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CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE AS A MEDIATOR: HOW PRE-DEPLOYMENT TRAINING SHAPES JOB PERFORMANCE OF CHINESE EXPATRIATE CONSTRUCTION WORKERS IN UGANDA

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ABSTRACT

The growing presence of Chinese construction firms in Uganda has increased the deployment of expatriate workers to culturally diverse environments, highlighting the need to understand factors that enhance expatriate effectiveness. Drawing on Cultural Intelligence Theory, this study examined the mediating role of cultural intelligence in the relationship between pre-deployment training and job performance among Chinese expatriate construction workers in Uganda. A quantitative cross-sectional survey design was employed, involving 212 Chinese expatriates working across fourteen major infrastructure projects. Pre-deployment training was measured using a 12-item scale, cultural intelligence was assessed using the 20-item Cultural Intelligence Scale, and job performance was evaluated using a 9-item supervisor-rated scale. Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) in AMOS. The findings revealed that pre-deployment training significantly enhanced all four dimensions of cultural intelligence, namely metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral cultural intelligence. Behavioral cultural intelligence exhibited the strongest relationship with training ($\beta = .72$, $p < .001$), followed by metacognitive cultural intelligence ($\beta = .68$, $p < .001$). Furthermore, all dimensions of cultural intelligence positively influenced job performance, with behavioral cultural intelligence ($\beta = .42$, $p < .001$) and metacognitive cultural intelligence ($\beta = .34$, $p < .001$) emerging as the strongest predictors. The results further demonstrated that cultural intelligence fully mediated the relationship between pre-deployment training and job performance, indicating that training enhances performance through the development of intercultural capabilities. The study concludes that cultural

intelligence is a critical determinant of expatriate effectiveness in Uganda's construction sector and recommends that multinational construction firms strengthen pre-deployment training programs by emphasizing cultural awareness, intercultural communication, and behavioral adaptability. The study contributes to the literature by extending Cultural Intelligence Theory to the African construction context and demonstrating the central role of cultural intelligence in translating training investments into improved expatriate performance.

KEYWORDS: Cultural Intelligence, Pre-Deployment Training, Expatriate Performance, Construction Management, China-Uganda, Belt And Road Initiative.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid globalization of business activities has increased the movement of employees across national borders, making expatriate management a critical concern for multinational organizations. Within this trend, the construction industry has experienced significant internationalization as firms increasingly undertake projects in foreign markets characterized by different cultural, social, and institutional environments. Chinese construction companies have emerged as major global actors, particularly through the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which has facilitated extensive infrastructure development across Asia, Africa, and other regions (Komakech & Ombati, 2023). As a result, large numbers of Chinese expatriate workers have been deployed to oversee, manage, and execute construction projects in host countries with cultural environments that differ substantially from those of China. Uganda has become one of the key beneficiaries of Chinese investment in Africa, particularly in the infrastructure sector. Chinese firms have played a prominent role in the construction of highways, hydropower dams, bridges, industrial parks, and urban development projects aimed at supporting Uganda's socio-economic transformation (Komakech & Ombati, 2023).

The increasing presence of Chinese expatriate workers within these projects has created opportunities for knowledge transfer, technical cooperation, and economic development. However, it has also introduced challenges associated with managing culturally diverse workforces. Construction projects typically require close collaboration among expatriates, local employees, government officials, subcontractors, and community stakeholders, making effective cross-cultural interaction essential for project success (Eyiah et al., 2025). Despite their technical expertise and engineering capabilities, expatriate employees often face considerable difficulties when adjusting to unfamiliar cultural environments. Differences in language, communication styles, workplace norms, management practices, and social

expectations can hinder effective collaboration and reduce operational efficiency (Chen, 2019). In many cases, expatriates experience culture shock, interpersonal misunderstandings, and adaptation challenges that negatively affect both individual performance and project outcomes. Research has consistently shown that technical competence alone is insufficient for successful international assignments; rather, expatriates must possess the ability to understand, interpret, and adapt to culturally diverse situations (Setti et al., 2020; Qomariyah et al., 2022; Chanveasna et al., 2024).

One of the most influential concepts for understanding intercultural effectiveness is Cultural Intelligence (CQ). Cultural intelligence refers to an individual's capability to function effectively in situations characterized by cultural diversity (Earley & Ang, 2003, as cited in Setti et al., 2020). The construct comprises four interrelated dimensions: metacognitive CQ, which reflects cultural awareness and strategic thinking; cognitive CQ, which refers to knowledge of cultural norms and practices; motivational CQ, which represents the interest and confidence to engage across cultures; and behavioral CQ, which reflects the ability to exhibit appropriate verbal and non-verbal actions during intercultural interactions (Ang & Van Dyne, 2015, as cited in Chanveasna et al., 2024). Individuals possessing high levels of cultural intelligence are generally more successful in adapting to foreign environments, building relationships with local stakeholders, and achieving positive work outcomes (Setti et al., 2020; Lei et al., 2025; Mensah, 2024).

To facilitate successful international assignments, organizations commonly invest in pre-deployment training programs designed to prepare employees for the cultural realities of host-country environments. Such programs typically include cultural awareness workshops, language instruction, communication skills development, adaptation strategies, and practical information concerning local customs and social norms (Noman et al., 2023; Bano & Liu, 2025). Effective training enables expatriates to anticipate potential cultural challenges, develop coping mechanisms, and acquire skills necessary for functioning effectively within multicultural contexts. Previous studies have reported positive relationships between cross-cultural training and expatriate adjustment, assignment success, and organizational performance (Setti et al., 2020; Gai et al., 2021; Chanveasna et al., 2024). However, evidence regarding the effectiveness of pre-deployment training within construction projects in developing economies remains limited (Lo & Nguyen, 2023; Tahir, 2021).

Furthermore, while existing studies acknowledge the importance of training and cultural intelligence independently, relatively little is known about the mechanisms through which training contributes to expatriate performance (Eyiah et al., 2025; Mensah, 2024; Komakech

& Ombati, 2023). Specifically, there remains insufficient empirical evidence regarding whether cultural intelligence serves as the underlying process through which pre-deployment training enhances work effectiveness among expatriates in construction settings. This gap is particularly evident within African contexts, where infrastructure projects often involve complex interactions among individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds and where the success of multinational projects depends heavily on effective cross-cultural collaboration (Eyiah et al., 2025; Mensah, 2024; Komakech & Ombati, 2023).

Against this background, the present study investigates the mediating role of cultural intelligence in the relationship between pre-deployment training and job performance among Chinese expatriate construction workers in Uganda. By examining how training contributes to the development of cultural intelligence and how cultural intelligence subsequently influences expatriate performance, the study contributes to both theory and practice. Theoretically, it extends Cultural Intelligence Theory to the context of international construction management within Africa (Setti et al., 2020; Lei et al., 2025). Practically, it provides evidence-based insights for multinational construction firms seeking to enhance expatriate effectiveness through targeted training interventions. Given the continuing expansion of Chinese infrastructure investments across Africa, understanding the factors that promote successful expatriate performance has become increasingly important for ensuring sustainable project implementation and effective international collaboration (Komakech & Ombati, 2023; Driessen, 2021).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review: Cultural Intelligence Theory

The present study is anchored in Cultural Intelligence (CQ) Theory, which was developed by Christopher Earley and Soon Ang to explain why some individuals are more effective than others when operating in culturally diverse environments (Earley & Ang, 2003; Earley & Ang, 2006). Cultural Intelligence Theory emerged from the recognition that traditional measures of intelligence, including cognitive intelligence (IQ) and emotional intelligence (EQ), were insufficient for explaining performance in intercultural settings (Earley & Ang, 2003). As organizations increasingly operate across national and cultural boundaries, the ability to understand and adapt to diverse cultural contexts has become an essential competency for expatriates and global professionals (Ang et al., 2012).

Cultural intelligence refers to an individual's capability to function effectively in situations characterized by cultural diversity (Ang & Van Dyne, 2015; Earley & Ang, 2003). The

theory proposes that successful adaptation and performance in multicultural environments depend on a set of capabilities that enable individuals to acquire, interpret, and apply culturally relevant knowledge (Ang et al., 2012). Unlike personality traits, cultural intelligence is considered a malleable capability that can be developed through learning, training, and intercultural experiences (Ang et al., 2007; Ott & Michailova, 2016; Rockstuhl, Ang, Ng, Van Dyne, & Annen, 2011). This characteristic makes CQ particularly relevant for expatriate management because organizations can actively enhance employees' cultural capabilities through structured interventions (Ang & Van Dyne, 2015).

The theory comprises four interrelated dimensions: metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral cultural intelligence (Ang et al., 2007; Ang et al., 2012). Metacognitive CQ refers to the higher-order cognitive processes used to acquire and understand cultural knowledge. Individuals with high metacognitive CQ consciously monitor and revise their cultural assumptions during interactions, allowing them to interpret unfamiliar situations more effectively (Ang et al., 2007). Cognitive CQ refers to knowledge of cultural norms, values, practices, institutions, and social systems. This dimension enables expatriates to understand the cultural frameworks that shape behavior in host-country environments (Ang et al., 2007).

Motivational CQ represents an individual's interest, confidence, and willingness to engage in intercultural interactions. Expatriates with high motivational CQ are more likely to persist when faced with cultural challenges and are generally more committed to learning about unfamiliar cultures (Ott & Michailova, 2016; Ang et al., 2012). Behavioral CQ refers to the capability to exhibit appropriate verbal and non-verbal actions when interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds. This dimension allows individuals to adapt their communication styles, gestures, and interpersonal behaviors to suit specific cultural contexts (Ang & Van Dyne, 2015; Ang et al., 2007).

The relevance of Cultural Intelligence Theory to the present study lies in its explanation of how expatriates develop the competencies necessary to perform effectively in foreign environments (Ang & Van Dyne, 2015; Ott & Michailova, 2016). The theory suggests that individuals who possess higher levels of CQ are better able to navigate cultural differences, establish productive relationships, and achieve superior work outcomes (Ang et al., 2007; Ang et al., 2012). Furthermore, because CQ can be developed through training and learning interventions, the theory provides a strong foundation for examining how pre-deployment training contributes to expatriate effectiveness (Ang & Van Dyne, 2015; Rockstuhl et al., 2011). In the context of Chinese expatriate construction workers in Uganda, Cultural

Intelligence Theory offers a useful lens for understanding how training programs can enhance cultural capabilities that subsequently improve job performance.

2.2 Pre-Deployment Training and Expatriate Performance

Pre-deployment training refers to structured learning interventions undertaken before employees are assigned to international postings. These interventions are designed to equip expatriates with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to function effectively within unfamiliar cultural, social, and organizational environments (Black & Mendenhall, 1989; Wang & Tran, 2012). Such training often includes cultural orientation, language instruction, communication skills development, adaptation strategies, and information regarding host-country norms and practices (Black & Mendenhall, 1989; Gai et al., 2021).

The importance of pre-deployment training has become increasingly evident as multinational organizations expand their operations into culturally diverse regions. Expatriates frequently encounter challenges associated with culture shock, communication barriers, differing management practices, and unfamiliar workplace expectations. Without adequate preparation, these challenges can negatively affect employee adjustment, productivity, and assignment success (Gai et al., 2021; Tahir & Ertek, 2017; Wang & Tran, 2012). Consequently, organizations invest substantial resources in cross-cultural training to reduce adjustment difficulties and enhance expatriate effectiveness (Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Tarique & Caligiuri, 2009; Wang & Tran, 2012).

Early research by Black and Mendenhall (1990) established that cross-cultural training improves expatriates' ability to interpret and respond appropriately to unfamiliar cultural situations. Their work demonstrated that trained expatriates generally experience smoother adjustment processes and achieve higher levels of performance than their untrained counterparts. More recent studies have reinforced these findings by showing that pre-departure preparation positively influences expatriate adjustment, cultural adaptation, job satisfaction, and assignment success (Gai et al., 2021; Wang & Tran, 2012; Kour & Jyoti, 2021).

Within the construction industry, the significance of pre-deployment training is particularly pronounced. Construction projects involve extensive collaboration among individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, including engineers, project managers, contractors, government officials, and local communities. Effective communication and coordination are therefore essential for achieving project objectives. Expatriates who lack adequate cultural preparation may experience misunderstandings, interpersonal conflicts, and reduced effectiveness when working with local stakeholders (Eyiah et al., 2025). Conversely, well-designed training

programs can facilitate cultural adaptation, improve communication effectiveness, and contribute to successful project implementation (Eyiah et al., 2025; Wang & Tran, 2012).

Empirical evidence further suggests that pre-deployment training contributes directly to expatriate job performance by reducing uncertainty and increasing confidence in dealing with culturally complex situations. Trained expatriates are generally better prepared to manage workplace relationships, solve problems, and adapt to local working conditions, resulting in improved task execution and interpersonal effectiveness (Presbitero & Toledano, 2018; Wang & Tran, 2012). Based on these arguments, pre-deployment training is expected to play a critical role in enhancing the effectiveness of Chinese expatriate construction workers operating in Uganda.

2.3 Cultural Intelligence and Job Performance

Job performance is a multidimensional construct that encompasses both task performance and contextual performance. Task performance refers to the effectiveness with which employees perform activities directly related to their job responsibilities, while contextual performance involves behaviors that support the social and psychological environment within which tasks are accomplished (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997; Van Scotter et al., 2000). For expatriates, job performance extends beyond technical competence and includes the ability to work effectively with individuals from different cultural backgrounds (Wang et al., 2018).

Cultural intelligence has emerged as one of the most important predictors of expatriate performance in international assignments. Individuals with high CQ possess the cognitive, motivational, and behavioral capabilities necessary to interpret cultural cues, adjust to unfamiliar environments, and establish productive relationships with local stakeholders (Rockstuhl et al., 2011; Ang et al., 2007). Such capabilities are particularly valuable in multicultural work settings where misunderstandings and cultural conflicts can undermine organizational effectiveness (Ang et al., 2019).

Research consistently demonstrates positive relationships between CQ and various dimensions of expatriate performance (Ang et al., 2007; Wang et al., 2018; Ang et al., 2019). Metacognitive CQ enables expatriates to critically evaluate cultural assumptions and adapt their strategies when interacting with local employees. Cognitive CQ facilitates understanding of host-country norms and practices, reducing the likelihood of cultural misunderstandings. Motivational CQ provides the confidence and persistence necessary to engage with unfamiliar cultural environments, while Behavioral CQ enables expatriates to modify their actions and communication styles in culturally appropriate ways (Ang et al., 2007; Ang et al., 2006).

Several empirical studies have found that expatriates with higher levels of cultural intelligence achieve superior work outcomes. Rockstuhl et al. (2011) reported that CQ significantly predicts leadership effectiveness, intercultural adjustment, and job performance across different cultural contexts. Similarly, Ott and Michailova (2016) found that culturally intelligent individuals are more capable of building trust, facilitating collaboration, and achieving organizational objectives in multicultural environments. Within construction projects, where teamwork and stakeholder engagement are critical success factors, cultural intelligence is likely to play a particularly important role in determining expatriate effectiveness (Wang et al., 2018).

Among the four CQ dimensions, behavioral and metacognitive capabilities are often identified as the strongest predictors of performance because they directly influence how individuals respond to cultural challenges in real-world situations. Expatriates who can consciously adapt their thinking and behavior are more likely to achieve successful interactions, maintain productive workplace relationships, and deliver superior project outcomes (Bücker et al., 2021; Ang et al., 2007; Rockstuhl et al., 2011).

2.4 The Mediating Role of Cultural Intelligence

Although previous studies have established positive relationships between pre-deployment training and expatriate performance, the mechanisms through which training influences performance remain insufficiently understood (Kour & Jyoti, 2021; Lee & Sukoco, 2010; Malek & Budhwar, 2013). Scholars have increasingly argued that training interventions may not directly enhance performance but instead operate by developing competencies that enable individuals to perform effectively in multicultural environments (Presbitero & Toledano, 2018; Kour & Jyoti, 2021).

Cultural Intelligence Theory provides a useful explanation for this process. Pre-deployment training exposes expatriates to information about host-country cultures, communication patterns, workplace norms, and adaptation strategies. Through these learning experiences, expatriates acquire cultural knowledge, develop greater cultural awareness, strengthen their motivation to engage with local populations, and improve their behavioral adaptability. These outcomes correspond directly to the four dimensions of cultural intelligence (Earley & Ang, 2003; Lee & Sukoco, 2010).

Consequently, cultural intelligence may function as an intermediary mechanism linking training interventions to performance outcomes. Expatriates who receive effective pre-deployment training are expected to develop higher levels of CQ, which subsequently enable them to communicate more effectively, adapt more quickly, and perform more successfully in

culturally diverse workplaces. This perspective is supported by studies showing that training enhances intercultural competencies, which in turn contribute to expatriate adjustment and effectiveness (Presbitero & Toledano, 2018; Kour & Jyoti, 2021; Lee & Sukoco, 2010; Malek & Budhwar, 2013; Morin & Talbot, 2021).

Despite growing interest in CQ, limited empirical research has examined its mediating role within international construction projects, particularly in African contexts (Chen et al., 2023). Most existing studies have focused on multinational corporations operating in developed economies, leaving significant gaps regarding expatriate workers engaged in infrastructure development projects across developing countries (Malek & Budhwar, 2013; Morin & Talbot, 2021). Given the increasing presence of Chinese construction firms in Uganda, investigating the mediating role of cultural intelligence offers an opportunity to advance both theory and practice. Accordingly, the present study proposes that cultural intelligence mediates the relationship between pre-deployment training and job performance among Chinese expatriate construction workers in Uganda.

3. Conceptual Framework

This study is grounded in Cultural Intelligence Theory and proposes that pre-deployment training influences the job performance of Chinese expatriate construction workers through the development of cultural intelligence (Ang et al., 2007; Ang et al., 2012; Ott & Michailova, 2016). Pre-deployment training serves as the independent variable and encompasses cultural orientation, language preparation, adaptation strategies, and host-country awareness (Moon et al., 2012; Wang & Tran, 2012; Noman et al., 2023). Cultural intelligence functions as the mediating variable and comprises four dimensions: metacognitive CQ, cognitive CQ, motivational CQ, and behavioral CQ (Ang et al., 2007; Dyne et al., 2012; Ang et al., 2019). Job performance is the dependent variable and is reflected through task performance and interpersonal performance (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997; Ang et al., 2007; Setti et al., 2020).

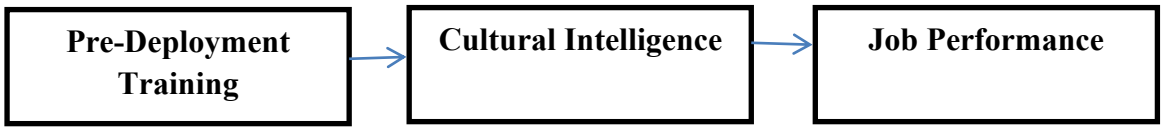


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework.

The framework assumes that expatriates who receive comprehensive pre-deployment training acquire cultural knowledge, awareness, motivation, and adaptive behavioral capabilities that

enhance their effectiveness in culturally diverse construction environments. Consequently, cultural intelligence serves as the mechanism through which training translates into improved workplace performance.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative research approach employing a cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationships among pre-deployment training, cultural intelligence (CQ), and job performance among Chinese expatriate construction workers in Uganda. A quantitative approach was considered appropriate because it enables the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data to test theoretically derived relationships among variables and establish empirical evidence regarding hypothesized associations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The cross-sectional survey design was selected because data were collected from respondents at a single point in time, allowing the researcher to assess existing perceptions and experiences regarding training, cultural intelligence, and job performance within ongoing construction projects. Cross-sectional designs are widely used in expatriate management and organizational behavior research because they facilitate the examination of relationships among variables within real-world organizational settings while minimizing time and resource constraints (Saunders et al., 2019).

The study was grounded in Cultural Intelligence Theory (Earley & Ang, 2003), which proposes that individuals who possess higher levels of cultural intelligence are better able to adapt to culturally diverse environments and consequently achieve superior work outcomes. Accordingly, the study sought to empirically test whether cultural intelligence mediates the relationship between pre-deployment training and job performance among Chinese expatriates working in Uganda's infrastructure sector.

4.2 Study Population

The target population comprised Chinese expatriate construction workers employed on major infrastructure development projects across Uganda. These expatriates occupied various technical, supervisory, managerial, and engineering positions and were actively involved in project planning, implementation, monitoring, and coordination. The focus on Chinese expatriates was informed by the growing involvement of Chinese construction firms in Uganda under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which has significantly increased the deployment of Chinese professionals to oversee and support large-scale infrastructure projects (Alden & Jiang, 2019).

The study population included project managers, resident engineers, site engineers, quantity surveyors, construction supervisors, quality assurance personnel, and technical specialists working across fourteen major infrastructure projects located in different regions of Uganda. These employees were considered appropriate respondents because they routinely interacted with Ugandan workers, government officials, subcontractors, suppliers, and local communities, thereby experiencing the cultural dynamics relevant to the study.

4.3 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

A total of 212 Chinese expatriate construction workers participated in the study. Respondents were drawn from fourteen infrastructure projects operating in different geographical regions of Uganda. The sample size was considered adequate for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), which generally requires a minimum sample of between 200 and 400 observations to produce stable parameter estimates and reliable model testing results (Hair et al., 2022).

The study employed a combination of purposive and convenience sampling techniques. Purposive sampling was used to identify expatriate employees who met the inclusion criteria of being Chinese nationals working on international construction assignments in Uganda. This approach ensured that only respondents possessing direct experience with pre-deployment training and cross-cultural work environments were included in the study. Convenience sampling was subsequently utilized to access available participants across project sites due to practical constraints associated with geographical dispersion, project schedules, and organizational access requirements (Etikan & Bala, 2017).

4.4 Data Collection Procedures

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to participating expatriates. The questionnaire was distributed in both English and Mandarin to minimize language barriers and improve response accuracy. The use of bilingual questionnaires is widely recommended in cross-cultural research because it reduces the likelihood of misinterpretation and enhances the validity of responses obtained from international participants (Brislin, 1986).

Prior to full-scale data collection, the instrument was reviewed by experts in international human resource management and cross-cultural management to ensure content validity. A pilot test was also conducted among a small group of expatriates working on construction projects to assess clarity, comprehensibility, and relevance of questionnaire items. Feedback obtained from the pilot study informed minor revisions to improve the wording and structure of the instrument.

Data collection was conducted with the support of project management teams and organizational representatives who facilitated access to eligible respondents. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before administering the questionnaire.

4.5 Measurement of Variables

The study utilized previously validated measurement scales adapted from established literature to enhance reliability and validity.

Pre-Deployment Training

Pre-deployment training was measured using a 12-item scale designed to assess expatriates' perceptions of the adequacy and effectiveness of training received prior to assignment. The scale captured three key dimensions, namely training duration, content coverage, and perceived training quality. The items assessed the extent to which expatriates received adequate cultural preparation, language training, adaptation guidance, communication skills development, and practical information regarding Uganda's social and workplace environment. Respondents rated each item using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Cultural Intelligence

Cultural intelligence was measured using the 20-item Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS) developed by Ang et al. (2007). The instrument is one of the most widely validated measures of cultural intelligence and has been extensively applied in international management and expatriate research. The scale assesses four dimensions of cultural intelligence:

- Metacognitive CQ (4 items)
- Cognitive CQ (6 items)
- Motivational CQ (5 items)
- Behavioral CQ (5 items)

Respondents indicated their level of agreement with each statement using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Higher scores indicated greater levels of cultural intelligence.

Job Performance

Job performance was measured using a 9-item scale adapted from the work of Williams and Anderson (1991). The scale captures two important dimensions of expatriate performance, namely task performance and interpersonal performance. Task performance assessed the extent to which expatriates effectively executed their technical and operational

responsibilities, while interpersonal performance evaluated their ability to maintain productive relationships and collaborate effectively with colleagues and stakeholders.

To minimize common method bias, job performance ratings were obtained from expatriates' immediate supervisors rather than through self-assessment. Supervisor-rated performance measures are widely regarded as more objective and less susceptible to social desirability bias than self-reported evaluations (Podsakoff et al., 2012). Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

4.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS). The analysis proceeded in several stages. Initially, descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages were computed to summarize respondent characteristics and provide an overview of the study variables. Thereafter, reliability and validity assessments were conducted to evaluate the psychometric properties of the measurement model.

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). According to Hair et al. (2022), values exceeding 0.70 indicate acceptable internal consistency. Convergent validity was examined using Average Variance Extracted (AVE), with values above 0.50 considered satisfactory. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was subsequently conducted to assess construct validity and determine the adequacy of the measurement model.

Following the establishment of measurement validity, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to test the hypothesized relationships among pre-deployment training, cultural intelligence, and job performance. SEM was considered appropriate because it enables the simultaneous examination of multiple relationships among latent variables while accounting for measurement error (Kline, 2023). The mediation effect of cultural intelligence was assessed using bootstrapping procedures with 5,000 resamples, consistent with recommendations by Hayes (2022). Statistical significance was evaluated at the 5% significance level ($p < .05$).

5. RESULTS

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics were examined to understand the overall distribution of responses concerning pre-deployment training, cultural intelligence, and job performance. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables. (N = 212)

Variable	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Pre-deployment Training	3.98	0.71	1.85	5.00
Metacognitive CQ	4.12	0.68	2.10	5.00
Cognitive CQ	3.89	0.74	1.95	5.00
Motivational CQ	4.05	0.70	2.00	5.00
Behavioral CQ	4.18	0.66	2.15	5.00
Job Performance	4.09	0.64	2.20	5.00

The findings indicate generally high perceptions across all study variables. Mean scores ranged between 3.89 and 4.18 on a five-point scale, suggesting that respondents generally agreed with statements relating to training effectiveness, cultural intelligence, and job performance.

Pre-deployment training obtained a mean score of 3.98, indicating that the majority of expatriates perceived their organizations as providing adequate preparation before deployment to Uganda. This finding suggests that Chinese construction firms recognized the importance of preparing employees for overseas assignments and invested in various forms of cross-cultural preparation. However, the standard deviation of 0.71 indicates some variability in training experiences, implying that the depth and quality of training may differ across organizations and projects.

Among the four dimensions of cultural intelligence, Behavioral CQ recorded the highest mean score (M = 4.18, SD = 0.66). This finding suggests that expatriates generally perceived themselves as highly capable of modifying their communication styles, interpersonal behaviors, and work practices to suit the Ugandan cultural environment. The high score reflects the practical necessity of behavioral adaptation within multicultural construction projects where collaboration with local employees is essential.

Metacognitive CQ recorded the second highest mean score (M = 4.12, SD = 0.68), indicating that expatriates were highly conscious of cultural differences and frequently adjusted their thinking when interacting with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Such awareness is important because it enables expatriates to anticipate cultural misunderstandings and adapt their decision-making processes accordingly.

Motivational CQ achieved a mean score of 4.05, suggesting that respondents were generally enthusiastic about engaging with Ugandan colleagues and were willing to invest effort in learning and adapting to the local culture. High motivational CQ is particularly important in

expatriate assignments because successful adaptation often requires sustained psychological commitment.

Cognitive CQ recorded the lowest mean score among the CQ dimensions (M = 3.89, SD = 0.74). Although still relatively high, this finding suggests that expatriates possessed comparatively less knowledge regarding Ugandan social systems, traditions, institutional structures, and cultural norms.

Job performance recorded a mean score of 4.09 (SD = 0.64), suggesting that expatriates generally perceived themselves as effective in accomplishing their work responsibilities and maintaining productive workplace relationships. The relatively high performance rating provides preliminary evidence that Chinese expatriates were largely successful in fulfilling their roles within Uganda's construction sector.

5.2 Assessment of the Measurement Model

Prior to examining the structural relationships among pre-deployment training, cultural intelligence, and job performance, the psychometric properties of the measurement scales were evaluated to establish their reliability and validity. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR), while convergent validity was examined using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 2: Reliability and Convergent Validity Results.

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Pre-deployment Training	0.901	0.914	0.680
Metacognitive CQ	0.892	0.908	0.712
Cognitive CQ	0.879	0.896	0.684
Motivational CQ	0.912	0.923	0.735
Behavioral CQ	0.918	0.931	0.752
Job Performance	0.903	0.917	0.691

The results demonstrate that all study constructs possessed strong internal consistency reliability. Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.879 to 0.918, substantially exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2022). These findings indicate that the measurement items consistently captured the intended latent constructs and that respondents interpreted the questionnaire items in a coherent and stable manner.

Behavioral Cultural Intelligence recorded the highest reliability coefficient (α = 0.918), followed by Motivational Cultural Intelligence (α = 0.912). This suggests that expatriates exhibited highly consistent responses regarding their ability to adapt their behavior across

cultures and their willingness to engage in intercultural interactions. The strong reliability observed for these dimensions may reflect the practical realities of construction projects in Uganda, where expatriates frequently encounter situations requiring behavioral flexibility and cultural engagement.

Similarly, the pre-deployment training construct demonstrated excellent reliability (α = 0.901), indicating that the various aspects of expatriate preparation, including cultural orientation, communication training, adaptation guidance, and host-country familiarization, formed a coherent and internally consistent construct.

The Composite Reliability values further confirmed the robustness of the measurement model. All CR values exceeded the recommended minimum value of 0.70, ranging between 0.896 and 0.931. According to Hair et al. (2022), Composite Reliability provides a more accurate estimate of internal consistency because it considers the individual factor loadings of observed indicators. The consistently high CR values therefore provide additional evidence that the constructs were measured reliably.

Convergent validity was assessed through the Average Variance Extracted. All AVE values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.50, ranging from 0.680 to 0.752. These findings indicate that the latent constructs explained more than half of the variance in their respective indicators. Behavioral CQ achieved the highest AVE value (0.752), suggesting that the indicators used to measure adaptive cultural behavior were particularly effective in representing the construct. Overall, the measurement model demonstrated satisfactory reliability and convergent validity, providing a sound basis for subsequent structural analyses.

5.3 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among the study variables. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix.

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Training	1					
2. Metacognitive CQ	.654**	1				
3. Cognitive CQ	.598**	.627**	1			
4. Motivational CQ	.621**	.672**	.601**	1		
5. Behavioral CQ	.689**	.701**	.619**	.665**	1	
6. Job Performance	.583**	.738**	.584**	.627**	.781**	1

p < .01

The correlation analysis revealed statistically significant positive relationships among all study variables. The positive correlations suggest that higher levels of training were associated with higher levels of cultural intelligence and better job performance.

Training demonstrated strong positive relationships with all CQ dimensions, with the strongest association observed for Behavioral CQ ($r = .689$, $p < .01$). This finding suggests that expatriates who received more comprehensive training were more likely to demonstrate culturally adaptive behaviors in the workplace.

Job performance exhibited the strongest relationship with Behavioral CQ ($r = .781$, $p < .01$), followed by Metacognitive CQ ($r = .738$, $p < .01$). These findings suggest that the ability to modify behavior and consciously manage cultural assumptions may be particularly important determinants of expatriate effectiveness within construction project environments. The significant correlations provided preliminary support for the proposed conceptual model and justified further examination through structural equation modeling.

5.4 Structural Model Evaluation

The structural model was assessed using Structural Equation Modeling. The goodness-of-fit indices are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Structural Model Fit Indices.

Fit Index	Recommended Value	Obtained Value
χ^2/df	< 3.00	2.11
CFI	> .90	.952
TLI	> .90	.944
RMSEA	< .08	.053
SRMR	< .08	.046

The model fit indices indicate that the proposed model adequately represented the observed data. The chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio of 2.11 was well below the recommended maximum value of 3.00. Similarly, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI = .952) and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI = .944) exceeded the recommended threshold of .90, indicating excellent model fit.

Furthermore, the RMSEA value of .053 and SRMR value of .046 were below the recommended maximum value of .08, suggesting minimal discrepancy between the observed and predicted covariance matrices. Collectively, these findings indicate that the structural model provided an appropriate representation of the relationships among the study variables.

5.5 Hypothesis Testing

Effect of Pre-Deployment Training on Cultural Intelligence

The first set of hypotheses examined whether pre-deployment training significantly influenced the four dimensions of cultural intelligence.

Table 5: Effects of Pre-Deployment Training on Cultural Intelligence.

Path	β	SE	CR	P
Training → Metacognitive CQ	.68	.05	13.60	< .001
Training → Cognitive CQ	.59	.06	9.83	< .001
Training → Motivational CQ	.63	.05	12.60	< .001
Training → Behavioral CQ	.72	.04	18.00	< .001

The findings indicate that pre-deployment training exerted significant positive effects on all dimensions of cultural intelligence. The strongest effect was observed on Behavioral CQ ($\beta = .72$, $p < .001$), suggesting that training programs were particularly effective in equipping expatriates with adaptive communication and interaction skills.

Training also strongly influenced Metacognitive CQ ($\beta = .68$, $p < .001$), indicating that expatriates who received extensive preparation became more aware of cultural differences and more capable of adjusting their thought processes during intercultural encounters.

Effects of Cultural Intelligence on Job Performance

Table 6: Effects of Cultural Intelligence on Job Performance.

Path	B	SE	CR	P
Metacognitive CQ → Performance	.34	.07	4.86	< .001
Cognitive CQ → Performance	.15	.06	2.50	.012
Motivational CQ → Performance	.19	.05	3.80	< .001
Behavioral CQ → Performance	.42	.06	7.00	< .001

All dimensions of cultural intelligence significantly influenced job performance. Behavioral CQ emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = .42$, $p < .001$), indicating that expatriates who effectively adjusted their behaviors across cultural contexts achieved superior work outcomes.

Metacognitive CQ was the second strongest predictor ($\beta = .34$, $p < .001$), suggesting that cultural awareness and reflective thinking significantly enhanced expatriate effectiveness. Although Cognitive CQ and Motivational CQ also exhibited significant effects, their influence was comparatively weaker.

5.6 Mediation Analysis

Bootstrapping procedures using 5,000 resamples were employed to test the mediating role of cultural intelligence.

Table 7: Mediation Analysis Results.

Relationship	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	Mediation
Training → CQ → Performance	.07 (p = .241)	.61 (p < .001)	.68 (p < .001)	Full Mediation

The mediation results revealed that the direct effect of pre-deployment training on job performance became statistically insignificant after the inclusion of cultural intelligence within the model (β = .07, p = .241). In contrast, the indirect effect remained highly significant (β = .61, p < .001).

These findings provide strong evidence that cultural intelligence fully mediates the relationship between pre-deployment training and job performance. The results indicate that training does not directly improve expatriate performance. Rather, training enhances expatriate effectiveness by developing cultural intelligence capabilities, which subsequently enable workers to perform successfully within Uganda's multicultural construction environment.

The findings therefore establish cultural intelligence as the central explanatory mechanism through which pre-deployment training translates into improved expatriate performance. Among the CQ dimensions, behavioral and metacognitive capabilities emerged as the most influential pathways through which training contributes to successful international assignment outcomes.

6. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.1 Pre-Deployment Training and Cultural Intelligence

The findings revealed that pre-deployment training exerted a significant positive influence on all four dimensions of cultural intelligence, namely metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral CQ. Among these dimensions, the strongest effect was observed on behavioral CQ (β = .72, p < .001), followed by metacognitive CQ (β = .68, p < .001). These findings suggest that expatriates who received comprehensive training before deployment were more capable of adapting their behavior to culturally diverse situations and were more conscious of cultural differences when interacting with local stakeholders.

These findings strongly support Cultural Intelligence Theory, which posits that cultural intelligence is not an innate characteristic but rather a capability that can be developed

through learning, training, and intercultural experiences (Earley & Ang, 2003; Ang & Van Dyne, 2015). The results indicate that training programs focusing on cultural awareness, language preparation, adaptation strategies, and host-country orientation enhanced expatriates' ability to understand and navigate Uganda's cultural environment. This finding is consistent with Ang et al. (2007), who argued that structured learning experiences significantly contribute to the development of cultural knowledge and adaptive capabilities.

The findings also corroborate the work of Black and Mendenhall (1990), who found that cross-cultural training enables expatriates to interpret unfamiliar cultural situations more accurately and respond appropriately. Similarly, Wang and Tran (2012) reported that expatriates who receive extensive pre-departure preparation exhibit higher levels of intercultural competence and adjustment. The significant effects observed across all CQ dimensions suggest that training programs implemented by Chinese construction firms effectively prepared expatriates for cultural interactions within Uganda's construction industry.

The Ugandan context provides an important explanation for these findings. Uganda is characterized by significant ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity, with over fifty indigenous ethnic groups, multiple local languages, and distinct social norms governing interpersonal relationships and workplace interactions. Chinese expatriates arriving from a relatively homogeneous cultural background may therefore encounter substantial cultural differences in communication styles, power distance perceptions, community relations, and workplace expectations. In such circumstances, pre-deployment training becomes particularly valuable because it equips expatriates with the skills needed to understand and navigate these cultural complexities. The effectiveness of training in enhancing CQ therefore reflects the practical realities of operating within Uganda's multicultural environment.

The particularly strong influence of training on behavioral CQ may be attributed to the practical nature of construction projects in Uganda. Construction activities frequently involve interaction with local workers, community leaders, district authorities, suppliers, and government agencies. Success in such environments requires expatriates to adapt their communication styles, negotiation approaches, and interpersonal behaviors to local expectations. This finding supports Eyiah et al. (2025), who emphasized that behavioral adaptability is critical for effective collaboration within multicultural construction teams.

The significant relationship between training and metacognitive CQ further suggests that training enhanced expatriates' ability to consciously reflect on cultural assumptions and adjust their thinking during intercultural encounters. Within Uganda's construction sector, where

project success often depends on stakeholder engagement and community acceptance, the ability to anticipate cultural misunderstandings and adjust decision-making processes is particularly important. The findings therefore reinforce previous studies indicating that pre-deployment training serves as a foundational mechanism for developing cultural intelligence among expatriates (Kour & Jyoti, 2021; Lee & Sukoco, 2010).

6.2 Cultural Intelligence and Job Performance

The study established that all four dimensions of cultural intelligence significantly influenced expatriate job performance. Behavioral CQ emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = .42$, $p < .001$), followed by metacognitive CQ ($\beta = .34$, $p < .001$), motivational CQ ($\beta = .19$, $p < .001$), and cognitive CQ ($\beta = .15$, $p = .012$). These findings indicate that culturally intelligent expatriates performed more effectively within Uganda's construction sector than those with lower levels of cultural intelligence.

The findings provide strong empirical support for Cultural Intelligence Theory, which proposes that individuals possessing higher CQ are better equipped to function effectively in culturally diverse environments (Earley & Ang, 2003). The significant positive relationships between CQ dimensions and job performance suggest that expatriates who understand cultural differences, remain motivated to engage with local populations, and adapt their behaviors appropriately are more likely to achieve superior workplace outcomes.

Behavioral CQ emerged as the most influential predictor of performance, suggesting that practical adaptation capabilities are particularly important within construction projects. This finding aligns with Ang et al. (2007), who argued that the ability to modify verbal and non-verbal behavior is one of the most visible manifestations of cultural intelligence. In construction settings, expatriates must frequently communicate with local workers, negotiate with stakeholders, and resolve project-related challenges. The ability to adapt communication styles and behaviors therefore directly contributes to task accomplishment and interpersonal effectiveness.

The strong effect of metacognitive CQ on performance further highlights the importance of cultural awareness and reflective thinking. Expatriates who actively evaluate cultural assumptions and adjust their approaches are more likely to avoid misunderstandings and develop effective working relationships. This finding is consistent with Rockstuhl et al. (2011), who found that metacognitive CQ significantly predicts leadership effectiveness and intercultural performance across international contexts.

Within the Ugandan context, the strong influence of behavioral and metacognitive CQ is particularly understandable. Construction projects in Uganda often involve close interaction

between expatriates and local employees whose cultural values, communication patterns, and workplace expectations may differ considerably from those of Chinese workers. For example, relationship-building, respect for local authority structures, community engagement, and collective decision-making often play an important role in project implementation. Expatriates who can recognize these cultural expectations and adjust their behavior accordingly are more likely to gain trust, facilitate cooperation, and achieve project objectives. Consequently, behavioral and metacognitive CQ become critical determinants of performance because they directly influence day-to-day interactions that underpin project success.

Although cognitive CQ and motivational CQ also demonstrated significant effects, their influence was comparatively weaker. This suggests that possessing cultural knowledge alone may not guarantee effective performance unless individuals can translate that knowledge into appropriate behaviors and decision-making processes. Similarly, motivation to engage across cultures, while important, appears to be most effective when combined with practical adaptive capabilities. These findings support Ott and Michailova (2016), who argued that the effectiveness of cultural intelligence depends on the integration of all four CQ dimensions rather than any single component in isolation.

The findings also extend previous expatriate management research by demonstrating that cultural intelligence is a critical determinant of effectiveness within African infrastructure projects. Much of the existing literature has focused on multinational corporations operating in developed economies. The present study therefore contributes new evidence showing that CQ plays an equally important role within Uganda's construction industry, where project implementation depends heavily on effective collaboration among culturally diverse stakeholders.

6.3 The Mediating Role of Cultural Intelligence

One of the most significant findings of the study was that cultural intelligence fully mediated the relationship between pre-deployment training and job performance. The results revealed that the direct effect of training on performance became statistically insignificant after cultural intelligence was introduced into the model ($\beta = .07$, $p = .241$), while the indirect effect remained highly significant ($\beta = .61$, $p < .001$). This finding indicates that pre-deployment training influences expatriate performance entirely through its effect on cultural intelligence.

The finding provides strong support for the theoretical proposition that training does not automatically translate into improved workplace performance. Rather, training creates value

by developing competencies that enable individuals to function effectively within culturally diverse environments. This interpretation is consistent with Cultural Intelligence Theory, which emphasizes that intercultural effectiveness depends on the acquisition and application of cultural capabilities rather than the mere provision of information (Ang & Van Dyne, 2015; Earley & Ang, 2003).

The results also support the arguments of Presbitero and Toledano (2018), who suggested that organizational interventions influence expatriate outcomes primarily through the development of intercultural competencies. Similarly, Kour and Jyoti (2021) found that cultural intelligence serves as a critical mechanism linking organizational support practices to expatriate effectiveness. The present study extends this line of inquiry by demonstrating full mediation within the context of Chinese expatriate construction workers in Uganda.

The Ugandan context offers a particularly compelling explanation for the observed mediation effect. Uganda's infrastructure projects are implemented within environments characterized by extensive interaction among expatriates, local employees, government institutions, local communities, and other stakeholders. Consequently, technical training alone may be insufficient for ensuring successful performance. Instead, expatriates must acquire the cultural capabilities necessary to understand local customs, communicate effectively, build trust, and manage culturally sensitive situations. The finding that cultural intelligence fully mediates the training-performance relationship suggests that the benefits of training are realized only when expatriates internalize and apply cultural competencies within the Ugandan environment. In other words, training does not improve performance directly; it improves performance because it develops the cultural intelligence required to operate effectively within Uganda's socio-cultural and organizational context.

The finding suggests that pre-deployment training programs generate positive outcomes only when they successfully cultivate metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral CQ capabilities. In practical terms, simply exposing expatriates to cultural information may not be sufficient to improve performance. Instead, training must facilitate the development of deeper cultural awareness, adaptive thinking, intercultural motivation, and behavioral flexibility. This observation explains why some expatriates continue to experience adjustment difficulties despite receiving formal training, as the effectiveness of training ultimately depends on its capacity to strengthen cultural intelligence.

The prominence of behavioral and metacognitive CQ within the structural model further suggests that these dimensions constitute the primary pathways through which training enhances performance. Training that encourages reflective thinking and behavioral adaptation

is therefore likely to produce the greatest performance benefits for expatriates working in Uganda's multicultural construction environment.

Overall, the findings establish cultural intelligence as the central explanatory mechanism through which pre-deployment training contributes to expatriate success. The study therefore advances Cultural Intelligence Theory by providing empirical evidence that CQ functions not merely as an individual competency but as a strategic capability that translates organizational training investments into improved performance outcomes. Within Uganda's rapidly expanding infrastructure sector, the findings underscore the importance of designing training programs that prioritize cultural intelligence development as a means of enhancing expatriate effectiveness, stakeholder engagement, and project success.

7. Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study make several important contributions to Cultural Intelligence Theory and expatriate management literature. First, the study extends Cultural Intelligence Theory beyond the traditional contexts in which it has predominantly been examined, including multinational corporations, higher education institutions, and international business settings. By focusing on Chinese expatriate construction workers operating within Uganda's infrastructure sector, the study demonstrates that Cultural Intelligence Theory provides a robust explanatory framework for understanding employee effectiveness in project-based industries characterized by multicultural collaboration, complex stakeholder relationships, and dynamic work environments.

The findings provide empirical support for the central proposition of Cultural Intelligence Theory that cultural capabilities significantly influence individuals' effectiveness in culturally diverse contexts. The significant positive relationships observed between all dimensions of cultural intelligence and job performance confirm that expatriates who possess higher levels of cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, intercultural motivation, and adaptive behavior are better positioned to achieve superior performance outcomes. The study therefore reinforces the theoretical argument that effective performance in international assignments depends not only on technical competence but also on the ability to understand and navigate cultural differences.

More importantly, the study advances theory by demonstrating that cultural intelligence functions as a full mediating mechanism between pre-deployment training and job performance. While previous studies have generally established independent relationships between training, cultural intelligence, and expatriate outcomes, limited evidence has

explained how these variables interact within international construction environments. The finding that the direct effect of training on performance became statistically insignificant after the inclusion of cultural intelligence suggests that training contributes to performance exclusively through the development of cultural capabilities. This finding strengthens the theoretical proposition that cultural intelligence is not merely an outcome of training but the primary mechanism through which training translates into improved expatriate effectiveness.

The study also contributes to the growing body of literature on international human resource management by providing evidence from a developing-country context. Much of the existing research on cultural intelligence has been conducted in Western economies and multinational corporate settings. By examining Chinese expatriates working in Uganda, the study broadens the geographical and contextual applicability of Cultural Intelligence Theory and highlights its relevance within Africa's rapidly expanding infrastructure development sector. The findings therefore contribute to the internationalization of cultural intelligence research by demonstrating that the theory remains applicable across diverse economic, cultural, and industrial contexts.

8. Practical Implications

The findings of this study have significant implications for construction firms, international human resource managers, policymakers, and project stakeholders involved in China-Uganda infrastructure partnerships. The results indicate that organizations seeking to improve expatriate effectiveness should place greater emphasis on cultural preparation as an integral component of international assignment management.

For Chinese construction firms operating in Uganda, the findings suggest that pre-deployment training should extend beyond technical and operational preparation to include comprehensive cross-cultural learning components. Training programs should incorporate cultural awareness workshops, language familiarization, host-country orientation, communication skills development, stakeholder engagement strategies, and practical adaptation exercises. Such interventions can help expatriates develop the cultural capabilities necessary to function effectively within Uganda's diverse social and organizational environment.

The results further indicate that organizations should prioritize the development of behavioral and metacognitive cultural intelligence, as these dimensions emerged as the strongest predictors of expatriate performance. Training initiatives should therefore focus on enhancing expatriates' ability to adapt their communication styles, interpersonal behaviors, and decision-

making approaches to culturally diverse situations. Interactive training methods such as role-playing exercises, cultural simulations, mentoring relationships, experiential learning activities, and scenario-based problem-solving exercises may be particularly effective in strengthening these competencies.

The findings also highlight the importance of integrating cultural intelligence development into broader talent management and expatriate management strategies. Organizations should view cultural intelligence as a strategic capability that directly influences project performance rather than as a supplementary soft skill. Consequently, cultural intelligence assessments could be incorporated into expatriate selection processes to identify individuals with strong intercultural potential and to determine areas requiring developmental support before deployment.

Within the Ugandan context, the findings underscore the importance of cultural competence for facilitating collaboration between expatriates and local stakeholders. Construction projects frequently require interaction with local employees, government agencies, community leaders, suppliers, and contractors. Expatriates who possess strong cultural intelligence are more likely to build trust, reduce misunderstandings, strengthen stakeholder relationships, and promote effective knowledge transfer. Consequently, investments in cultural intelligence development have the potential to improve not only individual performance but also overall project success and organizational reputation.

For policymakers and project managers involved in China-Uganda infrastructure collaborations, the findings suggest that cultural intelligence should be recognized as a critical success factor in project implementation. Encouraging organizations to invest in cultural preparation and intercultural competence development may contribute to more effective collaboration, reduced workplace conflicts, and improved project outcomes across the infrastructure sector.

9. Limitations and Future Research

Despite its contributions, the study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study employed a cross-sectional research design, which limits the ability to establish definitive causal relationships among the variables. Although the findings support the proposed theoretical model, the data were collected at a single point in time and therefore cannot fully capture the dynamic process through which pre-deployment training influences cultural intelligence and subsequent job performance. Future studies

should adopt longitudinal research designs to examine how cultural intelligence develops throughout expatriate assignments and how its effects on performance evolve over time.

Second, the study focused exclusively on Chinese expatriate construction workers employed on infrastructure projects in Uganda. While this focus was appropriate given the objectives of the study, it may limit the generalizability of the findings to expatriates from other nationalities, industries, or geographical regions. Future research could examine whether similar relationships exist among expatriates from different cultural backgrounds or within other sectors such as manufacturing, energy, telecommunications, and international development.

Third, the study concentrated on cultural intelligence as the primary mediating variable linking pre-deployment training and job performance. Although the findings confirmed the significance of this relationship, expatriate effectiveness is likely influenced by additional organizational, individual, and contextual factors. Future research should therefore investigate the role of variables such as organizational support, leadership style, psychological adaptation, expatriate resilience, project complexity, and organizational culture in shaping expatriate outcomes.

The Ugandan context also presents opportunities for further investigation. Comparative studies involving multiple African countries could provide valuable insights into how national cultural differences influence expatriate adaptation and performance. Such studies would help determine whether the mechanisms identified in Uganda are equally applicable in other African contexts characterized by different cultural, institutional, and socio-economic conditions. Future research could also explore the perspectives of Ugandan employees working alongside expatriates to provide a more comprehensive understanding of intercultural collaboration within construction projects.

10. CONCLUSION

This study examined the role of cultural intelligence in explaining how pre-deployment training influences the job performance of Chinese expatriate construction workers in Uganda. Drawing upon Cultural Intelligence Theory, the study investigated whether cultural intelligence serves as the mechanism through which training enhances expatriate effectiveness within multicultural construction environments.

The findings revealed that pre-deployment training significantly improved all four dimensions of cultural intelligence, namely metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral CQ. The results further demonstrated that all dimensions of cultural intelligence

positively influenced job performance, with behavioral CQ and metacognitive CQ emerging as the strongest predictors of expatriate effectiveness. These findings highlight the importance of adaptive behavior and cultural awareness in enabling expatriates to function successfully within Uganda's culturally diverse construction sector.

Most importantly, the study established that cultural intelligence fully mediates the relationship between pre-deployment training and job performance. The findings indicate that training does not directly enhance expatriate performance; rather, its effectiveness is realized through the development of cultural capabilities that enable expatriates to navigate cultural differences, build productive relationships, and perform effectively within host-country environments. Cultural intelligence therefore represents the critical mechanism through which organizational investments in training translate into improved workplace outcomes.

The study contributes to theory by extending Cultural Intelligence Theory to the context of international construction management in Africa and by providing empirical evidence regarding the mediating role of cultural intelligence in expatriate performance. From a practical perspective, the findings underscore the importance of designing expatriate preparation programs that prioritize cultural intelligence development alongside technical competence. As Chinese investment in Uganda's infrastructure sector continues to expand, organizations that cultivate culturally intelligent workforces will be better positioned to enhance expatriate effectiveness, strengthen stakeholder relationships, and achieve sustainable project success.

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