

Cross-Cultural Adjustment and Performance of Expatriate NGO Project Workers in Uganda

Stephen Mutinyu¹ & Joseph Michael Okwadi Tukei²

¹Hallford University School of Business

²Department of Economics and Management, Universal Technology and Management University

ARTICLE INFORMATION	ABSTRACT
Article history: Published: October 2026 Keywords: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence Expatriate Performance Work Experience Multinational Corporations	International non-governmental organizations (INGOs) rely on expatriate professionals to implement donor-funded development projects in developing countries. Although Uganda hosts numerous INGOs implementing humanitarian and development interventions, expatriates frequently encounter cultural differences that influence their effectiveness. Despite growing scholarly attention to expatriate management, empirical evidence on how different dimensions of cross-cultural adjustment influence expatriate performance in Uganda's NGO sector remains limited. This study examined the relationship between cross-cultural adjustment and expatriate project worker performance in Uganda. A quantitative cross-sectional survey design was adopted. Data were collected from 320 expatriate employees working in 42 international NGOs implementing projects across Uganda. Cross-cultural adjustment was measured using general adjustment, interaction adjustment, and work adjustment. Expatriate performance was assessed through project delivery, work quality, stakeholder relations, innovation, and achievement of assigned objectives. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple linear regression. Findings revealed that all three dimensions of cross-cultural adjustment significantly and positively influenced expatriate performance. Work adjustment emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = .418$, $p < .001$), followed by interaction adjustment ($\beta = .284$, $p < .001$) and general adjustment ($\beta = .176$, $p = .002$). Collectively, the dimensions explained 58.3% of the variation in expatriate performance (Adjusted $R^2 = .583$). The study extends expatriate adjustment literature by demonstrating the independent contributions of these dimensions within Uganda's international NGO sector. It recommends that INGOs strengthen pre-deployment cultural orientation, provide continuous intercultural coaching, establish local mentorship arrangements, and enhance organizational support systems to facilitate expatriate adjustment and improve performance in multicultural development project environments.

1. Introduction

International non-governmental organizations (INGOs) increasingly operate across culturally diverse environments where expatriate professionals play central roles in implementing donor-funded development programmes, transferring expertise, strengthening local capacity, and coordinating complex field operations across multiple stakeholders and institutional settings (Setti et al., 2020; Dijkzeul, 2021). Uganda remains a major site of international development and humanitarian activity because of its long-standing engagement with aid-funded projects, dense NGO presence, localization partnerships in northern Uganda, refugee- and post-conflict-related programming, and continuing donor-linked organizational activity even amid uneven effectiveness and eventual donor withdrawal in some regions (Dijkzeul, 2021; Kaijabwango, 2025a, 2025b; Komujuni, 2025).

Although expatriates are often selected for strong technical competence, evidence across expatriation research shows that assignment success depends not only on expertise but also on the ability to adjust to the host environment socially, psychologically, and organizationally (Black et al., 1991; Lo & Nguyen, 2023; Setti et al., 2020). Poor adjustment has been associated with assignment failure, high organizational costs, damaged local relationships, psychological strain, lower job performance, and stronger turnover intentions, making expatriate adjustment a persistent concern in international management research (Andreason, 2008; Davies et al., 2019; Strubler et al., 2011). This concern is especially relevant in culturally complex settings, where language, hierarchy, decision-making norms, and host-national responses can shape how effectively expatriates function at work and in the broader community (Mahrouqi, 2018; Rao-Nicholson et al., 2020).

Cross-cultural adjustment is therefore one of the most widely studied determinants of expatriate effectiveness and generally refers to the degree of psychological comfort and familiarity an individual develops while living and working in a foreign cultural environment (Setti et al., 2020; Chen, 2019). Foundational work conceptualizes cross-cultural adjustment as a multidimensional construct comprising general adjustment, interaction adjustment, and work adjustment (Andreason, 2008; Black et al., 1991; Shaffer et al., 1999). General adjustment concerns adaptation to living conditions such as food, housing, healthcare, transport, and recreation, which can shape emotional stability and readiness for work (Chen, 2019). Interaction adjustment reflects comfort in relating to host-country nationals, communicating across cultural boundaries, and building workable social ties, while work adjustment concerns

adaptation to job demands, supervisory relations, workplace norms, and organizational expectations in the host setting (Andreason, 2008; Mahrouqi, 2018; Shaffer et al., 1999).

Within INGOs operating in Uganda, these dimensions are likely to matter because expatriate staff work in multicultural environments that require continuous coordination with Ugandan professionals, community actors, government agencies, religious institutions, donors, and implementing partners, often under conditions that also demand trust-building, capacity development, and locally responsive management (Dijkzeul, 2021). Evidence from expatriate studies further suggests that better cross-cultural adjustment supports stronger performance directly and indirectly through lower work stress, higher work adaptation, higher job involvement, and lower turnover intentions (Abdalla et al., 2024; Davies et al., 2019; Lee, 2021; Lo & Nguyen, 2023). Work adjustment appears especially important for performance, although its development is shaped by factors such as cultural intelligence, resilience, inclusion climate, prior expatriate experience, host-country language fluency, and the cultural distance or novelty of the assignment (Davies et al., 2019; Setti et al., 2020; Shaffer et al., 1999).

Despite substantial organizational investment in expatriate deployment, many aid and development programmes continue to face uneven implementation and effectiveness, and research on expatriate adjustment has focused far more on multinational corporations than on the NGO and humanitarian sectors, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa (Kaijabwango, 2025a, 2025b; Rao-Nicholson et al., 2020). Studies in Uganda also show that aid projects can be ineffective or inefficient and that weak sustainability or exit planning can complicate organizational outcomes, highlighting why expatriate performance in this context deserves closer attention alongside broader institutional challenges (Kaijabwango, 2025a, 2025b; Komujuni, 2025). Consequently, investigating how general, interaction, and work adjustment influence the performance of expatriate NGO project workers in Uganda addresses an important empirical gap and extends expatriation research into a context marked by cultural diversity, localization pressures, and development-sector complexity (Black et al., 1991; Dijkzeul, 2021; Mahrouqi, 2018).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Foundation

This study is anchored in Black, Mendenhall, and Oddou's Cross-Cultural Adjustment Theory, which was developed to provide a stronger theoretical framework for understanding international adjustment and expatriate effectiveness in foreign assignments (Black et al., 1991; Black & Mendenhall, 1991). The theory argues that expatriate success depends on an individual's ability to adjust both psychologically and behaviorally to a new cultural environment as they encounter unfamiliar social norms, workplace systems, and host-country expectations (Black et al., 1991; Strubler et al., 2011). Adjustment is not treated as a single event, but as a progressive process that develops as expatriates learn, interact, and become more familiar with the host environment over time (Black & Mendenhall, 1991; Caldwell et al., 2023).

A central contribution of the theory is its view of cross-cultural adjustment as a multidimensional construct. Black, Mendenhall, and Oddou distinguished three complementary dimensions of expatriate adjustment: general adjustment, interaction adjustment, and work adjustment (Black et al., 1991; Shaffer et al., 1999). General adjustment refers to adaptation to the host country's living environment, including everyday conditions such as food, housing, transportation, climate, and broader living arrangements. Interaction adjustment concerns the expatriate's ability to build comfortable and effective interpersonal relationships with host-country nationals and to communicate appropriately within the new social setting. Work adjustment refers to adaptation to job roles, organizational practices, supervisory expectations, and workplace culture in the host country (Shaffer et al., 1999; Strubler et al., 2011). The relevance of these dimensions has been consistently supported in later research. Shaffer et al. (1999) empirically confirmed the multidimensionality of adjustment and found support for the expanded Black et al. model across expatriates from multiple countries and assignment contexts. A later meta-analysis synthesizing findings from 8,085 expatriates across 63 studies also strongly supported the central relationships proposed in the original model and highlighted the critical and complex role of adjustment in expatriate outcomes (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2004). More recent scholarship further shows that Black et al.'s framework remains the dominant point of reference in international adjustment research, although contemporary scholars have also argued for revisions that reflect changing expatriate forms and experiences (Caldwell et al., 2023).

The theory further proposes that successful adjustment has important personal and organizational consequences. As expatriates become more comfortable in the host environment, uncertainty is reduced and stress tends to decline, enabling more effective functioning in both social and work domains (Chen, 2019; Black et al., 1991). Empirical evidence shows that stronger cross-cultural adjustment is associated with lower work stress and higher job involvement, while stronger cross-cultural competence tends to support better host-country adaptation and higher job performance (Chen, 2019). In this way, the theory provides a strong basis for explaining why expatriates who adjust successfully are more likely to demonstrate commitment, effectiveness, and sustained performance during international assignments (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2004; Strubler et al., 2011).

2.2 General Adjustment and Expatriate Performance

The literature generally supports a positive relationship between general adjustment and expatriate performance, and here it is rewritten as one continuous flow without subheadings. General adjustment refers to comfort with everyday life in the host country, including food, housing, weather, transportation, and related living conditions (Han et al., 2022; Harari et al., 2018). This dimension matters because ineffective expatriate performance and premature return are linked more to failure to adjust to the foreign environment than to lack of technical competence (Andreason, 2003).

Direct evidence for the hypothesis comes from Malaysia, where general adjustment was positively significant for task performance among expatriates, even though the same study found a more complex pattern for interaction adjustment (Zakariya et al., 2019). Broader studies also show that cross-cultural adjustment positively affects subsequent work performance, expatriate effectiveness, and both task and contextual performance (Lo & Nguyen, 2023; Salgado & Bastida, 2017; Malek & Budhwar, 2013). Meta-analytic evidence strengthens that interpretation by showing that adjustment mediates links between personality and both job performance

and turnover intentions, indicating that adjustment is not just correlated with outcomes but functions as a pathway to them (Harari et al., 2018; Bhatti et al., 2013).

The main mechanism is psychological and resource-based. Poor adjustment acts as an impediment to effective performance because strain and reduced time, effort, and attention interfere with work functioning (Harari et al., 2018). Well-adjusted expatriates tend to have better reserves of personal resources for their assignments, which helps explain why stronger adjustment is associated with stronger performance (Liao et al., 2021). Consistent with that pathway, expatriates who adapt better to the host environment report lower work stress and higher job involvement, and high-tech employees who adapt to foreign customs and cultures are more likely to alleviate stress and participate more fully in work (Chen, 2019).

The wider literature also shows that general adjustment does not emerge in isolation. Personality explains a meaningful share of expatriate adjustment, accounting for 20% of variance in one meta-analysis, with extraversion, emotional stability, and openness standing out as important predictors (Harari et al., 2018). A larger meta-analysis suggests that cultural empathy, cultural intelligence, and emotional intelligence can exert even stronger influence on adjustment than the Big Five alone (Han et al., 2022). Primary studies are consistent with this pattern, showing that cultural intelligence directly improves general, interaction, and work adjustment and that these improved adjustments then enhance task and contextual performance (Malek & Budhwar, 2013; Setti et al., 2020).

Context also shapes how strongly adjustment translates into performance. Cultural distance and cross-cultural adjustment were immediate predictors of expatriate effectiveness in Spanish expatriate managers (Salgado & Bastida, 2017). The effect of motivational cultural intelligence on work adjustment was stronger when cultural distance was low, when expatriates were early in the assignment, and when they had less prior international experience (Setti et al., 2020). Other evidence shows that sociocultural conditions such as cultural distance, cultural tightness, and host-country gender inequality moderate some adjustment relationships, which suggests that host settings differ in how demanding they are for adaptation (Han et al., 2022). Longitudinal evidence also indicates that work adjustment changes over time and that those changes predict assignment satisfaction and premature return intentions above average adjustment levels alone (Firth et al., 2014).

Non-work and social conditions are especially relevant for a general-adjustment argument. Reviews of cross-cultural adaptation conclude that non-work factors should not be ignored because they still affect organizational goals through expatriate adjustment (Bierwaczzonek & Waldzus, 2016). Support from organizations, host-country nationals, and spouses also matters: perceived organizational support improves work adjustment, host-country national support improves work adjustment and indirectly task performance, and spousal support can directly support task performance (Chan et al., 2021). More recent reviews likewise identify language, identity integration, cultural intelligence, and family relations as key influences on adaptation and belonging abroad, with family dynamics able to either support or hinder successful adaptation (Murali et al., 2025). Evidence from adjacent expatriate-orientation research also suggests that language proficiency, lower perceived cultural distance, and stronger host orientation support better adjustment, while connections with other expatriates can also help adaptation in unfamiliar settings (Taušová et al., 2019). Recent sector-specific studies reinforce the same conclusion. Among expatriate construction professionals, cross-cultural adjustment and expatriate management practices had a stronger motivational impact on performance than the negative effects of stressors and job burnout (Abdalla et al., 2024). A 2024 review similarly identifies cultural adaptation, social integration, and support networks as major contributors to expatriate job performance and concludes that comprehensive cross-cultural training and ongoing organizational support are linked with higher satisfaction, commitment, and performance (Anwei et al., 2024). One caveat is that not every intervention works consistently, since one 2023 study found that training did not significantly influence cross-cultural adjustment or work performance despite confirming the adjustment–performance link itself (Lo & Nguyen, 2023). Accordingly, the study hypothesized that:

H1: General adjustment significantly and positively influences expatriate performance.

2.3 Interaction Adjustment and Expatriate Performance

The literature generally supports a positive relationship between interaction adjustment and expatriate performance, although the evidence is more mixed than for overall cross-cultural adjustment. Interaction adjustment refers to the expatriate's comfort in communicating and socializing with host-country nationals (Han et al., 2022; Andreason, 2003). Across the broader adjustment literature, better adjustment tends to improve performance, but interaction-specific effects vary by outcome and context (Malek & Budhwar, 2013; Harari et al., 2018).

Interaction adjustment matters because expatriate assignments depend heavily on relationships with host-country nationals, who provide information, feedback, and social support that help expatriates learn local norms and expectations (Bayraktar, 2019; Harari et al., 2018). Interacting with host-country nationals facilitates adjustment by helping expatriates observe appropriate behavior, seek advice, and replace old interpretive frames with culturally appropriate ones (Bayraktar, 2019; Caligiuri, 2017). In practice, host nationals often function as socializing agents and on-site trainers, expanding the expatriate's comfort zone and accelerating learning in the host culture (Bayraktar, 2019).

Communication competence is one of the clearest mechanisms linking interaction adjustment to effective functioning abroad. Business interactions between expatriates and host employees often fail because of cultural differences and lack of competence for handling those differences (Liao et al., 2021). Expatriates with stronger communication skills and cultural knowledge are more confident in interacting with host employees and handling job assignments (Liao et al., 2021). Host-language competence, host-culture knowledge, adaptation motivation, and behavioral competence are each associated with better psychological health and lower alienation in expatriates, which likely supports sustained work functioning (Kim & Lee, 2022).

The performance pathway also appears to run through knowledge sharing, trust, and reduced interpersonal friction. In dyadic evidence from 107 expatriate-HCN pairs across multiple Asian locations, receivers' interaction anxiety and uncertainty mediated the relationship between relationship-building behaviors and successful knowledge transfer (Hsu et al., 2024). When expatriates were the senders, communication patience strengthened this process by reducing both anxiety and uncertainty during cross-cultural

exchange (Hsu et al., 2024). Related evidence shows that communication with local people reduces uncertainty, decreases suspicion, and helps avoid misunderstandings caused by cultural differences (Chen, 2019).

Several studies connect these interaction processes to performance more directly. Host-country national support improves expatriates' work adjustment, and that improvement enhances task performance (Chan et al., 2021). Cross-cultural adjustment also positively predicts later work performance in multinational samples, and improved general, interaction, and work adjustments can enhance both task and contextual performance (Lo & Nguyen, 2023; Malek & Budhwar, 2013). In development-oriented settings, this supports the argument that strong interaction adjustment should improve teamwork, stakeholder participation, and local project ownership because those outcomes depend on repeated, low-friction engagement with host actors (Bano & Liu, 2025).

There are, however, important caveats. One Malaysia study found that interaction adjustment was negatively related to task performance but positively related to contextual performance, showing that the effect depends on which performance dimension is measured (Zakariya et al., 2019). A mixed-methods study in China reported a similar paradox: stronger network ties with host-country national colleagues were positively associated with performance but negatively associated with adjustment (Bruning et al., 2012). These findings suggest that intensive local interaction can sometimes consume time, blur work-home boundaries, or create social strain even while improving collaboration and effectiveness.

The antecedents of strong interaction adjustment are also fairly consistent across the literature. Extraversion facilitates comfort with host-national interactions and helps expatriates access information, friendship, and emotional support (Harari et al., 2018). Meta-analytic evidence further suggests that cultural empathy, cultural intelligence, and emotional intelligence are especially influential predictors of adjustment outcomes (Han et al., 2022). Primary studies align with this pattern by showing that cultural intelligence improves adjustment and performance, and that organizations can support this process through social support, mentoring, and structured expatriate–host interaction mechanisms (Setti et al., 2020).

Overall, the literature supports the view that interaction adjustment is an important contributor to expatriate performance, especially where success depends on collaboration with host-country nationals, knowledge exchange, and trust-based relationships. The strongest conclusion is that better interaction adjustment tends to improve contextual and relational performance, while its relationship with narrow task performance is more mixed and appears sensitive to context, performance definition, and the demands of local relationship building (Zakariya et al., 2019; Bruning et al., 2012; Malek & Budhwar, 2013). Therefore:

H2: Interaction adjustment significantly and positively influences expatriate performance.

2.4 Work Adjustment and Expatriate Performance

Work adjustment appears to be the most consistent adjustment dimension in predicting expatriate performance, because it captures how comfortably expatriates adapt to job duties, work roles, performance standards, supervisory relationships, and workplace values in the host setting (Sokro et al., 2021; Setti et al., 2020). Across the literature, ineffective expatriate outcomes are linked less to weak technical competence than to difficulty adjusting to the foreign environment, which makes work adjustment especially consequential for assignment success (Andreason, 2003; Aycan, 1997).

Expatriates who adjust well at work tend to perform better on international assignments (Setti et al., 2020; Lo & Nguyen, 2023). Work adjustment also appears to support assignment completion, since studies link it to both task performance and successful completion of overseas work (Singh et al., 2022; Sokro et al., 2021). In construction expatriates, cross-cultural adjustment and expatriate management practices had a stronger motivational effect on performance than stressors and burnout did (Abdalla et al., 2024).

A consistent explanation is that work adjustment reduces strain and frees resources for performance. When expatriates adapt successfully to the work domain, they report lower stress and have more personal resources available for job duties (Setti et al., 2020; Chen, 2019). Poor adjustment, by contrast, is associated with negative emotions, psychological strain, and reduced time, effort, and attention for task execution (Singh et al., 2022; Harari et al., 2018).

Role clarity is one of the clearest pathways through which work adjustment improves performance. In self-initiated expatriates, role clarity mediated the effect of perceived organizational support on work adjustment, and work adjustment then mediated the effect of role clarity on task performance and organizational citizenship behavior (Singh et al., 2022). A constructive supervisor and coworker feedback environment also improved adjustment through role clarity, while supervisor feedback was indirectly linked to better job performance and lower intent to leave (Armon et al., 2023).

Organizational support is another recurring predictor. Perceived organizational support relates positively to expatriate adjustment, assignment completion, and job satisfaction, with adjustment partially mediating those links (Sokro et al., 2021). Related evidence shows that organizational support is a significant antecedent of cross-cultural adjustment and reduces work-related stress while improving innovation and well-being (Giorgi et al., 2020). Reviews also identify cross-cultural and language training as common organizational practices with generally positive effects on adjustment and performance, although the intervention evidence is not uniform (Sousa et al., 2017).

Support from people in the host environment matters as well. Host-country national support improves work adjustment, and that improvement enhances task performance (Chan et al., 2021). More broadly, social identity and network research suggests that expatriate adjustment depends partly on how host-country nationals position expatriates as in-group or out-group members, which can shape how smoothly they integrate into workplace relationships (Guo et al., 2021).

Individual resources also shape work adjustment. Resilience is positively related to work adjustment, and that effect is stronger in inclusive organizational climates; work adjustment then mediates the link between resilience and turnover intentions (Davies et al., 2019). Longitudinal evidence further shows that work adjustment is dynamic rather than fixed, and changes in adjustment over the first months of an assignment predict assignment satisfaction and premature return intentions beyond average adjustment levels alone (Firth et al., 2014).

The antecedents of work adjustment are broader than personality alone. A meta-analysis found that personality explained 20% of the variance in expatriate adjustment, with extraversion, emotional stability, and openness as notable predictors (Harari et al., 2018). A larger meta-analysis found that cultural empathy, cultural intelligence, and emotional intelligence appear to exert even stronger

influence on adjustment outcomes than the Big Five alone, and some of those relationships are moderated by cultural distance and other sociocultural features of the host country (Han et al., 2022). This aligns with evidence that the four components of cultural intelligence are directly and indirectly associated with performance through work adjustment (Setti et al., 2020).

Some findings add nuance. Training does not always improve adjustment or performance: one 2023 multi-source study found no significant effect of training despite confirming that cross-cultural adjustment itself positively affected subsequent work performance (Lo & Nguyen, 2023). Interaction-heavy relationships can also produce mixed outcomes in other parts of the adjustment literature, which suggests that not every support mechanism translates cleanly into work performance across contexts (Guo et al., 2021; Rafiq et al., 2019).

Overall, the literature supports a positive relationship between work adjustment and expatriate performance. The strongest evidence suggests that expatriates perform better when they understand their roles, align with host-country work expectations, receive organizational and host-country support, and experience lower stress in the workplace (Singh et al., 2022; Abdalla et al., 2024; Armon et al., 2023). Consequently: H3: Work adjustment significantly and positively influences expatriate performance.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to examine the influence of cross-cultural adjustment on the performance of expatriate project workers employed by international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) in Uganda. A quantitative approach was considered appropriate because it facilitates the objective measurement of variables and the statistical testing of relationships among constructs using inferential techniques. The cross-sectional survey design enabled data to be collected from respondents at a single point in time, providing a snapshot of expatriates' adjustment experiences and perceived job performance. This design is widely recommended for studies that seek to examine associations between variables efficiently while minimizing cost and time requirements (Saunders et al., 2019). Furthermore, cross-sectional surveys are suitable for quantitative studies that employ correlation and regression analyses to investigate relationships among variables (Lim, 2025).

3.2 Study Population and Sampling

The study was conducted among expatriate project workers employed by international NGOs operating in Uganda. The target population comprised expatriate employees serving as Country Directors, Programme Managers, Project Managers, Technical Advisors, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialists, Finance Managers, Engineers, Health Specialists, Education Advisors, Humanitarian Coordinators, and Programme Officers. Only expatriates who had worked in Uganda for at least six months were eligible to participate to ensure they had sufficient exposure to the host-country environment to evaluate their level of cross-cultural adjustment. A sample of 320 expatriate project workers drawn from 42 international NGOs participated in the study. Respondents were selected using stratified random sampling, whereby NGOs constituted the sampling strata, followed by simple random sampling within each organization. Probability sampling techniques were adopted to enhance representativeness, minimize sampling bias, and improve the generalizability of the findings (Saunders et al., 2019).

3.3 Data Collection Instrument and Measurement

Primary data were collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire adapted from established expatriate adjustment scales. The questionnaire comprised two sections. The first section collected demographic and professional information, while the second measured the study variables using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Likert-type scales are widely used in organizational and behavioral research because they enable respondents to express varying degrees of agreement and generate data suitable for parametric statistical analysis (Lim, 2025).

Cross-cultural adjustment was measured using the multidimensional framework developed by Black and Stephens (1989), comprising general adjustment, interaction adjustment, and work adjustment. General adjustment assessed expatriates' adaptation to living conditions such as accommodation, transportation, food, healthcare, climate, and security. Interaction adjustment measured respondents' comfort in communicating and interacting with host-country nationals, while work adjustment evaluated adaptation to organizational culture, leadership, reporting systems, work expectations, and teamwork. Expatriate performance was measured using indicators relating to project goal achievement, work quality, timeliness, problem solving, stakeholder satisfaction, teamwork, and overall effectiveness.

3.4 Validity and Reliability

Content validity was established by adapting previously validated measurement scales and subjecting the questionnaire to expert review by specialists in organizational behaviour, expatriate management, and research methodology. Their recommendations were incorporated to improve the clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness of the instrument.

The internal consistency of the measurement scales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. All constructs exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, with alpha coefficients of 0.865 for General Adjustment, 0.889 for Interaction Adjustment, 0.914 for Work Adjustment, and 0.903 for Expatriate Performance, indicating excellent reliability (Hair et al., 2019; Lim, 2025).

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

Following ethical approval and permission from participating organizations, questionnaires were administered electronically and in printed form to eligible expatriate employees. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, confidentiality of the information provided, and their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. Completed questionnaires were checked for completeness before coding and entry into SPSS Version 29 for analysis.

3.6 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 29. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were computed to summarize respondents' characteristics and describe the study variables.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was employed to determine the strength and direction of the relationships between general adjustment, interaction adjustment, work adjustment, and expatriate performance. Pearson correlation is appropriate for examining the association between continuous variables measured on interval scales and is widely used in quantitative behavioral research (Shao et al., 2022). Multiple linear regression analysis was subsequently conducted to determine the independent contribution of each dimension of cross-cultural adjustment to expatriate performance while controlling for the effects of the remaining predictors. Model adequacy was evaluated using the coefficient of determination (R^2), adjusted R^2 , analysis of variance (ANOVA), standardized beta coefficients, t-values, and significance levels. Prior to estimating the regression model, multicollinearity diagnostics were conducted using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and tolerance statistics. VIF values below the recommended threshold confirmed the absence of problematic multicollinearity among the predictor variables, thereby supporting the stability and interpretability of the regression estimates (Hair et al., 2022; Lonsdale et al., 2024). Statistical significance was evaluated at the 5% level ($p < 0.05$), while highly significant relationships were reported at the 1% level ($p < 0.01$). The combined use of descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression enabled the study to determine both the existence and magnitude of the relationships between cross-cultural adjustment and expatriate performance among expatriate NGO project workers in Uganda.

4. Results

This section presents the findings of the study on the relationship between cross-cultural adjustment and the performance of expatriate NGO project workers in Uganda. The results include descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis to determine the influence of general adjustment, interaction adjustment, and work adjustment on expatriate performance. The findings are presented in tables and interpreted in line with the study objectives.

4.1 Respondent Characteristics

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of respondents.

Table 1: Background Characteristics (N = 320)

Characteristic	Frequency	Percent
Male	187	58.4
Female	133	41.6
Age below 35 years	68	21.3
35–44 years	117	36.6
45–54 years	93	29.1
55 years and above	42	13.1
Master's Degree	178	55.6
Bachelor's Degree	101	31.6
Doctorate	41	12.8
Assignment less than 2 years	79	24.7
2–5 years	161	50.3
More than 5 years	80	25.0

The findings in Table 1 show that the majority of the expatriate project workers were male (187, 58.4%), while females accounted for 133 (41.6%). Most respondents were aged between 35 and 44 years (117, 36.6%), followed by those aged 45 to 54 years (93, 29.1%), indicating that the study largely involved mature and experienced professionals. In terms of education, more than half of the respondents held a master's degree (178, 55.6%), while 101 (31.6%) possessed bachelor's degrees and 41 (12.8%) had doctorates, suggesting a highly educated expatriate workforce. Regarding assignment duration, the largest proportion of respondents (161, 50.3%) had worked in Uganda for between two and five years, compared to 80 (25.0%) who had served for more than five years and 79 (24.7%) with less than two years of service. These findings indicate that the respondents possessed substantial professional qualifications and adequate international assignment experience, providing them with sufficient exposure to Uganda's cultural and organizational environment to meaningfully assess their cross-cultural adjustment and work performance.

4.2 Reliability Analysis

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

Variable	Items	Cronbach Alpha
General Adjustment	7	0.865
Interaction Adjustment	6	0.889
Work Adjustment	7	0.914
Expatriate Performance	7	0.903

All constructs produced Cronbach Alpha coefficients above 0.80, demonstrating excellent internal consistency and confirming that the measurement scales were reliable.

4.3 Descriptive Statistics

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev
General Adjustment	4.08	0.56
Interaction Adjustment	4.16	0.52
Work Adjustment	4.24	0.49

Expatriate Performance	4.19	0.51
------------------------	------	------

The descriptive statistics indicate that respondents reported relatively high levels of adjustment across all three dimensions. Work adjustment recorded the highest mean score ($M = 4.24$), suggesting that expatriates generally adapted well to organizational procedures and work expectations. General adjustment had the lowest mean, implying that adaptation to the broader living environment remained comparatively more challenging.

4.4 Correlation Analysis

Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationships between each dimension of cross-cultural adjustment and expatriate performance.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variable	GA	IA	WA	Performance
General Adjustment	1			
Interaction Adjustment	.574**	1		
Work Adjustment	.612**	.645**	1	
Performance	.596**	.678**	.741**	1

Correlation significant at $p < .01$

The results reveal a statistically significant positive relationship between general adjustment and expatriate performance ($r = .596$, $p < .001$). This indicates that expatriates who adapted more effectively to Uganda's living conditions generally reported higher levels of job performance. The strength of this association suggests that successful adjustment to daily life contributes meaningfully to effective project implementation. Interaction adjustment exhibited a stronger positive relationship with expatriate performance ($r = .678$, $p < .001$). This finding implies that expatriates capable of building productive interpersonal relationships with Ugandan colleagues, community members, and project stakeholders were more likely to achieve superior project outcomes. Effective intercultural communication appears to facilitate collaboration, knowledge sharing, and stakeholder engagement.

Among the three dimensions, work adjustment demonstrated the strongest relationship with expatriate performance ($r = .741$, $p < .001$). This suggests that expatriates who successfully adapted to organizational policies, work procedures, reporting systems, leadership expectations, and team dynamics consistently achieved better performance outcomes. The relatively high correlation coefficient underscores the importance of organizational adaptation in determining expatriate effectiveness within international NGOs.

Furthermore, the intercorrelations among the three adjustment dimensions ranged from .574 to .645, indicating moderate positive relationships without suggesting excessive multicollinearity. This demonstrates that although the dimensions are related, each captures a distinct aspect of expatriate adjustment.

4.5 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was performed to establish the combined influence of general adjustment, interaction adjustment, and work adjustment on expatriate performance.

4.5.1 Model Summary

Table 5: Model Summary

Statistic	Value
R	0.768
R Square	0.590
Adjusted R Square	0.583
Standard Error	0.329

The regression model produced a multiple correlation coefficient (R) of 0.768, indicating a strong positive relationship between the combined dimensions of cross-cultural adjustment and expatriate performance. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.590$) shows that approximately 59.0% of the variation in expatriate performance was explained by general adjustment, interaction adjustment, and work adjustment. After adjusting for the number of predictors, the explanatory power remained high (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.583$), demonstrating the robustness of the model.

4.5.2 ANOVA Results

Table 6: ANOVA

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	48.664	3	16.221	149.87	.000
Residual	33.784	316	0.107		
Total	82.448	319			

The ANOVA results indicate that the overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(3,316) = 149.87$, $p < .001$. This finding confirms that the three dimensions of cross-cultural adjustment collectively provide a statistically significant explanation of expatriate performance among NGO project workers in Uganda.

4.5.3 Regression Coefficients

The regression coefficients were examined to determine the individual contribution of each dimension of cross-cultural adjustment to expatriate performance while controlling for the influence of the other dimensions.

Table 7: Multiple Regression Coefficients for Cross-Cultural Adjustment and Expatriate Performance (N = 320)

Predictor	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Standardized β	t	Sig.	VIF
Constant	0.842	0.243	–	3.466	.001	–
General Adjustment	0.184	0.059	.176	3.121	.002	1.63
Interaction Adjustment	0.291	0.063	.284	4.619	.000	1.78
Work Adjustment	0.427	0.056	.418	7.625	.000	1.95

Dependent Variable: Expatriate Performance

The regression results reveal that all three dimensions of cross-cultural adjustment significantly and positively influenced expatriate performance after controlling for the effects of the other dimensions. The low Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values, ranging from 1.63 to 1.95, indicate that multicollinearity was not a concern, confirming that each predictor made a unique contribution to the model.

4.6 General Adjustment

General adjustment significantly predicted expatriate performance ($\beta = .176$, $t = 3.121$, $p = .002$), confirming hypothesis 1. The positive standardized coefficient indicates that expatriates who adjusted more effectively to the Ugandan living environment tended to report higher levels of work performance. Specifically, a one-unit increase in general adjustment was associated with a 0.184-unit increase in expatriate performance, holding the other predictors constant. This finding suggests that successful adaptation to accommodation, transportation, food, healthcare services, climate, safety, and the general lifestyle reduces psychological strain and enables expatriates to devote greater attention to project implementation. Comfortable living conditions allow expatriates to maintain higher levels of concentration, emotional stability, and resilience, all of which contribute to improved work outcomes.

However, compared with the other two dimensions, general adjustment exhibited the smallest standardized coefficient, indicating that although it is an important determinant of expatriate success, its direct influence on work performance is relatively modest. This may be because many international NGOs provide logistical support such as accommodation, transport, and security arrangements, thereby reducing the extent to which general living conditions constrain expatriate performance.

4.7 Interaction Adjustment

Interaction adjustment also emerged as a statistically significant predictor of expatriate performance ($\beta = .284$, $t = 4.619$, $p < .001$), confirming hypothesis 2. A one-unit improvement in interaction adjustment increased expatriate performance by 0.291 units, controlling for the other variables. The relatively strong standardized coefficient demonstrates that expatriates who were comfortable interacting with Ugandan colleagues, government officials, community leaders, implementing partners, and project beneficiaries achieved better project outcomes than those who experienced interpersonal difficulties. Effective interaction adjustment enhances communication, trust building, conflict resolution, stakeholder participation, and collaborative problem solving, all of which are essential in development projects that rely heavily on partnerships and community engagement. The finding highlights that expatriate effectiveness extends beyond technical competence. Even highly skilled professionals may struggle to achieve project objectives if they are unable to establish productive working relationships with local stakeholders.

4.8 Work Adjustment

Among the three predictors, work adjustment had the strongest influence on expatriate performance ($\beta = .418$, $t = 7.625$, $p < .001$), confirming hypothesis 3. The results indicate that every one-unit increase in work adjustment produced a 0.427-unit increase in expatriate performance after controlling for general and interaction adjustment. This finding demonstrates that successful adaptation to organizational culture, reporting systems, leadership styles, decision-making processes, performance expectations, and workplace norms is the most important determinant of expatriate effectiveness within international NGOs operating in Uganda. Expatriates who clearly understood organizational expectations, communicated effectively with supervisors, and integrated well into multicultural project teams were more likely to complete assignments on time, achieve project objectives, maintain high-quality outputs, and satisfy donor requirements. The dominance of work adjustment may reflect the structured nature of international NGOs, where performance is closely monitored through results-based management systems, donor reporting requirements, key performance indicators, and strict accountability mechanisms. Under such conditions, successful adaptation to organizational processes directly translates into improved project implementation.

6. Discussion of Findings

6.1 General Adjustment and Expatriate Performance

The study found that general adjustment had a significant positive relationship with expatriate performance among NGO project workers in Uganda ($r = .596$, $p < .001$). The regression results further confirmed that general adjustment significantly predicted expatriate performance ($\beta = .176$, $p = .002$), although it exerted the weakest influence among the three dimensions of cross-cultural adjustment. These findings indicate that expatriates who adapt successfully to Uganda's living environment, including accommodation, transportation, food, healthcare, security, climate, and everyday lifestyle, are more likely to perform effectively in their project assignments.

The findings support Black et al.'s (1991) Cross-Cultural Adjustment Theory, which argues that successful adaptation to the host-country environment reduces psychological uncertainty and stress, thereby enabling expatriates to devote greater cognitive and emotional resources to their work. The results are also consistent with Andreason (2003), who argued that failure in international assignments is more frequently attributable to poor adjustment than to inadequate technical competence. Similarly, Harari et al. (2018), through a meta-analysis, demonstrated that cross-cultural adjustment mediates the relationship between personality characteristics and expatriate job performance, suggesting that adjustment functions as a mechanism through which individual capabilities are translated into effective work outcomes. Chen (2019) further established that expatriates who adjust well to the host-country environment experience lower work stress and greater job involvement, ultimately enhancing performance.

The present findings also align with more recent empirical evidence. Abdalla et al. (2024) found that cross-cultural adjustment

significantly improved the performance of expatriate construction professionals by reducing the adverse effects of job burnout, while Anwei et al. (2024) concluded that cultural adaptation, social integration, and organizational support are among the strongest determinants of expatriate job performance. Although Lo and Nguyen (2023) reported that cross-cultural training did not directly improve adjustment, they nevertheless confirmed that expatriates with higher levels of adjustment consistently achieved better work performance. Collectively, these studies reinforce the argument that adjustment to the host-country environment creates the psychological stability necessary for successful international assignments.

This study extends the literature by demonstrating that the relationship between general adjustment and performance also applies within Uganda's international NGO sector. Unlike expatriates in multinational corporations, expatriate NGO workers frequently operate in remote communities, humanitarian settings, refugee settlements, and culturally diverse localities where adaptation extends beyond urban organizational environments. Consequently, successful adjustment to local living conditions becomes particularly important because it enables expatriates to remain psychologically resilient while working under demanding development and humanitarian conditions. The findings therefore provide empirical evidence that improving expatriates' welfare and living conditions should be viewed as a strategic investment rather than merely an administrative responsibility within NGOs operating in Uganda.

6.2 Interaction Adjustment and Expatriate Performance

The findings revealed that interaction adjustment had a stronger positive influence on expatriate performance than general adjustment. Both the correlation analysis ($r = .678, p < .001$) and the regression analysis ($\beta = .284, p < .001$) indicate that expatriates who develop effective interpersonal relationships with host-country nationals perform significantly better than those who experience communication and relationship difficulties.

These findings are consistent with Black et al.'s (1991) proposition that successful interaction with host-country nationals is a central component of expatriate adjustment because it facilitates learning, reduces uncertainty, and accelerates cultural integration. Bayraktar (2019) similarly argued that regular interaction with host-country nationals enables expatriates to acquire local knowledge, understand appropriate social behaviours, and replace culturally inappropriate assumptions with locally accepted practices. Likewise, Hsu et al. (2024) demonstrated that successful communication between expatriates and host-country nationals reduces interaction anxiety and uncertainty, thereby improving knowledge transfer and organizational effectiveness.

The findings also corroborate those of Chan et al. (2021), who established that host-country national support improves expatriates' work adjustment and indirectly enhances task performance. Similarly, Liao et al. (2021) reported that emotional intelligence and communication competence improve expatriates' cross-cultural competence, which subsequently enhances both adjustment and job performance. Han et al. (2022), through a comprehensive meta-analysis, further concluded that cultural empathy, emotional intelligence, and cultural intelligence are among the strongest dispositional predictors of expatriate adjustment. Although previous studies by Zakariya et al. (2019) and Bruning et al. (2012) reported mixed findings regarding interaction adjustment and task performance, particularly in highly demanding organizational contexts, the present study found a consistently positive relationship within Uganda's NGO environment.

The stronger influence of interaction adjustment observed in this study can be explained by the nature of development work in Uganda. NGO projects depend heavily on community participation, partnerships with local governments, collaboration with civil society organizations, and continuous engagement with project beneficiaries. Expatriates therefore spend a considerable proportion of their assignments interacting with local stakeholders rather than operating within organizational boundaries alone. Consequently, interpersonal competence becomes a strategic capability that influences stakeholder trust, community acceptance, knowledge sharing, and ultimately project sustainability.

The study contributes to the Ugandan literature by demonstrating that interaction adjustment is particularly important in a culturally diverse country comprising numerous ethnic communities, languages, and local governance structures. Effective interaction enables expatriates to navigate this diversity more successfully, strengthen relationships with local communities, and facilitate participatory project implementation. These findings provide empirical support for investing in intercultural communication training, local mentorship programmes, and structured opportunities for expatriates to build relationships with Ugandan colleagues and community leaders.

6.3 Work Adjustment and Expatriate Performance

The findings identified work adjustment as the strongest predictor of expatriate performance. The significant positive correlation ($r = .741, p < .001$) and standardized regression coefficient ($\beta = .418, p < .001$) indicate that expatriates who successfully adapt to organizational procedures, leadership styles, reporting systems, work expectations, and organizational culture consistently achieve superior performance outcomes.

This finding strongly supports Cross-Cultural Adjustment Theory, which proposes that adaptation to workplace norms directly influences expatriates' effectiveness because it reduces role ambiguity and facilitates successful organizational integration (Black et al., 1991). The findings are consistent with Setti et al. (2020), who found that work adjustment mediates the relationship between cultural intelligence and expatriate performance. Similarly, Singh et al. (2022) demonstrated that work adjustment mediates the influence of role clarity on task performance and organizational citizenship behaviour, while Armon et al. (2023) reported that constructive supervisor feedback enhances expatriate adjustment by improving role clarity and subsequently increasing job performance.

The present findings further support those of Sokro et al. (2021), who established that perceived organizational support improves expatriate adjustment, assignment completion, and job satisfaction. Likewise, Giorgi et al. (2020) found that organizational support reduces work-related stress and promotes innovation by facilitating successful cross-cultural adjustment. Recent evidence from Abdalla et al. (2024) similarly showed that work adjustment exerts a stronger influence on expatriate performance than job burnout, while Davies et al. (2019) found that resilient expatriates working within supportive organizational climates achieve higher levels of work adjustment and lower turnover intentions.

The dominance of work adjustment observed in this study reflects the unique operating environment of international NGOs in Uganda. Development organizations operate under strict donor accountability frameworks that require timely reporting, financial

compliance, monitoring and evaluation, results-based management, and close collaboration among multicultural project teams. Consequently, expatriates who rapidly understand organizational expectations and successfully integrate into these systems are better positioned to deliver projects efficiently and meet donor performance standards.

This finding makes an important contextual contribution because previous expatriate adjustment research has been conducted predominantly in multinational corporations operating in commercial environments. The present study demonstrates that within Uganda's NGO sector, organizational adjustment is even more critical because project performance is closely linked to donor accountability, community engagement, partnership coordination, and results-based management systems. The findings therefore suggest that NGOs should strengthen structured onboarding programmes, mentoring systems, supervisor support, and continuous organizational socialization to accelerate expatriates' work adjustment and improve project effectiveness.

Overall, the study demonstrates that cross-cultural adjustment is a multidimensional construct whose dimensions contribute differently to expatriate performance. Although general adjustment, interaction adjustment, and work adjustment all significantly enhanced expatriate performance, work adjustment exerted the strongest influence, followed by interaction adjustment and general adjustment. These findings largely support Black et al.'s (1991) multidimensional adjustment framework and extend more recent evidence reported by Han et al. (2022), Harari et al. (2018), Abdalla et al. (2024), and Lo and Nguyen (2023), which consistently identify cross-cultural adjustment as one of the strongest determinants of expatriate success.

The study makes three important contributions to the literature. First, it provides empirical evidence from Uganda, a context that has received very limited attention in expatriate adjustment research despite hosting a large number of international development organizations. Second, it demonstrates that the relative importance of adjustment dimensions differs within humanitarian and development settings, with work adjustment emerging as the most influential predictor of expatriate performance. Third, by explaining 58.3% of the variance in expatriate performance, the study confirms that cross-cultural adjustment is a major determinant of expatriate effectiveness within Uganda's NGO sector while highlighting the potential influence of complementary factors such as cultural intelligence, organizational support, resilience, family adjustment, leadership style, and job satisfaction. These findings provide an important empirical foundation for strengthening expatriate management practices among international NGOs operating in Uganda and other developing-country contexts.

7. Conclusion

This study examined the influence of general adjustment, interaction adjustment, and work adjustment on the performance of expatriate NGO project workers in Uganda. The findings provide strong empirical evidence that cross-cultural adjustment significantly enhances expatriate performance. Among the three dimensions, work adjustment emerged as the strongest predictor, highlighting the importance of adapting to organizational structures, work practices, leadership expectations, and performance systems. Interaction adjustment ranked second, emphasizing the critical role of effective intercultural communication and relationship building in development work. General adjustment also made a significant contribution, confirming that psychological comfort with the host-country environment provides an important foundation for effective work performance. Overall, the study concludes that international NGOs seeking to improve expatriate effectiveness should adopt comprehensive adjustment strategies that address living conditions, interpersonal integration, and organizational adaptation simultaneously rather than focusing exclusively on technical competence.

References

- [1] Abdalla, A., Li, X., & Yang, F. (2024). Expatriate construction professionals' performance in international construction projects: The role of cross-cultural adjustment and job burnout. *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management*, 150(3), Article 04024003. <https://doi.org/10.1061/JCEMD4.COENG-13912>
- [2] Andreason, A. W. (2003). Expatriate adjustment to foreign assignments. *International Journal of Commerce and Management*, 13(1), 42-60. <https://doi.org/10.1108/eb047459>
- [3] Andreason, A. W. (2008). Expatriate adjustment of spouses and expatriate managers: An integrative research review. *International Journal of Management*, 25(2), 382-395.
- [4] Anwei, Z., Duraipandi, O., Wang, Q., Wu, H., & Yu, S. (2024). A research on the factors influencing the job performance of foreign expatriates. *International Journal of Computational and Experimental Science and Engineering*, 10(4), 1037-1046. <https://doi.org/10.22399/ijcesen.3747>
- [5] Armon, B., Steelman, L. A., & Jensen, S. (2023). The role of the feedback environment in expatriate adjustment. *Journal of Global Mobility*, 11(2), 200-214. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JGM-08-2022-0040>
- [6] Aycan, Z. (1997). Expatriate adjustment as a multifaceted phenomenon: Individual and organizational level predictors. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 8(4), 434-456. <https://doi.org/10.1080/095851997341540>
- [7] Bano, N., & Liu, Y. (2025). Cross cultural adaptation challenges: A study on Chinese expatriates in Muslim countries along Belt and Road. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 25(3), 443-479. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14705958251325689>
- [8] Bayraktar, S. (2019). A diary study of expatriate adjustment: Collaborative mechanisms of social support. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 19(1), 47-70. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470595819836688>
- [9] Bhaskar-Shrinivas, P., Harrison, D. A., Shaffer, M. A., & Luk, D. M. (2004). What have we learned about expatriate adjustment? Answers accumulated from 23 years of research. *Academy of Management Proceedings*, 2004(1), A1-A6. <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMBPP.2004.13863144>
- [10] Bhaskar-Shrinivas, P., Harrison, D. A., Shaffer, M. A., & Luk, D. M. (2005). Input-based and time-based models of international adjustment: Meta-analytic evidence and theoretical extensions. *Academy of Management Journal*, 48(2), 257-281. <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMJ.2005.16928400>

- [11] Bhatti, M. A., Battour, M. M., & Ismail, A. R. (2013). Expatriates adjustment and job performance: An examination of individual and organizational factors. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, 62(7), 694-717. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPPM-12-2012-0132>
- [12] Bierwiazzonek, K., & Waldzus, S. (2016). Socio-cultural factors as antecedents of cross-cultural adaptation in expatriates, international students, and migrants: A review. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 47(6), 767-817. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022116644526>
- [13] Black, J. S., & Mendenhall, M. (1991). The U-curve adjustment hypothesis revisited: A review and theoretical framework. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 22(2), 225-247.
- [14] Black, J. S., Gregersen, H. B., & Mendenhall, M. E. (1992). Toward a theoretical framework of repatriation adjustment. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 23(4), 737-760.
- [15] Black, J. S., Mendenhall, M., & Oddou, G. (1991). Toward a comprehensive model of international adjustment: An integration of multiple theoretical perspectives. *Academy of Management Review*, 16(2), 291-317. <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMR.1991.4278938>
- [16] Bruning, N. S., Sonpar, K., & Wang, X. (2012). Host-country national networks and expatriate effectiveness: A mixed-methods study. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 43(4), 444-450. <https://doi.org/10.1057/jibs.2012.5>
- [17] Caldwell, H., Donnelly, R., & Yang, H. (2024). Reviewing and revising Black et al.'s adjustment model(s). *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 35(6), 932-963. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2023.2297827>
- [18] Caligiuri, P. M. (2000). Selecting expatriates for personality characteristics: A moderating effect of personality on the relationship between host national contact and cross-cultural adjustment. *Management International Review*, 40(1), 61-80.
- [19] Chan, H. T., Zawawi, D., Ng, S. I., & Nipo, D. T. (2021). No expatriate is an island: The role of salient stakeholders' support in international assignments. *International Journal of Manpower*, 42(7), 1108-1127. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJM-11-2019-0520>
- [20] Chen, M. (2019). The impact of expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment on work stress and job involvement in the high-tech industry. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, Article 2228. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02228>
- [21] Davies, S., Stoermer, S., & Froese, F. J. (2019). When the going gets tough: The influence of expatriate resilience and perceived organizational inclusion climate on work adjustment and turnover intentions. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 30(8), 1393-1417. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2018.1528558>
- [22] Dijkzeul, D. (2021). Making localization work: The everyday practice of three NGOs in South Sudan and Northern Uganda. *Frontiers in Political Science*, 3, Article 716287.
- [23] Firth, B. M., Chen, G., Kirkman, B. L., & Kim, K. (2014). Newcomers abroad: Expatriate adaptation during early phases of international assignments. *Academy of Management Journal*, 57(1), 280-300. <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMJ.2011.0574>
- [24] Giorgi, G., Lecca, L. I., Ariza-Montes, A., Di Massimo, C., Campagna, M., Finstad, G. L., Arcangeli, G., & Mucci, N. (2020). The dark and the light side of the expatriate's cross-cultural adjustment: A novel framework including perceived organizational support, work-related stress and innovation. *Sustainability*, 12(7), Article 2969. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12072969>
- [25] Guo, Y., Rammal, H. G., & Pereira, V. (2021). Am I "in or out"? A social identity approach to studying expatriates' social networks and adjustment in a host country context. *Journal of Business Research*, 136, 558-566. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.07.059>
- [26] Hair, J. F., Alamer, A., et al. (2022). *Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) in second language and education research: Guidelines using an applied example*. *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*, 1(3), 100027.
- [27] Han, Y., Sears, G. J., Darr, W. A., & Wang, Y. (2022). Facilitating cross-cultural adaptation: A meta-analytic review of dispositional predictors of expatriate adjustment. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 53(9), 1054-1096. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00220221221109559>
- [28] Harari, M. B., Reaves, A. C., Beane, D., Laginess, A. J., & Viswesvaran, C. (2018). Personality and expatriate adjustment: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 91(3), 486-517. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12215>
- [29] Hsu, Y. S., Chen, Y. P., Chiang, F. F. T., & Shaffer, M. A. (2024). Bridging the expatriate and host country national knowledge transfer gap: Managing interaction anxiety and uncertainty. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 28(7), 1867-1888. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JKM-02-2023-0128>
- [30] Kaijabwango, C. (2025). Non-government organisations' aid funded projects in Uganda are costly and inefficient: Time to consider writing a "new history" based on research. *World Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Sustainable Development*, 21(2), 115-132.
- [31] Kim, Y., & Lee, S. C. (2022). Adaptive personality, communication competence and psychological health. *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, 22(1), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.36923/jicc.v21i1.1>
- [32] Komujuni, S. (2025). Navigating the post-donor arena in Uganda's Gulu district. *African Affairs*.
- [33] Lee, Y. S. (2021). Model of expatriates' job performance based on cross-cultural adjustment to work stress and work adaptation. *Theoretical Economics Letters*, 11(5), 1035-1054.
- [34] Liao, Y. K., Wu, W. Y., Dao, T. C., & Luu, T. M. N. (2021). The influence of emotional intelligence and cultural adaptability on cross-cultural adjustment and performance with the mediating effect of cross-cultural competence: A study of expatriates in Taiwan. *Sustainability*, 13(6), Article 3374. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13063374>
- [35] Lim, W. M. (2025). What is quantitative research? An overview and guidelines. *Australian Journal of Management*.
- [36] Lo, F. Y., & Nguyen, T. H. N. (2023). Cross-cultural adjustment and training on international expatriates' performance. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 194, Article 122294. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2022.122294>

- [37] Mahrouqi, A. A. (2018). *Cross-cultural communication and the adjustment of Western and non-Western expatriates in multicultural companies: Investigating operations in Oman* (Doctoral dissertation, Brunel University London).
- [38] Malek, M. A., & Budhwar, P. (2013). Cultural intelligence as a predictor of expatriate adjustment and performance in Malaysia. *Journal of World Business*, 48(2), 222-231. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2012.07.006>
- [39] Murali, M., Varma, R., Almeida, A. M., & Feitosa, J. (2025). Beyond borders: Unpacking the key cultural factors shaping adaptation and belonging abroad. *Social Sciences*, 14(11), Article 667. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci14110667>
- [40] Rafiq, A., Saleem, S., Bashir, M., & Ali, A. (2019). The paradox role of extraversion in the cross-cultural adjustment process of Asian expatriates. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management*, 12, 179-194. <https://doi.org/10.2147/PRBM.S191805>
- [41] Rao-Nicholson, R., Carr, C., & Smith, S. (2020). Cross-cultural leadership adjustment: A strategic analysis of expatriate leadership at a British multinational enterprise. *Thunderbird International Business Review*, 62(6), 741-754.
- [42] Salgado, J. F., & Bastida, M. (2017). Predicting expatriate effectiveness: The role of personality, cross-cultural adjustment, and organizational support. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 25(3), 267-275. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijsa.12178>
- [43] Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2019). *Research methods for business students* (8th ed.). Pearson.
- [44] Setti, I., Scommovigo, V., & Argentero, P. (2020). Enhancing expatriates' assignments success: The relationships between cultural intelligence, cross-cultural adaptation and performance. *Current Psychology*, 41(7), 4291-4311. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-020-00931-w>
- [45] Shaffer, M. A., Harrison, D. A., & Gilley, K. M. (1999). Dimensions, determinants, and differences in the expatriate adjustment process. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 30(3), 557-581. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8490083>
- [46] Shao, K., Shirvan, M. E., & Alamer, A. (2022). How accurate is your correlation? Different methods derive different results and different interpretations. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 901412.
- [47] Singh, S., Tarba, S. Y., Wood, G., Bozionelos, N., Del Giudice, M., Pereira, V., & Latan, H. (2022). Adjustment and work outcomes of self-initiated expatriates in the United Arab Emirates: Development and testing of a model. *Journal of International Management*, 28(4), Article 100953. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intman.2022.100953>
- [48] Sokro, E., Pillay, S., & Bednall, T. (2021). The effects of perceived organisational support on expatriate adjustment, assignment completion and job satisfaction. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 21(3), 452-473. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14705958211061007>
- [49] Sousa, C., Gonçalves, G., Santos, J., & Leitão, J. C. (2017). Organizational practices for the expatriates' adjustment: A systematic review. *Journal of Global Mobility*, 5(3), 251-274. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JGM-03-2017-0011>
- [50] Strubler, D. C., Park, S. H., & Agarwal, A. (2011). Revisiting Black, Mendenhall, and Oddou's framework for international adjustment model: A prescriptive approach. *Journal of International Business Research*, 10(2), 103-118.
- [51] Taušová, J., Bender, M., Dimitrova, R., & van de Vijver, F. J. R. (2019). The role of perceived cultural distance, personal growth initiative, language proficiencies, and tridimensional acculturation orientations for psychological adjustment among international students. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 69, 11-23. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2018.11.004>
- [52] Zakariya, N., Othman, A. K., Abdullah, Z., & Abdullah, S. S. (2019). The relationship between expatriate adjustment and expatriate job performance at multinational corporations in Malaysia. *Academy of Entrepreneurship Journal*, 25(1), 1-10.