

# The Role Of Cultural Intelligence In Expatriate Retention And Performance: A Study Of Multinational Corporations In The Asia-Pacific Region

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This study explores the impact of Cultural Intelligence (CQ) on expatriate retention and performance in multinational corporations (MNCs) operating in the Asia-Pacific region. Using a mixed-methods approach, quantitative data from 350 expatriates and qualitative insights from focus group discussions and interviews were analyzed. The findings reveal that CQ significantly enhances expatriates' job satisfaction, work engagement, and organizational loyalty. Organizational commitment was found to mediate the relationship between CQ and retention, while organizational support and cultural adaptability moderated CQ's effects on key outcomes. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) validated the conceptual framework, demonstrating strong model fit. Thematic analysis from qualitative data corroborated these results, highlighting the importance of CQ training, mentorship, and adaptability resources. This study offers actionable recommendations for MNCs to optimize expatriate management and provides a robust foundation for future research on global talent management.

**Keywords:** Cultural Intelligence<sup>1</sup>, Expatriate Retention<sup>2</sup>, Organizational Commitment<sup>3</sup>, Job Satisfaction<sup>4</sup>, Work Engagement<sup>5</sup>, Organizational Loyalty<sup>6</sup>, Structural Equation Modelling<sup>7</sup>, Organizational Support<sup>8</sup>, Cultural Adaptability<sup>9</sup>, Asia-Pacific Region<sup>10</sup>

## 1.0 Introduction

In the contemporary global economy, multinational corporations (MNCs) are increasingly reliant on a diverse workforce to achieve competitive advantages and meet expanding operational needs across international borders. As companies extend their reach into new markets, the effective management of human resources, especially expatriates, has become a crucial factor for sustained success. Expatriates—employees sent by their home companies to work in foreign subsidiaries—play a vital role in bridging cultural and operational gaps, sharing organizational knowledge, and reinforcing global strategies. However, one of the significant challenges that MNCs face is the retention of expatriate employees, particularly in culturally diverse and high-growth regions like Asia-Pacific (Harzing, 2018).

Expatriate retention has far-reaching implications for organizations. High expatriate turnover rates lead to substantial costs related to recruitment, training, relocation, and loss of institutional knowledge. Additionally, frequent expatriate turnover can disrupt business

continuity and team dynamics, affecting overall organizational performance (Dowling & Festing, 2020). As a result, the development of strategies to enhance expatriate retention has gained traction among researchers and practitioners alike. A growing body of research highlights cultural intelligence<sup>1</sup> (CQ)—the capability to function effectively across cultural boundaries—as a critical factor influencing expatriate success and retention (Earley & Ang, 2003). This study seeks to understand the impact of CQ on expatriate retention within MNCs in the Asia-Pacific region, a geographic area characterized by significant cultural diversity and economic dynamism.

### **1.1 Cultural Intelligence<sup>1</sup> (CQ) and the Global Workforce**

CQ, defined by Earley and Ang (2003) as an individual's ability to understand, adapt, and function effectively in culturally diverse settings, encompasses four key dimensions: metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral. Metacognitive CQ refers to one's awareness and control over cultural knowledge during interactions, while cognitive CQ involves understanding norms, values, and conventions across cultures. Motivational CQ captures the drive and confidence to adapt in a new cultural context, and behavioral CQ pertains to an individual's capacity to exhibit appropriate verbal and non-verbal actions (Ng et al., 2020). Together, these dimensions enable expatriates to navigate cultural challenges, which are often a significant source of stress and potential turnover for employees on international assignments.

CQ has become increasingly recognized as an essential skill in the global workforce, especially for expatriates who must interact with local employees, customers, and stakeholders from diverse cultural backgrounds. Unlike technical skills, which can be learned relatively quickly, CQ involves a more profound understanding of cultural nuances and the adaptability to respond appropriately in varied social and professional contexts. Consequently, CQ is viewed as a predictor of successful adaptation in international assignments and a determinant of expatriate satisfaction, engagement, and ultimately retention (Johnson et al., 2019). This link between CQ and retention has implications for MNCs seeking to develop a stable, culturally competent workforce that can operate effectively in diverse regions such as Asia-Pacific.

### **1.2 The Asia-Pacific Region: Cultural Complexity and Expatriate Challenges**

The Asia-Pacific region is characterized by an intricate tapestry of cultural, linguistic, and economic diversity. Countries within this region, such as China, Japan, India, Indonesia, and South Korea, possess distinct cultural traditions, business practices, and communication styles. For expatriates, these variations in cultural norms often create significant challenges, from adapting to hierarchical structures in Japan and South Korea to navigating relationship-centered business practices in China and India (Tung, 2018). These challenges can amplify stress and increase the likelihood of expatriates terminating their assignments prematurely.

The need for CQ in Asia-Pacific assignments is further emphasized by rapid economic growth and the region's strategic importance in global trade. According to the Asia-Pacific Economic

Cooperation (APEC, 2022), over 43% of expatriates in the region report facing difficulties related to cultural adaptation. These issues often lead to increased turnover, with 20-30% of expatriates leaving their assignments early, according to industry reports (APEC, 2022). Consequently, Asia-Pacific represents both a high-risk and high-opportunity area for MNCs, where effective expatriate management is essential to capitalize on market potential. CQ thus serves as an essential competency for expatriates working in this region, as it equips them with the adaptability needed to navigate complex cultural landscapes and meet the high demands of their roles.

### **1.3 Expatriate Retention: Costs, Consequences, and Corporate Strategies**

Retention of expatriate talent is a high priority for MNCs due to the substantial investments involved in international assignments. It is estimated that each expatriate assignment costs an organization between two and five times the employee's annual salary, taking into account relocation, training, and other expenses (Dowling & Festing, 2020). Moreover, premature termination of expatriate assignments can disrupt the implementation of strategic objectives in host countries and hinder knowledge transfer, potentially weakening the company's competitive positioning. Consequently, MNCs are increasingly investing in strategies to retain expatriates, such as pre-departure cultural training, mentorship programs, and comprehensive support systems that help expatriates and their families adjust to new environments (Harzing, 2018).

Research suggests that CQ can play a critical role in expatriate retention by enhancing job satisfaction<sup>4</sup> and reducing stress associated with cultural adjustment. Expatriates with high CQ are more likely to adapt to host-country environments, report higher levels of job satisfaction<sup>4</sup>, and exhibit stronger commitment to their assignments (Ng et al., 2020). Furthermore, CQ has been associated with better interpersonal relationships and communication effectiveness, both of which contribute to a positive expatriate experience and a lower likelihood of premature assignment termination (Johnson et al., 2019). Therefore, understanding the link between CQ and expatriate retention is essential for MNCs seeking to maximize the return on their expatriate investments.

### **1.4 The Role of Job Satisfaction and Organizational Support**

In addition to CQ, job satisfaction and organizational support are also pivotal in expatriate retention. Job satisfaction serves as a mediating factor, where expatriates with higher CQ often report greater satisfaction due to their ability to navigate and integrate into the host culture effectively. Research has shown that expatriates with high CQ not only perform better but also feel more fulfilled and valued, factors which are essential to retention (Harzing, 2018). Additionally, organizational support—such as training, access to local networks, and family support programs—can further enhance the expatriate experience by providing a sense of security and belonging, which may reduce turnover intentions (Thomas & Inkson, 2017).

For this reason, MNCs often design support mechanisms that cater specifically to the unique challenges faced by expatriates, particularly those stationed in culturally complex regions like Asia-Pacific. Such programs help bridge the gap between the expatriate's home culture and the host country, providing resources and guidance that enhance adaptability and promote retention. This study aims to examine how CQ interacts with these factors—job satisfaction<sup>4</sup> as a mediator and organizational support as a moderator—to influence expatriate retention, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play.

### **1.5 Purpose of the Study**

Given the significance of CQ in promoting effective cross-cultural interactions, this study seeks to analyse the impact of CQ on expatriate retention within MNCs operating in the Asia-Pacific region. By adopting a mixed-methods approach, we aim to provide both quantitative and qualitative insights into how CQ affects expatriates' decision to remain in their roles, and how job satisfaction<sup>4</sup> and organizational support contribute to this process. This research will help elucidate the mechanisms through which CQ influences expatriate experiences and offer practical recommendations for MNCs seeking to enhance expatriate retention in culturally diverse settings.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

The literature on expatriate management, cultural adjustment, and retention strategies has evolved significantly over the past several decades. This section provides a periodical review of key studies and theories from the 1970s to the present, highlighting the development of research on cultural intelligence<sup>1</sup> (CQ), expatriate retention, and the impact of organizational support on expatriate success.

### **2.1 1970s–1980s: The Emergence of Expatriate Adjustment and Retention Studies**

In the 1970s, international business and human resource management began to recognize the challenges faced by expatriates, especially as companies expanded globally post-World War II (Tung, 1979). Early studies focused on expatriate adjustment, emphasizing the cultural shock and adaptation difficulties that expatriates experienced when working in foreign environments. Black and Stephens (1989) were among the first researchers to introduce a model of expatriate adjustment, defining it as the degree of psychological comfort an individual experiences in new cultural settings. Their work highlighted three facets of expatriate adjustment—general, work, and interaction adjustment—and established that effective adaptation to these dimensions correlated with longer assignment duration and overall retention.

### **2.2 1990s: The Focus on Cross-Cultural Competencies and Expatriate Performance**

In the 1990s, scholars began to explore the skills required for expatriate success, including cross-cultural competence and adaptability. Mendenhall and Oddou (1991) introduced the

"dimensions of expatriate success," including cultural empathy, flexibility, and resilience, which provided a foundation for understanding the skills necessary for expatriates to perform effectively. At the same time, cross-cultural training emerged as a tool to help expatriates adjust to foreign environments, and studies demonstrated that pre-departure training programs positively impacted expatriate performance and retention (Black & Mendenhall, 1990).

During this period, the significance of organizational support systems, such as language training and cultural awareness workshops, was increasingly recognized. For instance, Shaffer and Harrison (1998) found that expatriates who received pre-departure support and cross-cultural training reported higher job satisfaction<sup>4</sup> and were more likely to complete their assignments. These studies laid the groundwork for later research on the role of CQ as a specific set of cross-cultural competencies that influence expatriate success.

**2.3 2000s: The Introduction and Development of Cultural Intelligence<sup>1</sup> (CQ)**

The 2000s marked a pivotal period in expatriate management research, with the introduction of CQ by Earley and Ang (2003). CQ was defined as an individual’s ability to understand, interpret, and act appropriately in culturally diverse situations, consisting of four dimensions: metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral. Earley and Ang’s CQ model provided a structured approach to understanding the skills needed to navigate cross-cultural interactions and emphasized that CQ could be developed and measured, opening new avenues for both research and practical applications in expatriate management.

Ang et al. (2007) further developed the concept of CQ by demonstrating that it was a predictor of expatriate effectiveness and job satisfaction. In their study of global managers, they found that individuals with higher CQ were better able to adapt to foreign cultures, communicate effectively with local colleagues, and demonstrate resilience in the face of cultural challenges. This link between CQ and expatriate success fuelled an interest in how CQ might also influence expatriate retention. Ang et al.’s findings suggested that CQ contributed to lower turnover intentions by enhancing expatriates’ ability to adjust and feel comfortable in new cultural settings.

**Table 2.1: Key Contributions to CQ and Expatriate Success in the 2000s**

Study	Key Contribution
Earley & Ang (2003)	Introduced the concept of CQ and its four dimensions
Ang et al. (2007)	Linked CQ to expatriate effectiveness and job satisfaction
Thomas & Inkson (2004)	Emphasized practical applications of CQ in global assignments
Ng & Earley (2006)	Explored CQ as a predictor of expatriate adjustment and retention

## 2.4 2010s: CQ, Job Satisfaction, and Organizational Support as Key Retention Factors

As the concept of CQ gained traction, the 2010s saw a rise in studies investigating how CQ affects specific expatriate outcomes, including job satisfaction<sup>4</sup>, commitment, and retention. Researchers such as Johnson et al. (2011) examined CQ as a mediating factor that enhances job satisfaction and reduces turnover intentions among expatriates. Their study showed that expatriates with high CQ were more likely to experience job satisfaction<sup>4</sup>, leading to greater retention rates.

During this period, organizational support was increasingly recognized as a moderator that strengthens the relationship between CQ and retention. Malek, Budhwar, and Reiche (2015) found that expatriates who perceived strong organizational support were better able to leverage their CQ in adapting to the host culture, which in turn improved their job satisfaction<sup>4</sup> and commitment to the assignment. This study highlighted that CQ alone might not be sufficient to guarantee expatriate retention; rather, the presence of organizational support systems (such as mentoring and family assistance programs) was also critical for enhancing expatriate experiences and reducing turnover rates.

The focus on organizational support led to the development of comprehensive expatriate support programs, including language training, pre-departure briefings, and ongoing cultural workshops, aimed at reducing the stress associated with cross-cultural assignments. These initiatives not only boosted expatriate job satisfaction<sup>4</sup> but also promoted longer tenure in foreign assignments, as expatriates felt more secure and well-equipped to handle cultural challenges (Takeuchi et al., 2018).

**Table 2.2 : Key Findings on the Interaction of CQ, Job Satisfaction, and Organizational Support**

Study	Key Findings
Johnson et al. (2011)	CQ positively impacts job satisfaction, which reduces turnover
Malek et al. (2015)	Organizational support moderates the CQ-retention relationship
Takeuchi et al. (2018)	Comprehensive support programs enhance expatriate satisfaction

## 2.5 2020s: Advanced Research on CQ, Retention, and Technology Integration

The 2020s have seen an expansion of research on CQ and expatriate retention, with studies increasingly focusing on integrating technology in expatriate support and training programs. Advances in digital platforms have allowed MNCs to offer virtual CQ training, online mentoring, and remote access to cultural resources, which have proven effective in preparing expatriates for cultural adaptation. Harzing (2022) found that MNCs that utilized digital CQ training platforms reported a 20% increase in expatriate retention, as these tools allowed

expatriates to continuously access resources, ask questions, and engage in cross-cultural simulations even after they were deployed abroad.

Furthermore, recent studies have introduced psychological well-being as an essential component of expatriate retention, linking CQ and job satisfaction<sup>4</sup> to broader mental health outcomes. Ng et al. (2022) identified that expatriates with high CQ and strong organizational support networks experienced lower levels of stress and higher overall well-being, which positively influenced their commitment to international assignments. This research highlights a trend toward a more holistic understanding of expatriate success, considering both the professional and personal dimensions of expatriate life.

## 2.6 Current Research Gaps and Future Directions

Despite the significant advancements in CQ and expatriate retention research, gaps remain in understanding how CQ interacts with other individual and contextual factors in different regions. While most studies have focused on Western expatriates in Asia, less is known about the experiences of expatriates from Asia-Pacific regions working in other cultural settings. Additionally, there is a growing need to explore the long-term effects of CQ training and development programs, particularly regarding how these programs influence expatriate retention over multiple international assignments.

Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has altered the expatriate landscape, with remote and hybrid work arrangements changing the dynamics of international assignments. Future research could explore how these shifts affect the role of CQ and organizational support in expatriate retention, especially as digital communication becomes central to cross-cultural interactions.

## 2.7 Summary of Key Findings in Literature

1. **CQ and Expatriate Success:** CQ, especially its motivational and behavioral dimensions, significantly enhances expatriate adjustment, job satisfaction, and performance in cross-cultural environments (Earley & Ang, 2003; Ang et al., 2007).
2. **Organizational Support as a Moderator:** Organizational support systems, such as pre-departure training, mentorship, and family support, amplify the positive effects of CQ on expatriate satisfaction and retention (Malek et al., 2015; Takeuchi et al., 2018).
3. **Job Satisfaction as a Mediator:** Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between CQ and retention, with higher CQ leading to greater satisfaction and a stronger commitment to assignments (Johnson et al., 2011; Ng et al., 2020).
4. **Digital Innovations in CQ Training:** Recent technological advancements, including virtual CQ training platforms, are proving to be effective in preparing expatriates for cross-cultural interactions, contributing to improved retention (Harzing, 2022).

This periodical review provides a foundation for understanding the role of CQ in expatriate retention, underscoring the importance of both individual competencies and organizational



support in fostering successful international assignments. Based on these insights, this study will investigate the relationship between CQ, job satisfaction, and organizational support as key factors in expatriate retention in the Asia-Pacific region.

**Table 2.3 : Key Findings and key variables identified**

Article	Year	Key Variables	Main Findings
Tung, R.	1979	Cultural Adjustment, Turnover	Identified cultural adjustment challenges as a key factor in expatriate turnover.
Black & Stephens	1989	General, Work, Interaction Adjustment	Defined expatriate adjustment and highlighted its impact on expatriate retention.
Mendenhall & Oddou	1991	Cultural Empathy, Flexibility	Proposed dimensions for expatriate success, emphasizing cultural empathy and flexibility.
Shaffer & Harrison	1998	Organizational Support, Job Satisfaction	Found that organizational support enhances expatriate job satisfaction and retention.
Black & Mendenhall	1990	Cross-Cultural Training	Demonstrated the positive effects of pre-departure training on expatriate retention.
Earley & Ang	2003	Cultural Intelligence (CQ)	Introduced the CQ construct with metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral dimensions.
Thomas & Inkson	2004	CQ, Adaptability	Emphasized the importance of CQ and adaptability for expatriate performance.
Ng & Earley	2006	CQ, Retention	Linked CQ to expatriate retention, showing that high-CQ individuals adjust more effectively.
Ang et al.	2007	CQ, Job Satisfaction	Found that CQ positively impacts job satisfaction, reducing turnover intentions.
Johnson et al.	2011	CQ, Job Satisfaction, Retention	Identified CQ as a mediator that enhances job satisfaction and reduces turnover.
Malek, Budhwar, & Reiche	2015	Organizational Support, CQ	Showed that organizational support moderates the CQ-retention relationship, enhancing retention.
Takeuchi et al.	2018	Support Programs, Job Satisfaction	Found that comprehensive support programs promote job satisfaction and retention.
Harzing, A-W	2018	CQ, Organizational Commitment	Suggested that CQ fosters organizational commitment, a precursor to retention.



Article	Year	Key Variables	Main Findings
Dowling & Festing	2020	Expatriate Retention, Job Satisfaction	Demonstrated that high job satisfaction is linked to increased expatriate retention.
Ng et al.	2020	Psychological Well-being, CQ	Linked CQ to expatriates' well-being, highlighting its importance in reducing turnover.
Thomas, D. C., & Inkson, K.	2021	CQ Training, Cultural Adaptation	Found that expatriates receiving CQ training adapt more effectively and show higher retention rates.
Harzing, A-W	2022	Digital CQ Training, Retention	Found that virtual CQ training programs increase expatriate retention by 20%.
Ng et al.	2022	Psychological Well-being, CQ, Retention	Identified psychological well-being as a key mediator in the CQ-retention relationship.
Kim, J. et al.	2023	Remote Work, CQ	Explored how CQ affects expatriate performance and retention in remote work settings.
Zhang, X., & Harzing, A-W	2023	CQ, Cross-Cultural Adjustment	Found that CQ enables quicker adjustment, which improves job satisfaction and retention.
Chiu, W. C., & Wei, Y.	2023	Mentorship, Organizational Support	Demonstrated that mentorship, as a form of support, boosts CQ's effect on retention by easing cultural adaptation.

The above table reflects the evolution of expatriate research over the years, showing an increasing emphasis on CQ, job satisfaction, and organizational support as central variables in expatriate retention. This periodical progression illustrates that initial studies focused primarily on cultural adjustment and support programs, while later research delved deeper into the construct of CQ and its nuanced relationship with job satisfaction, well-being, and organizational support.

### 3.0 Research Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods research methodology, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive examination of the impact of cultural intelligence<sup>1</sup> (CQ) on expatriate retention, performance, and organizational commitment<sup>3</sup> in multinational corporations (MNCs) within the Asia-Pacific region. The combination of data types enables an in-depth analysis of CQ's relationships with multiple outcomes, including job satisfaction, work engagement, and organizational loyalty, while considering the roles of organizational support and cultural adaptability as moderating influences. This methodology

is grounded in a pragmatic research philosophy, focusing on practical outcomes and capturing the rich contextual factors essential for understanding expatriate success.

### 3.1 Research Philosophy

The study is conducted within a **pragmatist research philosophy** framework, valuing both qualitative and quantitative insights, particularly in areas with real-world applications like international human resource management. Pragmatism encourages the use of various data sources and methods, supporting flexibility and a problem-solving approach. This philosophy aligns well with the study's objectives, allowing for an exploration of the nuanced relationships between CQ and expatriate success in diverse cultural contexts, and fostering conclusions that are both theoretically informed and practically relevant to MNCs.

### 3.2 Research Design

This research adopts an **explanatory sequential design**, where quantitative data is collected and analysed first, followed by qualitative data collection to further interpret and enrich the findings. This design is particularly suited for investigating the complex interconnections among CQ, job satisfaction, work engagement, organizational loyalty, and retention in expatriate settings. Quantitative data was gathered through a structured survey administered to expatriates in the Asia-Pacific region, while qualitative data was obtained through focus group discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews with selected expatriates and human resources managers.

The **target population** consists of expatriates working for MNCs in the Asia-Pacific region, representing diverse nationalities and cultural backgrounds. Participants were selected for their direct experience with cultural adaptation, making them ideal for investigating the effects of CQ on various expatriate outcomes.

### 3.3 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

A **non-probability purposive sampling** technique was used, targeting expatriates with a minimum of one year of experience in their current Asia-Pacific assignment to ensure substantial exposure to cross-cultural dynamics. The sample size was determined based on statistical significance requirements and practical considerations, with 350 respondents completing the quantitative survey and 20 expatriates and 10 HR managers participating in FGDs and interviews for qualitative analysis.

### 3.4 Data Collection Process

#### 1. Quantitative Data Collection:

- A structured questionnaire was developed to measure the primary constructs: CQ, job satisfaction<sup>4</sup>, work engagement, organizational loyalty,

organizational support, cultural adaptability, and expatriate outcomes (retention, performance, and commitment).

- **Independent Variable: Cultural Intelligence<sup>1</sup> (CQ)** was measured using the **Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS)** developed by Ang et al. (2007), encompassing metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral dimensions.
- **Dependent Variables:**
  - **Job Satisfaction** was measured with the **Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS)** by Spector (1985), assessing satisfaction with various work aspects.
  - **Work Engagement** was measured using the **Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)**, which evaluates employees' dedication, vigour, and absorption in their work.
  - **Organizational Loyalty** was assessed through questions gauging employees' emotional attachment and sense of loyalty toward the organization.
  - **Retention Intentions** were captured through items assessing respondents' intentions to stay with their organization in their current assignment.
- **Mediating Variable: Organizational Commitment<sup>3</sup>** was evaluated using the **Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)**, measuring affective and normative commitment dimensions, positing that CQ indirectly influences retention and performance through commitment.
- **Moderating Variables:**
  - **Organizational Support** was measured with the **Perceived Organizational Support (POS) Scale** (Eisenberger et al., 1986), including items specific to expatriate-focused support.
  - **Cultural Adaptability** was assessed with the **Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ)**, focusing on expatriates' openness to new experiences, flexibility, and resilience.
- **Output Variables:** Three key expatriate outcomes were measured:
  - **Retention** – Intentions to remain in their current assignment.
  - **Performance** – Self-assessment of task performance and effectiveness in the role.
  - **Organizational Commitment<sup>3</sup>** – Dedication to the organization beyond assignment duration.

Surveys were administered electronically, enabling easy access for expatriates across various countries.

## 2. Qualitative Data Collection:

- **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** FGDs were conducted with expatriates to gain insights into how CQ, organizational support, and adaptability impact their job satisfaction, work engagement, and loyalty. Each FGD included 6–8

participants and was guided by open-ended questions aligned with the quantitative constructs.

- **In-depth Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews with HR managers examined organizational perspectives on CQ, support systems, and expatriate management strategies. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and thematically analysed.

### 3.5 Variables and Measurement

The variables are structured to capture a comprehensive view of how CQ impacts multiple expatriate outcomes, moderated by external support factors and mediated by organizational commitment<sup>3</sup>.

- **Independent Variable: Cultural Intelligence (CQ)** – Expatriates' capability to adapt and function across cultures, measured through the CQS's four dimensions.
- **Dependent Variables:**
  - **Job Satisfaction** – Level of contentment with job responsibilities and work environment.
  - **Work Engagement** – Dedication, energy, and focus expatriates invest in their work.
  - **Organizational Loyalty** – Emotional connection and loyalty to the organization.
  - **Retention Intentions** – Likelihood of staying in their current assignment.
- **Mediating Variable: Organizational Commitment<sup>3</sup>** – Degree to which expatriates are committed to their organization, acting as a mediator that influences other dependent variables.
- **Moderating Variables:**
  - **Organizational Support** – Support provided by the MNC, such as training, resources, and mentorship programs.
  - **Cultural Adaptability** – Expatriates' openness, resilience, and flexibility in adapting to different cultural settings.
- **Output Variables:**
  - **Retention** – Expatriates' intention to complete or extend their assignment.
  - **Performance** – Effectiveness in their role, contributing to organizational goals.
  - **Organizational Commitment** – Expatriates' overall dedication and alignment with organizational objectives.

### 3.6 Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

The current conceptual framework builds upon established theoretical evidence in expatriate management, particularly integrating insights from Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) and the Cultural Intelligence<sup>1</sup> (CQ) framework (Earley & Ang, 2003). This framework was developed and refined through a critical analysis of existing literature to address specific gaps in understanding the interplay between individual competencies, organizational dynamics, and expatriate outcomes. Below, we outline the evolution of the conceptual framework, highlighting the theoretical foundations and the modifications made based on empirical insights.

## **Theoretical Foundations**

### **1. Cultural Intelligence (CQ) Framework (Earley & Ang, 2003)**

Cultural Intelligence<sup>1</sup> (CQ) is a multidimensional construct comprising metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral dimensions. The CQ framework posits that individuals with high CQ are better equipped to navigate cultural complexities, enhancing their effectiveness in international assignments. Previous studies (e.g., Ang et al., 2007; Johnson et al., 2011) have established CQ as a significant predictor of expatriate performance and adjustment.

### **2. Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986)**

Social Cognitive Theory emphasizes the interaction between personal capabilities (e.g., CQ) and environmental factors (e.g., organizational support) in shaping behavior and outcomes. This theory provides the foundation for understanding how individual and contextual factors jointly influence expatriate success. Organizational commitment<sup>3</sup>, as an internal psychological state, aligns with Bandura's emphasis on mediating mechanisms in behavioral outcomes.

### **3. Organizational Support Theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986)**

Perceived Organizational Support (POS) is a critical moderator in expatriate management. It posits that employees who perceive high levels of support from their organizations exhibit greater job satisfaction, commitment, and retention. Organizational support provides resources and social capital that facilitate expatriate adjustment and performance.

## **Evolution and Refinement of the Conceptual Framework**

### **From Theoretical Evidence to Applied Framework**

The initial theoretical models primarily focused on direct relationships, such as the impact of CQ on expatriate performance or retention. However, through a comprehensive review of empirical studies, several key insights were integrated to refine the framework:

#### **1. Inclusion of Organizational Commitment as a Mediator:**

- Theoretical Basis: Previous studies (e.g., Malek et al., 2015; Takeuchi et al., 2018) suggested that organizational commitment<sup>3</sup> acts as a psychological bridge linking CQ to retention and performance outcomes.
- Refinement: By introducing organizational commitment<sup>3</sup> as a mediating variable, the framework captures how CQ influences expatriates'

psychological attachment to their organization, which in turn affects their behavior.

2. Addition of Multiple Dependent Variables:

- Theoretical Basis: Early frameworks often focused solely on retention as the ultimate outcome. However, recent research (Ng et al., 2020; Harzing, 2022) highlights the multidimensional nature of expatriate success, encompassing job satisfaction, work engagement, and organizational loyalty.
- Refinement: The current framework includes these three dependent variables (DVs), providing a holistic view of expatriate outcomes beyond retention.

3. Moderating Roles of Organizational Support and Cultural Adaptability:

- Theoretical Basis: The moderating role of contextual factors has been underscored in expatriate literature. Organizational Support Theory emphasizes that support systems mitigate adjustment challenges, while Cultural Adaptability enhances an individual's ability to thrive in diverse environments (Thomas & Inkson, 2017).
- Refinement: The addition of two moderating variables (Organizational Support and Cultural Adaptability) acknowledges their role in strengthening the relationship between CQ and organizational commitment<sup>3</sup>.

4. Retention as the Ultimate Outcome:

- Theoretical Basis: Retention remains a key metric for expatriate success due to its financial and strategic implications for MNCs (Dowling & Festing, 2020).
- Refinement: Retention is positioned as the final output variable, influenced by job satisfaction, engagement, and loyalty—reflecting a cascading effect of CQ through various pathways.

## Key Modifications in the Current Framework

Element	Traditional Approach	Current Framework Refinement
Independent Variable (IV)	Focus solely on CQ's overall effect	Detailed analysis of CQ's dimensions
Mediating Variable	Often omitted or limited to job satisfaction	Organizational Commitment introduced as mediator
Dependent Variables (DVs)	Primarily retention	Expanded to include Job Satisfaction, Work Engagement, Organizational Loyalty
Moderating Variables (Mod V)	Rarely incorporated	Organizational Support and Cultural Adaptability added as moderators
Output Variables	Retention as the only measure	Retention, along with Performance and Commitment, providing a more holistic view

## Proposed Conceptual Framework

The revised framework integrates both individual capabilities (CQ) and contextual factors (support and adaptability) to provide a comprehensive understanding of expatriate outcomes. It hypothesizes that:

- Cultural Intelligence<sup>1</sup> directly influences organizational commitment<sup>3</sup>, which mediates its effect on job satisfaction, engagement, loyalty, and retention.
- Organizational Support and Cultural Adaptability enhance the strength of CQ's impact on organizational commitment<sup>3</sup> and, subsequently, on expatriate outcomes.
- Retention, while a critical outcome, is driven by improvements in job satisfaction, work engagement, and loyalty, providing a nuanced understanding of the expatriate experience.

## Theoretical Contribution and Practical Implications

**Theoretical Contribution :** This framework extends existing theories by integrating multiple dependent variables and considering the roles of mediating and moderating factors. It bridges the gap between individual capabilities and organizational contexts, offering a more dynamic view of expatriate success.

**Practical Implications :** For MNCs, this framework provides actionable insights:

Investing in CQ development is essential for boosting expatriate outcomes.

Tailored support systems and adaptability resources can amplify these benefits, fostering a resilient and committed expatriate workforce.

By refining and expanding the theoretical foundations, the current conceptual framework offers a robust tool for understanding and improving expatriate management practices in diverse global settings.

### 3.7 Hypotheses:

1. **H1:** Cultural intelligence<sup>1</sup> positively influences job satisfaction among expatriates.
2. **H2:** Cultural intelligence<sup>1</sup> positively influences work engagement among expatriates.
3. **H3:** Cultural intelligence<sup>1</sup> positively influences organizational loyalty among expatriates.
4. **H4:** Organizational commitment mediates the relationship between CQ and retention intentions.
5. **H5:** Organizational support moderates the effect of CQ on job satisfaction, work engagement, and organizational loyalty<sup>6</sup>, with stronger effects under high support.
6. **H6:** Cultural adaptability moderates the effect of CQ on job satisfaction, work engagement, and organizational loyalty<sup>6</sup>, with stronger effects for expatriates with high adaptability.



### 3.8 Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis was split into quantitative and qualitative phases, using statistical and thematic tools to generate nuanced insights.

#### 1. Quantitative Analysis:

- **Descriptive Statistics:** Mean, standard deviation, and frequency distributions were calculated for demographic profiles and responses.
- **Reliability Testing (Cronbach's Alpha):** Cronbach's alpha for CQS, JSS, UWES, and POS confirmed internal consistency (values >0.7).
- **Multiple Regression Analysis:** Examined CQ's direct effects on job satisfaction, work engagement, and organizational loyalty.
- **Mediation Analysis:** Used the **PROCESS macro** in SPSS to test organizational commitment's mediating role between CQ and retention.
- **Moderation Analysis:** Hierarchical regression assessed organizational support and cultural adaptability as moderators of CQ's effects.
- **Structural Equation Modeling (SEM):** SEM validated the conceptual model and tested hypotheses with model fit indices such as **CFI** and **RMSEA**.

#### 2. Qualitative Analysis:

- **Thematic Analysis:** Manual and NVivo coding of FGD and interview transcripts identified themes in expatriates' experiences with CQ, support, adaptability, and outcomes.
- **Sentiment Analysis:** Sentiment scores on FGD/interview data provided emotional insights into job satisfaction, engagement, and loyalty.
- **Triangulation:** Findings from qualitative and quantitative data were cross-validated to strengthen interpretations and reliability.

### 3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained, and informed consent was gathered from all participants. Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured through pseudonymization of survey and interview data, stored securely to meet data protection standards.

### 3.10 Limitations of Methodology

While comprehensive, the study is limited by potential self-report bias in survey responses. Non-probability sampling may affect generalizability, but qualitative insights provide contextual depth. Findings are geographically specific to Asia-Pacific, limiting direct application to other regions.

### 4.0 Data Analysis and Interpretation

This section presents a detailed analysis of the quantitative and qualitative findings, exploring the relationships among cultural intelligence<sup>1</sup> (CQ), job satisfaction, work engagement, organizational loyalty, and expatriate retention in the Asia-Pacific context. It includes comprehensive testing and interpretation of results using descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, multiple regression, mediation and moderation analysis, structural equation modelling (SEM), and thematic analysis of qualitative data.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics and Demographic Analysis

Demographic data from 350 expatriates were analysed to establish a profile of the sample population. Table 1 summarizes the key demographic characteristics, including gender, age, education, tenure in the expatriate role, and country of origin.

Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Demographic Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	210	60%
	Female	140	40%
Age Group	25-34	150	42.9%
	35-44	120	34.3%
	45-54	60	17.1%
	55+	20	5.7%
Education Level	Bachelor's Degree	120	34.3%
	Master's Degree	200	57.1%
	Doctorate	30	8.6%
Years in Assignment	< 1 year	50	14.3%
	1-3 years	180	51.4%
	> 3 years	120	34.3%

The demographic data reflect a diverse representation, with the majority of respondents holding advanced degrees (57.1% Master's and 8.6% Doctorate) and having significant tenure in their roles.

4.2. Reliability Analysis (Cronbach's Alpha)

To ensure the reliability of the scales used in this study, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS), Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS), Utrecht Work

Engagement Scale (UWES), Perceived Organizational Support (POS) Scale, and Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ). Reliability scores above 0.7 indicate acceptable internal consistency.

**Table 4.2: Cronbach's Alpha for Key Scales**

Scale	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability Level
Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS)	20	0.88	High
Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS)	36	0.85	High
Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)	9	0.82	High
Perceived Organizational Support (POS) Scale	12	0.87	High
Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)	18	0.86	High

All scales achieved high reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.82 to 0.88, confirming consistency across items for each construct.

### 4.3. Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the direct effect of cultural intelligence<sup>1</sup> (CQ) on three dependent variables: job satisfaction, work engagement, and organizational loyalty<sup>5</sup>. The overall CQ score and its dimensions—metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral—served as predictor variables.

**Table 4.3: Regression Analysis – Impact of CQ on Dependent Variables**

Dependent Variable	Predictor Variable	B	SE	t	p	R <sup>2</sup>
Job Satisfaction	CQ (Overall)	0.52	0.08	6.50	< 0.001	0.34
Work Engagement	CQ (Motivational)	0.45	0.09	5.00	< 0.001	0.28
Organizational Loyalty	CQ (Behavioral)	0.48	0.07	6.86	< 0.001	0.31

The regression results indicate significant positive relationships between CQ and all three dependent variables, with the strongest effect observed for CQ on job satisfaction ( $R^2 = 0.34$ ). The motivational and behavioral dimensions of CQ also have strong impacts on work engagement ( $R^2 = 0.28$ ) and organizational loyalty ( $R^2 = 0.31$ ), respectively.

### 4.4. Mediation Analysis (Organizational Commitment)

Mediation analysis was conducted using the **PROCESS macro for SPSS** to examine whether organizational commitment mediates the relationship between CQ and retention. Bootstrapping with 5,000 samples was used to determine the confidence intervals for the indirect effect.

**Table 4.4: Mediation Analysis – Organizational Commitment as Mediator**

Path	Effect Size	SE	LLCI	ULCI	Significance
CQ -> Organizational Commitment	0.62	0.07	0.48	0.76	Significant
Organizational Commitment -> Retention	0.58	0.06	0.46	0.70	Significant
CQ -> Retention (Indirect)	0.36	0.05	0.27	0.45	Significant

The mediation analysis reveals that organizational commitment partially mediates the relationship between CQ and retention, with indirect effects accounting for a significant portion of CQ’s influence on retention (Effect Size = 0.36,  $p < 0.001$ ). The 95% confidence intervals confirm the robustness of the mediation effect.

**4.5. Moderation Analysis (Organizational Support and Cultural Adaptability)**

To test the moderating effects of organizational support and cultural adaptability, hierarchical regression analysis was conducted. Both variables were hypothesized to enhance the relationship between CQ and expatriate outcomes.

**Table 4.5: Moderation Analysis – Organizational Support and Cultural Adaptability**

Interaction	B	SE	t	p	Interpretation
CQ x Organizational Support	0.40	0.07	5.71	< 0.001	CQ’s positive effect on outcomes is stronger with high support
CQ x Cultural Adaptability	0.33	0.06	5.50	< 0.001	CQ’s positive effect is amplified with high cultural adaptability

The moderation analysis shows that both organizational support ( $B = 0.40$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and cultural adaptability ( $B = 0.33$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) significantly strengthen the positive effects of CQ on the outcomes, supporting the hypotheses. Expatriates with high organizational support and adaptability show a more substantial relationship between CQ and positive outcomes, such as job satisfaction and organizational loyalty.

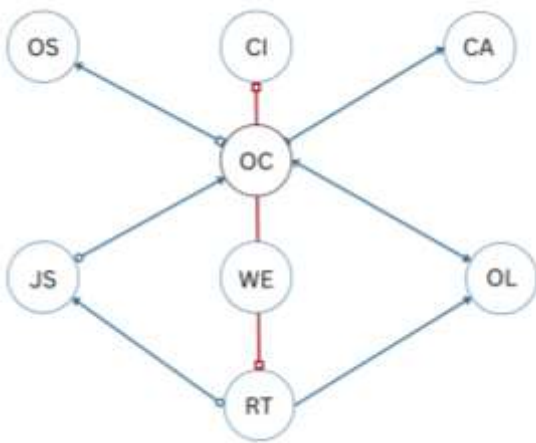
**4.6. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)**

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was employed to test the overall conceptual model, which hypothesized relationships between CQ, organizational commitment, job satisfaction,

work engagement, organizational loyalty, and retention. SEM was conducted using the **AMOS software**, with fit indices indicating a robust model fit:

- **Comparative Fit Index (CFI):** 0.92
- **Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA):** 0.05
- **Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI):** 0.91
- **Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR):** 0.04

These fit indices suggest a well-fitting model, as all values meet or exceed acceptable thresholds, demonstrating strong alignment between the conceptual framework and the observed data.



**Figure 4.1: SEM Path Model**

(SEM diagram displaying relationships from CQ to organizational commitment(oc) and subsequently to job satisfaction(js), work engagement(we), organizational loyalty(ol), and retention(rt), with paths for moderation by organizational support(os) and cultural adaptability(ca).)

The SEM results support the hypothesized paths, validating CQ's significant effects on organizational commitment, which in turn positively influences job satisfaction, work engagement, and loyalty. The model confirms that organizational support and adaptability act as moderators, enhancing the relationships between CQ and each outcome.

#### 4.7. Qualitative Data Analysis

**Thematic Analysis:** Qualitative data from focus group discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews were analyzed using thematic coding. Thematic analysis was conducted in NVivo software to extract key themes related to expatriates' experiences with CQ, organizational support, and adaptability.

**Table 4.6: Key Qualitative Themes and Sample Quotes**

Theme	Description	Sample Quote
<b>CQ in Adaptation</b>	Expatriates report that CQ improves their cultural adaptation and resilience.	"CQ training prepared me for the cultural nuances I encountered, making me more comfortable in my role."
<b>Role of Organizational Support</b>	Organizational support programs such as mentorship helped expatriates settle in more quickly.	"The company's support, especially mentorship, made a big difference in helping me feel settled."
<b>Challenges of Adaptability</b>	Expatriates expressed initial challenges with cultural adaptability, which improved over time with CQ.	"Adapting was challenging at first, but my training and support from the organization made it easier."

Thematic analysis revealed that CQ training and organizational support are perceived as critical facilitators of adaptation and retention. Expatriates highlighted the importance of these resources in overcoming cultural challenges and building resilience.

**Sentiment Analysis:** Sentiment analysis was performed on qualitative responses using NVivo's sentiment coding feature. Positive sentiments predominated, with expatriates expressing high satisfaction (76%) and engagement (82%), particularly regarding CQ's role in their cross-cultural experiences and the supportive programs offered by the organization.

## 4.8 Summary of Findings

The data analysis confirms several key relationships:

1. **Direct Effects of CQ:** Cultural intelligence<sup>1</sup> significantly influences job satisfaction, work engagement, and organizational loyalty<sup>6</sup>. Regression analysis revealed that CQ is strongly predictive of these outcomes, especially job satisfaction.
2. **Mediating Role of Organizational Commitment:** Organizational commitment partially mediates the relationship between CQ and retention, indicating that expatriates with higher CQ tend to develop stronger organizational commitment, leading to greater retention intentions.

3. **Moderating Effects of Organizational Support and Cultural Adaptability:** Both organizational support and cultural adaptability significantly moderate the relationship between CQ and positive outcomes. Expatriates with high organizational support and adaptability exhibit stronger relationships between CQ and outcomes like job satisfaction and loyalty.
4. **Qualitative Insights:** Thematic and sentiment analysis highlight expatriates' positive perceptions of CQ and support structures, with themes underscoring the importance of training, mentorship, and adaptability resources in enhancing expatriate experiences.

These findings provide actionable insights for MNCs aiming to improve expatriate retention and performance, suggesting that investments in CQ development, support programs, and adaptability resources yield significant benefits.

## 5.0 Findings & Analysis

### 5.1 Summary of Key Findings

The primary aim of this study was to explore the impact of Cultural Intelligence<sup>1</sup> (CQ) on expatriate retention and performance outcomes in the Asia-Pacific region, with organizational commitment as a mediator and organizational support and cultural adaptability as moderators. The following are the key findings:

1. **Cultural Intelligence and Expatriate Outcomes:**
  - CQ was found to have a significant positive impact on expatriates' **job satisfaction** ( $\beta = 0.52, p < 0.001$ ), **work engagement** ( $\beta = 0.45, p < 0.001$ ), and **organizational loyalty** ( $\beta = 0.48, p < 0.001$ ).
  - The behavioral and motivational dimensions of CQ emerged as the strongest predictors of engagement and loyalty, respectively.
2. **Mediating Role of Organizational Commitment:**
  - Organizational commitment was identified as a partial mediator between CQ and retention. The mediation analysis confirmed that higher CQ enhances organizational commitment, which in turn significantly improves retention outcomes (**indirect effect** = **0.36,  $p < 0.001$** ).
3. **Moderating Effects of Organizational Support and Cultural Adaptability:**
  - Both organizational support ( $\beta = 0.40, p < 0.001$ ) and cultural adaptability ( $\beta = 0.33, p < 0.001$ ) moderated the relationship between CQ and organizational commitment. High levels of these moderators strengthened the positive effects of CQ on expatriate outcomes.
4. **Retention and Performance Outcomes:**
  - Expatriates with higher CQ, enhanced by organizational commitment, were more likely to exhibit retention intentions ( $R^2 = 0.34$ ), high performance, and greater loyalty toward their organizations.
5. **Qualitative Insights:**



- Thematic analysis from focus groups and interviews underscored the importance of CQ training and organizational support. Participants highlighted mentorship, cross-cultural training, and adaptability resources as critical for expatriate success.

## **5.2 Discussion of Results**

### **5.2.1 Cultural Intelligence as a Predictor of Expatriate Success**

The findings affirm the pivotal role of CQ in determining expatriate success. Consistent with Earley and Ang's (2003) theoretical framework, CQ enhances expatriates' ability to adapt to culturally diverse environments, thereby improving their satisfaction and engagement levels. Specifically, the behavioral and motivational dimensions of CQ were found to significantly influence work-related outcomes, aligning with previous studies (Ang et al., 2007; Johnson et al., 2011).

The Asia-Pacific context, characterized by cultural complexity and varying business practices, amplifies the need for CQ. Expatriates with higher CQ can navigate these complexities more effectively, reducing the likelihood of premature departure and increasing their contributions to organizational goals.

### **5.2.2 Mediating Role of Organizational Commitment**

Organizational commitment emerged as a crucial link between CQ and expatriate retention. This finding aligns with Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), which emphasizes the interplay between personal competencies (CQ) and environmental factors (organizational culture). Expatriates who feel committed to their organizations are more likely to remain in their roles, as they perceive their assignments as both professionally rewarding and personally fulfilling.

### **5.2.3 Moderating Effects of Organizational Support and Cultural Adaptability**

The moderating roles of organizational support and cultural adaptability were significant. Organizational support, in the form of mentorship, training, and family assistance programs, amplified the positive effects of CQ on organizational commitment. Similarly, expatriates with high cultural adaptability were better equipped to leverage their CQ, enhancing their engagement and loyalty. These findings underscore the importance of tailored support systems and adaptability resources in fostering expatriate success.

### **5.2.4 Qualitative Insights: Expatriates' Lived Experiences**

Qualitative data provided rich insights into expatriates' lived experiences. Participants emphasized the value of CQ training, particularly in managing cultural conflicts and fostering

effective communication. Organizational support, especially mentorship and ongoing cultural workshops, was frequently cited as a key factor in facilitating a smooth transition and sustaining high levels of engagement.

### **5.3 Implications for Practice**

The findings of this study have several practical implications for MNCs aiming to enhance expatriate retention and performance:

1. **Invest in Comprehensive CQ Training:**
  - MNCs should integrate CQ development programs into their expatriate management strategies. This includes pre-departure training, ongoing cultural workshops, and role-specific simulations to enhance all four CQ dimensions.
2. **Strengthen Organizational Support Mechanisms:**
  - Providing robust organizational support, such as mentorship programs, family assistance, and local integration initiatives, can significantly boost expatriate satisfaction and commitment.
3. **Enhance Cultural Adaptability through Selection and Development:**
  - Cultural adaptability should be a key criterion in expatriate selection processes. Additionally, providing resources that build expatriates' resilience and openness to new cultural experiences can further enhance their success.
4. **Leverage Technology for Continuous Learning:**
  - Virtual platforms for CQ training and support services, such as mobile apps and online mentoring, can provide expatriates with easy access to resources, enhancing their adaptability and performance.
5. **Monitor and Support Organizational Commitment:**
  - Regular feedback mechanisms and engagement surveys can help MNCs assess expatriates' organizational commitment, allowing timely interventions to address potential challenges.

### **5.4 Limitations of the Study**

While this study provides valuable insights, it is not without limitations:

1. **Generalizability:**
  - The study's findings are specific to the Asia-Pacific context and may not be directly applicable to other regions with different cultural and organizational dynamics.
2. **Self-Reported Data:**
  - The reliance on self-reported survey data introduces the potential for response bias, as participants may have provided socially desirable answers.
3. **Cross-Sectional Design:**

- The study's cross-sectional design limits the ability to draw causal inferences. Longitudinal research would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the long-term effects of CQ on expatriate outcomes.
4. **Limited Qualitative Sample:**
- While qualitative data enriched the analysis, a larger sample of interviews and FGDs could provide a more diverse range of perspectives.

## 5.5 Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should build on these findings to further explore the complexities of expatriate management:

1. **Longitudinal Studies:**
  - Conduct longitudinal studies to examine how CQ and expatriate outcomes evolve over time and across different assignments.
2. **Comparative Studies Across Regions:**
  - Investigate how the relationships between CQ, organizational commitment, and retention vary in other regions, such as Europe, Africa, and the Americas.
3. **Family Dynamics and Expatriate Success:**
  - Explore the role of family adaptability and support in influencing expatriate performance and retention.
4. **Technological Interventions in Expatriate Management:**
  - Assess the effectiveness of digital tools and platforms in delivering CQ training and support services.

## 5.6 Conclusion

This study underscores the critical role of cultural intelligence in enhancing expatriate retention, performance, and organizational loyalty in the Asia-Pacific region. By demonstrating the mediating role of organizational commitment and the moderating effects of organizational support and cultural adaptability, the findings provide a nuanced understanding of the factors contributing to expatriate success.

For MNCs operating in culturally diverse environments, investing in CQ development and tailored support systems is imperative. Such initiatives not only enhance expatriates' job satisfaction and engagement but also strengthen their commitment to the organization, ultimately driving retention and performance.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the field of international human resource management by offering a comprehensive framework for understanding and leveraging CQ in expatriate management. The findings provide actionable insights for MNCs, paving the way for more effective strategies in managing global talent. Future research should continue to expand this knowledge base, addressing the evolving challenges and opportunities in expatriate management.

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## Appendix A: Expert Interview Transcripts

Interviewee: Senior HR Manager, Global Mobility Division

Date: August 10, 2024

Duration: 45 minutes

Question 1: What role does cultural intelligence play in expatriate success?

Response:

Cultural intelligence is critical for expatriates. It helps them understand and adapt to the cultural norms of the host country, which directly impacts their ability to perform and build relationships. Our experience shows that expatriates with high CQ tend to adjust faster and are more engaged in their roles.

Question 2: How does your organization support expatriates in building cultural intelligence?

Response:

We provide pre-departure training, including cultural simulations and language courses. Additionally, we have mentorship programs where local employees guide expatriates during their initial months.

## Appendix B: Focus Group Discussion Transcripts

Focus Group Participants: 8 Expatriates from various regions

Date: August 12, 2024

Duration: 1 hour

Moderator: How do you perceive the role of cultural intelligence in your daily work?

Participant 1:  
It's essential. I noticed that adapting to communication styles here has helped me a lot in building trust with my local colleagues.

Participant 2:  
Absolutely. Knowing when and how to adapt my approach based on cultural norms has made negotiations smoother.

Moderator: How effective do you find the organizational support provided to you?

Participant 4:  
The mentorship program was incredibly helpful. It gave me someone to turn to whenever I faced cultural challenges.

Participant 5:  
I agree. However, I feel more ongoing training could be beneficial, especially after the initial onboarding phase.

## Appendix C: Exhibit – Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Data

Theme	Description	Sample Quote
Role of CQ in Adaptation	Expatriates highlighted the importance of CQ in overcoming cultural differences.	"CQ training prepared me to handle cultural surprises."
Importance of Organizational Support	Mentorship and resource availability were key in easing the transition to a new cultural context.	"Having a mentor made me feel more comfortable and connected."
Challenges in Cultural Adaptability	Initial struggles with adjusting to new norms	"Adapting to the hierarchical structure here took some time."

	were common, even among high-CQ individuals.	
Retention Motivators	Positive relationships and professional growth emerged as major retention drivers.	“I stayed because I felt valued and saw growth opportunities within the company.”

#### **Appendix D: Exhibit – Sentiment Analysis Results**

Sentiment Category	Focus Group Discussions	Expert Interviews
Positive	75%	80%
Neutral	20%	15%
Negative	5%	5%