The Influencing Factors and Cross-Cultural Adaption: Chinese Workforce in Lao People's Democratic Republic

Phothong SAITHIBVONGSA[*1], Souphavady LARKHAMSAI[2]

National Academy of Politics and Public Administration, Thangone Village, Xaythany District, Vientiane Capital Lao PDR

*Correspondence: Phothong SAITHIBVONGSA, National Academy of Politics and Public Administration, Thangone Village, Xaythany District, Vientiane Capital; Lao PDR
(+856 20 9719 2919, Fax: (+856 21 752 001, E-mail:
vongsa9996@gmail.com

Abstract

Cross-cultural adaption is a challenging issue for expatriates and foreign workforce in different cultural settings. Lao PDR is a country shared border with China and there are a number of Chinese-invested companies and projects in this country. As a result of this, Chinese workforce is also dispatched to work for these Chinese invested companies and projects in Laos. The main objective of this empirical research is to examine the influences of language barrier, working environment and organizational structure on cross-cultural adaptation among Chinese workforces in Laos. Another key objective is to investigate the role of cultural and language training in moderating the relationship of three main independent variables (language barrier, working environment, organizational structure) and independent variable (cross-cultural adaptation). The questionnaire form is used to collect data from 448 samples who are Chinese workers at Chinese invested enterprises in Laos. The collected data is analyzed by both IBM SPSS v.23.0 and IBM AMOS v.21.0 for proving the proposed hypotheses.

The research findings show that language barrier negatively affects cross-cultural adaption among Chinese workforces in Laos. Additionally, it was also found that working environment and organizational structure also play a crucial role in facilitate the cultural adaptability of Chinese workers. Interestingly, cultural and language training significantly moderate the influences of language barrier and working environment on cross-cultural adaptation. Surprisingly, there is no moderating effect of cultural and language training on the relationship between organizational structure and cross-cultural adaptation in the context of Chinese workforce in Laos. In short, this research is implemented in the same period as COVID 19 epidemic in Laos. Online data collection and virtual interview are frequently used. Therefore, some limitations emerged especially limited sample size, incomplete data collection, missing data, and bias issue. As a result of this some recommendation and suggestions are also provided for the future research. The findings provide valuable insights for policymakers and companies in designing training and support programs to improve expatriate adaptation.

Keywords: Cross-cultural, Language-barrier, working-atmosphere, Organizational-structure, Cultural-training

1. Introduction

Since Laos is an ASEAN country which is under the Belt and Road Initiative policy of China and there is an enormous rise in social economic cooperation and development between two countries. Meanwhile, many Chinese companies are interested investing in Laos in a wide range sectors such as construction, mining, agriculture, services, and small industries. Additionally, there are also some Chinese invested economic zones which are under the concession of Chinese investors for many years in Laos and the main business partnerships of Chinese invested companies are located in Chinese territories. Therefore, some companies are required to bring Chinese human resources to lead, manage and run

a business in Laos. Some Chinese invested SMEs mainly employed Chinese workforces in Laos especially Bokeo Special economic Zone, Boten Economic Zone, Thatlaung Special Economic Zone, and so on. According to the data of CEIC, it revealed that Chinese workers were officially imported and worked in Chinese invested projects and companies in Laos approximately 15,310 people in 2020 and 10,538 people in 2021 respectively (CEIC 2021). Additionally, the Department of Economics and Social Affairs of United Nations reported that there were around 17,115 Chinese workers who had been working in some Chinese giant projects such as Laos-China railway, Special Economic Zones, Trading Centers, mining, hydro power plants, farming projects (United Nations, 2023). Based on the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare of Laos, it indicated that there were more than 9,857 legal Chinese workforces who had been working in construction, mining, services, and agricultural sectors across the country in 2022 (Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, 2022). Generally, Chinese workers who have been brought to Laos are assigned to work at managerial levels and specialized fields such as professors, managers, architects, construction technical officers, engineers, specialized experts, customer service companions, and agricultural workers.

Because of the cultural and workplace differences between China and Laos, many Chinese workers face challenges when assigned to Laos. One of the most common issues is language barrier. Even though majority of Chinese workers are allocated to work at Chinese invested companies, it is still necessary to communicate with local government sectors and local employees especially logistics enterprises, service businesses, and manufacturing. Additionally, some Chinese invested enterprises prefer hiring local workers at the functional level because of cheap cost of labor-force while the managerial levels are Chinese workers. Because of this managerial strategy, the workplace conflicts often emerge. The cultural differences can possibly lead to workplace conflicts which significantly affect individual and organizational performances (Strategic Security Corp, 2022). In case of Chinese workforce in Laos, some workers decide to take a cultural and language training courses in order to diminish the differences rather than leaving companies in Laos. Some companies are aware of this problem among their Chinese workforces, they have organized a wide range of facilitating and supporting programs for their Chinese employees such as local language and cultural trainings for improving the difficulties of the communication and cultural differences, Hometown visiting programs, Family member supporting programs for the short trip, etc. Some cases must recruit new employees who are familiar with working environment and can communicate in both Chinese and Lao languages. In the process of recruiting new employees, companies have encountered the high expense unavoidably.

In some cases, Chinese employees have to leave companies in Laos and return back to work in China instead. Apart from these mentioned issues, some circumstances revealed that both individual and organizational performances are significantly diminished by employee's stress and underperformance. The main objective of this empirical research on cross-cultural adaptation is to explore the main concepts of cross-cultural adaptation among Chinese worker in Chinese invested companies in Laos which is consodered as the different country interms of culture, lanaguage, living style. Specifically, this research intentionally investigates how factors such as language barriers, organizational structure, and working atmosphere negatively influence self-adaptation such as language barrier, organizational structure, and working atmosphere. Additionally, this empirical research tecnically attempts to figure out the power of these negative influencer of self-adpatation in different culture in the context of business. In addition, another significant purpose of this research is to examine the effectiveness of cultural and language training which are common used by many organizations and companies for diminishing the effect of cultural differences in the business context. Additionally, this study also investigates the moderating effect of cultural and language training on the negative relationship between lanuage barrier, working atmosphere, and organizational structure. Apart from this, the research is also expected to figure out the differences of influences of language barrier, organizational structure, and working atmosphere on self adaptation in terms of gender, age group and working experiences. This study contributes not only to academic literature on expatriate management but also offers

practical strategies for companies operating under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Population and sample group

Chinese expiates and workers who have been working in Lao PDR for more than two years are identified as sampling group for predicting 120,000 Chinese workers' cross-cultural adaptation. 448 Chinese expiates are selected as sample group Regardless of demographic characteristics, it shows that almost 69% of samples are male participant while females cover only approximately 31%. It is also interesting to note that samples with 26-35 age gap take up to 56%. The samples with 18-25 years old take the second place which shares almost 22% while the age range between 36 and 45 years old takes approximately 16%. In terms of education, the majority of samples hold undergraduate degree which is about 68% and around 21% is the master's degree holders. Interestingly, most target samples earn a degree from China. The percentage of target samples who graduate in Chinese universities is up to 62% and around 16% earn a degree in Laos. In connection with working experiences, about 28% of samples have been working between three and six months. The samples with working experience between one and four years cover over 27%. Some have been working in Laos between seven and eleven months which shares around 17%. Surprisingly, over 56% of sample group can earn between $501 and $1,000. Almost 21% said that their salary is between $1,001 and $2,000 and around 14% can earn only less than $500. At the workplaces in Laos, it showed that more than two languages are frequently used which is over 55%. Additionally, Chinese language is still another frequent language usage at the workplace which covers more than 28%. In terms of cultural and foreign language training participation, approximately 85% of samples is given a cultural and foreign language training course. Only 15% of samples said they have never received any cross-cultural training courses neither foreign language training.

In order to assess sample adequacy and make sure that the sample can sufficiently represent the target population, Barlett's test and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test are firstly tested. According to the value of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) is .93 and Bartlett's value is significant at .001 (p<.001). It can be explained that the collected data and samples can achieve adequate level and the population can be explained by the sample group by 93% at the significant level of .001 (p<.001). Based on Leech et al. (2011) and Bertsch (2013), the KMO value and the value of Bartlett's test is also another important indicator to prove that the collected data and dataset are qualified to proceeding factor analysis and the variances of each factor are sufficient for explaining the factor at the significant level of .001. Additionally, the communality value of variances of each factor is also inspected, it found that each communality value of variances can reach over .51. This means that each variance can explain over 51% of each factor.

2.2 Designing and testing data collection tool

Since this research is fresh empirical research which is required to collect raw data from the target samples. The questionnaire form is used for collecting data from target sample group. The collecting data tool is originally developed and improved based on the previous empirical studies. After the questionnaire form is completely developed. Some pre-testing measures are put in practice. Firstly, the content of questionnaire form is written in English and distributed to 10 Chinese workers in Chinese Invested companies in Vientiane for filling the forms. Some feedbacks are received such as sentence complexity, ambiguous statements, long sentences, and difficulty in understanding and time-consuming. Each questionnaire respondent spends around 20 minutes to read and fill the questionnaire form. Additionally, some participants also claim about the privacy. According to Peterson (2000) the effective questionnaires should clear, simple and comprehensive statements. Meanwhile, questionnaire filling participants should have the least ambiguity in filling the form. Murray (1999) also claimed that the complexity of questionnaire often leads to misunderstanding and low-quality data as the result. Therefore, the questionnaire form is repeatedly improved, and some questions are shortened but remain the main concepts of the original statements. Additionally, some guaranteed message is also added in order to encourage the questionnaire filling participation. Apart from this, the questionnaire form is translated into Chinese language to ensure that Chinese people can comprehensively understand the content of each question and statement. Finally, the questionnaire form is dispatched to 10

previous respondents. It found that they can fill the form more quickly and they spend approximately 10 minutes to fill the questionnaire form.

2.3 Data collection

Due to the fact that questionnaire form is the main tool used to collect data from target samples in this empirical research, the form is firstly created in the Google form and distribute to target samples in Chinese invested companies and enterprises across the country through email address and what's app group. Prior distributing the link of questionnaire form to the target business unites, the informal request letter is firstly sent to the concerning enterprises' management team for permission. Additionally, the researcher directly meets with the Chinese managers and employees in some Chinese invested companies and enterprises in Vientiane especially hotels, restaurants, construction companies, grocery stores, department stores, imported-exported, farming, mining, and traveling companies. At first, almost two hundred links of questionnaire form are sent to Chinese national managers and employees who have been working in Chinese-invested companies and enterprises in Special Economic Zone in Vientiane, Bokeo, Luangnamtha and Oudomxay provinces though what's app group and email account. Around 506 survey forms are filled and received via google form account in return. According to Dillman (1978), Odom et al. (2005) and Gaskin (2012), screening for missing data and data error is an important task in order to improve the normal distribution, validity and reliability of data. Meyers et al. (2013) added that it is a critical part of research in eliminating all incomplete and missing data for structural equation model analysis. Each questionnaire form is carefully checked for the missing data and data errors which are filled by the respondents. The data set firstly is transferred to Excel file and then the Microsoft excel function (=count blank) is used to figure out the missing data. As the result of this, 19 questionnaire forms consist of missing answers, and they are then filled by the average point for the missing answers. In addition, each sample is also tested for standard deviation for checking and eliminating unengaged participants. Because of this technical method, the data set showed that there are totally 45 survey forms including same number for all statements, many incomplete information and

inappropriate responses. Therefore, these 38 survey samples are excluded from the dataset. Additionally, some survey forms are additionally excluded from the dataset because they are filled by participants who are not Chinese employees, managers, expatriates or target samples based on some questions in the questionnaire form. As the result of this, other 20 survey forms are additionally excluded from the dataset. There are only 448 samples are qualified to use in the data analysis for this empirical research. In order to assess sample adequacy and make sure that the sample can sufficiently represent the target population, Barlett's test and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test are firstly tested.

2.4 Data analysis

The collected data is analyzed by both IBM AMOS v.21.0 and IBM SPSS v.23.0. Regardless of factor analysis, several statistical functions are performed for inspecting the validity and reliability of factors and variances. Firstly, all 42 components which belong to five factors are analyzed by Principal component analysis method with Promax rotation method and all components which share loading value .20 or greater will be eliminated based on the recommended threshold value of Ibrahim et al. (2015). Additionally, the components which have factor loading value lower than .30 are also weeded out. As the result of this principal component analysis. Secondly, discriminant validity is also tested. According to Ibrahim et al. (2015), if variances with cross-factor loading value is .20 and higher, those variances are statically unqualified for further factor analysis. The reason is that variances with unacceptable cross-factor loading can possibly disrupt validity and reliability of factors (Gaskin, 2012). As the result of this, there are 32 variances with factor loading more than .50 that are grouped in five variables in the structural equation model as shown in Figure 2.

In order to examine the casual relationships between language barrier, organizational structure, working environment and cross-cultural adaption of Chinese workers in Laos, another Structure Equation Model (SEM) is developed. Firstly, the model fit indexes are investigated to ensure that the developed Structure Equation Model has a good fit and reach a reliable level. Based on Wu et al. (2009) and Gaskin (2012), the model fit or the goodness of structural equation model can be

indicated by Root Mean Square Residual (RMR), Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Tucker Lewis Index (TLI), Incremental Fit Index (IFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) and Chi-square over degree of freedom. In terms of the moderating effect of cultural and language training on the casual relationships between language barrier, working environment, organizational structure and cross-cultural adaptation, another structural equation model is firstly developed as shown in Figure 3. The model fit is also tested and explained. In order to analyzing moderating effect in IBM AMOS by using structural equation model, standardized values of language barrier, working environment, organizational structure, cross-cultural adaptation, and cultural and language training are created. Additionally, the interactions between each independent variable and moderator are also created. IBM AMOS v.23.0 is used to investigating the moderating effect of cultural and language training on the relationship between language barrier, working environment, organizational structure, and cross-cultural adaption.

3. Results

According to the model fit indexes of the SEM for examining the casual relationships between language barrier, working environment and organizational structure and cross-cultural adaptation, it revealed that all model fit indicators are categorized as acceptable levels. For instances, RMSEA is less than 0.06; Additionally, RMR's value is also lower than .08 which also indicates as a reliable model. Regardless of TLI, IFI, GFI and CFI values which are greater than .90, these indicators demonstrate a highly fit between the collected data and structural equation model for casual relationship analysis. In a similar vein, Chi-square ($\chi2$=661.95) is greater than its standard value (χ^2>166.57) and the value of Chi-square over degree of freedom (χ^2/df=2.99) also meet requirement which is expected to be 3 and lower. Therefore, these indices indicated that the SEM of casual relationships is highly good fit. Even though there is a weak relationship between language barrier and cross-cultural adaption, but the language barrier significantly and negatively relates to cross-adaption (β=-.09; p<.05). Therefore, **H1** is fully supported. This means that language barrier is a key negative effect on cultural adaption of Chinese workers in Laos. In other words,

language barrier hinders the capability of self-adjustment in a new cultural setting in Laos.

In the connection with working environment and cross-cultural adaptation, it is interesting to note that there is a strong positive correlation between working environment and cross-cultural adaption at significant level .001 (β=.22, p<.001). So, **H2** is also supported. It can say that working environment plays a crucial role in facilitating the self-adjustment in different cultural settings among Chinese employees and managers in Laos. It significantly encourages newcomers adapt to new culture more effectively. It can conclude that working environment does not only play a key role in improving individual and organizational performances, but it also directly contributes to expatriate's cultural adaptation. Cross-cultural adaption of expatriates is strongly and positively influenced by working environment at workplace and local community. It is also interesting to note that organizational structure significantly and positively affects cross-cultural adaptability (β=.52, p<.001). This means that Chinese workers' cultural adjustment is also influenced by organizational structure which is designed to facilitate cultural adaptation at workplace such as communication line, management system, and coordination line, etc. Therefore, **H3** is also supported by the collected data. This finding can also show that organizational structure can be a main obstacle for cultural self-adaptability as well. Therefore, organizational structure should be designed for facilitating cultural adaption process to ensure both individual and organizational performance improvement. In brief, organizational structure is also an essential component in facilitating or hindering cross-cultural adaption.

In terms of moderating effect, the mode fit indexes reflect a great fit between the collected data and normal distribution in the structural equation model for moderating effect analysis. For example, TLI (.92) and IFI (.91) values are greater than the threshold of a good model fit. Additionally, CFI (.96) and GFI (.97) values are greater than .95 which indicates as highly fit and reliable model. RMSEA (.03) and RMR (.06) are also categorized within the threshold values of good model fit. Based on the statistical results of moderating effect analysis, it indicated that language barrier has a moderate negative impact on cross-cultural adaption at significant

level .001 (β=.-15, $p<$.001). Meanwhile, the relationship between cultural and language training and cross-cultural adaptation is also significant (β=.22, $p<$.001) and the interaction between language barrier and cultural and cultural and language training factor is also negative and significant (β=.-14, $p<$.001). This can summarize that Cultural and language training significantly moderates the relationship between language barrier and cross-cultural adaptation. **H4** is strongly supported.

In similar stream, working environment strongly and positively relates to cross-cultural adaption at significant level .001 (β=.38, $p<$.001). As well as there is a significantly positive relationship between cultural and language training and cross-cultural adjustment (β=.24, $p<$.001). The interaction between working environment and cultural and language training also significantly affects cross-cultural adaptation (β=-.18, $p<$.01). Therefore, there is moderating effect of cultural and language training on the relationship between working environment and cross-cultural adaptation and **H5** is also supported. Surprisingly, it figured out that the interaction between organizational structure and cultural and language training is weak and insignificant for influencing on cross-cultural adaption (β=-.03, $p>$.05). Even though the correlation between organizational structure and cross-cultural adaptation is moderately strong and significant. Therefore, **H6** is statistically rejected. As a result of this, it can be said that cultural and language training might not be able to strengthen the cultural adaption process among Chinese workforce which is influenced by organizational structure in the context of Laos.

4. Discussion

This empirical research can figure out some significant findings in the connection with cross-cultural adaptation and its influencing factors such as language barrier, working environment, organizational structure as well as cultural and language training. Firstly, the research finding strongly supports the negative relationship between language barrier and cross-cultural adaptation and it also recognized that language barrier plays a significant role in diminishing cross-cultural adaptability. This finding is also correspondent with the previous studies of Mandari and Boer (2021) and Gong et al. (2021) which acknowledge the influence of language barrier mitigated cultural adaptability in new cultural

setting countries. Apart from this, this finding can also reaffirm the research results of Selmer and Lauring (2015), Sun et al. (2020) and Yi et al. (2020) which identify language barrier as an outstanding obstacle for self-adjusting in different culture. This means that language barrier is another main obstacle for adjusting to a new culture of Chinese workforce in the context of Laos.

Another interesting finding is that working environment also significantly and positively contributes to cross-cultural adjustment. This means that working environment can also facilitate cross-cultural adaptation process. This finding reaffirms the research results of some outstanding empirical research such as Shi and Franklin (2014), Abbe (2021) and Chen (2019). Grill et al. (2021) also figure out that working atmosphere is a facilitating factor to encourage newcomers for experiencing new cultural environment at workplace. They also added that cultural adaptation process can be accelerated and stimulated by working atmosphere factors such as colleagues, working styles, surrounding environment, communication system, etc. This finding can absolutely reinforce the concepts and research findings of Chen & Zhu (2020) and Setti et al. (2020). Many managers often overlook this issue when they have been trying to help expatriates or foreign workforce to adjust to new different culture. It means that working environment can be improved to facilitate cross-cultural adaptation process. This finding might be a fresh dimension for further investigating the effectiveness of working environment to facilitate the cross-cultural adaptation.

It is also interesting to discover the positive influence of organizational structure on cross-cultural adaption among Chinese workforce at Chinese invested enterprises in Laos. The finding indicates that organizational structure can be designed for improving the effectiveness of cross-cultural adaptation of expatriates and foreign workforce. Even though it is not a common concept to select the organizational structure as the predictor of cross-cultural adjustment, but organizational structure has a crucial role in supporting foreign workers to adjust themselves within new cultural environment at both workplaces and local communities. This finding can be a pre-stage for investigating other working setting

factors which might be able to influence foreign workers' cultural adaptation. Even though organizational structure is an unpopular area for researchers, but some empirical studies are also found. Similarly, the research of Cramton and Hinds (2014) also found that local organizational structure is a challenging issue for global teams in adapting to new culture at new workplace in different countries. The authors also acknowledge the organizational structural differences. In a similar vein, Keats (2010) also revealed that organizational structure critically mitigates the effectiveness of self-adaptation among American soldiers in foreign cultures in his empirical research. This research result also ratifies the recent research of Arokodare and Falana (2021) who claim that organizational structure can a critical part in creating obstacle for cultural adaption at workplaces among expatriates.

Another significant objective of this research which aims at examining the moderating effect of cultural and language training among the relationship between language barrier, working environment, organizational structure and cross-cultural adaptation. The research finding shows that there is a moderating effect on the relationship between language barrier and cross-cultural adaption in case of Chinese workers in Laos. In fact, culture and language training can strengthen the relationship between language barrier and cross-cultural adaptation. This research finding can also reaffirm the effectiveness of cultural and language training for mitigating language barrier influence on cross-cultural adaptation. This research finding is also correspondent with Amro et al. (2019). Cultural and language training is commonly used to support cross-cultural adaptation among foreign expatriates. Meanwhile, this finding also extends the empirical research of Naeem et al. (2020) which claims that linguistic training effectively contributes to cross-cultural adaptability and surrounding environment in foreign countries. It might be true to say that foreign language and cultural training is still considered as crucial measure to increase the cross-cultural adjustment effectiveness. Apart from this, the language training also significantly moderates the correlation between working environment and cross-cultural adaptation in case of Chinese employees in Laos. This means that cultural and linguistic training can

facilitate the working environment which significantly and positively influence cross-cultural adaptability of foreign workers. Similarly, Lewthwaite (1996) and Timmerman et al. (2013) also claimed that cultural or linguistic training program does not only facilitate cultural adaptability, but it can still improve working environments which help newcomers to have a quick and effective cross-cultural self-adjustment. Therefore, it can conclude that cultural training does not only diminish the negative effect of language barrier, but it can also influence working environment which directly impact cross-cultural adaptability of expatriates or foreign workers at workplaces.

It is a surprising thing to figure out that there is no moderating effect on the relationship between organizational structure and cross-cultural adaptation in this case. This means that cultural and language training does not have any impact on organizational structure to facilitate the cultural adaptation among Chinese workers in Laos. This research finding is likely contradictory with the empirical research of Kempf and Holtbrügge (2020) who found the moderating effect of cultural training on the relationship between organizational structure and cross-cultural self-adjustment. In the real working world, some organizations and business enterprises design organizational structure as the way they are familiar with as home cultural style and methods. For instance, management structure, leadership style, and communication line are often designed as the similar way as home country. Obviously, those components of organizational structure should be influenced by home culture. However, this research finding shows that the moderating effect of cultural and language training does not exist in this case study. Because of the fact that there is a shortage of research on cross-cultural adaptation in Laos, so this research finding might be important source for extending both theoretical and practical implications regardless of cross-cultural adaptation, language barrier and the influences of workplace on cross-cultural adaptability. Additionally, the research findings might be beneficial to many organizations and foreign business enterprises. While there is increasing growth in international companies and foreign investment in Laos and foreigner workforce and expatriates are also dispatched to Laos for supporting those business units and

enterprises. One of most common issue those international enterprises have been experiencing is self-adaptations to local cultural setting especially expatriates with completely different cultural background. This directly hinders both individual and organizational performance. Therefore, the findings of this empirical research can be foundation source for those international companies and related organizations which can use for supporting managerial decision, making public policy, and improving human resource development policy.

5. Conclusion

In summary, this empirical research basically can achieve its expected objectives to investigate the relationship between some influential factors and cross-cultural adaptability of Chinese workforces such as working atmosphere, organizational structure and language barrier. In addition, this research also aims at investigating the moderating role of foreign language and cultural training on the casual relationship between language barrier, working atmosphere and organizational structure and cross-cultural adaptation among Chinese workers in Laos. This empirical research uses a wide range of analytical and statistical functions for designing data collecting tools, sampling, analyzing the correlation among variables, and testing the proposed model and hypotheses. This can also become a research model to investigate the influential factors and human behaviors in others areas. The findings can provide some concrete suggestions for both individual and organizational cross-cultural adaptation in context of Chinese workforce in foreign countries. Additionally, this research can figure out some significant limitations and provide some recommendation for implications of research finding and the future research.

6. Conflict of interest

We certify that there is no conflict of interest with any financial organization regarding the material discussed in the manuscript.

7. References

Abbe, A. (2021). 'Evaluating Military Cross-Cultural Training Programs', *Expeditions with MCUP*, *2*(1), 1-59.

Amro, I., Ghuloum, S., Mahfoud, Z., Opler, M., Khan, A., Hammoudeh, S., Hani, Y., Yehya, A., & Al-Amin, H. (2019). Cross-cultural adaptation of the Arabic Positive and Negative Syndrome Scale in schizophrenia: Qualitative analysis of a focus group. *Transcultural psychiatry*, *56*(5), 973–991. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363461519850345.

Arokodare, M. A., & Falana, B. R. (2021). Strategic Agility and the Global Pandemic: The Agile Organizational Structure: A Theoretical Review. *Information Management and Business Review*, *13*(1), 16-27.

Bertsch, L. (2013). *Noise prediction within conceptual aircraft design*, Technische Universität Braunschweig.

CEIC. (2021). Laos Number of Foreign Labour: Chinese, ISI Emerging Market Group company, viewed 6 January 2022, <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/laos/employment-statistics-number-of-foreign-labour/no-of-foreign-labour-chinese>

Chen, J., & Zhu, J. (2020). *Cross-cultural adaptation experiences of International Scholars in Shanghai: From the perspective of organizational culture*. Springer Nature.

Chen, M. (2019). The impact of expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment on work stress and job involvement in the high-tech industry'. *Frontiers in psychology*, *10*(2), 22-28.

Cramton, C. D. & Hinds, P. J. (2014). An embedded model of cultural adaptation in global teams. *Organization Science, 25*(4), 1056-1081.

Dillman, D. A. (1978). *Mail and telephone surveys: The total design method.* New York, Wiley.

Gaskin, J. (2012). *Confirmatory factor analysis.* Viewed on 15 January 2022, <https://scholar.google.com.hk/citations?user=lorHa4MAAAAJ&hl=en>.

Gong, Y., Gao, X., Li, M., & Lai, C. (2021). Cultural adaptation challenges and strategies during study abroad: New Zealand students in China. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, *34*(4), 417-437.

Grill, S., Rosenbaum-Feldbrügge, M., Fliege, H., & Rüger, H. (2021). Expatriate adjustment over time among foreign service employees: the role of cross-cultural experience. *Journal of Global Mobility*, *9*(3), 338-360.

Ibrahim, N., Shiratuddin, M. F. & Wong, K. W. (2015). Instruments for measuring the influence of visual persuasion: Validity and reliability tests. *European Journal of Social Science Education and Research, 2*(3), 25-37.

Keats, P. A. (2010). Soldiers working internationally: Impacts of masculinity, military culture, and operational stress on cross-cultural adaptation. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling, 32*(4), 290-303.

Kempf, C., & Holtbrügge, D. (2020). Moderators and mediators of cross-cultural training effectiveness: literature review and development of a conceptual model. *European Journal of International Management, 14*(2), 293-326.

Leech, R., Salwa K., Christian, B., & David, S. (2011). Fractionating the default mode network: distinct contributions of the ventral and dorsal posterior cingulate cortex to cognitive control. *Journal of Neuroscience, 31*(9), 3217-3224.

Lewthwaite, M. (1996). A study of international students' perspectives on cross-cultural adaptation. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling, 19*(2), 167-185.

Mandari, W. M., & Boer, R. F. (2021). Cross-Cultural Adaptation Process of Japanese Expatriates in Indonesia. *Journal ASPIKOM, 6*(2), 413-428.

Meyers, L. S., Gamst, G. C., & Guarino, A. J. (2013). Performing data analysis using IBM SPSS. Milton, Qld: John Wiley & Sons.

Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. (2022). *Statistical Yearbook on labour and social welfare,* S&K Company, viewed 24 December 2023, <https://molsw.gov.la/assets/source/document/Statistical%20Yearbook%202018.pdf>

Murray, P. (1999). Fundamental issues in questionnaire design. *Journal of Accident and Emergency Nursing, 7*(3), 148-153.

Naeem, K., Jawad, A., Rehman, S. U., & Zulqarnain, M. (2020). Role of cross-cultural training on expatriate's overall adjustment in China and Malaysia. *European Online Journal of Natural and Social Sciences, 9*(4),818-828.

Odom, S. L., Brantlinger, E., Gersten, R., Horner, R. H., Thompson, B., & Harris, K. R. (2005). Research in special education: Scientific methods and evidence-based practices. *Exceptional Children, 71*(2), 137-148.

Peterson, R. A. (2000). Constructing effective questionnaires. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage publications.

Selmer, J., & Lauring, J. (2015). Host country language ability and expatriate adjustment: The moderating effect of language difficulty. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 26*(3), 401-420.

Setti, I., Sommovigo, V., & Argentero, P. (2020). Enhancing expatriates' assignments success: The relationships between cultural intelligence, cross-cultural adaptation and performance'. *Current Psychology, 15*(2), 1-21.

Shi, X., & Franklin, P. (2014). 'Business expatriates' cross-cultural adaptation and their job performance. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources, 52*(2), 193-214.

Strategic Security Corp. (2022). *Workplace Culture and Conflict,* viewed 2 January 2023, <http://www.sscctu.com/blog/workplacecc>

Sun, K., Yossuck, P., Panyadee, C., & Ek-lem, B. (2020). The Process of Chinese Students' Cross-cultural Adaptation and Their Main Difficulties Encountered while Studying in the Upper Northern Thai Universities. *Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Studies, 20*(2), 343-372.

Timmerman, H., Wolff, A. P., Schreyer, T., Outermans, J., Evers, A. W., Freynhagen, R., & Vissers, K. C. (2013). Cross-cultural adaptation to the Dutch language of the PainDETECT-Questionnaire. *Pain Practice, 13*(3), 206-214.

United Nations. (2023). Jointly Building Belth and RoadTowards SDG: Lao PDR, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, viewed on 4th January 2023, <https://www.brisdgs.org/sites/default/files/inlinefiles/Lao_PDR_National_Report_2023_1.pdf>.

Wu, W., West, S. G., & Taylor, A. B. (2009). Evaluating model fit for growth curve models: Integration of fit indices from SEM and MLM frameworks. *Psychological Methods, 14*(3), 183-201.
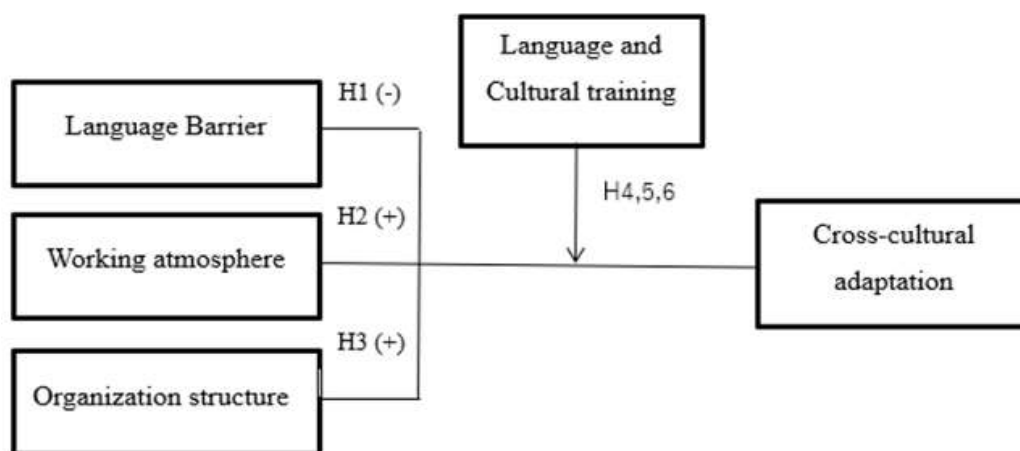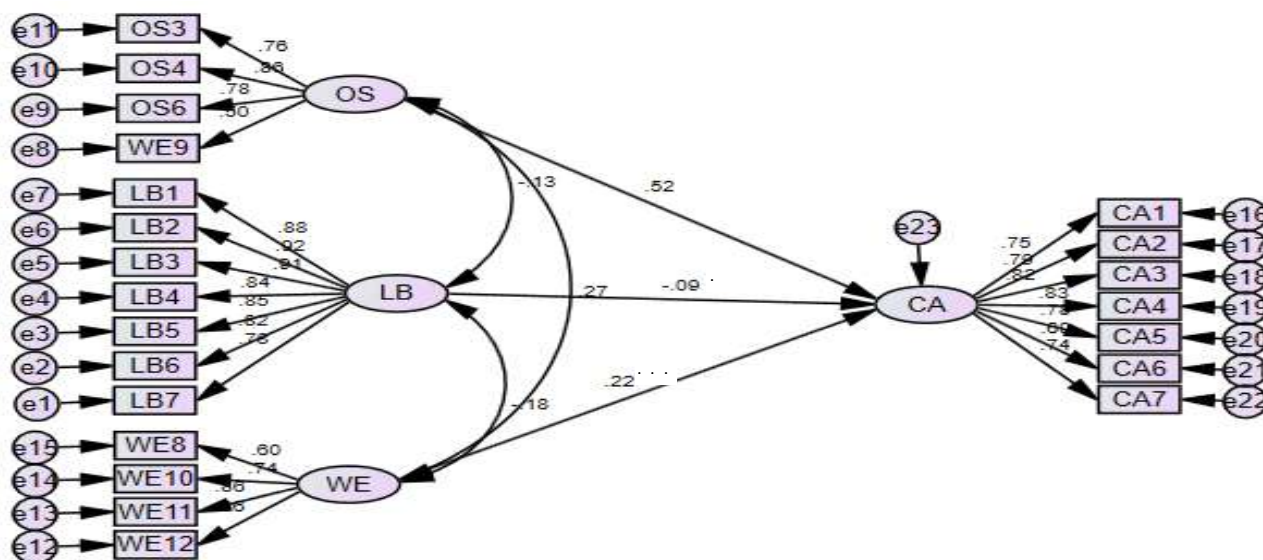
Yi, S., Wu, N., Xiang, X., & Liu, L. (2020). Challenges, Coping and Resources: A Thematic Analysis of Foreign Teachers' Experience of Cultural Adaptation in China. *Frontiers in psychology*, *11*(168), 1-14.

Figure 1. Proposed research model

Note: ***= *p*<.001; ** = *p*<.01; * = *p*<.05; CA= Cross-cultural adaptation; OS= Organizational structure; WE=working environment, LB= language barrier

Figure 2: The structure equation model of Casual relationship analysis
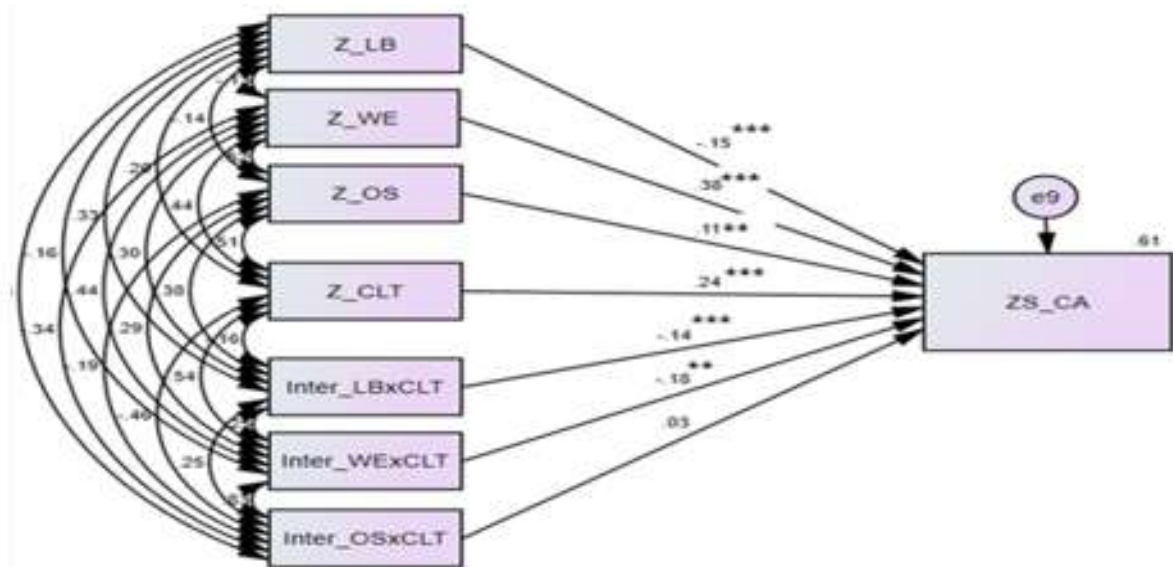
Note: ***= p<.001; **=p<.01; *= p<.05; LB= language barrier; WE= workplace environment; OS=organizational structure; CA= Cross-cultural adaptation. Inter= Interaction.

Figure 3: The structure equation model of moderating effect analysis