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## **UNTANGLING CULTURE SHOCK AND WORKPLACE BULLYING USING ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT IN ACHIEVING EXPATRIATE ADAPTATION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Similar to other expatriate destinations, expatriates in Nigeria are susceptible to a myriad of issues. Nevertheless, empirical investigation to curb vicious actions against expatriates in Nigeria has been scarce and scanty. This study was conducted on the notion that organisational support moderates the negative effects of workplace bullying and culture shock on the adaptation of expatriates in Nigeria. It is a quantitative, correlational, and cross-sectional study based on responses gathered using a purposive sampling technique from 192 expatriates from 17 countries working in Nigeria. The PLS-SEM path modelling outcomes indicated that both culture shock and workplace bullying negatively and significantly affect both work and non-work domains of expatriate adaptation. On the contrary, the path coefficients and t-values obtained for the moderation of culture

shock by organisational support are positive but weak. Consequently, the p-values were not statistically significant and H3 was not supported. The moderation of workplace bullying and adaptation by organisational support was negative and also weak, implying that H4 is also not supported. In order to forestall the burdens of adaptation on expatriates, multinational companies are encouraged to explore various support measures, including cross-cultural training and addressing workplace bullying, to facilitate smooth adaptation for expatriates.

**Keywords:** Culture shock, workplace bullying, organisational support, expatriate adaptation, assigned expatriates.

## INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of global markets and increased ease of global mobility, among other factors, has culminated in greater assignation of expatriates across multinational organisations (Polón, 2017; Miao, 2021; Meyer et al., 2023). In Nigeria, both government and private sectors profit massively from the activities of multinationals (Ezeoha et al., 2022) in terms of job and income creation, transfer of technology and expertise, and improvement in infrastructure. Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society with a myriad of languages, cultures, traditions, and festivals. There are approximately 250 ethnic groups in Nigeria with varying characteristics relating to socioeconomic tapestry (Babangida, 2002), where these diversities influence their interactions and values (Ofili, 2016). Many expatriates deployed to Nigeria are reported to have failed due to difficulties in adaptation owing to distance culture and unwarrantable work environment (Heirmsmac et al., 2015; Okpara, 2016). Eze and Awolusi (2018) indicated that expatriates on international assignments to Nigeria faced difficulties in early communication, cultural dissimilarities, and workplace resentment. Nevertheless, aviation, oil and gas, maritime and construction companies have continued to attract a substantial number of expatriates despite the country's whopping annual \$2,000 fee work permit requirement, which is the highest in Africa (Okeke-Korieocha, 2023).

It is evident in the extant literature that expatriates suffer difficulties globally while adapting to new work environments (Chen, 2019),

which is attributable to psychological imbalances, weak internal security in some countries, ill-treatment in the workplace, and sudden loss of home culture (Scott, 2018; Nolan & Liang, 2022). The inability of expatriates to adapt to foreign environments is described as expatriate failure, which not only impacts firms' expansion strategies abroad but also leads to high costs for the company (Harzing, 2001; Yeaton & Hall, 2008; Furusawa & Brewster, 2018). Although Harzing (1995) and Forster (1997), as cited in Harzing and Christensen (2004), argued that expatriate failure is a myth and perhaps a "means to end" the foreign assignment and not an "end" to the assignment. The Global Relocation Services (2016) report on expatriation indicated that approximately 40 percent to 70 percent of expatriates deployed to foreign locations globally typically experience maladjustment. Hence, the issue of expatriate adaptation proves to be intriguing.

Nevertheless, there is no empirical consensus concerning specific antecedents of expatriate failure based on culture shock and workplace bullying. Culture shock and workplace bullying represent both negative notions and connotations, which have remained relatively understudied in expatriate-hostile environments (Pheko et al., 2017). Workplace bullying, which is invariably known as workplace incivility (Hon & Dong, 2023), organisational alienation (Yumuk & Kurgun, 2020), workplace harassment (Neall & Tuckey, 2014), or workplace mobbing (Qureshi et al., 2013) is an extreme social stressor that triggers employees' psychological aggression, which could result into anxiety, anger, memory loss, and inability to concentrate on the job. On the other hand, culture shock is primarily construed to be an emotional reaction to the loss of perceptual reinforcements from one's own culture (Adler, 1975), which affects expatriates intellectually, emotionally, and physiologically.

Since the first formal empirical case of workplace bullying was reported in Sweden in 1993, the phenomenon has become a global organisational issue (Salin et al., 2019), with an 83 percent rating in Europe, 65 percent in America and 55 percent in Asia (Afolaranmi et al., 2022). A survey of 5,235 respondents across 47 companies in Malaysia indicated that employees were bullied multi-dimensionally (Chan et al., 2019). This finding is corroborated by Rizali et al. (2020), who found a significant negative relationship between workplace bullying and workers' performance in Malaysia. In Bangladesh, workplace bullying is responsible for the career failure of sampled bankers (Milon et al., 2022). In Nigeria, Eze and Awolusi (2018)

discovered that culture shock is a counter-productive factor affecting expatriates, which unduly extends the adaptation period, negatively impacting well-being, achievements, and effectiveness and reducing job satisfaction for expatriates (Simpson, 2014).

Notably, despite the prevalence and detrimental consequences of workplace bullying and culture shock, there is an obvious need for deliberate attention to demystifying their dynamics and impacts on expatriates in Nigeria. Oluigbo (2023), under the sarcastic title, *Violence and Harassment in the Workplace is Rife in Nigeria*, reported that the incidence of workplace harassment was 29.5 percent above the global average of 20.9 percent, with 69.1 percent of the victims experiencing it three or more times. Similarly, Owoyemi and Akintayo (2019) and Akintayo (2014) indicated in their dissertations that workplace bullying cases in Nigeria were prevalent but were largely unreported due to fear of retribution. Moreover, Bader et al. (2018) ranked Nigeria third after Thailand and Cambodia in the list of 25 expatriate host countries in terms of institutional discrimination and workplace harassment of female expatriates.

It is noteworthy to observe that the long-standing issue of expatriate failure is still a raging phenomenon. In Nigeria, these incidences continue to occur despite the government's commitment to the enforcement of international labour organisations' conventions (Yusuf et al., 2022). Although previous studies indicated a negative significant statistical relationship between workplace bullying and expatriate adaptation (Bader et al., 2018; Dos Santos, 2020; Al-Surimi, 2022), the present study used organisational support as a moderator to alter the strength of the relationship between expatriate adaptation and workplace bullying. Overall, in view of the gaps identified in the previous studies, this present study is poised to examine how culture shock and workplace bullying affect the adaptation of expatriates in Nigeria. In view of the negative relationship reported in past studies, this study examined the moderating effect of organisational support in influencing the strength of the relationship between the endogenous and the exogenous constructs in this study.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON KEY CONSTRUCTS

Workplace bullying has been identified as one of the leading workplace anxiety and emotional exhaustion factors with adverse consequences

on individuals, groups, and organisations (Andriyani & Wicaksono, 2023). Bullying in the workplace has been an ethical issue since the existence of formal organisations, and there is no reason to believe that the motives behind it or its intensity are diminishing (Samnani, 2013). Employees facing workplace bullying encounter demonstrate low job satisfaction, higher levels of anxiety and depression, and are likely to repatriate, which all leads to expatriate failure (Gumbus & Meglich, 2012; Devonish, 2013; Gillen et al., 2017). As this phenomenon continues, it remains unclear to what extent its outcomes can be curtailed (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011; León-Pérez & Rubio, 2011). Yusuf et al. (2022) and Mwabi (2019) reported skewed human resources practices favouring expatriates at the expense of the host country employees in Nigeria. In contrast, Uwbuike (2021) reported how West African migrant nurses experienced bitter workplace bullying from their managers in the United Kingdom. Thus, the prevalence of workplace bullying jeopardising the adaptation of expatriates is substantially established.

Miller and El-Aidi (2008) construed that culture shock, as an antecedent of expatriate adaptation, is predicated on communication, language, tradition, and personal traits. Shi and Wang (2014) examined the factors and reported how they significantly impeded the adaptation of Chinese expatriates in selected multinational organisations. A contrary result was presented by Selmer (1999), who discovered that the psychological adaptation of American and European expatriates failed to indicate the culture shock effect. Additionally, in a longitudinal study involving American expatriates in Turkey, Bikos et al. (2007) found that culture shock was not a predictor of expatriate adaptation. Although Lysgaard's U-curve model is popularised due to its validity in explaining the strict phases of expatriate adaptation with respect to culture shock, a study by Ward et al. (1998) across Japanese expatriates in New Zealand revealed that culture shock measured in terms of psychological and sociocultural perspectives deviated from the norm. In this case, the greatest shock experience was encountered at arrival and eventually phased out over time.

Overall, workplace bullying creates a perception of risk for the expatriates, which could jeopardise their adaptation (Jennifer et al., 2003; Nauman et al., 2019). It adds strands of stress and difficulty, potentially hindering the success of the assignment. Nevertheless, drawing from the hypothetical notion of organisational support theory, employees believe that work success should depend on treatment

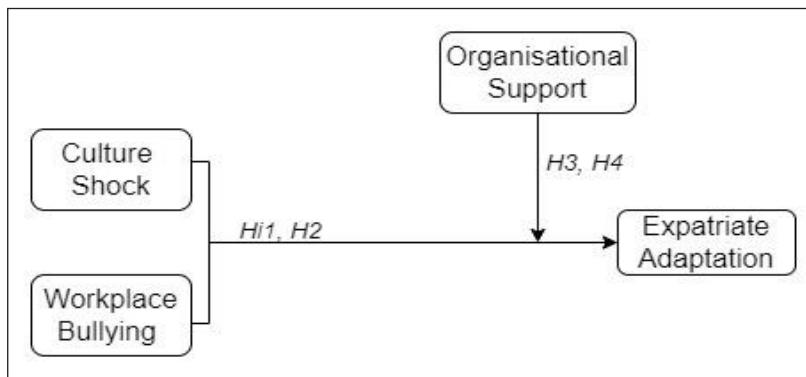
by the organisation. Both workplace bullying and the resulting risk perception would be moderated by organisational support. Past studies, including Kraimer and Wayne (2004), Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al. (2005), and Bader (2015), reported that organisational support influences expatriates' intention to work in a bullying environment and even complete assignments. In determining the mechanisms that would facilitate expatriate adaptation and performance, Kawai and Strange (2014) discovered that organisational support has a direct positive influence on work adjustment and affective commitment. Furthermore, Eisenberger et al. (1986) ascertained that employees form a global belief that organisational support fosters commitment and reduces absenteeism. Hence, it is now widely accepted by academic researchers and human resources practitioners that organisational support can help expatriate staff adapt to living and working in new environments.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

The study's framework is based on the prediction of direct and indirect effect relationships. The direct effect relationship is between culture shock, workplace bullying and expatriate adaptation. Nevertheless, to mitigate the negative effect of shock and bullying on expatriates' process of adaptation, it is proposed that organisational support moderates the interaction.

**Figure 1**

*Research Framework*



As illustrated in Figure 1, Anxiety-Uncertainty Management Theory and the Theory of Organisational Support conspicuously capture and describe the relationship in the framework while also supporting the hypothetical assumptions of this study. The Anxiety Uncertainty Management Theory (AUMT), as modelled by Gudykunst (1984), was built on the notion of expatriate adaptation with respect to adapting and coping with foreign culture. It also envisions that adaptation outcomes are based on the dimensions of uncertainty reduction and anxiety reduction. In essence, expatriate adaptation involves the process of adjusting to and coping with a foreign culture. Reducing uncertainty and anxiety is critical to this adaptation. Successful adaptation is achieved when expatriates can lower their uncertainty regarding how to behave and what to expect in the new cultural environment, as well as reduce their anxiety concerning these unknowns. By understanding and managing these dimensions, expatriates can better integrate into the foreign culture and improve their overall experience and performance abroad.

In the context of organisational support, Eisenberger et al. (1986) argued that to meet socio-emotional needs and assess the benefits of increased work effort, employees form a general perception concerning how much the organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being. Such perceived support increases employees' felt obligation to help the organisation attain its objectives. Hence, in the height of uncertainties, organisational support would lessen expatriates' psychological burden and enhance their adaptation process.

### ***Culture Shock and Expatriate Adaptation***

The psychological and emotional disorientation experienced by individuals when they encounter a new and unfamiliar culture is described as culture shock (Stewart & Leggat, 1998; Luo, 2014). It is a prevalent occurrence for individuals who move to another country or even within their own country if wide cultural differences exist. According to Haslberger (2005), culture shock is the core conundrum that describes the adjustment crisis that expatriates encounter before transitioning to comfort and normal functionality. For example, Ward et al. (1998), Selmer (1999), and Bikos et al. (2007) established that the popular Lysgaard's U-curve model, which explains how expatriates navigate culture shock, does not have absolute effects, particularly

when considering psychological adaptation among Chinese, American, European, and New Zealand expatriates. In examining expatriate children's adaptation, de Sivatte et al. (2019) reported that they adapted well without any traces of culture shock. Several studies, including Ali et al. (2003), Zhoue et al. (2008), Oluwadare (2019), and Hack-Polay and Mahmoud (2023), established that culture shock strongly influences the adaptation of expatriates. Cranston (2016) reported that diverse cultures can lead to overbearing tendencies, perceived as issues that may require medical solutions. In that respect, it constitutes risks to the expatriates, affecting their adaptation and the way they experience migration. It extends the period of adaptation to a new culture, negatively impacts well-being, achievements, and effectiveness, and reduces job satisfaction for expatriates (Simpson, 2014). Its causes are contextualised as stemming from communication, language, religious, and traditional differences (Shi & Wang, 2013). Nevertheless, Adler (1976) construed culture shock from a positive perspective as a profound learning experience that leads to a high degree of self-awareness and personal growth rather than being only a disease for which adaptation is the cure.

*H1: There is a significant negative relationship between culture shock and expatriate adaptation in Nigeria.*

### ***Workplace Bullying and Expatriate Adaptation***

Workplace bullying is a concerning issue in contemporary working life, affecting up to 15 percent to 18 percent of employees (Matthiesen, 2010; Glambek, 2014). Its consequences include poor work outcomes as a result of negative emotional and physical responses (Ghaida'a, 2022). In the case of expatriates, it leads to failure of adaptation and premature repatriation (Dos Santos, 2020), which constitute a huge loss to the organisation (Hajro et al., 2019). Prior literature has shown that workplace bullying, as an exogenous variable, yields mixed findings when measured against various endogenous variables such as adaptation, performance, or turnover intention. For example, Ghaida'a (2022) reported that the relationship between workplace bullying and employee performance is not significant. Hsu et al. (2019) indicated that workplace bullying can harm employees' well-being, trigger negative attitudes, and undermine job performance. Exposure to workplace bullying among expatriates increases job insecurity and turnover intention, potentially affecting expatriate adjustment and adaptation (Glambek, 2014).

In two meta-analyses of the effects of workplace bullying, Nielsen and Einarsen (2012) proved that exposure to workplace bullying is associated with mental and physical health issues, post-traumatic stress, burnout, increased intentions to leave, and reduced job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Ahmad and Sheehan (2017) also revealed that bullying also destroys organisations' succession planning efforts as competent and talented individuals leave jobs as a way of coping with bullying. In a recent study involving a large sample of 403 respondents, Ma et al. (2023) reported that, as a mediator, workplace bullying has a direct effect on turnover intention, which is a consequence of a lack of adaptation. From the foregoing, it was assumed that:

*H2: There is a significant negative relationship between workplace bullying and expatriate adaptation in Nigeria.*

### ***Moderating Role of Organisational Support***

Organisational support is typically the provision of resources, training, and assistance that can help expatriates adjust to their new environment. According to the theory of organisational support, employees generally perceive the extent to which the organisation values their contributions and demonstrates responsiveness to their personal well-being. This perception triggers their innate commitment with the hope that the organisation will stand by them in meeting their socio-emotional needs. Organisational support is described by Eisenberger et al. (1990) as a general perception concerning the extent to which the organisation values employees' general contributions and cares for their well-being. Organisational support, in general, contributes to positive reciprocity in line with expatriates' expectations. As soon as the expatriates possess a good perception of the organisation, their efforts and work will improve. Logically, the changes in expatriates' behaviour stem from the fact that employees generally perform better after receiving support, whether the support is intrinsic or extrinsic. It has been serially established in extant literature that organisational support is a strong enhancer of expatriate adaptation globally. In a sub-Saharan African study, Sokro et al. (2021) found that organisational support positively influences expatriate adjustment. The study analysed 229 expatriates using partial least squares path modelling. In an examination of salient factors that predict expatriates' adaptation, Takatsuka and Yimcharoen (2021) established that organisational support plays a major role in enhancing expatriates' satisfaction.

As a moderating construct, Birdseye and Hill (1995) alluded that organisational support is a strong predictor of expatriate tendencies to stay or leave, which is a consequence of lack of adaptation. Amari (2023) discovered that organisational support fosters expatriates' creativity in high-diversity contexts, which could be evidenced by the increased emotional stability necessary for effective adaptation. Additionally, Lee and Kartika (2014) reported that organisational support is a strong moderator of expatriate adaptation. Undoubtedly, workplace bullying constitutes both physical and psychological encumbrance on employees wherever it exists and affects an individual's well-being in terms of anxiety (Nauman et al., 2019). Hence, support is required to stabilise both physical and psychological strains. Although Kuzikova and Shcherbak (2022) and Al-Hawari et al. (2020) established that employee resilience is capable of subduing the influence of stress arising from workplace bullying, Davies et al. (2019) demonstrated that the positive effects of employee resilience on stress are enhanced for expatriates when accompanied by organisational support. Nevertheless, Davies et al. (2019) and Lazarus and Folkman (1984) confirmed that the presence of combined personal, environmental and effective organisational resources (Eby et al., 2000) is instrumental in influencing positive expatriate adaptation (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2006). Organisational support, according to Quratalain and Al-Hawari (2021), could be informational, instrumental, or emotional. By extension, it would also mitigate absenteeism, decreased productivity, and intention to leave (Karatepe, 2012; Manoharan et al., 2019; Muazzam et al., 2020). Consequently, Ngale (2017) recommended that organisational strategies should be used to mitigate the negative tendencies of workplace bullying on employees. Based on the foregoing empirical grounds, it was proposed that:

*H3: The relationship between workplace bullying and expatriate adaptation is moderated by organisational support such that the relationships are weakened when the level of organisational support is high.*

On the contrary, the effects of culture shock, which are anticipated to hinder effective expatriate adaptation, could be mitigated if organisations provide effective support to expatriates. It has been established in past studies such as Selmer (1999), Tung (1998), Caligiuri et al. (2001), and Tarique and Bürgi (2001) that continued logistical support involving pre and post-arrival cross-cultural training

mitigates culture shock. Hence, when expatriates find themselves immersed in an unfamiliar culture, the support being provided by the organisation will ease the effects. Based on these facts, the study proposed that:

*H4: The relationship between culture shock and expatriate adaptation would be moderated by organisational support such that when organisational support is high, the effect of culture shock will be weakened.*

## METHODOLOGY

### ***Research Design, Respondents, and Data Collection***

This study is quantitative, correlational, and cross-sectional. The unit of analysis was individual expatriates from four sectors in Nigeria. The inclusion and exclusion criteria were those who had worked and lived in Nigeria for not less than six months. These criteria were influenced by the extant laws that restricted the employment of foreigners in Nigeria. Notably, although there were different categories of expatriates (Andresen, 2014; Przytuła, 2015; Wurtz, 2022), participants for this study consisted of assigned (corporate) expatriates only. With a predictive power of 0–95 and the effect size parameter at 0.15, G\*power recommended 107 as the minimum sample. An electronic platform using Google Forms generated data from 192 expatriates (representing a 179% response rate) from 17 countries working across the oil and gas, telecommunication, mining, and tourism sectors of Nigeria. Access to the expatriates was facilitated by the Nigerian Immigration Service's national headquarters. Descriptive and inferential statistical analysis were performed using IBM SPSS statistics 27 and SmartPLS 4.

### **Procedure for Data Collection**

Due to diplomatic protocols and insecurity concerns, access to the expatriates requires formality. Hence, the researchers approached the Nigerian Immigration Service, which is the supervisory government agency on expatriate issues, and a cover letter was issued. The letter was duplicated and delivered to various organisations where the expatriates were working. The organisations gave their consent to

allow their expatriate employees to participate in the survey. Although they refused to share the expatriates' phone numbers and email IDs with the researcher, a contact person was available in each organisation to share the survey link with the participants. The inclusion and exclusion criteria, including a minimum stay of six months in Nigeria, were discussed and enforced. It took several weeks of follow-up and reminders through the contact person within the organisations to get them to fill out the questionnaire, which was subsequently collated in an Excel sheet, scrutinised and processed for analysis.

### ***Measurement of Study Variables***

Measurement items for this study are in three parts: A, B, and C. Parts A and C comprised self-developed items (vetted and recommended by experts in the field of international management), which contained screening questions and demographic data of respondents, respectively. Part B comprised items that measured all the study's variables, which were adapted from previous reputable studies with strong Cronbach's alpha values. The questionnaire was administered online and accompanied by a cover letter issued by the Comptroller General of Nigeria Immigration Service, which served as ethical support to convince expatriates to participate freely in the survey. The screening question in part A sought to fulfil the inclusion criteria of the study by asking the respondents to answer if they had lived in Nigeria for a period not less than six months. If the response was "No", they would not be able to proceed to the remaining parts of the questionnaire. If "Yes", the respondents could proceed with the study. Items in section B relating to the study variables were all placed on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Slightly Disagree = 3, Neutral = 4, Slightly Agree = 5, Agree = 6, and Strongly Agree = 7. Sources of items for the variables are as follows:

### ***Workplace Bullying***

In order to measure workplace bullying as an antecedent of a hostile environment, the study adopted an instrument developed by Kwan et al. (2020) containing 19 items, known as the Malaysian Workplace Bullying Index (MWBI). Samples included: "Other people take credit for the work done by me" and "I am being blamed for mistakes committed by other people" ( $\alpha = 0.78$ ).

### ***Culture Shock***

Culture shock is an independent variable in this study, and its measurement was based on an 18-item instrument developed by Mumford (1998) with  $\alpha = 0.70$ . It was administered based on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from “1 = Strongly Disagree” to “7 = Strongly Agree”.

### ***Expatriate Adaptation***

Expatriate adaptation is the dependent variable in this study. It was measured using the instrument developed by Black and Stephens (1989), with slight modifications to fit the context and style of the current study. The sample of the 14 items included: “I engage in friendly interaction with my hosts” and “I enjoy the entertainment and recreation facilities provided here” ( $\alpha = 0.94$ ).

### ***Organisational Support***

The nine-item instrument adapted for this variable was originally developed by Selmer et al. (1998). A sample of the statements included: “The training provided by my organisation before my departure helps me better adjust to the new environment” ( $\alpha = 0.94$ ).

## **ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

### ***Data Cleaning (Assessment of Missing Values, Outliers, and Normal Distribution)***

In order to avoid contraction of the statistical power and generation of bias in estimates that could result in unreliable conclusions (Kang, 2013), data for this study was scrutinised for detection of missing values, outliers, and normality distribution. In detecting missing data, the value was 0, potentially due to all items in the Google online survey form being tagged “required”. Hence, submission was not possible with a missing response.

For the outliers, the study adopted the Mahalanobis distance approach. Hence, the measure for Mahalanobis  $D^2$  in this study with four variables revealed a chi-square value of 22.46 (at  $p < .001$ ),

indicating the presence of multivariate outliers in the data set. All generated values of Mahalanobis greater than the threshold of 22.46 were deleted since allowing outliers in a data set can strongly affect the estimation of the coefficients and consequently lead to misleading results (Verardi & Croux, 2008). As a result, four cases (1, 155, 159, and 165) were deleted from the data set, leaving the study with 188 valid cases.

In order to fulfil the assumption of multivariate analysis, data normality was assessed using kurtosis (the peakedness or flatness of the distribution compared with the normal distribution) and skewness (Hair et al., 2010). Skewness values are recommended to be less than 2, and kurtosis values should be less than 7 (Curran et al., 1996). Based on the values obtained, it is satisfied that the data was normal since the absolute values of the skewness and kurtosis of all the items were within the acceptable range of  $< 2$  and  $< 7$ , respectively. Appendix A presents the score for both skewness and kurtosis of the study variables.

### ***Common Method Variance***

Based on the assumption that the same source data is susceptible to common method bias (Jordan & Troth, 2020), this study adopted a statistical mechanism involving post hoc procedure using Harman's single factor analysis to determine whether a single factor accounts for variance in the data. The results of the analysis indicate that a single factor accounted for 25.78 percent of the variance in the data set, which is less than 50 percent. Hence, the data set is free of common method variance (Tehseen et al., 2017; Chang et al., 2020).

### ***Profile of the Respondents***

**Table 1**

#### *Demographic Information of Sampled Expatriates*

Demography	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
<b>Gender</b>	Male	128	66.70
	Female	64	33.30

(continued)

Demography	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
<b>Age</b>	20–29 years	18	9.40
	30–39 years	72	37.50
	40–49 years	85	44.30
	50–59 years	17	8.90
<b>Marital status</b>	Single	64	33.30
	Married	128	66.70
	Basic level	55	28.65
	Diploma	84	43.75
<b>Education</b>	Bachelor degree	38	19.79
	Master's degree	11	5.73
	Phd	4	2.08
<b>Length of stay in Nigeria</b>	Less than 6 months	0	0
	>> 6 months << 1 year	84	56.30
	>>One year	108	43.80
<b>International work experience</b>	No	69	35.90
	Yes	123	64.10

In this study, as reflected in Table 1, 66.70 percent of the participants were male, and the same percentage were married. A significant proportion of respondents were in the age range of 30–39 (n = 72, 37.50%) and 40–49 (n = 84, 44.30%). A total of 84 (43.75%) were holders of diplomas, and 55 (28.65%) had first degrees. Only four (2.08%) had PhD while 11 (5.73%) had master's degrees. This finding indicates that most expatriates were not highly professional personnel based on educational qualifications. All the expatriates had lived in Nigeria for more than six months, while another 108 (43.08%) had exceeded one year of stay. Most respondents (n =123, 64.10%) had previous international work experience from another country.

### ***Assessment of the Measurement Model***

The measurement model was assessed to confirm the convergent validity and discriminant validity in terms of factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha (CA), composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). According to Hair et al. (2019), factor loadings should not be less than 0.708. Nevertheless, the researcher can consider other items' loadings between 0.40 and 0.70 as long as the AVE and CR are achieved. In this study, from the 19 items that

constituted the construct of culture shock, nine items (CS2 - 0.392, CS3 - 0.315, CS8 - 0.312, CS12 - 0.332, CS13 - 0.360, CS14 - 0.351, CS15 - 0.355, CS16 - 0.359, and CS17 - 0.068) that did not satisfy this requirement were deleted. The remaining ten items with strong factor loading (ranging from 0.752–0.903) are shown in Table 2. In order to satisfy the requirements for internal consistency, the CR measure for all constructs exceeded the recommended value of 0.700 (Wasko & Faraj, 2005; Peterson & Kim, 2013). For Cronbach's alpha, the value of each construct exceeded the 0.70 threshold. The convergent validity was also acceptable as the AVE constructs range from the highest (0.728) for expatriate adaptation to the lowest (0.7040) for culture shock, exceeding 0.50, per the recommendations of Kock (2011) and Hair et al. (2011).

**Table 2**

*Loadings, Reliability, and Validity*

Constructs and indicators	Factor loadings	CA	CR	AVE
<b>Culture shock</b>		<b>0.953</b>	<b>0.961</b>	<b>0.704</b>
CS1	0.821			
CS10	0.903			
CS11	0.849			
CS18	0.796			
CS19	0.752			
CS4	0.889			
CS5	0.852			
CS6	0.770			
CS7	0.896			
CS9	0.845			
<b>Expatriate adaptation</b>		<b>0.971</b>	<b>0.972</b>	<b>0.728</b>
EAD1	0.824			
EAD10	0.857			
EAD11	0.860			
EAD12	0.805			
EAD13	0.795			
EAD14	0.801			
EAD2	0.896			

(continued)

Constructs and indicators	Factor loadings	CA	CR	AVE
EAD3	0.869			
EAD4	0.868			
EAD5	0.888			
EAD6	0.881			
EAD7	0.829			
EAD8	0.884			
EAD9	0.881			
<b>Workplace bullying</b>		<b>0.974</b>	<b>0.977</b>	<b>0.709</b>
WB1	0.793			
WB10	0.835			
WB11	0.852			
WB12	0.873			
WB13	0.834			
WB14	0.861			
WB15	0.848			
WB16	0.819			
WB17	0.826			
WB2	0.835			
WB3	0.824			
WB4	0.861			
WB5	0.803			
WB6	0.859			
WB7	0.85			
WB8	0.863			
WB9	0.873			

Discriminant validity was examined by assessing the cross-loadings (Hair et al., 2014) and the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations (Henseler et al., 2015). The items' loadings of each construct were at least 0.40 larger than the cross-loadings of other constructs. This result indicates that the construct items were distinct from other constructs within the model (Chin, 2010). The HTMT ratio analysis was also examined for its systematic ability to assess discriminant validity (Ronkko & Evermann, 2013; Henseler et al., 2015). Table 3 reveals that the inter-construct correlation was less than any of the HTMT criterion standards compared to the threshold of either 0.85 or 0.90 by using inference statistics to test the hypothesis

that HTMT = 1. Based on the traditional discriminant analysis, it is satisfactory to state that the discriminant validity is well-established in this study (Henseler et al., 2015; Franke & Sarstedt, 2019), proving that the respondents did not misconstrue one construct for the other.

**Table 3**

*Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) Ratio*

	CS	EAD	WB	OGS x WB	OGS x CS
CS					
EAD	0.333				
WB	0.102	0.345			
OGS x WB	0.054	0.069	0.149		
OGS x CS	0.194	0.077	0.039	0.176	

*Assessment of the Structural Model*

By adhering to the recommendations of Hair et al. (2019), the structural model was assessed by administering a bootstrapping procedure and setting the traditional parameters of 5000 re-samples to calculate path coefficients and t-values. Table 4 shows that the negative relationship hypothesised between culture shock and expatriate adaptation was not supported. The statistics ( $\beta = 0.323$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) generated from the analysis indicate a positive relationship between culture shock and expatriate adaptation, signifying that the relationship is significant (Kwak, 2023). Thus, H1 is not supported and rejected. Additionally, the test of the relationship between workplace bullying and expatriate adaptation ( $\beta = -0.327$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) indicates that it is negative and equally significant, confirming H2. Hence, workplace bullying significantly negatively influences expatriate adaptation.

**Table 4**

*Hypotheses Testing for Direct Relationships - Path Coefficient*

Hypotheses	Relationships	Path coefficient	Standard deviation	t-values	p-values	Decision
H1	CS $\rightarrow$ EAD	0.323	0.070	4.598	0.000	Not Supported
	WB $\rightarrow$ EAD	-0.327	0.077	4.225	0.000	Supported

Further analysis of the inferential statistics to account for the moderating role of organisation support on the negative relationship between culture shock and expatriate adaptation indicates a path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of 0.032 and a significance probability value of  $p > 0.05$  (Refer to Table 5). At 0.653, the statistics demonstrate 'not significant', implying that organisational support did not significantly moderate the negative relationship between culture shock and expatriate adaptation, contrary to H3. Similarly, H4 with ( $\beta = -0.031$ , and  $p < 0.616$ ) indicated a moderate effect in the relationship between workplace bullying and expatriate adaptation but also not significant.

**Table 5**

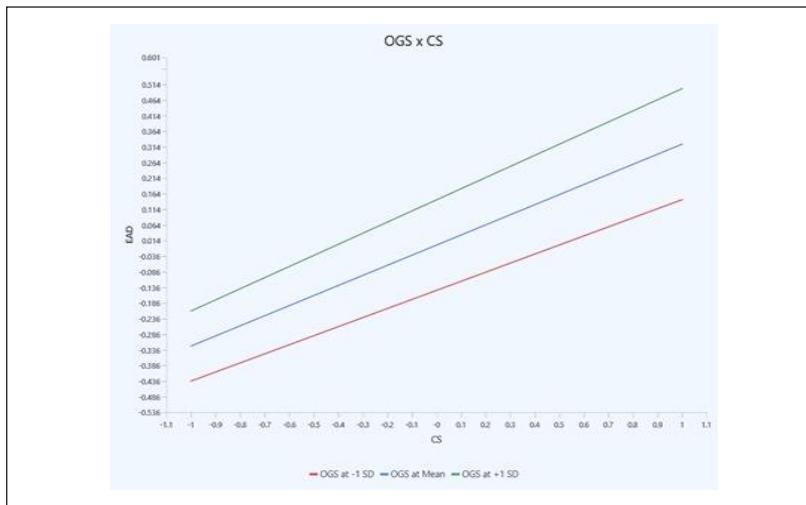
*Testing for Moderation*

Hypotheses	Relationships	Path Coefficient	Standard Deviation	t-values	p-values	Decision
H3	OGS x CS -> EAD	0.032	0.072	0.450	0.653	Not Supported
H4	OGS x WB -> EAD	-0.031	0.061	0.502	0.616	Not Supported

Nevertheless, to further clarify the nature of this interaction, this study followed the recommendations of Helm et al. (2010) and Henseler and Fassott (2010) to detect interaction effects involving continuous predictor and moderator variables. Additionally, Park and Yi (2023) recommended using a multi-approach to explain moderation effects. This approach involves analysing the simple slope to confirm the direction of the moderating effect and assessing the effect size to determine how much the r-square changes as a result of introducing the moderating variable. Therefore, this study explored a simple plot analysis and found that organisational support, though mildly, did not actually moderate the interaction between culture shock and expatriate adaptation. As illustrated in Figure 2, when organisational support is low, the effect of culture is higher, but when it is high, the effect of culture shock on expatriate adaptation is lower, indicating a much steeper line.

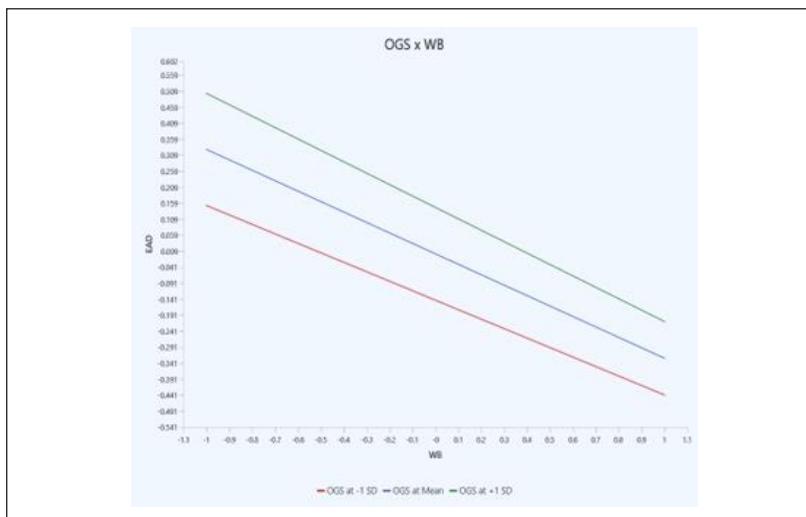
**Figure 2**

*Moderating Effect of Organisational Support on Culture Shock*



**Figure 3**

*Moderating Effect of Organisational Support on Workplace Bullying*



The negative slope in Figure 3 illustrates how, at the low level of the red line (workplace bullying), the steeper green line (expatriate

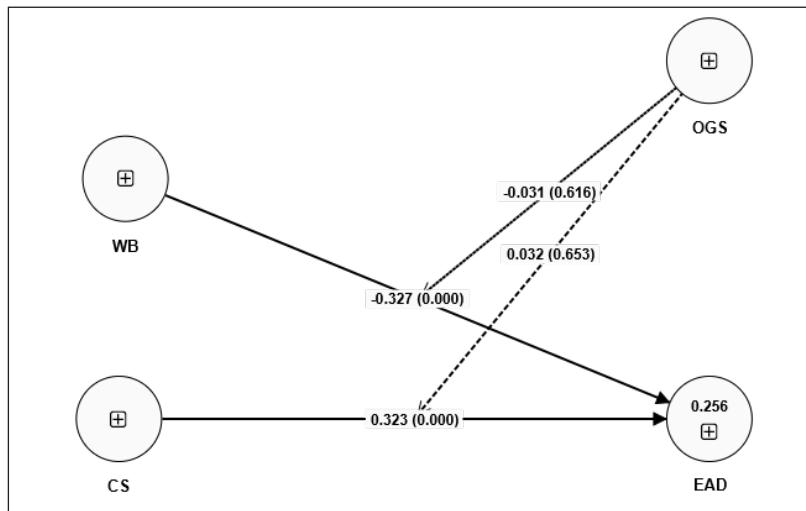
adaptation) is higher. In the case of the effect size ( $f^2$ ), this study abided by Cohen (1988), Campus and Adyar (2018), and Chua (2023), who categorised 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 to constitute small, medium, and large effect sizes of moderation, respectively. Thus, the statistics obtained ( $f^2 = 0.018$ ) signify that the moderation effect did not contribute significantly to this study in explaining the endogenous variable (expatriate adaptation).

## DISCUSSION

The twin exogenous constructs in this study portend an unbearable possibility of deterring expatriate adaptation. As evidenced in the extant literature, both culture shock and workplace bullying are negatively related to the effective adaptation of expatriates. Nevertheless, the study's findings contradict the first assumption predicted between culture shock and expatriate adaptation. Interestingly, this inconsistency can be relatedly inferred from previous studies, such as Kaye and Taylor (1997), Miyamoto and Kuhlman (2001), Sims and Schraeder (2004), and Chang et al. (2023), which indicated that certain demographics (especially previous international work experience) and personality characteristics neutralise culture shock in expatriates. In this study, over 64 percent of the sampled expatriates had previous experience working in other countries. Thus, this factor could be the reason for the expatriates' resilience towards culture shock that resulted in positive association. The second assumption in this study was corroborated with strong statistical significance, indicating that workplace bullying has a detrimental effect on the adaptation of expatriates. This outcome is also in line with Wang et al. (2023), Naseer et al. (2018), Glambek et al. (2014), and Nielsen and Einarsen (2012). The outcome of the moderation is in line with Winkelmann (1994), Schmidt (2020), and Mulyaningrum et al. (2022), who found insignificant interaction between organisational support and expatriate adaptation.

**Figure 4**

*Moderation Structure*



## CONCLUSION

Expatriates often experience culture shock, a feeling of disorientation, and stress caused by encountering unfamiliar customs, norms, and values. This experience can lead to feelings of isolation, anxiety, and even depression. Nevertheless, occasionally, these feelings can be mistaken for or compounded by workplace bullying, which could involve exclusion, sabotage, or even verbal or physical abuse from colleagues or supervisors. The level of organisational support plays a crucial role in untangling this web. Strong support can help expatriates navigate cultural differences, build resilience, and address any bullying they may face. This support includes providing clear channels for reporting bullying, offering cultural sensitivity training for both employees and managers and creating a supportive and inclusive work environment. By understanding the interplay between culture shock, workplace bullying, and organisational support, companies can create a smoother and more positive experience for their expatriate employees, promoting both individual well-being and successful adaptation.

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