The Effects of Expatriate’s Personality and Cross-cultural Competence on Social Capital, Cross-cultural Adjustment, and Performance: The Context of Foreign-Owned Multinational Firms

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Abstract
Expatriation is still a challenging task, although the determinants of expatriate adjustment and performance have been evaluated extensively. This study aimed to empirically investigate the influence of the expatriates’ personality and cross-cultural competence on social capital, cross-cultural adjustment, and performance with expatriates from foreign-owned multinational firms in Taiwan. This study integrated three perspectives to explain expatriate success and failure. The first perspective involves expatriate-related factors, including the Big Five personality traits, and the emotional intelligence (otherwise known as emotional quotient or EQ) of expatriates. The second perspective is cross-cultural competence factors, including cultural intelligence, cultural adaptability, and cultural empathy. The third perspective is the social capital of expatriates, which includes leader-member exchange (LMX), perceived organizational support (POS). Furthermore, this study incorporated these perspectives into antecedents and identified their individual and combined effects on expatriates’ cross-cultural adjustment and performance. The findings of this study may be helpful for human resource managers in managing their expatriates. The findings may also help academicians in exploring expatriate management.

Keywords
expatriate personality, cross-cultural competence, social capital, expatriate performance

Introduction
Research Background and Motivation
This study aims to identify the influence of the personality and competence of expatriates on social capital, cross-cultural adjustment and performance. Understanding it is crucial, especially for managers in multinational companies, because they must send their employees to other countries to fulfill their organizational goals. Many studies have concentrated on expatriation practices, a significant gap related to expatriation success still remains. In this study, the first research concern is the relationship between expatriate characteristics and expatriation success. Most previous expatriate studies have examined the “Big Five” personality traits (Al Doghan et al., 2019; Bhatti et al., 2019; Takeuchi, 2010). For instance, Ang et al. (2006) adopted the theory of evolutionary personality psychology. They argued that these traits including emotional stability, conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, and openness to experience could enhance human adaptability. Expatriates who possess key personality traits for a given task in specific physical and social environments will adapt more effectively than those who do not possess the appropriate personality characteristics for the same role.

In addition, the role of intelligence in predicting expatriate performance has also been extensively explored. Among others, emotional intelligence (EQ) deserves particular attention. Expatriates competent in EQ can encourage themselves to continuously perform better and direct their emotions in a positive and productive direction (Alon et al., 2016; Alshaibani & Bakir, 2017; Law et al., 2004), further
improving their adjustment and performance. Wu and Bodigerel-Koehler (2013) asserted that EQ might be more assertive in facilitating expatriate adjustment. However, as previous studies have observed, IQ and EQ help expatriates adjust to the new environment. Based on organizational learning theory (Senge, 1982), learning is a knowledge-sharing-and-knowledge-acquiring process in which the social capital of expatriates becomes a critical factor in their adjustment. If the expatriate cannot learn cross-cultural competence during the learning process, then the learning and adjustment may be limited.

The second perspective of expatriate success is cross-cultural competence, which includes (1) cultural intelligence, (2) cultural adaptability, and (3) cultural empathy. Recently, the influence of cultural intelligence has been shown to influence adjustment. It is argued that adjustment may be led by the efforts of expatriates to conceptualize their assignment through their self-concept, which is in turn directed by the motivation to adapt to new cultural surroundings. Earley and Ang (2003) proposed that cultural intelligence (CQ) can capture the ability to adapt across cultures, encouraging expatriates to work effectively across multicultural situations. Cultural adaptability is the process through which new cultural skills are added to the own cultural “repertoire” of an individual.

Cultural empathy reflects the sensitivity and ability to sympathize with the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of expatriates from other cultural settings. Moreover, it includes the ability to experience behaviors and characteristics from a different culture than one’s own (Olson & Kroeger, 2001; van der Meulen et al., 2019). Research has indicated that expatriates will quickly adjust to a host country’s new environment when they have high cultural adaptability. Therefore, higher cultural empathy, cultural intelligence, and cultural adaptability will result in expatriates’ higher adjustments and success. Nonetheless, studies on the interaction between EQ and CQ are limited, and studies on the influence of EQ on cross-cultural competence are also spaced. Understanding the interrelationships among these three key elements can enhance our knowledge of expatriation.

The third perspective is the social capital of expatriates. According to social exchange theory (Guzzo et al., 1994; Takeuchi et al., 2009) and social capital theory (Adler & Kwon, 2002), in a relationship, each party is expected to contribute more toward the maintaining and developing of the relationship if the relationship proves mutually satisfying. Recent studies have emphasized that LMX, POS, and OCB (Kupka & Cathro, 2007; Lee & Qomariyah, 2015; Organ et al., 2006; Tran et al., 2020) are the most influential factors in social capital. This study argues that higher social capital may have significant implications for the effectiveness and success of expatriate adjustment and performance.

Based on above discussions, previous studies have primarily adopted an expatriate-centric and piece-meal approach to investigate the phenomenon of expatriate adjustment and expatriate success. Further efforts may be required to evaluate the interactive, mediating and composed effects from the following three perspectives: (1) personal characteristics, (2) cross-cultural competence, and (3) social capital.

Although previous studies have suggested that social capital is critical to expatriate adjustment and performance, social capital can be integrated into the personality and competence domain is largely neglected in the literature. For instance, what are the interrelationships between expatriate personality, EQ, cross-cultural competence and social capital? What is the role of social capital (LMX, POS, and affect commitment) on expatriate adjustment and performance? How can Big Five personality and EQ influence cross-cultural competence and social capital enhance expatriate adjustment and performance? All of these research questions require further investigation. The current study developed a comprehensive framework by integrating the above constructs and perspectives into a more consolidated framework. In addition, the study proposed that while expatriate personality may impact expatriate cross-cultural competence, both of these factors have significant impacts on expatriate social capital, cross-cultural adjustment, and performance.

Based on the research background and research motivation stipulated above, the objectives of this study are the following: (1) to identify the influence of expatiating personality, and expatriate cross-cultural competence on social capital and cross-cultural adjustment and (2) to identify the influence of expatriate cross-cultural adjustment on expatriate performance.

Hypothesis Development

Theoretical Development

Cross-cultural adjustment refers to the extent of expatriate psychological comfort and acquaintance with host countries during international expatriation (Huff et al., 2014). It is considered one of the first privileged expectations for expatriates who are exposed to a foreign environment. Previous studies have proved that personality (in terms of Big Five and IQ/EQ) and cross-cultural competence (in terms of cultural intelligence, cultural adaptability, and cultural empathy) have a positive influence on career adaptability (Jiang, 2017) and job performance (Lee & Qomariyah, 2015; Tran et al., 2020). This study examined the interrelationship between expatriate personality, cross-cultural competence, social capital, adjustment, and performance. Understanding the whole concept of expatriation will be highly essential and valuable.

Furthermore, this study emphasized social learning theory (Black & Mendenhall, 1990) and social capital theory
(Coleman, 1990) as the theoretical background. According to social learning theory, the mix of personality traits and cross-competencies that improve self-management and relationships will facilitate expatriate effectiveness in host countries. This theory is used to explain the expatriate personality-related hypotheses. Meanwhile, social capital theory explains how valuable resources and information that expatriates obtain through their social networks, will facilitate the process of their adjustment in host countries. By applying both theories, this study explains the various factors predicted impact expatriate competences and performance. The theories explain that both internal factors, the personalities, and external factors that consist of social capital are very important for expatriates to do their assignment in the host country.

Interrelationships Between Expatriate Personality and Cross-cultural Competence

Many studies have identified expatriate personality and intelligence as two of the most important predictors of expatriation performance. Based on the theory of evolutionary personality psychology, Ang et al. (2006) argued that the Big Five personality characteristics (including emotional stability, conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, and openness to experience) allow expatriates to adapt to and meet the demands of a given expatriation experience. Expatriates who possess key personality traits will adapt more effectively than those who do not possess appropriate personality characteristics. In addition to the Big Five characteristics, expatriate emotional intelligence (EQ) is also regarded as a fundamental characteristic that significantly impacts on expatriate adjustment and expatriation performance. Following organizational theory (Senge, 1982) and the hierarchical model (Carroll, 1993), expatriates with higher EQ are assumed to be better at learning and adjusting to a new environment.

According to the results of previous studies (Snow, 1996), EQ is defined as the ability to manage one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions and facilitate good interaction with supervisors, coworkers, supporting staff, and customers and clients (Alshaibani & Bakir, 2017). EQ can also reduce the cross-cultural adjustment level of expatriates.

According to Yamazaki and Kayes (2010), human relationship skills include intercultural competencies. Individuals proficient in relating to people and who are open-minded can more easily have good relational skills. Morley and Parkinson (2015) also proposed that cross-cultural training including emotional positively correlates with relational skills. Hence, the higher the cross-cultural competence of an expatriate (including open-mindedness, emotional stability, extraversion, and consciousness), the higher their relational skill.

Moreover, according to Matsumoto and Hwang (2013), expatriates with higher emotional stability and who possess open-mindedness, flexibility, and extraversion can achieve self-efficacy (Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2002). If an individual can manage their emotion well, then they can earn higher cross-cultural competence. In detail, if expatriates have higher personality competence, in terms of cultural empathy, cultural adaptability, cultural intelligence and EQ, they will enhance more relationships with others.

According to McCrea and Yin (2012), EQ has a strong relationship with people with high scores for extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. Still it tends to be weakened when people are neurotics. Thus, expatriates need to have skills, capabilities and EQ to acquire higher cross-cultural competence in terms of cultural intelligence, cross-culture adaptability, and cultural empathy.

H1: Expatriate personality has a positive influence on cross-cultural competence

The Effects of Expatriate Personality on Expatriate’s Social Capital

Expatriates who have higher personality traits will actively approach a social situation and then establish an interpersonal relationship. If individuals can manage their emotions well, they will remain calm in stressful situations in cross-cultural environments (Peltokorpi & Froese, 2014). In addition, open-minded people can maintain open and unprejudiced attitudes toward other groups and different cultures. Therefore, they may have higher social capital.

H2: Expatriate personality positively influences expatriate social capital.

The Effects of Expatriate Personality on Cross-cultural Adjustment

If expatriates have higher emotional stability, they will be less worried about unfamiliar and uncertain situations (Che Rose et al., 2010). Thus, they can have relationships with others easily because they have flexible verbal and nonverbal abilities and lack ethnocentric behavior boundaries (Ang et al., 2006). Therefore, the higher the emotional stability level, the higher the social capital accumulated performed by expatriates.

According to Hunler (2012), open-mindedness has a vital role in multicultural effectiveness because it means that expatriates have open and unbiased attitudes toward divergent cultures (van der Zee & van Oudenhoven, 2000). This personality is essential because identification with the local mainstream culture can aid expatriation. If individuals can manage their emotions well, they will remain calm in stressful situations in cross-cultural environments (Leiba-O’sullivan, 1999). Furthermore, open-minded people have open and unprejudiced attitudes toward other group cultures.
Accordingly, they can understand and respond to cultural differences. Huff et al. (2014) stated that expatriates who have an extroverted personality might adjust well at work, interact better with others, and have a better living situation. Expatriates with high extraversion (extrovert) will thus easily adjust to a cross-cultural environment.

**H3: Expatriate personality has positive effects on expatriate cross-cultural adjustment.**

### Effects of Cross-cultural Competence on Social Capital

According to Takeuchi et al. (2002), expatriates with a higher cross-cultural competence have a higher ability to maintain interpersonal relationships in host countries. Through this communication, expatriates can gain information, such as new ideas, from others. These ideas can then increase expatriate innovativeness to generate ideas related to their work (Yuan & Woodman, 2010).

Further, good relations with others may enable expatriates to solve their problems and implement ideas quickly because they have friends they can turn to for resources and connections (De Spiegelaere et al., 2014). Expatriates with a higher level of cultural adaptability have more confidence to deal with new situations (Bandura, 1997). In this case, expatriates can be more innovative because nothing challenges their beliefs in doing so. Moreover, expatriates who lack cross-cultural empathy will put their own group first (Shaffer et al., 2006). It means that they will only focus on their home country and only think in that way. They cannot enhance their host-country knowledge and will be less innovative.

Conversely, the broader their thinking, the greater will be their social capital. Therefore, the higher the cross-culture competence, the higher the innovative work behavior. Based on the preceding discussion, the following hypothesis is developed:

**H4: Cross-cultural competencies have a positive influence on social capital.**

### Effects of Expatriate Cross-Cultural Competence on Expatriate Cross-Cultural Adjustment

Early and Ang (2003) proposed the concept of cultural intelligence (CQ) to capture intercultural adaptability. It reflects a person who can interpret and act on completely distinct signals to function effectively in multicultural situations. The level of adjustment can be higher when the expatriates can absorb and adjust behaviors appropriate to the new culture (Earley & Peterson, 2004).

According to Amadi and Abdullah (2011), cultural empathy means sensitivity to other cultures, thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Expatriates with high cultural empathy will be able to identify with others and regard them as separate, and expatriates with higher cultural empathy will not be ethnocentric in their relationships with others. In addition, the social initiative has a negative influence on ethnocentrism (Arasaratnam & Banerjee, 2007). It implies that social initiative positively influences on non-ethnocentrism because when expatriates are more active in interacting with others, they will not care about cultural differences and will not exhibit ethnocentrism. Moreover, if someone is open-minded, then they will be more capable of acquiring perceptual competencies, such as non-ethnocentrism through training or on-the-job experience (Wu & Bodigerel-Koehler, 2013). Cultural empathy is also crucial to identify the mainstream culture because expatriates must understand how a host country feels and thinks (van der Zee & van Oudenhoven, 2000). If expatriates have abilities and sensitivity toward the host culture, then they can identify the mainstream culture well.

Cultural adaptability is how new cultural skills and behaviors are added to an individual’s cultural “repertoire,” and include the ability to experience behaviors and characteristics from a different culture than one’s own (Olson & Kroeger, 2001). Thus, cultural adaptability refers to the degree to which individuals can apply their knowledge of new cultural behaviors and characteristics in various cultural situations (Jyoti & Kour, 2017). It also indicates that expatriates will quickly adjust to their host countries’ new environments when they have high cultural adaptability.

**H5: Expatriate cross-cultural competence has a positive influence on expatriate cross-cultural adjustment.**

### Effects of Expatriate Social Capital on Expatriate Cross-Cultural Adjustment

Social capital is significant in cross-cultural adjustment. According to van Den Hooff and Huysman (2009), social capital provides access to individuals with relevant knowledge or needs. It provides conditions of mutual trust and appreciation of the value of the knowledge that others have. It also includes the ability to understand, interpret, and assess the knowledge shared. Kim et al. (2016) further explained that social capital enhances the willingness of individuals to share knowledge with their colleagues for both collection and transmission. That social capital has a positive influence on expatriate cross-cultural adjustment.

Social capital comes from research involving families and communities (Jacobs & Tillie, 2004). It has since been introduced into the business sectors, and it is also associated with several important performance factors. When expatriates build and maintain relationships with others (internal and external), they can exploit the social capital contained in those networks (Bayraktar, 2019). This study thus proposes:

**H6: Expatriate social capital has a positive influence on expatriate cross-cultural adjustment.**
Effects of Expatriate Cross-cultural Adjustment on Expatriate Performance

Many expatriate studies have argued that expatriate adjustment is positively related to performance on international assignments and the intent of expatriates to stay in the host country (Stahl & Caligiuri, 2005). When expatriates can adjust to their new environment, they will feel psychologically comfortable with assignments and duties, interaction with others, and the general living conditions in their host countries (Ramalu et al., 2010; Zhou & Qin, 2009). In this situation, they will be more innovative because they are already familiar with the new environment and nothing hinders them. Furthermore, expatriates who have good perceptions of their host attitudes will be more innovative because they feel that the host country nationals treat them well and encourage them to do more innovation. Furthermore, Abdul Malek and Budhwar (2013) corroborated that expatriates who can adjust themselves well will have a greater reserve of personal resources, such as emotional investment, effort, and time, leading to better behaviors and facilitating job performances. Thus, Kraimer and Wayne (2004) expected that expatriate adjustment positively relates to expatriate performance. Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis is developed:

\[ H7: \text{Expatriate cross-cultural adjustment has a positive influence on expatriate performance.} \]

Methodology and Results

Conceptual Model and Construct Measurement

This present study investigated the three perspectives of antecedents and identified their individual and combined effects on expatriate cross-cultural adjustment and performance. For this study, the conceptual model was developed as shown in Figure 1. The following five major constructs were operationalized in this study: (1) expatriate personality, (2) expatriate cross-cultural competence, (3) expatriate social capital, (4) expatriate cross-cultural adjustment, and (5) expatriate performance.

Questionnaire Design

A survey questionnaire was developed to obtain responses from expatriates about their experiences and attitudes toward the research variables. The questionnaire of this study comprises the following primary constructs: (a) expatriate personality including emotional stability (eight items), extraversion (six items), conscientiousness (six items), openness to new experience (seven items), agreeableness (6 items), and emotional intelligence (12 items); (b) expatriate cross-cultural competencies including cultural empathy (10 items), cultural adaptability (four items), and cultural intelligence (21 items); (c) expatriate social capital including LMX (six items), POS (13 items), and OCB (17 items); (d) expatriate cross-cultural adjustment including identification mainstream with culture (10 items), expatriate adjustment (nine items), and perceived host attitude toward expatriate (9 items); (e) expatriate performance (7 items). The questionnaire was designed on 7-point Likert scale, except for the respondent’s demographics.

The questionnaire was pretested through a pilot study by a Ph.D. student of a university in Taiwan. The author designed a preliminary version of the questionnaire and discussed with human resource (HR) managers. Finally, the questionnaire items were revised based upon the results of the pilot study.
Participants and Sampling Plan

The questionnaire surveys were given to a sample of expatriates in Taiwan. Six hundred questionnaires were sent to the foreign expatriates of foreign multinational companies (MNCs) in Taiwan. The sampling frames of the respondents were obtained from (1) 2019 US firms in Taiwan, (2) 2019 European firms in Taiwan, and (3) 2019 Japanese firms in Taiwan. The names of managers, vice presidents, presidents, and CEOs in each of the firms were identified and asked to be the respondents in this study. Additionally, the study adopted a non-random sampling to choose 200 American–owned firms, 250 Japanese firms, and 150 European-owned firms in Taiwan. Table 1 shows the population, sample, and response rate of the sample firms. The survey materials included a cover letter from a researcher with a university-addressed envelope. The expatriates were also asked to express their opinions about the questionnaire items for all research constructs. The respondents were promised that no personal information would be made public. The data would be kept in strict confidentiality and only used for data analysis in this study. Eventually, 244 valid questionnaires were obtained.

Descriptive Analysis

The characteristics of the respondents were gathered. Table 2 presents the descriptive analysis of this study. Of the 244 valid respondents, 177 (72.54%) were males, 67 (27.46%) were females, most were aged between 36 and 45 (42.2%), followed by 26 to 35 years old (32.4%); nearly 49.2% of the respondents had at least a Master’s degree, followed 43.0% respondents had a bachelor’s degree (Lee et al., 2021). For annual income, 36.1% respondents claimed to be 2.1 million to 3.0 million, followed 3.1 million to 4.0 million (26.2%). With a GDP per capital of USD 32,123, an average annual salary of NT 641,000 (USD 21,370), and a minimum monthly wage of NTD 24,000 (USD 854). The annual income of the respondents in this study was much higher than the average annual income in Taiwan, which was approximately 1.5 million.

Reliability and Validity Analysis

Table 3 shows that factor loadings of all the questionnaire items exceed 0.6 (0.623–0.931), and all item-to-total correlation coefficients range from .550 to .900, which are higher than .5. Finally, Cronbach’s alpha of all the factors exceeds 0.7 (0.814–0.9674). These all exceed the generally accepted guidelines from Hair et al. (2017). Hence, we...
conclude that all the questionnaire items show a high degree of internal consistency and that their factors are appropriate for further analysis.

**Analysis Results**

**Evaluation of Measurement Model**

The data were analyzed by using the PLS software. The software is less restrictive judging by its standard distribution assumption, sample size restriction and multicollinearity situation (Anderson and Swaminathan (2011). Table 4 shows the coefficient of determination ($R^2$) for the endogenous latent variables: 0.7953 for expatriate cross-cultural adjustment, 0.6186 for expatriate cultural competence, 0.5978 for expatriate social capital. These $R^2$ coefficients are considered substantial to moderate, according to Scheroer and Hertel (2009). The AVEs of the constructs range from 0.5176 to 0.7924, higher than the recommended benchmark of 0.5, and demonstrate the satisfactory reliability and convergent validity of the research constructs. Cronbach’s alpha coefficients range from .6907 to .9774, higher than a threshold of 0.6, which suggests that the variance shared by the respective indicators is robust.

The goodness-of-fit (GoF) index was employed to measure the overall fit between the data and the model, where greater than 0.36 is considered large, 0.25 medium, and 0.10 small (Vinzi et al. (2010). In this study, the GoF is 0.753, which is considered large, and this result confirms that the structural model is appropriate with high predictive power. Based on the above discussions, the reliability and convergent validity of the research model are appropriate, which enables us to proceed to an evaluation of the structural model.

**Evaluation of the Structural Model**

Table 5 shows the relationship among the research constructs. The results confirm that personality positively influences cross-cultural competence ($\beta = 1.309$, $t=5.6030$), social capital ($\beta = .7854$, $t=41.3737$), and cross-cultural adjustment ($\beta = 1.306$, $t=11.5898$). The t-values are higher than 1.96 which indicates that the results are significant. Thus, H1a, H2a, and H3a are accepted.

For the influence of emotional intelligence, the results validate that emotional intelligence has a significantly positive influence on expatriate cross-cultural competence ($\beta = .8865$, $t$-value = 23.0032, social capital ($\beta = .2366,$
Table 5. Evaluation of Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing.

| Hyp. Path | Standardize Estimate | t-value |
|-----------|----------------------|---------|
| H1a Personality → cross cultural competence | 0.1309 | 5.6030*** |
| H1b Emotional intelligence → cross cultural competence | 0.8865 | 23.0032*** |
| H2a Personality → social capital | 0.7854 | 41.3377*** |
| H2b Emotional intelligence → social capital | 0.2366 | 12.8836*** |
| H3a Personality → cross cultural adjustment | 0.1306 | 11.5898*** |
| H3b Emotional intelligence → cross cultural adjustment | 0.4120 | 27.0602*** |
| H4 Cross cultural competence → social capital | 0.5165 | 15.8621*** |
| H5 Cross cultural competence → cross cultural adjustment | 0.4856 | 31.0934*** |
| H6 Social capital → cross cultural adjustment | 0.1839 | 8.1479*** |
| H7 Cross cultural adjustment → expatriate performance | 0.7732 | 138.7372*** |

***p < .001.

The t-values are higher than 1.96, which indicates that the results are significant. Hence, H1b, H2b, and H3b are accepted.

For the influence of cross-cultural competence and social capital, the results verify that cultural competence positively influences on social capital ($\beta$ = .5165, $t$ = 21.1060), and cross-cultural adjustment ($\beta$ = .4856, $t$ = 31.0934). The t-values are higher than 1.96, which indicates that the results are significant; therefore, H4 and H5 are accepted.

For the influence of social capital on cross-cultural adjustment, the results affirm that social capital positively influences on cross-cultural adjustment ($\beta$ = .1306, $t$ = 11.5898). Finally, for the relationship between cross-cultural adjustment and expatriate performance, the empirical results corroborate that cross-cultural adjustment positively influences on expatriate performance ($\beta$ = .7732, $t$ = 138.7372). The t-values are higher than 1.96, which indicates that the results are significant. Thus, H6 and H7 are accepted.

Conclusion and Discussion

Conclusions

This study aims to identify the influence of expatriate personality and social capital on cross-cultural adjustment and expatriate performance. Several conclusions may be drawn from the results of this study.

First, the elements of expatriate personality traits have significant effects on their social capital and cross-cultural adjustment. This result is consistent with the results of previous studies. Hua et al. (2019) argued that proactive personalities significantly influence on expatriate social adjustment, because expatriates with higher levels of proactive personality will proactively engage in events that promote social interaction. In addition, Kang and Shen (2018) contended that expatriate personality could improve guanxi. Caligiuri (2000) also argued that the Big Five personality traits enable expatriate adjustment through conscientiousness and sociability, encouraging individuals to be dutiful. Further, Ang et al. (2006) argued that expatriates who possess key personality traits would adapt more effectively than those who do not possess the appropriate personality characteristics. Early and Ang (2003) asserted that expatriates with stronger positive personalities would more easily adjust themselves to the host culture.

Second, the elements of expatriate cross-cultural competence have significant effects on their social capital and cross-cultural adjustment. This result is consistent with the results of previous studies. MacNab and Worthley (2012) contended that an increasing number of firms are looking for expatriates who can quickly adjust to multiple cultures and effectively interact with novel cultural settings. Thus, individuals with CQ can encounter confusing situations, think deeply about what is happening, and make appropriate adjustments. Cultural adaptability refers to how expatriates can apply their new cultural behaviors in various cultural situations (Deal et al., 2003). Hence, when expatriates have higher cultural adaptability, they will quickly adjust to their host countries (Olson & Kroeger, 2001). Cultural empathy refers to the ability and sensitivity to empathize with individuals’ feelings, thoughts, and behaviors from other cultural settings. Expatriates with higher cultural empathy will not be ethnocentric in their relationships (Amadi & Abdullah, 2011), and expatriates with the ability and sensitivity to the host culture can identify the mainstream culture well (Wu & Bodigerel-Koehler, 2013).

Third, expatriate social capital has significant effects on their cross-cultural adjustment, which further promotes expatriate performance. These results are consistent with those of previous studies. According to social exchange theory (Takeuchi et al., 2009) and social capital theory (Adler & Kwon, 2002), if a mutual relationship is satisfying, expatriate performance in adjustment will improve. The current study argued that POS, OCB, and LMX are essential factors in social capital (Kupka & Cathro, 2007; Organ et al., 2006).

Fourth, in an interactive expatriation environment, if expatriates can build and retain relationships with insiders
and outsiders, they can tap into the social capital contained in those networks (Bayraktar, 2019). When expatriates have high social relationships, they will be good in LMX, making them easier to adjust (Quttainah & Said, 2021). POS is another essential factor in expatriate adjustment and performance. Organizational support theory (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) assumes that expatriates tend to develop global beliefs regarding support from their organizations, especially from their supervisors. When supervisors value the contributions of expatriates and care about their wellbeing, they will enable expatriates to reduce their stress to improve their adjustment to work. This study extended POS to a broader perspective of social support, which includes perceived support of expatriates from organizations, coworkers, supervisors, friends, and families. Kupka and Cathro (2007) argued that these perceived social supports are critical for expatriates. OCB is the degree to which expatriates feel that they must work beyond their organizations and duties to support the interests of their organizations (Bambale, 2011). If expatriates have favorable OCB, they may have a higher degree of organizational commitment and exhibit better expatriate adjustment and performance.

Finally, the study results confirm that the effect of the cross-cultural adjustment on expatriate performance is significant. Zhou and Qin (2009) argued that when expatriates can adjust to their new environments, they will be psychologically comfortable with assignments and duties, interactions with others, and the general living conditions in their host countries (Ramalu et al., 2010; Zhou & Qin, 2009). In this situation, they will be more innovative because they are familiar with their new environments. Expatriates who have good perceptions of their host attitudes will be more innovative because they feel that the host country nationals treat them well and encourage them to do more innovation. Furthermore, Abdul Malek and Budhwar (2013) stated that expatriates who can adjust well would have a greater reserve of personal resources such as time, effort, and emotional investment, leading to better behaviors and facilitating job performance.

Implications

Theoretical Implications

Several theoretical implications can be drawn from the results of this study. First, this study adopted personality trait theory (Takeuchi, 2010), and the theory of evolutionary personality psychology (Ang et al., 2006) to verify the effect of Big Five personality traits on expatriate’s cross-cultural adjustment. The study results confirmed that proactive or positive personality traits could help expatriates adapt to their host environments more effectively. Second, this study adopted organizational learning theory (Senge, 1982) to explain the roles of emotional intelligence (EQ) and cultural intelligence (CQ) on expatriate adjustment and performance.

The study results confirm that “the ability to generate feeling, to understand emotional knowledge and to regulate emotion (EQ)” can enable expatriates to return quickly to normal psychological states after rejoicing or being upset (Law et al., 2004) and to perform better in a productive direction (Côté & Miners, 2006). The study results also confirm that “the ability to acquire or adopt behaviors appropriate for a new culture (CQ)” can help expatriates to act effectively across multicultural situations.

Third, this study adopted social capital theory (Adler & Kwon, 2002) to explain the influence of cultural adaptability and cultural empathy on expatriates’ cross-cultural adjustment. These study results show that cross-cultural competencies enable expatriates to maintain interpersonal relationships with the host country people. Through this communication, expatriate obtain more ideas and information from others. These ideas can increase expatriate innovativeness at work (Yuan & Woodman, 2010). Expatriates with these competences exhibit enhanced willingness to share their knowledge with their colleagues, further facilitating cross-cultural adjustment.

Those findings of this study contribute to the expatriate literature regarding the importance of holistic understanding about expatriation, not only the internal factors that can influence expatriates’ performance, but also external factors. Therefore, the neglected issues that may happen when the previous studies discuss it can be solved. Furthermore, this study also uses various theoretical backgrounds in order to cope with the research problems discussed here. Thus, this study applies the theory to it.

Managerial Implications

Several managerial implications may be drawn from the results of this study. First, Hua et al. (2019) mentioned a proactive personality is relevant for expatriates. MNCs’ Human Resources (HR) managers may consider including proactive personality as part of the screening items in the expatriate election. Second, like EQ, CQ, and cross-cultural competence are the critical factors of expatriation success, HR managers should give the most significant attention regarding those competences to expatriates. Firms can adopt the CQ scale as a selection tool for recruiting expatriates for overseas assignments. Firms should also develop training programs to promote headquarters employees and overseas employees to enhance managers’ CQ and cross-cultural competence. Pre-departure and post-arrival training programs should also be developed for expatriates to minimize culture shock in the host environment. HR managers should also emphasize EQ in hiring and training programs to improve work’s relational and behavioral aspects. Furthermore, Company Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) within communities should get all expatriates involved to allow interactions with people to enhance cultural and social capital.
Third, expatriate cross-cultural competences including cultural adaptability and cultural empathy are regarded as critical elements for expatriation success. Expatriates with high cultural empathy and cultural adaptability will be able to identify with others. They will add new cultural skills to their own cultural “repertoire” (Arasaratnam & Banerjee, 2007; Olson & Kroeger, 2001). HR managers should be aware of these crucial issues and arrange training programs in cross-cultural competences to promote cultural empathy and cultural adaptability. HR managers should also try to understand the status of (1) leader-member exchange (LMX), (2) expatriate perceived organizational support, and (3) expatriate organizational citizenship behavior, because these are the main factors in expatriate cross-cultural competences.

Fourthly, cross-cultural adjustment has been regarded as one of the most critical factors for expatriation success. It is essential for HR managers to continuously monitor expatriate’s cross-cultural adjustment, including (1) identification of expatriate with the mainstream culture, (2) expatriate adjustment, and (3) perceived host attitude toward expatriate. Firms need to understand their expatriates’ level of cross-cultural adjustment and provide the support needed to facilitate the adjustment.

Limitations and Future Research Directions
This study focused on several essential antecedents and consequences of expatriate cross-cultural adjustment. Though the study results are fruitful and may provide significant contributions and implications for academics and practitioners, limitations remain, which may provide guiding for future research direction. First, this study incorporates three aspects of antecedents to explain expatriate social capital and cross-cultural adjustment. Consequently, the research model become comprehensive but complicated. Future research can incorporate more aspects of antecedents but should simplify the research model so that the research model to enable it to illuminate the explanatory power of different theories. Second, while this study has identified (1) leader-member exchange, (2) perceived organizational support, and (3) organizational citizenship behavior to the operational definition of the research constructs of social capital. Future research can include other aspects of social capital from the aspects of social-economic status, such as the connections through classmate’s families and community activities.

Third, since this study focus on the effect of cross-cultural and social capital on expatriate, PLS-SEM as the data analyzing technique. The survey data in this study have been collected from the respondents at a single point in time. Future research can use cross-cultural competence and social capital as two independent variables and two-ANOVA to see the interaction effects of these two independent variables on determent variables. Future research can adopt a longitudinal design to verify the causal effect of expatriate adjustment and performance.

Fourth, recent studies (Chew et al., 2021) have emphasized the effect of multiple intelligence on expatriate cross-cultural adjustment. Future studies can incorporate different kinds of intelligence as a composite score or as individual elements, and evaluate their influences on expatriate performance, especially political intelligence (PQ).

Fifth, this study conducted non-random as the sampling technique. It may cause the chosen respondents cannot represent the whole population and may lead to bias. Therefore, the future study may use random sampling method to solve this possible issue.

Finally, despite these limitations, this study is one of a few studies that investigating a bundle of multiple intelligence and cross-cultural competencies in an integrated research model and examining the mediation effect of social capital on cross-cultural adjustment. Future research can replicate the model of this study or a revised form to deepen our understanding of expatriate management.

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An Ethic Statement
The survey material included a cover letter from a researcher with university-addressed envelope. Expatriates were asked to express their opinions about the questionnaire items for all research constructs. The respondents were promised that no personal information would be made public, and the data would be kept in strict confidentiality and only used for data analysis in this study.

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