



CONCEPTUAL PAPER ON THE CAUSAL EFFECTS OF INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES ON EXPATRIATE EFFECTIVENESS IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract

Purpose of the study: To investigate the causal effects of expatriates' individual differences (measured by Job Insecurity, Personality, and Social Network) on their effectiveness (measured Coping Strategies, Job Performance, and Organizational Citizenship Behavior) in carrying out their responsibility to complete assignments whilst stationed and working in Malaysia.

Main Result: This conceptual paper will contribute to the body of knowledge on matters related to expatriates' services in a cross-cultural and different environment, especially the difficulties they faced, roles played and contribution towards both the host country and the organization that they work for. The research gaps are on Coping Strategies is affecting the expatriate effectiveness and there are a few researches in the Malaysian context.

Applications: It is significant to resolve the problem faced by expatriates working and stationed in Malaysia. This paper is important for both current and future development for academics (for theoretical knowledge consolidation), practitioners (for multinational organizations) and the country's economy. The contribution to the literature on expatriate is by offering new individual variables that are influencing their performance, which could be unique and still relevant to each other, and this consolidates and enriches the literature.

Novelty/Originality: This paper provides a better understanding on how the variables work on individual differences and how are they connected to effectiveness. It is also envisaged that the performance can be enhanced and multinationals will improve their profitability and thus contribute to the GDP of the country.

Keywords: *Expatriate, Individual Differences, Expatriate Effectiveness, Coping Strategies.*

INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is still categorized as a developing country. However, it is hoped that her efforts to achieve a fully developed and industrialized country status by 2020 will be realized ([Sixth Malaysia Plan, 1991-1995](#)). In order to reach this status, a high rate of economic growth with relevant development of the technological infrastructure needs to be sustained. Her liberalization of the trade policies needs to be continued to open its economy for globalization and attract investors from other countries. The economics and trading environment in the country need to be vibrant and healthy so that investors can enjoy a fair return to their investments. As a result, Malaysia has succeeded in attracting many multinationals and foreign investors to operate in the country.

Generally, foreign direct investment (FDI) has a multiplier effect on driving and steering the long-term growth of Malaysia's economy. The key benefits consist of the development of the supply chain, collaboration with tertiary institutions, an increase in the talent base of management skills, growth of the shared services industry, job creation, and innovation through research and development (R&D) ([MIDA, 2015](#)).

From the 2015 Malaysian Industrial Development Authority ([MIDA](#)) Report, the total FDI was estimated to increase by 36.0% to USD 1.7 trillion as compared with USD 1.26 trillion in 2014. The global establishment projects approved investment was RM 8.2 billion and created 4,217 employment opportunities. From 2007 to 2015, a total of 448 foreign organizations have registered in Malaysia and this shows an increase of 10.59% ([SSM from 2007 to 2015](#)). This implies that organizations are also sending a fair increase in the number of expatriates to be assigned to Malaysia to handle the international assignments.

At this developing stage, Malaysia still needs more skilled, talented and professional personnel from abroad to assist and support the development in various areas. There are several local and multinational companies already employing foreign experts. They are sometimes called foreign assignment personnel and are becoming important human resource personnel that provides a competitive advantage to many organizations ([Dickman & Harris, 2005](#); [Zhang & Dodgson, 2007](#)). In 2008, Malaysia had 35,583 approved expatriate postings in Malaysia as compared to 21,859 in 1999 ([Malaysia, 1999](#); [Malaysia, 2008](#)). This showed a significant increase of 62.8%.

The organizations gain benefits of transferring their own employees abroad, it includes venturing into and developing new international markets, spreading and sustaining corporate culture, facilitating organizational coordination and control, transferring of technology, knowledge, and skills ([Brown, 1994](#); [Klaus, 1995](#); [Huang, Chi & Lawler, 2005](#)).

Some of these expatriates failed to complete the full term of their international assignment duration. Consequently, this could be detrimental to the organizations and even to the host country. This paper will attempt to address this, as well as the gaps deduced and retrieved from related studies.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Malaysia still need expatriates services (as they are called) for its developing programs. Commonly they work for their respective multinationals. However, they are facing new challenges starting with the need to adapt to the host country's culture, environment, working norms and social interaction. This could be a culture shock to them.

The expected outcome benefits and contributes to the foreign organizations and Malaysia's Multinational Company's (MNC). Malaysia has opened its door to adopt liberal trading policies to attract investors and encourage multinationals to set foot in the country (MIDA, 2015).

Generally, expatriates are either assigned by parent organizations or through employment (Brown, 1994; Klaus, 1995; Huang, Chi & Lawler, 2005). The duration to complete the international assignment is around three to five year period. However, many expatriates unable to finish the international assignment. This creates problems for both the hosts and the organizations.

The expatriates' failure to complete the international assignments within their duration is caused by many factors and this will lead to delays in completing the project. This affects the organization's reputation and creates additional costs such as compensation penalties in order to request an extension in the project. Moreover, finding a suitable candidate for replacement needs a lot of time and the cost of replacement is usually high.

The emphasis is to fill the gaps that have been identified on the poor records of expatriates' international assignment. This is to establish the cause for expatriates' failure to complete their international assignments. The conceptual framework to investigate is on the causal relationship of individual differences (ID): Job Insecurity (JI) Sverke and Hellgren (2002), Personality (P) Larsen and Buss (2010) and Social Network (SN) Lin et al. (1981a;1981b) on expatriate effectiveness (EE): Coping Strategies (CS) Lazarus and Folkman (1984), Job Performance (JP) Borman and Motowidlo (1993) and Caligiuri (1997) and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) Organ (1988).

The independent variables are the ID factors such as JI, P, and SN. The internal factors are JI and P, as SN is the external factor influencing and surrounding the expatriates. The above three factors are important measures for their degree of existence and measurement. The dependent factors are grouped into EE and they are CS, JP, and OCB. CS plays two roles as dependent and mediating variables.

LITERATURE AND HYPOTHESIS

The literature consists of two parts, which are Individual Differences (ID) and Expatriate Effectiveness (EE).

Individual Differences

Individual differences (ID) consist of three components: Job Insecurity (JI), Personality (P) and Social Network (SN). The followings are the underpinning theories supporting the ID and they will serve as the independent variables.

Job Insecurity

Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) defined Job Insecurity (JI) in two parts:

1. The powerlessness of a person to change a situation or unable to do anything about it, and
2. The threat of losing one's job.

JI creates unhealthy worries for both the employees and the organization. The general effects can be conceived on the employee's health, Job Performance (JP) and the organization's business operation.

As regards to JI theory, most of the researchers agreed with the practice of a multifaceted approach to be more expressive (Ashford, Lee & Bobko, 1989; Lee, Bobko, & Chen, 2006). They started to pay more attention to the difference between the two parts of JI, which are evaluations of perceiving and affective (Sverke & Hellgren, 2002). These two parts are recognized and are labelled as cognitive which is identifying the possibility of job loss and worrying about job loss (Borg & Elizur, 1992).

Also, Maslow and Herzberg explained that security is one of the essential elements for humans to coexist (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984). Security itself provides individuals peace of mind, safety, protection from danger and freedom of fear from any event. However, insecurity has negative implications for individuals, such as fearful, doubtful, uncertainty, unsafe and afraid from any event (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984; Heaney, Israel & House, 1994). These researchers' perceptions of JI are on threats of employees in their current employment with the organization. This condition, they believe, will create uncertainty, discomfort and fearful thoughts which can affect employees' JP and mental health within the organization. There are many studies carried out to illustrate this negative relationship between JI and well-being. In their theory of psychological contract, they stated that the employees need to feel their efforts and contributions

meet the organization's expectations ([Rousseau, 1989](#)). If the employee feels they have not met the expectation of the organization, their psychological contracts will not be fulfilled. This can create a negative effect, not only in their job but on other things as well ([De Witte, Sverke, Van Ruysseveld, Goslinga, Chirumbolo, Hellgren & Naswall, 2008](#)).

Furthermore, [Lazarus \(1991\)](#) mentioned different types of events of uncertainties and different characteristics attached to threats such as low, middle and high as perceived by individuals. The different types of uncertainties are also important to how individuals respond and handle future events ([Thau, Aquino & Wittek, 2007](#)). This uncertainty is what the organizational researchers described as an aversive state. It is a state of mind when an individual can control a certain situation. For example, [Spector\(1998\)](#) and [Sverke, Hellgren and Naswall \(2002\)](#), explained how effective it is to recognize the process and control the stress level in a threatening event.

[Sverke and Hellgren's \(2002\)](#)'s stress theory labelled job insecurity as a stressor. The theory mentioned that work stress has a negative influence on individual's behavior ([Jacobson 1991](#); [Cheng, Chen, Chen & Chiang, 2005](#)). The stress theory argument is about the uncertainty of stress that creates anxiety for individuals ([Berger & Calabrese, 1975](#)). It is supported by experimental evidence which explained, an individual's ability to identify unexpected events have more impact and created more anxiety than their ability to identify less expected events ([Badia, McBane, Suter & Lewis, 1966](#)). This is because individuals do tend to consider that JI is related to a threat, danger, and uncertainty of events. It is an important aspect of psychology and social resources, which includes relationships with other elements such as income, self-esteem, social roles, status and opportunities to use as skills or information ([Hobfoll, 1989](#)).

The Stressor theory will be used as a measurement of JI of the expatriate working in Malaysia. The measurement is on the stress that arises on an event due to insecurity and this build-up anxiety for individuals.

Personality

Personality (P) concerns on the traits of a person and the psychological aspect, in communication with a person and adjusting to the environment and surroundings ([Larsen & Buss, 2010](#)). P consists of a person's motivation (e.g. needs and motives), cognitions (e.g. value and beliefs) and traits (e.g. Extraversion and shyness) ([Code & Langan-Fox, 2001](#)).

[Larsen and Buss \(2010\)](#) asserted the taxonomy of Big Five plays an important role and contributes a lot of support to the psychological literature. It consists of (1) Extraversion (outgoing and talk active), (2) Agreeableness (cooperative and kind), (3) Conscientiousness (organized & orderly), (4) Emotional Stability, where it is traditionally meant as Neuroticism in earlier literature (anxious & insecure) and (5) Openness (creative & intellectual). The Big Five components represent the characteristics of an individual, which is biologically or genetically inherited from the family, generally explains the different types of evaluation and cultures ([Saucier & Goldberg, 2003](#)). The Big Five contributed and helped the researchers to comprehend the relationships between personality traits and individual results in the organizational workplace (e.g. [Mount & Barrick, 1995](#); [Salgado, 1997](#); [Hurtz & Donovan, 2000](#)).

According to [Saucier and Goldberg \(2003\)](#), the Big Five model is still considered as the best and suitable taxonomy in psychological research. The followings are the principles of the Big Five:

1. Extraversion

Extraversion is the first factor of the Big Five and is originally created by [Jung \(1923\)](#). The principal of Extraversion focuses on the level of sociability, talkative characteristics of a person, energetic and generally more active and assertive person ([Costa & McCrae, 1992c](#)). Although some scholars tried to connect this with Impulsivity ([Eysenck, 1970](#); [Eysenck & Eysenck, 1964](#)) and Ambition ([Hogan & Hogan, 1986](#)).

2. Agreeableness

The second factor of the Big Five is Agreeableness which is the abstracted Conformity with Others ([Digman, 1990](#)) or Likeability ([Hogan & Hogan, 1986](#)). People with this trait tend to be more helpful, trust and understand others ([Costa & McCrae, 1992c](#)). This trait is related to higher levels of social compliance, self-control and less violence ([Laursen, Pulkkinen & Adams, 2002](#)). Both Agreeableness and Extraversion in the Big Five explain the basic dimensions of interpersonal behavior expressed in the interpersonal circumplex model of personality ([Wiggins, Trapnell, & Phillips, 1988](#); [McCrae & Costa, 1989b](#)).

3. Conscientiousness in the form of Conformity

The third factor of the Big Five is Conscientiousness in the form of Conformity. This is connected to Responsibility, Organizing, Hard-Work, Impulse Control, and Prudence ([Hogan & Ones, 1997](#)). Its main focus is to follow the rules and standards ([Barrick & Mount, 1991](#); [Hogan & Ones, 1997](#)). In this type of trait, the individuals do not create problems, challenge authority and avoid an argument, ambiguities, and altercations ([Hogan & Ones, 1997](#)).

4. Emotional stability

The fourth factor of the Big Five is Emotional Stability. It is a person's psychological adjustment ([Judge & Bono, 2000](#)); or showing a lack of maladjustment and anxiety as explained by [Costa and McCrae \(1992c\)](#). Many studies researchers focus more on Neuroticism factor which is the opposite of Emotional Stability such as [Eysenck\(1970\)](#) and [McCrae and](#)

[Costa\(1987\)](#). Some researchers believe that people with high Emotional Stability always exhibit happiness and have positive core self-evaluations (Self-Esteem, Self-Efficacy and Internal Locus of Control) ([Judge & Bono, 2000](#)). In contrast, people with lower Emotional Stability such as low Neuroticism have negative core self-evaluations which leads to emotional distress connected to their behaviors ([Watson & Clark, 1997](#); [Rusting & Larsen, 1998](#)).

5. Openness

The fifth factor of the Big Five is Openness, which involves Experience. For example, there are several factors of Openness that involve Experience of Culture ([Norman, 1963](#)), Intellect ([Goldberg, 1981](#)), and Absorption ([Tellegen & Atkinson, 1974](#)). [McCrae and Costa \(1997\)](#) studied the general approval of Openness to experience. [Eysenck \(1993\)](#) explained that the relationship of intelligence and intellect in the form of cognitive style in Openness is related to Experience than in the personality. However, [McCrae and Costa \(1997\)](#) believed the Intelligence and Intellect can be the characteristics of Openness to Experience but are not identical to each other. According to them, the Openness to Experience personality characterizes a person's willingness to attempt new ideas, accept uncertainty, disagreement, and have the mindset of curiosity.

Individuals' behaviour and thinking are complex, unique and challenging to be measured. Overall, the Big Five theory is beneficial in the area of personalities and very useful in explaining and identifying an individual's personality and conducts. Also, it is a suitable and good measurement of an individual's emotional, motivational and interpersonal behavior. For this reason, the researcher adopts the Big Five to measure the expatriates' effectiveness of working in Malaysia.

Social Network

Social network (SN) and social support are the platforms supported by countries for expatriates to interact with one another. Its purposes and contributions play an important role in transferring and distributing knowledge to expatriates.

[Hall and Wellman \(1985\)](#) defined social network (SN) as a finite set of acts that are associated with one or more exact types of relationships. Its function is to provide assistance and social activities to individuals who are staying in a particular country. SN is established by host nations to provide certain types of relationships of social structure for expatriate activities ([Coleman, 1988](#)). This will enable them to settle down in host countries to complete their international assignment ([Black, Mendenhall & Oddou, 1991](#); [Toh, Varma & DeNisi, 2004](#)). Meanwhile, other researchers such as [Kim \(1987\)](#) assert, SN provides feedback on the expatriates' behaviors. [Wang \(2001\)](#) also found that expatriates' social networks offered social support to their psychological well-being and performance.

Furthermore, [Morrison \(2002\)](#) believed that SN emphasis mainly on two categories of networks: (a) a complete network that emphasis on the whole social structure of a population and (b) an ego network that emphasis an individual's unique set of social contacts. In an ego social network, the main idea is focusing on "ego" and "tie", referred to as the relationship between ego and network contact. The measurement of egocentric is network size, closeness, and frequency of individuals. [Granovetter \(1982\)](#) mentioned that the measurement is on the strength of network ties, composed of time, emotional intensity, intimacy, and reciprocal services. Also, [Marsden and Campbell \(1984\)](#) believe that the most effective indicator of measurement is on the strength of network relationships using closeness and frequency.

However, [Podolny and Baron \(1997\)](#) believed that SN provides two main functions to newcomers, which are information and social support. According to them, the information contains the network contacts coming from a variety of backgrounds such as the local environment and host country. [Kirmeyer and Lin \(1987\)](#) supported that social support creates stimuli for a person to believe he or she is being cared for, valued, belongs to a network of communication and mutual obligation in the host country. This social support provides a cure and solution to the psychological effects of stress and uncertainty for expatriates.

In addition, [Shaffer and Harrison \(2001\)](#) supported the that social support assists, expatriates, in building self-esteem and improve self-identification that will eventually increase their own encouragement in the host country. Furthermore, [Black and Stephens \(1989\)](#) explained another factor of SN. Their view is that social support from expatriates' spouses and the host country plays a great part to improve the expatriates' adjustment. This is supported by [Osman-Gani and Rockstuhl \(2008\)](#), who explained the relational ties between the expatriate and other individuals such as family, peer expatriates, local working partners or local friends. Some other researchers such as [Li and Rothstein \(2009\)](#) also believed that the relational ties of individuals create the basis for an individual's social life and career development. The strength of such ties depends on how intense, reliable and reciprocal they are ([Granovetter, 1973](#)).

There are three important theories, which are developed over time, in supporting different perspectives of social networks ([Seibert, Kraimer & Liden, 2001](#)). They are (a) [Granovetter's weak tie theory \(1973\)](#), (b) Lin, Ensel and Vaughn's social resources theory ([1981a;1981b](#)) and (c) [Burt's structural hole theory \(1992\)](#). The weak tie theory by [Granovetter's \(1973\)](#) emphasizes on the importance and strength of social ties. It explains that the development of strong ties needs time and effort to build weaker ties in an ego network. Comparing the strong and the weak ties may provide a lot of different information and offer more flexible opportunities to the ego. The weak ties can provide information that is important to individuals' opportunities to integrate into social communities.

The social resources theory by [Lin et al. \(1981a;1981b\)](#) emphasizes the properties of network contacts and resources supporting the network function. They believe that, for individuals to complete their objective, there is a need to have diverse types of resources within the social ties of the host country. They further suggested that to be resourceful within the social activity, one needs some characteristics of his own to manage available resources successfully in reaching one's ego.

The structural hole theory by [Burt \(1992\)](#) is defined as the relationship of non-redundancy between two contacts. It emphasizes on the structure that provides a platform for interaction between the network connections in an ego social network. The theory stated that, for individuals to create social relations, they need to join a separate set of groups' activities that the members do not know one another. This approach will allow them to know more people and get their contacts.

These three theories believed that SN has different perspectives and measurements (information, assistance, and power) which can assist expatriate. The social resources theory by [Lin et al. \(1981a; 1981b\)](#) will be used because it covers the properties of network contacts and resources supporting the network's functions. Another reason for the adoption of this theory is to measure resources provided by the host country in assisting expatriates stationed and working in Malaysia.

Expatriate Effectiveness

The expatriate effectiveness (EE) foundation consists of three components, which are Coping Strategies (CS), Job Performance (JP) and Organization Citizenship Behaviors (OCB) and will serve as the dependent variables. The followings are the underpinned theories supporting the expatriate effectiveness.

Coping Strategies

Coping is a part of the stress and it has been used and investigated by psychologists for more than 50 years. [Lazarus \(1966\)](#) argued that stress consists of three processes namely:

1. Primary appraisal which is the process of perceiving a threat to oneself;
2. Secondary appraisal, on the other hand, is the process of bringing to mind a potential response to the threat, and;
3. Tertiary appraisal, also known as the Coping strategy, is the process of carrying out a response to the threat.

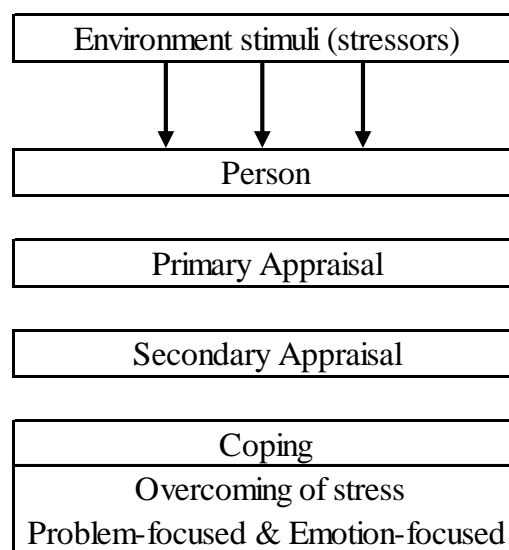


Figure 1: Stressful environment

The above figure 1 shows how a person will encounter a stressful environment in both daily works and life activities. Primary appraisal finds out whether an event is stressful. If the event is stressful, this creates harm, threat or challenge to the individual. While secondary appraisal, on the other hand, focuses on how individuals can handle or cope with stress. If they can successfully cope, using (CS) as a process to deal with stress, then the stress levels are lowered but are incapable to cope with stress, then the stress levels are becoming higher.

As a result, this paper adopts Lazarus's third process, that is Coping Strategies (CS) to investigate the causal relationship of ID on EE.

The Coping Strategies (CS) theory is a process of managing a situation by using different alternatives. This theory explained that individuals need to put their conscious effort and attempt to manage stressful environments ([Connor-Smith & Flachsbart, 2007](#)). [Monat and Lazarus \(1991\)](#) defined coping as an individual's effort to master a situation, such as conditions of harm, threat, or challenge, which are perceived as exceeding or taxing for them.

According to [Lazarus \(1999\)](#), this strategy is serving as a mediator of a stressful environment and not as a moderator because the coping process arises de novo (from the beginning) between a person and the environment itself.

Furthermore, the coping theory constructed by [Folkman and Lazarus \(1988b\)](#) is used by some number of studies throughout the last thirty years, but their functions are in a different field and have some physiological outcomes. Other researchers like [Sommerfield and McCrae \(2000\)](#) examined “coping behavior” from 1967 to 1999 in the psychological literature and discovered 13,744 records. From these records, a large portion of the studies is using a lot of [Folkman and Lazarus’s \(1988b\)](#) research assessment instrument, “Ways for Coping Questionnaire”.

[Lazarus and Folkman’s \(1984\)](#) emphasis is to measure the stress, resulting from the transaction activities of people and the external environment. Their findings explained that stress is not a reason for the failure of an individual if the person does not understand it as a threat. However, if the individual sees it as a threat then it becomes a challenge to overcome. Using appropriate CS, the individuals will be able to overcome the stress and such an event will not develop again.

CS will also serve as a mediating variable based on the understating of the Stress theory. The Stress theory was developed by a social-personality psychologist (Richard Lazarus). He developed the Cognitive Transactional Model of Stress called “the Stress theory”. The theory focuses on how the individual perceived and appraise stress in an event and not about the importance of the events ([Lazarus & Folkman, 1984](#)). The Transactional Model of Stress consists of five key factors:

1. Person Variables

[Lazarus and Folkman \(1984\)](#) defined person variables as the extent of a person to feel confident of mastery over the environment. They believed that these characteristics are the most important determinants of appraising a person. The descriptor is commitments, beliefs, and a sense of control.

2. Environmental Stressors

This is an external phenomenon that a person views as taxing or exceeding resources and endangering well-being. The descriptors are demands, constraints, resources, imminence, and ambiguity.

3. Cognitive Appraisals

This is defined as personal-social functioning, life satisfaction, mental and physical health. The descriptors are primary, secondary and reappraisal.

4. Coping Functions

Coping is “constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of a person” ([Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p.141](#)). The descriptors are confrontational coping, distancing, self-controlling, seeking social support, accepting responsibility, escape-avoidance, and positive reappraisal.

5. Adaptation Outcomes

These are three outcomes that can be viewed in short and long-term effects. The descriptors are personal-social functioning, life satisfaction, and health.

As a result, the fourth key factor of the Transactional Model of [Lazarus and Folkman \(1984\)](#) discusses more Coping functions. According to their research, the Coping function is the CS, which consists of the problem and emotion-focused coping:

1. The problem-focused coping is a state of condition where an individual collects information encountered on the problem and then selects the most appropriate ways to progress (either by oneself or with the help of the environment) ([Lazarus, 1999](#)). The information gathered by the individual can control a specific situation and provide solutions to resolve problems encountered by them resulting in positive outcomes.
2. Emotion-focused coping, on the other hand, is a process that emphasized social transactions and the transformation of a person. This transformation is not about changing the actual environment relationship of a person but the emphasis is on the mood of the individual at the moment of time where their emotions arise in a stressful event ([Lazarus, 1999](#)). The strategy believes that individual mood is adaptable through positive thinking and reviewing the situation at hand to make it less severe or threatening to the environment ([Lazarus & Folkman, 1991](#); [Lazarus, 1999](#)).

CS as a mediator

A moderating and mediating variable is distinguishable. The moderating variable will indicate a strong contingent effect on the independent-dependent variable relationship. Its purpose is to modify the original relationship between the two variables ([Sekaran & Bougie, 2013](#)). It concerns the effects of the strength and direction of the relation between a predictor and an outcome e.g. enhancing, reducing, or changing the influence of the predictor.

As for mediating variables (or intervening variables), they will explain the impact between the time they start operating, until the impact is felt and influence the dependent variables. Thus, there is a temporal quality or time dimension for the mediating variable ([Sekaran & Bougie, 2013](#)). It explained how or why questions exist between two variables are related. It is a process to understand the mechanism(s) of the unexpected effect of the variables with one another.

Overall, the problem-focused coping provides steps on how to reduce and remove the impact of problems while emotion-focused coping emphasized reducing the stress level ([Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010](#)). As such, CS will play two roles (mediating and dependent variables) for the investigation of expatriate stationed and working in Malaysia.

Job Performance

[Viswesvaran and Ones \(2000\)](#) explained Job Performance (JP) as the contribution and responsibility of the employees to deliver organizational goals. JP plays a role in overseeing the employee's performance. The employees' direction needs to be consistent with the organization's goals. They cannot have different goals because this can affect the organization's operation and reputation.

[Campbell \(1990\)](#) explained JP as the only conduct pertinent and related to the organization's objectives. It is the process involved in executing the task assigned to an individual rather than the after-effect of completion. [Motowidlo, Borman, and Schmidt \(1997\)](#) supported that the level of assistance provided to an employee plays a part to achieve organizational competence.

Researchers such as [Borman and Motowidlo \(1993\)](#) and [Caligiuri \(1997\)](#), were the first to use the multidimensional concept of expatriate JP, having similarities with the domestic setting of JP. [Caligiuri \(1997\)](#) explained in the taxonomy of expatriate JP that, the expatriate assignment involved both the task and contextual performance theories.

Furthermore, [Cardy and Dobbins in Williams \(2002\)](#) conceptualized JP as the result of work outcomes and job-relevant behaviors. Again, [Motowidlo \(2003\)](#), [Jex and Britt \(2008\)](#) explained that JP can be measured by terms of financial figures by using the combination of expected behaviors and task-related aspects.

However, [Harrison and Shaffer \(2005\)](#) believed that JP is the function of the amount of time and energy spent by an expatriate to his/her job. They say it consists of a multidimensional construct of task dimension and contextual dimension.

In the organizational context, several theories were developed and performance usually considered as a single construct which represented as "overall". In the development of JP theories, many researchers consider it as a complex multidimensional factor ([Campbell, 1990](#); [Austin & Villanova, 1992](#); [Grant, 1996](#)). Over time, several significant theories have separated JP into different models such as the eight-factor model ([Campbell, 1990](#)), the two-factor model which is a task dimension/contextual dimension model ([Borman & Motowidlo, 1993](#)) and a three-factor model ([Grant, 1996](#)).

As a result, several researchers supported the two-factor model. For example, [Katz and Kahn \(1978\)](#) explained that the two-factor model of JP consists of organizational behaviors of individuals (showing actual tasks performed and behaviors) that are based on discretionary. This belief was also supported by [Brief and Motowidlo's \(1986\)](#), prosocial organizational behavior and organizational citizenship like [Organs \(1988\)](#) and [George and Brief's \(1992\)](#). Organizational spontaneity also believed that the job's core task requirement can be distinctively separated into the two-factor model. In addition, [Borman and Motowidlo \(1993\)](#) explained the two-dimensional model separates JP into a task dimension and a contextual dimension respectively. They asserted that the task dimension explained the activities that concerned production such as transforming raw materials into products and services of the organization up to servicing and maintaining the core task requirements. While the contextual dimension is supporting the work environment which is directly connected to core tasks function.

[Borman and Motowidlo \(1993\)](#) explained that the two-factor model consists of task dimension and contextual dimension. According to the theory, there are three basic assumptions to distinguish between task and contextual performances ([Borman & Motowidlo, 1997](#); [Motowidlo & Schmit, 1999](#)). The first assumption stated that task performance is relevant for the job compared to the contextual performance that is identical across jobs. The second assumption stated that the task performance is related to ability and for contextual performance is to personality as well as motivation. The third assumption is the task performance is more recommended in creating in-role behavior while contextual performance is more discretionary in extra-role behavior.

From the above, it is seen that task performance is an individual's proficiency and showed the person's competence in handling the job within the organization's 'technical core'. The theory categorized employees into direct (blue-collar or production line worker), or indirect (white-collar or managers and staff personnel). Studies by [Borman and Motowidlo \(1993\)](#) and [Campbell, McCloy, Oppler, and Sager \(1993\)](#) affirmed that the task performance dimension stands for overall JP. They explained that job analytical term will show the incumbents needed to perform a task. This is supported by [Campbell, McCloy, Oppler & Sager \(1993\)](#) who explained that the task performance is the main individual's job-specific task proficiency. Although, [Katz and Kahn \(1978\)](#) believed that task performance is a role-prescribed behavior.

[Borman and Motowidlo's \(1993\)](#) definition of contextual performance dimension is that JP is not directly connected to the technical tasks or duties of a job. They explained that contextual behaviors assist to operate and support the environment with core technical function rather than the job. This is supported by [Brief and Motowidlo \(1986\)](#) which showed the activities required by individuals within the organization (assisting the co-workers, giving extra effort to accomplish the job in hand, be a good team player and other prosocial behaviors). These behaviors are connected to organizational citizenship, such as altruism, compliance with organization policies, integrated into contextual dimensions, all contributing to the effectiveness of the expatriate ([Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983](#)). The contextual activities contribute to the effectiveness of the expatriate by shaping the social and psychological context of the organization in the area of task activities and processes ([Borman & Motowidlo, 1993](#)).

Researchers such as [Borman and Motowidlo \(1993\)](#) and [Caligiuri \(1997\)](#) were the first to use the multidimensional concept of expatriate JP, having similarities with the domestic setting of JP. [Caligiuri \(1997\)](#) explained in the taxonomy of expatriate JP that, the expatriate assignments involve both task and contextual performance theories. The task performance theory of expatriate assignments involves; negotiating joint ventures, managing sales accounts, training host countries on new technologies, and starting a production operation. While the contextual performance theory involves; establishing and maintaining good working relationships with employees, developing relationships with the host country, and communicating effectively and keeping others informed. [Caligiuri \(1997\)](#) explained further that the expatriates need to have some specific tasks to achieve in their international assignments. This is referred to as expatriate-specific performance theory. This involves; replacement planning, transferring information, language and culture proficiency, establishing good relationships with the host nation, and fostering a commitment to the organization in the subsidiary.

From the foregoing studies, the use of Job Performance (Task, Contextual and Expatriate assignment specific) is to investigate EE and it can be served as the dependent variable.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) is generally on the employees and organizational performance. The employees are the stakeholder and the backbone of the organization as they handle business and operational activities. The main focus of OCB is the positive attitude employee exhibits out of their volition in supporting colleagues within the organization because the action is beneficial to the organization. [Podsakoff, Whiting, Podsakoff, and Blume \(2009\)](#) explained that the employee's involvement of OCB benefits the organization to increase productivity, efficiency, customer satisfaction, reduce costs and rates of turnover.

[Organ \(1988\)](#) defined Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) as "individual behavior that is discretionary and not explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, which aggregately promotes the effective functioning of the organization". OCB is concerned with the extra role, contribution, and effort made by employees in their work to the organization ([Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine & Bachrach, 2000](#); [Feather & Rauter, 2004](#)). However, [Organ \(1997\)](#) disagreed with this definition because he believes that OCB should be a part of employees' work responsibility and function.

The extra-role of behavior theory concerned the discretionary, contribution and effort made by an individual, which is not explicitly recognized by the formal reward system. This kind of action increases the productivity and efficiency of the organization. In light of this, the extra-role of behavior theory will be employed in this variable to measure the employees' performance within the organization. According to this theory, there are different types of extra-role of behavior, such as:

1. Outstanding performance; which is exceeding beyond specified role requirements and responsibility ([Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2000](#)).
2. Exhibiting good attitude; which is a positive contribution to the functioning of the firm; [Organ \(1997\)](#), [Feather and Rauter \(2004\)](#) and [Bowling \(2010\)](#).
3. Impression management behavior; which is creating a positive impression for a worker's own interest ([Bolino, 1999](#)).

All these extra-roles of behaviors include setting up a good impression for self-interest based on the job description, work duty, and others. The benefits are to provide a high team spirit and support among employees especially when the organization faced crises and difficult moments.

[Organ \(1988\)](#) mentioned that the extra-role of behavior theory of the OCB consists of five measurements:

1. Altruism:

The discretionary behaviors helping an individual on a duty.

2. Conscientiousness:

The impersonal behaviors following the organization's rules and procedures in carrying their duty.

3. Sportsmanship:

The behaviors of refraining from complaining about trivial matters or filing up petty grievances. Sportsmanship as “a willingness to tolerate the inevitable inconveniences and impositions of work without complaining.”

4. Courtesy:

Consult with others before taking any action.

5. Civic virtue:

Concerned about involvement and keeping up with the organization’s matters.

Also, [Organ, Podsakoff, and MacKenzie \(2006\)](#) explained the benefits of OCB as stated in the extra-role of behavior. They consist of:

1. Enhance productivity (helping new co-workers; helping colleagues meet deadlines).
2. Free up resources (autonomous, cooperative employees give managers more time to clear their work; helpful behavior facilitates cohesiveness (as part of group-maintenance behavior).
3. Attract and retain good employees (through creating and maintaining a friendly, supportive working environment and a sense of belonging).
4. Create social capital (better communication and stronger networks facilitate accurate information transfer and improve efficiency).

Other than that, there are some other distinctive studies done on different dimensions supporting the extra-role of behavior theory of the OCB, such as those by [Williams and Anderson \(1991\)](#); [Podsakoff and MacKenzie \(1994\)](#); [Van Dyne, Graham and Dienesch. \(1994\)](#); [Moorman and Blakely \(1995\)](#) and [Podsakoff et al. \(2000\)](#).

[Williams and Anderson \(1991\)](#) are of the view that the different expressions of the OCB in the extra-role of behavior theory are categorized into; (a) Organization (OCB-O) and (b) Individuals (OCB-I). OCB-I is considered as one dimension in the extra-role of behavior ([Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1994](#)). This type of behavior is like altruism and courtesy ([Podsakoff et al., 2000](#)). OCB-O, on the other hand, comprises of multiple dimensions such as organizational compliance, sportsmanship, and civic virtue ([Organ et al., 2006](#)).

A lot of contributions have been made by using OCB as a variable in research by different scholars in the areas of psychology and organizational behavior ([Podsakoff et al., 2000](#)). For the past forty-four decades, [Katz \(1964\)](#) proposed that an organization’s success does not depend only on job descriptions and performance, but also with voluntary efforts of employees to assist other co-workers, voicing suggestions and protecting the organization. Furthermore, [Smith, Organ, and Near \(1983\)](#) have conceptualized these discretionary behaviors as an act of citizenship assumed to be beneficial to some individuals and the organization. [Organ \(1988\)](#) described these discretionary behaviors as OCBs or good soldier syndrome. [Vigoda-Gadot \(2006\)](#) defined good soldier syndrome as the willingness of people to invest effort and energy in their social environment beyond any formal requirement with no expectation of formal rewards.

[Organ et al. \(2006\)](#), mentioned that OCBs can have crucial impacts on the individual, group and organizational effectiveness. According to [Katz \(1964\)](#), there are three basic types of behaviors crucial for organization functioning:

1. People must be induced to enter and remain within the system;
2. They must carry out specific role requirements in a dependable fashion, and;
3. There must be innovation and spontaneous activity that goes beyond role prescriptions.

He further stated that an organization depended on an individual’s blueprints of prescribed behaviors and a very fragile social system. Citizenship behavior means that every factory, office or bureau depends on acts of cooperation, helpfulness, suggestions, gestures of goodwill, altruism, and other instances.

[Turnipseed and Murkison \(1996\)](#) explained that these measurements are important to maintain and improve the organizational variables in the area of job satisfaction, system maintenance, and productivity. As such, their findings showed where managers adopt the extra-role of behavior measurement, to create or enhance a positive work environment than using force in the recruitment/selection process, and also use socialization to determine employees’ behavior.

OCB will be a part of EE and will be served as the dependent variable. It will be used to measure the discretionary, contribution and effort of expatriates stationed and working in Malaysia. This measurement will consist of the followings:

1. OCB-O – Compliance, Sportsmanship, and Civic virtue
2. OCB-I – Altruism and Courtesy

Recommended Hypotheses

Overall, based on the previously listed studies, the following hypotheses are recommended as the alternative hypothesis statements. In that regard, the hypotheses are presented as follows:

H1: There is a positive causal relationship of JI on CS, JP, and OCB.

H2: There is a positive causal relationship of P on CS, JP, and OCB.

H3: There is a positive causal relationship of SN on CS, JP, and OCB.

H4: CS mediates the causal relationship of JI, P, and SN on JP and OCB.

Research Gaps and Future

The previous findings have shown that Coping is identified as one of the factors affecting the Expatriate Effectiveness. As mentioned before, Coping is an individual's effort to master conditions of harm, threat or challenge that are appraised or perceived as exceeding or taxing his or her resources (Monat & Lazarus 1991). The Coping Strategies (CS) is to be used by individuals to solve problems faced by them because individuals are working consistently hard and this creates pressure for them to control the stress environment (Connor-Smith & Flachsbart, 2007). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) proposed to use CS in organizational literature as a mediator called the Transactional Model. The model was used to investigate the relationship between Job Performance (JP) on Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB).

There are numerous studies on JI, P, SN, CS, JP, and OCB independently. Even by the end of 2017, there are a few published studies examining the mediating role of CS on the relationship of JP on OCB. This is why it is proposed to use different factors from another study to cover a lot of ground and to show a relationship of the independent on dependent variables. This is to improve the research and make it more relevant and reliable.

However, just a few are using CS as the mediating variable. Also, there are a few research in Malaysian context in regards to expatriate Effectiveness, which is why there is a need for more research in order for them to become more effective in undertaking their international assignments and to reduce the failure rate. For a starting point, future research is advised to use and adopt CS as a mediating variable for the investigation of expatriate stationed and working in Malaysia.

CONCLUSION

This paper has discussed and covered several different concepts, theories, research gaps and future research concerning expatriates and organizations in Malaysia. The research gaps are on CS as one of the factors affecting the expatriate effectiveness and there are a few research in the Malaysian context. It is expected to establish whether there is a causal relationship of ID on EE and whether ID mediating by CS on both dependent variables of JP and OCB. This will produce theoretical contributions to expatriate literature and provide useful information on international assignments. The results can help host countries, organizations and expatriates realize the importance of ID and EE facilitate the success. Furthermore, it shall contribute to implications for future research and practice in this field for other researchers to consider in their research.

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