

## The Relationship Between Framing Strategies and Intercultural Negotiation Outcome Among Working Professionals in Klang Valley

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### ABSTRACT

This research paper examines the relationship between framing options and the outcomes of intercultural negotiations among working professionals in the Klang Valley, Malaysia. Based on the Framing Theory and the Cultural Dimensions developed by Hofstede, the study focuses on three forms of framing strategies, namely, gain-loss framing, issue framing and emotional-rational framing, in which gender serves as a moderating factor. The study followed a quantitative research design that relied on a self-administered questionnaire that was sent using the Microsoft Forms. The stratified sampling was used to provide proportional representation of gender and professional sectors, thus making 451 valid responses. The survey used four-point Likert scale, which ensured the content validity and reliability of the instruments. Data was analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics and PROCESS Macro, and includes descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, multiple linear regression and moderation analysis. The results show that the three framing strategies have great effect on the outcome of intercultural negotiation. Emotional-rational framing was the most significant predictor (0.845,  $p = .001$ ) and it reflects the importance of the need to combine logic and emotion sensitivity in a negotiation situation. Moreover, gender was observed to have a significant moderation between framing strategies and negotiation outcomes ( $p < .05$ ) with female workers being more responsive to such strategies than their male counterparts. Altogether, the research points to the relevance of emotional-based and cognitively-oriented communication strategies in increasing the effectiveness of negotiation in culturally diverse working settings.

**Keywords:** *Framing strategies, intercultural negotiation, gender moderation, Klang Valley professionals, emotional-rational framing.*

### INTRODUCTION

#### *Overview*

This paper explores how framing strategies influence the results of intercultural negotiations between professionals in the Klang Valley, a multicultural economic hub (Azami et al., 2023). The success of negotiations in such a diverse environment is determined not only by the content of negotiations but also the manner in which messages are framed, perceived and interpreted. Framing is the strategic way of presenting information, whether by gains or losses, emotional or rational appeals or issue-oriented appeals to a cognitive or emotional reaction, which ultimately influences negotiation results. Although it is well-established that framing is a persuasive factor, minimal literature has examined framing as a factor in the heterogeneous Malaysian professional setting. This paper examines the three most common framing styles, namely gain-loss framing, issue framing and emotional-rational framing and evaluates its effect on agreement rates during cross-cultural negotiations. Moreover, it reflects on the moderating role of gender in these relationships which sheds some light on potential differences in response to framing strategies by male and female negotiators. With

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a quantitative research design, the study will help in filling the gap between theories like Framing Theory and the Cultural Dimensions by Hofstede and real-life practice of negotiation to provide empirical data and feasible research advice on how to enhance the effectiveness of intercultural negotiations within a workplace setting.

### *Problem Statement*

his study addresses the problem of increasing complexity and high-stakes outcomes in negotiations within modern globalized professional environments, particularly in multicultural workplaces such as the Klang Valley, Malaysia, where diverse cultural backgrounds often create communication challenges and affect negotiation effectiveness. In these settings, negotiation outcomes have a direct impact on organizational performance, conflict resolution and team cohesion (Ozer & Kamran, 2023). However, the effectiveness of intercultural negotiations is often compromised due to communication barriers, differing value systems, and mismatched expectations among participants from diverse cultural backgrounds (Siagian et al., 2024). These challenges are particularly pronounced in the Klang Valley, where the workforce is ethnically and culturally heterogeneous, creating additional layers of complexity in negotiation interactions. Although message framing has been widely recognized as a critical factor influencing negotiation outcomes, most existing research has been conducted in Western contexts with relatively homogeneous cultural norms. Consequently, there is a notable lack of empirical evidence on how different framing strategies operate in multicultural or intercultural settings especially with many evidence applying qualitative research designs (Szkudlarek et al., 2020; Chande, 2024; Grosz et al., 2024; Karanikola & Panagiotopoulos, 2025). Moreover, the potential moderating effect of gender on framing strategies and negotiation outcomes has been largely overlooked, despite evidence suggesting that gender influences communication preferences and responsiveness.

### *Research Questions*

This study seeks to examine the role of framing strategies in intercultural negotiation contexts among employees in the Klang Valley. Specifically, the study aims to determine which framing strategies; namely gain-loss framing, issue framing, and emotional-rational framing; are most effective in influencing intercultural negotiation outcomes. In addition, the study investigates the relationship between these framing strategies and intercultural negotiation outcomes among employees working in the Klang Valley. Finally, the study examines whether gender plays a moderating role in the relationship between framing strategies and intercultural negotiation outcome.

### *Research Objectives*

1. To identify the most effective framing strategies (gain vs loss framing, issue framing and emotional-rational framing) in intercultural negotiation outcome among employees in Klang Valley.
2. To examine measure the relationship between framing strategies and Intercultural Negotiation Outcome among employees in Klang Valley.
3. To examine test the role of gender on framing and negotiation relationship among employees in Klang Valley.

### *Project Scope*

The present study aims at employed professionals between the ages of 25 and 60 in Klang Valley, Malaysia to determine the influence of three main framing strategies including gain-loss framing, issue framing and emotional-rational framing on the outcomes of intercultural workplace negotiations. These are the strategies that have been selected because of their theoretical strength and implications in practice. Gain-loss framing, which is based on the Prospect Theory, affects the decision-making process by changing the perceptions of risk and reward (Fiedler & Hillenbrand, 2020; Livneh, 2020; Schauer et al., 2023). Issue framing enables the negotiators to overemphasize or underemphasize certain aspects which influence priorities and integrative bargaining (Zimmermann et al., 2021). Emotional-rational framing is a blend of emotion and logic and hence is effective in negotiation during intercultural negotiation where emotion is portrayed differently in various cultures (Bermúdez, 2022; Prassa & Stalikas, 2020). The dependent variable is negotiation outcome, which is defined as full, partial, and no agreement while gender and cultural orientation, namely the Masculinity vs. Femininity dimension by Hofstede, are moderating variables (Arrafi, 2024). The study is also theoretically important as it establishes a connection between Framing Theory and the cultural dimensions of Hofstede in a quantifiable way to fill gaps in the body of empirical literature.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *a. Framing*

Framing is defined as the influence of the organization and the presentation of information to shape perception, cognition and behaviour in transforming theoretical concepts into practical negotiation strategies. Framing plays a very important role in negotiation situations wherein people evaluate risk, proposals and intentions (Neumann & Wulf, 2021). Recent research stress the psychological role of framing in intercultural communication and show that the presence of culturally incongruent frames may cause a cognitive dissonance, decreasing the chances of agreement (Ylla-Anttila et al., 2021). Moreover, framing is a process mediated by culture with the same language being construed differently in different cultural contexts (Druckman & Wagner, 2021). Notwithstanding these revelations, current studies continue to be sparse in exploring the joint impact of two or more framing tactics in the same context, especially in a workplace where cultural diversity and gender interaction is experienced. Although there is a significant body of empirical data in culturally homogeneous settings such as the United States and Germany, there is still a significant gap in the knowledge of the effects of framing in culturally hybrid areas, particularly in southeast Asia.

### *b. Framing Strategies in Communication*

Gain-loss framing consists of the display of results as hypothetical gains or losses (Majer et al., 2022). Fiedler and Hillenbrand (2020) demonstrate that gain framing leads to greater acceptance of proposals especially when the society is individualistic whereas loss framing results in heightened urgency but can lead to defensiveness especially when a high-power distance is part of the culture. Framing effects in collectivist cultures like Malaysia might also vary because relations and communal results are more highly valued (Ng et al., 2024). Despite the dual reaction exhibited by Malaysian practitioners, Azmi et al. (2023) argues that the balance between pragmatic thinking and relationship-oriented values has limited empirical evidence.

Issue framing can be defined as highlighting or deemphasizing certain elements of negotiation with the aim of influencing attention and enabling integrative solutions. Druckman and Wagner (2021) argue that culturally congruent issue framing improves understanding and facilitates cooperation, especially in inter-cultural contexts. Zhang (2024) notes that Western communication styles are characterized by analytical and linear frameworks, whereas Dissanayake (2021) contends that Southeast Asian communication emphasizes contextual sensitivity, group harmony, and deference to hierarchy. Nevertheless, there is little empirical research into the gendered reactions to the framing of issues even though there are theoretical hypotheses suggesting that men and women can be different in their emphasis on competition, cooperation, hierarchy and inclusiveness (Spadaro et al., 2022).

Emotional-rational framing is used to differentiate between affective and logical persuasive appeals. High context cultures, where interpersonal harmony is a key element, are better suited to emotional framing, and low context, task-oriented culture, respond better to rational framing (Han et al., 2021). According to recent findings, gender could also moderate these influences with women typically reacting better to emotional appeal and men to rational arguments based on Hofstede masculinity -femininity dimension. However, the evidence is still inconclusive, with preferences differing by role in society, professional status and setting of an industry (Ferrary & Deo, 2022; Xue et al., 2024; Hoyt et al., 2025).

### *c. Negotiation*

Negotiation can be essentially described as a communicative process where two or more parties attempt to make a mutually agreed agreement. It is generally considered to be a two-person decision-making process and a fundamental aspect of organizational, legal, political and daily interactions (Lipp et al., 2023). Modern research understands negotiation not as a process of strategic demands exchange but rather as a process rooted in psychology and culture influenced by emotions, perceptions and social expectations. Classical negotiation models draw the line between distributive (win-lose) and integrative (win-win) paradigms but these models are gradually being considered inadequate in explaining the complexities of cultural diversity, emotional involvement and identity dynamics in global workplaces (Benetti et al., 2021). Recent studies highlight the importance of subjective perception and emotional expression and framing in mediating the outcomes of negotiations. Research has shown that successful negotiation can be associated with dealing with psychological distance and relational expectations and not necessarily positional bargaining (Cai et al., 2022). When used in harmony with the cultural norms, emotional expression may improve authenticity and trust, which provokes a challenge to classical theories that propose emotional neutrality.

### *d. Intercultural Negotiation*

Intercultural negotiation is defined as a type of negotiation that involves people or a group of people of varying cultural orientations that are all influenced by a certain set of values, communication styles, and standards of relationship. Intercultural negotiation involves the use of culturally diverse interpretive schemes (Surakhmad, 2023). In contrast to the classical research on negotiation which focuses on structural strategies, intercultural negotiation focuses on perception, adaptability, and framing (Chen et al., 2023). Behavioural communication can be perceived differently in different cultures, which can cause

misunderstanding and conflict in situations where there is a difference in expectations (Yamini et al., 2025; Broeder, 2021).

These difficulties are especially pronounced in multicultural areas such as Klang Valley, Malaysia, where different professionals of various ethnicities and cultures interact on a regular basis (Yaheya & Subramaniam, 2024). In such situations, variations in the attitudes towards authority, time orientation, risk taking and emotional expression make negotiation dynamics difficult (Huang, 2023).

*e. Intercultural Negotiation Outcome*

Outcomes of a negotiation process are the final results of the negotiation process, and, in intercultural negotiations, they are influenced by strategic factors as well as by the alignment of perceptions and the congruence of relations (Usunier, 2025). Although subjective measures like trust, satisfaction, and fairness are relevant (Hammami, 2024), this research focuses on agreement rate as a more objective and measurable measure of negotiation success. The concept of agreement rate is operationalized into three levels, which are full agreement, partial agreement, and no agreement to capture the degree and level of consensus that is reached. This system of classification is especially helpful in multicultural environments, where consensus-building can be complicated due to the fact that various values, communication methods, and expectations differ.

Intercultural negotiations often produce partial agreements because of the difficulty in overcoming the semantic, relational and cultural differences. When there is an alignment mismatch in framing strategies, it may also obstruct complete agreement because the culturally incongruent communication may result in misinterpretation, feelings of defensiveness or lack of concern. The effects can also be gender-moderated, as masculine and feminine orientations culture helps to make emotional and rational messages more or less significant. Although it is pragmatically relevant, the agreement rate has not been studied thoroughly in the intercultural negotiating literature, which has always been subjective and process-oriented (Druckman & Harinck, 2022; Kazemitabar et al., 2022).

*f. Cultural Orientation*

Cultural orientation is defined as the perpetually ingrained values, norms and expectation of behavior that defines how individuals perceive, communicate and interpret social interactions, which also includes negotiation. The Cultural Dimensions Theory by Hofstede is a powerful approach towards cross-cultural analysis. This paper particularly revolves around the masculinity-femininity dimension which has been closely connected with gender roles and communication preferences during negotiation (Maciejewski, 2021). Competition, assertiveness and goal-focused communication are mostly valued by masculine cultures as opposed to cooperation, empathy and relational sensitivity that are mostly valued by feminine cultures (Żemojtel-Piotrowska & Piotrowski, 2023). Such orientations play a great role in the perceived framing strategies and their consideration (Appelbaum et al., 2021). Rational appeals are usually more convincing in male cultures whereas emotional framing appeals more in the feminine societies. By placing framing strategies into this cultural context, this study makes an essential contribution to the existing gaps in knowledge regarding the way in which gendered cultural orientations influence the reactions to negotiation framing.

*g. Gender*

Gender is central in influencing communication styles, power relations and conflict management, especially in the case of negotiation (Kokić et al., 2024). In addition to biological differences, gender is strongly ingrained in culturally constructed expectations, relational norms and identity performances, and as such, it is a very important variable in the perceptions and actions of framing strategies in intercultural negotiations. Bowles et al. (2021) and Zulauf and Wagner (2021) state that women tend to employ more affiliative and emotionally sensitive styles of communication and men tend to employ competitive, assertive and outcome-oriented styles of communication (Trombini et al., 2024). These tendencies affect the interpretation of framed messages, where emotional appeals tend to be better received by female negotiators and gain-oriented or rational framing tends to be more effective with male negotiators, particularly in performance and assertiveness-oriented cultures.

Based on the Hofstede dimension of masculinity and femininity, this paper conceptualizes gender not as a demographic trait but as an embodied communication pattern culturally. It hypothesizes that gender and cultural orientation interplay to influence the effectiveness of framing (Huang & Low, 2022).

*Related Theories*

*a. Framing Theory*

The Framing Theory, which was formulated by Tversky and Kahneman (1981) is based on the idea that the manner in which information is framed would have a great impact on perception, emotional reaction, and decision-making. Framing itself is a strategic tool that can be used in the context of negotiation, to influence the manner in which a proposal is seen, the manner in which risk is perceived, and cooperation or resistance is developed (Bhatia et al., 2023). Using gain-loss framing, negotiators are able to frame the same proposal as an opportunity or as a threat, which is likely to impact acceptance and concession-making (Fiedler & Hillenbrand, 2020). Issue framing focuses on priorities chosen, creating the nature and direction of negotiation dialogue (Druckman & Wagner, 2021), whereas emotional-rational framing appeals to values, relation identity, and rationality (Han et al., 2021). This study uses the Framing Theory to justify why communication has an impact on the results of the negotiation process through the establishment of framing strategies as the independent variables.

*b. Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory*

Hofstede Cultural Dimensions Theory gives the cultural background of how framing strategies are subjected to societal values and gendered expectations (Gonzalez, 2021; Adamovic, 2023). Out of the six dimensions of Hofstede, this paper specifically dwells on the masculinity-femininity dimension which describes the variation in choices of competitive versus cooperative, assertive versus empathetic and material success versus relational harmony within the society. Male cultures are more inclined to direct, rational and assertive communication patterns whereas female cultures are more sensitive to emotions, modest, and focused on relations (Turetsky et al., 2022). These cultural orientations have a lot of impact on the perceptions and valuations of the framing strategies. Rational and assertive frames can be considered as constructive and convincing in the masculine world and can be interpreted as aggressive or insensitive in the feminine cultures. On the other hand,

emotional appeals can build trust and collaboration in feminine contexts and be seen to be weak or ineffective in masculine ones (England, 2023). This paper combines Framing Theory with Hofstede masculinity-femininity dimension to present a culturally informed model of gendered reactions to negotiation framing.

### Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study illustrates the relationships between framing strategies and intercultural negotiation outcomes among employees in Klang Valley. Specifically, gain-loss framing, issue framing, and emotional-rational framing is treated as key dimensions of the independent variable, collectively influencing the dependent variable, which is intercultural negotiation outcome measured through agreement rate. Hypotheses H1, H2, and H3 represent the direct effects of each framing strategy, while H4 captures their overall combined influence. Additionally, gender is positioned as a moderating variable (H5), affecting the strength of the relationship between framing strategies and negotiation outcomes. This framework is grounded in Framing Theory and Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions, highlighting how both communication strategies and gendered cultural orientations shape negotiation effectiveness in multicultural workplace settings.

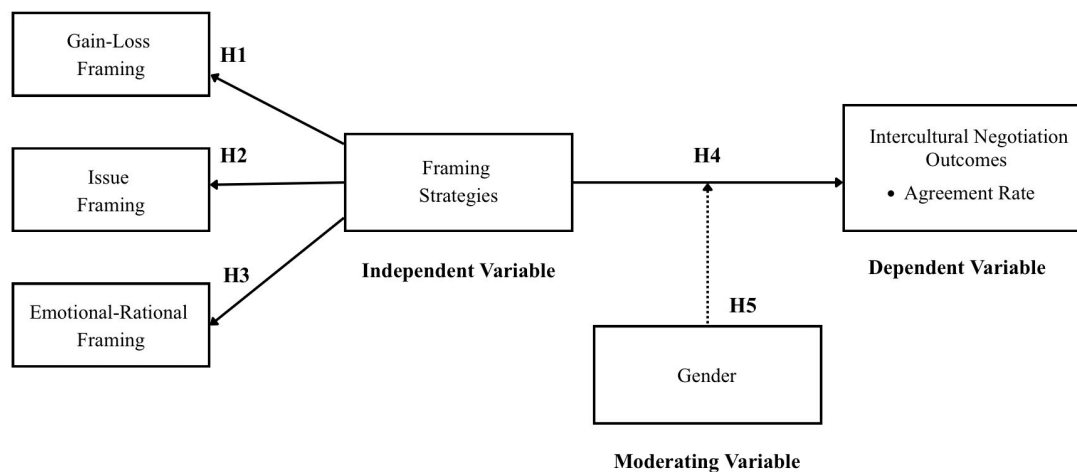


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of this study

Note: Developed by the authors based on Framing Theory (Tversky & Kahneman, 1981) and Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory

### Hypothesis

- H1: There is a significant influence between gain-loss framed messages and Intercultural Negotiation Outcome among employees in Klang Valley.
- H2: There is a significant influence between issue framing and Intercultural Negotiation Outcome among employees in Klang Valley.
- H3: There is a significant influence between emotional-rational framing and Intercultural Negotiation Outcome among employees in Klang Valley.
- H4: There is a positive relationship between framing strategies and Intercultural Negotiation Outcome among employees in Klang Valley.
- H5: Gender moderates the relationship between framing strategies and negotiation outcomes among employees in Klang Valley.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Research Design*

This research uses a quantitative research design to test the hypotheses empirically on the relationships between the framing strategies, gain-loss, issue and emotional-rational, and the negotiation outcomes, which are operationalized in terms of the agreement rates. Correlational design is used to establish the strength and nature of relationships between variables. The independent variables include framing strategies, the dependent variable is the outcomes of negotiation, and the moderating variable is gender, directed by the Hofstede masculinity-femininity dimension. This model helps the research to examine the characteristics of how male and female negotiators perceive and react to the various framing strategies in a multicultural negotiation scenario.

### *Population*

The target group of the study is working adults between 25 and 60 years old in Klang Valley, Malaysia because they are the most likely to be involved in professional negotiations and have a high level of cognitive maturity and experience. Other studies have also confirmed this age group, suggesting that intellectual degeneration generally rises beyond 60 and people below 25 years might not have sufficient professional experience (Previtali & Spedale, 2021). The choice of the sample guarantees a cognitively qualified and occupationally experienced sample and increases the plausibility of the results. Klang Valley is selected because it is also the main economic centre of Malaysia and has a very diverse environment with multicultural employees so it would be a perfect location to study the aspects of intercultural negotiation (Azami et al., 2023; Yaheya & Subramaniam, 2024).

### *Sampling Procedure*

The research entails the workforce of large organizations in Klang Valley in major industries such as management consulting, professional services, oil and gas, construction and engineering and consumer goods with an estimated total workforce of 17,086 (refer Table 3.1). Gender and professional sector stratified sampling will be used to provide proportional representation, reduce sampling bias and maximize the generalizability. The determination of the sample size based on the 1970 Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination table (Bukhari, 2021) shows that a minimum sample of 384 respondents is enough to obtain an adequate statistical power to conduct correlation and moderation analyses.

Table 1: Number of employees in Klang Valley-based companies.

<b>Company</b>	<b>Estimated Employees</b>	<b>Source</b>
Boston Consulting Group Malaysia	~150 (KL office estimate)	Boston Consulting Group, 2025
Shell Malaysia	6,000	Shell Malaysia Annual Report, 2024
Deloitte Malaysia	2,400	Deloitte Southeast Asia, 2025
Gamuda Berhad	3,500	Gamuda Berhad Annual Report, 2024
Nestlé (Malaysia) Berhad	5,036	Nestlé (Malaysia) Berhad Annual Report, 2024

### *Data Collection*

The current study follows the quantitative research design, which involves a self-completed and voluntary online survey using Microsoft Forms to gather primary data among working professionals in Klang Valley. The questionnaire was constructed with reference to the



existing literature to guarantee the content validity as such items were adapted from previous research and they were adjusted to the context of workplace negotiation. The scale of measuring responses was a four-point Likert scale, and the survey was divided into three parts, demographics, framing strategies and outcomes of intercultural negotiation.

*i. Section A: Demographic Information*

Section A gathered demographic and professional background data regarding the respondents in order to profile the sample and justify the application of stratified sampling. The variables used were employment in Klang Valley, the nature of employment (full-time or part-time), gender, ethnicity, industry or sector, years of experience at work and job position. The choice of these factors was based on the diversity of the Klang Valley working population and to enable the subgroup analysis especially when analysing the moderating effect of gender.

*ii. Section B: Framing Strategies*

Part B of the questionnaire evaluated the application of framing strategies in intercultural negotiation situations with emphasis on three major aspects that are; gain-loss framing, issue framing and emotional rational framing. A total of 30 adapted items based on the existing negotiation and communication literature were used to measure these constructs to ensure conceptual validity and applicability to workplace negotiations. Each of the responses was measured in a four-point Likert scale and composite mean scores were derived on each framing strategy to reflect the general patterns of use by the respondents.

Gain-loss framing was determined using 10 items (Wicke & Bolognesi, 2024; Rachev et al., 2021) that assessed the degree to which respondents highlighted the possible positive effects of an agreement, the reduction of the risk, the possible losses in case of not cooperating and relative results of cooperation compared to conflict. The increase in the mean scores showed a more pronounced disposition towards framing negotiation messages as gains and losses.

Issue framing was measured with 10 items (Wicke & Bolognesi, 2024; Rachev et al., 2021) that considered how the respondents organized, prioritized and re-framed negotiation issues. The captured items reflected tendencies towards concentrating on the underlying interests, framing issues as a common problem, combining multiple concerns and placing more emphasis on common good rather than on sticking to their position. The scores were higher in terms of a more integrative and strategic issue framing.

Emotional-rational framing was assessed using 10 items (Wicke & Bolognesi, 2024; Rachev et al., 2021) based on the evaluation of the weight of logic and emotionality in communicating negotiations. The items evaluated data, logic, cost-benefit analysis, empathy, fairness, relationship-building and flexibility. An increase in mean scores indicated more successful incorporation of emotional and rational aspects into the process of framing negotiation.

*iii. Section C: Intercultural Negotiation Outcome*

The Intercultural Negotiation Outcome in this research will be the perceived effectiveness and success of the respondents in the workplace negotiation that happens across cultural settings. Ten items based on the adaptation of Fernandez and Ryu (2023) were used to measure this construct, which has a good conceptual base and measurement reliability. The

items measured the main aspects of the negotiation success, such as agreement achievement, efficiency of the negotiation, belief in deal-related success, readiness to compromise, and the perceived impact of framing strategies on the outcomes of the negotiation. The responses were measured on a four-point Likert scale with strongly disagree to strongly agree. The overall outcome in terms of perceived intercultural negotiation results was summarized into a composite mean score with higher scores reflecting more positive results.

*iv. Data Collection Procedure*

The survey was conducted through Microsoft Forms online among working individuals in the Klang Valley. The objectives of the study were explained to the participants, and their confidentiality was made. Incomplete and unresponsive answers were also eliminated to ensure the quality of data. Only 451 valid answers were used in the analysis, which is larger than the recommended minimum sample size by Krejcie and Morgan (1970).

*Data Analysis Technique*

Data analysis in this study was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 30) to examine the relationships between framing strategies and intercultural negotiation outcome among working professionals in the Klang Valley. Prior to the main analyses, the dataset was screened for incomplete responses, missing values, and potential outliers, and only valid responses were retained for further analysis (N = 451). Composite mean scores were calculated for all multi-item constructs, including gain–loss framing, issue framing, emotional–rational framing, and intercultural negotiation outcome, and these scores were treated as continuous variables for subsequent statistical analysis. Construct validity was assessed using exploratory factor analysis (EFA), while Harman’s single-factor test was conducted to evaluate potential common method bias. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondent demographics and the central tendency of the study variables. Pearson correlation analysis was performed to examine the relationships between the framing strategies and intercultural negotiation outcome. Simple linear regression and multiple linear regression analyses were then conducted to evaluate the individual and combined effects of the framing strategies on intercultural negotiation outcome. Finally, moderation analysis was carried out using the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Model 1) to examine the moderating role of gender in the relationship between framing strategies and intercultural negotiation outcome, with statistical significance assessed at  $p < .05$ .

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

*Respondent Profile (Demographics)*

The study involved 451 working professionals in the Klang Valley. Most of them were full-time employees (79.8%). The majority of respondents fell within the age range of 35-44 years (43.0%), followed by those aged 25-34 years (37.0%). The sample was made up of 68.1% males and 31.9% females, with 71.8% identifying as Malay. The respondents represented a diverse workforce, with the largest segments of professional services (22.8%) and construction and engineering (20.0%). The majority of respondents (41.0%) had 6-10 years of working experience. In terms of job roles, a large number of them had non-managerial and supervisory roles with 41.7% of them having middle to senior management jobs.

Table 2: Demographic profile of respondents (N = 451)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Employment Location (Klang Valley)	Yes	451	100.0
	No	0	0.0
Employment Type	Full-time	360	79.8
	Part-time	91	20.2
Age Group	25-34	167	37.0
	35-44	194	43.0
	45-54	88	19.5
	55-60	2	0.4
Gender	Male	307	68.1
	Female	144	31.9
Ethnic Background	Malay	324	71.8
	Chinese	67	14.9
	Indian	55	12.2
	Others	5	1.1
Industry / Sector	Management Consulting	86	19.1
	Professional Services	103	22.8
	Oil & Gas / Energy	83	18.4
	Construction / Engineering & Infrastructure Development	90	20.0
	Food & Beverage / Consumer Goods	89	19.7
Work Experience	1-5 years	121	26.8
	6 –10 years	185	41.0
	11–15 years	87	19.3
	16 - 20 years	47	10.4
	21 years and above	11	2.4
Job role level	Non-managerial	141	31.3
	Supervisor	122	27.1
	Middle management	96	21.3
	Senior management	92	20.4

### Reliability Analysis

Table 3: Reliability analysis of measurement scales (N = 451)

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ )
Gain-Loss Framing	10	.951
Issue Framing	10	.947
Emotional-Rational Framing	10	.951
Intercultural Negotiation Outcome	10	.950

Cronbach alpha was used to perform reliability analysis to determine internal consistency of the measurement scales. Table 3 indicates that all constructs had high levels of internal consistency with a Cronbach alpha value that is above the recommended value of 0.70. These findings imply that the measurement tools used in the study are valid and can be used to carry out future statistical analysis.

### Exploratory Factor Analysis (Construct Validity)

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted to examine the construct validity of the measurement items used in this study. Principal Component Analysis with Oblimin rotation was employed to identify the underlying factor structure. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.860, indicating that the dataset was suitable for factor

analysis. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 50382.244$ ,  $df = 780$ ,  $p < .001$ ), confirming that the correlation matrix was appropriate for factor extraction. The results revealed that four components with eigenvalues greater than 1 were extracted, explaining a cumulative variance of 86.13%. The first component accounted for the largest proportion of variance (67.54%), indicating the presence of a strong underlying dimension among the variables. The factor loadings in the pattern matrix showed that most items loaded strongly onto their respective components, supporting the construct validity of the measurement scales used in this study.

#### *Common Method Bias Test*

To assess the potential presence of common method bias, Harman's single-factor test was conducted by entering all measurement items into an unrotated principal component analysis. The results showed that the first factor accounted for 67.54% of the total variance. Although this value exceeds the commonly referenced threshold of 50%, the earlier exploratory factor analysis indicated the presence of multiple components. This suggests that common method bias does not severely threaten the validity of the results. The relatively high variance explained by the first factor may be attributed to the conceptual similarity between framing strategies and negotiation outcomes measured in the study.

#### *Descriptive Statistics of Main Variables*

Table 4: Descriptive statistics of study variables (N = 451)

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Gain-Loss Framing (GLF_M)	3.201	0.707
2. Issue Framing (IF_M)	3.193	0.705
3. Emotional-Rational Framing (ERF_M)	3.202	0.710
4. Intercultural Negotiation Outcome (INO_M)	3.189	0.695

Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics of the key study variables. All in all, the level of agreement on all the framing strategies showed moderate to high levels among respondents. Emotional-rational framing had the highest mean score ( $M = 3.202$ ,  $SD = 0.710$ ), closely followed by gain-loss framing ( $M = 3.201$ ,  $SD = 0.707$ ) and issue framing ( $M = 3.193$ ,  $SD = 0.705$ ). The average score on the outcomes of intercultural negotiation was also fairly high ( $M = 3.189$ ,  $SD = 0.695$ ), which shows that the overall impressions of the effectiveness of negotiation among working professionals in the Klang Valley are quite positive.

These descriptive statistics indicate that respondents use framing strategies actively when negotiating at intercultural level. This is consistent with previous studies that have underlined that framing plays a big role in perception and decision-making during negotiations (Neumann & Wulf, 2021; Druckman & Wagner, 2021).

The largest mean score of emotional-rational framing confirms the prior studies emphasizing the significance of both rational and emotional responsiveness in intercultural negotiation environments (Han et al., 2021; Enaifoghe, 2023). This observation aligns with the results of Azmi et al. (2023), who observe that the Malaysian working environments are generally more inclined towards relationship harmony and pragmatic decision making.

The similarity in the mean scores between gain-loss and issue framing also supports the prior literature, indicating that even though structural clarity and outcome-focused framing are still significant, they are not valued as much as relational factors in collectivist and high-context cultural settings (Dissanayaka, 2021; Azmi et al., 2023).

### Pearson Correlation Analysis

Table 5: Pearson correlation matrix of study variables

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Gain-Loss Framing (GLF_M)	1			
2. Issue Framing (IF_M)	.988**	1		
3. Emotional-Rational Framing (ERF_M)	.973**	.966**	1	
4. Intercultural Negotiation Outcome (INO_M)	.960**	.957**	.980**	1

Pearson correlation analysis revealed that all framing strategies were positively associated with Intercultural Negotiation Outcome. The strongest correlation was emotional-rational framing ( $r = .980$ ,  $p < .001$ ) followed by gain-loss framing ( $r = .960$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and issue framing ( $r = .957$ ,  $p < .001$ ). These findings corroborate H4, meaning that the higher the use of framing strategies, the more positive the results of negotiations are. The results empirically support Framing Theory, which states that interpretation and behaviour are highly dependent on the way information is presented.

### Regression Analysis

#### a. Simple Linear Regression (H1–H3)

Table 6: Summary of simple linear regression results (N = 451)

Hypothesis	Predictor	Standardized $\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>	p	Decision
H1	Gain-Loss Framing	.960	.922	< .001	Supported
H2	Issue Framing	.957	.916	< .001	Supported
H3	Emotional-Rational Framing	.980	.961	< .001	Supported

The three framing strategies, namely gain-loss, issue and emotional-rational framing, were analysed separately to determine their influence on the intercultural negotiation success. All three were found to be of significant positive influence ( $p < .001$ ), where emotional-rational framing was found to be the most explanatory. Hence, H1, H2, and H3 were supported.

#### b. Multiple Linear Regression (Strongest Predictor)

Table 7: Multiple linear regression predicting intercultural negotiation outcome (N = 451)

Predictor	Standardized $\beta$	p
Gain-Loss Framing	-0.059	.378
Issue Framing	0.199	< .001
Emotional-Rational Framing	0.845	< .001

In an overall analysis of all three framing strategies, the emotional-rational framing turned out to be the best predictor ( $= 0.845$ ,  $p = .001$ ) followed by issue framing ( $= 0.199$ ,  $p = .001$ ). Gain-loss framing was not a significant predictor ( $p = .378$ ) in the established model. These findings suggest that framing which is emotionally and rationally balanced is a more

important element in intercultural negotiations, as opposed to outcome-based framing. Multicollinearity diagnostics were conducted to examine the relationships among the independent variables. The results indicated relatively high multicollinearity among the framing strategy variables, as reflected by low tolerance values and high Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values. This may be attributed to the conceptual similarity between gain–loss framing, issue framing, and emotional–rational framing, which represent closely related dimensions of negotiation framing behaviour. Similar situations have been reported in behavioural and communication research where theoretically related constructs exhibit strong intercorrelations. Despite this, the individual regression models remain useful for understanding the separate influence of each framing strategy on intercultural negotiation outcome.

### *Moderation Analysis (H5: Gender)*

#### *a. Purpose of the Moderation Analysis*

Table 8: Moderation analysis of gender on the relationship between framing strategies and intercultural negotiation outcome (N = 451)

Predictor	$\beta$	SE	t	p
Constant	3.210	0.023	138.551	< .001
Framing Strategies (FRAME_M)	0.882	0.038	23.475	< .001
Gender (D4)	0.012	0.017	-0.746	.456
Framing × Gender	0.049	0.023	2.189	.029

Model Summary:  $R^2 = .949$  |  $\Delta R^2$  (interaction) = .001 |  $F(3, 447) = 2776.42$ ,  $p < .001$

The moderation analysis was used to determine the effect that gender has on the relationship between the framing strategies and the intercultural negotiation outcome among working professionals in the Klang Valley. The findings obtained with the help of PROCESS Macro Model 1 showed that the use of framing strategies played a significant role in the achievement of positive negotiation results ( $B = 0.882$ ,  $p < .001$ ). More importantly, the statistically significant interaction between framing strategies and gender ( $B = 0.049$ ,  $p = .029$ ) implies that gender mediates this interaction, although with a weak increment in the explained variance ( $G = 0.001$ ).

Table 9: Conditional effects of framing strategies on negotiation outcomes by gender

Gender	$\beta$	SE	t	p
Male (D4 = 1)	0.932	0.017	53.620	< .001
Female (D4 = 2)	0.981	0.014	68.468	< .001

Conditional effect tests also indicated that female respondents ( $B = 0.981$ ,  $p < .001$ ) responded more to framing strategies than males ( $B = 0.932$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This implies that women in the negotiation process are more sensitive to framing tactics, which is probably explained by the cultural and socially conditioned preferences in communication values, in which feminine orientations are related to the sensitivity of relations, empathy and mutual interaction conditions. The results prove the hypotheses put forward, as they showed that the gain-loss framing, issue framing, and emotional-rational framing are all effective in influencing the results of intercultural negotiation.

## *Discussion*

### *a. Influence of Framing Strategies on Intercultural Negotiation Outcome (H1–H3)*

The results indicate that gain-loss framing, issue framing, and emotional-rational framing each have significant positive effects on intercultural negotiation outcome, supporting H1, H2, and H3. These findings align with Framing Theory, which proposes that the way information is presented influences perception and decision-making during negotiations (Entman, 1993; Bhatia et al., 2023). Gain-loss framing encourages cooperative behaviour by highlighting potential benefits or avoiding losses (Tversky & Kahneman, 1981; Fiedler & Hillenbrand, 2020), while issue framing helps structure negotiation discussions around shared interests rather than rigid positions (Druckman & Wagner, 2021). Among the three strategies, emotional-rational framing demonstrated the strongest effect, suggesting that successful intercultural negotiations require both logical reasoning and emotional sensitivity. In culturally diverse settings such as the Klang Valley, empathy and relational awareness are important in facilitating mutual understanding and constructive dialogue (Han et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2021).

### *b. Relationship Between Framing Strategies and Negotiation Outcomes (H4)*

The correlation analysis revealed strong positive relationships between framing strategies and intercultural negotiation outcomes, supporting H4. These findings suggest that increased use of framing strategies is associated with more favourable negotiation outcomes. Emotional-rational framing showed the strongest association with negotiation outcome, highlighting the importance of combining analytical reasoning with interpersonal sensitivity in negotiation processes. The exploratory factor analysis also indicated that the framing variables share a strong underlying dimension, suggesting that gain-loss framing, issue framing, and emotional-rational framing function as closely related behavioural mechanisms in negotiation contexts. In multicultural environments, these strategies often operate simultaneously rather than independently, shaping how negotiators interpret information and communicate intentions (Lee et al., 2023).

### *c. Strongest Predictor of Intercultural Negotiation Outcome*

The multiple regression analysis indicated that emotional-rational framing had the strongest standardized effect on intercultural negotiation outcome when all framing strategies were considered together. Although gain-loss framing and issue framing showed significant effects individually, their influence was reduced when emotional-rational framing was included in the model. Multicollinearity diagnostics suggested that the framing variables are highly interrelated, reflecting their conceptual similarity as components of negotiation framing behaviour. Nevertheless, the findings highlight the importance of emotional awareness and rational evaluation in negotiation processes. Emotional-rational framing appears particularly effective in multicultural contexts because it enables negotiators to balance analytical reasoning with relational communication, helping to manage cultural differences and build trust (Brett et al., 2021; Azmi et al., 2023).

### *d. Moderating Role of Gender in Framing and Negotiation Outcomes (H5)*

The moderation analysis confirmed that gender significantly moderates the relationship between framing strategies and intercultural negotiation outcome, supporting H5. The results suggest that framing strategies are slightly more influential among female employees

compared with male employees. This may reflect differences in communication styles, as previous studies have shown that women often demonstrate higher levels of empathy, relational communication, and emotional awareness in negotiation settings (Othman et al., 2022; Warsitzka et al., 2021). These findings highlight the importance of considering demographic factors when developing negotiation strategies in multicultural workplaces.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the study was to determine the effectiveness of framing strategies on the result of intercultural negotiations between employees of the Klang Valley, and how gender mediates the outcome. The findings show that emotional-rational framing is the most effective technique, which is consistent with Framing Theory and previous studies relating the need to integrate rationality and emotional sensitivity in negotiations (Bhaumik et al., 2024; Lerner & O'Loughlin, 2023; Melo et al., 2023). The moderation analysis found that gender plays a significant role in determining the effectiveness of framing strategy and female employees were found to be more responsive, which supports the available literature on gendered communication preferences (Trombini et al., 2024).

#### *Theoretical Implications*

This research experiment provides solid empirical evidence to support the Framing Theory that the manner in which negotiation messages are framed has an important effect on perception, interpretation and outcomes (Entman, 1993; Wicke & Bolognesi, 2024). Emotional-rational framing became the best strategy, which supports the notion that effective negotiation needs both emotional and cognitive processing. The results are also consistent with the masculinity-feminine dimension by Hofstede (2001), where empathy, cooperation and relational orientation are also significant in the communication process. The gender moderating effect further emphasizes the fact that collectivist and relational cultures like Malaysia believe in emotion-informed approaches.

#### *Practical Implications*

The findings offer viable advice to practitioners and institutions within multicultural workplaces. Emotional-rational framing and logical reasoning must also be prioritised as essential components of negotiation to gain more positive results (Joshi et al., 2021; Wicke & Bolognesi, 2024). It is suggested that organizations should properly frame issues, employing issue framing to attain clarity and incorporating emotional consciousness to achieve better relational outcomes (Ozer & Kamran, 2023). Further, gender differences need to be considered by managers since emotion-based framing seems to be particularly effective among female employees, exhibiting gendered intercultural communication preferences (Othman et al., 2022; Warsitzka et al., 2021).

#### *Limitations of the Study*

Notwithstanding its contributions, this study has a number of limitations. Primarily, cross-sectional research design does not allow establishing the cause-and-effect relationships between framing strategies and the outcomes of negotiations (Zhang et al., 2021). Second, the use of self-reported information can lead to response bias since perceptions of participants might not be an accurate indicator of their actual negotiation practices (Fernandez & Ryu, 2023). Third, the study concentrates only on professionals in the Klang



Valley, which restricts the ability to generalize the results to other areas or cultures (Azmi et al., 2023).

#### *Recommendations for Future Research*

These limitations could be overcome in future studies by using experimental or longitudinal designs to establish more causal relationships (Wicke & Bolognesi, 2024). Other moderating variables, including cultural background, organizational hierarchy, or negotiation experience, can also be considered by researchers to understand the effectiveness of framing strategies (Cheng & Wang, 2022). Moreover, it would be more effective to perform comparative research in other cultural or regional settings to increase the generalizability of results connected with framing strategies and intercultural negotiation results.

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