

Foreign academic adaptation: Emotional intelligence and resilience perspectives

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Abstract

This research navigates the dynamic terrain of global academia, where an increasing number of scholars seek international opportunities for diverse academic growth. Recognizing a significant gap in the existing literature, this study proposes to delve into the often-overlooked dimension of adaptive performance among foreign academics. Building on the foundation of cross-cultural adaptation theory, the research empirically tests the interplay between emotional intelligence and psychological resilience in shaping the adaptive performance of foreign lecturers. In an effort to ground this exploration, a structured questionnaire was administered to 800 lecturers based in tier 1 cities, including new tier 1 cities, in China. These cities were strategically chosen due to their dense populations and being hubs for a majority of higher educational institutes. The ensuing analysis, conducted through PLS-SEM, yielded compelling evidence affirming the pivotal roles of emotional intelligence and psychological resilience as influential factors in determining adaptive performance. Crucially, the study unraveled the significant mediating role played by psychological resilience in linking emotional intelligence and adaptive performance. These findings not only contribute to the academic discourse but also offer actionable insights for practitioners.

Keywords: Adaptive Performance, Academic, Cross-cultural Adaption Theory, Emotional Intelligence; Psychological Resilience

Introduction

In the ever-changing global academic landscape, an increasing number of scholars and researchers are exploring opportunities beyond their home institutions, driven by the appeal of international exposure and the potential for diverse academic prospects. This emerging trend in academia mirrors the evolving dynamics of higher education and heightened competitiveness (Zhang et al., 2022; Welch, 2021). This shift has prompted essential inquiries into the motivations, challenges, and transformative impacts associated with academics' international migration (Cai & Hall, 2016).

The discourse surrounding foreign academics in China has evolved over the years. In the 1950s, they were referred to as "sulian zhuanjia" (Soviet experts), transitioning in the 1990s to terms such as "waiguo wenjiao zhuanjia" (foreign cultural and educational experts) and "waiji jiaoshi" (foreign-nationality teachers) (Xu et al., 2022). Recently, the term "waiji rencai" (foreign talents) has gained prominence in national and local talent programs. Current policies primarily target researchers with foreign nationalities, particularly those of non-Chinese ethnicity, especially from Western countries. The early 2000s witnessed China's commitment to establishing world-class universities through initiatives like Project 211, Project 985, and the 'Double First-class' Project (Han & Xu, 2019). Achieving this goal hinges significantly on recruiting foreign faculty and students and adopting Western academic practices and values, influenced by national policy evaluations and international university rankings (Marginson & van der Wende, 2007). In the late 2000s, China introduced the Thousand Talents Plan, a systematic recruitment effort aiming to attract foreign talents over a decade. The program aims to bring in individuals with established academic records, committing to a consecutive period, with a minimum obligation of three years (or nine months per year for long-term project candidates) (Zhao, 2012).

Despite arising trends, particularly regarding the and cultural diversity and quality assurance of these 'imported' foreign academics, challenges have been noted in their adaptation to the Chinese academic system (Ma & Luan, 2012). They often perceive themselves as potential sources of conflict in their interactions with domestic academics and administrators (Poole & Xu, 2022) contributing to feelings of isolation. Language barriers, especially in the context of applying for research funding, present a common hurdle (Braun Střelcová, Cai, & Shen, 2022). Furthermore, researchers in the social sciences have raised concerns about diminishing academic freedom, with many encountering challenges in adapting to the local research administration system. Non-professional challenges encompass issues related to cultural integration, such as conflicts in value systems, as well as navigating complex legal procedures, including lengthy visa and residence permit applications (Chen, Sun & Zhu, 2022). These challenges, while present, are integral to the intricate and evolving experiences of foreign academics contributing to the academic landscape in China.

The literature on international mobility often overlooks a critical standardizing factor: adaptive performance. Pulakos et al. (2006) define "adaptive performance" as an employee's capacity to establish interpersonal connections, acquire the knowledge and skills needed to adapt to changes and new responsibilities, handle crises calmly, and creatively solve problems. Adaptive performance extends beyond classical task and contextual performance management and is particularly valuable in dynamic work environments. Various studies have explored factors influencing adaptive performance

in employees, highlighting the relationship between individual characteristics and adaptive performance. These factors include the big five personality traits (Rowe, Arghode, & Bhattacharyya, 2023), self-efficacy, cognitive capacity and experience and knowledge (Dheer & Castrogiovanni, 2023). However, existing scholarly work tends to overemphasize the impact of personality traits and static variables while neglecting to address the specific factors influencing foreign employees' adaptive performance in a new workplace.

Emotional intelligence, based on concepts proposed by Mayer and Salovey (1997), refers to an individual's adeptness in identifying, comprehending, and managing both their own emotions and those of others. It acts as an effective gauge to assess how someone copes with stressful situations and overcomes obstacles by embracing a positive mindset (Zhi, Wang, & Wang, 2023). An individual's capacity to navigate ambiguous scenarios by regulating negative emotions and employing behaviors that cultivate positive emotions significantly impacts their career success (Pirsoul et al., 2023). This proficiency proves crucial in diverse work environments, aiding foreign employees in navigating various cultural intricacies, interpreting social cues, and adapting their behavior accordingly. According to Wong and Law (2002), this concept is subdivided into four dimensions: self-emotion appraisal, appraisal of others' emotions, emotional utilization, and regulation of emotions. Despite its importance, there is a scarcity of empirical studies investigating the relationship between emotional intelligence and adaptive performance. To address these gaps, this study proposes that the cultivation and application of emotional intelligence substantially augment an individual's ability to adapt and flourish in a foreign professional environment.

The emergence of positive psychology has drawn attention to beneficial traits such as resilience, a crucial factor influencing how employees respond in dynamic work environments. Psychological resilience, defined as the ability to exert high effort and persistence in initiating, advocating, and implementing new ideas, has become a focal point in understanding individual behavior within organizations (Ahmad et al., 2019). Despite a growing body of evidence supporting the value of positive psychological traits in organizational settings, the specific role of resilience in individual innovation remains underexplored in the existing literature. The contemporary work landscape, marked by rapid changes, places a premium on resilience as employees are not just expected to cope with setbacks but are also required to thrive despite adversities. The intensified pressures, increased competition, and blurred lines between work and home demand exceptional performance for both personal and organizational success (Zeng et al., 2023). Resilient employees exhibit engagement, determination, and a proactive attitude towards learning and growth. Previous research underscores that these qualities provide a competitive advantage and contribute to achieving organizational objectives effectively. Resilience empowers organizations to adapt to the dynamic needs and challenges of the environment. In essence, having a workforce with a strong, intrinsic sense of self and resilience is pivotal for both individual employee performance and the organization's ability to navigate the rapidly changing demands of the business landscape. These indications underscore the need for research to explore the impact of psychological resilience in foreign academics on their adaptive performance.

In summary, our study aims to explore a new trajectory, focusing on the following key objectives:

1. To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and adaptive performance
2. To examine the relationship between psychological resilience and adaptive performance
3. To explore the potential mediating role of psychological resilience in the relationship between emotional intelligence and adaptive performance.

By collecting empirical data from the respective parties (i.e., foreign academics working in China), this study makes significant contributions to both theoretical and practical domains. Theoretically, it advances the understanding of foreign lecturers' adaptive performance by employing the cross-cultural adaptation theory as a conceptual framework. By doing so, the study provides a nuanced exploration of the intricate dynamics at play in the cross-cultural academic setting of Chinese universities. On the practical front, the research offers valuable insights with broad implications. It enhances the knowledge base for higher-education institutions, providing a framework to better understand and support foreign lecturers in adapting to the Chinese academic environment. Policymakers can draw upon the study's findings to inform policies that foster a conducive and supportive atmosphere for international educators. Lastly, foreign lecturers themselves can benefit from the practical insights offered, gaining a deeper understanding of the role of emotional intelligence and psychological resilience in optimizing their adaptive performance within Chinese universities.

Literature Review

International Academic and Globalized Market

This is the first paragraph under the secondary heading. The extensive body of literature examining international scholars employed by higher education institutions globally has provided valuable insights into their role within the academic landscape. This is evident through substantial research conducted in countries like Australia, the UK, and the US. Institutional cultures play a crucial role in shaping the experiences of international academics, particularly during the transitional phase between their native culture and the local environment. The employment of international academics encompasses diverse modes of academic production, ranging from interdisciplinary group-based projects to self-contained projects (Sibawaihi & Fernandes, 2023). Additionally, the previous international experience of global academics holds significance, not only for personal growth but also for its impact on students. The cross-cultural adaptation experience enhances lecturers' ability to understand and engage with students from diverse cultural backgrounds globally (Richardson & McKenna, 2003). However, some international scholars may opt to leave their overseas positions due to dissatisfaction with host institutions and a lack of integration into the new cultural context (Li, 2021).

With a growing body of empirical research dedicated to international scholars in China, scholars typically adopt an interdisciplinary perspective to analyze motivations, challenges, and the policy context underpinning their experiences (Han, 2022). Chinese policy, often a focal point of research, plays a pivotal role in shaping the specific field. Policies designed to attract talent, such as initiatives like "Young Thousand Talents" and "the Thirty Provisions" in Shanghai, have yielded positive outcomes in talent

acquisition (Chen, Sun, & Zhu, 2022). For international academics, motivations primarily revolve around career advancement, professional opportunities, and personal connections. Offered tenured positions and more favorable working conditions than those available in the US, these professionals are inclined to embrace the opportunities presented by China to realize their academic aspirations (Ha & Fry, 2021). Notably, foreign academics in China face various challenges, including administrative complexities, difficulties in cultural adaptation, and instances of 'cross-cultural misfit.'

Cross-Cultural Adaption Theory

The cross-cultural adaptation theory, encompassing both the cross-cultural adaptation stage and development model, stands as a well-established framework extensively explored in multidisciplinary literature. As demonstrated by Wilczewski and Alon (2023), utilize this theory to gain insights into various aspects of cross-cultural experiences.

In the realm of cross-cultural adaptation development theory, the focus lies on an individual's subjective experience and dynamic adjustment to a new environment. Theoretical tools, such as Ward's sociocultural and psychological theory and Berry's acculturation strategy, contribute to understanding the nuanced dimensions of this process. Ward and Kennedy (1999) introduced the theory of sociocultural and psychological adaptation, emphasizing the interconnectedness of these dimensions. The Sociocultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS) was subsequently proposed as a comprehensive tool influenced by measurable and predictive factors.

Extending these foundational ideas, Berry (2005) underscores the importance of considering an individual's cultural background and the societal conditions of their origin in acculturation studies. The concept of acculturation strategy, covering integration, assimilation, marginalization, or separation, was introduced, emphasizing the impact of cultural and social dynamics. This conceptual framework has found application in corporate settings, offering valuable insights into how individuals adapt across diverse contexts.

Despite the widespread application of Berry's theory in categorizing acculturation strategies, there is occasional oversight of the nuanced experiences of individuals and their interactions with their environment. This study aims to address this gap by exploring how foreign academics perceive and respond to institutional culture in Chinese universities, unveiling unique acculturation strategies in a cross-cultural setting. The integration of adaptive performance within the cross-cultural adaptation theory is justified by the inherent connection between an individual's adaptability and their performance outcomes in a cross-cultural environment. While examining emotional intelligence and psychological resilience as pivotal constructs, the study explores their roles in understanding and managing emotions within the cross-cultural setting, thereby contributing to the lecturer's adaptive performance (Zhi, Wang, & Wang, 2023; Ahmad et al., 2019).

Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Resilience

Salovey and Mayer (1990) were among the early proponents of the term "emotional intelligence," defining it as "the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to

monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (p. 189). The literature underscores that individuals possessing high emotional intelligence demonstrate an enhanced capacity to comprehend and manage their emotions, significantly aiding in navigating stress, adversity, and challenging circumstances (Ullah et al., 2023). Their proficiency in emotional management leads to a wider array of adaptive coping strategies, nurturing psychological resilience when facing difficulties. Particularly for foreign lecturers, a high level of emotional intelligence acts as a catalyst, facilitating adaptation to diverse cultural environments and managing the inherent challenges of teaching abroad. The capacity to regulate emotions based on emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in coping with stress related to cultural adjustments, language barriers, and unfamiliar academic systems (Zhang et al., 2022). This ability to manage stress significantly contributes to their psychological resilience, enabling lecturers to rebound from setbacks and persist in the face of the unique challenges experienced in foreign academic settings. In line with the highlights of cross-cultural adaption theory (Berry, 2005), it remains imperative for international academics in China to cultivate a robust level of emotional intelligence to fortify their psychological resilience, aiding them in surmounting the challenges encountered throughout their academic career. Therefore, the first hypothesis under investigation in this study is:

- H1** There is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological resilience.

Emotional Intelligence and Adaptive Performance

The proposal for a positive relationship between the emotional intelligence of foreign lecturers and their adaptive performance is substantiated by several key factors. Firstly, the cross-cultural adaptability fostered by high emotional intelligence equips foreign lecturers with the ability to navigate and thrive in diverse cultural settings, aiding in their adjustment to the complexities of teaching in a foreign academic environment (Chu & Zhu, 2023). Moreover, their adeptness in effective communication, understanding, and managing emotions not only in themselves but also in others enables foreign lecturers to bridge cultural gaps, fostering more meaningful connections with students and colleagues (Aliane & Zakariya, 2023). This skill is pivotal in tailoring teaching methods to accommodate the varied needs of a diverse student body. This resilience enables lecturers to effectively cope with cultural and professional challenges associated with teaching in a foreign academic setting. As highlighted in the cross-cultural adaptation theory (Berry, 2005), an individual's ability to engage with colleagues from various cultural backgrounds, coupled with effective leadership qualities often associated with high emotional intelligence, contributes to innovation and adaptability in performing daily tasks. These combined factors highlight a positive correlation between the emotional intelligence of foreign lecturers and their effective ability to overcome the challenges encountered in a diverse academic context.

- H2** There is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and adaptive performance.

Psychological Resilience and Adaptive Performance

Resilience, viewed as the ability to positively adapt in the face of adversity, is reflected

in how individuals navigate challenges (Britt et al., 2016). Some scholars characterize resilience as a distinctive trait that enables individuals to bounce back after encountering difficulties (Fisher, Ragsdale, & Fisher, 2019). In this study, we contend that lecturers working abroad often confront significant cultural differences, and psychological resilience plays a pivotal role in facilitating their adaptation and effective coping with the stress, uncertainties, and challenges associated with acclimating to a new cultural environment.

Moreover, psychological resilience equips lecturers with the flexibility and adaptability required to tailor their teaching methodologies, communication styles, and approaches to meet the diverse needs of students in an overseas context (Schilbach, Baethge, & Rigotti, 2021). Individuals who exhibit higher psychological resilience often showcase improved problem-solving abilities, enabling them to face challenges and devise innovative solutions in unfamiliar or unexpected situations (Liang & Chao, 2021). Their resilience directly impacts their ability to adapt, grow, and perform effectively amid uncertainties, contributing significantly to their overall adaptive performance. Thus, lecturers with higher psychological resilience are more likely to persist, navigate difficulties, and maintain a positive attitude, fostering their adaptive performance in their overseas roles (Han, 2022; Cai & Hall, 2016). As mentioned in cross-cultural adaption theory, university lecturers with enhanced interpersonal skills, cultivated through resilience, aid in building relationships with students and colleagues in diverse cultural settings, fostering better engagement and collaboration, ultimately impacting their adaptive performance positively in overseas teaching roles.

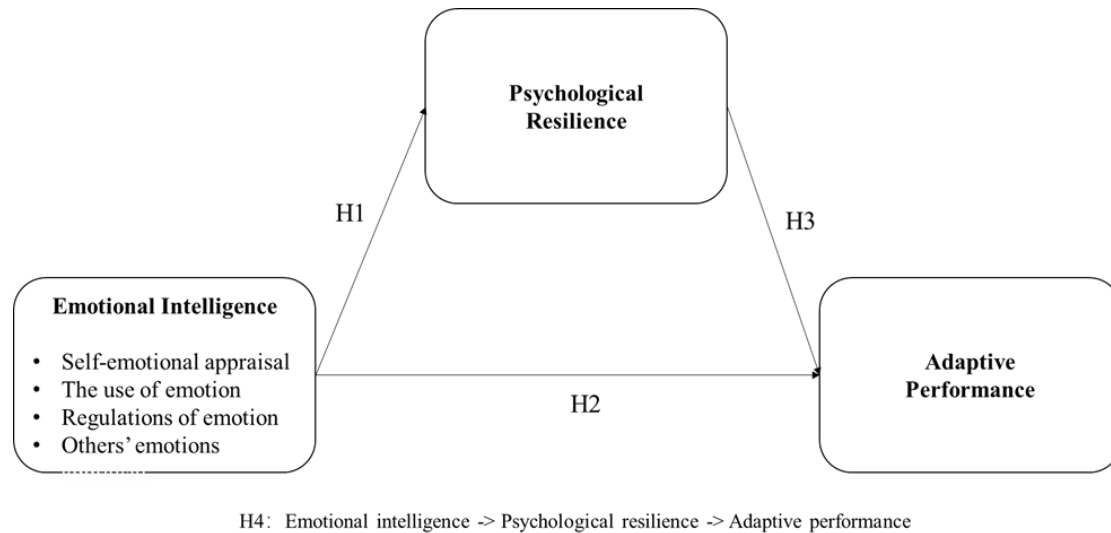
H3 There is a positive relationship between psychological resilience and adaptive performance.

Mediating Role of Psychological Resilience

This study contributes to the current knowledge by proposing psychological resilience as a crucial mechanism that bridges the relationship between emotional intelligence and adaptive performance. This proposition is supported by several key observations. Firstly, emotional intelligence, encompassing the comprehension and regulation of emotions, significantly contributes to stress management. Psychological resilience aligns with this stress management capability, acting as a coping mechanism to navigate stress effectively and subsequently enhancing adaptive performance (Smith et al., 2020). Moreover, existing research has highlighted the correlation between high emotional intelligence and a diverse array of adaptive coping strategies. Psychological resilience, being a fundamental aspect of coping, further reinforces these strategies, empowering individuals to effectively overcome challenges and setbacks, thereby positively influencing their adaptive performance (Luo et al., 2022; Van Dam, 2013). Additionally, recent findings underscore that emotional intelligence correlates with heightened adaptability and flexibility (Parker et al., 2015). In this context, psychological resilience acts as a mediator, strengthening this adaptability and subsequently enhancing individuals' capacity to perform adaptively in diverse and evolving situations (Kim, 2020). Furthermore, emotional intelligence significantly contributes to improved social relationships. Psychological resilience strengthens these relationships and collaborations, providing essential support amid stressors and setbacks, thereby fostering an environment conducive to adaptive performance (Luo et al., 2022). In light of the above evidence, the following hypothesis is formulated:

- H4** Psychological resilience mediates the path between emotional intelligence and adaptive performance.

Figure 1: Research framework



Methodology

Data Collection

While precise and up-to-date data is currently unavailable, Ministry of Education figures from 2019 estimate the presence of over 18,000 foreign academics in China (Chinesedmobility.com, 2023). In line with that, the study focuses on the population of foreign faculty members employed in the Chinese higher education sector, including both public and private institutions for several reasons. First, China is drawn for a variety of interconnected professional, cultural, social, and personal reasons (Chen & Li, 2019). Second, cultural and social connections are often intertwined with individual professional pursuits (Guo & Lei, 2020). Third, the nature of the teaching profession in China, characterized by frequent interactions with students and colleagues, combined with the demanding nature of the tasks, creates a suitable environment for assessing emotional intelligence and its impact on psychological resilience and social adaption.

Due to the impracticality of collecting data from the entire population, non-probability sampling techniques, specifically convenience sampling and snowball sampling, were employed to gather data from a targeted sample. An online questionnaire was distributed to a total of 1000 faculty members working in tier 1 (such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen) (including new tier 1, such as Chengdu, Chongqing, Hangzhou, Wuhan, Nanjing, Tianjin, Suzhou, Xi'an, Changsha, Shenyang, Qingdao, Zhengzhou, Dalian, Dongguan, Ningbo) cities in China between April and September 2023. These cities were selected due to their denser populations and because they are home to a majority of higher education institutions. The distribution of respondents is illustrated in Table 1, where 203 data points were collected from four Tier 1 cities, and 507 data points were gathered across 15 emerging Tier 1 cities. From the total of 800 respondents, majority of them are female (56.88%), aged between 36-

40 years old (26.63%), hold PhD degree (100%), have been working in a Chinese higher education institution for 3-4 years (29.50%), and currently in the position of associate professor (38.75%).

Table 1: Distribution of respondents across cities

Tier 1 Cities	No of Respondents	New Tier 1 Cities	No of Respondents
Beijing	58	Chengdu	45
Shanghai	45	Chongqing	48
Guangzhou	44	Hangzhou	44
Shenzhen	56	Wuhan	45
Total	203	Nanjing	43
		Tianjin	48
		Suzhou	32
		Xi'an	46
		Changsha	51
		Shenyang	37
		Qingdao	35
		Zhengzhou	33
		Dalian	39
		Dongguan	28
		Ningbo	23
		Total	597

Instruments

Emotional intelligence was assessed using the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) developed by Law, Wong and Song (2004). The WLEIS consists of 16 items designed to evaluate four distinct dimensions, including self-emotion appraisal, others' emotion appraisal, the use of emotions, and emotion regulation. Psychological resilience was measured using a ten-item scale adapted from a previously validated Chinese version and further refined by Qing et al. (2022). Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with nine statements regarding their typical responses to challenging situations. The measurement of adaptive performance was based on a 35-item scale developed by Charbonnier-Voirin and Roussel (2012).

Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations in this research were meticulously addressed. First, formal procedures were followed to secure the necessary permissions for accessing information from the chosen higher educational institutions in China. Additionally, participants were thoroughly informed about the research's aims, purpose, and objectives, with a strong emphasis on maintaining their anonymity and confidentiality throughout the study. Discrimination based on age, gender, or race was rigorously prevented at every stage of this research, ensuring fairness and equity. The research also complied with local rules and regulations specific to the China higher education sector. Furthermore, careful measures were taken to ensure the accuracy, reliability, and validity of data at each phase of the research study, upholding the highest standards of research integrity.

Results

The collected data underwent initial examination using SPSS (version 29) to assess respondents' demographic information and identify potential common method variance. Subsequently, SmartPLS version 4 was employed to investigate the hypothesized relationships through partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) (Ringle et al., 2023). PLS-SEM is a well-accepted approach in the social sciences, particularly suitable for intricate research models involving formative and reflective constructs, as well as higher-order constructs and mediators (Hair et al., 2022; Low et al., 2023). Our selection of PLS-SEM is further supported by its explorative-predictive nature (Chin et al., 2020), aligning effectively with the scope of our research.

Common Method Variance

Considering the cross-sectional design of this study, we employed two statistical approaches to assess and address common method variance (CMV). Firstly, Harman's single-factor test was conducted, revealing that the variance explained by the first factor accounted for 37.9%, which is below the threshold of 50%. This outcome suggests that CMV is not a significant issue in this study (Podsakoff et al., 2012). Additionally, the results of a thorough collinearity examination, as presented in Table 2, demonstrate that the variance inflation factor (VIF) values ranged from 1.432 to 1.892, well below the threshold of 3.33 (Kock, 2015). This provides further confirmation that CMV is not a concern in our dataset.

Measurement Model

From the measurement model findings, it indicated that 11 indicators of internal consistency reliability (i.e., Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability), exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, affirming the reliability of the measures (Hair et al., 2022). Additionally, the construct loadings surpassed the threshold of 0.708 (Hair et al., 2022). Furthermore, we assessed the indicators' reliability by squaring the relevant loading values and their respective squared values, demonstrating the measures' adequate reliability (Hair et al., 2022). Moreover, each construct exhibited an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value exceeding 0.5 (Hair et al., 2022), indicating strong convergent validity of the measures. For discriminant validity assessment, we utilized the HTMT. As detailed in Table 3, none of the HTMT values exceeded the conservative threshold of 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015), thereby establishing the discriminant validity of the constructs.

We then employed a two-stage approach to investigate emotional intelligence and its four sub-dimensions, namely self-emotion appraisal, use of emotion, regulation of emotion, and appraisal of others' emotions. Following the assessment guidelines for the higher-order construct, we first assessed convergent validity using a global-item measure. The obtained score of 0.737 indicates that all four dimensions can collectively explain more than 50% of the variance in emotional intelligence (refer to Table 4). Additionally, the VIF values for the sub-dimensions ranged from 1.523 to 2.392, which is below the threshold of 3.33. This suggests that collinearity is not a concern in this dataset. Finally, all sub-dimensions were found to be statistically significant, with weight values ranging from 0.211 to 0.671, at $p < 0.001$.

Structural Model

We evaluated the structural model by examining the potential collinearity among the predictors. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for all the combination paths, as presented in Table 5 (Hair et al., 2022), were below 3.33, indicating that collinearity was not an issue in the data. To assess the significance of the inter-construct relationships, we employed bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples (Hair et al., 2019b). As depicted in Table 5, this study revealed a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological resilience (H1: $\beta = 0.221$; $p < 0.001$). Additionally, as predicted, psychological resilience (H2: $\beta = 0.215$; $p < 0.01$) and emotional intelligence (H3: $\beta = 0.384$; $p < 0.001$) were found to be significant predictors of adaptive performance. The mediating effect of psychological resilience is found significantly in mediating the path between emotional intelligence and adaptive performance (H4: $\beta = 0.167$; $p < 0.001$). Therefore, H1-H4 are supported. When assessing the coefficient of determinations, the results indicated that 48.6% of the variance in psychological resilience is explained by emotional intelligence, and 52% of the variance in adaptive performance is explained by the combined effect of emotional intelligence and psychological resilience. In terms of effect sizes, it was observed that emotional intelligence exhibited a slightly higher effect size ($f^2 = 0.542$) than psychological resilience in explaining adaptive performance. Finally, the PLSpredict procedure was utilized to evaluate the model's predictive relevance (Chin et al., 2020). The Q^2_{predict} values for both psychological resilience ($Q^2 = 0.303$) and adaptive performance ($Q^2 = 0.387$) exceeded zero, demonstrating the model's predictive relevance.

Table 2: Reliability and convergent validity

Latent variable	Item statement	Loading	FC	CA	CR	AVE
Emotional Intelligence						
<i>Self-emotion Appraisal</i>	SA1: I know when to share my personal problems with others	0.524	1.543	0.824	0.941	0.841
	SA2: I know why my mood changes	0.648				
	SA3: When I experience positive emotions, I know how to maintain them	0.634				
	SA4: I can control my emotions	0.574				
<i>The Use of Emotion</i>	TE1: Some major events in my life have made me realize again what is important in life and what is not	0.646	1.432	0.911	0.954	0.838
	TE2: When I am in a positive mood, I can think of new ideas	0.639				
	TE3: Emotional experience is one of the things that makes life meaningful to me	0.630				
	TE4: When my mood changes, I find new possibilities	0.635				
<i>Regulations of Emotion</i>	RE1: I help others when they are feeling down and make them feel better	0.655	1.238	0.905	0.970	0.800
	RE2: I try to make a good impression on others	0.623				
	RE3: I seek activities that make me happy	0.657				
	RE4: I feel like I can do most of the things I do well	0.701				
<i>Others' Emotions Appraisal</i>	OE1: I am aware of extraverbal messages expressed by others	0.722	1.024	0.915	0.923	0.750
	OE2: By looking at their facial expressions, I can tell how people are feeling at the moment.	0.706				
	OE3: I can tell how people are feeling just by listening to the tone of their voice.	0.743				
	OE4: I can tell how others are feeling just by observing them.	0.618				
Psychological Resilience	PR1: I have confidence in myself	0.666	1.892	0.907	0.872	0.629
	PR2: I can easily adjust in a difficult situation	0.601				
	PR3: I am able to persevere	0.634				
	PR4: After setbacks, I can easily pick up where I left off	0.612				

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Adaptive Performance	PR5: I am resilient	0.600	0.927	0.760
	PR6: I can cope well with unexpected problems	0.601		
	PR7: I appreciate myself	0.657		
	PR8: I can handle a lot at the same time	0.710		
	PR9: I believe in myself	0.812		
	AP1: I am able to achieve total focus on the situation to act quickly	0.706		
	AP2: I analyse possible solutions and their ramifications quickly to select the most appropriate one	0.806		
	AP3: I quickly decide on the actions to take to resolve the problem	0.795		
	AP4: I am not in a position to be able to respond quickly	0.819		
	AP5: I can only work efficiently in a comfortable environment	0.725		
	AP6: I sometimes reach my physical limits to accomplish an urgent task	0.781		
	AP7: I feel at ease even if my tasks change and occur at a very fast pace	0.726		
	AP8: I keep my cool in situations where I am required to make many decisions	0.766		
	AP9: Having to take on additional work unexpectedly makes me very anxious	0.780		
	AP10: I look for solutions by having a calm discussion with colleagues	0.771		
	AP11: Work-related stress does not impact the quality of what I do	0.737		
	AP12: My colleagues ask my advice regularly when situations are difficult because of my self-control	0.655		
	AP13: I do not hesitate to go against established ideas to propose an innovative solution	0.727		
	AP14: I use a variety of sources/types of information to come up with an innovative solution	0.637		
	AP15: Whatever the problem to be solved, I never use anything but well-known methods	0.777		
	AP16: I develop new tools and methods to resolve new problems	0.856		
	AP17: Within my department, people rely on me to suggest a new solution	0.753		
	AP18: I wait for more accurate information from my superior before acting	0.637		
	AP19: I contribute to the stability of my team by driving others toward our priority assignments	0.753		

AP20: I easily reorganize my work to adapt to the new circumstances	0.662
AP21: Uncertain or unpredictable work situations impair my ability to act	0.767
AP22: I am on the lookout for the latest innovations in my job to improve the way I work.	0.732
AP23: I undergo training on a regular basis at or outside of work to keep my competencies up to date.	0.647
AP24: I wait for the innovations having to do with my job to become widespread in the company before I put major effort into relevant training or learning.	0.606
AP25: I prepare for change by participating in every project or assignment that enables me to do so.	0.706
AP26: I look for every opportunity that enables me to improve my performance	0.695
AP27: I adapt my work practices to the requirements and suggestions of others	0.719
AP28: I do not consider negative comments about my work very important	0.725
adjust my work practices if someone points out a better solution	0.681
AP29: Developing good relationships with all my counterparts is an important factor of my effectiveness	0.476
AP30: I try to understand the viewpoints of my counterparts to improve my interaction with them	0.555
AP31: I learn new ways to do my job to collaborate better with others	0.627
AP32: I frequently feel awkward because of problems in understanding the work practices of others	0.437
AP33: I willingly adapt my behaviour whenever I need to work well with others	0.718
AP34: Whatever the situation, I like to stay with my own work practices and act based on my own principles of cooperation	0.812
AP35: I strive to adapt, however, difficult, to the working conditions I am in	0.756

Table 3: HTMT Result

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Adaptive performance						
2. EI- Other's emotion appraisal	0.308					
3. Psychological resilience	0.189	0.539				
4. EI -Regulations of emotions	0.180	0.514	0.730			
5. EI- Self-emotion appraisal	0.585	0.239	0.130	0.186		
6. EI- The use of emotion	0.690	0.259	0.097	0.206	0.540	

Note: EI=Emotional Intelligence

Table 4: Results of higher-order construct

Sub-dimension	Outer Weight	Std Error	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P value	Outer VIF	Convergent validity
(i) Self-emotion appraisal <-EI	0.211	0.021	1.853	<0.001	1.523	0.737
(ii) The use of emotion <-EI	0.326	0.017	2.549	<0.001	2.392	
(iii) Regulations of emotion <-EI	0.263	0.015	2.607	<0.001	2.065	
Other's emotion appraisal <- EI	0.671	0.020	2.117	<0.001	1.963	

Note: EI=Emotional Intelligence

Table 5: Result of structural model

	Std Beta	Std. Error	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	VIF	F ²
H1) Emotional Intelligence -> Psychological Resilience	0.221	0.063	2.056	<0.001	N/A	N/A
H2) Psychological Resilience -> Adaptive Performance	0.215	0.056	2.666	0.01	1.403	0.354
H3) Emotional Intelligence -> Adaptive Performance	0.384	0.043	3.568	<0.001	1.403	0.542
H4) EI -> PR -> Adaptive Performance	0.167	0.032	2.456	<0.001		
<u>R²</u>			<u>Q²</u>			
Psychological resilience = 0.486			Psychological resilience = 0.303			
Adaptive performance =0.520			Adaptive performance =0.387			

Discussion

Grounded in the conceptual framework of cross-cultural adaptation theory, the research findings confirm a robust positive relationship between emotional intelligence, psychological resilience, and the adaptive performance of foreign university lecturers, supporting hypotheses H1 and H2. This affirmation not only echoes prior research outcomes (Zeidner, Matthews, & Roberts, 2013) but also underscores the pivotal roles played by emotional intelligence and resilience in facilitating successful adaptation within the challenging cross-cultural landscape of Chinese academia. The empirical evidence reaffirms the paramount importance of these individual characteristics in contributing to successful adjustment and enhanced performance within unfamiliar academic and cultural terrains.

Furthermore, the study reveals that psychological resilience not only independently influences adaptive performance (supported by H3) but also acts as a mediator between emotional intelligence and adaptive performance, as substantiated by H4. This indicates a nuanced interplay between these elements, with psychological resilience functioning as both an independent catalyst and a mediating force in the relationship between emotional intelligence and adaptive performance (Jiang et al., 2023).

Of paramount importance, this study delves into the intricacies of foreign lecturers' experiences within the academic realm of China, a context distinct from research conducted in countries like Thailand or Japan. China's cultural richness, deeply rooted in millennia-old traditions, presents nuanced challenges and opportunities that set it apart from its Asian counterparts (Han, 2022). The investigation goes beyond superficial examinations, aiming to uncover how foreign lecturers navigate the complexities of collectivism, hierarchical structures, and Confucian principles unique to China's academic landscape (Cai & Hall, 2016). The prevalence of Mandarin Chinese, not just as a daily communication tool but also as a significant influence on pedagogy, poses distinct challenges that demand tailored adaptive strategies.

Despite the abovementioned findings, this study presents certain limitations that need consideration. Firstly, the data concerning emotional intelligence, psychological resilience, and adaptive performance relied on self-reports from employees, potentially leading to homologous errors in cross-sectional studies. Future investigations could benefit from applying conventional methods to measure social desirability. Secondly, it is crucial to acknowledge that the current research has not explicitly delved into the moderating role of job security in the relationships between emotional intelligence, psychological resilience, and adaptive performance among foreign lecturers in Chinese universities, as reflected in the current situation where most of them are being employed on a time-based contract, e.g., 3-5 years. Future studies are encouraged to address this gap by examining how job security may act as a moderating factor influencing the dynamics between these key constructs. Job security, as a significant aspect of the work environment, can play a pivotal role in shaping individuals' responses to challenges and uncertainties (Zhao, Yuan & Hu, 2024). Understanding these moderating effects will contribute valuable insights into the nuanced interplay of contextual factors within the

academic setting, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms shaping foreign lecturers' adaptive performance in Chinese universities.

Practical Implications for Asian Business

The study's findings offer valuable insights that extend beyond the Chinese higher education context, holding significant implications for Asian businesses. As globalization continues to reshape the business landscape, cross-cultural adaptability and emotional intelligence have emerged as crucial factors in fostering successful international collaborations and enhancing organizational performance. The multi-faceted approach proposed in this study, focusing on individual strategies and institutional support, can be effectively translated to the Asian business realm.

At the individual level, regular self-reflection, mindfulness practices, active engagement in local culture, setting clear goals, and establishing supportive personal networks are strategies that can be readily adopted by expatriate employees in Asian businesses. These practices not only promote self-awareness and resilience but also facilitate cultural understanding and adaptability, which are essential for navigating the diverse and complex business environments across Asia. By cultivating these competencies, expatriate employees can enhance their job performance, job satisfaction, and overall well-being, ultimately contributing to the success of their organizations.

At the organizational level, Asian businesses can benefit from implementing periodic workshops and training programs tailored to specific facets of emotional intelligence, as suggested in the study. These initiatives can be designed to address the unique challenges faced by expatriate employees working in various Asian countries, taking into account the cultural nuances and business practices specific to each region. By investing in the emotional intelligence development of their expatriate workforce, Asian businesses can foster a more adaptable and culturally competent workforce, leading to improved cross-cultural communication, teamwork, and decision-making.

Furthermore, the study's emphasis on mentorship programs and peer support networks holds significant relevance for Asian businesses. Implementing mentorship initiatives that pair experienced local employees with expatriate staff can facilitate knowledge sharing, cultural understanding, and professional growth. These mentoring relationships can help expatriate employees navigate the complexities of the Asian business environment, develop valuable networks, and contribute more effectively to their organizations. To ensure the success of such mentorship programs, Asian businesses should carefully consider factors such as mentor selection, time and resource allocation, and the establishment of clear goals and expectations for both mentors and mentees.

In conclusion, the findings of this study have far-reaching implications for Asian businesses seeking to enhance the adaptive performance and well-being of their expatriate workforce. By implementing a multi-faceted approach that combines individual strategies and institutional support, Asian businesses can cultivate emotionally intelligent and culturally adaptable employees, ultimately driving organizational success in an increasingly globalized business environment.

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