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**CROSS-CULTURAL MANAGEMENT: A RESEARCH ON
MALAYSIAN EXPATRIATES IN HONG KONG**

Leong Chew Kuan

University of Wales Trinity Saint David

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ABSTRACT

This study, titled "Cross-Cultural Management: Malaysian Expatriates in Hong Kong," investigates the unique challenges and opportunities faced by Malaysians working in Hong Kong's dynamic business environment. As globalization continues to transform international business, the movement of professionals across borders has become essential for multinational organizations seeking to expand their operations and tap into new markets (Baruch et al., 2016). Among the expatriate community, Malaysian professionals have notably established a gradually significant presence in Hong Kong, a city characterized by its unique blend of Eastern and Western cultures, vibrant economy, and strategic geographical location as a gateway to Asia (*Business Culture and Work Etiquette in Hong Kong*, 2024; Fung, 2024).

The research explores into how Malaysian expatriates navigate cultural differences, adapt their management styles, and overcome barriers to effectively lead diverse teams. It examines the specific challenges they face in adapting to Hong Kong's fast paced and competitive business environment, marked by complex cultural dynamics. The study also explores the strategies employed by these expatriates to bridge cultural gaps and enhance collaboration with local colleagues (Hofstede, 2011).

The motivation for this research stems from the researcher's extensive professional experience spanning over two and a half decades, including 19 years residing in Hong Kong. The researcher has faced numerous challenges related to cross-cultural adjustments, language barriers, and his ability to interact with colleagues at work. This personal journey underscores the importance of understanding cultural differences and their impact on individuals' mindsets, organizations' performances, and management styles (Hofstede et al., 2010; Mohd Tahir & Ismail, 2007).

The study aims to address a gap in the existing literature by offering empirical evidence into the experiences of Malaysian expatriates in Hong Kong. It addresses key research questions, including the management styles employed by Malaysian expatriates, the challenges they face in adapting to Hong Kong's business culture, the effectiveness of their management practices in a multicultural environment, and the strategies they use to overcome cross-cultural barriers (Black & Gregersen, 1999).

By focusing on the unique experiences of Malaysian expatriates, this research contributes to the broader understanding of cross-cultural management practices. The findings have practical implications for organizations employing expatriates, particularly in designing effective training programmes and support systems that enhance cross-cultural adjustment and performance. Additionally, the study hopes to inform policymakers about the needs of expatriates in Hong Kong, ultimately contributing to better integration strategies (Bird & Mendenhall, 2016).

In conclusion, this research provides valuable insights into the challenges and strategies of Malaysian expatriates in Hong Kong, offering a comprehensive understanding of cross-cultural management in a multicultural business environment. The findings are expected to enhance organizational performance and integration within the Hong Kong and Greater Bay business landscapes (Schmillen & Testaverde, 2020).

Keywords: Malaysians in Hong Kong, Multinationals, Cross-cultural Adjustments, Management Style, Expatriate Adjustments

TITLE

Cross-Cultural Management: A Study on How Malaysian Expatriates Navigate Cultural Differences and Utilize Their Management Styles in a Hong Kong Multicultural Environment.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, globalization has transformed the landscape of international business, leading to an increase in expatriations across the world (Pearson & Entrekina, 2001). The movement of professionals across borders has become essential for multinational organizations seeking to expand their operations and tap into new markets (Baruch et al., 2016). Among the expatriate community, Malaysian professionals have notably established a gradually significant presence in Hong Kong; a city characterized by its unique blend of Eastern and Western cultures, vibrant economy, and strategic geographical location as a gateway to East Asia (*Business Culture and Work Etiquette in Hong Kong*, 2024; Fung, 2024).

Hong Kong's business environment is marked by its fast-paced nature and competitive landscape, where organizations must navigate complex cultural dynamics (*Business Culture in Hong Kong*, 2019). For Malaysian expatriates, adapting to this new environment presents both challenges and opportunities (Zainol et al., 2014). Understanding how these expatriates manage their teams and navigate cultural differences is critical for their success and the organizations they represent.

Research motivation

For over two and a half decades, the researcher has been working as a professional accountant. He has the privilege of working with renowned international accounting firms, prominent multinational corporations, and major public listed companies within the Asian

region. His diverse experience spans over 23 countries across multiple continents, demonstrating his adaptability and expertise.

As a Malaysian, he has spent the past 19 years living in the vibrant and dynamic city of Hong Kong. Throughout his career, he has encountered numerous challenges, including multiple repatriations that requires adaptation to entirely new environments and cultures. Each move demanded a significant adjustment period, during which he had to learn new customs, understand different societal norms, and navigate unfamiliar bureaucracies. His experiences have included mastering the Putonghua language, which not only broadened his communication skills but also deepened his appreciation for cultural differences.

In addition, he has experiences in working with individuals from diverse nationalities, fostering strong professional relationships, and building a network of contacts across various sectors. These interactions gave him insights into global business practices and enhanced his ability to work effectively with multicultural teams. Furthermore, he embarked on various business ventures, each presenting unique opportunities and obstacles. From starting up small enterprises to managing larger-scale projects, he understands the importance of resilience, innovation, and strategic thinking in a multicultural business environment.

His journey in Hong Kong has been characterized by continuous learning and personal growth, shaped by the city's fast-paced lifestyle and competitive business environment. He has been adapting to this bustling metropolis, where every day brings new experiences and lessons, contributing to his professional development and enriching his life story.

However, the researcher believes that the primary challenges are not related to the technical aspects of his work or business ventures. Instead, the true difficulties lie in non-technical issues such as family dynamics, cultural differences, language barriers,

interaction with colleagues, adaptability, and openness to the local culture (Zainol et al., 2014). For example, Malaysians' Cantonese, passed down orally through generations; can sound differently from Hong Kong Cantonese (H. J. Chan, 2024).

The researcher also acknowledges that he has yet to fully grasp the significance of Hong Kong cultural differences and its impact on individuals' mindsets, organizational performance, and management styles. This ongoing learning process underscores the complexity of cross-cultural interactions and the need for continuous effort to bridge gaps and build mutual understanding. By addressing these non-technical challenges, the researcher believes that individuals and organizations can better navigate the complexities of working in Hong Kong and global environment and achieve greater success in their endeavours.

As a Malaysian residing in Hong Kong, he hopes to conduct research on this aspect. The researcher believes that there's research gap in this area, and the findings and conclusions can be beneficial Malaysians who seeks to repatriate and establish a living and career in Hong Kong and Greater Bay. Lastly, he hopes that his research can provide valuable insights to the Academia, both the Malaysian and Hong Kong Governments and relevant organizations.

Background

Hong Kong's position as a global financial hub invites numerous expatriates from Southeast Asia, including those from Malaysia. In mid-2024, Hong Kong's population is estimated to be 7.53 million (*C&SD: Population Estimates*, 2024). In 2024, there are approximately 15,000 Malaysians currently reside in Hong Kong, with the majority originating from the state of Penang (*Malaysia*, 2025). This region's vibrant economy and strategic position in global trade attract many professionals seeking new opportunities.

This research proposal aims to examine the management styles and practices of Malaysian expatriates in Hong Kong, focusing on the challenges they face in adapting to a different business culture and the effectiveness of their management approaches in a multicultural environment. Given the number of expatriates Malaysians in Hong Kong, understanding their experiences is critical for enhancing cross-cultural management practices and fostering better integration within Hong Kong and the Greater Bay business landscape.

Despite the increasing number of Malaysian expatriates in Hong Kong, there is a notable lack of empirical research focusing on their experiences regarding cross-cultural adaptation and management practices. The existing literature primarily addresses general expatriate challenges without diving into the specific context of Malaysian expatriates in Hong Kong.

RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

This research will contribute to the existing academic on cross-cultural management by providing insights into the unique experiences of Malaysian expatriates in Hong Kong. The findings will have practical implications for organizations employing expatriates, particularly in designing effective training programmes and support systems that enhance cross-cultural adjustment and performance. Additionally, this study will inform policymakers about the needs of Malaysian expatriates in Hong Kong, ultimately contributing to better integration strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review serves as a critical groundwork for understanding on the complexities of cross-cultural management, particularly in the context of Malaysian expatriates working in Hong Kong. This section synthesizes existing research on cultural

dimensions, expatriate challenges and management styles; and highlighting key existing themes and gaps in the literature.

Cross-Cultural Management: An Overview

Cross-cultural management is an essential area of study that examines how individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds interact within organizations. It emphasizes the importance of understanding cultural differences in communication styles, decision-making processes, leadership approaches, and conflict resolution strategies (Hofstede, 2002; Hofstede & Bond, 1988). The globalization of business has intensified the need for effective cross-cultural management as organizations increasingly operate in multicultural environments (Erfan, 2024).

Cultural Dimensions Theory

One famous framework on cultural differences is Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory. This theory identifies several dimensions that influence management behaviour across cultures, as examined below (Hofstede, 2002; Hofstede et al., 2010). Understanding these dimensions is crucial for analysing the management practices of Malaysian expatriates in Hong Kong, where cultural differences significantly impact workplace dynamics.

- **Power Distance:** This dimension reflects how less powerful members of society defer to more powerful members. The society in Malaysia exhibits a high power distance culture, where hierarchical structures are important and respect for authority is emphasized (Hofstede et al., 2010). For instance, in Malaysian workplaces, decisions often come from the top, with limited input from lower-level employees. Conversely, Hong Kong has a slightly lower power distance, promoting more democratic relationships (Hofstede et al., 2010). Employees in Hong Kong might feel more

comfortable voicing their opinions and challenging decisions made by their superiors, especially in multinationals landscape.

- **Individualism vs. Collectivism:** The Malaysian culture is mainly collectivist, which prioritize on group harmony and unity over individual achievements. The collectivist mindset can be seen in how Malaysians often prioritize family and community obligations over personal goals (Hofstede, 2002). Similarly, Hong Kong also leans towards collectivism, emphasizing on harmony and group unity ('Hofstede', 2017; Hofstede, 2002). Individuals in Hong Kong may place value on personal accomplishments and while try to avoid conflicts among group interests.
- **Masculinity vs. Femininity:** This dimension indicates the degree to which traditional masculine values (such as competitiveness), or feminine values (like care for others) are emphasized. Both Malaysia and Hong Kong cultures exhibit masculine traits. However, while competitiveness and achievement are important in both Malaysia and Hong Kong, Malaysian culture tends to value cooperation and social harmony slightly more than competitiveness compared to Hong Kong (Hofstede, 2002). For example, team success might be celebrated more prominently in Malaysia, whereas individual accomplishments could receive more focus in Hong Kong.
- **Uncertainty Avoidance:** As per Hofstede, cultures with high uncertainty avoidance prefer structured environments with strict rules to minimize ambiguity (Hofstede, 2011). Malaysia displays moderate uncertainty avoidance, indicating a preference for some level of predictability and clear guidelines but also some flexibility (Hofstede, 2002). Conversely, Hong Kong is characterized by a lower tendency towards this dimension, indicating greater comfort with ambiguity and risk-taking (Hofstede, 2002). In practical terms, businesses in Hong Kong may be more willing to experiment with new strategies and take entrepreneurial risks compared to Malaysians.

- **Long-Term vs. Short-Term Orientation:** Malaysian culture typically emphasizes long-term planning and perseverance, often valuing traditions and sustained efforts over quick results (Islam & Hj. Ismail, 2024; Schmillen & Testaverde, 2020). This long-term orientation is evident in business strategies that focus on building lasting relationships and gradual growth. On the other hand, Hong Kong may exhibit a more short-term orientation, focusing more on immediate results (Hofstede & Bond, 1988). Companies in Hong Kong might prioritize strategies that show quick returns and are adaptive to fast-changing market conditions.
- **Indulgence vs. Restraint:** This dimension assesses the extent to which societies allow gratification of basic human desires. Malaysia is generally more restrained, meaning there is a greater emphasis on controlling gratification and regulating behaviours according to social norms (Mohd Tahir & Ismail, 2007). This restraint can manifest in more conservative attitudes towards leisure and consumption. Similarly, Hong Kong is also generally restrained, with slightly more indulgent towards pursuing higher quality lifestyle ('Hofstede', 2017).

Understanding these dimensions provides essential insights into the differences between the Malaysian societies and Hong Kong cultures, which can help explain the challenges faced by Malaysian expatriates in adapting their management practices within this Hong Kong multicultural environment.

Expatriate Challenges

The context of expatriation poses unique challenges for individuals relocating to manage operations in foreign countries. Research indicates that successful expatriate management emphasizes on the ability to adapt to local cultures and business practices (Black & Gregersen, 1999). Malaysian expatriates in Hong Kong experience various challenges related to cultural adaptation.

- **Cultural Differences:** Misunderstandings due to differing communication styles can hinder effective collaboration. For instance, while Malaysians often use indirect communication styles emphasizing politeness and relationship-building, Hong Kong's business culture may favour directness and assertiveness (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2011). This can cause difficulties for both parties; Malaysians may perceive Hong Kong staff challenging when they engage in direct feedback or discussing on an authoritative topic.
- **Conflict Management:** Different approaches to conflict resolution can create friction between expatriate managers and local employees. Research shows that Malaysians typically prefer integrating or compromising styles when handling conflicts, often emphasizing consensus-building over confrontation (Awalluddin & Maznorbalia, 2023). In contrast, Hong Kong's competitive environment may encourage more confrontational approaches where issues are addressed head-on (Wong et al., 2024). This divergence can complicate team dynamics; for instance, a disagreement over project direction might escalate if not managed appropriately.
- **Social Adaptation:** Building relationships with local colleagues is crucial but can be hindered by language barriers and cultural difference (Rahman & Hussain, 2021). Many Malaysian expatriates report difficulties forming connections due to these barriers impacting their overall job satisfaction and performance (Black & Gregersen, 1999; Zainol et al., 2014). The emphasis on networking in Hong Kong's business culture further complicates this process; while Malaysians may rely on established relationships for business dealings, their counterparts in Hong Kong often prioritize expanding their professional networks.
- **Work-life Balance:** Another significant challenge faced by expatriates includes balancing work commitments with personal life. The demanding nature of roles and

responsibilities in Hong Kong, coupled with long working hours, can lead to stress and burnout among expatriates (Lindeman, 2022). Malaysian expatriates, who may come from a work culture with different expectations regarding work-life balance, often find it hard to adjust to this aspect. Integrating time for leisure and family activities becomes crucial yet difficult under such pressures, thereby affecting their mental well-being, productivity and work performances.

- **Adaptation Strategies:** Previous studies highlight that expatriates often adopt various strategies to cope with cultural differences. Understanding these strategies among Malaysian expatriates can shed light on their management effectiveness in a multicultural setting. Research indicates that successful adaptation often involves cognitive flexibility and emotional intelligence (Bird & Mendenhall, 2016). Cognitive flexibility allows expatriates to adjust their thinking according to situational demands while emotional intelligence enables them to manage their emotions effectively.
- **Training and communications:** Training deficiencies also pose significant challenges for many expatriates. A lack of adequate pre-departure training on local customs, communication styles, and business etiquette can lead to difficulties in managing diverse teams effectively (Puck et al., 2008). Comprehensive training programmes addressing these gaps can significantly improve Malaysian expatriates' adjustment (H. L. Chan et al., 2024). However, there is a gap in the studies in this area in the context of Malaysians repatriated to Hong Kong.

Management Styles

Understanding the management styles in both Malaysia and Hong Kong is crucial for analysing the experiences of Malaysian expatriates.

- **Malaysian Management Style:** Management practices in Malaysia exhibit a mix of traditional and modern approaches influenced by various cultural factors including elements from Malay, Chinese, and Indian traditions (Kennedy, 2002). While Malaysian firms generally score close to the median in global management practices, there remains considerable room for improvement particularly in operations management and performance monitoring (Schmillen & Testaverde, 2020).
- **Hong Kong Management Style:** Hong Kong's business culture is characterized by a combination of Eastern and Western influences emphasizing formality respect for hierarchy and punctuality (*Business Culture and Work Etiquette in Hong Kong*, 2024; *Business Culture in Hong Kong*, 2019). Expatriates must adapt to these cultural nuances to effectively manage local teams fostering productive working relationships.

The differences in conflict management styles between expatriate managers and their local counterparts further complicate this adaptation process (Wu & Bertha, 2021). Understanding these dynamics is essential for enhancing cross-cultural management practices among Malaysian professionals operating in Hong Kong.

Research Gaps

Despite the increasing number of Malaysian expatriates in Hong Kong and Greater Bay area, there is a notable lack of empirical research focusing specifically on their experiences regarding cross-cultural adaptation and management practices. Existing literature primarily addresses general expatriate challenges without researching into the specific context of Malaysian expatriates in Hong Kong.

In conclusion this literature review highlights the importance of understanding cross-cultural dynamics within international business contexts. By focusing on the unique experiences of Malaysian expatriates in Hong Kong, this research seeks to contribute

valuable insights into effective cross-cultural management practices that can enhance organizational performance in increasingly diverse workplaces.

RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this study is to explore how Malaysian expatriates navigate cultural differences and leverage their management styles within the multicultural business environment of Hong Kong. This research aims to fill a gap in the existing literature regarding the specific experiences of Malaysian expatriates, particularly focusing on their challenges, strategies, and management practices in a diverse workplace. The findings are expected to provide practical implications for organizations employing expatriates, aiding in the development of training programmes, which enhance cross-cultural adjustment and overall performance.

KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study will address the following research questions:

1. What challenges do Malaysian expatriates face in adapting to Hong Kong's business culture?
2. How effective are the management practices of Malaysian expatriates in a Hong Kong multicultural environment?
3. What strategies do Malaysian expatriates use to overcome cross-cultural barriers in Hong Kong and enhance organizational performance?
4. What management styles are employed by Malaysian expatriates in Hong Kong?

PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

This research study will adopt a qualitative research design that allows for an in-depth exploration of participant's experiences and perceptions regarding cross-cultural management practices among Malaysian expatriates working in Hong Kong.

Sample Selection

A purposive sampling method will be employed to select participants who have at least one year of experience working in Hong Kong as expatriates from Malaysia. The sample size will consist of approximately 30 participants from various industries such as finance, technology, manufacturing, and services sectors. This is to ensure diversity within the sample while still allowing for rich qualitative data collection through interviews.

Data Collection Methods

The data collection process is a crucial component of qualitative research, as it directly influences the richness and validity of the findings. In this study, data will be gathered through semi-structured interviews, which are particularly effective for exploring complex topics such as cross-cultural management practices among Malaysian expatriates in Hong Kong. This method allows for a flexible yet focused dialogue between the researcher and participants, facilitating deeper insights into their personal experiences and perceptions.

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted in person, with each interview lasting approximately 2 to 3 hours. The participants will also be offered to be interviewed via video conferencing platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams. This dual approach ensures that the participants' busy schedules and geographical constraints do not hinder their participations, allowing the participants from different working backgrounds to share their insights without the need for travel. The flexibility of this method is vital, as it accommodates participants' schedules and comfort levels, which can significantly

enhance their willingness to engage openly in discussions about sensitive issues, such as cultural adaptation challenges and management effectiveness.

Moreover, using face-to-face or utilizing video conferencing tools enables the researcher to capture non-verbal cues, such as facial expressions and gestures, which can provide additional context to the verbal responses as compared to voice conferencing only. This aspect is particularly important in cross-cultural research, where communication styles may vary significantly between cultures. By integrating video conferencing technology into the data collection process, the study aims to create a conducive environment for participants to express their thoughts freely and candidly.

Interview Guide Development

The development of a comprehensive interview guide is essential for ensuring that the data collected aligns with the research objectives. The guide will be meticulously crafted based on insights gathered from the literature review and the specific aims of this study. It will encompass a range of topics designed to elicit detailed responses regarding participants' experiences as Malaysian expatriates in Hong Kong.

Key areas covered in the interview guide will include:

- **Personal Background Information:** This section will gather demographic data such as age, gender, educational background, and duration of stay in Hong Kong. Understanding participants' backgrounds is crucial for contextualizing their experiences and identifying any patterns related to demographic factors.
- **Experiences with Cultural Adaptation:** Participants will be prompted to share their experiences regarding cultural adjustments they have faced since relocating. This evaluation will provide insights into how they perceive cultural differences and their strategies for navigating these challenges.

- **Challenges in Managing Local Teams:** Questions in this section will focus on specific difficulties encountered when leading diverse teams composed of local employees. Understanding these challenges is vital for identifying gaps in current management practices and training programmes needed.
- **Perceptions of Management Effectiveness:** Participants will be asked to evaluate their management styles and practices in relation to local expectations and norms. This inquiry aims to uncover how expatriates perceive their effectiveness in fostering team performance within a multicultural context.
- **Strategies for Overcoming Cultural Barriers:** Lastly, this section will explore the practical strategies employed by expatriates to bridge cultural gaps and enhance collaboration with local colleagues.

Prior to full-scale data collection, the interview guide will undertake pilot testing with a small group of three to five participants who share similar characteristics with the target population. This pilot phase is critical for refining questions based on feedback regarding clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness. By addressing any ambiguities or biases identified during pilot testing, the researcher can enhance the quality of data collected during the main study.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is a fundamental aspect of qualitative research that transforms raw data into meaningful insights (Lim, 2024). In this study, thematic analysis will be employed following the completion of all interviews. This analytical approach allows the researcher to systematically identify patterns and themes within the qualitative data collected from participants' narratives.

Thematic analysis involves several key steps:

1. **Familiarization:** The first stage requires the researcher to engage in the data by reading through interview transcripts multiple times. This process fosters a deep understanding of participants' experiences and helps identify initial impressions that may inform subsequent analysis.
2. **Initial Coding:** The researcher will generate initial codes based on significant statements or phrases that tie with the research questions. These codes serve as labels that categorize segments of text relevant to specific themes or concepts under investigation.
3. **Theme Development:** After initial coding, the researcher will group related codes into broader themes that summarize key aspects of the experiences of participants. This step is crucial for grouping information into several categories that reflect commonalities across different interviews.
4. **Reviewing Themes:** Once themes are developed, the researcher will review them against the original data set to ensure consistency and accuracy. This iterative process helps validate that themes accurately represent participants' experiences while also considering any outliers or unique perspectives that may emerge.
5. **Defining and Naming Themes:** Finally, each theme will be clearly defined and named to express its essence effectively. This clarity is essential for reporting findings in a manner that resembles with both academic audiences and practitioners interested in cross-cultural management practices.

By employing thematic analysis, this study aims not only to identify challenges faced by Malaysian expatriates but also to uncover effective management strategies that contribute to successful outcomes within multicultural environments.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations are important to ascertain the integrity and credibility of this research. The following ethical principles will be adhered to throughout the research project to safeguard the participants' rights and well-being:

Informed Consent: Prior to participation, all potential participants will be provided with a complete information regarding the study's objectives, inherent and potential risks, procedures and benefits. This complete information will be presented in an understandable and clear manner, ensuring that participants are fully aware of their level of involvements. Informed written consent will be obtained, providing participants with ample opportunities to ask questions and seek clarification before agreeing to take part in the study.

Confidentiality: Throughout the research process, the confidentiality of participants will be strictly maintained. During the research process, personal identifiers will be deleted from all data to ensure ambiguity. Data will be securely stored and accessible only to the researcher. In any reports, publications or presentations resulting from this research, aliases will be used, and any identifying information will be omitted to protect participants' privacy and confidentiality.

Right to Withdraw: Participants will be informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any research milestones without any negative repercussions, even after their semi-structured interviews have been conducted. This right will be emphasized during the consent process and reiterated throughout the research study. Participants will not be

required to provide a reason for their withdrawal, and any data collected from them up to that point will be securely destroyed if they so desire.

Minimization of Harm: Every effort will be made to minimize any potential harm or discomfort to participants. The research design includes measures to ensure that the interview process is respectful and non-intrusive to the participants. Participants will be encouraged to share only what they are comfortable with, and they will have the option to skip any questions they find distressing.

Transparency and Honesty: The research will be conducted with the highest transparency and honesty. Participants will be kept informed about the progress of the research and how their data is being used. Any potential conflicts of interest will be disclosed, and the research findings will be reported accurately and without fabrication or falsification.

Ethical Approval: This study will seek ethical approval from the Ethical Review Committee of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David before commencing. This approval process will ensure that the research adheres to established ethical standards and guidelines, providing an additional layer of oversight and accountability.

Cultural Sensitivity: Given the cross-cultural nature of this research, cultural sensitivity will be a key consideration. The research team will be mindful of cultural and religious differences and respectful of participants' cultural backgrounds. Efforts will be made to ensure that the research instruments and procedures are culturally appropriate and do not inadvertently cause offense or misunderstanding to the participants.

By adhering to these ethical principles, this research aims to uphold the highest standards of ethical conduct, ascertaining that the rights and well-being of participants

are protected while contributing valuable insights to the field of cross-cultural differences and management styles adaptations.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

While this study aims to provide valuable insights into the experiences of Malaysian expatriates in Hong Kong, it is essential to acknowledge several limitations that may impact the findings and their generalizability. Recognizing these limitations not only enhances the transparency of the research but also provides a context for interpreting the results.

Sample Size and Selection Bias

One of the primary limitations of this research is the sample size, which may not be large enough to represent the broader population of Malaysian expatriates in Hong Kong. The qualitative nature of this study necessitates a purposive sampling method, where participants are selected based on specific criteria related to their experiences and backgrounds. While this approach allows for in-depth exploration of individual narratives, it inherently limits the diversity of perspectives captured. Consequently, findings may reflect only the experiences of those who were willing to participate, potentially leading to selection bias. Future research could benefit from a larger and more diverse sample to enhance the representativeness of the data.

Generalizability of Findings

Qualitative research is often criticized for its limited generalizability due to its focus on specific contexts and smaller sample sizes. The insights gained from this study may not be applicable to all Malaysian expatriates or to expatriates from other countries working in Hong Kong or similar multicultural environments. The unique cultural backgrounds, personal circumstances, and professional contexts of participants can significantly influence their experiences and adaptation strategies. Therefore, while this study provides

valuable insights into the challenges faced by Malaysian expatriates, caution should be exercised when extrapolating these findings to broader populations or different cultural settings.

Researcher Bias and Subjectivity

Another limitation arises from the potential for researcher bias and subjectivity in qualitative research. The interpretation of participants' narratives is influenced by the researcher's perspectives, experiences, and preconceptions. This subjectivity can affect how data is analysed, and themes are identified. To mitigate this risk, the researcher will engage in personal reflections, which is to constantly reflect on his biases and assumptions throughout the research process. However, complete objectivity is challenging to achieve in qualitative studies, which may lead to questions about the validity of interpretations drawn from the data.

Time Constraints

The time-consuming nature of qualitative research poses another limitation. Conducting in-depth semi-structured interviews, transcribing conversations, and analysing qualitative data require significant time investments. This limitation can lead to constraints in the depth of analysis or limit the number of interviews conducted within a given timeframe. As a result, some information or complexities within participants' experiences may remain unexplored due to time constraints during data collection and analysis phases.

Lack of Longitudinal Approach

This study focuses on a cross-sectional analysis of expatriate experiences at a single point in time. Consequently, it does not capture the dynamic nature of cross-cultural adjustment in the long run. Expatriate experiences are often characterized by evolving challenges and adaptations that may occur throughout their assignments. A longitudinal approach would provide richer insights into how expatriates navigate cultural differences in the long run and how their management practices evolve in response to ongoing

challenges. Future research could explore these longitudinal aspects to develop a more comprehensive understanding of expatriate adjustments in the longer timeframe.

Limited Contextual Factors

Finally, while this study emphasizes the experiences of Malaysian expatriates in Hong Kong, it may overlook broader contextual factors that influence these experiences, such as organizational culture, industry-specific challenges, or macroeconomic conditions affecting expatriate assignments. For instance, the Trump's 2024 Presidency election outcomes and the implications of his administration on global trades, economic growth and other international affairs (McKibbin et al., 2024). These external factors can significantly shape expatriate experiences and outcomes but may not be fully captured within the scope of this research.

In conclusion, while this study aims to contribute valuable knowledge regarding Malaysian expatriates' management practices in Hong Kong's multicultural environment, it is essential to consider these limitations when interpreting the research findings. Future research should address these limitations by employing larger sample sizes, exploring longitudinal approaches, and considering contextual factors that influence expatriate experiences.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The anticipated outcome of this research aims to provide valuable insights into various aspects concerning Malaysian expatriates working in Hong Kong's multicultural business environment. By focusing on specific challenges faced by these individuals along with their management practices within diverse settings, this study seeks not only academic contributions but also practical implications beneficial for organizations employing expatriates.

Expected outcomes include:

- A comprehensive understanding of the unique challenges faced Malaysian expatriates when managing their teams amidst cultural differences. This can range from communication barriers to differing expectations around leadership and management styles.
- Insights into the effectiveness of management approaches employed by Malaysian expatriates, as compared against local practices. This will allow organizations employing overseas expatriates an opportunity assess the alignment between managerial strategies utilized abroad versus those preferred locally.
- Recommendations aimed at enhancing cross-cultural training programmes tailored specifically towards supporting expatriate adjustment processes. Such programmes ultimately lead towards improved organizational performances through increased managerial effectiveness among expatriate leaders operating within multicultural contexts.

Contributions To Literature

These outcomes are expected not only to contribute significantly towards existing literature surrounding cross-cultural management but also offer empirical evidence regarding specific challenges encountered specifically by Malaysians operating in Hong Kong and Greater Bay area, a context underexplored thus far.

Practical Implications

Organizations employing Malaysian expatriates can benefit from this research, gaining insights on effective training programmes designed specifically for cross-cultural adjustment purposes. This can ultimately enhance overall organizational performance through improved managerial effectiveness among expatriates and local leaders.

Significance of the Study

By comprehending cross-cultural management practices among Malaysians residing in Hong Kong, organisations can formulate more effective policies supporting international assignments or Malaysian repatriations. This leads to improved integration, enhanced employee satisfaction, and greater integration among local leaders and expatriate managers.

Policy Recommendations

Based on the findings derived from this study, the recommendations may include:

- Developing comprehensive pre-departure training programmes that focus on cultural awareness specificities relevant locally (in Malaysia) and regionally (in Hong Kong). These training programmes should cover aspects such as local customs, traditions, language barriers, communication styles, and business etiquette. Additionally, they should provide practical scenarios and may include role-playing exercises to prepare employees for real-life interactions and challenges they might face in Hong Kong and the Greater Bay area.
- Implementing mentorship programmes, partnering new arrivals with experienced locals for guidance during the initial adjustment periods. This mentorship can involve regular one-on-one meetings where new arrivals can ask questions and seek advice, as well as group activities to foster a sense of community and acceptance. The mentors can also assist with navigating both professional and personal aspects of the expatriations, such as finding suitable accommodation, which can be a major adjustment, to understanding local transportation systems.
- Establishing regular feedback mechanisms allowing all employees (including both local staff and expatriates) to voice concerns about workplace dynamics openly without fear of repercussions. This could involve anonymous surveys, suggestion

boxes, and scheduled town hall meetings where issues can be addressed directly with management. Creating a safe space for dialogue will help identify and resolve potential conflicts early, promoting a more harmonious and productive work environment.

Conclusion

As businesses continue to expand globally, understanding cross-cultural management practices becomes increasingly important. This research proposal seeks to shed some light on the experiences of Malaysian expatriates in Hong Kong, contributing to both academic literature and practical applications within international business contexts. This proposal outlines a comprehensive plan for investigating the cross-cultural management practices of Malaysian expatriates in Hong Kong. By focusing on their unique challenges and effective strategies within a multicultural environment, this research aims to enhance our understanding of international business dynamics.

Further research can provide deeper insights into exploring longitudinal perspectives and considering multiple contextual factors, such as the implications of the Trump Second Presidency on cross-cultural management and the role of artificial intelligence technology. Such research can contribute to understanding how expatriate professionals can effectively navigate the complexities of international business environments while maintaining their cultural identity.

RESEARCH TIMETABLE AND RESOURCES PLANNING

Research timetable

To ensure systematic progress throughout this research project while adhering to established timelines, a comprehensive work plan outlining the key phases, activities, and required completion dates is provided below.

1. **Literature Review:** Conduct a comprehensive literature review focusing on cross-cultural management theories relevant to understanding the unique dynamics faced by Malaysians in Hong Kong. Identify gaps in existing research specifically related to their experiences. This phase will involve an extensive understanding of academic journals, books, and other scholarly resources to gather relevant information. (Duration: Months 1 – 3)
2. **Pilot Study:** Execute a pilot study to test methodologies and refine the research approach. This will include selecting a small sample group of three to five participants, conducting preliminary interviews or surveys, and analysing the results to fine-tune the data collection process. The goal is to ensure that the methods employed are effective and efficient. The Pilot Study will begin only after receiving approval from the Ethnicity Committee. (Duration: Months 4 – 5)
3. **Data Collection:** Develop an interview guide based on insights gathered during the literature review phase. Conduct face-to-face semi-structured interviews with selected 30 participants. Upon request, the interviews shall be conducted utilizing video conferencing platforms to ensure flexibility and accessibility. This stage involves reaching out to potential participants, scheduling interviews, and recording responses systematically. (Duration: Months 2 – 4)

4. **Data Analysis:** Perform a thematic analysis of the qualitative data collected, ensuring precision and clarity throughout the reporting phases. Identify recurring themes and patterns related to the challenges encountered and strategies utilized in multicultural settings. This phase requires careful coding and categorization of the data, followed by interpretation of the identified themes. (Duration: Months 4 – 5)
5. **Revisiting Literature Review:** Revisit the initial literature review to incorporate any new developments or gaps that have emerged, ensuring that the study remains current and relevant. This step ensures the incorporation of the latest insights and information in cross-cultural management and may involve additional reading and integration of new findings into the existing framework. (Duration: Months 9 – 11)
6. **Report Writing:** Compile findings into a report adhering to academic standards, ensuring clarity and depth. Discuss the implications of the findings and link them to broader issues surrounding cross-cultural management trends affecting Malaysian expatriates in Hong Kong. This will involve drafting, reviewing, and revising the report to ensure the report meets high academic standards. (Duration: Months 6 – 12)
7. **Final Submission:** Review and complete all necessary revisions to the final report before submission, adhering to institutional guidelines. Ensure timely delivery and completion of the project objectives. This stage includes proof-reading, formatting, and making final adjustments based on relevant feedback. (Duration: Month 12)

By following this structured timeline, the researcher aims to ensure both timely completion and thoroughness in addressing the complexities associated with cross-cultural

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management practices among Malaysian expatriates. The table below depicts the research timeline:

Research Timeline

Months 1 – 3		Months 4 – 6			Months 7 - 9		Months 10 – 12	
Literature Review	Revisit Research Questions					Revisiting Literature Review		
		Develop interviews and conduct pilot study	Conduct pilot study and refine questionnaires					
	Determine data collection sources		Perform data collections via semi-structured interviews					
					Perform data analysis			
				Write different sections of the report			Write report for final submission	

Resources planning

The research project will be conducted solely by the researcher. The target of 30 participants will be selected on a voluntary basis, and there will be no compensation provided to the participants during the data collection and analysis phase.

The research will be conducted on a full-time basis. During the initial phase of the research timeline, the researcher anticipates dedicating approximately 16 hours per week to the research. Upon reaching the data analysis milestone, the researcher will allocate approximately 20 hours per week to data analysis, including revisiting literature reviews and finalizing on the research report. This time allocation will ensure that the researcher has

adequate time to focus on data analysis, literature reviews, and the completion of research report.

Moreover, the researcher anticipates utilizing the facilities provided by the University of Wales Trinity Saint David and Hong Kong Management Association for his research and studies. Hence, he expects that the facilities, libraries and online tools from these institutions will cover most of the research expenditures. Nevertheless, the researcher does anticipate incurring approximately HK\$16,000 for the project. The following table presents the cost breakdowns:

Descriptions	HK\$
Purchase of Apple Macbook	8,500
Subscription for Microsoft 365 (HK\$53 for 13 months)	689
Travelling and coffee expenses for semi-structures interviews (HK\$200 for 30 participants)	6,000
Stationeries and pilot study expenses	1,000
Total	16,189

Despite meticulous planning and careful consideration, unforeseen expenses and resources may arise due to unanticipated events such as typhoon seasons, public holidays, and the necessity for data analysis software. The researcher will diligently endeavour to minimize resource and cost overruns throughout the research period.

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