unlikely to be threat for the validity of our results (Table 1).

Analytical approach and hypothesis testing

We report the means and standard deviations of variables, as well as the correlations in Table 2. We employed hierarchical multiple regression using ordinary least squares (OLS) to test Hypotheses 1, 2, 3, 5, 7a and 8a. Because we had a relatively small sample size, and because the regression approach provides a smaller absolute bias than structural equation modelling in testing mediation models (Cheung & Lau, 2017), we used the former approach to test our multiple mediation model. Therefore, we aggregated all items at each scale to create a scale measure for each construct. We used Hayes (2017) PROCESS macro with 10,000 bootstrap samples to test our mediation (H3 and H6) and moderated mediation hypotheses (H7b and H8b). While testing for the mediation of one path, we controlled for the other mediating variable.

Hypothesis 1 suggested that perceived HCN supervisor CQ is positively related with expatriate work engagement. As shown in Model 1

Table 1. Means, standard deviations and correlations.

		Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Age	37.37	7.46									
2	Gender	1.39	0.49	−0.34***								
3	Time in subsidiary	17.50	8.34	0.17	−0.24**							
4	Language fluency	3.01	1.42	0.02	−0.06	0.27**						
5	Cultural distance	2.54	0.91	0.27**	−0.29**	0.04	0.13					
6	Expatriate cultural metacognition	5.76	0.82	−0.02	−0.04	0.04	−0.09	−0.03				
7	Perceived HCN supervisor CQ	5.16	1.11	−0.04	−0.04	0.16	−0.05	−0.05	0.29**			
8	Expatriate work engagement	5.15	0.97	0.24**	−0.21*	−0.04	0.11	0.30**	0.22*	0.23*		
9	Expatriate subsidiary socialization	5.78	0.81	0.25**	−0.24*	0.17	0.21*	0.25**	0.21*	0.25**	0.40***	
10	Expatriate innovativeness	5.29	0.95	0.20*	−0.32***	0.11	0.02	0.14	0.45***	0.29**	0.41***	0.45***

N = 115.

†*p* < 0.10, **p* < 0.05, ***p* < 0.01, ****p* < 0.001.

Note. The coding of variables are as follows.

Gender: 1: female, 2: male.

Language fluency: 1: none, 2: poor, 3: average, 4: good, 5: excellent.

Table 2. CFA results.

	χ^2	df	RMSEA	CFI	TLI
7-factor: WEAT; WEAB; ESS; EINN; ECMT; PSCQ; CD	761.37	506	.07	.90	.90
6-factor: WEAT&WEAB; ESS; EINN; ECMT; PSCQ; CD	912.21	512	.08	.84	.82
5-factor: WEAT&WEAB; ESS&EINN; ECMT; PSCQ; CD	1020.06	517	.09	.80	.78
4-factor: WEAT&WEAB; ESS&EINN&ECMT; PSCQ; CD	1086.78	521	.10	.77	.75
3-factor: WEAT&WEAB; ESS&EINN&ECMT; PSCQ&CD	1392.51	524	.12	.65	.62
2-factor: WEAT&WEAB&ESS&EINN&ECMT; PSCQ&CD	1629.92	526	.14	.55	.52
1-factor: WEAT&WEAB&ESS&EINN&ECMT&PSCQ&CD	2131.03	527	.16	.35	.31

Note. SRMR values are not reported because we used maximum likelihood with missing values.

WEAT: Expatriate work engagement (attention); WEAB: Expatriate work engagement (absorption); ESS: Expatriate subsidiary socialization; EINN: Expatriate innovativeness; ECMT: Expatriate cultural metacognition, PSCQ: Perceived HCN supervisor CQ; CD: Cultural distance.

of Table 3, perceived HCN supervisor CQ is significantly correlated with expatriate work engagement ($b = 0.20$, $p = 0.014$). Thus, Hypothesis 1 is supported. In Hypothesis 2, we proposed that perceived HCN supervisor CQ is positively related with expatriate subsidiary socialization. This hypothesis is supported in Model 1 of Table 4 ($b = 0.16$, $p = 0.013$).

In Hypothesis 3, we suggested that expatriate work engagement is positively related with expatriate innovativeness. This hypothesis is supported in Model 1 of Table 5, after controlling for subsidiary socialization ($b = 0.19$, $p = 0.031$). Hypothesis 4 suggested that expatriate work engagement mediates between perceived HCN supervisor CQ and expatriate innovativeness. Using PROCESS macro, we observe that the product of the bootstrapped OLS results of the two stages is significant (value = 0.062, 95% CI [0.009, 0.136]). This finding supports Hypothesis 4. Hypothesis 5 suggests that

Table 3. Regression results for the influence of perceived HCN supervisor CQ on expatriate work engagement.

	Model 0		Model 1		Model2	
	b	se	b	se	b	se
Age	0.02	(0.01)	0.02*	(0.01)	0.03*	(0.01)
Gender	-0.25	(0.20)	-0.21	(0.19)	-0.26	(0.19)
Time in subsidiary	-0.02	(0.01)	-0.02*	(0.01)	-0.02*	(0.01)
Language fluency	0.07	(0.06)	0.10	(0.06)	0.10	(0.06)
Cultural distance	0.22*	(0.10)	0.23*	(0.10)	0.22*	(0.10)
Perceived supervisor CQ			0.20*	(0.08)	0.18*	(0.08)
Expatriate cultural metacognition			0.22*	(0.10)	0.27*	(0.11)
Perceived HCN supervisor CQ X Expatriate cultural metacognition					0.16	(0.09)
Intercept	2.99**	(1.10)	2.83**	(1.04)	2.96**	(1.03)
F-value	3.72**		4.98***		5.10***	
ΔR -squared			0.10		0.02	
R-squared	0.15		0.25		0.27	

$N = 115$.

† $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Table 4. Regression results for the influence of perceived HCN supervisor CQ on expatriate subsidiary socialization.

	Model 0		Model 1		Model2	
	b	se	b	se	b	se
Age	0.02	(0.01)	0.02*	(0.01)	0.02*	(0.01)
Gender	-0.19	(0.16)	-0.16	(0.15)	-0.22	(0.15)
Time in subsidiary	0.01	(0.01)	0.00	(0.01)	0.00	(0.01)
Language fluency	0.10	(0.05)	0.12*	(0.05)	0.11*	(0.05)
Cultural distance	0.13	(0.08)	0.14	(0.08)	0.13	(0.08)
Perceived HCN supervisor CQ			0.16*	(0.07)	0.13	(0.06)
Expatriate cultural metacognition			0.16	(0.09)	0.22*	(0.09)
Perceived HCN supervisor CQ X Expatriate cultural metacognition					0.20**	(0.07)
Intercept	4.06***	(0.91)	3.92***	(0.86)	4.07***	(0.84)
F-value	3.91***		5.05***		5.65***	
ΔR -squared			0.10		0.05	
R-squared	0.15		0.25		0.30	

$N = 115$.

† $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Table 5. Regression results for the effect of expatriate work engagement and subsidiary socialization on expatriate innovativeness.

	Model 0		Model 1	
	b	se	b	se
Age	0.16*	(0.07)	0.07	(0.07)
Gender	0.02	(0.01)	0.01	(0.01)
Time in subsidiary	-0.48**	(0.17)		
Language fluency	-0.00	(0.01)	0.00	(0.01)
Cultural distance	0.03	(0.06)	-0.03	(0.05)
Perceived HCN supervisor CQ	0.45***	(0.09)	0.37***	(0.09)
Expatriate cultural metacognition	0.05	(0.09)	0.01	(0.09)
Expatriate work engagement			0.19*	(0.09)
Expatriate subsidiary socialization			0.30**	(0.11)
Intercept	1.73	(1.12)	-0.26	(0.97)
F-value	7.97		0.39	
ΔR -squared			0.01	
R-squared	0.34		0.39	

N = 115.

†*p* < 0.10, **p* < 0.05, ***p* < 0.01, ****p* < 0.001.

expatriate subsidiary socialization is positively related with expatriate innovativeness. As displayed in the Model 2 of Table 5, after controlling for the effect of expatriate work engagement, we find support for Hypothesis 5 ($b = 0.30$, $p = 0.005$). Then, we tested for the mediation effect of subsidiary socialization between perceived HCN supervisor CQ and expatriate innovativeness using PROCESS macro. The product of the bootstrapped results of two stages reveal that this indirect effect is significant (value = 0.078, 95% CI [0.013, 0.161]), supporting Hypothesis 6.

When we introduced expatriate cultural metacognition as a moderator (Model 2 of Table 3), the interaction term was only marginally significant ($b = 0.16$, $p = 0.071$), and therefore, our Hypothesis 7a is not supported. Since we did not find support for this moderation hypothesis, Hypothesis 7b is not supported either. Model 2 of Table 4 shows the moderation effect of cultural metacognition between perceived HCN supervisor CQ and expatriate subsidiary socialization. The interaction term is significant ($b = 0.20$, $p = 0.007$). A simple slopes analysis (Figure 2) shows that the slope of the perceived HCN supervisor CQ-expatriate subsidiary socialization relationship is significantly higher than zero at high levels of expatriate cultural metacognition ($b = 0.290$, $p < 0.001$), while it is not significant at low levels of expatriate cultural metacognition ($b = -0.040$, $p = 0.683$). These findings support Hypothesis 8a. We discuss the implications of the boundary condition effect in the theoretical implications section. Testing for Hypothesis 8b, we observed that the index of moderated mediation is significant (value = 0.081, 95% CI [0.005, 0.169]). Further, the mediation effect of expatriate subsidiary socialization was significant at high levels of expatriate cultural metacognition (value = 0.112, 95% CI [0.010, 0.215]), but not significant

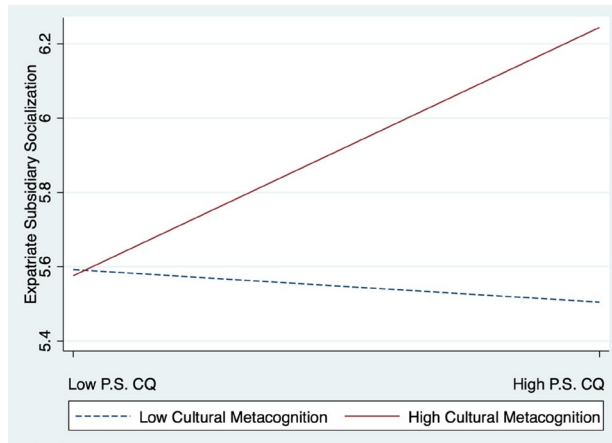


Figure 2. The moderating effect of expatriate cultural metacognition. *Note.* P.S. CQ stands for Perceived HCN supervisor CQ

at its low levels (value = -0.021 , 95% CI [-0.103 , 0.053]). The difference between the high and low levels of moderator was significant (value = 0.134 , 95% CI [0.008 , 0.277]). Thus, Hypothesis 8b is supported.

Discussion

As MNCs strive to boost their innovativeness, they should provide their expatriates with a suitable subsidiary environment for generating and implementing innovative ideas. This study sheds light on how local supervisors' intercultural competencies can be perceived by their expatriate subordinates as a contextual resource driving the latter's innovativeness. Specifically, we aimed to understand the mechanisms through which and the conditions under which perceived HCN supervisor CQ plays such role. Drawing on COR theory, we proposed that perceived HCN supervisor CQ positively influences expatriate innovativeness via both their work engagement and subsidiary socialization. Thus, perceived HCN supervisor CQ is an important contextual resource that induces personal energies and personal knowledge as two relevant types of personal resources for expatriates to innovate. Further, expatriates who can effectively control their thinking and learning activities in an intercultural context, that is, those who score high on cultural metacognition can more effectively translate the contextual resource of perceived HCN supervisor CQ to relevant personal resources to innovate.

Theoretical contributions

This study has three theoretical implications. First, the emergent literature on expatriate innovativeness has focused on expatriates themselves

as focal actors that can facilitate their own innovativeness (Elenkov & Manev, 2009; Lorenz et al., 2018). Further, while research suggests HCNs as critical actors in expatriate effectiveness (Carragher et al., 2008), empirical studies generally neglected the impact of HCN supervisors (for an exception, see Liu & Shaffer, 2005). To address this shortcoming, we used COR theory's resource gain principle, which helped us shift the focus from the impact of expatriates' personal attributes to the role of work environment-related factors (i.e. HCN supervisors) in expatriate innovativeness. This perspective not only allowed us to answer the calls for explaining how local actors' intercultural effectiveness can facilitate expatriate effectiveness (Adler & Aycan, 2018), but also to provide further nuances to the notion of resources in the expatriate literature. For instance, Lazarova et al. (2010) emphasized the relevance of resources in expatriate effectiveness broadly. The resource gain perspective (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012) helped us distinguish between resources that are located externally (i.e. contextual resources) and resources that exist within an expatriate (i.e. personal resources), and explicate the logical links between these two types of resources. As such, our theoretical model brings further precision to the resource categories external and internal to an expatriate and helps explain how expatriates can acquire personal resources to innovate from contextual factors.

Second, investigating multiple pathways provides new insights for the expatriate literature. In this study, we leveraged the resource caravan corollary of COR theory and showed that multiple resource-pathways can drive expatriates' innovativeness. With regards to the personal energy pathway, previous studies have suggested that work engagement positively affects expatriates' in-role performance (Lazarova et al., 2010). Research has also suggested that subsidiary socialization, which we conceptualize as a personal knowledge pathway and introduce to the expatriate literature empirically, impacts expatriates' role as a change partner in subsidiaries (Vance et al., 2009). Our results show that these two resource pathways have distinct influences on innovativeness, which is an emerging outcome of interest for the expatriate literature. Notably, these findings help us reconcile two competing contentions in the expatriate innovation literature. While expatriates may facilitate the introduction of novel and useful products and procedures for MNCs by bringing their outsider perspectives (Dabic et al., 2015; Un, 2016), their foreignness could be a liability for innovation (Harvey et al., 2005). This study shows that factors external to expatriates, such as perceived HCN supervisor CQ, can simultaneously engage expatriates at work so that they can bring their whole selves and ideas to work, and provide them with subsidiary-related knowledge so that they can effectively assess the viability of these ideas. In other words, host country nationals can help

expatriates become an asset to MNCs' innovation processes through these two mechanisms.

While COR theory led us to focus on two mediating mechanisms of work engagement and subsidiary socialization, future research can also leverage constructs with a more international flair such as 'international opportunity recognition' (Lorenz et al., 2018) as mediators. We also acknowledge that not all expatriates' roles require them to be innovative. Studies can also take this factor into account by controlling for innovativeness expectations associated with expatriates' roles, or by focusing on expatriate participants who are specifically expected to be innovative.

Third, the moderating role of expatriate cultural metacognition elaborates on how resource transfers from subsidiary environment to expatriates themselves take place. By emphasizing this positive moderation effect, we depart from prior contentions that intercultural effectiveness of expatriates can alleviate the negative impact of demands associated with expatriation (Lazarova et al., 2010). Thus, expatriate cultural metacognition not only helps expatriates overcome certain demands pertinent to their effectiveness, but it can also be critical for further exploiting resources made available to them in the subsidiary. Notably, we find the extent to which expatriates acquire subsidiary-related knowledge is contingent on having the key resource of cultural metacognition. We observe that low levels of expatriate cultural metacognition pose a boundary condition for this relationship. As such, the sole presence of contextual resources may not be sufficient for individuals to convert personal resources to personal resources in a highly challenging work context such as expatriation, and key personal attributes are crucial in this resource gain process.

In contrast to expatriate cultural metacognition's moderating effect between perceived HCN supervisor CQ and expatriate subsidiary socialization, we did not find evidence towards its moderating effect towards expatriate work engagement. This differential moderating impact in the knowledge- and energy-based resource pathways has implications for the notion of key resources in the expatriation context (Reiche et al., 2021) and the COR theory literature more broadly. It is possible that since culturally intelligent HCN supervisors can effectively take the perspective of expatriate subordinates and clearly convey task-related goals to them, expatriates can readily be engaged at work. Therefore, expatriate metacognition may be less pertinent as a key resource in this specific resource gain process. On the other hand, perceiving self as possessing subsidiary-related knowledge requires converting potentially useful knowledge to a form that is applicable to the subsidiary work context. With respect to COR theory, it is possible that certain key resources have the potency to 'unlock' contextual resources and hence be a facilitator for

gaining only various types of personal resources, but not necessarily all types. While we proposed expatriate cultural metacognition as one key resource, alternative key resources may be more relevant in linking perceived HCN supervisor CQ and expatriate work engagement.

Practical implications

This study has various managerial implications. Cross-cultural skills have long been suggested as important in the expatriation experience. Specifically, these skills are highly relevant in the expatriate selection process as they help to determine successful expatriate posting. However, a lack of effective relationships with local colleagues and supervisors may hamper expatriate effectiveness. It is thus similarly important to assign expatriates with HCN supervisors equipped to effectively manage their intercultural interactions with expatriates. Local supervisors not only play a critical role in dyadic relationships with expatriates, but they can also act as a liaison with local colleagues, thus socializing expatriates into a subsidiary. Further, HCN supervisors' intercultural skills play a role in engaging their expatriate subordinates.

Our findings imply that MNCs can benefit from providing cross-cultural training not only to their expatriates, but to the managers who supervise them. Because experiential learning is one way in which individuals acquire intercultural skills, MNCs could select HCN supervisors with previous expatriate or global virtual team experience. Those with previous international experience have more extensive knowledge about other cultures, are generally interculturally adaptable and likely to take foreigners' perspectives. As this study shows, having interculturally effective HCN supervisors may encourage expatriates to generate and implement innovative ideas, which is an important way through which MNCs can benefit from their expatriation strategies. Further, the innovative outcomes of expatriation can be maximized in cases where both expatriates and their corresponding local supervisors are interculturally effective. MNCs can thus benefit from introducing such effectiveness criterion both for their expatriates and their corresponding HCN supervisors.

This research shows that MNCs can boost their innovations by creating a suitable context for expatriates to be both engaged at work and knowledgeable about the subsidiary. While HCN supervisors' intercultural effectiveness may be one way to attain this outcome, MNCs could also involve in other endeavours. For instance, companies can ensure a welcoming organizational climate in their subsidiaries by investing in diversity-friendly policies (Hajro et al., 2017). Associating expatriates to peers with dense prior international experiences who have a genuine interest to interact with people from other cultural backgrounds could

be another alternative (Akkan et al., 2022). Finally, MNCs could invest in team-building activities or employee tournaments to facilitate expatriates' engagement and socialization into the subsidiary.

Limitations and conclusions

This research has a few limitations. First, innovativeness data was collected from expatriates themselves. This approach is likely to introduce social desirability in participants' responses, which may inflate the correlations between variables. Second, although our data is time-lagged, it does not allow us to infer a causal relationship between constructs. However, it helps us overcome common method bias to a certain extent. The marker variable test provides some evidence that common method variance does not pose substantial threat to the reliability of our results. Future research could overcome some of the above shortcomings by employing multi-source data collected from both expatriates and their supervisors or colleagues, as well as multi-wave data to measure daily or weekly variations in work engagement and subsidiary socialization. Further, our intended perceived HCN supervisor CQ construct is measured by expatriates. Future studies that aim to tap into a more objective measure of supervisor CQ may use CQ data collected from supervisors themselves or expatriates' colleagues. The robustness of findings can be strengthened by complementing future studies with alternative measures of work engagement for which the subdimensions could be more highly correlated (e.g. Schaufeli et al., 2006). Research can also benefit from using an innovativeness measure with a more pronounced international content.

While local supervisors can be the most prominent point of contact for expatriates, it would also be worth considering the influence of other local colleagues who could provide different types of support for expatriates. For instance, many MNCs assign multiple expatriates to subsidiaries. In such a context, having colleagues from one's home country may change the sign or magnitude of effect on the mediating variables. It could also be the case that contextual factors mitigate the ability of local supervisor to foster personal resources. For instance, a liability of foreignness embedded in the subsidiary culture may hinder expatriates from being endowed with relevant resources to innovate. Similarly, countries and subsidiaries may have different levels of ethnocentrism or receptivity to foreigners. Researchers could apply multilevel analyses to how these differences may impact expatriate innovativeness.

In our empirical study, we found full evidence towards the moderating effect of expatriate cultural metacognition between perceived HCN supervisor CQ and expatriate subsidiary socialization, but not for the moderation between perceived HCN supervisor CQ and expatriate work

engagement. The lack of support for the latter relationship could be due to our low sample size. We encourage future researchers to test the relationships with larger samples. We also would like to note that while subsidiary socialization can foster innovativeness, very high levels of socialization can also be a source of conformity, and thus may reduce the innovativeness levels under certain circumstances. It would be interesting to see future research clarifying possible contingencies in the socialization-innovativeness relationship. Finally, the average age of our sample is slightly lower than some of the studies on assigned expatriates, and the percentage of females to males is higher than these studies. While this can be due to increasing number of opportunities provided to MNCs' younger and female employees, future research can test this model using more representative samples.

It is important for MNCs to create work environments in subsidiaries that foster expatriates' innovativeness. This study shows one way to understand how the work environment in a subsidiary, and specifically local supervisors' intercultural skills, influence expatriate innovativeness via multiple resource pathways.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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Appendix

Expatriate work engagement

- I focus a great deal of attention on my work.
- I concentrate a lot on my work.
- I pay a lot of attention on my work.
- I often get carried away by what I am working on.
- When I am working, I am completely engrossed by my work.
- When I am working, I am totally absorbed by it.
- Nothing can distract me when I am working.
- I spend a lot of time thinking about my work.*
- When I am working, I often lose track of time.*

Expatriate subsidiary socialization

- I know the policies, rules, and procedures of this host country organization.
- I know how my job contributes to this host country organization.
- I understand the expertise each member and group brings to this host country organization.
- I understand the politics of this host country organization (e.g. who is influential, what needs to be done to advance or maintain good standing).
- I understand this host country organization's objectives and goals.*

Expatriate innovativeness

- I create new ideas for difficult issues.
- I search out new working methods, techniques, or instruments.
- I generate original solutions for problems.
- I transform innovative ideas to useful applications.
- I introduce innovative ideas into the work environment in a systematic way.
- I evaluate the utility of innovative ideas.

Note. Items in italics are items that were not used in this study.