

Perceived overqualification and leisure crafting of immigrants: the moderating role of acculturation

Leisure
crafting of
immigrants

Harun Sesen

*Department of Business Administration, Cyprus International University,
Nicosia, Turkey, and*

Senay Sahil Ertan and Gözde Inal Cavlan
World Peace University, Nicosia, Turkey

Received 16 August 2022

Revised 5 May 2023

11 October 2023

13 October 2023

Accepted 31 October 2023

Abstract

Purpose – The aim of this research is to investigate the association between perceived overqualification and leisure crafting in the context of immigrants. Drawing on the cross-cultural adaptation theory, the study tests the moderating role that acculturation plays in this relationship.

Design/methodology/approach – Data were collected from a total of 226 immigrants living in Northern Cyprus. In the initial survey, data were collected on perceived overqualification and acculturation, which was followed by the measurement of leisure crafting. Data analysis was performed using structural equation modeling.

Findings – Perceived overqualification asserts a significantly positive impact on leisure crafting. Assuming that acculturation plays a moderating role, the research shows that the positive effect that perceived overqualification has on leisure crafting is increased in cases where positive acculturation is elevated as opposed to reduced.

Research limitations/implications – The study results were based on self-reported surveys and data were limited to overqualified immigrant groups in Northern Cyprus.

Practical implications – The study provides significant practical implications for management teams. They can design managerial interventions to increase the acculturation of immigrants, which may in turn reduce the perceived overqualification and increase the positive impact of leisure crafting. Also, the government needs to implement policies targeted at immigrants in order to help them rapidly adapt to the host society.

Originality/value – This research will be a pioneering attempt to explore the positive relationship between perceived overqualification and leisure crafting. The results suggest actions that can be taken to promote leisure crafting behaviors through the use of acculturation to enhance organizational commitment, belongingness to the host society, and well-being in overqualified immigrants.

Keywords Leisure crafting, Perceived overqualification, Acculturation, Immigrants

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Overqualification is defined as an employment condition where the qualification of an employee, including their training, know-how, expertise and experience, exceed the prerequisites for the position (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021). As a result of issues like the rate of growth in educational credentials exceeding the number of positions that require such credentials (Johnson & Johnson, 2000), challenges with finding employment after redundancy or economic crises (Hultin,

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Revista de Gestão
Emerald Publishing Limited
e-ISSN: 2177-8736
p-ISSN: 1809-2276

DOI 10.1108/REG-06-2022-0103

Lundberg, Lundin, & Magnusson, 2016), as well as insufficient delegation from managers, perceived overqualification is becoming a global employment concern. For example, approximately 39% of employees perceive their qualifications to exceed the requirements of their positions (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, 2018).

Overqualification impacts a variety of different groups, including immigrants (Aycan & Berry, 1996), workers who have been re-hired subsequent to redundancy (Feldman, Leana, & Bolino, 2002), and those with disabilities (Erdogan, Bauer, Peiro, & Truxillo, 2011). Immigrants are frequently confronted with the issue of overqualification (Crollard, de Castro, & Tsai, 2012). Pull and push factors have been widely used to explain migration reasons. The pull factor involves various factors such as social incentives, economy, better employment opportunities, education, and living conditions. The push factor is the force that motivates people to leave their place of origin, such as a lack of job opportunities, political or social insecurity, and economic instability (Lee, 1966). In the current study, we focus on immigrants who have a desire to improve their employment conditions.

The migration of individuals from one country to other results in the introduction of fresh skill sets, which support the development of technology and encourage economic advancement (Bove & Elia, 2017). However, there is a strong possibility that immigrants will be overqualified in the host country (Frank & Hou, 2018). Studies have shown that different obstacles (such as language difficulties, cultural awareness & social connectivity) prevent immigrants from obtaining jobs that match their credentials (Guerrero & Rothstein, 2012).

Leisure crafting is where individuals engage in activities that are unrelated to work outside of working hours that are particularly aimed at meeting needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness. In leisure activities, it includes achieving specific goals, building relationships with others, acquiring knowledge, and developing personal skills (Petrou & Bakker, 2016). Leisure crafting can be suggested as a powerful way in which employees manage their work-life balance (Petrou & de Vries, 2023).

This study uses self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) to explain the positive link between perceived overqualification and leisure crafting of immigrants. According to self-determination theory, surplus skills for their job may not allow overqualified immigrants to satisfy their inner needs in the workplace and might cause boredom or inefficiency in the host country. As immigrants are mostly obliged to perform work for which they are overqualified due to economic reasons and short-term goals, they might apply their abilities to actively manage their situation outside their prescribed role boundaries (i.e. leisure crafting) in order to motivate and increase their resilience in the host country.

There are three important contributions of this research to the literature. Firstly, it broadens the knowledge rarely discussed in the extant literature on the manner in which perceived overqualification positively impacts the leisure crafting of immigrants. Secondly, this is a pioneering attempt to specifically explore the moderating role of the acculturation of immigrants in the connection among perceived overqualification and leisure crafting. Additionally, it satisfies the need for further research on specific populations regarding perceived overqualification (Erdogan *et al.*, 2011) and also research adopting a cultural approach (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021). Prior work has shown that a host nationality moderates the relationship among perceived overqualification and the job satisfaction of immigrants (Wasserman *et al.*, 2017). However, they mentioned that the national identity of the host country is only one of the indicators of acculturation and called future researchers to cover a wider perspective that includes different aspects of acculturation. This signals the extent that acculturation may play a moderating role in immigrants who have a positive response to the overqualification feeling. Thirdly, the study incorporates a theoretically grounded process leading to perceived overqualification by integrating self-determination theory and cross-cultural adaptation theory that attempts to integrate these two into a single model.

Perceived overqualification in organizational settings

Overqualification is where someone is underemployed whereby the individual has more abilities, experience, know-how and expertise than is needed for a position (Erdogan *et al.*, 2011; Maynard, Joseph, & Maynard, 2006; Wasserman and Hoppe, 2019). Existing studies have demonstrated that perceived overqualification can have adverse consequences for workers, such as a lack of satisfaction in their job, the intention to leave their position, and the inclination to search for a new job (Harari, Manapragada, & Viswesvaran, 2017). Roh and colleagues showed that the life satisfaction of employees who perceived themselves as overqualified was at a similarly low level as those without employment (Roh, Chang, Kim, & Nam, 2014). Frank and Hou (2018) revealed that an objective measure of overqualification was negatively correlated with the life satisfaction of immigrants (Wassermann & Hoppe, 2019).

However, there are some studies that have reported that perceived overqualification has a positive impact on work performance and consequences (van Dijk, Shantz, & Alfes, 2020; Zheng & Wang, 2017) through some boundary conditions. Previous studies have empirically considered the moderating role of some variables that can increase the positive effects of overqualification. In one of the only studies to explore possible moderators of the relationship between overqualification and outcomes, Debus, Gross, and Kleinmann (2020) suggested that autonomy plays a moderating role, where the impact of autonomy was realized through increased job crafting levels. Similarly, Lin, Law, and Zhou (2017) showed that there is a curvilinear association between perceived overqualification and task crafting, which results in greater creativity. Recent studies have examined different moderators that result in both negative and positive outcomes by mainly focusing on certain organizational behaviors or attitudes of employees. Contrary to the previous literature, this paper focuses on immigrants and studies the moderating role of acculturation between their perceived overqualification and leisure crafting in their off-work time.

Association between perceived overqualification and leisure crafting

Leisure crafting is derived from the concept of job crafting (Petrou & Bakker, 2016). Job crafting is a spontaneous behavior by individuals that involves physical and cognitive changes in the task or relational boundaries of their work (Tsaour, Yen, Yang, & Yen, 2020). Leisure crafting or nonwork crafting is defined as engagement with non-work activities outside work hours with the intention of satisfying the need for competence, autonomy and relatedness (Dumani, 2015). Often, through leisure crafting, individuals fulfill callings they could not fulfill at work due to the flexibility of leisure time. Vicarious experience and participation in hobbies are two ways to achieve leisure crafting (Berg, Grant, & Johnson, 2010). The concept of vicarious experience refers to participating in an activity (such as family, friends, celebrities) for the purpose of gaining a sense of purpose; and participation in hobbies involves taking part in leisure and volunteering activities to achieve enjoyment and amusement. Participating in leisure crafting for the purpose of addressing need satisfaction external to work acts as a psychological resource and makes employees more resilient, which can subsequently make them less vulnerable to unsatisfied needs at work as a result of their overqualification (Dumani, 2015; Petrou & Bakker, 2016).

The current study argues that overqualification and leisure crafting have a positive relationship, in the case of overqualified immigrants. According to self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), people have an inherent motivation to satisfy their needs (e.g. values and interests). They could try to achieve this in different area domains (through leisure crafting) when it is not possible to accomplish this at work (Chen, 2020). Therefore, immigrants who feel overqualified at a low to moderate level may motivate themselves to do something else outside of work in order to increase their resilience at work when possible. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1. Perceived overqualification positively relates to leisure crafting.

Moderating role of acculturation on the relation between perceived overqualification and leisure crafting of immigrants

Acculturation denotes alterations in a person's "cultural patterns" (i.e. practices, values, identities) that result from ongoing direct contact with another culture and that have a subsequent impact on the psychological wellbeing and social function of that person (Ward & Geeraert, 2016, p. 98). Acculturation is a complicated process by which an individual adapts to a different culture, which is comprised of three key factors: language fluency, host national identity and cultural awareness (Shang, O'Driscoll, & Roche, 2017). To facilitate their adaptation to the new cultural conditions, it is important that immigrants learn the language of the host country, modify their identities and increase their awareness of the host culture so that they become more knowledgeable and avoid cultural taboos (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2010).

Immigrants who have successfully acculturated have the ability to process work more rapidly as a result of their enhanced language ability and are capable of better understanding and managing the demands of the job in the host culture through their cultural awareness compared with immigrants who have not acculturated effectively (Wasserman *et al.*, 2017). Additionally, enhanced language fluency, host national identity and cultural awareness could assist with preventing interpersonal conflicts and effectively resolving such conflicts (Fuller-Rowell, Ong, & Phinney, 2013). This study argues that immigrant feelings of overqualification and its positive outcomes could be stronger the potential function of acculturation.

Previous studies investigated the association between the acculturation levels of immigrants and their engagement in leisure activities (Kim, Kleiber, & Kropf, 2001, 2015; Liu, Probst, Harun, Bennett, & Torres, 2009). They have demonstrated that a greater level of acculturation in the host society will increase the likelihood that immigrants will engage in diverse leisure activities. For instance, Kim *et al.* (2001) explored the associations among acculturation, leisure engagement and life satisfaction in the context of 127 older immigrants from Korea. Their findings suggested that immigrants who generally engaged in more leisure activities had increased acculturation, and vice versa.

This study claims that immigrants with high acculturation are more motivated and this helps them to decrease their perceived overqualification and increase leisure crafting. Cross-cultural adaptation theory (Kim, 2001) is known as an adaptation of the interaction between individuals and the environment. To better fit into the host culture, immigrants are suggested to maximize their acculturation into the host culture by unlearning some of their home cultural habits and being closer to citizens in the long run (Kim, Park, Malonebeach, & Heo, 2015). Overqualification could prevent immigrants from effectively establishing themselves in the host society. However, if acculturation to the host society is high, the positive association between overqualification and leisure crafting will be strengthened. Immigrants will feel a sense of belongingness and adaptation to the host country and they might start to feel a commitment to their both organization and the host society.

- H2.* Acculturation plays a moderating role in the positive association between perceived overqualification and leisure crafting whereby it is strengthened when acculturation is increased.

Method

Respondents and procedures

The respondents of the study were immigrants in Northern Cyprus who worked in different sectors. The surveys were delivered to respondents by the researchers. All surveys were administered face-to-face. The surveys were in English and all of the respondents could use English effectively enough to answer the survey questions. The first ten respondents were

known by the researchers formerly due to a graduate course, and then snowballing technique was used. Respondents were informed that data collected would remain confidential, and would only be utilized for the purpose of research.

The sample comprised 226 respondents from the ex-USSR countries: 54% Turkmen, 32% Russian, 14% Moldovan, and 46% male and 54% female immigrants. Their ages varied from 24 to 48 and the most dominant age was 32. In terms of marital status, 49.5% were married and 46.4% were single and 4.1% were widowed. Among them, 70% had moved to a different job at least once, but most had been employed in the same position for more than two years. The majority of the respondents (78.3%) were college or university graduates.

Measurement scales

A 5-point Likert scale was utilized to rate the variables (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

Perceived Overqualification: To determine the level of perceived overqualification, the Scale of Perceived Overqualification consisting of nine items from [Maynard et al. \(2006\)](#) was utilized. This scale defines the scope of the perception of immigrants in terms of how qualified they are for the demands of the job, such as, "I have more abilities than I need in order to do my job." The Cronbach's alpha of the scale was calculated as 0.94.

Leisure crafting: The nine-item scale of [Petrou and Bakker \(2016\)](#) was used to determine the scope of immigrants' leisure crafting. Example items include "I try to build relationships through leisure activities" and "I try to find challenging activities." The Cronbach's α of the scale was 0.93.

Acculturation: Three acculturation dimensions (language fluency, cultural awareness, and cultural identity) were evaluated utilizing 12 modified items taken from [Gim Chung et al. \(2004\)](#) (e.g. "How well do I speak the language of Turkish?" for language fluency; "How knowledgeable am I about the history of mainstream North Cyprus?" for cultural awareness; "How proud am I to be part of mainstream Cypriot?" for cultural identity). The Cronbach's α of the scale was 0.91.

Reliability and validity of the scales

Indicator reliability (Cronbach alpha) and internal consistency were calculated for testing the reliability and the validity of the scales was confirmed by convergent and divergent validity. [Table 1](#) presents the results of these analyses.

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values of latent variables are 0.744, 0.673, and 0.574, respectively. If AVE scores are not less than 0.5 significantly, the latent variable would have convergent validity ([Cheung & Wang, 2017](#)). Thus, these AVE scores indicate significant convergent validity. Indicator reliability (Cronbach alpha) and internal consistency (CR) values greater than the threshold of 0.7 indicate that the scales are reliable ([Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010](#)). The results in [Table 1](#) indicate that the measurement model variables have validity and reliability.

Variable	CR	AVE	CA	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1. Perceived overqualification	0.953	0.744	0.941	3.56	1.21	–		
2. Leisure crafting	0.941	0.673	0.939	2.81	1.14	–0.10*	–	
3. Acculturation	0.930	0.574	0.916	3.78	0.82	0.61**	–0.42**	–

Note(s): CR: Composite reliability, AVE: Average variance extracted, CA: Cronbach's alpha

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed)

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed)

Source(s): Elaborated by authors

Table 1.
Validity, reliability
scores, means,
standard deviations
and correlations

To test the construct validity of the research variables, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted through AMOS software to test the significance of two measurement models: (1) a one-factor model with all items loaded on one factor and (2) a three-factor model that included all items loaded on their original factors. To assess the overall fit of the model, we calculated the values of minimum discrepancy (CMIN), goodness of fit index (GFI), normed fit index (NFI), incremental fit index (IFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), comparative fit index (CFI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). While the proposed three-factor model had a good fit ($\chi^2 = 1170.007$; $df = 347$; $CMIN/df = 3.37$; $p < 0.001$; $GFI = 0.91$, $NFI = 0.90$, $IFI = 0.91$, $TLI = 0.89$, $CFI = 0.90$, $RMSEA = 0.04$), the single factor model had a poor fit ($\chi^2 = 5093.260$; $df = 350$; $CMIN/df = 14.552$; $p < 0.001$; $GFI = 0.29$, $NFI = 0.21$, $IFI = 0.22$, $TLI = 0.15$, $CFI = 0.22$, $RMSEA = 0.32$). These results suggest that the three-factor model was valid (see [Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013](#) for cut-off points).

Findings

[Table 1](#) shows the means, standard deviations, and correlations for the variables of the study. It was determined that perceived qualification has a negative relationship with leisure crafting ($r = -0.10$, $p < 0.05$) and a positive relationship with acculturation ($r = 0.61$, $p < 0.01$), whereas leisure crafting and acculturation are significantly negatively correlated ($r = -0.42$, $p < 0.01$).

The research hypotheses were tested with AMOS 16.0 software by running a structural equation model using the 2,000 re-sampling option with the bootstrap technique. The regression results are given in [Table 2](#). In the model, leisure crafting is treated as the dependent and POQ and acculturation (moderator) are treated as independent variables. The interaction variable (POQ * acculturation) is created and added to the model as an independent variable. To control the impacts of the demographics, gender, age, job change frequency, and length of stay in the country are also included in the model. The AMOS model is presented in [Figure 1](#).

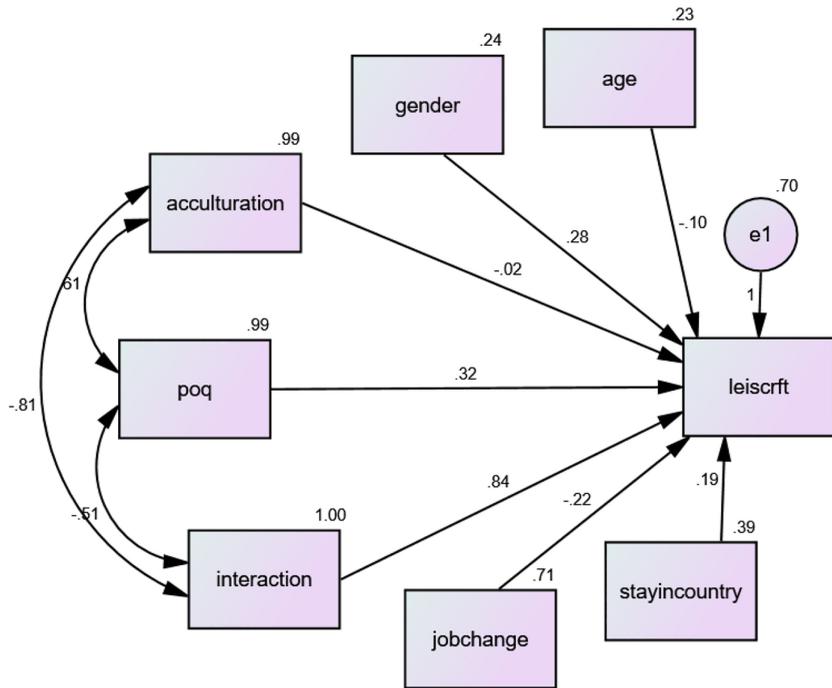
In the model, each of the rectangles represents an observed variable. “Poq” represents the perceived overqualification of immigrants while “leiscrft” stands for leisure crafting and “acculturation” is for the acculturation of the respondents. All of these variables are calculated as average scores with SPSS. The “interaction” term is created by multiplying the independent variable (poc) with the moderator (acculturation). In the model, the independent variable and the moderator are intercorrelated with the interaction term. Demographic variables of age, the number of job changes during the stay in the country (jobchange), the age of the respondent, and the duration of the respondent in the country (stayincountry) are included as controlling variables. “Gender” and “jobchange” are categorical (dummy variables are included) while “age” and “stayincountry” are continuously measured in terms of years.

Variables	Coeff	SE	C.Ra.	p	LLCI	ULCI
Age	-0.101	0.155	-0.651	0.515	-0.375	0.185
Gender	0.281	0.151	1.856	0.063	0.020	0.555
Job change	-0.220	0.089	-2.479	0.013	-0.373	-0.082
Stay in country	0.186	0.120	1.547	0.122	-0.114	0.487
POQ	0.323	0.095	3.387	0.000	0.162	0.464
Acculturation	-0.021	0.140	-0.148	0.883	-0.329	0.267
Interaction	0.837	0.128	6.517	0.000	0.618	1.055

Note(s): Coeff. = Unstandardized beta, SE = Standard error, C.Ra. = Critical ratio (*t*-value), LLCI = Lower-level confidence interval, ULCI = Upper-level confidence interval

Source(s): Elaborated by authors

Table 2.
Bootstrap results



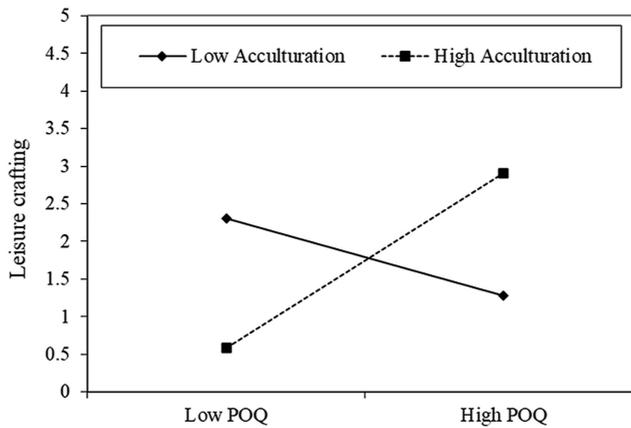
Source(s): Created by authors (2023)

Figure 1. Research model test results in AMOS

H1 predicts that POQ positively affects leisure crafting. As shown in Table 2, the POQ has a significant effect on leisure crafting ($\beta = 0.323$, 95% CI = [0.162, 0.464], $t = 3.387$, $p < 0.05$), hence, H1 is supported.

H2 envisages that the acculturation of migrants will play a moderating role in the association between perceived overqualification and leisure crafting meaning that this relationship will be strengthened when acculturation is increased, but weakened when it is reduced. As shown in Table 2 the interaction variable has a significant and positive impact on leisure crafting ($\beta = 0.837$, 95% CI = [0.618, 1.055], $t = 6.517$, $p < 0.05$). The results showed that acculturation has a moderating effect between perceived overqualification and leisure crafting since the interaction term has a significant impact on leisure crafting. Thus, H2 is supported.

To extend beyond the exploration of the interaction term, the study incorporated simple slope regression lines of leisure crafting regressed on perceived overqualification for higher and lower levels (i.e. +1 and -1 SD from the mean) of acculturation (Aiken, West, & Reno, 1991). As presented in Figure 2, the simple slope among perceived overqualification and leisure crafting is significantly positive for high acculturation migrants and the slope is negative for low acculturation ones. An immigrant's strong perception of overqualification will probably cause them to be disengaged from leisure crafting when their degree of acculturation is reduced; nevertheless, it yields strong leisure crafting when they have a high level of acculturation. This result reinforces the assertion that acculturation plays a moderating role in the relationship between perceived overqualification and leisure crafting.



Source(s): Created by authors (2023)

Figure 2.
Interactive effects of
acculturation and POQ

Discussion and conclusions

Prior research has examined both positive and negative reflections of perceived overqualification outcomes. As overqualified immigrants have underutilized capabilities, they are capable of completing the tasks assigned to them with greater ease and speed and they have more time to engage in additional activities at work (Liu *et al.*, 2009) and might positively affect their extra-role behaviors. However, rather than focusing on work-related activities, we aimed to study whether immigrants who feel perceived overqualification can increase their engagement in leisure crafting in order to increase their resiliency at both the workplace and host country.

The first hypothesis addressed the positive relation between perceived overqualification and leisure crafting. This finding indicated that immigrants who have perceived overqualification are more likely to increase their leisure crafting. These results are largely based on the self-determination theory, when immigrants feel overqualification at the job, they might not satisfy themselves among the work aspect and as they are highly-skilled labor, they can direct this excess skill with leisure crafting in order to increase their motivation toward work. Therefore, [hypothesis 1](#) is fully accepted.

The second hypothesis concentrated on the moderating role of acculturation between perceived overqualification and leisure crafting. This study demonstrates the significance of acculturation in the relationship between perceived overqualification and leisure crafting. Hence, we reach the conclusion that acculturation moderates the positive effect of perceived overqualification on leisure crafting. The results indicate that there is a positive relation among perceived overqualification and leisure crafting for immigrants with high acculturation while there exists a negative relation between the two for those with low acculturation at high levels of POQ. Thus, [hypothesis 2](#) is fully accepted.

Theoretical contributions

This study is one of the first to highlight how perceived overqualification positively impacts the leisure crafting of immigrants. Among the studies on crafting, it has been investigated whether there is a negative relationship between perceived overqualification and employee job crafting (Sesen & Ertan, 2019). Also, previous studies have determined that immigrants' perceived overqualification has a negative impact on their job satisfaction, career satisfaction, and psychological well-being (Wasserman *et al.*, 2017; Wassermann & Hoppe, 2019).

As reviewed by [Erdogan and Bauer \(2021\)](#), the positive effect of overqualification is rarely discussed in the literature; thus, this study contributes to the literature by highlighting the positive impact of immigrants' perceived overqualification on leisure crafting. In addition, no study has investigated the positive association between perceived overqualification and leisure crafting among immigrants. Drawing from self-determination theory, the study reveals that when immigrants feel overqualified in their jobs, they cannot satisfy themselves with the job aspects, and therefore, they might start to engage in non-work activities like leisure crafting in order to increase their resilience and motivation toward work.

This study is pioneering in its attempt to explore the moderating role that immigrant acculturation plays in the connection between perceived overqualification and leisure crafting. It also satisfies the demand for more population-specific research on perceived overqualification and also researches more adopting an emic approach ([Erdogan & Bauer, 2021](#); [Erdogan et al., 2011](#)). It highlights that immigrants with high acculturation are more motivated to decrease overqualification feelings and increase leisure crafting behavior. In line with cross-cultural adaptation theory, these findings place emphasis on the significance of immigrants' cultural adaptation to the host society if they have a powerful feeling of being overqualified. Furthermore, if immigrants are familiar with the host society's cultural knowledge and language, it can help to increase their belongingness to the country and commitment to the organization in order to reduce their overqualification feeling and increase leisure crafting. Thus, this can help increase immigrants' psychological well-being and physical health in the long run ([Kim et al., 2015](#)).

Managerial implications

The study finds that the positive relationship among the perceived overqualification and leisure crafting of immigrants is stronger when the level of acculturation is increased. This suggests that organizations can potentially take benefit from overqualified immigrants. Firstly, the results have significant implications for management teams. It is important for managers to foster the development of immigrants in terms of their cultural knowledge and language proficiency. This can be also supported by the organization by giving information sessions regularly to immigrant employees about the host country's cultural knowledge and language. Also, as they are highly skilled labor, they might be more willing to learn the host society's culture in order to achieve adaptation in the short term. As adaptation to the environment can lower the level of perceived overqualification, it might also motivate immigrants to increase their leisure crafting and this will directly affect their well-being.

Secondly, to change the employees' views about their jobs from negative to positive, organizations should create diverse and improved opportunities for immigrant employees to achieve public interaction. For example, they could organize an activity to join local festivals in order to encourage wider participation and celebrate diversity, which may help immigrants with cultural interaction. Organizing local events can help immigrants increase their interaction with the host society and their adaptation period.

Thirdly, from a policy perspective, assistance training program policies, especially for developing countries like Cyprus, are essential. The government should create an assistance program especially for immigrants in the host society in order to set eligibility rules and increase their social welfare and adaptation. The assistance training program should include health information, cultural knowledge, local language teaching, criminal aliens' regulations, local facilities information, and so on. This will help to increase immigrants' commitment, familiarity, and adaptation to the host society and increase the positive effects of overqualification.

In fact, the internet and social media can be used as an integral part of immigrants' acculturation experience. It can be important in adapting and learning about the new cultural

environment through building up social capital, getting help, and gaining language skills in the host country, in addition to the connection with their social networks in the home country. Connecting with other immigrants eases the acculturation stress, it helps manage uncertainty and helps achieve greater psychological well-being. Therefore, government agencies should encourage those not familiar with social media to learn to use it, with community outreach programs.

Future study recommendations

Perceived overqualification studies still largely ignore culture despite the fact that different countries have been investigated, and research questions generally have not adopted an emic approach (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021). Thus, we suggest that future researchers explicitly focus on the cultural nuances of immigrants. We propose that future researchers take into account cultural backgrounds (individualistic/collectivistic) while measuring acculturation. Similar cultural backgrounds might help immigrants to easily adapt themselves to the host society. Gelfand, Harrington, and Jackson (2017) recently proposed the notion of tightness-looseness as a framework that can be used for studying cultural distinctions. This conceptualization of culture could have significant implications for research into overqualification and acculturation (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021). Tight cultures are considered to have rigid conventions and deviations from the rules are punished, while loose cultures have less strict conventions and a less restrictive approach. Such distinctions are caused by historical, ecological, and sociopolitical factors and impact the ability of immigrants to adapt their behaviors to the host cultures. We suggest that future researchers investigate the integration of the concepts of tightness and looseness to the overqualification and acculturation literature. It may lead to a new perspective in terms of how immigrants could respond to overqualification and acculturation.

The current study only focused on overqualified immigrants in Northern Cyprus, future research can focus on comparing overqualified and underqualified immigrant groups in North Cyprus on the same topic. In addition, this study can be replicated with other immigrant groups in different countries. Such different designs may yield better results for the generalization of the research findings.

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Corresponding author

Harun Sesen can be contacted at: hsesen@ciu.edu.tr

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