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## **The better, the worse, and the bicultural: examining bicultural competence and bicultural liability in elite football teams**

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**Abstract:** Researchers have argued that biculturals have performance and behavioural advantages over their mono-cultural peers within multi-cultural teams. We test this claim with performance data from 442 association football players that participated in the 2012–2013 English Premier League season. As expected, bicultural individuals were found to exhibit higher levels of creativity and manifest leadership behaviour more often than monoculturals did; however, biculturals were also found to exhibit higher levels of stress susceptibility and were regarded as less effective leaders by their teammates. We use these findings to develop the construct of bicultural liability and identify how biculturalism can affect individual skills.

**Keywords:** biculturalism; bicultural competence; bicultural liability; cross-cultural management; global leadership; cultural intelligence.

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## 1 Introduction

Bicultural individuals (*biculturals*) are “individuals [who] identify with two (or more) distinct cultures because of having internalised more than one set of cultural schemas” (Brannen and Thomas, 2010). Both managers and researchers are increasingly interested in biculturals because of the positive characteristics and outcomes associated with them such as high-cultural intelligence (Brannen et al., 2009), more complex cultural metacognitive patterns (Benet-Martínez and Haritatos, 2005), appropriate cultural behaviour (Friedman et al., 2012) and intercultural effectiveness (Lee, 2010). However, biculturals have not always been seen in this positive light. Early research and discussion on biculturalism emphasised the negative effects of constantly balancing and mixing two cultures within individuals on their mental health. Stonequist (1937) and Park (1928) stressed that while biculturals bring an important contribution to the society, they pay an emotional price for being different from every other member of the society. However, this historical line of reasoning has been largely abandoned in modern research on biculturals. With very few exceptions (e.g., Kane and Levina, 2017; Fitzsimmons et al., 2017), most organisational scholars focus on the benefits of biculturalism (e.g., Brannen and Thomas, 2010; Fitzsimmons et al., 2011; Fitzsimmons, 2013) and, thus, a more balanced view of biculturalism in the organisational context is absent.

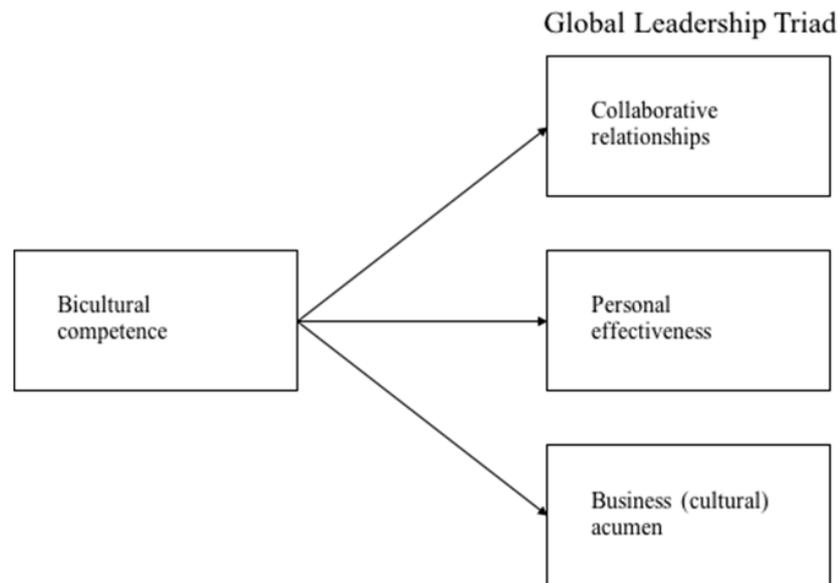
This balanced perspective is important for several reasons: a versatile view and conceptualisation of biculturals will advance research by examining whether liabilities exist and, if so, how they might be reduced. From a practical perspective, this may allow organisations to be reflective in their choices of employing biculturals for specific tasks and roles as often times it is assumed automatically that biculturals in a team or organisation will lead to positive outcomes (e.g., Kane and Levina, 2017).

Biculturals in teams have been examined mostly from a conceptual perspective (e.g., Dau, 2016; Hong, 2010; Zander et al., 2012), focusing on the possible positive contribution to team effectiveness. However, the role and impact of biculturals in teams is not clear and empirical studies are rare.

Thus, the aim of this study is to examine whether biculturalism is more of a double-edged sword than the current literature implies. That is, we investigate whether it has both positive and negative outcomes for bicultural individuals' behaviours, abilities, and performance. We do this by building on the model of bicultural competence by Hong (2010) and the global leadership triad framework by Brake (1997). Hong (2010) developed the construct of bicultural competence, referring to biculturals' ability to draw upon their own cultural knowledge and abilities to work effectively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. While bicultural competence is closely related to cultural intelligence, it is a broader term. The construct of Cultural Intelligence (CQ) was introduced to management literature by Earley (2002, p.274) who described it as “a person's capability to adapt effectively to a new cultural context.” Thomas and colleagues theorised that “cultural intelligence consists of knowledge and skills, developed in specific cultural (intercultural) contexts, but is dependent on the culture

general process of cultural metacognition to produce culturally intelligent behaviour” (Thomas et al., 2015, p.1101). Hong argued that bicultural competence includes also “cultural metacognition, culture-general skills, cross-cultural competence, intercultural competence and cross-cultural adaptability” (Hong, 2010, p.110) stemming from the individuals’ bicultural background. Hong (2010) and other international management scholars (e.g., Brannen et al., 2009; Gillespie et al., 2010; Dau, 2016) proposed that bicultural competence might be used for global leadership skills development. Brake’s (1997) model of a global leadership skills triad consists of three sets of competencies: (1) personal effectiveness, (2) business acumen, and (3) relationship management which we use to explain the mechanisms through which biculturals enact bicultural competence. Figure 1 displays how bicultural competence (i.e., “a unique construction of biculturals’ cultural intelligence in the service of effective cross-cultural interactions that benefit organisations, specifically multicultural team effectiveness”; Hong, 2010, p.94) is linked to the three elements of the global leadership triad (Brake, 1997).

**Figure 1** Conceptual model of bicultural competence related to the global leadership triad



Hong used this construct to propose how biculturals contribute to team performance, such as being boundary spanners and as mediators in conflict situations. In opposition to the construct of *bicultural competence* (Hong, 2010), we develop the construct of *bicultural liability*, referring to the negative effects of biculturalism such as higher levels of stress susceptibility and bias in leadership perception.

In what follows, we review the recent literature on biculturals in organisations. Next, we present three hypotheses consistent with the construct of bicultural competence followed by two hypotheses about the negative effects of biculturalism and consistent with the construct of bicultural liability. We decided to test three hypotheses already described in the literature, because theory testing plays an important role in the development of a field as “such testing can temper enthusiasm for appealing but invalid models” (Colquitt and Zapata-Phelan, 2007, p.1283). After testing all five

hypotheses, we revisit Hong's (2010) model of bicultural competence to include the construct of bicultural liability.

## 2 Literature review

Biculturalism is a growing area in management and organisational behaviour research. Numerous scholars have proposed the potential positive effect of biculturals on organisational performance, presenting a number of mechanisms through which bicultural individuals can contribute. Hong (2010) and Brannen and colleagues (Brannen et al., 2009; Brannen and Thomas, 2010) proposed that biculturals contribute positively to organisational performance through their intercultural skills and developed cultural metacognition. Fitzsimmons and colleagues (Fitzsimmons et al., 2011, 2013; Fitzsimmons, 2013) elaborated on the conceptual foundations of biculturals individual performance and contribution to team performance. Lakshman (2013) argued that higher levels of biculturals' attributional complexity and attributional knowledge contribute to cross-cultural competence, thus influencing biculturals' leadership effectiveness. Dau (2016) theorised about the ideal conditions under which bicultural team members might exhibit their full potential for team contribution. Szymanski and colleagues (Szymanski, 2017; Szymanski et al., 2019) found that bicultural managers contribute positively to team performance only when the team environment is culturally diverse. Conversely, when the environment is relatively homogeneous, biculturals might perform at lower levels than their monocultural peers. Similarly, Kane and Levina (2017) and Fitzsimmons et al. (2017) reported some negative effects of biculturalism on biculturals and their abilities and performance. To conclude, biculturals are thought to possess a particular set of skills and abilities, making them valuable members of international teams and organisations, but recent research has been shifting to understand better of the limitations and specific conditions of their contribution. In this study, we address these issues and develop a construct of *bicultural liability* as opposed to bicultural competence (Hong, 2010).

## 3 Hypotheses development

We test three hypotheses related to the positive effects of biculturalism. All have been developed previously in research on biculturals, but are included here to establish a consistency with current research and as a foundation for developing our new construct of bicultural liability. Fitzsimmons et al. (2011) proposed that bicultural individuals could excel in global leadership positions. Interestingly, biculturals can be effective leaders even if they do not identify with neither culture (Fitzsimmons et al., 2013). To illustrate the potential mechanisms, we use Brake's (1997) model of a global leadership skills triad, which consists of three sets of competencies: (1) personal effectiveness (i.e., "the ability to attain increasing levels of maturity to perform at peak levels under the strenuous conditions of working in a global enterprise"; Brake, 1997, p.52); (2) business acumen (i.e., "the ability to pursue and apply appropriate professional knowledge and skills to achieve optimal results of the company's *global stakeholders*"; Brake, 1997, p.45); and (3) relationship management (i.e., "the ability to build and influence collaborative relationships in a complex and diverse global network"; Brake, 1997, p.48). We use this leadership triad model to explain the mechanisms through which biculturals enact bicultural competence.

Higher levels of creativity would improve the *personal effectiveness* of the individual. Organisational behaviour research on biculturalism suggests that biculturals exhibit certain skills and abilities that might be useful in and for multinational organisations (e.g., Brannen et al., 2009; Friedman and Liu, 2009). Research from the area of psychology has provided management scholars with a profound knowledge about biculturals' skills. Several studies found that biculturals exhibit greater levels of creativity than their monocultural peers do (Leung et al., 2008; Leung and Chiu, 2010; Saad et al., 2013). Research in this area suggests that biculturalism and exposure to different cultures allow individuals to obtain different perspectives on issues and, thus, to come up with new and creative ideas. Leung and Chiu (2010), for example, conducted several experiments and showed that biculturals are able to engage effectively in creativity-enhancing processes and to generate creative ideas. Tadmor et al. (2012a, 2012b) found that individuals who identified with two cultures exhibit more fluency, flexibility, and novelty on creative tasks and produce more innovations at work. Korzilius et al. (2017) found that multiculturalism leads to higher levels of innovative workplace behaviours with the effect being driven by multiculturalists' high levels of cultural intelligence.

*H1. Bicultural individuals exhibit higher levels of creativity than their monocultural peers do.*

Another element improving the *personal effectiveness* of a bicultural global leader would be cognitive complexity and more complex metacognitive strategies. Cognitive CQ is the "knowledge of norms, practices and conventions in different cultures that has been acquired from educational and personal experiences" (Ang and Van Dyne, 2008, p.5). Benet-Martínez and colleagues report that biculturals are higher in cognitive complexity, which is the "capacity to construe people, objects, and ideas in a multidimensional way" (Benet-Martínez et al., 2006, p.388), than their monocultural peers are. Similar findings were reported by Tadmor et al. (2009) who found that biculturals are high in integrative complexity, which is associated among others with higher creativity and better performance. Consistent with these findings in the field of psychology, Brannen et al. (2013) found that biculturals exhibit more cognitive complexity and, hence, can successfully act as cultural bridges in the organisational context. Furthermore, biculturals have been found to possess more complex cultural metacognitive strategies (Brannen et al., 2013). Metacognition might be defined as "cognition about cognitive phenomena" (Flavell, 1979) or "awareness of one's own thinking, awareness of the content of one's conceptions, an active monitoring of one's cognitive processes, [and] an attempt to regulate one's cognitive processes in relationship to further learning," (Hennessey, 1999, p.3). Ang and Van Dyne (2008) defined cultural metacognition as mental processes directed at acquiring, comprehending, and calibrating of cultural knowledge. It is the ability to control and adapt one's cognitive processes and affective states related to or stemming from different experiences, and to abstract knowledge from specific culture-related experiences to broader knowledge of principles of cross-cultural interactions (Szymanski, 2017; Thomas et al., 2008). Brannen and colleagues (Brannen et al., 2009) suggested that bicultural individuals have higher levels of cultural metacognition than their monocultural peers due to their extensive experience in understanding and adapting to different, often contradictory, cultural settings.

*H2. Bicultural individuals exhibit higher levels of cognitive skills than their monocultural peers do.*

Cognitive skills and creativity are important elements of bicultural competence but are not the only qualities identified in the literature. Another element of the global leadership triad consists of skills necessary for *collaborative relationships*. Several authors have suggested, yet not empirically shown, that biculturals could be effective leaders due to high-attributional complexity, defined as “the propensity of individuals to infer complex internal and external attributions in interpersonal situations, and the accuracy of the attributions made by these individuals, as well as their leadership effectiveness” (Lakshman, 2013, p.923) or thanks to their improved decision-making skills (Friedman and Liu, 2009). Zander et al. (2012) proposed that biculturals exhibit some traits necessary for successful team leaders in multinational teams. Good leaders should have cognitive, behavioural and emotional flexibility (e.g., Osland et al., 2012; Osland, 2013), and biculturals would be particularly effective in leadership positions as they would possess the necessary flexibility to react to different situations and demands placed upon them. Similarly, Osland et al. (2013) proposed that high-cultural intelligence is necessary for successful global leadership. Thus, individuals with more than one cultural identity are assumed to excel in leadership positions (Fitzsimmons et al., 2011). In one of the few empirical studies, Gillespie et al. (2010) found that bicultural managers are more likely to be in upper leadership positions than their monocultural peers in Mexico are.

*H3. Bicultural individuals undertake leadership actions more often than their monocultural peers do.*

All the previously mentioned skills and abilities of biculturals have been conceptualised to have a positive effect on biculturals’ performance. However, there might also be negative aspects of biculturalism. We theorise that two negative effects of biculturalism exist: (1) higher stress susceptibility of biculturals, affecting their *personal effectiveness*, and lower acceptance and perception of biculturals as leaders, thus, affecting their *collaborative relationships*.

Early studies on biculturalism suggested that biculturalism might be an individually detrimental state (Park, 1928). Stonequist (1937) believed that biculturals could be marginalised in both cultures; hence, they experience stress and anxiety. Baumeister et al. (1985) identified potential identity crises related to the lack of adequate self-definition. Yet the much referred to research by LaFromboise et al. (1993) and subsequent studies showed that individuals are able to hold to different cultural frames without having to suffer, which was assumed previously. Nevertheless, albeit it has been shown in numerous studies—led by the pioneering research on cultural frame-switching by Hong et al. (2000) that individuals can hold and effectively function with two distinct cultural schemas, research looking at the relationship between stress susceptibility and biculturals is rare to non-existent in the management literature. From the literature on education and counselling we are informed that growing up in two cultural environments could lead to higher-stress levels in bicultural youths (Romero and Roberts, 2003; Romero et al., 2007) and minority stress was found to be positively related to depressive symptoms (Wei et al., 2010). However, the findings here are mixed and not consistent. For example, Vivero and Jenkins (1999) reported that the individuals who grew up in culturally diverse environments report cultural homelessness experienced as confusion and isolation, whereas Moore and Barker (2012) found that these individuals rather feel more multicultural than confused. In this study, we examine the levels of stress susceptibility of bi- and monocultural individuals.

*H4. Bicultural individuals exhibit higher levels of stress susceptibility than their monocultural peers do.*

In Hypothesis 3, we theorise that biculturals exhibit leadership behaviours more often, which is an important element of *collaborative relationships*. Cultural intelligence research has shown that individual with high CQ are more likely to be accepted by new groups (e.g., Joardar et al., 2007). However, the very essence of biculturalism, i.e., identification with two cultures, might be a source of negative effects on group work. The social identity theory of leadership (Hogg, 2001; Hogg and van Knippenberg, 2003) connects leadership to the social psychology of influence. Tajfel (1979) proposed that social groups (e.g., social class or ethnic groups) are an important source of pride and self-esteem for the group members. Through the process of social categorisation, individuals divide the world into two groups: the in-group and the out-group. Tajfel (1979) argued that individuals display more positive behaviours toward members of their in-group to enhance their self-image. The social identity theory of leadership is based on similar principles and proposes that group prototypical (i.e., embodying values and characteristics of the group) leaders are perceived as more effective than are less prototypical leaders (Hogg et al., 2012). Biculturals present a significant challenge to social categorisation as they cannot be easily identified and categorised into one national group. For instance, in a group of Spanish individuals, a person born to Spanish and French parents will be, by definition, always less prototypical than a Spanish person born to both Spanish parents will be. Now, this challenge might be multiplied in multinational teams. For instance, in a group of Spanish individuals and several foreign nationals, the bicultural would be seen as neither Spanish (for Spanish members he is not a prototypical Spanish) nor as a foreigner (for foreign nationals he is not prototypically foreign as he is half-Spanish). In this case, a monocultural French individual in the same team will at least be seen as a prototypical individual by one group (the foreigners). While this is still an understudied area, we hypothesise that because of the social identity theory of leadership mechanisms, biculturals will be seen as less effective leaders of their teams, even when they exhibit leadership behaviours more often. In this study, we examine the perception of leadership effectiveness of bi- and monocultural individuals.

*H5. Bicultural individuals are less often perceived as effective leaders in multicultural teams than their monocultural peers are.*

## **4 Methods**

In this section, we outline the research design and context of this study, describe all variables used, and provide detailed descriptive statistics of the sample and the correlation matrix.

### *4.1 Research context and design*

We use sport as our research context. Sport has been found to be a useful research setting for studying organisational and management phenomena (Wolfe et al., 2005). Wolfe et al. (2005, pp.184–185) suggested that sport mimics laboratory research, as it resembles a relatively controlled field experiment without the challenge of motivating subjects. Goff and Tollison (1990) advocated using sport to study organisational phenomena because sport provides researchers with clarity of outcomes and availability of many relevant variables measured with great accuracy. Hence, it comes as no surprise that a number of organisational scholars have used sport as a research context for studying a vast array of phenomena, including resource divestment and capability building (Moliterno and Wiersema, 2007), the importance of managerial ability for resource value

creation (Holcomb et al., 2009), the determinant of perception of rivalry (Kilduff et al., 2010), interpersonal networks (Cotton et al., 2011), and alignment of dynamic capabilities to external environments of the organisation (Szymanski et al., 2019).

We use a sample of association football (soccer) players competing in the English Premier League (top-tier) during the 2012–2013 season. When it comes to the relevance of the context to the phenomenon of interest, we believe that association football is an ideal setting. Maderer et al. (2014) studied teams in the German Bundesliga as multicultural teams. Hoffmann et al. (2002) found that culture and cultural differences have a significant effect on national team performance in FIFA World Cup tournaments; hence, cross-cultural skills developed by biculturals are likely to exhibit their effect in the game. Furthermore, sport management studies have reported the effect of cognitive skills (Williams et al., 1993), metacognitive strategies (Maynard et al., 1995; Williams, 2000; Ward and Williams, 2003; Wolfson and Neave, 2007), stress-related factors (Jones and Hardy, 1990; Hanton et al., 2005), and leadership skills (Vestberg et al., 2012) on individual performance.

In this study, we adopt a hypothetico-deductive approach. The hypotheses formulated in the previous section were tested using fixed-effects models. In what follows, we present details of the variables used as proxies for the discussed constructs.

#### 4.2 Independent variables

To build our models and test the hypotheses we had to adopt proxies for the relevant constructs. While some of them (e.g., biculturalism) were relatively easy to select and measure, some were more controversial (e.g., leadership behaviour). We grounded our proxy selection in the existing sport management and psychology literature. In this section, we describe all variables and proxies and discuss why we selected the particular measure. We continue the discussion on imperfect proxies in the limitation section of this manuscript.

*Biculturalism* is a dummy-coded variable, indicating whether the individual is affiliated with two (or more) countries under the FIFA eligibility rules. FIFA is the global association football governing body regulating international games and national team statuses of all professionally active players. If a player wants to be eligible for a nation different from his country of origin (i.e., where he was born and has citizenship of), then the individual must report a “clear connection” to the other country. Under Article 17 of the FIFA statute, at least one of the following requirements must be met: (1) the player was born on the territory of the country; (2) his biological mother or biological father was born on the territory of the country; or (3) he has lived continuously for at least five years after reaching the age of 18 on the territory of the relevant country. The rules were introduced to avoid a situation when exceptionally skilled players are given citizenship of a country they have no connection with just to represent that country on the international stage. Therefore, a player who is officially eligible for two countries must have significant ties with both countries. In this study, consistent with much of the management literature, the approach of identifying culture with national culture is adopted. Such measurement is consistent with most recent conceptualisations of biculturalism as knowledge of, identification with, and internalisation of more than one societal culture (Vora et al., 2018).

#### 4.3 Dependent variables

*Creativity* is measured by the number of assists per minute played. Lucifora and Simmons (2003, p.44) define an assist as “the final pass made prior to a goal being

scored and (...) an indicator of player creativity.” Higher levels of creativity should enable the player to see more passing options that could result in goal-scoring opportunities (Lucifora and Simmons, 2003; Duch et al., 2010). Assists and passes are used traditionally as a measure of creativity in team sport research (Lucifora and Simmons, 2003; Memmert, 2011; Memmert et al., 2010).

*Cognitive skills* are measured by the number of interceptions (i.e., dispossessing the opponent while the other team is making a pass). Interceptions are used as a proxy of cognitive skills and the ability of the player to read the game and opponents playing patterns, and to anticipate the next move. Sport management literature (e.g., Williams et al., 1993; Maynard et al., 1995) consistently links cognitive skills to this element of team sports.

*Leadership behaviour* is measured with the number of dribbling attempts (both successful and unsuccessful) and the number of shots taken per game. Leadership is difficult to measure in team sports (Price and Weiss, 2011). Loughhead et al. (2006) and Loughhead and Hardy (2005) proposed that team leaders exhibit leadership behaviours by assuming important tasks and decision-making, such finishing plays with a shot, thus, taking on more responsibility for team performance, or by attempting individual moves to gain an advantage over the opponent. In this study, we do not differentiate between successful and unsuccessful shots and dribblings (as they are a function of individual football skills), but we look at the number of attempts as they reflect the willingness to take responsibility.

*Stress susceptibility* is measured with the number of red cards per minute played. Stress-related factors cause aggression and, in turn, violent behaviour in sport (Anshel and Wells, 2000a, 2000b; Terry and Jackson, 1985; Kerr et al., 2005); hence, we use the number of direct red cards, which in association football is an individual penalty given for violent and aggressive behaviour. We excluded red cards given because of two yellow cards.

*Leadership perception* is measured by the number of man of the match (MotM) awards received during the season. MotM is an equivalent to the Most Valuable Player award in American sports and is given to the player whose performance led the team to success. It is a subjective measure of individual performance.

#### 4.4 Control variables

*Age of the player*, *professional experience* (measured by the number of games played by a player at the senior level), and *international experience* (measured by the number of international caps) are proxies used to grasp a complex construct of physiological and psychological abilities of the player. Sport medicine studies have found that physiological functional capacity, after reaching a certain peak, declines with age (e.g., Donato et al., 2003; Reaburn and Dascombe, 2008; Tanaka and Seals, 2008), but this effect can be mitigated by increased experience in the task area. This effect has been reported in a number of sport settings (Barnsley and Thompson, 1988; Barnsley et al., 1992), but it was also found significant in education (e.g., Barnsley and Thompson, 1985).

*Salary* is a proxy for the footballer’s market value, which should reflect their skills and potential. It is measured in British Pounds per month. Salary approach to measuring skills is common in management research (Smart and Wolfe, 2003; Kahn, 1993; MacDonald and Reynolds, 1994).

**Table 1** Summary of all variables used in this study

<i>Key construct</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Measurement</i>	<i>Source of data</i>	<i>Previously used</i>	<i>Alternative measure for robustness tests</i>
Identification with two or more cultures (Biculturalism)	1 Biculturalism	Dummy-coded (1 for bicultural players)	Country affiliation under FIFA eligibility rules	Whoscored.com Transfermarkt.de	Szymanski et al. (2019)	NA
	2 Creativity	Continuous	Number of assists per minute played	Whoscored.com	Lucifora and Simmons (2003) and Memmert (2011)	Number of key passes per minute played
Bicultural competence	3 Cognitive skills	Continuous	Number of interceptions per minute played	Whoscored.com		Number of blocks per minute played
	4 Leadership behaviour	Continuous	Number of shots and dribbling attempts taken	Whoscored.com		Number of penalty kicks taken
Bicultural Liability	5 Stress susceptibility	Continuous	Red cards per minute played	Whoscored.com		NA
	6 Leadership perception	Continuous	Man of the match awards	Whoscored.com		NA
Physiological and psychological potential	7 Age	Continuous	Years	Whoscored.com	Maderer et al. (2014)	NA
	8 Professional experience	Continuous	Number of games played in senior football	Transfermarkt.de	Grohsjean et al. (2016)	NA
Football skills	9 International experience	Continuous	Number of international games played	Transfermarkt.de	Maderer et al. (2014)	NA
	10 Salary	Continuous	British Pounds per month (thousands)	Transfermarkt.de	Smart and Wolfe (2003)	NA
Team role	11 Team role	Dummy-coded (1 for defensive players)	Position on the pitch where the player played most games in the season	Whoscored.com	Grohsjean et al. (2016)	NA

*Team role* is a dummy variable used to separate offensive players (0) from defensive players (1) based on their playing position on the pitch (Grohsjean et al., 2016).

When running regression analyses, we also controlled for the player's *team* because players in better performing teams might show better individual statistics. Table 1 summarises all variables used in this study.

#### 4.5 Data

To test our hypotheses, we collected secondary data about all players that participated in the English Premier League's 2012–2013 season. According to Whoscored.com, 537 players played at least one minute during the season. Detailed professional history and contract information were available for 535 of these players. We decided to remove all individuals who played less than 180 minutes during the season (an equivalent of two full games or 5.26% of total available playing time) to eliminate potential outliers. We also removed all goalkeepers, as their task is substantially different from other players. The final sample included 442 individuals in 20 teams. A summary of key characteristics of the final sample is reported in Table 1. We found no statistically significant differences between the bi- and monocultural subsamples.

Descriptive statistics and the correlation matrix are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2** Characteristics of biculturals and monocultural individuals compared with the total sample

	<i>Total sample</i>	<i>Bicultural</i>	<i>Monocultural</i>
Age	25.95	25.61	26.10
Height	181.43	181.51	181.40
Weight	75.37	75.54	75.30
Salary	184.95	181.47	186.47
Senior games	204.31	196.44	207.73
International games	18.93	16.68	19.91
Position	0.51	0.45	0.53
N	442	134	308

## 5 Results

We performed regression analyses using fixed-effect (GLS) models that allowed controlling for constant, but unmeasured differences due to team-specific factors (Smart and Wolfe, 2003). To test Hypotheses 1–4, we specified four pairs of models: Base Models 1–4, using five control variables (salary, age, professional experience, international experience, and team role) and Biculturalism Models 1–4, including the five controls and biculturalism variable. The Dependent Variable in Model 1 is Creativity, in Model 2 is Stress Susceptibility, in Model 3 is Cognitive Skills, and in Model 4 is Leadership Behaviour.

In all but one pair (dependent variable: cognitive skills), adding biculturalism improved the explanatory power of the model. The detailed results and model specifications are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3** Descriptive statistics and correlation matrix

	Mean	Std. dev.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Creativity	0.964	1.346											
2. Stress susceptibility	0.067	0.208	0.009										
3. Metacognitive skills	1.157	0.801	-0.207**	0.006									
4. Leadership	0.958	0.830	0.177**	0.044	-0.030								
5. Salary	184.956	162.417	0.191**	0.052*	-0.066	0.168**							
6. Professional experience	204.310	116.785	-0.015	0.022	0.004	-0.141**	0.308**						
7. International experience	18.934	25.574	0.081	0.001	-0.032	0.013	0.524**	0.483**					
8. Age	25.953	3.915	-0.085	0.026	0.089	-0.187**	0.222**	0.894**	0.522**				
9. Team role (dummy)	0.511	NA	-0.364**	0.250**	0.526**	-0.272**	-0.139**	-0.040	-0.057	0.059			
10. Biculturalism (dummy)	0.302	NA	0.095*	0.118*	-0.063	0.100*	-0.014	-0.045	-0.058	-0.057	-0.074		
11. Leadership perception	0.797	1.524	0.178**	0.032	0.091	0.270**	0.366**	0.106*	0.172**	0.040	-0.162*	-0.104	
12. Goals scored	2.257	3.698	0.256**	0.011	-0.211**	0.227**	0.410*	0.158**	0.202**	0.050	-0.421**	0.007	0.687**

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

**Table 4** Effects of biculturalism on creativity, stress susceptibility, metacognitive skills, and leadership behaviours

	DV: Creativity		DV: Stress susceptibility		DV: Metacognitive skills		DV: Leadership	
	Base Model 1	Biculturalism Model 1	Base Model 2	Biculturalism Model 2	Base Model 3	Biculturalism Model 3	Base Model 4	Biculturalism Model 4
1. Salary	0.001**	0.001**	0.000*	0.000*	0.001**	0.000**	0.001**	0.001**
2. Professional experience	0.001	0.001	0.000	0.000	-0.001	-0.001	-0.000	-0.000
3. International experience	0.003	0.003	-0.001	0.000	-0.003	-0.003	0.001	0.001
4. Age	-0.062*	-0.062*	0.004	0.004	0.037*	0.037*	-0.023	-0.023
5. Team role (dummy)	-0.870	-0.870	0.012**	0.016**	0.839**	0.833**	-0.281**	-0.275**
6. Biculturalism (dummy)	0.200*	0.200*	0.054**	0.054**	0.003	0.003	0.095*	0.095*
Team effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	442	442	442	442	442	442	442	442
R <sup>2</sup>	0.15	0.17	0.29	0.31	0.27	0.28	0.12	0.14
Change in R <sup>2</sup>		0.02**		0.02**		0.01		0.02**
Wald Chi2	82.16	85.65	191.16	198.41	198.42	204.35	67.16	70.85
Prob > Chi2	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$

Testing Hypothesis 5 required a more complex model as the leadership assessment is done post-game; hence, in-game performance influences the outcome. Therefore, we created another pair of models. The Base Model 5 included all five previously used controls *and* two measures of offensive performance traditionally used in sport research: goals scored and assists. The Biculturalism Model 5 included the controls and biculturalism variable. The detailed results and model specifications are presented in Table 4.

**Table 5** Effect of biculturalism on leadership perception

	<i>DV: Leadership perception</i>	
	<i>Base Model 5</i>	<i>Biculturalism Model 5</i>
1. Salary	0.001*	0.001*
2. Professional experience	-0.001	-0.001
3. International experience	-0.001	-0.000
4. Age	0.006	0.006
5. Team role (dummy)	0.513**	0.501**
6. Goals scored	0.270**	0.269**
7. Creativity	0.107**	0.107**
8. Biculturalism (dummy)		<b>-0.159*</b>
Team effects	Yes	Yes
<i>N</i>	442	442
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.50	0.52
<i>Change in R</i> <sup>2</sup>		0.02**
Wald Chi2	461.22	468.16
Prob > Chi2	0.00	0.00

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$

To sum up the results, we found statistical support for Hypotheses 1, 3, 4, and 5. Biculturals were not found to show more cognitive skills than monocultural individuals did, but it should be noted that the absence of evidence is not the evidence of absence (Altman and Bland, 1995).

### 5.1 Robustness tests

We performed a battery of robustness tests to check the reliability of the results. First, to ensure that the results are not sensitive to the selected method, another estimation technique was applied. We replaced the fixed-effects models with OLS regressions, but the significance and direction of all predictors remained stable. Second, we included additional control variables in our models, including a quadratic term for age to capture a decline in performance caused by physical performance deteriorating with age, and foreignness of the player (dummy coded); however, the new variables neither had a significant effect on the dependent variables nor improved the fit of the models. Finally, we replaced three of the dependent variables' proxies with alternative measures. Assists, used to measure creativity, were replaced with the number of key passes. However, the effect remained positive became only marginally significant (at  $p < 0.1$ ). The number of

interceptions, used to measure cognitive skills, was replaced with the number of blocks, but the effect remained statistically insignificant. Number of shots and dribbling attempts, used to measure leadership behaviour, was replaced with the number of penalty kicks taken, but the effect remained statistically significant (at  $p < 0.05$ ).

## 6 Discussion

The results of this study confirmed two of the three hypotheses in the literature about the positive effect of biculturals. Furthermore, the results also confirmed our two new hypotheses about the negative effect of biculturalism. Overall, the results of this study indicate that biculturals possess certain beneficial skills and characteristics for global work, as proposed by Hong (2010) and Fitzsimmons (2013). However, despite these positive outcomes, biculturalism also led to negative outcomes in the team context. To analyse these limitations resulting from biculturalism systematically, we used the same model presented before in Figure 1 and examined where the negative effects would fit.

Hypothesis 4 was statistically confirmed, meaning that bicultural individuals are more prone to stress and negative behaviours stemming from higher-stress levels. Our proxies and the available data did not allow us to measure and/or quantify the exact levels of stress in individuals, but based on sport management and sport psychology literature, which posits that higher-stress levels lead to more aggression and violent behaviour in team sports (Anshel and Wells, 2000a; Terry and Jackson, 1985), we conclude that our proxy was valid and it indeed measures susceptibility to stress. Furthermore, our results are coherent with the early literature on biculturalism (Park, 1928) and previous research on bicultural stress among bicultural teenagers in the USA (Romero et al., 2007). Romero et al. (2007, p.456) found that higher bicultural stress (i.e., “the perception of stress due to everyday life stressors that result from navigating between more than one culture”), had an impact on health and triggered risk behaviours. Hanek (2016) found some negative effects of biculturalism on the decision-making process and argued that individuals with low-identity integration (including cultural identity) exhibit higher levels of indecisiveness. The results and the knowledge from the literature leads us to a conclusion that bicultural individuals not only benefit from two cultural perspectives and cognitive skillsets (Dau, 2016), but the two cultural cognitive perspectives may eventually result in an individual making a decision slower than a monocultural would (Hanek, 2016) and/or making an irrational decision as exemplified in our sample. As a result, the *personal effectiveness* of a bicultural benefits from higher levels of creativity, but is affected by higher levels of stress susceptibility.

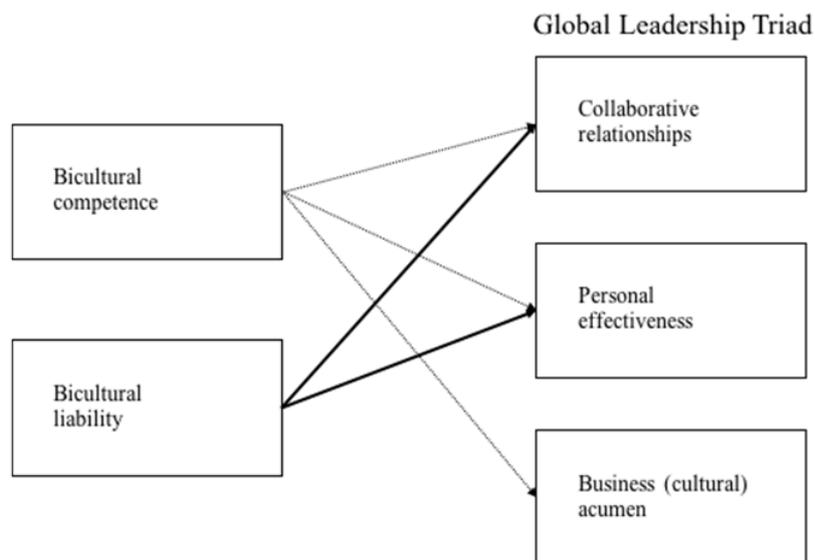
Hypothesis 5 was statistically confirmed, meaning that bicultural individuals are less often seen as leaders of their teams, despite the fact that they exhibit leadership behaviours more often than their monocultural team members (Hypothesis 3 was confirmed). It must be noted that our hypothesis was based on the social identity theory of leadership; hence, the proxy reflects how other team members see biculturals as leaders and not how effective they really are. One could imagine that an individual who performs at the same level as his peers (as showed by our comparison of bi- and monocultural individuals) *and* exhibits more leadership behaviours would be seen more often as a team leader. Interestingly, we conducted a follow-up analysis of post-game ratings (on a 1–10 scale) and found no statistically significant differences between the two groups. It is only in the perception as the team leader where biculturals are less often

appreciated. These findings are consistent with the social identity theory of leadership literature because bicultural individuals cannot be considered to belong to the same group as their monocultural peers. It seems that within multinational teams (i.e., teams of individuals coming from various nations) in which leaders almost by definition face significant challenges with social identity leadership, individuals who do not belong to only one national category face even bigger challenges. Perhaps they are not seen as a foreign national, but as a yet another species. While the results do not indicate that biculturals cannot be effective global leaders, the study indicates that their biculturalism is a liability affecting the *collaborative relationship* element of the global leadership triad.

Finally, the last element of the triad is *business acumen*. Biculturals possess deeply socialised culture-specific knowledge, which, by definition, is tacit (Brannen, 2004; Brannen and Thomas, 2010) and, thus, difficult to transfer (Johnson et al., 2006). Therefore, biculturalism contributes positively to this area of the triad. Currently, we do not recognise any potential drawbacks caused by biculturalism, but that is not to say that future research will not reveal any. For example, cultural intelligence has been, by and large, seen as advantageous for individuals (e.g., Ramsey et al., 2017; Wang, 2016; Lisak and Erez, 2015; Groves and Feyerherm, 2011) and their teams (e.g., Presbitero, 2016; Moon, 2013; Khani et al., 2011). However, more recently researchers have been looking into negative effects of high-cultural intelligence (e.g., Gelfand et al., 2008; Fang et al., 2018). Similarly, more research shall be devoted to any potential negative effects of biculturalism.

As a result of our theorising and empirical examination, we expand the model presented in Figure 1 to include the construct of *bicultural liability*, i.e., the unique set of cognitive, psychological, and social attributes of bicultural individuals that limits their potential contribution to multinational team performance. Figure 2 displays how the construct links to the three elements of the global leadership triad.

**Figure 2** Conceptual model of bicultural competence and bicultural liability related to the global leadership triad



## 7 Implications for practice

The study's findings offer valuable insights for multinational organisations operating on the global market. Biculturals are already recognised as an important resource for multinational corporations, but very few have specified strategies and practices in place to fully take advantage of biculturals' potential (Furusawa and Brewster, 2015). Despite early overly optimistic studies on the potential contribution of biculturals to team and organisational performance (Brannen and Thomas, 2010; Fitzsimmons et al., 2011, 2013; Szymanski et al., 2019), biculturals cannot be seen as a silver-bullet solution to all cross-cultural challenges faced by multicultural teams and organisations. Indeed, biculturals contribute positively to organisational performance but only under specific circumstances (Dau, 2016; Szymanski et al., 2019). To be effective biculturals shall be placed in teams where their characteristics are aligned, at least partially, with other teammates (Dau, 2016). Furthermore, bicultural managers have been found to be effective leaders only when the external environment of the team is culturally diverse (Szymanski et al., 2019). This study sheds more light on *why* the effect of biculturals on team performance is not always positive. Undoubtedly, biculturals exhibit skills and abilities leading to their bicultural competency (Hong, 2010), but also suffer from bicultural liability limiting their potential for contribution in teams. In other words, the positive effects (as previously reported in the literature) are mitigated by certain negative effects such as high-stress susceptibility and less often perception as leaders.

Practicing managers must first understand both the strengths and weaknesses of their bicultural employees before placing them in a setting where they can take advantage of the bicultural competence with limiting losses stemming from bicultural liability. For instance, biculturals shall be placed in multicultural teams operating in highly diverse environments, where they can take advantage of their cross-cultural communication and negotiation skills. Further, they shall be assigned tasks requiring high levels of creativity and cognitive skills (Hong, 2010). Conversely, putting biculturals in homogeneous teams might highlight the negative aspects, i.e. the bicultural liability.

## 8 Limitations and future research

First, the list of performance measures used in this study is not exhaustive. We recognise that some of our measures are only approximate proxies for the underlying constructs; hence, we recommend future research to develop more fine-tuned performance measures that ideally, could also distinguish the team-level effects of biculturals. Second, this study does not differentiate between various bicultural types; therefore, a more fine-tuned categorisation of biculturals is required.

Next, this study examined biculturals' performance in a very particular environment. While we explain why this research setting is appropriate to study the phenomenon of biculturalism, we are also aware of its limitation. A study using a more diverse environment could shed more light on biculturals' performance and further validate our findings.

Furthermore, our study examined bicultural team *members* only but did not investigate the performance of team *managers*. To improve our knowledge about biculturals as leaders, future studies could also investigate various other team positions.

Finally, we caution against over-reaching in terms of interpretations or conclusions of this study as it were conducted using sport teams. While sport has been used as a research context to study a wide range of management phenomena, such as including effects of executive succession (Pfeffer and Davis-Blake, 1986); escalating commitment (Staw and Hoang, 1995), the pay distribution-performance relationship (Bloom, 1999); in some regards sport differs from a traditional business-like setting.

## 9 Conclusions

The ongoing globalisation, migration, and integration of cultures are leading to an inexorable increase in the number of bi- and multicultural individuals around the world. Biculturals are becoming key stakeholders for virtually all organisations, either as customers or as employees; hence, a solid understanding of their characteristics and behaviours is critical for success. Organisational research has already offered important insights into how biculturals contribute to team performance, but the negative effects have been ignored, largely.

Both bicultural competence and bicultural liability exist and affect individuals' performance. This research contributes to the literature on biculturals and, specifically, on the effect of biculturalism on team performance (e.g., Dau, 2016; Hong, 2010). It is one of the first studies to quantitatively examine the effect of biculturalism on individuals' performance in multicultural teams. The study contributes by testing the theory proposed by Hong (2010) and extending this model to include the negative effects of biculturalism. The findings of this study may be used as a basis for further theory development in the area of biculturals in teams and we hope this manuscript triggers a wider debate on both bicultural *competences* and *liabilities*.

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