# FACTORS AFFECTING SELF-INITIATED EXPATRIATES' JOB PERFORMANCE IN VIETNAM: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF CROSS-CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

## CÁC YẾU TỐ ẢNH HƯỞNG ĐẾN HIỆU SUẤT CÔNG VIỆC CỦA NGƯỜI NƯỚC NGOÀI TỰ KHỞI XƯỚNG TẠI VIỆT NAM: VAI TRÒ TRUNG GIAN CỦA SỰ ĐIỀU CHỈNH LIÊN VĂN HOÁ

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***Phùng Nam Phương✉, Lê Phước Thành, Lê Minh Thư, Nguyễn Ngọc Bảo Hiếu, Bùi Huỳnh Nguyên***

**ABSTRACT**

The research explores various factors influencing the job performance of self-initiated expatriates (SIEs), focusing on the mediating role of cross-cultural adjustment. Employing a quantitative research methodology, the study utilizes a questionnaire-based survey to collect data from a sample of 250 SIEs currently working in Vietnam. The findings denote that political skill, perceived organizational support, and cultural intelligence indirectly influence SIEs' job performance, moderated by cross-cultural adjustment. The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on the factors affecting the job performance of SIEs, offering pragmatic insights for Vietnamese enterprises on bolstering support mechanisms for SIEs and enhancing their performance in this emerging country.

**Keywords**: Job performance; cross-cultural adjustment ; self-initiated expatriates; political skill; perceived organizational support.

**TÓM TẮT**

Nghiên cứu khám phá các yếu tố ảnh hưởng đến hiệu suất công việc của những người lao động nước ngoài tự khởi xướng (SIE), tập trung vào vai trò trung gian của yếu tố điều chỉnh liên văn hóa. Dựa trên phương pháp nghiên cứu định lượng, đề tài sử dụng bảng câu hỏi khảo sát 250 SIE hiện đang hoạt động tại Việt Nam. Kết quả cho thấy rằng kỹ năng chính trị, sự hỗ trợ của tổ chức và trí tuệ văn hóa ảnh hưởng gián tiếp đến hiệu suất công việc của SIE, thông qua vai trò điều tiết của yếu tố điều chỉnh liên văn hóa. Nghiên cứu này góp phần bổ sung thêm kho tàng lý thuyết hiện có về các yếu tố ảnh hưởng đến hiệu suất làm việc của SIE, đồng thời cung cấp những hiểu biết thực tế cho các doanh nghiệp Việt Nam về việc xây dựng các cơ chế hỗ trợ và nâng cao hiệu quả hoạt động của SIE tại Việt Nam.

**Từ khóa**: Hiệu suất công việc; sự điều chỉnh liên văn hoá; người lao động nước ngoài tự khởi xướng; kỹ năng chính trị, sự hỗ trợ của tổ chức.

## 1. Introduction

Over the past few decades, globalisation has led to an increase in the number of people who live and work abroad. Expatriates, often shortened to "expats," are individuals who reside in a country other than their country of citizenship or origin (Mohr **& Batsakis**, 2018). There are several types of expatriates, including self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) and organisational expatriates (OEs). OEs are employees who are sent by their employer to work in a foreign country for a temporary period of time (Andresen et al., 2014); whereas SIEs are individuals who choose to move to a

Phùng Nam Phương, Lê Phước Thành, Lê Minh Thư, Nguyễn Ngọc Bảo Hiếu,Bùi Huỳnh Nguyên, Trường Đại học Kinh tế - Đại học Đà Nẵng
✉Email: phuongpn@due.edu.vn

foreign country on their own initiative, often for personal reasons such as a desire for adventure or pursuing career opportunities (Doherty et al., 2013).

According to some estimates, OEs make up around two-thirds of all expatriates, while SIEs make up the remaining one-third. With a larger and more accessible population for study, it is understandable why previous studies have tended to focus more on OEs than SIEs. The significant body of literature on OEs covers a wide range of topics, including the challenges of living and working abroad, the impact of expatriate assignments on families, the role of expatriates in global organisations, and the factors that contribute to the success or failure of expatriate assignments (Ang et al., 2007; Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Caligiuri & Tarique, 2009; Kraimer et al., 2012). These studies have adopted different theoretical perspectives, such as social capital theory (Lin, 2001), career capital theory (Seibert et al., 2001), adjustment theory (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005) or motivation theory (Caligiuri & Tarique, 2009), to explain how OEs acquire and use different resources and capabilities to perform effectively in their international assignments. These results, however, seem difficult to apply to SIEs because there are huge differences between OEs and SIEs (Andresen et al., 2014).

Indeed, while both OEs and SIEs face unique challenges and opportunities, their experiences differ in significant ways due to the differing purposes, support, and employment arrangements associated with each type of expatriate (Andresen et al., 2014; Doherty et al., 2013). Firstly, OEs are sent to work in a foreign country by their employer, while SIEs move to a foreign country on their own initiative, often for personal reasons (Doherty et al., 2013). Secondly, OEs typically receive more formal support from their employer, including assistance with relocation, housing, and visa requirements, as well as training and development opportunities; whereas SIEs are responsible for arranging their own accommodation, visas, and other logistical details, and may not have access to the same level of support (Andresen et al., 2014). Thirdly, OEs are typically employed by a multinational corporation, international organisation, or government agency, while SIEs may be self-employed, start their own business, or work for a local company in a foreign country (Collings et al., 2018). Lastly, OEs may experience less culture shock than SIEs, as they receive training and support to help them adjust to the new culture. SIEs may need to navigate cultural differences on their own, which can be challenging (Doherty et al., 2013).

Therefore, several topics relating to OEs have been studied by many researchers but whether these findings may capture the complexity and dynamics of SIEs or not is still a question. Job performance is one of them. Job performance has been defined as the level of effectiveness with which employees carry out their work duties and responsibilities (Borman **&** Motowidlo, 1993). According to Murphy (1989), performance is behaviours that are related to the goals of the organisation. Meanwhile, Campbell (1990) stated that performance is the individual's controlled behaviours or actions that are beneficial to the organisation's objectives, and that can be evaluated in accordance with the individual's level of competence, which is in agreement with earlier definitions). According to the maximum boundary of searching, a little research about SIEs' job performance could be found. Some studies suggest that SIEs perform better than OEs due to their self-

motivation and sense of responsibility for their success (Lepak **&** Snell, 1999) or tend to have higher levels of job satisfaction because they have greater control over their work and career development (Suutari **&** Brewster, 2000). However, other studies report lower levels of job performance among SIEs, potentially due to difficulties in adapting to a new culture and work environment (Lauring **&** Selmer, 2018). Overall, the research on SIEs' job performance is scarce and requires further investigation.

Furthermore, there is the lack of empirical research on SIEs in different contexts, especially in emerging economies. Previous studies have predominantly examined SIEs in developed countries or regions such as Europe, North America, or Australia. However, SIEs may encounter distinct challenges and opportunities in emerging economies like Vietnam, where the economic, social, and cultural conditions differ from those of developed countries (Lima & Domingues, 2021; Oh & Jang, 2021). Although Vietnam is one of the fastest-growing economies in Southeast Asia and has attracted a large number of foreign workers in recent years (Lima & Domingues, 2021); SIEs in Vietnam may encounter more difficulties in adjusting to the local culture and language, finding suitable employment and career opportunities, dealing with institutional barriers and uncertainties (Oh & Jang, 2021). To date, however, there has been little agreement on SIEs in Vietnam and how they perform in their jobs. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by examining the factors affecting SIEs' job performance in Vietnam. Firstly, the influences of several factors, such as political skills, perceived organisational support, and cultural intelligence, on the cross-cultural adjustment of SIEs are identified. Secondly, the effects of cross-cultural adjustment on the job performance of SIEs are examined.

## 2. Literature review and hypotheis development

### *2.1. Cross – cultural adjustment*

Cross-cultural adjustment delineates the degree to which an individual is psychologically attuned and acclimated to a novel environment (Black, 1990). Within the realm of expatriation research, adjustment is principally bifurcated into socio-cultural and psychological adjustments (Ward & Kennedy, 1993). The former pertains to an individual's aptitude and readiness to effectively engage, assimilate, and communicate with the host country's populace (Black et al., 1991). Conversely, psychological adjustment denotes an individual's sense of well-being and satisfaction in a distinct cultural milieu (Castro, 2003; Ward **&** Kennedy, 1996). An expatriate's prospects of thriving are contingent on their adaptability to both the new professional setting and the overarching foreign culture (Shaffer et al., 1999). Conversely, maladjustment can precipitate stress, manifesting in issues such as absenteeism or premature job departure (Takeuchi et al., 2002).

Empirical research corroborates that expatriates exhibiting adept acclimatization tend to deliver superior job performance (Chua et al., 2015; Wu **&** Ang, 2011). Notably, the pinnacle of an expatriate's efficacy is intrinsically linked to their cultural congruence within the target context (Chiu **&** Hong, 2005). By forging interpersonal bonds with host country nationals and engaging actively, expatriates can deepen their grasp of the local culture, enriching both their vocational and avocational pursuits (Kraimer **&** Wayne, 2004). Conversely, an expatriate's

occupational prowess might be undermined if they grapple with cultural assimilation (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Chua et al., 2015). Yet, once they attain a state of comfort and integration, their disposition towards the host nation turns favorable (Mol et al., 2005), resulting in diminished stress and potentially augmented professional output (Tsegaye et al., 2019).

From numerous previous studies thoroughly analysed at length above, the present study proposes that:

*H1: Cross-cultural adjustment has a positive impact on SIEs' job performance.*

### *2.2. Political skill*

Mintzberg (1983) posits that political skill is indispensable for proactive participation within organizations. Contemporary academic discussions commonly define political proficiency as the capability to discern the motivations and emotions of others in a professional setting and utilize this understanding to motivate them in support of personal or organizational goals (Ahearn et al., 2004; Ferris et al., 2005). Four main facets have been identified in political skill: networking ability, interpersonal influence, social astuteness, and apparent sincerity (Ferris et al. 2005, 2007). Networking ability is perceived as the capacity to cultivate and sustain relationships with individuals from diverse backgrounds (Zaman et al., 2019). Interpersonal influence pertains to the skill of impacting others' behaviors in social engagements (Ferris et al., 2005). Social astuteness involves a deep understanding of social interactions and the ability to perceive various social dynamics (Wihler et al., 2017; Ferris et al., 2005). Finally, apparent sincerity encompasses qualities like authenticity and integrity (Ferris et al., 2005).

Numerous studies concur that possessing political skill correlates positively with cross-cultural adjustment for SIEs. Such a skill equips SIEs to wield social influence and foster trustful associations, aiding their acclimatization (Mahajan **&** Toh, 2014; Jokinen et al., 2008). Additionally, Kong et al. (2020) and Wang et al. (2019) highlighted the beneficial impact of political skill on the cross-cultural adaptation of SIEs, noting enhanced cultural empathy, communicative efficacy, and increased social support. Hence, it could conceivably be hypothesised that:

*H2: Political skill has a positive impact on SIEs' cross – cultural adjustment.*

### *2.3. Perceived organisational support*

Perceived organizational support is defined as the extent to which employees believe their organization appreciates their efforts and is concerned about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Huang et al. (2022) introduced a nuanced perspective by categorizing perceived organizational support into three specific facets: living, work, and emotional perceived organisational support. They proposed this model to be particularly apt for the Chinese milieu, given its distinct socio-cultural attributes like the emphasis on guanxi (social connections), the collectivist orientation, and the blending of professional and personal spheres. Considering similarities in cultural context, it's plausible that Huang et al.'s (2022) tripartite model might be relevant for Vietnam, serving as a tool to explore the nexus between perceived organizational support and cross-cultural adjustment.

Initially, living perceived organizational support gauges the extent to which expatriates acknowledge the amenities and assistance accorded by their hosting organization, encompassing basic necessities

like accommodation, sustenance, and leisure. Expatriates discerning a significant level of such support tend to mitigate the strains inherent in adapting to unfamiliar terrains, thereby assimilating more effectively into the new cultural milieu (Suutari **&** Brewster, 2001; Setti et al., 2022). Next, work perceived organizational support pertains to employees' perceptions of backing they receive concerning job-related matters (Setti et al., 2022; Suutari **&** Brewster, 2001). Suutari and Brewster (2001) infer that job-centric supports—like training, feedback, and autonomy—augment expatriates' occupational efficacy, furthering their cultural acclimatization. Setti et al. (2022) further correlate elevated work support perception with better psychological well-being among expatriates. Lastly, emotional perceived organizational support encapsulates the sentiment of expatriates feeling emotionally buttressed during challenging times in their host nation. Such support contributes to expatriates sensing a deeper connection and less alienation, favoring their cultural integration (Suutari et al., 2018; Selmer **&** Lauring, 2011)

It's noteworthy that OEs often discern heightened levels of perceived organizational support compared to SIEs. This is attributed to OEs typically benefiting from comprehensive support systems spanning their home and host nations, encompassing aspects like accommodation, conveyance, and logistics. Such provisions bolster their sentiment of organizational valuation. Nonetheless, while SIEs might lack analogous support structures in their native lands, they can still perceive organizational backing in their host countries. Yet, the understanding of how perceived organizational support impacts SIEs remains relatively underexplored compared to OEs.

Based on previous studies, the following hypothesis is proposed:

*H3: Perceived organisational support has a positive impact on SIEs' cross – cultural adjustment.*

### *2.4. Cultural intelligence*

Earley and Ang (2003) characterize cultural intelligence as the aptitude to excel in settings marked by cultural diversity. In a parallel vein, Sousa and Gonçalves (2017) portray it as the proficiency to function effectively amidst varied nationalities, ethnic groups, and organizational cultures. Multiple research endeavors ascertain that those possessing elevated cultural intelligence manifest superior cross-cultural adjustment (Van Dyne et al., 2012; Konanahalli et al., 2014). Ang et al. (2007) propounded a four-dimensional model of cultural intelligence, which has subsequently emerged as the predominant paradigm for its assessment and comprehension. This model encompasses: metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioural facets of cultural intelligence.

The metacognitive facet pertains to one's capacity to introspectively comprehend their cognitive patterns, especially in relation to cultural variances. As per Ang et al. (2007), those with pronounced metacognitive cultural intelligence can discern their cultural predispositions, recalibrating their perspectives aptly in diverse cultural scenarios. The cognitive dimension is centered around one's familiarity with different cultures, encompassing an understanding of cultural norms, mores, and traditions, coupled with the prowess to decode cultural symbols and practices. Individuals endowed with elevated cognitive cultural intelligence can adeptly navigate and acclimatize to cross-cultural scenarios, bearing an enhanced recognition of culture's

influence on behavior and interaction, as highlighted by Ang et al. (2007)

The motivational aspect of cultural intelligence concerns an individual's enthusiasm and drive to assimilate and interact with culturally diverse groups. This is epitomized by a proclivity for cross-cultural exchanges and an earnestness to assimilate diverse cultural viewpoints. Ang et al. (2007) elucidate that those with potent motivational cultural intelligence are more inclined towards cross-cultural explorations and display receptiveness towards unfamiliar cultural contexts. Lastly, the behavioral dimension encapsulates one's competency to modify their conduct to resonate with varied cultural backdrops, embracing both verbal and non-verbal cues, inclusive of gestures and body language. Those with a pronounced behavioral cultural intelligence exhibit adaptability, ensuring effective intercultural communication and curtailing cultural faux pas, as delineated by Ang et al. (2007).

This research put forward the subsequent hypothesis:

*H4: Cultural intelligence has a positive impact on SIEs' cross – cultural adjustment.*

From the literature review which forming the hypothesis above, a proposal research model is made:

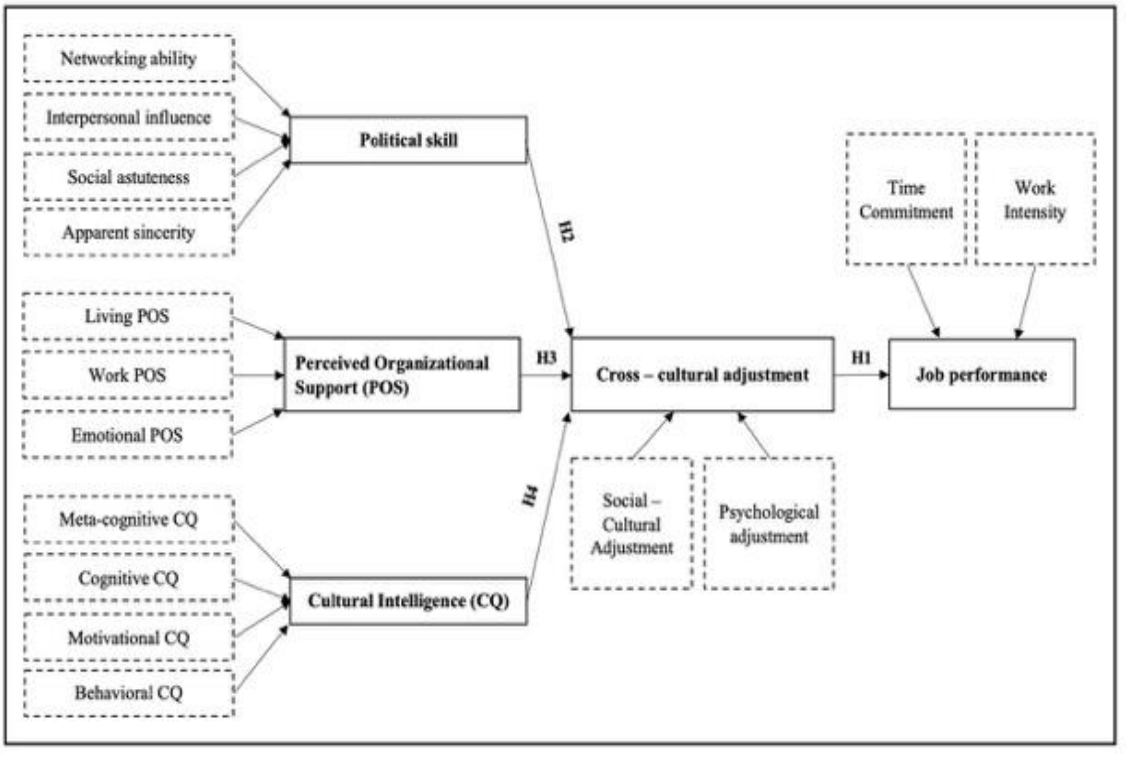


*Figure 1*. The research model

## 3. Research methodology

### *3.1. Measurement instruments*

The study utilised multi-item measures that were adapted from existing research, and revised to better fit the specific focus and context of the study.

Firstly, political skill was measured employing the 18-item in a shortened version of the Political Skill Inventory (Ferris et al., 2005), developed and validated by Vigoda-Gadot and Meisler (2010). Networking ability is composed of six items, interpersonal influence is composed of four

items, social astuteness is composed of five items, and apparent sincerity is composed of three items. Secondly, as mentioned before, this study used the scale for perceived organisational support scale tailoring specifically for use in Chinese enterprises from Huang et al. (2022) because Vietnam and Chinese share similar context. The scale encompasses three categories - living perceived organisational support, work perceived organisational support which is derived by Morgeson **&** Humphrey (2006), and emotional perceived organisational support which is based on the scale developed by Wen et al. (2019). Thirdly, according to Ang et al. (2007), cultural intelligence has been assessed using a 20-item scale, which has been widely employed in recent cross-cultural management studies (e.g, Ang **&** Inkpen, 2008; Subramaniam et al., 2011; Templer et al., 2006; Williams, 2008). The scale is divided into four categories, including meta-cognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioural cultural intelligence.

Next, Black and Stephens' (1989) 14-item scale was used to measure social-cultural adjustment, which has been confirmed to be valid and reliable when utilised in distinct cultures (Robie **&** Ryan, 1996) and Zhang's (2013) 11-item general health scale was employed to assess psychological adjustment. This scale has been implemented to monitor levels of wellbeing in organisational contexts (Forster, 2000) and has been extensively used in expatriation studies to measure expatriates' subjective wellbeing and psychological adaptation in overseas assignments (e.g, Anderzén **&** Arnetz, 1999; Selmer, 1999, 2007; Williams, 2008). Lastly, two aspects of job performance which includes time commitment and work intensity are used to assess how well SIEs perform in their job (Schaufeli et al., 2002) (see Table 1). Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each statement on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

### *3.2. Data collection*

An online survey was carried out to collect data on the job performance of SIEs and the factors affecting their performance. The survey questionnaire consisted of several parts, with the initial section outlining the research project's purpose. The subsequent segment collected socio-demographic information from respondents to ensure that they were SIEs. The following sections of the survey obtained information and opinions from participants regarding the variables examined in the study. The survey was promoted through various social media platforms and expat forums in Vietnam to reach the target population of SIEs. Data was collected during three weeks in March 2020. A total of 273 responses were collected. After the data screening process, 23 questionnaires were eliminated due to missing data and unengaged responses. Therefore, a final sample of 250 was qualified for data analysis using the PLS-SEM approach. Table 1 presents demographic information of respondents in this study.

### *3.3. Data analysis*

The partial least square-structural equation model (PLS-SEM) serves as both a factorization technique and an analytical method, elucidating the manner in which observed variables produce latent variables and authenticate their relationships (Hair et al., 2016). PLS-SEM stands as a stable and reliable approach for pinpointing optimal components through factor analysis, while

also augmenting the descriptive capacity of each latent variable's influence on the endogenous ones. A significant advantage of PLS-SEM is its lack of dependency on the normality prerequisites that covariance-based multivariate analyses demand, rendering it sample size agnostic. It is also the most suitable method for establishing a causal relationship as well as estimating a model with a higher-order construct (Hair et al., 2010; Hwang et al., **2020**). In this research, using R (RStudio) software (version 3.6.2), the structural and measurement models were both tested using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). Following the recommendations by Hair et al. (2021), data was analysed and interpreted in two stages, namely the assessment of the measurement model, and the assessment of the structural model.

## 4. Results

### *4.1. Descriptive statistics*

Table 2 provides details of the surveys with typical characteristics. The total number of SIEs who participated in this survey was 250, including: male (54%) and female (46%). The table illustrates that the age group of 36-40 years exhibited the highest proportion within the survey at 15%. Subsequently, the age groups of 31-35 years, 56-60 years, 51-55 years, and 26-30 years accounted for approximately 13%, 12%, 12%, and 12% of the survey respondents, respectively. In relation to nationality, 15% of the respondents hail from Europe, 14% are from China, and 13% each originate from Korea, Japan, and Britain. SIEs from North America constitute 12%, while those from Taiwan represent 9%. It was unexpected to find that 50% of the respondents possess over a year of experience in Vietnam, while the remaining respondents have resided in Vietnam for less than one year.

### *4.2. Measurement model*

When assessing the measurement model, construct reliability was evaluated based on composite reliability (CR) and convergent validity. According to Hair et al.'s (2021) guidelines, CR should be greater than 0.70. Table 3 demonstrates that all constructs have CR of more than 0.70. Next, convergent validity is achieved when items' loading and several average variance extracted (AVE) are greater than 0.70 and 0.50 respectively (Hair et al., 2021). Some AVE is less than 0.5 but their CRs higher than 0.6, the convergent validity of the construct is still tolerable (Fornell **& Larcker**, 1981; Lam, 2012). The convergent validity of the constructs is verified in Table 3.

In the final stage of measurement model analysis, Heterotrait- Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) criterion as suggested by Henseler et al. (2015) was used to evaluate discriminant validity among constructs. As presented in Table 4, the HTMT scores of all the constructs do not violate the threshold value of 0.85, thus confirming the presence of discriminant validity across the constructs of interest (see Table 4).

### *4.3. Higher-order construct (HOC)*

In the current study, political skill, perceived organisational support, cultural intelligence, cross-cultural adjustment, and job performance are conceptualized formatively. As discussed in previous section, in this study, political skill, were measured using four dimensions, namely networking ability, interpersonal influence, social astuteness, and apparent sincerity (Ferris et al. 2005, 2007). Similarly, Huang et al. (2022) considered perceived organisational support as three dimension's constructs, namely living, work, and emotional perceived organisational support. Ang et al. (2007) propounded a four-

dimensional model of cultural intelligence, including metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioural facets of cultural intelligence. Cross-cultural adjustment was assessed using two distinct dimensions: socio-cultural and psychological adjustments, as proposed by Ward and Kennedy (1993). Lastly, job performance is conceptualized as a construct encompassing two dimensions: time commitment and work intensity (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

The assessment of the HOC was performed according to the approach recommended by Cheah et al. (2019) and Sarstedt et al. (2019). Variance inflation factor (VIF) values (between 1.002 and 4.151) less than threshold score of 5 indicate that multicollinearity is not a concern in this path model (Diamantopoulos **&** Siguaw, 2006). Next, the significance and outer weights of the constructs further validate the data as all the dimensions or lower-level constructs are significant at 0.001 (Hair et al., 2021) (see Table 5).

### *4.4. Structural model*

After determining the goodness of data, the structural model assessment was conducted. First, the VIF was examined to cross-check the multicollinearity issue. Table 6 illustrates that VIF values vary from 1.007 to a maximum of 2.251, which is below the most adopted cut-off value of 3.33 (Diamantopoulos **&** Siguaw, 2006), denoting that multi-collinearity is not an issue.

#### *4.4.1. Direct relationships.*

Following the non-parametric guidelines, the hypotheses were assessed by bootstrapping with 10,000 sub-samples (see Table 6). The bootstrapping results show significant paths pertaining to political skill on cross-cultural adjustment ($\beta = 0.521$, $p < .001$), perceived organisational support on cross-cultural adjustment ($\beta=0.387$, $p < .001$), and cultural intelligence on cross-cultural adjustment ($\beta = 0.407$, $p < .001$); thus supporting hypotheses H2, H3 and H4. In other words, political skill, perceived organizational support, cultural intelligence have a positive impact on SIEs' cross-cultural adjustment. The confirmed H2 suggests that SIEs who possess strong political skill are more likely to adapt well to their new cultural environment. These results are consistent with earlier research by Kong et al. (2020); Jokinen (2010); Lvina et al. (2012), and Wang et al. (2019). The confirmed H3 supports the importance of perceived organisational support in the cross-cultural adjustment of SIEs, coming to the same conclusion as Li and Tan (2014), Suutari et al. (2018), and Selmer and Lauring (2011). These results indicate that organisations should provide support and resources to help SIEs adjust to expatriate life's cultural and psychological challenges. The confirmed H4 also supports the relationship between cultural intelligence and SIEs' cross-cultural adjustment, consistenting with the investigation of previous studies, including Van Dyne et al. (2012), Ang et al. (2007), and Chua et al. (2015). This suggests that SIEs with a high level of cultural intelligence are better equipped to navigate the cultural differences and challenges they encounter while living and working abroad.

The results also show that H1 which concern the effect of cross-cultural adjustment on job performance ($\beta = 0.932$, $p < .001$) is supported. This result supports the idea that when SIEs adjust well to a new culture, it positively influences their job performance. In other words, the better an SIE adapts to a foreign culture, the better they tend to perform in their job. This finding aligns with the research conclusions of prior studies, such as those

by Chua et al. (2015), Tsegaye et al. (2019), and Wu and Ang (2011).

The effect size ($f^2$) measures the contribution of any exogenous variable in the model. Table 6 also show $f^2$ of the relationships and the outcomes of hypothesis testing, with large effect sizes ($f^2$>0.35) for significant relationships (Cohen, 1988; Hair et al., 2021).

*4.4.2. Indirect relationships*

According to Hair et al. (2014), the mediating relationship among constructs was supported when the t-value was exceeded the benchmark of 1.65 at a significance level of 0.1, as well as the zero value being excluded from the confidence interval. Table 7 shows the results of comparing the direct and indirect effects between latent variables. Three paths; including political skill → cross cultural adjustment, perceived organizational support → cross cultural adjustment, cultural intelligence → cross cultural adjustment; had only direct effects. Meanwhile, political skill → job performance (β = 0.485), perceived organizational support → job performance (β = 0.361), cultural intelligence → job performance (β = 0.379) had only indirect effects without direct effects.

*4.4.3. Predictive capability evaluation*

One of the important parts in evaluating an SEM is testing the predictive accuracy and predictive relevance of the model. Predictive accuracy is tested using the coefficient of determination (R value) which presents the degree of variance explained in each endogenous construct (Hair et al., 2021). As explained by Hair et al. (2021), a value of $R^2$ ranging between 0 and 1with a higher value of $R^2$ indicated a higher level of predictive accuracy. Overall, $R^2$ of endogenous latent variables revealed that the proposed model explains 64.2% of the variance in cross cultural adjustment and 86.7% of the variance in job performance, establishing a satisfactory explanatory capacity of the model (see Table 6).

## 5. Conclusion

### *5.1. Theoretical contributions*

The results indicate that political skill, perceived organizational support, and cultural intelligence indirectly influence SIEs' job performance, moderated by cross-cultural adjustment. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, there was little evidence before this research attempt to measure SIEs' job performance in the Vietnamese context. By addressing this gap, the study has significant theoretical implications. Firstly, the study's findings will be considered an essential reference for future studies, both sectional and longitudinal, that seek to comprehend how SIEs perform their jobs in Vietnam. Specifically, the study validates the positive impact of various factors, such as political skill, perceived organisational support, and cultural intelligence, on the cross-cultural adjustment of SIEs. Additionally, the study explores the positive relationship between cross-cultural adjustment and SIEs' job performance.

### *5.2. Practical implications*

Practically, this study offers insights for organisations using SIEs can take several steps to improve SIEs' adjustment and performance. First, unlike OEs, SIEs may not receive pre-departure training; organisations should provide SIEs with adequate support and training when they start to work to help them adjust to the cultural and psychological demands of living and working in a new country. This could include language training, cross-cultural training and mentoring, and support for developing

coping strategies for living and working in a new environment. For example, Vietnamese organisations can provide Vietnamese language courses to expatriates to help them communicate more effectively with their colleagues and clients. This can help expatriates build stronger relationships and enhance their job performance. Vietnamese organisations also can provide support with housing, transportation, and other daily needs, as well as access to social networks and cultural events.

Second, organisations can foster a supportive organisational culture that values diversity and inclusion. This culture can help SIEs feel more accepted and supported in their new work environment, enhancing their social-cultural and psycho-cultural adjustment. Third, organisations can promote perceived organisational support by providing clear communication, supportive leadership, and opportunities for SIEs to participate in decision-making processes. By promoting perceived organisational support, organisations can help to create a positive work environment for SIEs, which can in turn promote their cross-cultural adjustment and job performance.

### *5.3. Research limitations and recommendation*

Firstly, the study focused exclusively on SIEs in Vietnam, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other cultural contexts or regions. Future research should investigate the factors that affect the job performance of SIEs in other cultural contexts or regions to determine the extent to which the findings are applicable in other contexts.

Secondly, future research should use objective measures or multiple sources of data to investigate the factors that affect SIEs' job performance. This could involve using performance metrics or ratings by supervisors, colleagues, or clients, in addition to self-reported measures.

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Table 1. *Measurement scales for constructs in the model*

| Construct | Sign | Items | Source |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Networking ability** | **NA1** | I spend a lot of time and effort at work networking with others. | *Ferris et al., 2005* |
| | **NA2** | I am good at building relationships with influential people at work. | |
| | **NA3** | I have developed a large network of colleagues and associates at work when I need assistance. | |
| | **NA4** | At work, I know a lot of important people and am well connected. | |
| | **NA5** | I spend a lot of time at work developing connections with others. | |
| | **NA6** | I am good at using my connections and network to make things happen at work. | |
| **Interpersonal influence** | **II1** | I am able to make most people feel comfortable and at ease around me. | *Ferris et al., 2005* |
| | **II2** | I am able to communicate easily and effectively with others. | |
| | **II3** | It is easy for me to develop good rapport with most people. | |
| | **II4** | I am good at getting people to like me.. | |
| **Social astuteness** | **SA1** | I understand people very well. | *Ferris et al., 2005* |
| | **SA2** | I am particularly good at sensing the motivations and hidden agendas of others. | |
| | **SA3** | I have good intuition or savvy about how to present myself to others. | |
| | **SA4** | I always seem to instinctively know the right things to say or do to influence others. | |
| | **SA5** | I pay close attention to people's facial expressions. | |
| **Apparent sincerity** | **AS1** | When communicating with others, I try to be genuine in what I say and do.. | *Ferris et al., 2005* |
| | **AS2** | It is important that people believe I am sincere in what I say and do. | |
| | **AS3** | I try to show a genuine interest in other people. | |
| **Living perceived organisational support** | **LPOS1** | The organisation is concerned with my diet in the host country. | *Lee et al. 2013* |
| | **LPOS2** | The organisation is concerned with my accommodation in the host country. | |
| | **LPOS3** | The organisation cares about my entertainment and recreational activities in the host country. | |
| **Work perceived organisational support** | **WPOS1** | The organisation has provided adequate help for my work in the host country so that I can adapt to the handling of equipment in overseas projects. | *Lee et al. 2013* |
| | **WPOS2** | The organisation has provided me with enough assistance in my work so that I can adapt to the new technologies utilised in overseas projects. | |
| | **WPOS3** | The organisation provides enough assistance for my work in the host country so that I can communicate with the staff of the overseas project and the host country. | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Emotional perceived organizational support** | **EPOS1** | Our organisation cares and helps me adapt to the host country. | *Lee et al. 2013* |
| | **EPOS2** | Our organisation is very concerned with me. | |
| | **EPOS3** | When I have problems in working and living abroad, the organisation will provide necessary assistance. | |
| **Meta-Cognitive cultural intelligence** | **MOG1** | I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I use when interacting with people with different cultural backgrounds. | *Ang et al. 2007* |
| | **MOG2** | I adjust my cultural knowledge when interacting with people from a culture that is unfamiliar to me. | |
| | **MOG3** | I am conscious of cultural differences when I interact with people of different cultures. | |
| | **MOG4** | I check the accuracy of my cultural knowledge when interacting with people from different cultures. | |
| **Cognitive cultural intelligence** | **COG1** | I know the legal and economic systems of other cultures. | *Ang et al. 2007* |
| | **COG2** | I know the rules (e.g. vocabulary, grammar) of other languages. | |
| | **COG3** | I know the cultural values and religious beliefs of other cultures. | |
| | **COG4** | I know the marriage systems of other cultures. | |
| | **COG5** | I know the arts and crafts of other cultures. | |
| | **COG6** | I know the non- verbal behaviours (gestures, facial expression, tone, accent, etc.) in other cultures. | |
| **Motivational cultural intelligence** | **MOT1** | I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures. | *Ang et al. 2007* |
| | **MOT2** | Confident that I can socialise with locals in culture that is unfamiliar to me. | |
| | **MOT3** | I am unable to deal with the stresses of adjusting to a culture that is new to me. | |
| | **MOT4** | I enjoy living in cultures that are unfamiliar to me. | |
| | **MOT5** | I am confident that I can get used to the shopping conditions in a different culture. | |
| **Behavioural cultural intelligence** | **BEH1** | Change my verbal behaviour (e.g. accent, tone etc.) when a cross- cultural interaction requires it. | *Ang et al. 2007* |
| | **BEH2** | I use pause and silence differently to suit different cross- cultural situations. | |
| | **BEH3** | Vary the rate of my speaking when a cross- cultural situation requires it. | |
| | **BEH4** | Change my non-verbal (e.g. gestures, facial expression, etc.) behaviour when a cross-cultural situation requires it. | |
| | **BEH5** | Alter my facial expressions when a cross-cultural interaction requires it. | |
| **Socio-cultural adjustment** | **SCA1** | I adjust myself to living conditions of Vietnam than home. | *Black & Stephens, 1989* |
| | **SCA2** | I adjust myself to the housing conditions in Vietnam than home. | |
| | **SCA3** | I adjust myself to the food in Vietnam than home. | |
| | **SCA4** | I adjust myself to shopping in Vietnam than home. | |
| | **SCA5** | I adjust myself to the cost of living in Vietnam than home. | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **SCA6** | I adjust myself to entertainment/recreation facilities and opportunities in Vietnam than home. | |
| | **SCA7** | I adjust myself to the health care facilities in Vietnam than home. | |
| | **SCA8** | I am unable to adjust myself to socialise with host people in Vietnam than home. | |
| | **SCA9** | I adjust myself to interact with host people on a day to day basis in Vietnam than home. | |
| | **SCA10** | I am unable to adjust myself to interact with local people outside of work in Vietnam than home | |
| | **SCA11** | I adjust myself to speak with host people in Vietnam than home. | |
| | **SCA12** | I adjust myself to specific job responsibilities in Vietnam, compared to your home country. | |
| | **SCA13** | I adjust myself to the performance standards and expectations at work in Vietnam, compared to your home country. | |
| | **SCA14** | I adjust myself to supervisory responsibilities in Vietnam, compared to your home country. | |
| **Psychological adjustment** | **PCA1** | I have recently felt I couldn't overcome my difficulties. | *Goldberg, 1972* |
| | **PCA2** | I have recently felt capable of making decisions about things. | |
| | **PCA3** | I have recently been feeling unhappy and repressed. | |
| | **PCA4** | I have recently felt that I am playing a useful part in my organisation. | |
| | **PCA5** | I have recently been able to concentrate on my goal. | |
| | **PCA6** | I have recently lost much sleep over worry in Vietnam. | |
| | **PCA7** | I have recently been thinking of myself as a worthless person. | |
| | **PCA8** | I have recently been reasonably happy, all things considered. | |
| | **PCA9** | I have recently been able to enjoy my normal day-to-day activities. | |
| | **PCA10** | I have recently been able to solve my problems in Vietnam. | |
| | **PCA11** | I have recently felt constantly under strain. | |
| **Time commitment** | **TC1** | Others people know me when I spend additional time at work over my contract hours. | *Schaufeli et al., 2002* |
| | **TC2** | My colleagues know I'm in the office early and always leave late. | |
| | **TC3** | Among my peers, I'm always the first to arrive and the last to leave. | |
| | **TC4** | Few of my peers put in more hours weekly than I do. | |
| | **TC5** | I put in more hours throughout the year than most of my colleagues do. | |
| **Work intensity** | **WI1** | When there's a job to be done, I devote all my energy to getting it done. | *Schaufeli et al., 2002* |
| | **WI2** | When I work, I do it with intensity. | |
| | **WI3** | I work at my full capacity in all of my job duties. | |
| | **WI4** | I strive as hard as I can to be successful in my work. | |
| | **WI5** | When I work, I really exert myself to the fullest. | |

Table 2. *Demographic information of participants*

| Group | Option | Frequency (N=250) | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 136 | 54 |
| | Female | 114 | 46 |
| Age | 20-25 | 26 | 10 |
| | 26-30 | 30 | 12 |
| | 31-35 | 32 | 13 |
| | 36-40 | 37 | 15 |
| | 41-45 | 22 | 9 |
| | 46-50 | 23 | 9 |
| | 51-55 | 30 | 12 |
| | 56-60 | 31 | 12 |
| | >60 | 19 | 8 |
| Marriage | Single | 88 | 35 |
| | Married | 82 | 33 |
| | Others | 80 | 32 |
| Nationality | Chinese | 33 | 13 |
| | Korean | 33 | 13 |
| | Taiwanese | 22 | 9 |
| | Japanese | 34 | 14 |
| | European | 37 | 15 |
| | North American | 30 | 12 |
| | The British | 33 | 13 |
| | Others | 28 | 11 |
| Vietnam stay | 1 year | 125 | 50 |
| | More than 1 year | 125 | 50 |

Table 3. *Evaluation of measurement model*

| Constructs/Component | | Outer Loadings | Cronbac | CR | AVE | rhoA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Networking ability** | NA1 | 0.712 | 0.809 | 0.862 | 0.51 | 0.822 |
| | NA2 | 0.702 | | | | |
| | NA3 | 0.69 | | | | |
| | NA4 | 0.779 | | | | |
| | NA5 | 0.665 | | | | |
| | NA6 | 0.732 | | | | |
| **Interpersonal influence** | II1 | 0.719 | 0.743 | 0.837 | 0.563 | 0.755 |
| | II2 | 0.793 | | | | |
| | II3 | 0.738 | | | | |
| | II4 | 0.748 | | | | |
| **Social astuteness** | SA1 | 0.777 | 0.754 | 0.829 | 0.494 | 0.778 |
| | SA2 | 0.583 | | | | |
| | SA3 | 0.704 | | | | |
| | SA4 | 0.719 | | | | |
| | SA5 | 0.716 | | | | |
| **Apparent sincerity** | AS1 | 0.831 | 0.603 | 0.787 | 0.553 | 0.634 |
| | AS2 | 0.71 | | | | |
| | AS3 | 0.681 | | | | |
| **Living perceived organisational support** | LPOS1 | 0.785 | 0.618 | 0.795 | 0.564 | 0.622 |
| | LPOS2 | 0.746 | | | | |
| | LPOS3 | 0.722 | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Work perceived organisational support** | WPOS1 | 0.625 | 0.616 | 0.767 | 0.531 | 0.845 |
| | WPOS2 | 0.621 | | | | |
| | WPOS3 | 0.904 | | | | |
| **Emotional perceived organisational support** | EPOS1 | 0.701 | 0.642 | 0.8 | 0.573 | 0.708 |
| | EPOS2 | 0.853 | | | | |
| | EPOS3 | 0.708 | | | | |
| **Meta-cognitive cultural intelligence** | CQ_MOC1 | 0.677 | 0.693 | 0.81 | 0.516 | 0.698 |
| | CQ_MOC2 | 0.719 | | | | |
| | CQ_MOC3 | 0.733 | | | | |
| | CQ_MOC4 | 0.742 | | | | |
| **Cognitive cultural intelligence** | CQ_COG1 | 0.691 | 0.793 | 0.851 | 0.488 | 0.796 |
| | CQ_COG2 | 0.718 | | | | |
| | CQ_COG3 | 0.732 | | | | |
| | CQ_COG4 | 0.694 | | | | |
| | CQ_COG5 | 0.695 | | | | |
| | CQ_COG6 | 0.658 | | | | |
| **Motivational cultural intelligence** | CQ_MOT1 | 0.583 | 0.731 | 0.815 | 0.472 | 0.763 |
| | CQ_MOT2 | 0.761 | | | | |
| | CQ_MOT3 | 0.569 | | | | |
| | CQ_MOT4 | 0.727 | | | | |
| | CQ_MOT5 | 0.767 | | | | |
| **Behavioural cultural intelligence** | CQ_BEH1 | 0.728 | 0.713 | 0.811 | 0.464 | 0.723 |
| | CQ_BEH2 | 0.699 | | | | |
| | CQ_BEH3 | 0.578 | | | | |
| | CQ_BEH4 | 0.683 | | | | |
| | CQ_BEH5 | 0.707 | | | | |
| **Social-cultural adjustment** | SCA1 | 0.76 | 0.94 | 0.947 | 0.563 | 0.941 |
| | SCA2 | 0.756 | | | | |
| | SCA3 | 0.803 | | | | |
| | SCA4 | 0.8 | | | | |
| | SCA5 | 0.805 | | | | |
| | SCA6 | 0.766 | | | | |
| | SCA7 | 0.779 | | | | |
| | SCA8 | 0.737 | | | | |
| | SCA9 | 0.717 | | | | |
| | SCA10 | 0.719 | | | | |
| | SCA11 | 0.701 | | | | |
| | SCA12 | 0.723 | | | | |
| | SCA13 | 0.71 | | | | |
| | SCA14 | 0.72 | | | | |
| **Psycho-cultural adjustment** | PCA1 | 0.844 | 0.962 | 0.966 | 0.724 | 0.962 |
| | PCA2 | 0.854 | | | | |
| | PCA3 | 0.848 | | | | |
| | PCA4 | 0.859 | | | | |
| | PCA5 | 0.867 | | | | |
| | PCA6 | 0.852 | | | | |
| | PCA7 | 0.834 | | | | |
| | PCA8 | 0.834 | | | | |
| | PCA9 | 0.857 | | | | |
| | PCA10 | 0.865 | | | | |
| | PCA11 | 0.845 | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Time commitment** | TIC1 | 0.94 | 0.968 | 0.975 | 0.886 | 0.968 |
| | TIC2 | 0.94 | | | | |
| | TIC3 | 0.942 | | | | |
| | TIC4 | 0.937 | | | | |
| | TIC5 | 0.947 | | | | |
| **Work intensity** | WOC1 | 0.942 | 0.97 | 0.976 | 0.892 | 0.97 |
| | WOC2 | 0.938 | | | | |
| | WOC3 | 0.954 | | | | |
| | WOC4 | 0.949 | | | | |
| | WOC5 | 0.939 | | | | |

Table 4. *Assessment of Discriminant Validity using the HTMT Criterion Note: HTMT < 0.85*

| | NA | II | SA | AS | LPOS | WPOS | EPOS | CQ_MOC | CQ_COG | CQ_MOT | CQ_BEH | SCA | PCA | TIC | WOC |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NA | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| II | 0.157 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SA | 0.165 | 0.116 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| AS | 0.098 | 0.172 | 0.115 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| LPOS | 0.124 | 0.095 | 0.155 | 0.204 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| WPOS | 0.169 | 0.12 | 0.079 | 0.052 | 0.115 | | | | | | | | | | |
| EPOS | 0.142 | 0.138 | 0.101 | 0.141 | 0.164 | 0.101 | | | | | | | | | |
| CQ_MOC | 0.153 | 0.105 | 0.161 | 0.123 | 0.161 | 0.088 | 0.142 | | | | | | | | |
| CQ_COG | 0.155 | 0.098 | 0.094 | 0.147 | 0.182 | 0.162 | 0.103 | 0.1 | | | | | | | |
| CQ_MOT | 0.124 | 0.107 | 0.208 | 0.11 | 0.15 | 0.144 | 0.123 | 0.183 | 0.096 | | | | | | |
| CQ_BEH | 0.106 | 0.139 | 0.112 | 0.114 | 0.206 | 0.162 | 0.138 | 0.123 | 0.169 | 0.16 | | | | | |
| SCA | 0.237 | 0.375 | 0.312 | 0.271 | 0.477 | 0.177 | 0.266 | 0.313 | 0.234 | 0.223 | 0.227 | | | | |
| PCA | 0.283 | 0.357 | 0.268 | 0.269 | 0.358 | 0.242 | 0.244 | 0.236 | 0.195 | 0.193 | 0.183 | 0.786 | | | |
| TIC | 0.211 | 0.306 | 0.286 | 0.317 | 0.447 | 0.215 | 0.222 | 0.337 | 0.191 | 0.203 | 0.119 | 0.809 | 0.839 | | |
| WOI | 0.261 | 0.318 | 0.292 | 0.324 | 0.415 | 0.201 | 0.262 | 0.288 | 0.17 | 0.178 | 0.205 | 0.809 | 0.84 | 0.849 | |

Table 5. *Assessment of higher-order construct (HOC)*

| HOC | Dimensions for LOC | Outer Weights | Outer VIF | t-value | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Political Skill | Networking Ability -> Political Skill | 0.429 | 1.025 | 4.76 | <0.001 |
| | Interpersonal Influence -> Political Skill | 0.586 | 1.01 | 7.219 | <0.001 |
| | Social Astuteness -> Political Skill | 0.578 | 1.016 | 6.496 | <0.001 |
| | Apparent Sincerity -> Political Skill | 0.364 | 1.005 | 3.839 | <0.001 |
| Perceived Organizational Support | Living Perceived Organizational Support -> Perceived Organizational Support | 0.775 | 1.004 | 9.237 | <0.001 |
| | Work Perceived Organizational Support -> Perceived Organizational Support | 0.378 | 1.002 | 3.308 | <0.001 |
| | Emotional Perceived Organizational Support -> Perceived Organizational Support | 0.52 | 1.002 | 5.246 | <0.001 |
| Cultural Intelligence | Meta-cognitive Cultural Intelligence -> Cultural Intelligence | 0.647 | 1.008 | 6.491 | <0.001 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Cognitive Cultural Intelligence -> Cultural Intelligence | 0.476 | 1.013 | 4.971 | <0.001 |
| | Motivational Cultural Intelligence -> Cultural Intelligence | 0.506 | 1.005 | 5.175 | <0.001 |
| | Behavioural Cultural Intelligence -> Cultural Intelligence | 0.386 | 1.01 | 3.559 | <0.001 |
| Cross Cultural Adjustment | Social - Cultural Adjustment -> Cross Cultural Adjustment | 0.68 | 2.279 | 16.892 | <0.001 |
| | Psycho - Cultural Adjustment -> Cross Cultural Adjustment | 0.384 | 2.279 | 8.813 | <0.001 |
| Job Performance | Time Commitment -> Job Performance | 0.511 | 4.151 | 12.325 | <0.001 |
| | Work Intensity -> Job Performance | 0.523 | 4.151 | 12.66 | <0.001 |

Table 6. *Assessment of structural model with bootstrapping procedure*

| Direct paths | Path coefficient | VIF | $f^2$ | t-value | p-value | 97.5% confidence intervals | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Political Skill -> Cross Cultural Adjustment | 0.521 | 1.007 | 0.757 | 14.666 | <0.001 | 0.435 | 0.574 |
| Perceived Organizational Support -> Cross Cultural Adjustment | 0.387 | 1.016 | 0.417 | 11.012 | <0.001 | 0.304 | 0.442 |
| Cultural Intelligence -> Cross Cultural Adjustment | 0.407 | 1.01 | 0.463 | 10.489 | <0.001 | 0.323 | 0.471 |
| Cross Cultural Adjustment -> Job Performance | 0.932 | 2.251 | 0.656 | 125.29 | <0.001 | 0.918 | 0.946 |
| | $R^2$ | | | | | | |
| Cross Cultural Adjustment | 0.642 | | | | | | |
| Job Performance | 0.867 | | | | | | |

Table 7. *Assessment of mediating effect*

| Indirect paths | Path coefficient | t-value | p-value | 97.5% confidence intervals | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Political Skill -> Job Performance | 0.485 | 14.703 | <0.001 | 0.403 | 0.535 |
| Perceived Organizational Support -> Job Performance | 0.361 | 11.034 | <0.001 | 0.282 | 0.411 |
| Cultural Intelligence -> Job Performance | 0.379 | 10.428 | <0.001 | 0.301 | 0.442 |