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# Understanding The Expatriate Experience In India: A Structural Equation Modeling Approach With Smart PLS

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#### Abstract

India has long been considered as a place of cultural and historical significance. Known for its nautical trade routes and unmatched topography and cultural diversity, the country has been a centre point of admiration and animosity. The current India is quite different from its past, still it is rapidly reclaiming its past glory and rising as a global super power and one of the leading economic forces in Asia. This has made country an attractive destination for foreigners seeking for a lucrative career opportunity paired with comparatively low living cost.

India offers a good combination of career growth along with opportunity to maintain the good standard of living as most of the positions offered to expatriates are in Metros and tier 1 cities. The economic liberalization after 1991 has led to the creation of a robust job market, solidifying the country's reputation as a land of opportunities. However, relocating to India comes with its set of challenges for expatriates. The country's culture is amalgamation of vibrant diaspora, traditions and practices that often looks unfamiliar to those who are accustomed to the life of west or other parts of the world. The striking diversity in lifestyle, customs, and social norms can make the adjustment process both exciting and challenging. In order to understand the nuances of life in India, it is essential for expatriates to navigate through its multifaceted social and professional landscapes, from adapting to its distinctive work culture to embracing the richness of its traditions. The present study was undertaken tounderstand the challenges and issues faced by expatriates living in India and to learn more about their issues and opinions. A quantitative study was carried outon expatriates in Delhi/NCR. The research aimed to explore the factors influencing expatriates' decision to remain in India, focusing on family, organizational, & crosscultural aspects.

**Keywords:** Expatriates, International Assignment, Issues & Challenges, MNC's, and International HRM.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The economic liberalization and subsequent opening of the world economy led a lot of MNCsto build their brand and grow their business internationally. As a result, there has been a global influx of expatriates into various nations. The similar thing happened in India also after economic liberalization of 1991. India has gradually opened up its services and commerce markets. Consequently, numerous multinational organizations have entered the country, bringing with them their expats. Apart from that, there was an increase in demand for qualified and professional labor or human expertise in a variety of industries due to entry of MNCs which also resulted in an influx of expatriates. As per the data of Ministry of External Affairs, there are 20,607 people from 147 nations who held Indian visa in the year 2021 (Kumar C, 2021). Out of which, almost half were from just three East Asian countries, viz., South Korea, China & Japan. (Refer Table 1). This shows that there is strong eastern presence in professional landscape of India. Many east and south East Asian countries further support these numbers. For example, 256 visa holders were from Philippines, 237 from

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Taiwan, 214 from Malaysia and 215 from Indonesia. This shows that there is growing regional collaboration with India by shared economic ties, cultural engagements and strategic partnerships. On the other hand, western countries contribute lesser foreign workers to India. Out of which, the maximum were from United States (1000 professionals) followed by France with 946 professionals, the United Kingdom with 976 professionals and Germany with 594 Professionals. Other western countries much lesser representation, like Spain with 317, Russia with 268, Italy with 244, Israel with 123 and the Netherlands with 122.

EASTERN COUNTI	RIES	WESTERN COUNTRIES		
Republic of Korea	4,748	United States	1000	
Japan	4,038	United	976	
		Kingdom		
China	1,783	France	946	

Table 1: Foreigners working in India (Source: Kumar C, 2021)

Southeast Asian nations like the Philippines, Taiwan, and Malaysia have also strengthened ties with India through various bilateral agreements and regional partnerships such as ASEAN. Their professionals contribute expertise in sectors ranging from IT and telecommunications to education and healthcare. Western professionals, while fewer in number, are typically concentrated in niche areas such as consultancy, academia, research, and high-level corporate positions. The disparity in numbers may reflect differences in visa policies, economic ties, and individual motivations for working in India. Western expatriates may also favor countries offering higher salaries or more established expatriate communities, whereas East Asian professionals appear to be leveraging India's expanding economic opportunities. Overall, the predominance of East Asian nationals working in India signals a shift in global labor patterns, emphasizing Asia's interconnectedness and mutual economic interests. While the West continues to maintain its presence, the East's growing dominance showcases a new chapter in India's international workforce composition. This evolution mirrors India's increasing alignment with Asian economies, making the country a key hub for talent and collaboration across diverse sectors. According to the Expat Insider 2023 survey, almost 73 percentage of expatriates were happy with their life in India (close to global average of 72%). The areas where India scored well as per the Expat Insider Survey 2023 were - expats in India find purpose in their work and are satisfied with their financial situation. However, the challenges posed by a low quality of life and cumbersome bureaucracy take a significant toll. This study focuses on the specific challenges that expatriates face in India, especially in Delhi/NCR. In the process, the motivations behind hiring expatriates are examined, and analysis is done to comprehend the problems and obstacles that expatriates face while accepting international assignments.

# 2. METHODOLOGY

In order to provide organizations insights on how to manage expatriates effectively, this research was undertaken to explore the experiences of expats in India. Closed ended structured questionnaire was designed to collect data form 20 expatriates living in Delhi/ NCR.

Sample Size: A total of Forty expatriates were selected for the present study. Their tenure in India varied from three months to ten years. The sample comprises the following nationalities, with percentages: 50% South Korea, 20% Japan, 10% German, 10% US and 10% Australia. Thirty six of the forty expatriates were men in their thirties to fifties, and the remaining four were women in their late thirties. Within these

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organizations, the roles and titles ranged from managing directors to youthful assistants or heads of departments. The detailed demographic profile is given in table 2.

Demographic Profile

						Nationality				
						Korea	Japan	USA	Australia	Germany
Marital	Single	Gender	Male	Status	With Family	3	2	0	1	0
Status					Without Family	1	0	0	1	0
			Female	Status	With Family	0	0	0	0	0
					Without Family	1	1	0	0	0
	Married	Gender	Male	Status	With Family	11	5	2	2	2
					Without Family	2	0	2	0	2
			Female	Status	With Family	2	0	0	0	0
					Without Family	0	0	0	0	0

Table 2 A: Demographic profile of respondents in terms of Marital status, Gender,

Family status with respect to Nationality

·			Korea	Japan	USA	Australia	Germany
Λαο	<30	Experience	4.5	0	0	3.0	5.0
Age		Experience	4.5 3.8	3.9	4.0	0	0
		Experience	4.0	3.5	0	3.8	3.0
	>50	Experience	2.8	4.0	3.0	4.0	0

Table 2 B: Demographic Profile of the respondents in terms of age, average experience with respect to Nationality

# 3. Research Structure and Hypothesis

The present study mainly explores the relationship between Organizational factors, Family related factors and Cross-cultural factors in determining the expatriate's intention to stay in India. The structure of the research is shown in figure 1

# Background Variables

- 1. Age
- 2. Experience
- 3. Marital Status

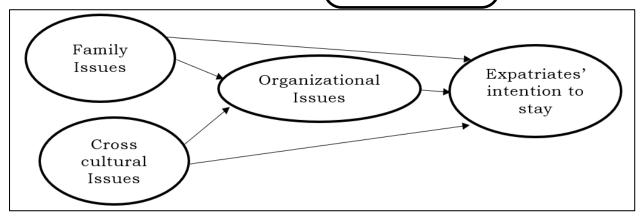


Figure 1: Research Structure

Based on the research purpose and the framework, the study proposed following hypothesis for the present research –

H1: There is a direct and positive relationship between Family issues and Expatriates intention to stay in a host country.

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**H2:** There is a direct and positive relationship between cross cultural issues and Expatriates intention to stay in a host country.

**H3:** There is a direct and positive relationship between organizational issues and Expatriates intention to stay in a host country.

**H4:** There is a direct and positive relationship between Family issues and Expatriates intention to stay in a host country with Organizations issues playing a mediating role.

**H5:** There is a direct and positive relationship between Cross cultural issues and Expatriates intention to stay in a host country with Organizations issues playing a mediating role.

# 3.1. Research Dimensions: definition and measurement

All the dimensions included in this study refer to the relevant literature for definition and identification of the variable. The references to the questionnaire items are shown in Tables 3

Questionnaire Items and references

Family	F1	Mäkelä, L., Känsälä, M., &
Factors		
ractors	growth for my spouse in	Suutari, V. (2011), Selmer &
	India.	Leung (2003), Harvey & Buckley
	T 1 (F :1	(1998)
	Lack of Family support	Van Erp et al., (2008); Selmer &
	is a major reason for job	Leung, (2003); Scheiner &
	dissatisfaction in India.	White, 2005, Mäkelä, L., Känsälä,
		M., & Suutari, V. (2011), Nisa &
		Farooqui (2010)
	Children's education is	Bhatti, M. A., Sundram, V. P. K.,
	an issue in India.	& Hoe, C. H. (2012)
Organizational	My job responsibility	Bolino, (2007)
Factors	and authority are clearly	
	described.	
	I am satisfied with my	Naumann, E. (1993). Frose and
	job	Peltokorpi (2011), Abhilasha
		Singh (2012)
	Organizational	Edstrom and Lorange, (1984);
	Communication is clear	Stroh and Caligiuri, (1998)
	and roles and	
	responsibilities are well	
	defined	
	Language is easy to	Novicevic and Harvey, (2004)
	understand and does	
	not play obstacle in	
	performing my job.	
Cross cultural	People in India are	KO, H. C., & Yang, M. L. (2011),
Factors	sensitive towards others	Bhatti, M. A., Sundram, V. P. K.,
	culture	& Hoe, C. H. (2012)
	The organization	Black & Mendenhall, (1990);
	_	Litlrell& Salas, (2005), Nisa S
Ī	provides crosscultural	Ettirche Salas, (2005), Ivisa 5
	training & development	(2008)

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		I know that my job	Harris and Kumra, (2000), Adler,		
		requires Cross cultural	N. J., & Bartholomew, S. (1992)		
		adjustment and I am	14. j., & Burtholomew, 6. (1992)		
		flexible enough to deal			
		it.			
		I am aware of the Indian	Briscoe & Schuler (2004);		
		culture.	Dowling & Welch, (2005)		
Intention	to	I want to stay in India	Kopp &Naland, (2021), Hussain		
stay		because of its locational	& Deery, (2018); Shen & Hall,		
		advantage	(2009)		
		I have adjusted well in	Huang, Liu, Zhao, He, & Ding,		
		India and I plan to stay	(2022)		
		for extended period			
		I am satisfied with	Linder, (2019)		
		career and job therefore			
		I plan to stay in India			
		I am overall satisfied	Shen & Hall, (2009)		
		with country therefore I			
		want to stay			

Table 3: Questionnaire items and references

#### 4. Data Collection and analysis method

Data was gathered from multinational corporations with Indian branches. The national capital region (NCR) of India, which includes New Delhi and the outlying cities of Faridabad, Gurgaon, Ghaziabad, Noida and Greater Noida, is home to several multinational corporations' headquarters. This area is home to a sizable expat population. To gather relevant data, a structured questionnaire was developed, targeting a sample of 50 expatriates. However, with multiple attempts, the data was collected from 40 Expatriates only. The questionnaire was designed to capture a comprehensive view of the various challenges and opportunities these expatriates encounter during their stay. The primary goal of the study was to understand how different variables, such as family preferences, organizational support, and crosscultural issues, shape the expatriates' decisions regarding their stay in India. These factors were identified as crucial in determining the overall experience of expatriates, which could either encourage them to stay longer or compel them to return to their home countries before completing the assignment. By examining these factors, the study aimed to provide valuable insights into the expatriate experience in India, a country known for its diverse cultural and professional landscape. To analyze the collected data, the study employed SmartPLS, a statistical tool used to perform Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). This method enabled the researchers to assess complex relationships between the different variables and identify key determinants influencing the expatriates' decisions. The use of SmartPLS allowed for a deeper understanding of how Family, organizational, and cross-cultural factors interact and contribute to the overall experience of expatriates in India.

# 4.1. Measurement Model

The measurement model was assessed using Smart PLS 3.0, leveraging Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) for the analysis (Ringle, Wende & Becker, 2015). Several key metrics were examined to evaluate the measurement model's validity and reliability. First, factor loadings were scrutinized to ensure the strength of the relationship between indicators and their corresponding constructs. Next, composite reliability was assessed to determine the internal consistency of the

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constructs. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was also calculated to evaluate the extent to which a construct explains the variance in its indicators. Finally, discriminant validity was tested to confirm that each construct is distinct and not highly correlated with others, ensuring the uniqueness of each measurement. Together, these evaluations provided a comprehensive understanding of the measurement model's robustness, ensuring that the constructs were adequately measured and appropriately represented within the structural equation model.

4.1.1. Construct Reliability & Validity

	Item	Outer		Composit	Composit	Average
Constructs	s	Loadin	Cronbach'	e	e	variance
Constructs		g	s alpha	reliability	reliability	extracte
				(rho_a)	(rho_c)	d (AVE)
	OI1	0.742				
Organizationa	OI2	0.844	0.832	0.870	0.885	0.658
1 Issues	OI3	0.800				
	OI4	0.854				
	IS1	0.954				
Intention to	IS2	0.929	1 0 0 0 0	0.955	0.935	0.783
Stay	IS3	0.836	0.908			
	IS4	0.814				
	FI1	0.889				
Family Issues	FI2	0.841	0.834	0.852	0.899	0.749
	FI3	0.866				
	CC1	0.806				
Cross cultural	CC2	0.794	0.047	0.963	0.006	0.694
Issues	CC3	0.837	0.847 0.863	0.863	0.896	0.684
	CC4	0.869	1			

Table 4: Measurement model parameters

Table 4 presents the chronbach alpha, composite reliability and AVE values, which reflect satisfactory results. As per George and Mallery (2003), Chronbach alpha &composite reliability values exceeding 0.7 are considered acceptable, and values greater than 0.9 are regarded as excellent. In this study, the valuesexceeds the 0.7 threshold, indicating sufficient reliability. This confirms that the internal consistency of the latent variables has been established. Furthermore, it suggests that there is a substantial variation among the indicator variables that load onto the latent variables, such as the "Intention to Stay" variable. This finding demonstrates the robustness of the measurement model and assures that the indicators are reliably reflecting the underlying latent constructs. The validity of a scale is determined by assessing whether it accurately measures the concept it is intended to represent. To evaluate the construct validity, two key types of validity are considered: convergent validity and discriminant validity. In the context of reflectively measured constructs, both types play an essential role. Convergent validity is achieved when the items in a measurement scale align in representing the underlying construct. To determine this, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is calculated, which is the average of the squared loadings for each indicator linked to a specific construct. The AVE value should exceed 0.50 to statistically confirm that convergent validity has been achieved. In this study, the AVE values for various variables are provided in Table 4. Since each value in Table 4 is greater than 0.50, it can be concluded that the constructs in the study meet the criteria for convergent validity. Discriminant validity, on the other hand, is used to establish the distinctiveness of the constructs being studied. It ensures that the constructs in the study are separate from one another and not overly correlated. Several methods are

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employed to test discriminant validity in SMART-PLS, including the Fornell-Larcker criterion, cross-loading, and the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (refer to Tables 5 and 6 for the values). The Fornell-Larcker criterion is one approach to assess discriminant validity. According to this criterion, discriminant validity is established if the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for a particular construct is greater than the correlation of that construct with other constructs. Additionally, the construct should share more variance with its indicators than with other constructs. In Table 5, the values along the diagonal represent the square root of the AVE for different constructs, and these values are higher than the correlation values shown below them. This confirms that, based on the Fornell-Larcker criterion, the study's constructs demonstrate discriminant validity.

	Cross cultural	Family	Intention to	Organizational
	Issues	Issues	Stay	Issues
Cross cultural	0.827			
Issues	0.827			
Family Issues	0.720	0.865		
Intention to Stay	0.222	0.424	0.885	
Organizational	0.575	0.691	0.395	0.011
Issues	0.373	0.091	0.393	0.811

#### Table 5: Fornell & Larcker

The heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) is a useful metric for assessing the degree of correlation between two constructs. When the HTMT value exceeds 0.9, it indicates that the constructs are not distinguishable from each other. The HTMT values are provided in the table 6 and it is evident that none of the HTMT values exceed the threshold of 0.9, which implies that the constructs are sufficiently distinct from one another. As a result, discriminant validity is confirmed based on the HTMT criteria. This further supports the robustness of the measurement model, ensuring that the constructs are valid and separate entities.

	Cross cultural	Family	Intention to	Organizational
	Issues	Issues	Stay	Issues
Cross cultural				
Issues				
Family Issues	0.840			
Intention to Stay	0.234	0.456		
Organizational	0.649	0.770	0.400	
Issues	0.648	0.779	0.400	

### Table 6: Hetrotrait-monotrait ratio

So, we can conclude that discriminant validity is achieved in our measurement model since it satisfies the criteria for the aforementioned indicators (Fornell & Larcker& HTMT ratio) of discriminant validity.

# 4.2. Structural Model

To accomplish the study's objectives, the relationship between independent variables—family issues, cross-cultural issues, and organizational issues—and the dependent variable, intention to stay, was thoroughly analyzed. The investigation focused on how these independent variables influence employees' intention to remain in acountry. To validate the hypothesis, both the path coefficient and the p-value were carefully assessed. The path coefficient helped determine the strength and direction of the relationships between the variables, while the p-value was used to assess the statistical significance of the findings. By examining these metrics, the study was able to confirm whether the independent variables significantly impacted employees' intentions to stay with their respective organizations. This approach provided a comprehensive

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understanding of the factors that contribute to employees' decisions to remain in their jobs, taking into account family, cultural, and organizational challenges.

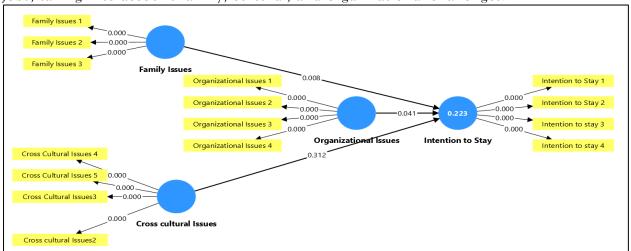


Figure 2: Structural Model

Figure 2: Structu	Original	Sample	Standard			
Hypothesis	sample (O)	mean (M)	deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values	
Family Issues - > Intention to Stay	0.384	0.356	0.145	2.649	0.008	Supported
Cross cultural Issues -> Intention to Stay	-0.156	-0.111	0.155	1.011	0.312	Not Supported
Organizational Issues > Intention to Stay	0.233	0.249	0.114	2.046	0.041	Supported
Family Issues -> Corganizational Issues -> Intention to Stay	0.131	0.131	0.075	1.98	0.049	Supported
Cross cultural Issues -> Organizational Issues -> Intention to Stay	0.036	0.043	0.046	0.796	0.426	Not Supported

Table 7: Hypothesis testing

# 5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The present study was designed to test five hypotheses, each aimed at understanding factors influencing expatriates' decisions to stay in India. Among the five hypotheses, three were found to be significant, while two hypotheses were not accepted. Specifically, Hypotheses 1, 3 and 4 were accepted, as their respective p-values were

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below the 0.05 threshold, indicating statistical significance. This suggests that family and organizational related factors have a notable impact on expatriates' decisions to stay in India. This also suggest that family factors are playing an important role in Organization factors which is leading to expatriates' decision to stay in India. The previous studies also indicated that if spouse and kids of expatriates are well adjusted then this led to overall satisfaction in expatiate which resulted in higher performance and achievement of organizational goals. Expatriates find their spouses' roles important, and most often described their spouses in very positive ways, as presented in earlier researches (e.g. Selmer & Leung, 2003; Scheiner & White, 2005). The finding showed that expatriates are describing their spouses multitasking as they play different roles while living together with their partners in overseas. There might be situation where spouse will show resistance and will show a dismissive attitude towards the expatriate's career success. These findings point to the importance of Family and Organizational factors in shaping the choices of expatriates regarding their stay in the country. On the other hand, Hypothesis 2 (H2) was not accepted, as it did not meet the criteria for significance. This result implies that cross-cultural issues do not play as substantial a role in expatriates' decision-making process when it comes to staying in India. While cultural differences are often considered an important factor in the overall experience of expatriates, this study suggests that they are not as influential in determining whether an expatriate will choose to remain in India. The acceptance of H1, H3 and H4 indicates that family issues, such as the presence of dependents, family support, and personal relationships, are crucial to expatriates' decisions to stay. Similarly, organizational factors, including job security, career growth opportunities, and the work environment, also contribute significantly to the decision-making process. In contrast, the lack of significance in H2 suggests that expatriates might be less concerned with cultural challenges or differences when deciding whether to continue their stay in India. While adapting to a new culture is an integral aspect of the expatriate experience, it appears that family and work-related factors take precedence in the decision-making process for many expatriates in the Indian context. At the same time, Organizations have realized the importance of cross-cultural training and mostly expats are provided training before they take up an international assignment.Bhatti, M. A., Sundram, V. P. K., & Hoe, C. H. (2012) suggested that the managers and top management who are dealing with international recruitment and selection should pay attention on the cultural sensitivity of the employees. To make this job easier to the expatriates in order to adjust smoothly in the host country, training on the topic of cultural sensitivity is one of the best remedies. KO, H. C., & Yang, M. L. (2011) in their research papermentioned that working in a different country is always full of issues and challenges therefore, learning about cultures, becoming aware of cultural differences, and having competence in cross cultural communication are a must for expatriate mangers so that they can adjust in different cultural environment and carry out a successful overseas assignment. These findings provide valuable insights into the priorities and motivations of expatriates, highlighting the need for organizations and policymakers to focus more on personal and professional support systems rather than solely on addressing cross-cultural challenges. The study suggests that cross-cultural training and support still play a role in facilitating the integration of expatriates into the host countrybut companies should focus on other factors also, especially the strategy to tackle need and requirements of spouse and kids of expatriate. This understanding can be used to improve expatriate retention strategies, ensuring that both family and organizational factors are adequately addressed to create a conducive environment for expatriates to stay in India. The findings of the study are expected to offer practical insights for organizations that

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employ expatriates, as well as for policymakers and businesses involved in managing the expatriate workforce in India. By understanding the various challenges and motivations that affect expatriates' decisions, organizations can better tailor their strategies to support expatriates, improve retention, and enhance the overall experience of foreign workers in the country. Additionally, the study aims to contribute to the growing body of research on expatriate management, particularly in the context of India, which has become a prominent destination for expatriates across various sectors.

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