

EXAMINING COPING STRATEGIES ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CULTURAL ADAPTATION AND THE PERFORMANCE OF EXPATRIATES IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to examine how coping strategies are used in the context of the relationship between cultural adaptation and job performance. The quantitative design of this study involves distributing questionnaires to gather data. In all, 381 expatriates in Malaysia's service industry participated in the study by responding to the questionnaire. PLS-SEM (SmartPLS) software was used for the multivariate analysis of the questionnaire data. The findings revealed a strong correlation between coping strategies and work performance, cultural adaptation and work performance, and cultural adaptation and coping strategies. Furthermore, the results of this study also revealed that coping strategies as a moderator in the association between cultural adaptation and work performance. The researcher also provided recommendations to other interested parties, including TalentCorp, the management of the organisation in Malaysia, and future researchers in this field.

Keywords: Job performance, Coping strategies, Cultural adaptation, Expatriate

1. Introduction

Many local and international researchers have recently become interested in studies about challenges associated with international migration. According to the 2019 International Migration Report, there were 270 million international migrants in 2019 as opposed to 150 million in 2010. This is further demonstrated by the fact that 164 million migrants—including expatriates—are foreign workers (International Migration Organization 2019). The development of careers, lifestyles, political, economic, and social system stability, the standard of living, safety considerations, and the availability of health services overseas all contribute to this active worldwide migration (Iheanachor et al., 2024).

However, a study by Ying et al. (2021) discovered that since they are unable to comprehend and adjust to the cultural context of the host country, expats who go through the process of international migration are perceived to face cultural conflict. This is because the local population in the host country follows different cultural practice patterns (Noman et al., 2023). As a result, foreigners' incapacity and weakness to adjust to their new culture might lead to more than only discomfort and mental instability (Fang-Yi & Thi, 2023). It has been seen that it may have an impact on how tasks are carried out, which may have an impact on how well the organisation performs at work (Cocuřová & Tomčříková, 2020).

A coping strategy approach is required to help expatriates deal with cultural issues and manage stressful circumstances more effectively (Agrawal, 2023). According to Vintila et al. (2023), coping mechanisms also contribute to effective emotional instability control. Accordingly, a coping strategy is a way to limit, cope with, control, and manage a stressful situation to prevent it from getting worse (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Past researchers have discovered that those who employ coping mechanisms are better at handling stressful circumstances and maintaining mental stability (Kurniyawan et al., 2023; Eybers & Gerber, 2021; El-Masri et al., 2021; & Ibrahim et al., 2021). Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine how coping mechanisms are used by foreign workers in Malaysia's service industry to their ability to adjust to their new culture and perform at work.

2. Problem Statement

To improve the quality of life in the host nation, there is much discussion and debate on the lack of cultural adaptation among expatriates living overseas (Arokiasamy & Kim, 2020). According to the National Trade Council's 2018 Global Mobility Trends Survey, 54% of the nation's expats are repatriating before their job contracts expire. Numerous causes contribute to this condition, such as a lack of understanding of organisational culture, a failure to establish a harmonious social network with the local population, and a refusal to learn about local culture (Ying et al., 2021). Indeed, an analysis of the 2017 HSBC Expat Explorer Survey found that 81% of expatriates reported having communication issues that made it challenging for them to socialize with local staff (HSBC Explorer pls, 2017).

Repatriation has been shown to have an impact on not only the expatriates themselves but also on their organisation and management. Accordingly, to prevent encountering difficulties with cultural adaptation in their new country of residence, expatriates should concentrate on aspects of intercultural communication, interpersonal relationships, and lifestyle adaptation (Agrawal, 2023; Ying et al., 2021). Despite this, local scholars Nazirah Abdul Rohman et al. (2023) reported that when expatriates were exposed to Malaysia's ethnic diversity, they experienced culture shock, which consequently produced linguistic, cultural, and religious diversity when carrying out organisational responsibilities. This illustrates how each employee's cultural background has an impact on the business culture (Zainatul Shuhaida Abd Rahman et al., 2022).

Despite the cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity of Malaysian society, research indicates that expats continue to choose Malaysia as their destination of choice for their career development (Lian & Li, 2020). According to the Immigration Department of Malaysia's Service Transaction Statistics report (2019), there were 157,725 foreign arrivals in 2015, 150,627 in 2016, and 153,523 of them in 2017. In 2018, this figure showed a slight decrease to 146,571 expatriates and then increased again to 149,634 expatriates in 2019 (Department of Immigration Malaysia, 2019). The government, organisations, or institutions in charge of managing corporate branches in Malaysia and career development are the ones driving the increase in expatriates to Malaysia (Norhayati Zakaria & Bibi Noraini Mohd Yusuf, 2023; Richardson, 2022).

Furthermore, compared to other sectors in Malaysia, this study has shown that the service sector employs the greatest number of expatriates—71,453 in total (Ministry of Human Resources, 2017). The service industry is driving the national economy and providing the majority of Malaysia's income, as seen by the growing number of expatriates working in this field (Hazirah Azami et al., 2021). Apart from that, Kuala Lumpur is identified to be the focal point of foreign involvement in significant areas in Malaysia. According to Lee and Nguyen (2020), social interaction among multiethnic inhabitants in large urban regions—particularly Kuala Lumpur—has a lower degree of social closeness than that of residents in slower-growing rural or urban areas.

Accordingly, the social interaction of the city's community is influenced by environmental factors like the advancement of technological currents, globalization, social standards, lifestyle practices, work demands, and individual personalities (Norhayati Zakaria & Bibi Noraini Mohd Yusuf, 2023; Agrawal, 2023; and Ying et al., 2021). Examining this issue in the context of foreigners undergoing cultural adaptation is crucial because Kuala Lumpur's community lacks social cohesion. The findings of the local literature spotlight research conducted up till 2019 indicate a lack of research focus on the topic of cultural adaptation and job performance among foreign workers in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia's service industry. Thus, it is anticipated that this study will be able to identify issues and investigate solutions for the shortcomings and challenges that foreigners encounter when attempting cultural assimilation in Malaysia.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Population

This study uses a quantitative approach design to gather data using surveys. The study's population, N=99,834, is made up of expatriates in Malaysia's service industry (Malaysia, Ministry of Human Resources, 2018). According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2017), the service industry in Malaysia includes the retail, information technology, finance, education, sports, medical, and tourist subsectors among others. Therefore, to gather sample respondents for this study, researchers employ a cluster random sampling technique. For this study, a sample of 381 expatriates was chosen using Cohen's Sampling Table (1988). This study's questionnaire was distributed to Kuala Lumpur-area service sector organisations. The research questionnaire was distributed to the service providers in the Kuala Lumpur area.

3.2 Research Instrument

The item of this study was adopted and adapted from past research. The sociocultural adaptation variables in this study are represented by the Psychological Adaptation Scales (Biesecker et al., 2013) and the Sociocultural Adaptation Scales (SAS) (Ward & Kennedy, 1999). High Cronbach's alpha values, ranging from 0.90 to 0.96, were obtained by previous research using this questionnaire instrument (Spong & Kamau, 2012). However, the coping strategy variables in this study were measured using Ways of Coping (Folkman & Lazarus 1988). Cronbach's alpha ratings for earlier studies using the Ways of Coping questionnaire

(Folkman & Lazarus, 1988) ranged from 0.88 to 0.90 (Yu-Ping & Shaffer, 2018). Furthermore, the job performance variables were measured using the instrument of Individual Job Performance (Charbonnier-Voirin & Roussel, 2012) and previous research findings indicated that Cronbach's alpha value ranged from 0.70 to 0.85 (Koopmans et al., 2016). The Likert scale has five points: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree.

3.3 Pilot Study

Data collection for a pilot study was conducted among 30 expatriates in Kuala Lumpur. The sample of this pilot study is not involved in the actual data collection. The criteria of the respondents are expatriate who serves in the service sector in Malaysia and have resided in Malaysia for a period of 9 months and above. The findings of the pilot study reported the reliability of the items measured through Cronbach's Alpha showing that all the items have a positive relationship with each other. The measurement of Cronbach's alpha in this study is based on Hair et al. (2006) which is Cronbach's alpha value approaching 1 indicates that the questionnaire item has high reliability while a value of 0.6 and below indicates low reliability. Table 1 shows the findings of the reliability of this study. The researcher additionally verifies the facts through face validity (Creswell, 2013). In this study, the researcher obtained views on the analysis of research data from two experienced and highly knowledgeable lecturers in the field of research. The researcher also gathered the opinions of human resources officers, who have expertise managing and resolving issues related to expatriates in the firm, to further strengthen the study's content and findings.

Table 1. Findings of Reliability

Study Variables	Total Questions	Cronbach's Alpha value
Cultural Adaptation	42	0.850
Coping Strategy	66	0.641
Job Performance	36	0.789

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Response Rate

A total number of 381 expatriates are working in the service sector. The researcher distributed 400 set questionnaires to the respondents in Kuala Lumpur and only 363 set were returned to the researcher. However, only 350 set out of the 363 completed surveys were approved and used for data analysis. This is because thirteen surveys were excluded from data analysis due to not meeting the requirement of this survey. A summary of the completed questionnaires is provided in Table 2, which will be utilized for additional analysis.

Table 2. Distribution of Questionnaire Acquisition

Distribution of Questionnaire Earnings	Total
Respondents who work in the Service Sector in Malaysia	381 people
Distributed questionnaires	
Percentage of Surveys returned	400 sets
Percentage of Questionnaires Used in this Study	363 sets (90.75%)
	350 sets (87.50%)

4.2 Respondent Demographics

This study involved 199 male respondents and 159 female respondents. The majority of respondents involved in this study are between the ages of 30 and 39 years (203 respondents), followed by the age range of 20 and 29 years (81 respondents) and 40 and 49 years (66 respondents). Respondents with United States citizenship (65 respondents) were among the most respondents to this study's questionnaire. Next, followed by respondents from Japan (61 respondents), Pakistan (49 respondents), Iran (30 respondents), Philippines (25 respondents), India (23 respondents), Brunei (21 respondents), Indonesia (11 respondents), Australia (10 respondents), Bangladesh (7 respondents), Korea (7 respondents), Turkey (6 respondents), Singapore (6 respondents) and Thailand (5 respondents). The results of the analysis found that a total of 148 respondents had lived in Malaysia for a period of 7 to 11 years. This was followed by 123 respondents who lived in Malaysia between 12 years to 16 years and 79 respondents who had lived in Malaysia for a period of 2 years to 6 years. Furthermore, a total of 225 respondents were found to work in local companies while 125 respondents worked in multinational companies operating in Malaysia. The results of the analysis reported that 102 respondents who were involved in answering the questionnaire of this study worked in the financial field, followed by 50 respondents from the field of education, 48 respondents from the field of information technology, 48 respondents (commerce industry), 48 respondents (medicine industry), 42 respondents (sports industry) and 12 respondents (tourism industry).

4.3 Structural Model Testing

The research data for this study was analysed using PLS-SEM software (SmartPLS) version 3. The researcher used path analysis and factor analysis in PLS-SEM to test whether or not there is a relationship between constructs and other constructs. The researcher also tested the research hypothesis developed through the research model generated through PLS-SEM. This section explains about testing the structural model to determine the strength of the model and support for testing the research hypothesis. The structural model test is done by involving the issue of collinearity, R2 level, f2 effect size, and Q2 prediction.

4.4 Collinearity Issues

The issue of collinearity for this study is obtained through Collinearity Statistics (VIF) which is provided that the effect of independent variables and moderator variables does not exceed the value of 3.3 (Hair et al., 2006). Table 3 shows the results of VIF testing which is less than the value of 3.3 which means that there is no collinearity problem.

Table 3. Collinearity Issues

Study Variables	Coping Strategy	Job Performance
Cultural Adaptation	1,000	1,080
Coping Strategy		1,080

4.5 Significant Value

The significant value of this study is obtained through the coefficient value which must be within the range of -1 and +1 (Azwadi Ali, 2019). The p-value does not exceed the value of 0.10 to show that there is significance between the variables studied (Ramayah et al., 2018). Table 4 shows the results of the significance value for this study.

Table 4. Significance Value

Relationship	Coefficient	Standard Error	Value t	Value p	Hypothesis Results
Cultural Adaptation -> Job Performance	0.244	0.064	3.831	0.000	Supported
Cultural Adaptation -> Coping Strategies	0.274	0.059	4.636	0.000	Supported
Coping Strategy -> Job Performance	0.617	0.040	15.307	0.000	Supported

4.6 R² Assessment

R² is used to analyse the effect on independent variables and dependent variables (Ramayah et al., 2018). The R² assessment for this study was done on the coping strategy variable (moderating variable) and job performance variable (dependent variable). The measurement of the R² value is according to the conditions set by Ramayah et al. (2018) a value of 0.75 to 1.0 (high), a value of 0.50 to 0.74 (moderate), and a value of 0.25 to 0.49 (low) as in Table 5.

Table 5. R² Values

Study Variables	R ² Value	Relationship Effects
Coping Strategy	0.740	Moderate
Job performance	0.531	Moderate

4.7 Effect Size Testing (f²)

Effect size testing (f²) was used to test the relationship between the variables studied based on levels of 0.02 to 0.14 (low), 0.15 to 0.34 (medium) and 0.35, and above (high) (Cohen, 1988). Table 6 shows the results for f² in this study.

Table 6. f² Values

Relationship	f ²	Relationship Effects
Cultural Adaptation -> Job Performance	0.090	Low
Cultural Adaptation -> Coping Strategies	0.790	High
Coping Strategy -> Job Performance	0.603	High

4.8 Prediction Testing Q^2

Forecasting Q^2 is done to test the suitability of forecasting by meeting the conditions of the Q^2 set which is $Q^2 > 0$ which means that the independent variable has a suitable forecast with the dependent variable (Ringle et al., 2018). Table 7 reports the analysis results for the Q^2 value in this study.

Table 7. Decision Value Analysis Q^2

Study Variables	Value Q^2
Coping Strategy	0.025
Job performance	0.156

5.0 Research Findings

Objective 1: Identify the Relationship of Cultural Adaptation and Job Performance

Figure 1 shows the model analysis for this objective. The value of $f^2=0.039$ explains that the effect of cultural adaptation on job performance is small. Predictive analysis $Q^2=0.116$ which is cultural adaptation has a relationship with job performance. Therefore, the results of the analysis found that cultural adaptation and job performance have a significant and positive relationship in this study. Table 8 shows a summary of the research findings for the objectives of this study.

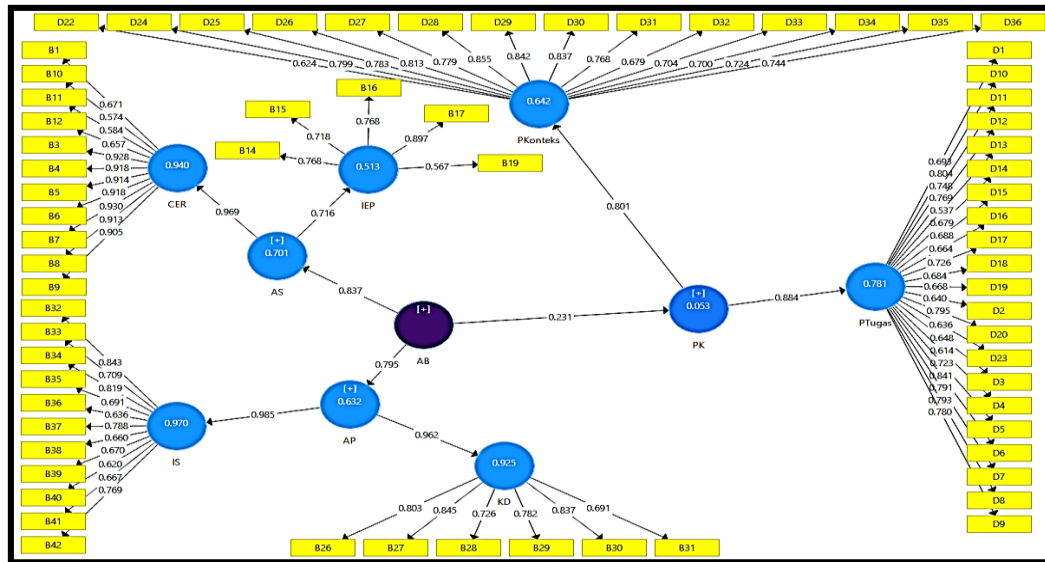


Figure 1. Model of Cultural Adaptation and Job Performance

*AB=Cultural Adaptation, AP=Psychological Adaptation, AS=Sociocultural Adaptation, CER=Cultural Empathy and Relatedness, IEP=Impersonal Endeavors and Perils, IS=Social Integration, KD=Self-Control, PK=Work Performance, PKon=Contextual Performance, Task = Task Performance

Table 8. Relationship between Cultural Adaptation and Work Performance

Relationship Variables	Job performance						Notes
	b	t	p	R ²	f ²	Q ²	
Cultural Adaptation	0.863	3.508	0.000	0.307	0.039	0.116	Hypothesis accepted

*std error=standard deviation, t > 1.96

Objective 2: Identify the Relationship of Cultural Adaptation and Coping Strategies

Figure 2 shows the structural model for this objective. The value of R²=0.180 shows that the relationship between these two variables is weak. The value of f²=0.219 is at a moderate level. The value of Q²=0.042 shows that cultural adaptation has a relationship with coping strategies as shown in Table 9. The results of the analysis show that cultural adaptation and coping strategies have a significant and positive relationship.

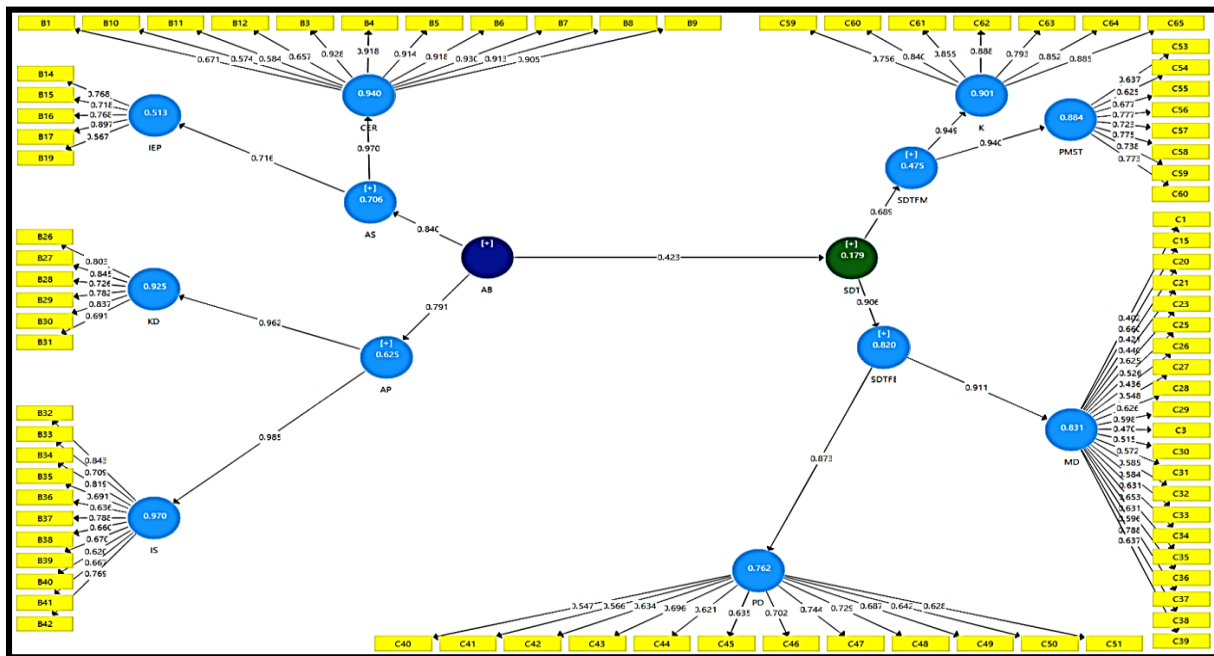


Figure 2. Model of Cultural Adaptation and Coping Strategies

*AB=Cultural Adaptation, AP=Psychological Adaptation, AS=Sociocultural Adaptation, CER=Cultural Empathy and Relatedness, IEP=Impersonal Endeavors and Perils, IS=Social Integration, K=Confrontation, KD=Self Control, MD=Distance, PD =Avoidance, PMST=Planned Problem Solving, SDT=Strategy of Action, SDTFE=Emotional Focused Coping Strategy, SDTFM=Problem Focused Coping Strategy

Table 9. Relationship between Cultural Adaptation and Coping Strategies

Relationship Variables	Coping Strategy						Decision
	b	t	p	R ²	f ²	Q ²	
Cultural Adaptation	0.049	8,740	0.000	0.180	0.219	0.042	Hypothesis accepted

*std error=standard deviation, t > 1.96

Objective 3: Identify the Relationship between Coping Strategies and Job Performance

Figure 3 shows the model analysis for this objective. The value of R^2 is 0.484 showing that the variables studied have a relationship with each other. The value of $f^2=0.037$ is weak. The value of $Q^2=0.153$ shows that this variable has a significant and positive relationship as shown in Table 10.

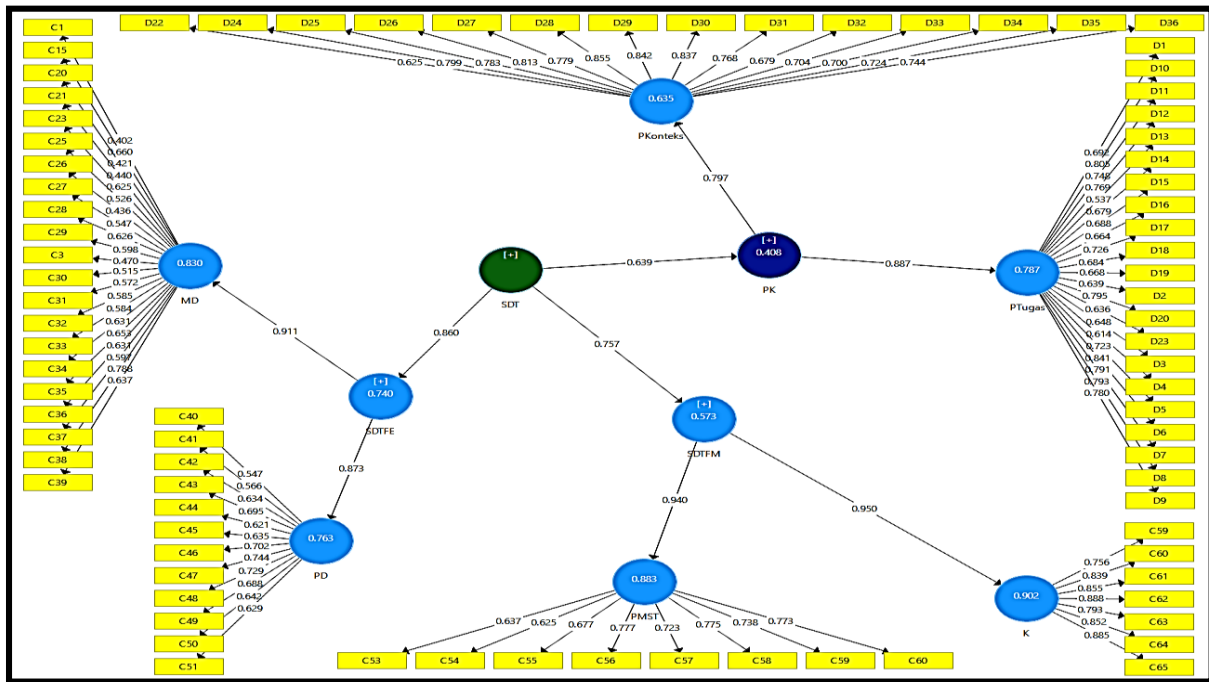


Figure 3. Model of Coping Strategy and Job Performance

*SDT=Responsive Strategy, SDTFE=Emotionally Focused Responsive Strategy, SDTFM=Problem Focused Responsive Strategy, MD=Distance, PD=Avoidance, PMST=Planned Problem Solving, K=Confrontation, PK= Job Performance, PKon =Contextual Performance, PTask=Task Performance

Table 10. Relationship between Coping Strategy and Job Performance

Relationship Variables	Job performance						Decision
	b	t	p	R^2	f^2	Q^2	
Coping Strategy	0.034	18,956	0.000	0.484	0.037	0.153	Hypothesis accepted

*std error=standard deviation, $t > 1.96$

Objective 4: Analyse Coping Strategies as a Moderator between Cultural Adaptation and Job Performance

The structural model for this objective is shown in Figure 4. The existence of coping strategies as a moderator in the relationship between cultural adaptation and performance is analysed through a 95% confidence interval. The confidence interval must exceed the value of 0 (Ramayah et al., 2018). Table 11 shows the results of the analysis for testing coping strategies as moderators (LL=0.031, UL=0.190) which is above the value of 0.

Table 11. Findings of Coping Strategy as a Moderator on Cultural Adaptation and Job Performance

Relationship of Variables	b	Std. Error	t	p	Confidence Interval (BC)		Decision
					LL	UL	
Cultural Adaptation →Coping Strategy → Job performance	0.118	0.048	2.515	0.000	0.031	0.190	Hypothesis accepted

*std error=standard deviation, LL (Lower Level) = lower limit, UL (Upper Level) = higher limit, t >1.96

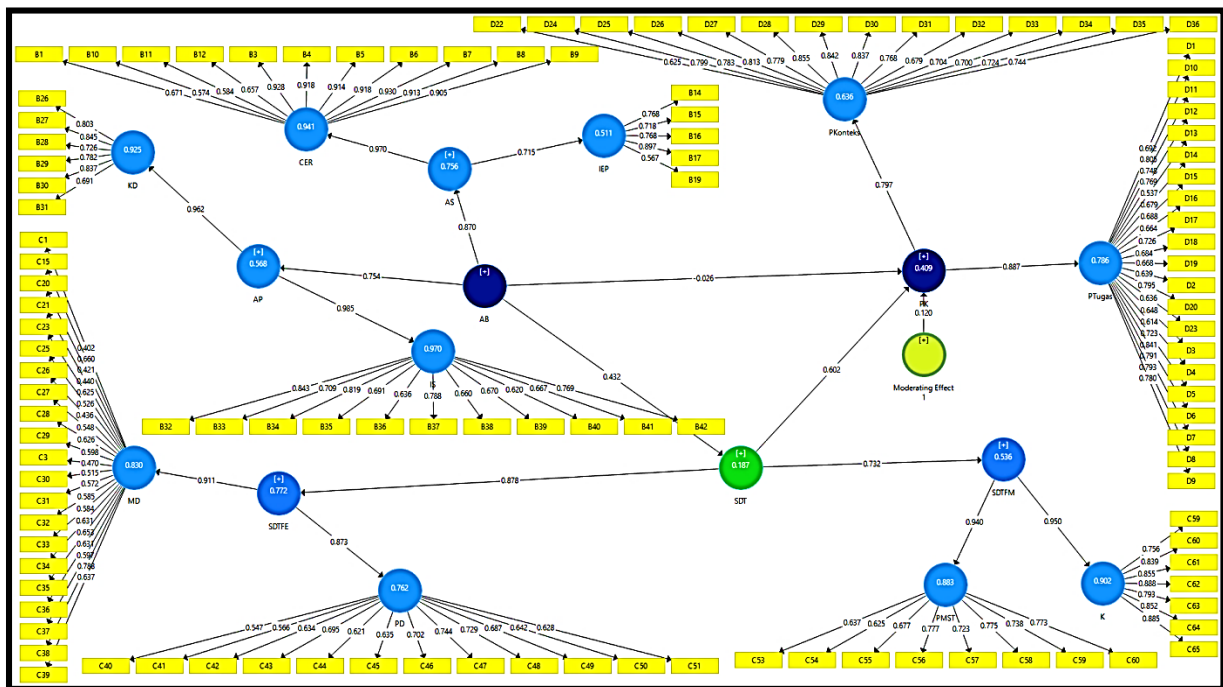


Figure 4. Model of Coping Strategy as a Moderator on Cultural Adaptation and Job Performance

*AB=Cultural Adaptation, AP=Psychological Adaptation, AS=Sociocultural Adaptation, CER=Cultural Empathy and Relatedness, IEP=Impersonal Endeavors and Perils, IS=Social Integration, K=Confrontation, KD=Self Control, MD=Distance, PD =Avoidance, PK=Work Performance, PKon=Contextual Performance, PMST=Planned Problem Solving, PTugas=Task Performance, SDT=Strategy of Action, SDTFE=Emotional Focused Coping Strategy, SDTFM=Problem Focused Coping Strategy

6.0 Discussion

6.1 Objective 1: Identify The Relationship Between Cultural Adaptation and Job Performance

Based on the findings of this study, this significant relationship shows that cultural adaptation contributes to the improvement of job performance in the service sector organisations involved in this study. This means that the issue of cultural adaptation needs to be given due attention to ensure that task activities can be carried out with quality and contribute to the improvement of job performance in the organisation. The findings of this study are seen in parallel with the study by Setti et al. (2020) which proves that the practice of cultural adaptation in organisations contributes to the evaluation of productive job performance. The findings of this study also support the study of Ying et al. (2021) who see a

good adaptation to the new culture and believe that expatriates can understand the importance of creating a harmonious relationship when performing tasks at work.

The findings of this study found that the relationship between cultural adaptation and job performance is significantly determined through cooperation between the organisation and expatriates. Effective cultural adaptation is seen to be able to contribute to the performance of productive tasks. This situation further contributes to the effective implementation of tasks and job performance in the organisation can be improved. This is seen to support the study by El-Masri et al. (2021) that the effectiveness of task execution depends on the management's commitment to dealing with and solving issues related to cultural adaptation in the organisation.

Results of this study have shown that the ability to adapt to culture is a catalyst for improving job performance in organisations. Noman et al. (2023) found that cultural adaptation is a yardstick for self-development including ability, capability, and ability to adapt to the new culture in the organisation. In addition, the results of this study also prove that the dimensions of cultural adaptation, namely socio-cultural adaptation and psychological adaptation (Ward & Kennedy, 1993) can create a positive and significant relationship with job performance in the organisation.

6.2 Objective 2: Identify The Relationship Between Cultural Adaptation and Coping Strategies

The results of the analysis show that there is significance in the relationship between cultural adaptation and coping strategies. This explains that expatriates who are capable of cultural adaptation tend to use the coping strategy approach as a method to deal with stressful situations. In addition, expatriates also play a role in self-adjustment through increasing knowledge, ability, and experience to launch the process of adapting to the local culture in the host country. Meanwhile, the findings of this study are seen to support previous studies by Agrawal (2023) that the ability to do cultural adaptation contributes to an effective coping strategy. This is because expatriates who have high self-confidence in adapting to a new cultural environment always ensure that the behaviour, they practice is appropriate to the stressful situation they go through while in the organisation. Therefore, stressful situations such as cultural conflicts caused by cultural transition can be avoided from happening.

In addition, the research findings clearly show that expatriates have a high level of ability to adapt to culture. This is because expatriates always have the feeling of wanting to try everything so that knowledge, ability, skills, and experience can be improved. Although expatriates are found to be constantly faced with stressful situations, the coping strategy approach taken is appropriate to minimize and resolve the stress that occurs. This point is supported by Kurniyawan et al. (2023) that increasing knowledge, experience, and ability in doing cultural adaptation is needed so that cultural adaptation can happen more smoothly.

In conclusion, the ability to adapt to culture has a positive impact on the coping strategy approach in expatriate life in Malaysia. Actions taken through a coping strategy approach, either a problem-focused coping strategy or an emotional-focused coping strategy,

can effectively solve the difficulties encountered in the organisation. Cultural adaptation is can form expatriate personalities who are highly motivated, willing to try new things, and have a high degree of openness.

6.3 Objective 3: Identify The Relationship Between Coping Strategies and Job Performance

The research findings show that the relationship between coping strategies and job performance is significant. This point explains that the actions taken to deal with stressful environments can have an impact on the evaluation of job performance in the organisation. Accordingly, the use of coping strategies that are relevant to stressful environments can affect work performance in organisations. Quality work performance is important in ensuring the expatriate's position in the organisation is stronger and more secure.

Next, the findings of this study are seen to support previous studies by Stanciu and Vauclair (2018) that expatriates who have knowledge, understanding, and awareness of conflict resolution prudently affect the evaluation of work performance. The results of this study also support the study by Nazirah Abdul Rohman et al. (2023) that the environment of a stressful situation contributes to the selection of relevant coping strategies to control the conflict environment from becoming worse. If conflict and a stressful environment can be minimised and dealt with effectively then tasks in the organisation can be carried out with quality.

The findings of this study also prove that expatriates working in the service sector in Malaysia have experience in facing cultural transition situations and cultural differences in Malaysia. This is explained when the significant relationship between coping strategies and job performance is determined through the ability of expatriates to handle cultural differences effectively. The findings of this study also support the study of Iheanachor et al. (2024) that is, the experience possessed by expatriates related to cultural transition is seen to influence the effectiveness of task execution in the organisation.

The findings from this study show that coping strategies are a driver for achieving productive job performance in organisations. This article is supported by Ibrahim et al. (2021) that the coping strategy becomes a yardstick for the excellence of work performance among expatriates in the organisation. The results of this study also prove the dimensions of coping strategies by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), which are problem-focused coping strategies and emotional-focused coping strategies that can have a large and significant impact on work performance in organisations.

6.4 Objective 4: Analyse Coping Strategies As Moderators of The Relationship Between Cultural Adaptation and Job Performance

Findings from this study found that coping strategies act as moderators, having a positive and significant relationship with cultural adaptation and job performance in organisations. This explains the expatriate's ability to adapt to a different cultural environment in the organisation which affects the coping strategies used by the expatriate. This finding supports a previous study by Zainatul Shuhaida Abd Rahman et al. (2022) which

states the ability of expatriates to adapt to new cultural situations affects the methods taken to deal with stressful situations in the organisation.

Besides that, the positive and significant relationship between coping strategies and job performance proves that expatriates have an awareness of using effective approaches so that stressful situations and conflicts in the organisation can be handled well. This can avoid difficulties that can affect motivation among expatriates. This indirectly causes work performance in the organisation to be improved. Nevertheless, the findings of this study are seen to support previous studies by Setti et al. (2020) that the need to take action in dealing with difficult situations is the expatriate's responsibility so that the task can be carried out with quality and interference with the execution of the task can be avoided from happening.

Overall, the findings of this study show that coping strategies have a moderating role in the relationship between cultural adaptation and job performance among expatriates working in the service sector in Malaysia. This proves that coping strategies are very relevant as variables that can improve the relationship between cultural adaptation and work performance in organisations. The coping strategy approach is an important factor in dealing with and controlling the cultural conflict environment so as not to affect the execution of tasks in the organisation.

7.0 Implications

7.1 Practical Implication

7.1.1 Organisational Management in Malaysia

Based on the findings of this study, the management of organisations in Malaysia that recruit expatriates should focus on cultural adaptation, coping strategies, and work performance in the organisation. This is because the use of coping strategies can help expatriates adapt to the culture well and can even perform tasks more effectively. This matter is indirectly seen to contribute to the excellence of work performance in the organisation.

7.1.2 Talent Corporation Malaysia Berhad (TalentCorp)

TalentCorp is a government body responsible for managing expatriates in Malaysia. Therefore, through this study, the importance of the use of coping strategies is emphasized in the life of expatriates in Malaysia. Furthermore, expatriates need to adapt to a diverse cultural environment while also ensuring that the execution of tasks in the organisation can be done well and effectively.

7.2 Theoretical Implication

7.2.1 Study Variables

This study involves three variables; cultural adaptation, coping strategies, and job performance. Cultural adaptation acts as an independent variable, coping strategies as a

moderating variable, and job performance as an independent variable in this study. The combination of these three research variables is seen to produce a new research framework in the context of research in Malaysia.

7.2.2 Study Framework

The implementation of this study is based on Social Exchange Theory (Emerson, 1976) which is the basic theory of the study. Researchers also use the Sociocultural and Psychological Adaptation Model (Ward & Kennedy, 1993), the Coping Strategy Approach (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), and the Work Performance Model (Blumberg & Pringle, 1982) which act as the basis for the variables of this study which are cultural adaptation, strategy coping and job performance.

8.0 Conclusions

In conclusion, this study focuses on aspects of cultural adaptation, coping strategies, and job performance among expatriates working in the service sector in Malaysia. The problem of this study is caused by the inability of expatriates in the service sector to adapt to the culture in Malaysia which is at a worrying level. This is because the service sector is the main pillar of the economy in addition to recording the highest number of expatriate involvement (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2017). Therefore, the objective of this study focuses on the role of coping strategies as a moderator in the relationship between cultural adaptation and job performance.

This study involved three variables namely cultural adaptation, coping strategies, and job performance. In addition, this study is also based on the *Social Exchange Theory* (Emerson, 1976) as a supporting theory in this study. Social Exchange Theory (Emerson, 1976) focuses on sociological and psychological elements. Coinciding with that, the Sociocultural and Psychological Adaptation Model (Ward & Kennedy, 1993), the Coping Strategy Approach (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) and the Work Performance Model (Blumberg & Pringle, 1982) were used as underlying variables of cultural adaptation, coping strategies, and work performance in this research.

Next, this study was conducted using quantitative methods. Research data was obtained by distributing questionnaires. The questionnaire instrument in this study was adapted from previous studies and subsequently modified according to the context of the study. Among the following questionnaires are the Sociocultural Adaptation Scales (Ward & Kennedy, 1999), Psychological Adaptation Scales (Biesecker et al., 2013), Ways of Coping (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988), and Individual Work Performance (Charbonnier-Voirin & Roussel, 2012).

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