

Cultural Adjustment of Expatriates' Spouses and Organization Contribution in Pakistan



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A thesis submitted to the National University of Sciences and Technology, Islamabad,

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Supervisor: Dr.Safa Riaz

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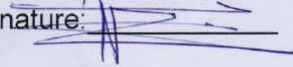
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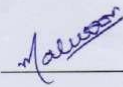


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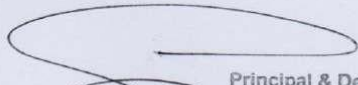
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DEDICATION

Dedicated to you Mama, for being my strength, when I didn't have any.

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research investigates the current cultural adjustment challenges faced by expatriate spouses and the role of organizations in addressing these issues, with a focus on the Pakistani context. Drawing on insights from 10 in-depth interviews conducted with expatriates, their spouses, and managerial personnel from organizations employing expatriates, the study aims to illuminate the complexities surrounding expatriate relocation with their spouses. Through a nuanced exploration, the research identifies the barriers encountered by expatriate spouses upon relocation to a new country and examines how these challenges influence the work experience of expatriates. The research encompasses exploring the root causes of expatriate spouses in-adjustment post-relocation, assessing the ramifications of cultural adjustment on expatriates' work experiences, and elucidating the perceived role of organizations in facilitating expatriate spouse adjustment in Pakistan, as articulated by both managerial staff and expatriates' spouses. By providing rich qualitative insights, this study aims to inform organization's contribution aimed at supporting expatriate families during international assignments in Pakistan.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

Perceived Organizational Support (POS)

Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

Subjective Well-being (SWB)

LIST OF APPENDIXES

OPEN CODING

Group A: Expat Workers' (EW) Open Interviews

Group B: Expat Spouses (ES) Open Interviews

Group C: Manager Personnel (MP) Open Interviews

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction: -

Globalization has led to an increase in opportunities not only for employees but for organizations too (Okafor, 2017). As they can hire from a larger pool of employees from the global market. Young professionals tend to pursue opportunities abroad in the hope of growth and to gain a better experience in a new country. International experiences involve directly observing or participating in culturally significant events or being influenced by such involvement (Black et al., 1991). Essentially, it encompasses the encounters a person acquires while employed, residing, studying, and/or journeying abroad, with the understanding that these encounters are not strictly confined to these activities. In the context of expatriate literature, the extent of international experience is often gauged by the duration, i.e., the total number of years spent in international work (Black et al., 1991).

In addition, Gabel et al. (2005) characterized cultural adjustment as the transformation individuals undergo to establish connections with the host society. According to Constantine et al. (2004), cultural adjustment encompasses the assimilation of behaviors, values, and beliefs from the host culture into one's own cultural perspective. Liu and Lee (2008) outlined four dimensions associated with successful cross-cultural adjustment. These dimensions consist of self-orientation, other-orientation, perceptual skills, and cultural toughness. Self-orientation, fostering increased self-esteem and confidence, aids individuals in effectively managing stress and adapting to a new culture. Other orientation involves the capacity to establish relationships in diverse cultures, particularly through monitoring. Perceptual skills entail being open-minded and more willing to align one's beliefs with those of the host country. Cultural toughness involves adapting to the living standards in another country. Collectively, these dimensions are linked to the concept of cultural distance, as greater disparities in living standards can make adjustment more challenging.

Multinational companies, when operating abroad, bring in their own local workforce to make sure everything at the workplace is standardized. From here, the role of expatriates becomes clearer. They make sure the global strategies are well-implemented throughout the company and assure

quality. However, there are plenty of problems associated with working abroad such as dual career couples, changes in environment, cultural adjustment, language etc. Both multinational companies and smaller corporations are dealing with these challenges when they opt to hire expats. The increase in above mentioned problems and lack of proper problem-solving approach leads to an increase in assignment rejection by employees chosen for foreign assignments (Harzing, 2006). Moreover, the candidates who accept foreign assignments work with immense pressure to succeed because if they fail to do so, it will discourage the potential candidates for future foreign jobs.

The process of adjustment can be seen as a continuous effort where individuals balance their various demands with their abilities (Patterson, 1988). For instance, a spouse traveling with their partner might face demands like stress from moving to a new country, ongoing strains such as giving up a career, disruptions to family routines, children adjusting to new schools, and dealing with everyday challenges like communicating in a foreign language. Cultural adjustment of spouses can be done in different ways. Capabilities could involve coping mechanisms drawn from emotional support like friendships, joining clubs or online communities, getting help from the company to find a job, or practical resources like relocation assistance and residency permits. Additionally, there are social and cultural factors, termed 'social cultural brokerage' (Glanz et al., 2001), at play, where connections made through children, for example, can help the spouse integrate into a new social network.

Matsumoto¹ & Gopal, (2020) states that many MNCs tend to encourage expatriates to travel with their families when they move from the parent company to the host country for work. The reason behind this is that family support is considered necessary to complete assignments abroad. Moreover, the good adjustment of the expatriate spouse can also help in adjustment of the expatriate themselves. Low well-being of spouses may affect the well-being of the expatriate in a negative way, which could in return affect the expatriate work performance and the success of the international assignment (Ali et al., 2003). This shows us the importance of adjustment of expatriate spouses and how much it affects the expatriates. As per Rashid et al., (2021), the psychological factor that affects the expatriate's adjustment in the host country is the adjustment of their spouse. Assignments tend to fail when the spouse is dissatisfied and not adjusted in the host country. Failed assignments become the consequence of in-adjustment of expatriate spouses.

When looking at the types of support offered to the spouse, consulting firms (like ORC Worldwide in 2008) found that around 80% of companies give a lot of practical assistance during international assignments (Cole & Nesbeth, 2014). This can include things like a visit before moving, storage for furniture, tax advice, temporary housing, help selling the old home, language lessons, training for cultural differences, and assistance with immigration paperwork. However, only about half of these companies help with the spouse's professional needs, like finding a job, career advice, preparing a resume, getting work permits, or covering the costs of further education. Even fewer, less than 30%, offer support for expat families to fit in socially. This could involve introducing them to other expats, giving them memberships to clubs, or connecting them with online communities for spouses.

Moreover, Cartus and Primacy (2010) conducted a survey involving 196 organizations across North America, Europe, and Asia. They found that companies' focus on improving assistance for spouses and families is diminishing. Only 13% considered it a priority for the next three years, down from 19% in 2007. It ranked the lowest overall. Additionally, when asked about the biggest challenges related to mobility in the future, companies did not even mention spouse and family concerns in the list. This indicates that while companies pay a lot of attention to the practical aspects of moving abroad, they do not prioritize helping spouses with the professional and social skills they need to adapt and create a fulfilling life in their new environment.

This research paper investigated the effect of relocation on expats, exploring different factors contributing to their adjustment in the host country. To add multifaceted perspective, this study also examined the organizational initiatives taken by the employers to assist in cultural adjustment.

1.2. Research Problem: -

The research problem we're exploring is how expatriate spouses adjust to the culture in Pakistan and how well organizations support them during international assignments here. Globalization has opened many opportunities for people to work abroad (Okafor, 2017), but we still don't fully understand the challenges expatriate spouses face or how organizations help them. While we know that adapting to a new culture is crucial for success, there's not enough information about the specific difficulties expatriate spouses encounter and whether organizations provide enough support. Even though organizations recognize the importance of expatriate spouses' adjustment,

they may struggle to offer effective help tailored to their needs (Cactus & Primacy, 2010). So, we need to investigate what kind of support organizations offer to expatriate spouses, the challenges they face and how this support affects the well-being and performance of expatriates. By understanding these factors better, organizations can improve their support systems and make international assignments more successful for everyone involved.

Moreover, globalization has led to an increase in people leaving their countries and moving abroad for better opportunities. However, despite it being an opportunity for growth and learning for expatriates and the locals, there are many reasons why expatriates have a hard time settling in their new home i.e., the host country. For example, there has been an increase in the number of expatriates from emerging economies, such as China, India, and Brazil, who have different cultural orientations and expectations than their counterparts from developed countries. Moreover, there has been a rise in the number of female expatriates and dual-career couples, who pose new challenges and opportunities for spousal adjustment and support (Harvey, 1997). Furthermore, there has been a shift in the nature and duration of expatriate assignments, from long-term to short-term, from single to multiple, and from traditional to alternative, such as self-initiated, commuters, and virtual expatriation (Andreason, 2008). These changes have implications for the cross-cultural adjustment and well-being of expatriate spouses and require new perspectives and approaches to understand and facilitate their adaptation.

1.2.1. Rise of CPEC and its impact on Chinese Expatriates in Pakistan: -

Around five years ago, Pakistan and China launched CPEC, due to which there was an increase in Chinese migration from China to Pakistan. Chinese nationals are engaged in public projects like energy, mining, nuclear energy plants, restaurants, and dental care. According to Dawn News, the number of Chinese in Pakistan has increased from 20,000 in 2013 to 30,000 in 2018 (Subohi, 2018). Today, we come across Chinese expats in public places like grocery stores, conferences, workplaces, recreational places, and restaurants. Mostly, Chinese women can be seen dressed in Pakistani dresses, like Shalwar Kameez, showing they have adapted to the culture. Sometimes, we see a translator/guide with Chinese families assisting them in public places. While the economic benefits of CPEC are undeniable, the human element of this large-scale migration often goes unnoticed, particularly the experiences of accompanying spouses (Abb, 2022). The presence of

Chinese in Pakistan shows expatriates are present in Pakistan and organizations need to become more expat friendly here.

1.2.2. Expatriate Spouses: -

The vast amount of research on expatriate adaptation has historically focused on the individual adjustment of expatriate personnel (James et al., 2004). While recent studies have begun to shed light on the successful outcomes of expatriate family adjustment, and there is a growing recognition that expatriate families should be given special attention before and during assignments; both organizations and families continue to underestimate the challenges associated with international postings (Lazarova et al., 2015). This is significant since the inability of family members to adjust to foreign contexts has been highlighted as a primary factor of expatriate failure (Fukuda and Chu, 1994; Haslberger and Brewster, 2008).

In many cases, expatriates are accompanied by their spouses and/or children, who also need to adjust to the host country and culture. Expatriate spouses are defined as “individuals who relocate with their expatriate partners to a foreign country, but do not have a formal work contract with an organization in the host country”. These ‘trailing partners’ play a crucial role in the success or failure of the expatriate assignment, as they provide emotional, social, and practical support to their partners, and influence their satisfaction, performance, and retention (Caligiuri et al., 1998). It has been established that spouses are an important part in the life of the expatriate and the failure or success of the assignment can depend on the spouses, but the problem remains on how to adjust the spouses in Pakistan in a way that it positively impacts the expatriates.

1.2.3. Spouses as a Liability or an Asset: -

According to Brookfield Global Relocation Services (2015), 80% of expatriates today relocate with their spouses and their partners can prove to be either an asset or a liability for the organization (Bove and Elia, 2017). Research has shown that expatriate spouses are unable to adjust, they can influence their partner psychologically which can cause withdrawal from the assignment and force them to return to their home country (Chen & Shaffer, 2018). These alarming statistics lay the foundation for this research, i.e., investigate the factors impacting the expatriate experience as well as organizational contribution to cultural adjustment.

1.2.4. The High Cost of Expatriate Assignment Failure: -

Additionally, Forum for Expatriate Management (Burgess, 2016) stated the assignment failure rate due to challenges in a new country range from 25% to 40%, and it can jump to 70% when expatriates are working in an under-developed country. The failure of the assignment can cause extra expense and disruption to the organization. Direct costs of a failed assignment can range from \$250,000 to \$1 million, and the annual cost of failures to all US companies is estimated at \$2 billion.

The organizations need to understand the high cost associated with the expatriate assignment failure, the association of spouses with the assignment failure and how the problem of assignment failure can be fixed by cultural adjustment of spouses.

1.3. Research Gap: -

Shah et al. (2021) results showed that there is a need for further research in several areas of expatriate's perceptions. One of the suggestions includes exploring the adjustment of expatriate spouses and children and what role does the organization play in supporting the adjustment of expatriates and their family. "The perceptions and experiences of expatriate spouses about the role of organizational support on their adjustment and that of the expatriate and children, particularly at different developmental stages, is worth investigating" suggests the study.

While the economic benefits of large-scale projects like CPEC are significant, the human element is often overlooked (Abb, 2022). Specifically, there's a lack of attention given to the experiences of accompanying spouses during large-scale migration. Research shows that expatriate spouses often face significant challenges during the adjustment process due to various factors:

- **Isolation:** Particularly for male trailing partners, there can be a sense of isolation due to a limited social circle. Building a personal support network becomes crucial for their well-being (Sterle et al., 2018).
- **Cultural and Social Adaptation:** Spouses encounter cultural differences, language barriers, and unfamiliar social norms in the host country (Rashid et al., 2021).

- **Career and Identity:** Many spouses struggle with disruptions to their careers, leading to feelings of frustration and loss of identity due to a lack of meaningful employment opportunities (Harvey, 1997).
- **Family Dynamics:** The adjustment of one family member can impact the success of the entire expatriate assignment. The well-being of all family members plays a crucial role in the overall expatriate experience (Sterle et al., 2018).

Looking at the expatriates' perceptions is worth exploring as it can reveal the subjective and personal experiences, feelings, and opinions of the expatriates and their spouses, which may not be captured by objective or quantitative measures. Moreover, the expatriates' perceptions influence their behavior, attitude, and performance, as well as their relationship with their spouses, their colleagues, and their host country (Harvey, 1997). Therefore, understanding the expatriates' perceptions can help to improve the cultural adjustment and satisfactions, as well as to foster a positive and respectful intercultural exchange.

The research on expatriates and their spouses has mainly focused on Western or developed countries, such as the US, the UK, or Australia, as the host or home countries (Noman et al., 2023). People move from developing countries to developed nations like the US or the UK, in search of jobs, career progression and a stable lifestyle (Oleribe & de la Fuente, 2022). However, there is a lack of research on expatriates and their spouses coming to non-Western or developing countries, such as Pakistan, and building a life in developing countries as the host country. Pakistan is a unique and challenging context for expatriates and their spouses, as it has a complex and dynamic cultural, social, political, and economic environment (Jayasekara, 2021). Therefore, this research aimed to fill this gap by conducting a qualitative study on the expatriate and their spouses' experiences in Pakistan, with a focus on their cultural adjustment and its impact on their personal and professional lives, as well as on their expatriate partners and the host society.

From this, we learn that there is a significant gap in the research regarding expatriate spouse's adjustment, particularly in non-western or developing countries like Pakistan. While studies have focused on expatriates and their spouses in Western or developed countries (Noman et al., 2023), there's a lack of understanding of their experiences in Pakistan, which has unique cultural, social, political and economic environments (Jayasekara, 2021). This gap is critical because it overlooks

the challenges faced by expatriate spouses in adapting to unfamiliar settings and the role organizations play in supporting their adjustment. Understanding these challenges and perceptions is essential for improving cultural adjustment, organizational support initiatives, expatriate satisfaction and promoting positive intercultural exchanges.

This research is important and valuable for several reasons. First, it contributes to the theoretical development and advancement of expatriate literature, by providing new insights and perspectives on the expatriate spouses' experience in a non-western or developing country context. Second, it provides practical implications and recommendations for expatriates, their spouses, their employers, and their host country, by identifying the challenges and opportunities, the factors and strategies, and the outcomes and implications of the expatriate's cultural adjustment in Pakistan. Third, it enhances the intercultural understanding and awareness between the expatriate and the host communities by exploring the expatriates' perceptions of the Pakistani culture and society, and the ways they interact and communicate with the local people.

1.4. Research Aim: -

The aim of the study is to understand the current situation of organizations in terms of cultural adjustment of expatriate spouses. To achieve this research aim, this study investigates the perspectives of expatriates, their spouses and manager personnel. Moreover, the research highlights the problems expatriate spouses face after re-location to a new country and how it can contribute to the work-life of expatriates.

The study explores what measures organizations are taking to maximize the cultural adjustment of expatriate spouses and what could be improved to make an ideal scenario for expatriates.

1.5. Research Objectives: -

This study will focus on achieving the following research objectives:

- To explore the causes of in-adjustment of expatriates' spouses due to relocation.
- To understand the impact of cultural adjustment of expatriates' spouses on the work experience of expatriates.

- To understand the role of the organizations in expatriates' spouse adjustment in Pakistan from the perspective of both managers and expatriates' spouses.

1.6. Research Questions: -

This study will focus on answering the following research questions:

- What are the factors that can cause in-adjustment of expatriate spouses when they relocate to Pakistan?
- How does the in-adjustment of expatriates' spouses influence expatriates' work experience?
- What roles do organizations play in expatriate spouse's adjustment in Pakistan from the manager's perspective?

1.7. Scope of the Study: -

Recently, CPEC has attracted many Chinese investors in Pakistan and multiple projects like transport infrastructure, energy and in industrial zones have started from 2015 onwards (Subohi, 2018). Due to which the Chinese workforce has increased here in Pakistan. This gives us an opportunity to study and introduce a multicultural character into our society with the aim to understand the means of diversity in the workplace and what measures could be taken to maximize productivity (Abb, 2022). Moreover, it is important that expatriates who relocate to Pakistan have a good overall experience and can concentrate on their work without any personal life interference.

Aside from the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), various additional factors contribute to the study's scope. One important element is the degree of cultural diversity between expatriates' home countries and Pakistan. Pakistan's cultural landscape is rich and diverse, which may provide considerable obstacles for expatriates and their spouses in cultural adaptation (Jayasekara, 2021). Understanding how expatriates negotiate and adjust to cultural differences is critical for companies and governments seeking to build effective support systems and policies.

Another important consideration is the level of organizational assistance provided to expatriates and their spouses. According to research, organizational assistance plays an important role in

aiding expatriate transition and wellbeing (Matsumoto1 & Gopal, 2020). However, the degree of assistance varies according to the organization and its rules (Cole & Nesbeth, 2014). Exploring the availability and efficacy of organizational assistance for expatriates and their spouses in Pakistan may help firms identify areas for growth and better fulfill the requirements of their employees and their families during abroad assignments.

Moreover, the data collected can point towards the reasons behind the cultural in-adjustment of the expatriate spouses such as career disruptions, identity loss (Sterle et al., 2018), social isolation (Rashid et al., 2021), dual-career challenges (Kierner, 2018), reverse culture shock (Haslberger and Brewster, 2008), and lack of organizational support (Cole & Nesbeth, 2014) behind the failure of assignment or repatriation due to family in-adjustment (Burgess, 2016). This research can help organizations in understanding the problem and to form a more problem-solving nature to maximize expatriate's productivity at work. Identifying the reasons behind the cultural in-adjustment can help in improving the adjustment process of expatriate spouses.

When expatriates come to host countries, they bring in a brand-new skill set, knowledge and innovation from them (Abbott et al., 2006). When we study the struggles of expatriate spouses in Pakistan, our aim will be to provide a solution to these issues so that Pakistan can become an attractive place for expatriates and attract a diverse workforce from all over the world. Attracting talent from all over the world will not only benefit the locals but can help in making an economic contribution to the country (Okafor, 2017).

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review section of this research serves an important purpose in examining and synthesizing existing literature related to expatriate spouses. It explores primary subjects, specifically focusing on the experiences of expatriate spouses at both individual and familial levels. By exploring secondary data sources, this chapter aims to gather insights into the challenges, adjustments, and overall experiences faced by expatriate spouses within the context of international assignments. Furthermore, the review examines how organizational support mechanisms impact and contribute to the well-being and experiences of expatriate spouses. Through this comprehensive examination of literature, the research seeks to contextualize and inform the understandings of expatriate spouse experiences and the role of organizational support within this dynamic.

2.1. Expat Induction and Adjustment

The literature on expatriate induction and adjustment presents a complex view of the factors influencing successful international assignments, particularly for expatriates and their spouses. Studies highlight various elements that contribute to adjustment, revealing both overlapping and contrasting insights.

McNulty and Moeller (2018) defined expatriations as, “legally working individuals who reside temporarily in a country of which they are not a citizen in order to accomplish a career-related goal, being relocated abroad either by an organization, by self-initiation or directly employed within the host-country”.

Isakovic and Whiteman (2013) emphasized the significance of prior international work experience and cultural exposure for expatriate adjustment in the UAE. This aligns with Han et al.'s (2022) findings, which suggest that individual traits like personality and emotional intelligence play a crucial role in the adjustment process. Both studies underline the importance of personal attributes in facilitating adaptation to new environments.

On the other hand, Setti, Sommovigo, and Argentero (2022) focused on cultural intelligence, highlighting its direct impact on expatriate performance and adaptation. This perspective adds another layer to the discussion, suggesting that a specific cognitive skill set can significantly

influence adjustment outcomes, possibly complementing or interacting with prior experience and personal traits identified by other researchers.

Whereas Chen and Shaffer (2018) compared cognitive and emotional focused approaches to spousal adjustment. They shed light on spousal coping strategies, emphasizing the role of problem-focused versus emotion-focused approaches in adjustment. Their findings hint at the importance of organizational support tailored to the specific needs of expatriate spouses, potentially enhancing overall adjustment outcomes. Agha-Alikhani's (2017) study on self-initiated expatriates in academia introduced unique challenges faced by this subgroup, including personal and professional factors influencing adjustment. This insight emphasized the complexity of expatriate experiences, suggesting that tailored organizational interventions may be necessary to address diverse adjustment needs.

Building on organizational interventions, Pires, Stanton, and Ostenfeld (2006) offered a marketing-focused strategy by proposing the use of related ethnic networks within host countries to mitigate culture shock. This approach presents a practical organizational intervention that could complement individual and spousal adjustment strategies identified by other studies.

When comparing these findings, it becomes apparent that while individual traits and personal experiences are crucial for expatriate adjustment, organizational support mechanisms also play a vital role. The interplay between cultural intelligence, prior experience, dispositional traits, coping strategies, and organizational interventions highlights the multifaceted nature of expatriate adjustment. Therefore, this research continues to explore these dynamics, considering the unique challenges posed by different cultural environments and the diverse needs of expatriates and their families. Such insights can inform more effective strategies for supporting expatriates and enhancing their overall success in international assignments.

2.2. Maladjustment of Expatriate Spouses and Its Impact

When traveling for foreign assignments, expatriates often bring along their families with them to the new country. Kanstren & Makela (2020) investigated the subjective well-being (SWB) and related resources of expatriate partners during international assignments. SWB is defined as “a person’s cognitive and affective evaluations of his or her life”, which includes life satisfaction,

positive affect, and negative affect. Conservation of Resources Theory (COR theory) was adopted, which posits that people strive to protect and acquire resources that are valuable for their well-being, and that resource losses and gains have different effects on well. This theory provides broader insights that can be integrated into the Family Systems theory, which recognizes family as a unit. Family unit as a system works together to conserve resources and the loss or gain of resources by one member will affect the whole family system (Baptist & Hamon, 2022). The paper used a qualitative approach, based on 20 in-depth interviews with expatriate partners who lived in Finland, Germany, India, Japan, or the United States (US). They found out that relocation causes significant changes in expatriate spouse's condition resources that lead to a change in their SWB either directly or through affecting their energy and personal resources (Kanstrén & Mäkelä, 2020). The change in environment often affects their personal resources (characteristics that facilitate coping, such as self-esteem, resilience, and social skills) and energy resources (psychological states that enable action, such as motivation, self-efficacy, and optimism), along with the condition resources. Condition resources are the social circumstances of a human that avail them to other resources such income, housing, love, and health (Kanstrén & Mäkelä, 2020). Expatriate's spouses experience both gains and losses in their SWB, which causes relocation to be more overwhelming for them (Kanstrén & Mäkelä, 2020). Moreover, international assignments cause a change in the condition resources of expatriate's spouses and can result in both positive and negative energy (Kanstrén & Mäkelä, 2020). The study suggested that relocation will cause changes in condition resources for their partner, so their concerns should be kept in due consideration by both their spouses and the organizations before the decision of relocation has been made. This resonates with the findings of Vijayakumar & Cunningham (2020), who identify work restrictions in the host country as a key challenge. Vijayakumar & Cunningham (2020) points out the challenges faced by expatriate spouses due to work restrictions in the host country, leading to wasted skills, financial issues, boredom, quality time, domestic tension, and social isolation. They analyzed data of 409 Indian information technology professionals who had traveled to the USA for work. It was evident that these challenges further created complications in the personal life of expatriates which gave them an overall lower life satisfaction and interfered in their work lives too.

Complementing the work of Vijayakumar & Cunningham (2020), Dimitrova et al. (2019) explored the adjustment and career implications for expatriates engaged in international business travel. They found that engaging in international business travel has a positive and indirect influence on

career satisfaction. However, it featured negative associations when resources were low. Their findings align with Zhu et al.'s (2006) emphasis on personal characteristics, suggesting that individual traits such as sense of achievement and perseverance, and family dynamics are crucial for successful adjustment and career development during expatriate assignments.

Hack-Polay's (2020) research on homesickness among Global South expatriates in Western settings exposes the personal and organizational implications of this emotional challenge. This study supports Zhu et al.'s (2006) findings, which demonstrate that family and personal characteristics significantly influence Singaporeans' willingness to take on expatriate assignments. Both investigations underscore the importance of personal well-being and family factors in the adjustment process, although Hack-Polay specifically emphasizes the psychological effects of homesickness. However, Dimitrova et al. (2019) extend the discussion to the context of frequent business travel, which poses unique challenges not covered in Zhu et al.'s (2006) study.

Investigating the family's perception of international corporate assignments, Vijayakumar & Cunningham (2020) highlighted that personal life interferes in life satisfaction when spouses are restricted to work abroad when they travel with their partners. It resonates with the work of Zhu et al. (2006). Based on the analysis, any disruption in the spouses, causing them boredom, domestic tension, social isolation which contributes to creating complications not for the spouses but for their partners. The study suggests that policy makers and organizational leaders should keep in mind the implications when dealing with expatriates, as any kind of restrictions on the spouses can be concerning for both the expatriates and the organization (Mohr & Klein, 2004).

Similarly, Ljubica et al. (2019) investigated the complexities of expatriate-host country national (HCN) relationships, uncovering disruptive relationship behaviors (DRBs) and their causes and consequences. This study examined how cultural differences can lead to relational dysfunction, complementing Bonache et al.'s (2016) work on negative stereotyping of corporate expatriates by HCNs through a social identity lens. Both studies highlight the impact of negative social categorization on expatriate adaptation, with Ljubica et al. (2019) providing a detailed model of the dynamics leading to relationship breakdowns.

Another research niched down to the experience of expatriate spouses, investigating their life satisfaction and its impact on cultural adjustment. Aligning with the work of Ljubica et al. (2019)

and Bonache et al. (2016) in the context of DRBs, and relational dysfunction, research found that expatriate spouses have a hard time adjusting to the culture when they feel isolated and are in less or no contact with the host-country nationals. Black and Stephens (1989) found that expatriate adjustment is correlated to the adjustment of spouse adjustment and is positively related to the expatriate decision to stay in the host-country for the assignment. The research also suggests that expatriate spouses who feel isolated have a negative spill-over on the expatriate decision to stay, hence telling us about the importance of spouse's adjustment in the expatriate work-life and their overall work experience. This aligns with Riusala & Suutari's (2000) exploration of dual-career partnerships, which highlights the need for organizations to consider spouse's career development during relocation. They studied the relation between career development and foreign assignment, keeping in mind the career of the expatriate spouses too. The research focused on dual-career partnerships which meant that both partners previously had their careers in their country. The study covered their issues based on the experience of 300 Finnish expatriates. The study found out that when a company relocated their employees, they paid no attention to their spouse's career arrangement, even when the spouse was previously working in Finland. Due to lack of job opportunities many (n=13) spouses chose to stay in their home country. However, the expatriates who had their spouses relocated with them had problems with finding jobs in the host country and stated career development of their spouses as their top most issue and priority. The study suggests that organizations should take note of an expatriate's spouse's career too when they are being relocated to a new country for work. This resonates with the findings of Ljubica et al. (2019) and Bonache et al. (2016), emphasizing the need for comprehensive support mechanisms that address not only the professional challenges faced by expatriates but also the relational and cultural dynamics impacting their spouses' well-being and adaptation.

Exploring the dual-career relationships in depth, McNulty (2014) discussed the challenges of expatriate spouses who were female breadwinners in non-traditional expatriate families. The challenges included career barriers and discrimination (lack of recognition, support, and opportunities from their employers and host societies), work-life balance issues (managing dual-career demands, childcare responsibilities, and household chores), family support and role conflicts (dealing with the expectations, emotions, and adjustment of their partners and children, who have different needs and preferences), and identity negotiation and social stigma (coping with stereotypes, prejudices, and isolation). The consequences of expat spouses who were unable to

adjust in the host country were reduced well-being and satisfaction, increased stress, anxiety, loneliness, decreased productivity, increased turnover, repatriation or divorce rates and misunderstandings. When talking about marital stress, 71% of the expatriate spouses stated that it is very hard to adjust in the host country when there is marital stress between the couple according to the study (McNulty, 2014). On the contrary, 99% of expatriate spouses rated a stable and strong marriage as the most important factor when adjusting in the host country (McNulty, 2014). These sources confirmed that the marital stress was due to inability to spend time with each other and because of lack of understanding regarding matters in the new country. Moreover, the expat spouses adopted different strategies such as role reversal (accepting and embracing their non-traditional roles), role sharing (dividing and negotiating their roles and responsibilities with their partners), role adaptation (adjusting and adapting their roles and expectations to the host country context) and role rejection (rejecting their non-traditional roles and maintaining their home country culture and identity) (McNulty, 2014).

Interestingly, both Vijayakumar & Cunningham (2020), and McNulty (2014) underline the significance of marital dynamics in expatriate adjustment. Vijayakumar & Cunningham point out how work restrictions impact personal and professional aspects, potentially affecting expatriate work satisfaction. McNulty's insights further emphasize the importance of a stable marital relationship for successful adjustment, with strategies such as role adaptation or rejection playing a role in navigating non-traditional roles.

These studies collectively illustrate the multifaceted nature of expatriate spouse experiences, highlighting the interplay between career development, marital dynamics, and personal well-being. Organizations and policymakers must take a holistic approach to support expatriate spouses, addressing challenges related to work restrictions, career development, and cultural adjustment to optimize overall assignment success and well-being for both expatriates and their partners.

2.3. Influence of Spousal Support on Expatriate Work Adjustment

The literature on spousal adjustment and support during expatriate assignments reveals a range of factors that influence overall expatriate success and satisfaction.

The empirical evidence on expatriate family adjustment presented by Sterle et al. (2018) highlighted the multifaceted challenges faced by expatriate families, including cultural adaptation, maintaining family cohesion, and managing stress. This research emphasized the importance of systematic investigation and a multi-informant approach to comprehensively understand the adjustment process within expatriate families.

Niching down, Cole (2011) investigated the critical role of spousal adjustment, particularly career-related issues, as a significant factor contributing to expatriate assignment failure. This finding is supported by Black and Stephens (1989), who note that a spouse's positive view of the overseas assignment correlates with better spousal adjustment and the expatriate's intention to stay, highlighting the importance of spousal support for assignment success.

Lauring and Selmer (2010) further emphasize the active role spouses play in supporting expatriate careers, suggesting that spouse involvement can positively impact expatriate outcomes. The objective of a research paper was to investigate how accompanying spouses affect the careers of business expatriates, with a particular emphasis on how female spouses contribute to their expatriate husbands' immediate success and repatriation chances. The researchers used an ethnographic fieldwork technique, focusing on a group of Danish business expatriates living together in Saudi Arabia. The primary subjects were female spouses. The major findings showed the active assistance offered by spouses, who used social methods to advance their husbands' immediate professional goals, such as forging alliances and developing networks via social contacts and dinner parties. The study also revealed the influence of female trailing partners on company decisions related to working schedules, pay, and holidays (Lauring & Selmer, 2010). The research emphasized the multi-faceted roles of spouses who actively shaped their partners' career trajectories.

This notion aligns with Chan et al.'s (2021) emphasis on the importance of organizational and social support networks for expatriate work adjustment and task performance. Chan et al. (2021) researched how spousal support can affect the work adjustment of the expatriate. 70.5% of the expatriates studied were males, which meant that their spouses were given the task to take care of their children at home and do household chores. It was seen that spousal support had a direct positive influence on the task performance of the expatriate (Chan et al., 2021). Even though task performance is expected to be influenced by organization, spouses do play a role in it too as they

reinforce the expatriate's mental health at home after they have spent hours working in the office. A concerned spouse, also helps deal with work issues or problems and boost expatriate self-esteem after their relocation. Spousal support helped expatriates to maintain their psychological well-being and family harmony (Chan et al., 2021). It also provided expatriates with emotional and instrumental support, such as listening, comforting, and assisting them.

Another research, Lee and Kartika (2014) also identified individual, family, and social capital factors as crucial for expatriate adjustment, highlighting the multifaceted nature of support required for successful assignments. Lee & Kartika (2014) aimed to enhance comprehension of the antecedents and consequences of expatriate adjustment, recognizing its crucial significance for both expatriate individuals and the organizations they serve. The researchers undertook an ethnographic study of Danish business expatriates in Saudi Arabia, with a particular emphasis on female spouses. The major findings revealed that emotional intelligence, cultural intelligence, and prior experience living abroad all played important roles in expatriate adjustment. Furthermore, family support and flexibility had a favorable impact on expatriate transition, and those who successfully addressed parental issues and family-to-work demands displayed increased resilience throughout their organizational challenges (Lee & Kartika, 2014). The study also stressed the importance of social capital in network building, along with mentoring behavior, as factors influencing expatriate performance, creative work behavior, knowledge transfer, and overall organizational success.

In exploring cultural and social adaptation, Bierwiazzonek and Waldzus (2016) reveal that adaptation outcomes are influenced by socio-cultural factors, which corroborates with Davies, Kraeh, and Froese's (2015) findings that partner nationality and length of stay in the host country affect cross-cultural adjustment. These studies collectively suggest that socio-cultural contexts and interpersonal relationships play a pivotal role in expatriate adaptation. Davies, Kraeh, and Froese (2015) studied how expatriates' spouses' nationality influences their capacity to adjust to a new cultural setting. The study classified partners into three types: host country partners (from the nation where the expatriate is working), home country partners (from the expatriate's native country), and third country partners (a partner from a different country altogether). Expatriates with host country partners observed the greatest increase in cross-cultural adjustment over time, followed by those with third-country national relationships, while those with home country

partners reported no improvement in cross-cultural adjustment. Unfortunately, relationships frequently contribute to expat maladjustment (Davies et al., 2015). However, caring spouses who offer emotional and practical aid help expatriates adjust.

Regarding gender and marital status, Selmer and Luring (2011) find that being married, regardless of gender, is associated with better work effectiveness and performance for self-initiated expatriates. This insight highlights the significance of marital status in moderating expatriate work outcomes. The study aimed to illuminate the work outcomes of self-initiated expatriates (SIEs), individuals who independently choose to work abroad rather than being assigned by their parent companies (Selmer & Luring, 2011). Employing a questionnaire-based approach directed electronically at SIE academics in universities across the Nordic countries and the Netherlands, the research yielded notable findings. Specifically, the study revealed a positive association between being married and two critical work outcomes for SIEs: enhanced work effectiveness and higher work performance (Selmer & Luring, 2011). Surprisingly, the gender of the SIEs did not moderate this relationship, indicating that marital status positively influenced work outcomes for both male and female SIEs alike. The practical implications suggest that companies looking for SIEs in host countries may consider selecting married expats, acknowledging the value of spousal support without gender-based disparities in the recruiting process.

Collins and Bertone's (2017) exploration of expatriate spouses' adjustment narratives in Malaysia highlights the significant threat international relocation poses to the central identities of these individuals. This findings resonate with Sterle et al. 's (2018) discussion on cultural adaptation challenges, as both studies emphasize the profound identity redefinition required for successful expatriate adjustment.

In contrast, the study on determinants of intercultural adjustment among expatriate spouses suggested that traits like open-mindedness, emotional stability, family cohesion, and adaptability contribute to better adjustment outcomes (Ali et al., 2003). While consistent with the emphasis on adaptation challenges by Sterle et al. (2018) and Collins and Bertone (2017), this study adds a focus on individual characteristics and family dynamics as determinants of adjustment. Similarly, the study investigating the adjustment of expatriate spouses to expatriate life highlighted the importance of perceived socio-emotional and instrumental support for general adjustment, irrespective of personality traits (Wilson, 2011). This finding aligns with the broader discussion

on the need for support networks and resources by Sterle et al. (2018). On the other hand, the analysis of American expatriate spouses in Germany reveals a distinction between adjustment and satisfaction as separate constructs (Mohr & Klein, 2002). They defined adjustment as an extent to which expatriates and their spouses feel comfortable in the host country, while satisfaction is related to the happiness of the success of the overseas assignments. This finding challenges a straightforward correlation between adjustment challenges and overall satisfaction, highlighting the complexity of expatriate adaptation.

2.4. Coping Strategies for Expatriate Adjustment

Chen and Shaffer (2018)'s main findings show that expatriate spouses who have problem-solving nature can adjust to culture after relocation. Not only this, but they also facilitate and help their partner's adjustment too. This shows that an expatriate spouse plays a vital supporting role in cross-cultural adjustment. The study implies multinational companies that prefer hiring from international pools should not only focus on the preparation of their employees but also on the mindset and adjustment of their spouses. The study justified their research by using the COR Theory (Conservation of Resources Theory) and interdependence theory by Folkman and Lazarus (1988), which states that interactive people affect one another's experience (Gerpott et al., 2018). In the context of Family System theory, interdependence can explain the interconnectedness of family members' actions and well-being. Each member's behavior can influence others, and the family system is maintained through reciprocal interactions and adaptations (Gavazzi & Lim, 2023). Chen and Shaffer (2018) also suggested that emotional-focused coping strategies, i.e., the indirect way to manage stress by distancing oneself from negative emotions (Noorbakhsh et al., 2010) had a negative influence in contrast to problem-focused coping strategies on all types of spouses and expatriate adjustment. Emotion-focused strategies aim to manage the emotional stressors, which might not address the root cause of the problem, or even consume more resources. However, these findings were inconsistent with the work of Wurtz (2022). His research highlighted that female expatriates and self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) tend to rely more on social support compared to male and assigned expatriates (AEs). This finding is further supported by Haist and Kurth (2022), who stress the importance of both external support networks and personal coping methods during challenging situations and crises. Additionally, Wurtz (2022) observed that female expatriates are more inclined to openly express their emotions compared to their male counterparts.

This practice not only helps in alleviating stress but also fosters meaningful connections with others, potentially enhancing social integration and emotional well-being within expatriate communities.

In contrast, problem-focused strategies aim to change or eliminate the stressor, which can prevent or reduce resource losses or even create resource gains. As a result, they can improve the expatriate and spouse adjustment, and create a positive feedback loop (Chen & Shaffer, 2018). These strategies can reduce the rewards and increase the costs of expatriate relationships and create a negative feedback loop (Chen & Shaffer, 2018). So, it can be deduced when one partner is unable to adjust to a new culture, they share their experience with their spouse, and can have a negative effect on their experience resulting in overall dissatisfaction. For practice, the study recommends that expatriate spouses and their employers should pay attention to the coping strategies of expatriate spouses and provide them with adequate support and training to facilitate their adjustment and well-being (Chen & Shaffer, 2018).

2.5. Role of Organizations in Adjustment of Expatriate

Eisenberger et al. (1986) defined perceived organizational support (POS) as “the degree to which employees believe that their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being”. The study by Chan et al. (2021) concluded that POS had a positive relationship with work adjustment. The study highlighted that POS is the initial support that the expatriates receive when they arrive in the host country and suggested that organizations must take care of the expatriates by providing daily support to facilitate their adjustment in the new country and to the new work so that they can feel more comfortable. Organizational support helped expatriates to cope with the stress and challenges of their international assignments, such as cultural differences, language barriers, and work demands. It also provided expatriates with emotional, instrumental, and informational support, such as recognition, feedback, and training (Chan et al., 2021).

Further research dives into POS initiatives aimed at facilitating expatriate adjustment in the host country. Pre-departure training is essential, offering comprehensive cultural and language preparation to equip expatriates with the necessary skills for navigating the cultural practices of the host country. This training includes language courses, cultural sensitivity workshops, and practical information on living and working in the new environment. These initiatives signify the

organization's success and correlate positively with their adjustment and job satisfaction (Sokro et al., 2021).

Secondly, programs designed to assist expatriates' spouses can greatly enhance the family's overall adjustment experience. These programs may include career counseling to aid spouses in finding employment, opportunities for social networking to build new relationships, and cultural training to understand the customs of the host country. Spousal assistance is a critical factor in cross-cultural adjustment and enables expatriates to focus more effectively on their work responsibilities (Warmbier, 2016). Thirdly, mentorship programs that assign a mentor or buddy from the host country offer expatriates a reliable source of information and guidance. This support system helps them integrate into the local culture and workplace, fostering a sense of belonging and reducing feelings of isolation. Mentorship programs contribute to improved expatriate retention by facilitating cross-cultural adjustment (Bashir, 2012). Fourthly, support for the repatriation process, including clear guidelines and assistance, can alleviate concerns about career progression and reintegration upon return. Organizations that provide repatriation support help expatriates manage their expectations and prepare for the transition back to their home country, positively influencing their commitment and satisfaction during the assignment (Sokro et al., 2021). Finally, maintaining open communication channels with expatriates is crucial for addressing concerns and providing continuous support (Liu, 2009). Regular check-ins, feedback sessions, and accessible HR support contribute to expatriates feeling valued and supported, leading to higher job satisfaction and effective commitment towards the parent company.

However, Cole (2011) found no significant difference in adjustment between spouses who received employer-provided career assistance and those who did not, which contrasts with studies emphasizing the positive impact of various forms of support on expatriate success. Selmer's (2005) work on psychological barriers to adjustment further suggests distinctions between sociocultural and psychological adjustment barriers over time, indicating complexities in the adjustment process.

Poor organizational support is likely to increase international assignment refusal rates at best and, at worst, to increase the likelihood of assignment failure in terms of premature return. It can also end up in refusal to take forward the assignment even at an early stage. In cases where the

expatriate decides to stay, and their spouses are not satisfied with the move, it can cause work-family stress for them (McNulty, 2013).

Linder (2019) investigated how the motivation to go abroad (self-initiated or assigned) affects career satisfaction and job effort of expatriates, and how these outcomes are mediated by the degree of organizational embeddedness (defined by connections, fit, and sacrifice) in the host country organization. The motivation drivers for self-initiated expats (SIEs) and assigned expatriates (AEs) are different. SIEs are more driven by personal motives such as self-adventure, adventure or lifestyle, while AEs are more driven by organizational motives such as career-advancement, financial rewards, or loyalty (Linder, 2019). SIEs exhibit higher career satisfactions (such as more autonomy, flexibility, control over their career decisions, valuable learning, and development opportunities) and lower job effort (they face less organizational support, recognition, security, risk and competition) compared to AEs, with organizational embeddedness partially mediating these relationships (Linder, 2019). In contrast, AEs have more organizational support, recognition, security, and they benefit from the expatriate contract and package. In conclusion, the study (Linder, 2019) highlights the importance of considering the motivation to go abroad and the organizational embeddedness of expatriates, and the need to provide adequate support and management for them.

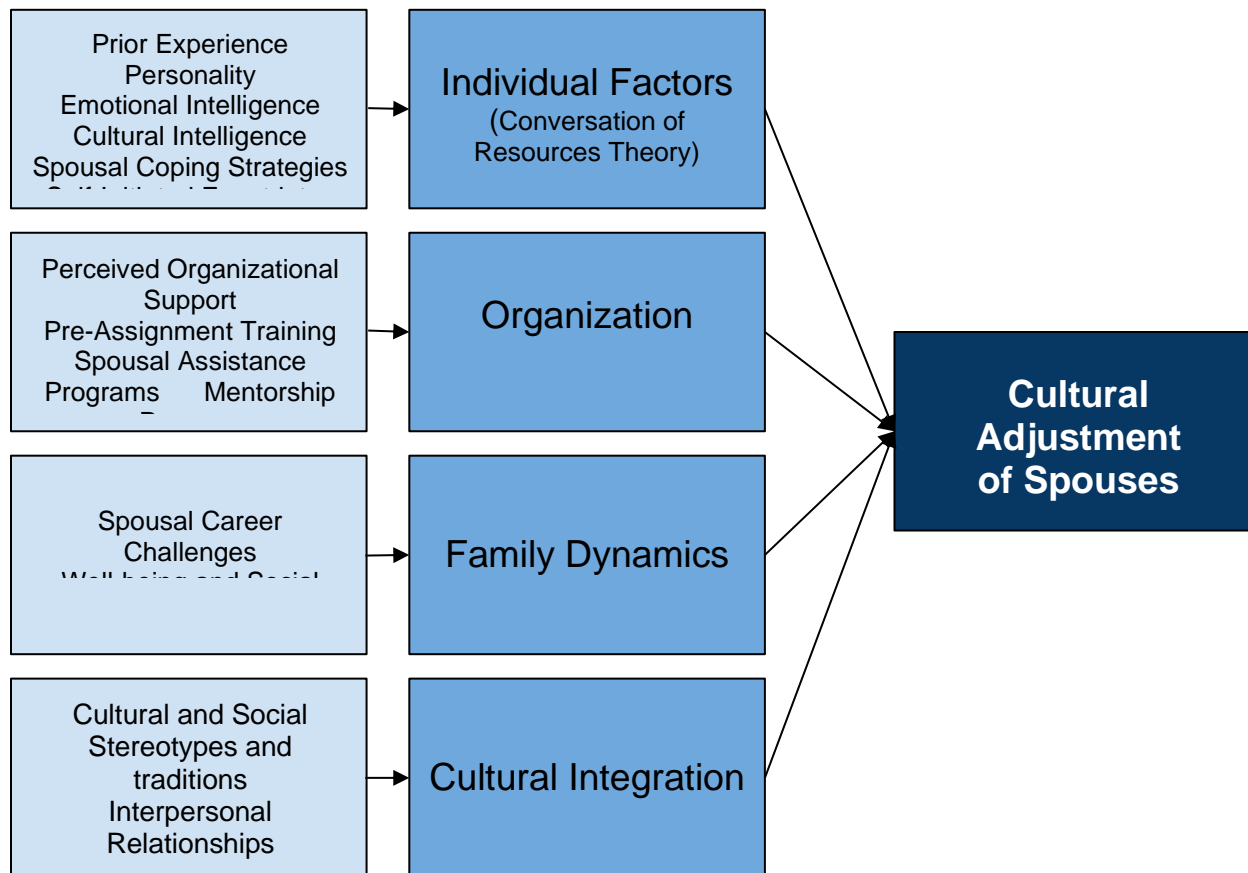
In line with Linder's findings, other studies reveal the vital role organizations play in facilitating expatriate adjustment and success. Studies advocate for organizations to provide direct and indirect support to expatriates and their families, including language and cultural training, career development opportunities, logistical assistance, family mentoring, psychological counseling, job search assistance, self-development programs, and social activities (Noman et al., 2023). Such comprehensive support can significantly improve adjustment to the new environment and enhance job performance (Awais Bhatti et al., 2013).

Additionally, organizational practices like cross-cultural and language training have demonstrated positive impacts on performance and adjustment. Pre-departure training programs that aim to enhance cultural intelligence and offer logistical support and organizational resources have proven beneficial (Setti et al., 2022). Organizations must acknowledge the diverse motivations and needs of SIEs and AEs. By offering tailored support that addresses both personal and professional aspects of expatriate life, organizations can promote better adjustment, increased job satisfaction, and

greater job effort, ultimately leading to successful international assignments. The pivotal role of organizational embeddedness, emphasized by Linder (2019), cannot be overstated, as it acts as a mediator between expatriate motivation and career outcomes. Therefore, organizations should strive to enhance the degree of embeddedness for both SIEs and AEs to ensure their well-being and performance during international assignments.

Perkins and Daste (2007) highlights the importance of interaction between corporate personnel and development specialists and line functions associated with expatriating managers. As higher management is expected to have a greater responsibility to manage and develop people, their differences may cause incompatibilities, which in the end could end up being harmful for the business. However, line managers tend to adopt problem-solving and risk-avoiding strategies to manage expatriate managers, while specialists tend to act as policy enforcers and advocates for expatriate welfare and development (Perkins and Daste, 2007). These different orientations for managing risks and in supervising expatriate managers may cause surface incompatibilities between the two groups, which may affect the effectiveness and efficiency of expatriation management. The authors, Perkins and Daste (2007), suggest that building partnership between specialists and line managers is crucial for successful expatriation management, and that this requires mutual understanding, trust, collaboration, and support. This paper came to the conclusion that the reasons behind the tensions around the application of corporate expatriation policy could be cured by 'educating' the managers according to expatriates.

2.6. Conceptual Model



This diagram represents the holistic view of factors influencing expatriate adjustment and success, emphasizing the interaction between individual traits, organizational support mechanisms, and socio-cultural contexts. Each category is interconnected, highlighting the complexity of expatriate experiences and the need for comprehensive interventions to facilitate successful international assignments.

2.7. Conclusion

The literature review presented in this chapter offers a comprehensive understanding of the complex factors influencing expatriate adjustment and success. Through an analysis of various studies, several key themes have emerged, underscoring the importance of individual traits, organizational support, spousal dynamics, and socio-cultural adaptation in shaping expatriate experiences.

Firstly, individual factors such as prior international work experience, personality traits, emotional intelligence, and cultural intelligence have been identified as critical determinants of expatriate adjustment. Studies emphasize that these personal attributes play a significant role in facilitating adaptation to new environments and contribute to expatriate success.

Secondly, organizational support mechanisms are essential for expatriate well-being and performance. Perceived organizational support (POS), pre-assignment training, spousal assistance programs, mentorship initiatives, repatriation support, and regular communication channels have been highlighted as key interventions that positively influence expatriate adjustment and job satisfaction.

Thirdly, the literature emphasizes the impact of spousal adjustment and family dynamics on expatriate experiences. Challenges related to spousal career development, well-being, and social integration significantly affect overall expatriate adjustment and success. Dual-career partnerships and the role of spouses in supporting expatriate careers emerge as critical aspects requiring organizational attention.

Finally, socio-cultural and cross-cultural adaptation factors also play a crucial role in expatriate adjustment. Studies highlight the importance of cultural and social adaptation, interpersonal relationships, and the influence of host country environments on expatriate experiences.

Chapter 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

The chosen methodology for this research is qualitative, employing an inductive approach. The inductive approach used in qualitative research involves initiating observations and data collection, with theories emerging from the analysis of this data (Thomas, 2006). This method is particularly effective for investigating subjective experiences, allowing natural patterns and themes to arise from the data without preconceived hypotheses or theories.

In the context of expatriate adjustment, employing a qualitative inductive approach can yield profound insights into the personal narratives and experiences of expatriates and their spouses (Azungah, 2018). This approach facilitates an understanding of how individuals navigate cultural changes and identifies the types of organizational support that are most beneficial during their adjustment process. The inductive approach aligns well with the exploratory nature of the study, which seeks to comprehend the cultural adjustment process and the significance of organizational support.

3.2. Research Philosophy

The interviews will be conducted with expatriates and their spouses, preferably the ones who are here to stay for a long period of time. So, the research philosophy for this study is interpretive research. It is believed that the best way to understand this topic is through human experience and that is why this specific philosophy of research has been chosen. The aim is to get to know about first-hand experience through storytelling and gain information that is needed for the research.

Interpretive research acknowledges that reality is subjective and socially constructed (Garrick, 1999). It focuses on understanding how expats interpret and make sense of their experiences, beliefs, and actions with their social context (Garrick, 1999). This approach also recognizes that each expat has different interpretations of the same phenomenon based on their unique perspectives and backgrounds. It presents practical implications for addressing social issues and improving practices. By understanding individuals' subjective experiences, the entities can craft policies, interventions, or organizational practices that better meet expatriates' needs.

Interpretive research typically aligns with constructivist ontology. This perspective suggests that reality is constructed by individuals based on their experiences and interpretations. In the context of expatriates and their spouses, the focus is on understanding their subjective experiences, implying that reality is socially constructed through the lens of the participants.

Also, interpretive research is often associated with subjective epistemology. This means that the aim is to understand the social phenomena from the perspective of the participants, emphasizing the importance of personal experiences and interpretations. In this case, the researcher aims to gain insights into the topic through the first-hand experiences of expatriates and their spouses, emphasizing the importance of human experience and storytelling.

3.3. Data Collection Tool

For this research, semi-structured interviews served as the primary data collection tool. Semi-structured interviews offered a balance between flexibility and structure. A predetermined interview guide ensured key themes were covered while allowing participants to elaborate on their unique experiences and perspectives. This fostered rich, detailed data that captured the impact of cultural adjustment on both expats and their expatriate spouses. These interviews, lasting between 20 to 25 minutes, were designed to align with the research goals and objectives.

In our research, I chose to create a specific set of questions for interviews to dig deep into the unique experiences of expatriates and the intricate support systems within organizations. This method aligns with the interpretive research philosophy, which emphasizes understanding people's subjective experiences and meanings. The decision to develop our interview guide was essential. It followed the advice of Magnusson and Marecek, who stressed the importance of a thorough interview guide covering all topics extensively (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015). Such a guide serves as a helpful tool for interviewers to remember all the important areas to explore. Customizing the interview guide was also about maintaining a natural conversation flow. This flexibility is crucial when discussing personal stories and experiences. It allows interviewers to adapt and delve deeper into topics that arise during the conversation.

Creating the guide ensured that the questions matched the research objectives. These semi-structured interviews are guided but allow for flexibility and consistency. By refining the questions

to be open-ended, I aimed to gather detailed and meaningful insights. In qualitative research, crafting effective questions is vital to capturing the full complexity of the subject matter. This thoughtful approach helps in gathering rich data that reflects the nuanced experiences of expatriates and the dynamics of organizational support.

During literature review, this study discovered four key themes that stood out: family dynamics, individual factoid, organizational support, and cultural integration. These themes played a crucial role in understanding the broader context of this research.

To analyze the data collected, this study used a detailed thematic analysis approach, assigning manual open and focused coding within an inductive framework. This method helped in organically identifying important themes in the data, leading to a deeper understanding of the literature review, and observing any similarities between the findings of this study and pre-existing research. Selecting manual coding was important because it allowed deep engagement and familiarity with the data. The hands-on approach, as described by Saldana in “The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers”, gives researchers a close familiarity with the content, which is essential for identifying themes without relying on preconceived ideas (Saldana, 2015).

3.3.1. Sampling

The research used a purposive sampling method to select participants. The focus was on expatriates living in Pakistan and managers overseeing diverse workforces inclusive of expatriates. According to the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (2024), the total number of emigrants decreased from over 800,000 in 2023 to 215,079 in 2024. This significant decrease in the expatriate number necessitates investigating the causes as well as the organization’s role in in-adjustment of expatriates. It forms the urgency to identify the areas of improvement and work on relevant policies to encourage expatriate assignments and increase their success rate. Moreover, the expatriates were chosen who worked in multinational companies and had experience with their families living with them here in Pakistan. Additionally, deciding to continue interviews until no new information came up aligned with the principle of saturation (Vasileiou et al., 2018). This is widely accepted in qualitative research because it ensures that the data gathered is detailed and thorough enough to support the study’s findings.

10 participants were chosen, mostly from Islamabad and Lahore, as it was convenient to collect data. It should be noted that the number of participants chosen was not determined in the beginning and the interviews were conducted till the saturation point i.e. until no new information presented itself.

Also, it must be noted that the research project was unable to include a large population of expatriates and their spouses due to participant hesitation and logistical constraints. There might be a fear that honest responses could negatively impact their relationship with their employer or their future career prospects within the organization. Some organizations may have internal policies restricting employee participation in external research, particularly if it involves sensitive and security topics.

Table. 1. Distribution by Gender and Location

Gender	Islamabad	Lahore
Female	3	-
Male	5	2

Table. 2. Distribution by Industry and Nationality

Category	Industry/Role	Nationality
EW 1	Telecommunication	Abu Dhabi
EW 2	Telecommunication	Abu Dhabi
EW 3	Diplomatic Mission	Oman

ES 1	Housewife	Oman
ES 2	Housewife	Abu Dhabi
ES 3	Housewife	Abu Dhabi
MP 1	Telecommunication	Pakistan
MP 2	Telecommunication	Pakistan
MP 3	Consumer Goods	Pakistan
MP 4	Consumer Goods	Pakistan

3.3.1. Expatriate Spouse’s Perspective

As part of a 3-month field study taking place in Islamabad, Pakistan. In-depth interviews were conducted to fully understand the reasons behind in-adjustment of expatriate spouses. The reason behind the use of a qualitative approach is to create a better understanding of expatriates' experience in Pakistan who had relocated to Pakistan from different countries. Narrating their experience, in the form of storytelling would cater to the objectives of the research in depth. We will see what factors lead them to a cultural in-adjustment. To understand the reasons behind in-adjustment of the expatriate spouse, I conducted interviews of 3 expatriate spouses. Questions were asked regarding their stay in Pakistan; how they felt when they first moved here, how their working spouse helped with their adjustment and how the organization their spouse was working for contributed to their adjustment. The main aim was to understand what problems expatriate spouses face after re-location from their own perspective.

3.3.2. Spouse's Perspective

Secondly, I interviewed 3 working spouses to understand what role they played in the adjustment of their spouses who moved to Pakistan with them. Moreover, they were interviewed about the hurdles they had to face at work (regarding their focus, efficiency, and productivity) due to a partner who was not adjusting well in the new country. This research was conducted to form a connection between expatriate's productivity and family or marriage distress due to spouses with adjustment issues.

3.3.3. Manager's (Organization) Perspective

Thirdly, interviews were also conducted with Pakistani managers dealing with expatriates to understand what role an organization plays to help expatriate spouses feel more adjusted after their re-location. I conducted in-depth interviews with 4 managers to find out about their role in expatriate spouse's adjustment in Pakistan. The main objective here was to figure out if organizations find it important to engage with expatriate families and if so, to what extent do they play a part in expatriate spouse's adjustment. These interviews will give us a better look at their experience and the issues they have faced in their workplace and living in Pakistani society. Moreover, I conducted interviews with managers, and saw what kind of inclusive approach they followed to understand what could be done to improve the current state of diversity management in firms. Also, I tried to understand how much priority they give to expatriates regarding their wellbeing, and if they can build a connection between expatriates' well-being and performance with their spouses. Moreover, I found out what measure's organizations take to help expatriates and their spouses settle down in Pakistan or what are their tools to make them feel more adjusted.

3.4. Data Analysis Method

This study opted for manual thematic analysis rather than utilizing software tools for coding and analysis. While dedicated software offers automation and streamlined workflows, a hands-on approach was selected for several reasons. Firstly, this allowed for a more in-depth and interactive engagement with the data. Reading, coding, and re-reading transcripts permitted a deeper understanding of the participants' narratives and facilitated the emergence of subtle themes and that might be missed algorithms (Nowell et al., 2017). Secondly, manual coding enabled greater

credibility, trustworthiness, confirmability, and adaptability (Nowell et al., 2017). As new themes emerged or existing ones required refinement, the coding scheme could be adjusted organically, ensuring a dynamic and responsive analysis process. Finally, this approach fostered a deeper familiarity with the data, enriching the understanding of the participants' experiences and allowing for a more insightful interpretation of the findings.

3.5. Ethical Guidelines

The research prioritized ethical conduct throughout its design and execution. Participants provided informed consent through clear explanations of the study's purpose, potential risks and benefits, and their right to withdraw (Allmark et al., 2009). Participants were assured that their identities and personal information would be kept confidential throughout the research and publication process (Allmark et al., 2009). Pseudonyms were used to represent participants in interview transcripts, protecting their anonymity.

Data collection and storage followed secure protocols to minimize the risk of unauthorized access or breaches. Interview recordings and transcripts were stored securely with limited access controls.

Interviews were conducted in a respectful and sensitive manner, ensuring participant comfort and well-being (Allmark et al., 2009). Interview questions were designed to be non-judgemental and avoid eliciting harmful or distressing information.

3.6. Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the research design, philosophy, data collection tools, sampling methods, and ethical considerations that guided this study. The qualitative approach, employing an inductive methodology, allowed for the emergence of themes from the lived experiences of expatriates and their spouses. This method is ideal for capturing subjective experiences and uncovering natural patterns without imposing preconceived notions. An interpretive research philosophy was chosen to gain insights through storytelling, acknowledging that reality is socially constructed and subjective.

Semi-structured interviews served as the primary data collection tool, offering flexibility while ensuring coverage of key themes aligned with research objectives. Manual thematic analysis was

preferred to enable deeper engagement with the data and facilitate the emergence of complex themes, as opposed to relying solely on software tools. Ethical considerations are paramount throughout the research process, ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, and respectful conduct.

Chapter 4: DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. Thematic Analysis Initiation

The proposed research brought together the unique perspectives of expatriate spouses, their working partners, and their managers to get a better picture of cultural adjustment and its impact on organizational contribution.

In the initial phase of this research, a meticulous approach was adopted to gather qualitative data that would serve as the foundation for the subsequent thematic analysis. A total of eight interviews were conducted, with each interview designed to explore the distinct perspectives of expatriate workers, expatriate spouses and managerial personnel leading a diverse workforce of expatriates. The selection of interviewees was purposeful, ensuring representation from each category to provide a comprehensive understanding of the expatriate experience.

Transcripts of the interviews were carried out with scrupulous attention to detail, capturing the themes and patterns in the participant's narratives. The verbatim transcripts formed the primary data set for the subsequent stages of analysis.

This phase involved obtaining informed consent from each participant, emphasizing the ethical considerations integral to qualitative research. The consent process not only ensured compliance with the ethical standards but also established a rapport between the researcher and the participant, fostering an environment conducive to open and candid discussions.

To discover the various narratives contained inside interviews, an inductive approach to thematic analysis was necessary for analyzing such rich qualitative data.

4.2. Familiarization with Data

Following the data collection phase, a critical aspect of the research process involved immersing oneself in the extensive pool of collected information. This stage aimed to foster a profound familiarity with the data, cultivating an in-depth understanding of the concepts and themes embedded within the transcripts. Multiple readings of each interview transcript were undertaken, a practice essential for grasping the contextual richness and subtleties inherent in the participants' narratives. This approach aimed at cultivating an openness to emergent themes that might not have

been initially apparent. The objective was to engage with the raw, unfiltered content to discern patterns, outliers, and recurrent motifs within the expatriate narratives.

4.3. Grouping Interviews

With the comprehensive set of interview transcripts at hand, the research process advanced to a pivotal stage – the grouping of interviews. Recognizing the distinct perspectives offered by expatriate workers, expatriate spouses, and managerial personnel, the interviews were purposefully organized into three groups (See Appendix A). This strategic categorization aimed to facilitate a focused analysis within each participant category, acknowledging the unique vantage points and roles each group played in the expatriate experience.

The first group (Group A) comprised interviews with expatriate workers (EW), individuals entrenched in the daily professional challenges and interactions within the host country. This segment of participants provided valuable insights into the workplace dynamics (Dimitrova et al., 2019; Isakovic & Whiteman, 2013), their and their spouse's cultural adjustment (Chen & Shaffer, 2018), and organizational support mechanisms (Chan et al., 2021) from an employee perspective.

The second group (Group B) centered on interviews with expatriate spouses (ES), offering a lens into the often-overlooked dimension of the expatriate experience. By isolating this demographic, the research aimed to identify and discuss the challenges (McNulty, 2014; Hack-Polay, 2020), successes and cultural adjustments encountered by spouses (Bonache et al., 2016), illustrating their unique roles in the expatriation process.

The third group (Group C) encompassed interviews with managerial personnel (MP), key decision-makers within the organizational framework. Their perspectives were crucial in understanding the strategies and initiatives implemented by the organization to facilitate cultural adjustment and support the expatriate workforce (Sokro et al., 2021).

This intentional categorization streamlined the subsequent analysis and allowed us to explore themes specific to each participant group. Later, themes common in each group were discussed in length.

4.4.Open coding

The third phase of the research process involved the application of open coding to the transcribed interviews. Open coding, as a qualitative analysis technique, allowed for the systematic identification and assignment of initial codes to segments of text within the transcripts. This process was conducted manually to ensure a thorough exploration of the participants' narratives and to capture the essences of their experiences.

Each transcript was meticulously scrutinized, and relevant phrases, sentences, or paragraphs were assigned open codes. These codes were generated without preconceived categories, allowing for an inductive approach to data analysis. The objective was to create a comprehensive and inclusive set of codes that reflected the diverse range of experiences.

Codes were selected based on the frequency of occurrences, their relevance to the research questions, and their potential to discover emerging themes within the dataset (See Appendix A).

4.5.Focused Coding

Building upon the foundation laid by open coding, the research process proceeded to focused coding, a critical step that involved the identification and refinement of specific, more concentrated codes within each group of interviews – expatriate workers, expatriate spouses, and managers. Focused coding aimed to capture the repeating ideas and concepts of initial open codes, allowing for a deeper and extensive analysis.

The initial set of open codes, generated through a meticulous examination of the transcripts, served as a comprehensive inventory of concepts, sentiments and experiences expressed by the participants. Focused coding involved a process of refinement and categorization, where similar open codes were grouped together to form more concentrated and meaningful codes, often referred to as focused codes.

For instance, within the expatriate workers' group, open codes related to professional challenges, cultural adaptation, and organizational support were examined. Focused coding involved synthesizing these open codes into more refined categories such as "Professional Background and Career Progression", "Security and Family Concerns" and "Spousal Adjustment and Support".

Simultaneously, within the expatriate spouses' interviews, open codes related to family dynamics, social integration, and language barriers, etc. were examined. Focused coding in this context led to identification of more concentrated codes like “Emotional and Psychological Adjustments”, “Spousal Support and Relationship Dynamics”, “Cultural Appreciation” and more.

Similarly, focused coding was applied to managerial interviews, where open codes related to organizational policies, security protocol, and expat work performance. Such open codes were refined into focused codes such as “Work Environment and Performance” and “Organizational Support and Initiatives”.

Table 1 Summary of Focused and Open Codes emerged within the Interviews Data Set

Groups	Focused Codes	Open Codes
Group A	Professional Background and Career Progression	Professional Experience and Assignments
		Work Challenges and Variety in Job Roles
	Telecommunication and Infrastructure in Pakistan	Evolution of Telecommunication in Pakistan
	Security and Family Concerns	Security Concerns and Adaptation to Pakistan
		Impact of Security on Travel and Family Life
		Perceived Differences in City Safety
	Daily Life and Work Balance	Maintaining Work-Life Balance
		Balancing Work Responsibilities with Family Needs
	Perception of Pakistani Society and Cultural Adjustment	Perception of Pakistani Society
		Positive Perception of Pakistani Society
		Cultural Adjustment and Multicultural Background

Group B		Cultural Immersion and Daily Routine
		Exploration of Pakistan
	Spousal Adjustment and Family Dynamics	Spousal Emotional Support
		Spousal Adjustment Challenges
		Impact on Spouse's Routine
		Spouse's Happiness and Adjustment
		Spouse's Well-being and Adjustment Concerns
		Family Dynamics and Decision-Making
		Support and Communication in Marriage
	Organizational Support	Organizational Support for Expats at Senior Level
		Organizational Support Suggestions
		Organizational Influence on Adjustment
		Organizational Support
	Emotional Psychological Adjustment and	Emotional Rollercoaster of Relocation
Challenges of Adjustment and Missing Home		
Positive Outlook and Nature's Influence		
Balancing Positivity and Realism		
Impact of Nature on Well-being		
Mental Health and Support System		
	Spousal Support in Adjustment	

	Spousal Support and Relationship Dynamics	Enhanced Bond in Marriage Amidst Challenges
	Communication and Cultural Adaptation	Language Barrier Challenges
		Adapting to Different Pace of Life
		Pakistani Food
		Exploration of Local Markets
		Balancing Adaptation and Preserving Identity
		Navigating Cultural Differences
		Adapting to Dress Code and Attire
		Flexibility in Cultural Exchange
		Appreciation of Pakistani Culture
		Cultural Adjustment Challenges
		Celebration of Multicultural Experiences
		Role of Organizations in Adjustment
		Integration with Traditional Events
		Supportive Role of Spouse's Family
Building Social Network		
Practical Adjustments	Safety and Security Measures	
	Financial Adjustments and Unexpected Costs	
	Cultural Awareness Workshops	
	Impact of Inflation and Economic Factors	

Group C		Political Awareness and Adjustment
		Welcoming Attitude of Locals
	Cultural Integration and Interaction	Cultural Integration and Comfort
		Interaction with Expat Spouses
		Impact of Cultural Engagement
	Diversity and Inclusivity	Strategic Importance of Diversity
		Diversity and Inclusivity
		Expat Representation in Workforce
		Isolation due to Security Protocols
		Family Separation and Limited Visits
		Diversity and Workforce
		Diversity Importance
	Adjustment Challenges	Language Adaptation Challenges
		Adjustment Time and Learning Curve
		Security Protocols and Organization Support
Personal Adjustment Challenges		
Daily Work Environment		
Expats' Independence and Autonomy		
Impact of Spouses on Expat Work Performance		
Challenges faced by Expats		

	Impact of Expatriate Spouses on Adjustment and Performance
Work Environment and Performance	Organizational Support for Adjustment
	Positive Impact on Marriage
	Recommendations for Organizations
Organizational Support	Expat Onboarding Support
	Hybrid Work Options for Expats
	Communication Barrier Avoidance
	Expatriate Onboarding
	Expatriate Onboarding Protocol
Security Concerns	Security Challenges in Karachi
	Security Protocol for Expat
	Security Concerns

4.6.Developing Themes

The thematic analysis process yielded five overarching themes that encapsulate the diverse dimensions of expatriate experiences in the host country and the organizational contributions to cultural adjustment. These themes emerged organically from the focused codes distilled from the participants’ narratives, providing a comprehensive framework for understanding the expatriate journey.

Theme 1: Professional And Work Adjustment

This theme explores the professional journey of expatriates, encompassing their experiences, challenges, and the evolution of their roles within their corporations

(Warmbier, 2016). From the impact of spouses on the work performance to the organization's pivotal role in adjustment, this theme underscores the relationship between professional adaptation and organizational support.

Theme 2: Cultural Integration and Societal Perceptions

Focusing on the cultural aspects of expatriate life, this theme explores their perceptions of Pakistani society, cultural immersion, and the impact of engagement with the local culture (Sterle et al., 2018). It signifies the positive aspects of their interactions, societal warmth, and the role of cultural experiences in shaping their adjustment in the host country.

Theme 3: Family and Personal Adjustment

This theme investigates the challenges faced by expatriate families, including the dynamics of family life, spousal support, emotional & mental health and the transformative journey of relocation (Lauring & Selmer, 2010). It captures the emotional resilience exhibited by expat families in navigating personal adjustments and offers insights into the mutual impact of in-adjustment on couples (McNulty, 2014).

Theme 4: Language and Communication Challenges

Addressing the linguistic and communicative dimensions of the expatriate experience, this theme highlights the challenges posed by language barriers, cultural adaptations, and strategies for effective communication. It emphasizes the delicate balance between adaptation and preserving identity, showcasing the complexities of cross-cultural communication.

Theme 5: Security and Safety Considerations

Focusing on the safety concerns of expatriates, this theme navigates the complexities of security protocols, isolation, and family separation. It sheds light on the perceived differences in city safety, the impact on travel and family life, and the organizational response to security challenges, including the exploration of hybrid work options for enhanced safety (Setti et al., 2022).

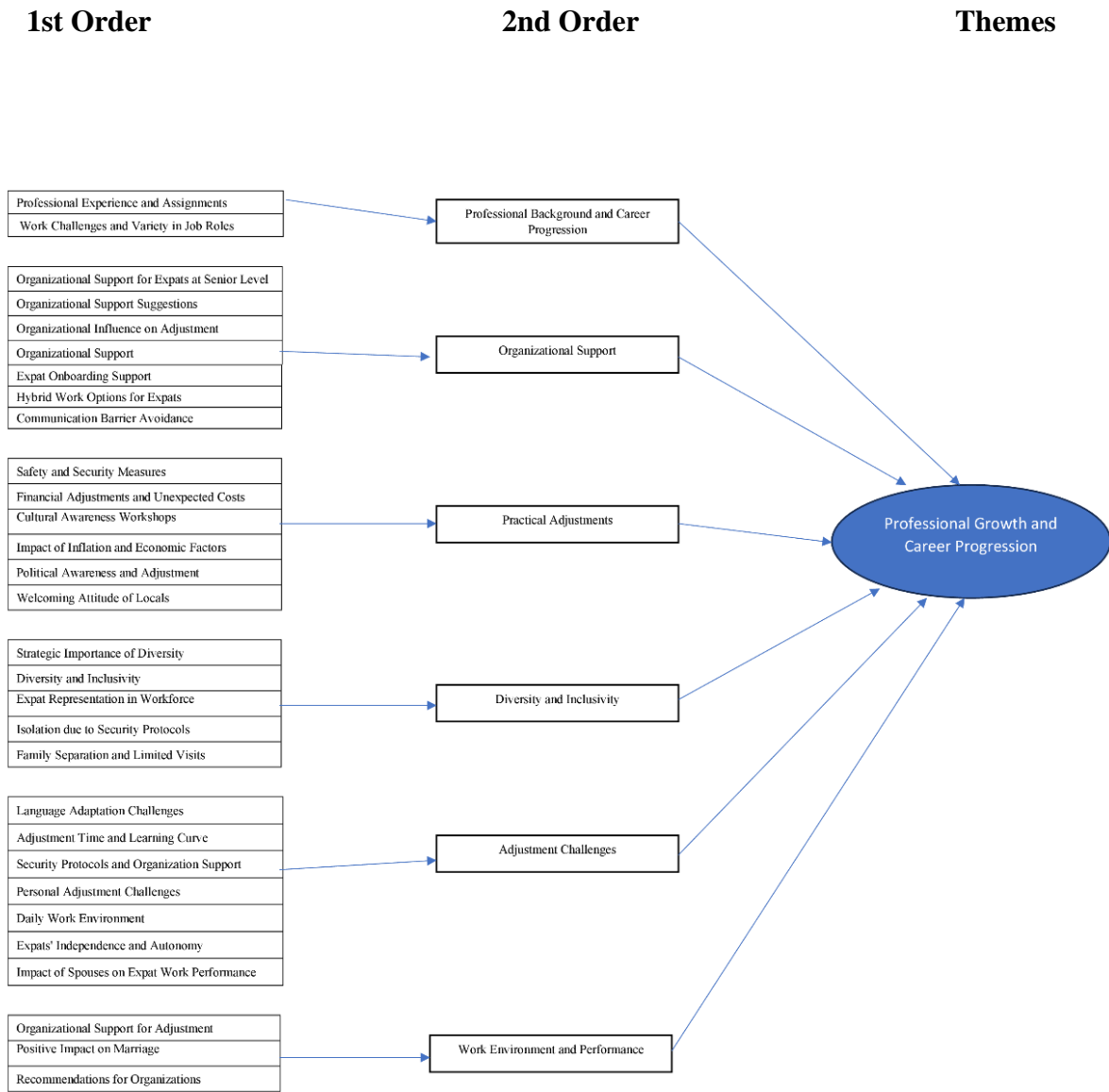
4.7. Use of Family Systems Theory in Expatriate Research

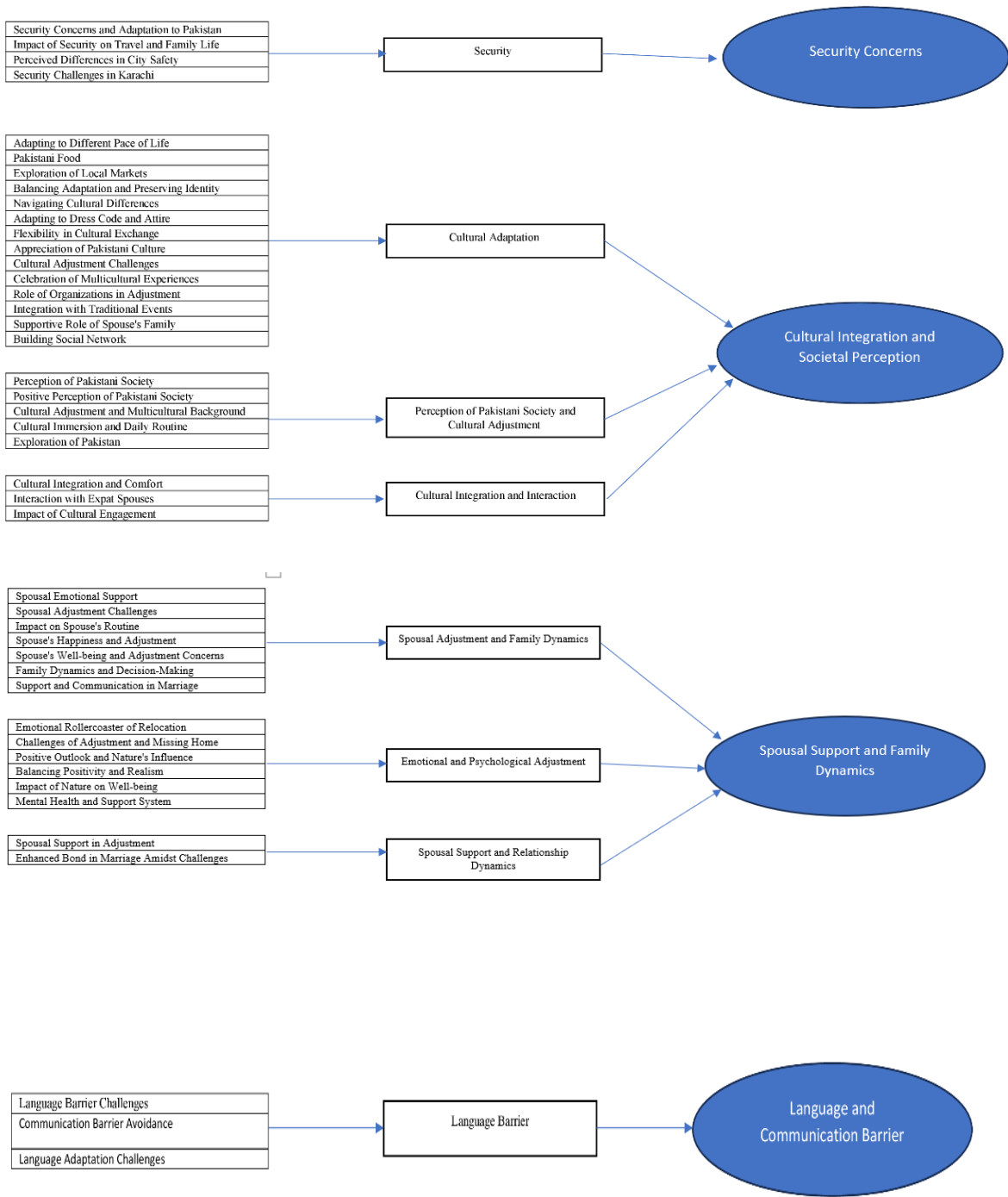
Several studies in expatriate research have employed family systems theory, a prevalent framework for exploring international assignees' willingness to relocate or adjust to international assignments. The concepts from COR and Interdependence theories can be seen in the dynamics of a family system, where the resource management and mutual dependence of family members play crucial roles in the functioning and adaptation of the family unit (Baptist & Hamon, 2022). In a study by Brett and Stroh (1995), family systems theory was employed to investigate the international relocation willingness of expatriates and their spouses. Drawing on the theoretical foundation of family systems theory, the researchers identified internal and external factors influencing family equilibrium and the inclination to relocate internationally. A model was formulated and tested, with results supporting the theory's assertion that a member's action within a family system can impact the psychological state of others, and both the family system and its members are influenced by various internal and external factors.

Similarly, Konopaske et al. (2009) utilized family systems theory to explore the willingness of managers and their partners to relocate for global assignments. While Konopaske et al. (2009) focused on more personal factors like age, sex, race, and career ambition, Brett and Stroh (1995) concentrated on aspects related to significant others, particularly the needs of elderly parents. This exhibits the applicability of family systems theory to the study's definition of family, constituting any member capable of exerting familial influences on international employees.

In a study examining the relationship between family adjustment and expatriate work adjustment, Caliguiri et al. (1998) employed the lens of family systems theory, treating the family as a unit. They proposed a model in which family-system skills and characteristics served as antecedents for expatriate adjustment at work. Findings indicated that family characteristics and perceptions of global assignments correlate with family adjustment, and family adjustment mediates the relationship between family characteristics and expatriate work adjustment, aligning with family systems theory.

1st Order, 2nd Order Themes and Dimensions





Chapter 5: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1. Professional Work and Career Progression: -

5.1.1. Challenges and Benefits of Expat Workers Adjustment

A Harvard Business Review study found that 40% of expatriate assignments fail, often due to cultural or language barriers and lack of company support (Vlachos, 2017). However, successful assignments contribute significantly to knowledge transfer, innovation, and market penetration for multinational companies.

However, multinational companies frequently use established conventions, communication styles, and decision-making processes that differ from expats' home cultures. This might cause uncertainty, dissatisfaction, and trouble navigating the business environment. A lack of awareness of tacit standards and unstated expectations might further marginalize expats, impeding their job advancement. This aligns with the findings of Bonache et al. (2016) who stated that negative stereotyping of corporate expatriates can cause disruption in their performance. However, the interviewees exhibit job satisfaction as they remain sedulously within organizational standards and maintain their performance (Goby & Al Hadhrami, 2020).

"Initially, there were some productivity challenges due to the adjustment period. However, with time and support from my organization, I've been able to strike a better work-life balance." -

EW2

Expatriate workers are valuable assets for corporations, since they bring in global experience, new mindset and ideas and bridge cultural divides (Elenkov & Manev, 2009). However, their performance can be limited by two primary obstacles: language hurdles and organizational culture, especially for individuals in mid or entry-level roles as suggested by the following quote:

"...because I'm part of the management. It was easy for me because I can ask them if I need this. I... [ask them what] they are doing for others, for the CEO, for the EVPs, why not [for] me, I am a VP." - EW1

And

“Because we have a privilege for that...” -EW1

5.1.2. Expatriate Leaders in Organizations

The assistance offered to overcome above mentioned obstacles, however, indicated a significant discrepancy. Companies prefer to emphasize assistance for top-level expatriates, recognizing their importance in running local companies and influencing overall performance.

These high-performing individuals frequently get administrative and financial support such as house staff, accommodation, drivers, translators, language classes and more, as quoted by one of managers below. Their demands are easily met, assuring them seamless integration and success (Goby & Alhadhrami, 2020).

“What I mean by administrative support is help in the expats' housing, accommodation, pick and drop, travel expenses or any financial support needed for the family, if the expat's family is coming along or anything else they need to start off here in Pakistan. I mean, these are seniors, but in general the process is very simple.”

To assess the influence of senior expatriate leadership on organizational innovation, we must examine three crucial factors:

- **Cultural intelligence:** Cultural intelligence is essential for effective cross-cultural leadership as highlighted in the research by Setti et al. (2022). Senior expatriates with high cultural intelligence (Goby & Alhadhrami, 2020), referring to our interviewee from Dubai who has an extensive experience of living in a multicultural country, may bridge cultural differences, stimulate collaboration among varied teams, and promote the interchange of ideas from various views. This can encourage creativity and result in novel solutions.
- **Visionary leadership:** Creating a clear vision for the future and encouraging people to accomplish it is crucial for fostering innovation. Senior expatriates with excellent visionary leadership skills may inspire their teams, stimulate risk-taking, and foster an environment favorable to new ideas (Elenkov & Manev, 2009). It is observed that expat workers exhibited visionary mindsets as they frequently quoted their positive experiences in Pakistan and within their organization.

- Transformational leadership: Leaders who inspire, empower, and challenge their colleagues to achieve their greatest potential may unleash creative energy (Lee et al., 2013). Senior managers who display transformational leadership may build an innovative culture within their units and help in cultural adjustment by promoting experimentation and unconventional thinking (Lee et al., 2013). It aligns with the findings of Han et al. 's (2022) work which stated in the literature that individual traits like personality and emotional intelligence assist in adapting to a new and foreign environment.

As a result, the success of senior expatriate leadership in promoting organizational innovation is dependent on their ability to bridge cultural difficulties, inspire a common vision, and empower their people to embrace innovative ways. Senior expatriates may play a critical role in generating innovation and success for corporations functioning in a globalized world by bridging cultural gaps, encouraging cooperation, and establishing an environment that nurtures creativity.

5.1.3. Dual Career Couples and their Adjustment Challenges

Comparable career challenges have been explored within the Dual-career couples (DCCs), where both partners are emotionally invested in their work roles, professions, and careers (Kierner, 2018). This study identified an additional sub-theme, examining how two individuals with strong career orientations in a family align their professions and organize their family life to enable both partners to cultivate their own careers. It is highlighted through the following comments:

"My wife is working. I asked her if she wanted to come in. And so, she said no, she preferred to keep her career... And I don't want to bother with my kids and stuff...She heard about this Lal masjid, and she said, No, no, no. Then I brought her here afterwards, like, you know, during the Nawaz Sharif era when he was, you know, I think in 2014 she came, and she actually stayed for almost two weeks then after that she went back." - EW1

The existing investigations have encompassed various aspects of dual-career partnerships, including their willingness to undertake assignments, the experiences of both partners in their careers (McNulty & Moeller, 2018), their job roles, the reconstructions of their career identities, adjustment processes (Ravasi et al., 2013), strategies for coordinating careers (Känsälä et al., 2015), repatriation considerations (Kierner & Suutari, 2017), and practices related to dual-career

support (Harvey et al., 2009). These career related challenges impacting expatriates and their partners stand as significant contributors to the failure of expatriate assignments as depicted through the above quote. It also provides a future direction for in-depth research. It also brings forth the reality of limited resources for expat spouses which is consistent with the findings of Vijayakumar & Cunningham (2020). Tailing partners face issues leading to wasted skills as there are limited resources and restricted job market for them to explore (Riusala & Suutari, 2000).

5.2. Cultural Integration and Societal Perceptions: -

5.2.1. Expat Integration in Pakistan

The interviews with expatriates in Pakistan revealed a multifaceted perspective on cultural integration and societal perceptions. Overall, the expatriates expressed a positive sentiment towards Pakistani society, emphasizing the warmth, hospitality, and kindness of the people. They highlighted the welcoming nature of the society in the following words, noting that encounters with locals have been overwhelmingly positive:

“Yes, we have found Pakistani society to be very welcoming.” - EW2

and

“The warmth and hospitality of the people have made our stay here much more enjoyable.” -

EW2

While the literature highlights the challenges of expat adjustment, particularly regarding isolation and limited contact with locals (Ljubica et al., 2019; Bonache et al., 2016), the Pakistani context might offer a more in-depth picture. Pakistan's potentially welcoming environment could indeed ease cultural adjustment for some expats and their spouses. However, it's important to consider that hospitality might differ regionally or within social circles. Second, expats in rural areas might face different experiences than those in urban centers. Third, while Pakistanis might be eager to help, the type of support offered might not necessarily align with the expats' needs. Finally, expats' personalities, cultural backgrounds, and reasons for relocation can significantly influence their adjustment experiences, regardless of the host country's general warmth (Zhu et al., 2006).

Moreover, it was found that expats with prior expatriate assignment experiences experienced a smooth transition which supports the findings of Lee and Kartika (2014). Cultural intelligence and prior experience living abroad in a multicultural country like Dubai increased resilience, cultivated a social capital and exhibited a mentoring behavior in one as remarked by an expatriate worker in the following words:

"Dubai, by nature, is a multicultural company. So, all my neighbors when I was even three years old, four years old were Indians and Pakistanis. We've been i Yeah, we've been living with them. So, I know the language. Since that time, I have understood Urdu and Hindi. But I don't speak it in a way that Yeah, but I understand that kind of 75-80% of the dialogue. And you know, when we were young, we would keep watching also what you know, Indian bollywood movies and so forth. So, it's helped me to understand the language and the culture and stuff, you know, from that perspective, I'm not a candidate that you know, you can see the difference and I've been struggling and so no, no, it was a smooth ride." - EWI

5.2.2. Expat Spouses' Experiences in Pakistan

The expatriate spouses acknowledged initial challenges, such as feelings of excitement, nervousness, and anxiety about being in a new environment:

"Excited, nervous and a bit scared if I'm being honest." - ES1

However, they also expressed a sense of happiness and fulfillment in experiencing something completely new and unexpected. The expatriates noted that the nature in Pakistan has a calming effect, contributing to their overall contentment.

"I guess the nature here has really calmed me down and just made me incredibly happy." - ES1

It is evident that adjustment outcomes are influenced by socio-cultural factors and interpersonal relationships as revealed in the literature (Davies et al., 2015; Bierwiazzonek & Waldzus, 2016) Supportive non-work conditions positively influenced psychological adjustment. Strong social networks with neighbors and friends in the host country provide emotional support, practical guidance, and a sense of community. successfully integrating into the host culture, for example by

learning basic language skills or participating in local customs, fosters a sense of belonging and facilitates a smoother adjustment.

The interviews also shed light on the importance of family and community in Pakistani culture. The expatriates expressed appreciation for the strong sense of family, which they found heartwarming. They navigated through cultural differences, such as gender roles and traditions emphasizing respect for elders, with an evolving understanding and acceptance.

Culinary experiences play a role in the expatriates' cultural integrations, with attempts to cook Pakistani recipes and enjoying the tradition of feasting and sharing meals. This underscores the significance of food as a cultural bridge and a means of connection with the local culture of Pakistan.

“Every visit to someone's home involves a delicious feast and endless cups of chai!” - ES2

Exploration of local markets and participation in traditional events emerge as key aspects of cultural immersion.

“Discovering the vibrant markets and shopping spots has added an exciting dimension to my time here.” - ES2

Attending events like Qawwali, weddings, and celebrations provides them with an opportunity to deepen their connection with the local community. Despite initial surprises and overwhelming moments, the expatriates actively engage in and embrace these cultural experiences.

“Attending a Sufi qawwali, wedding events like Mehndi, Barat, and Walima. Oh, I love how they get dressed in colorful outfits like lehnga.” - ES2

5.2.3. Challenges in Organization's Expatriate Policies

Unfortunately, a company's restricted policies, which stress security concerns and limited family engagement, compound these difficulties.

“...they have limitations or very strict guidelines while traveling and moving out of their homes...” - MP1

By restricting foreigners to a predefined work domain, they unintentionally create hurdles to genuine cultural and social integration. This lack of on-site tailored support, which is based on measurements and quotas rather than individual needs, fails to address the complicated problems of establishing meaningful connections inside the host country (Dousin & Sulong, 2021).

“...because they don't have freedom to move without the security clearance. So, they refrain from bringing in their families because they will be in those isolated complexes, and they'll face a lot of security concerns. So, they really don't bring in their families. It's not a preference, because moving out of the complex or moving out of the office zone, they must require proper security clearance. Only then can they move out of the city or visit public places in the Twin Cities. Even then they have to be very careful when planning their movements.” - MP1

Under such policies, cultural differences, such as the intrinsic homogeneity and distinctiveness of Pakistani culture, might result in isolation. Language limitations and limited social opportunities exacerbate the difficulty of inclusion (Horak & Yang, 2016). Even with a strong desire to connect, expats confront a difficult struggle that requires tremendous proactiveness, cultural awareness, and perseverance. As Chen (2019) points out, our unconscious cultural assumptions might collide with the reality of the host culture, causing internal conflict and worsening adjustment challenges.

Consistent with the findings of Van Bakel's research in the settings of Denmark (van Bakel, 2022), limited cultural integration and social immersion opportunities might create a grim image of expats in Pakistan who are confined in "expat bubbles" owing to cultural differences, language hurdles, and restricted social possibilities. This seclusion can have serious effects for their cultural learning, pleasure, and overall well-being.

Moving forward, a change in strategy is required. Companies must move beyond basic, metric-driven help and provide customized assistance based on individual requirements and cultural circumstances. In simple words, they should facilitate socialization and ensure employee-host country fit (Lueke & Svyantek, 2000). Pre-departure training, on-site cultural immersion programs, and proactive facilitation of local contacts are critical. Encourage family engagement wherever feasible, since it may give vital social support and promote a feeling of community in both expats and their spouses; its importance is highlighted by managers in the following words:

“We assign mentors to guide them through the initial adjustment period.” - MP3

"Before arrival, we provide extensive pre-departure information about Pakistan, including safety protocols, and visa procedures. Upon arrival, we offer a comprehensive orientation program covering everything from company policies to navigating the local transportation system." - MP4

"We offer resources like language classes and spouse career counseling. Additionally, we connect spouses with local social groups and communities to help build a support network outside of work." - MP4

5.3.Spousal Support & Family Adjustment: -

5.3.1. Challenges of Relocating as An Expatriate

Moving overseas for a new job requires more than just packing your belongings and boarding a plane. It's a complicated journey full of potential pressures that can destabilize even the strongest individual or family. Consider your partner sacrificing their work, children adjusting to a new school, loved ones far away, and a cultural environment as strange as the language. One of the expatriates addressed this concern in the following words:

"I think I was worried about my family not adjusting well to this new environment, as if they're not happy or face any challenges in the new relocation, it would eventually affect the whole family, hence ensuring they were comfortable was the key issue for me." - EW3

When you add in shifting habits, financial upheavals, and role conflicts, it's no wonder that unresolved tensions develop into chronic "strains" as communicated through following words:

"While there were moments of stress during the adjustment phase, overall, I've been able to maintain good mental health through a combination of support from my organization, quality time with my spouse, and self-care activities." - EW2

As Patterson (1988) and others have demonstrated, these stressors can fester, resulting in a cascade of anguish. Mental health suffers, with greater psychosocial distress (Silbiger and Pines, 2013) and depression (Magdol, 2002) looming ahead. Physical health declines, marriages are strained, and work situations deteriorate (Lazarova et al., 2015; Anderzén and Arnetz, 1999).

The pressure to perform, to be brave, and to keep going even when things are tough, may help to develop a distinct, collective strength. This research highlights the changing environment of modern expat families, in which both children and parents negotiate the joys and hardships of a nomadic existence together, highlighting the significance of marital status and family dynamics in the expatriate assignments (Selmer & Lauring, 2011). Therefore, it can be concluded that companies scheduling family trips to satisfy the needs of individuals as well as family units is crucial to keep expat employee's content.

"We have a contract called expats, or this is called secondment... They will give him a ticket to come back and forth for his family to visit once a month. These courses are a benefit..." - EW1.

To be successful when living abroad as a family, it is also observed from thematic analysis that you must possess a certain set of attributes. Adventurous spirits, a common sense of humor, and open communication are critical components in the "pulling together" approach that strengthens families (Lazarova et al., 2015). Every member deserves to be heard and appreciated in decision-making, and socializing outside of the family bubble is critical for overall well-being. The emphasis on open communication, family cohesion, and adaptability creates an even more supportive and understanding environment, allowing partners to tackle the problems together, which aligns with the study of Ali et al. (2003) as defined in the literature review.

"Being there and giving them support is all that is needed if I'm being honest with you. No matter the problem, whether small or big, you should always provide them with the needed support, especially emotionally." - EW3

5.3.2. Emotional and Social Dynamics of Expatriate Spouses

The challenges of this group thrust beyond physical and cultural barriers, into unfamiliar and unpleasant terrain, a rollercoaster of emotions and doubts. They are confronted with questions regarding their identity, and even the most fundamental habits (Collins & Bertone, 2017; Sterle et al., 2018), as illustrated through the following quotes:

"While adapting to the local culture, it's essential to preserve one's own identity and values." -

ES2

As addressed before, the weight of responsibility is heavy, like relocating one's family with no promise of seamless cultural assimilation, imposing a threat to the identities of individuals (Collins & Bertone, 2017). However, within this crucible exists a furnace of intense, accelerated learning.

Navigating the ups and downs of the first phase can be difficult. Expatriate spouses express feeling bewildered. The unfamiliarity of the physical and cultural surroundings can be disturbing, necessitating frequent changes and modifications. Nonetheless, these problems have a latent promise. As people adjust to their new surroundings, they go through a significant learning process, gaining new skills, perspectives, and resilience.

"Learning everyone's names, respecting the hierarchy, and adapting to the dynamics took time."

- ES2

Nonetheless, individual demands and tensions unavoidably arise during the process. Moving stressors may put bonds and resilience to the test. The emotional cost of family separation becomes a profound component of expat experience. Coping with a new culture, language, and social standards is difficult enough. Despite the hurdles, surprising intimacy might emerge as expressed by the participant in the following expression:

"...we only have each other here. So, I wouldn't say suffered but actually, we bonded better because of the relocation." - ES1

"Of course, we're both very open with each other, especially in terms of sharing our issues."

And:

"Connecting with [Spouse Name]'s colleagues and their spouses has broadened my social circle..." - ES2.

This study reinforces existing research highlighting the crucial role of active spousal support in successful expat assignments (Lauring & Selmer, 2010). When spouses adjust positively to the new environment, it creates a positive spill-over effect that benefits the expat worker and their willingness to stay in the host country (Black & Stephens, 1989). Spousal support contributes to the expat's immediate success in several ways (Lauring & Selmer, 2010). They can actively assist in building professional networks by attending industry events or introducing their partner to

potential collaborators. Equally important, spouses provide a strong social support system, facilitating the creation of new friendships and a sense of belonging in the host country.

Furthermore, a supportive spouse acts as a haven after work. Being present, willing to listen, and offering emotional support is essential for maintaining the expat's psychological well-being, which is consistent with the work of Chan et al., (2021). This emotional and mental strength is crucial for navigating the challenges of adapting to a new culture, workplace values, and daily life practices that differ from those back home.

However, when these factors are combined with the lack of a supporting partner, expat spouses may find themselves navigating a minefield of emotional difficulties.

"...keeping in mind as you live your life here, you're missing stuff back home and you just keep on hearing the news via video call..." - ES1.

And:

"...But I mean, I tried to cover it by having this daily video conference with them, talking to them." - EW1

This escalation of challenges emphasizes the vital relevance of addressing the family issue in the context of expatriate experiences. Interviews also presented a distinct perspective that emphasizes a family-centric approach to expatriate living as exhibited through the following comment. In their narratives, the spouse's well-being takes center stage, and open communication becomes a critical component in establishing a balanced and rewarding experience abroad (Wurtz, 2022) as discussed above in section 5.3.1.

"...especially for the kids as well. If I show that I'm feeling uncomfortable or depressed...it will affect us all." - ES1

This method acknowledges the interdependence between family dynamics and the overall success and pleasure of the expatriate assignment as projected through the following:

"Of course, if one has issues adjusting, so will the other person eventually." - EW3

Expressing emotions openly not only helped in reducing anxiety and stress but it also helped in building meaningful and stronger bonds between couples (Wurtz, 2022; Chen & Shaffer, 2018). It helped them in managing the emotional stressors and distancing themselves from the negative emotions (Noorbakhsh et al., 2010). The interactive nature of the spouses affected their partner's experiences and improved the life satisfaction of the expatriate couples in the host country, i.e. Pakistan in this context (Mohr & Klein, 2002).

5.3.3. Impact of Spousal Support on Organizational Performance

Prioritizing spousal well-being during the expatriate journey is a strategic decision. It recognizes that the happiness and contentment of the family unit play an important role in the expat's capacity to thrive in the new environment and new working place, as commented by a manager personnel in the following words:

"If your spouse is facing a hard time or mental health compromised it directly affects your obvious commitments towards the organization..." - MP2.

This finding is supported by the works of Kanstren & Makela (2020), which stated that expatriate spouses' subjective well-being is influenced by relocation as moving to a foreign environment can be overwhelming for them. Expatriate assignments influence condition resources (income, career, housing, and health), personal resources (self-esteem, resilience, and social skills) and energy resources (motivation, and optimism) of the expatriate couple. A slight change in living standards can result in both positive and negative energy. Combined with homesickness as a key factor in the expatriate experience (Hack-Polay, 2020), personal life can interfere with the task performance of the working partner, leading to assignment failure (Vijayakumar & Cunningham, 2020). Therefore, organizations must observe and monitor the expat spouse's experience during the assignment, as suggested by the manager, to encourage a positive spillover effect on the working partner. Decision-makers should consider spouses while crafting policies and strategy for expatriate assignments to ensure a high success rate.

"Companies can create a more welcoming environment by offering practical assistance like finding housing and schooling for children. Building a strong support network for spouses through social events and online forums can also be very beneficial." - MP 4

5.4. Language and Communication Barrier: -

The interviews revealed a theme not identified in the literature review - language barriers. Frequently mentioned by participants, this topic became a key focus of this research paper. Language barriers may disrupt communication, resulting in misunderstandings, unproductive workflow, and missed opportunities.

Expats who have little fluency in the local language struggle to understand instructions, participate in meetings, and establish connections with coworkers. This can limit their capacity to adapt, function successfully, and eventually contribute to the organization. As the participants of Group C quoted,

"...mostly, they are Chinese national speakers, and they are not very, very well versed with English..." - MP1.

Inadequate proficiency in the language of the host country may restrict expatriates' ability to effectively manage local operations, rendering them dependent on individuals proficient in host company languages, as identified through the following quote:

"...they use translators or Chinese-English translation to get a grip," - MP1

However, according to existing literature in this subject matter, relying on these bilingual/multilingual individuals can be risky as they may strategically manipulate information flows across language barriers to their own benefits (Peltokorpi, 2007). But there was no indication of such a barrier in the current research.

Research indicates that variations in language contribute to heightened social categorization, leading to the formation of linguistic-based in-groups and outgroups within subsidiary entities (Peltokorpi, 2010), as suggested by the following comment:

"There are certain meetings where the conversations are being done in Urdu. So, at times communication barrier...is avoided so that they know bits and pieces of Urdu language and do have an idea what you're talking about. But still, I think communication and cultural alignment can be a problem for them." - MP2

For expatriates navigating new cultures, language barriers can be a significant obstacle, impacting everything from communication to cultural immersion. This analysis highlights several key sub-themes:

5.4.1. Language Variation and Transition:

The mention of a different English accent, as well as the dependence on interpreters or Chinese-English translation, implies that language disparities go beyond language choice. Expatriates face differences in speech and expression, which can impede successful communication. Expatriates must navigate not just foreign languages, but also the complexities of regional dialects and linguistic expression.

"...they have their own accent of English, so they use translators or Chinese-English translation..." - MP1.

When people lack a common language, they must rely on translation to communicate, which increases the chance of misunderstandings. Misinterpretations can have a negative influence on the people concerned, perhaps causing problems and, more importantly, harming their overall job performance (Ramlan et al., 2018).

5.4.2. Adaptation through language familiarity:

The expatriate's ability to understand Hindi and Urdu is cited in the following quote as a factor that helped them assimilate to the culture (Berkes et al., 2018). This emphasizes the relevance of linguistic familiarity in enabling cultural adaptation, illustrating how prior knowledge of the local language may considerably assist to a more seamless transfer.

"Because of the language as you said, I used to understand Hindi and Urdu. Yes, during that time. So, it's, it's become easy for me to adjust this to the culture and so forth." - EW1

5.4.3. Overcoming language barrier:

The recognition of the first challenge provided by the language barrier, particularly as Urdu differs significantly from English, reflects a frequent problem experienced by expats. The gradual process

of learning phrases and engaging in basic conversations demonstrates the expatriate's determination to overcome language barriers through proactive language acquisition.

"Definitely, the language barrier was a hurdle at first. Urdu is so different from English!" - ES2

Another quote on this theme is as follows:

"Slowly, I started picking up phrases and basic conversation." - ES2

5.4.4. Workplace Communication Barrier:

The distinction between workplace communication and broader engagement activities implies that expatriates may have difficulties in broader social circumstances owing to language barriers, according to the comment made by a manager:

"One major challenge is communication style. Pakistanis tend to be more indirect, while some expatriates might expect a very direct approach. This can lead to misunderstandings." - MP4

However, favorable accounts of expatriates being comfortable in the job, participating in engagement activities, and communicating comfortably with locals suggest that overcoming language hurdles is more doable in the professional setting.

"...In the office, they are very comfortable, they gel with the local people, they participate in a lot of engagement activities and get together in the workplace..." - MP1.

5.5. Safety and Security Concerns: -

As voices intertwine, a complex narrative emerges, depicting a spectrum of perceptions influenced by the country, which didn't emerge during the literature review.

5.5.1. Perception of Security and Safety in Expatriate Experiences in Pakistan

The evolution of perceptions over time becomes apparent as an expatriate recounts initial apprehensions following relocation (Giorgi et al., 2016; Bader et al., 2015). The mention of the Lal Masjid incidents, characterized as "scary" for security reasons, underscores the external factors

influencing the expatriate experience. The personal account takes on a tragic depth when an expat recounts a family member's initial hesitancy, citing the historic Lal Masjid occurrences.

"She heard about this Lal masjid, and she said, No, no, no. Then I brought her here afterwards, like, you know, during the Nawaz Sharif era when he was, you know, I think in 2014 she came, and she actually stayed for almost two weeks then after that she went back." - EW1

However, future trips during a different political era demonstrate a more subtle shift in perspective, emphasizing the flexible nature of security considerations as circumstances change. A sense of relief emerges as the expatriate notes,

"...once these issues slowly resolved things were very nice." EW1

A comparative lens is cast on Islamabad, positioned as a safer haven in contrast to Karachi. The distinction between the two cities is pronounced, with one interviewee unequivocally stating,

"...if we compare it to Karachi, Karachi is a very dangerous place." - EW1

5.5.2. Expatriate Spouses on Safety and Community in Pakistan

The sentiments expressed range from a reassuring *"Honestly, I haven't felt unsafe here"* to a more measured approach reflecting in statements like *"Of course, I take precaution,"* highlighting the expatriates' conscientious efforts in navigating their surroundings during their stay in Pakistan. This emphasis on dressing modestly in certain areas speaks to an awareness of local customs and an adaptive approach to cultural differences.

"...being mindful of my surroundings, dressing modestly in certain areas..." - ES2.

A recurring theme emerges, shedding light on the role of community and vigilant neighbors in fostering a sense of comfort and security. The expatriates draw attention to the watchful eyes of those around them, creating a supportive environment that contributes to their overall well-being.

"Despite any concerns, the sense of community and the watchful eyes of neighbors contribute to an overall feeling of comfort and security." - ES2

5.5.3. Security Initiatives of Organizations

Organizations in Pakistan acknowledged security challenges as a key aspect of strategizing their expatriate assignments, with one manager explicitly stating,

"In Karachi, yes, we had certain challenges when it comes to security." - MP2

"We conduct thorough security briefings before relocation, outlining safe areas, cultural sensitivities, and emergency protocols." - MP4

The specificity of location becomes crucial in understanding the varying dynamics within different cities of Pakistan.

The discourse on security extends beyond personal experiences to the professional environment, where expatriates working with families in Karachi share their insights. One expatriate points to security as a primary concern which can affect their job performance (Bader et al., 2015), aligning with the broader organizational perspective that:

"...security management here is not very conducive in Pakistan, especially with respect to the expatriates we have in our organization..." - MP1.

Chapter 6: CONCLUSION

Relocating for a career requires complex family relations and personal changes. The expatriate experience involves a variety of pressures, including language barriers (Horak & Yang, 2016), identity crisis (Collins & Bertone, 2017; Sterle et al., 2018), family well-being (Selmer & Luring, 2011), mental health (Patterson, 1988), and the strain of juggling personal and professional life (Selmer & Luring, 2011). The influence on mental health is crucial, with the transition period being characterized by stress (Vijayakumar & Cunningham, 2020). The necessity of family support, open communication, and proactive involvement with local culture emerge as critical components in overcoming these obstacles (Ali et al., 2003).

Additionally, cultural integration and societal norms play an important influence in determining expatriate experiences. Positive attitudes toward Pakistani society, combined with initial challenges and subsequent adaptation, indicate a dynamic journey. The people's warmth and kindness, together with varied cultural experiences, help to build a broad perspective of Pakistani culture. It concluded that various factors such as expats' personalities, prior experience of living abroad, and social integration plays a significant role in cultural adjustment and expatriate assignment's success (Zhu et al., 2006). However, workplace practices that limit family interaction undermine true cultural assimilation, potentially leading to isolation and restricted social possibilities (Mohr & Klein, 2004). However, this study provides directions to conduct in-depth research into the impact of relocation on expat's well-being living in Pakistan.

Expatriates' responses show that they and their managers are aware of stress throughout the transition phase. Managers are aware of the early productivity problems experienced by expatriates during the transition period. It is also evident that managers are also attuned to the emotional and psychological toll that relocation may have on expatriates. The remark, "*While there were moments of stress during the adjustment phase,*" implies a knowledge of the transitional problems that expatriates confront, and, more importantly, the recognition of these issues indicates an appreciation of the need for intervention.

According to the findings, managers play an important role in assisting expatriates and their spouses with the transition process. Organizational and managerial assistance is emphasized as a critical aspect in assisting expatriates to achieve a better work-life balance. Managers have a

proactive role in aiding expatriates throughout their transition phase, emphasizing the need of time and organizational assistance (Chan et al., 2021). The expatriate statement, "*However, with time and support from my organization, I've been able to strike a better work-life balance,*" emphasizes managers' important role in providing the required assistance.

However, the views were contradictory in the participants because in one instance, organizational policies such as limited family engagement and security concerns restricted social integration and emotional stability, which suggested that organizations were unable to consider the emotional aspects of expatriate assignments while strategizing (Dousin & Sulong, 2021). The emphasis on administrative support, financial help, and other resources for expatriates, particularly those in high positions, demonstrates a desire to ensure a smooth integration process. The provision of housing, lodging, transportation, language lessons and other resources demonstrates managers' comprehensive commitment to ensuring expatriates' comfort in their new surroundings (Kanstrén & Mäkelä, 2020).

Organizations, in the manager's opinion, play an important role in assisting the adjustment of expatriate spouses in Pakistan. The findings show a dual focus on professional and personal issues. Organizations' support initiatives, such as housekeeping, lodging, drivers, interpreters, and language training, show a dedication to tackling the multiple issues that expatriates and their families confront. The manager's perspective on expatriates as significant assets to organizations highlights the strategic relevance of supporting their effective transition for knowledge transfer, innovation, and market penetration.

The findings provided insights into multifaceted challenges faced by expatriates and their spouses during relocation and cultural adjustment in Pakistan. Firstly, the participants talked about challenges like having trouble with language, stress, identity crisis, and family-and-work balance, during the early days of relocation. But eventually, family support, society's warm welcome, social networking, and open communication mitigated the negative feelings. It highlighted how important it is for families to support each other and for everyone to try to fit into the new culture. The research showed that managers at work play a critical role in an expatriate's transition and achieving a better work-life balance, as evidenced by providing administrative assistance and resources. However, the organizations were unable to adapt their policies to address emotional aspects and facilitate social integration. These findings align with the research objectives of

exploring the causes of expatriate spouses' in-adjustment, understanding the impact of cultural adjustment of spouses on a working partner's work experience, and the role of organizations in expatriate spouses' adjustment in Pakistan. In addition, it highlighted the need to refine organizational support programs to address expatriates and their spouses' personal and professional needs as well as family dynamics.

6.1. Practical Implications: -

These implications are significant because they can improve the lives of expatriates and their families in Pakistan and other underdeveloped countries, leading to better adjustment, satisfaction, and ultimately, success in their assignments. This can benefit both the expatriates and the organizations they work for.

Based on the insights gained throughout the debate, here are some essential recommendations for strengthening the cultural, social, and professional transition of expatriates and their families in Pakistan:

6.1.1. Cultural Adjustments and Social Integration: -

- **Pre-departure training and on-site cultural immersion programs:** Such programs should help expatriates learn about Pakistani culture, habits, norms, and communication styles. This will allow them to avoid misunderstandings and better integrate into society.
- **Proactive facilitation of local contacts:** Companies should connect expats with their local peers and communities to foster engagement and relationship building. This can be accomplished through language exchange programs, cultural events, and scheduled social activities.
- **Family involvement:** Encourage and support family participation in social and cultural events (Selmer & Luring, 2011). This will make them feel more involved and supported, minimizing loneliness and anxiety.
- **Promote inclusivity:** Encourage diversity inside the firm by creating a welcome and respectful work environment for people of all cultures. This may

be accomplished by providing training sessions on cultural sensitivity and diversity awareness to both Pakistani and expat personnel.

6.1.2. Language Support: -

- **Language classes:** Providing language training in Urdu or the native language spoken in the region can greatly improve communication and integration for expats and their families.
- **Encourage language learning rewards:** Encourage expats to acquire the local language by offering money incentives, skill development programs, or recognition opportunities.

6.1.3. Organizational Support: -

- **Tailored support for all levels:** Instead of focusing primarily on top-level expats, give cultural adjustment support to mid- and entry-level staff as well. Mentorship programs, buddy systems, and access to cultural specialists are all possible options (Dousin & Sulong, 2021).
- **Invest in cultural intelligence training:** Cultural intelligence training may help managers and coworkers better understand and collaborate with Pakistani and expat personnel (Setti et al., 2022).
- **Promote visionary and transformational leadership:** Encourage senior expatriates to embrace leadership styles that foster creativity, cooperation, and a culture of learning inside the business (Lee et al., 2013; Han et al., 2022).
- **On-boarding/Pre-departure training:** Organizations must provide training and information guides relating to the host country to the expatriates before their departure. It will provide expatriates with a picture of what to expect on their arrival in the country and how to navigate their environment with ease.

6.1.4. Addressing Spouse's needs: -

- **Pre-departure and on-site assistance for spouses:** Provide specialized programs and resources to assist spouses in adjusting to their new surroundings, coping with problems, and discovering their own sense of purpose and community (Harvey et al., 2009).
- **Career counseling and opportunities:** Investigate how spouses might obtain work or further their professional development in Pakistan (Riusala & Suutari, 2000).
- **Family counseling and mental health support:** Give families access to counseling services to address any concerns, tensions, or mental health issues (Lazarova et al., 2015; Anderzén and Arnetz, 1999) that may occur during the adjustment period.

Further studies can quantify the effectiveness of the proposed recommendations. For instance, researchers could track changes in expatriate well-being, work performance, or turnover rates after implementing cultural immersion programs or family support services.

Overall, organizations operating in Pakistan with expat personnel should take a more comprehensive approach to cultural adjustment. This should go beyond basic assistance measures, focusing on actual integration, social connection, and individual well-being for both expats and families.

6.2. Theoretical Implication: -

This research discusses the significant role of managers and organizational support in facilitating the successful adjustment of expatriates and their families during relocation, which is consistent with the findings of Chan et al. (2021). This has theoretical implications for organizational behavior and management literature, particularly in the context of expatriate well-being and work-life balance.

Moreover, the emphasis on organizational assistance, including administrative support, financial aid, and resource provision, points towards a broader theoretical implication for human resource

management (Kanstrén & Mäkelä, 2020). It highlights the strategic role of HR practices in facilitating the adjustment of expatriates, indicating that comprehensive support measures contribute to both individual well-being and organizational success through effective knowledge transfer, innovation, and market penetration (Liu, 2009).

Additionally, the study draws attention to the dual focus on professional and personal issues, emphasizing the interconnected nature of expatriate experiences. This insight challenges the traditional compartmentalization of work and personal life in international assignments and provides a basis for further exploration in the literature on expatriate management and organizational support.

This research encourages further exploration in a few key areas. One avenue is conducting longitudinal studies tracking expatriates over time. It would provide valuable insights into the lasting effects of different support structures. Additionally, comparing programs across companies and industries could reveal best practices for maximizing expatriate success. Whereas in-depth case studies can offer a chance to dissect the specific role that support played in successful and unsuccessful assignments. Moreover, the findings of this research encourage future research to explore experiences of specific expatriate groups, such as dual-career couples or families.

6.3. Limitations: -

While the study was effective in identifying characteristics impacting expatriate cultural adjustment, notably couple orientation, it is confronted with certain limitations that warrant attention. One noteworthy limitation is the size of the expatriate spouse sample, which, while informative, may be insufficient to determine the different and unique demands of this population. To draw more firm results and provide deeper insights, future study should include a bigger and more diversified sample of expatriate spouses.

Furthermore, the study provides a significant contribution by emphasizing the importance of organizational assistance in aiding family transition during overseas assignments. However, this finding brings a new limitation: the study does not go thoroughly into the precise character and efficacy of distinct organizational efforts. To close this gap, future research should take a more specialized approach, undertaking in-depth analyses of the influence of various types of

organizational support systems. Researchers can gain an in-depth understanding of the impact of organizational support in the expatriate experience by examining the specific steps taken by firms to improve expatriates' comfort and adjustment in the host nation. This might include investigating policies, programs, or resources given by organizations and their specific effects on expatriate families, resulting in a more thorough and detailed understanding of the dynamics involved in overseas assignments.

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APPENDIX

OPEN CODING

GROUP A: EXPAT WORKERS' (EW) INTERVIEWS

EW 1

1. Professional Background and Career Progression:

- *"Actually, I'm an Arab from Dubai, Amarati. Grew up and graduated from the U.S... One of them was petroleum for two years, and then I switched to telecom."*
- *"I walked into two types of firms... I'm in telecommunication and at the solid... look after all there, you know, this design and expansion and all this kind of thing."*

2. Evolution of PTCL and Telecommunication in Pakistan:

- *"When we came, we saw that, you know, this is not the way it should be. So we started developing the company and became one of the leading companies. It's providing everything broadband, trip, replay, or type like, you know, IPTV, all of these services."*
- *"But after that, now, I've been giving again, executive vice president business operation, which is related to all these installation, commissioning of flash fiber, and all these services that go into the customer premises, to help them to improve it and enhance it."*

3. Security Concerns and Adaptation to Pakistan:

- *"After relocation, or was actually the security part because Pakistan doesn't have six and seven it was not like, safe... But after that, I mean, once these issues slowly resolved things were very nice."*

- *"But I mean, if we compare it to Karachi, Karachi is a very dangerous place. You cannot even do anything about Islamabad. It is considered to be one of the safest cities actually in Pakistan."*

4. Impact of Security on Travel and Family Life:

- *"Yeah, that's why Emirates. They're happy with me because I got platinum one time. But for the past two years I have started getting too busy. Traveling every three weeks, instead of one, is great."*
- *"So, even the culture has changed now. Even my family, they don't recognize me. Like I used to be. Yeah, because it's when you live most of your time in the country, away from your family, and even if you visit them every three or two weeks, you know, still I mean, there is a big, big cultural effect and it definitely does."*
- *"...But I mean, I tried to cover it by having this daily video conference with them, talking to them."*

5. Impact of Family Absence on Work Focus:

- *"It's staying away from my family; it helped me actually to focus more. Okay, because if you have a responsibility in front of you, you will always, you know, focus on the responsibility more than if they are here, and they are just doing nothing."*
- *"What I'm doing every day, you mean? Yeah. Yeah, we got up first at 4: 30 during the month... And then everybody goes to sleep."*
- *"I brought them here. First of all, my wife is working... and also she was worried about the kids."*

6. Perception of Pakistani Society:

- *"They are very welcoming. I mean, even when I was actually young... they will try to help you as much as they can."*

7. Organizational Support for Expats at Senior Level:

- *"Actually, my organization is actually very caring, I'm not saying no, they are good... Because we are humans, when you are the boss, you know, everybody will do whatever you want."*
- *"They have helped me because they are like, you know, as I said, it's part of my or their responsibility toward me."*
- *"...they will give him a ticket to come back and forth for his family to visit once in a month."*
- *"We have a contract called expats, or this is called secondment... They will give him a ticket to come back and forth for his family to visit once a month. These courses are a benefit..."*

8. Cultural Adjustment and Multicultural Background:

- *"Dubai, by nature, is a multicultural company. So, all my neighbors when I was even three years old, four years old were Indians and Pakistanis. We've been i Yeah, we've been living with them. So, I know the language. Since that time, I have understood Urdu and Hindi. But I don't speak it in a way that Yeah, but I understand that kind of 75-80% of the dialogue. And you know, when we were young, we would keep watching also what you know, Indian Bollywood movies and so forth. So it's helped me to understand the language and the culture and stuff, you know, from that perspective, I'm not a candidate that you know, you can see the difference and I've been struggling and so no, no, it was a smooth ride."*
- *"Because of the language as you said, I used to understand Hindi and Urdu. Yes, during that time. So, it's become easy for me to adjust this to the culture and so forth."*

9. Impact of Political Events on Personal Experience:

- *"After relocation, or was actually the security part because Pakistan doesn't have six and seven... I was here during Lal masjid,,of these actions I was here."*

- *"So, these kinds of things were a little bit very scary in a way that was for security, but after that, I mean, once these issues slowly resolved things were very nice."*

10. Family Dynamics and Decision-Making:

- *"My wife is working. I asked her if she wanted to come in. And so, she said no, she preferred to keep her career... And I don't want to bother with my kids and stuff."*
- *"She heard about this Lal masjid, and she said, No, no, no. Then I brought her here afterwards, like, you know, during the Nawaz Sharif era when he was, you know, I think in 2014 she came, and she actually stayed for almost two weeks then after that she went back."*

11. Work Challenges and Variety in Job Roles:

- *"But because I'm part of the management. It was easy for me because I can ask them if I need this. I need them to go on because they are doing it for others, for the CEO, for the EVPs, why not me, I am a VP."*
- *"Because every day, every time there is a new challenge, you know, so you don't feel like you know, I am doing a routine job, why am I doing things here."*

12. Balancing Work Responsibilities with Family Needs:

- *"Because my wife is taking care of it. But Homestake is still there. Because they're not with me. But I mean, I tried to cover it by having this daily video conference with them, talking to them."*
- *"...it is too difficult to balance between both, even Pakistanis if you see them that, you know, they have to drop their children to school, and then they have to go on a work tour."*

13. Perceived Differences in City Safety:

- *"...if we compare it to Karachi, Karachi is a very dangerous place. You cannot even do anything about Islamabad. It is considered to be one of the safest cities actually in Pakistan."*
- *"Yeah, that's why Emirates. They're happy with me because I got platinum one time. But for the past two years I have started getting too busy. Traveling every three weeks, instead of Oh, great."*

EW 2

1. Motivation for Relocation:

- *"I relocated to Pakistan because of my job."*
- *"My organization expanded its operations in this region, and I was assigned to manage a key project here."*

2. Initial Feelings and Concerns:

- *"Initially, I had mixed feelings."*
- *"While I was excited about the new opportunity and experiencing Pakistan's rich culture, I also had some concerns about adapting to a different environment."*
- *"We were both aware that my spouse would need emotional support during the adjustment period."*

3. Spousal Emotional Support:

- *"We were both aware that my spouse would need emotional support during the adjustment period."*
- *"We discussed this and made a conscious effort to be there for each other."*

4. Transformative Journey of Relocation:

- *"Overall, our relocation to Pakistan has been a transformative journey."*
- *"We've encountered challenges and made wonderful memories."*

5. Daily Routine and Cultural Immersion:

- *"My daily routine typically involves work, followed by exploring the city in the evenings or spending time with friends we've made here."*
- *"On weekends, we often travel to different parts of Pakistan to immerse ourselves in its culture and natural beauty."*

- *"...tasted diverse cuisines and enjoyed festivals and events."*

6. Impact on Spouse's Routine:

- *"My spouse's routine includes attending language classes, volunteering, and pursuing hobbies."*
- *"She has also made friends through expat groups, which helps her stay engaged and connected."*

7. Positive Perception of Pakistani Society:

- *"Yes, we have found Pakistani society to be very welcoming."*
- *"The warmth and hospitality of the people have made our stay here much more enjoyable."*

8. Spousal Adjustment Challenges:

- *"Some of the initial problems my spouse faced included language barriers, adapting to local customs, and building a social network."*
- *"These challenges were expected but still required patience and effort to overcome."*

9. Maintaining Work-Life Balance:

- *"While there were moments of stress during the adjustment phase, overall, I've been able to maintain good mental health through a combination of support from my organization, quality time with my spouse, and self-care activities."*
- *"Initially, there were some productivity challenges due to the adjustment period. However, with time and support from my organization, I've been able to strike a better work-life balance."*

10. Organizational Support Suggestions:

- *"Organizations can offer more comprehensive pre-departure training for both the expatriate and their spouse, including cultural sensitivity training."*
- *"They can also establish a support network in the host country and offer flexibility in work arrangements to accommodate family needs."*

11. Organizational Influence on Adjustment:

- *"My organization has been quite supportive. They provided resources for cultural orientation, language training, and access to counseling services, which has made a significant difference in our adjustment process."*

12. Reflective Transformation Through Challenges:

- *"Overall, our relocation to Pakistan has been a transformative journey."*
- *"We've encountered challenges and made wonderful memories."*
- *Enhancing Expatriate Support Systems:*
- *"Organizations can offer more comprehensive pre-departure training for both the expatriate and their spouse, including cultural sensitivity training."*
- *"They can also establish a support network in the host country and offer flexibility in work arrangements to accommodate family needs."*

EW3

1. Professional Experience and Assignments:

- *"I'm 58 years old and have been working at Oman's embassy for more than 30 years. I've been assigned to different countries over the years."*
- *"I got assigned here."*
- *"Before the family arrived in Pakistan, I had to come prior to them to make sure everything will be done before they arrive. This is in terms of finding a school for them and a house. It also gave me a chance to look into the place and the people I'd be working with."*
- *"...a chance to look into the place and the people I'd be working with."*

2. Excitement and Comfort in Relocation:

- *"To be honest with you, I was rather excited to start this new journey and experience something new."*
- *"...reminded me a lot of the previous country that I was located in, so this excitement was also because I could see some similarities of my previous experience, hence it made me really comfortable and happy."*

3. Concerns for Family's Adjustment:

- *"I think I was worried about my family not adjusting well to this new environment, as if they're not happy or face any challenges in the new relocation, it would eventually affect the whole family, hence ensuring they were comfortable was the key issue for me."*
- *"Of course, if one has issues adjusting, so will the other person eventually."*
- *"But so far in Pakistan I don't think both of us have faced any major issues or anything like that."*

- *"...we did face a small issue with the housing, but other than that nothing major happened."*

4. Spouse's Happiness and Adjustment:

- *"She was actually pretty happy with the relocation, especially here in Pakistan as she enjoys places with nature and greenery... the local people are very welcoming."*
- *"...ensuring that we're both there for each other is really important for the adjustment phase."*

5. Exploration of Pakistan:

- *"In terms of exploring Pakistan, honestly I haven't really explored it as much as I'd like to, we've been outside of Islamabad a few times, but I'd like to have more trips to other cities, but due to work and the children's school, we haven't been able to."*

6. Perception of Pakistani Society:

- *"Very welcoming and kindhearted. Everyone we've worked with or even encountered has been very generous and hospitable. Like society as a whole is incredibly kind."*

7. Support and Communication in Marriage:

- *"Of course, we're both very open with each other, especially in terms of sharing our issues."*
- *"Everything is going smoothly with us and we're really happy with this relocation."*
- *"Being there and giving them support is all that is needed if I'm being honest with you. No matter the problem, whether small or big, you should always provide them with the needed support, especially emotionally."*

- *"...an important problem we were facing was the house... hence I made sure that we both found a house that we're both 100% happy with."*

8. Work-Life Balance and Mental Health:

- *"Nothing at all since this isn't my first relocation so I'm really used to leaving home and living somewhere completely new."*
- *"No, Alhamdulillah."*

9. Organizational Support:

- *"Pretty well, everyone at the organization has been helping us, whether with small things or major things, that's what makes everything easier for us, having the support of the people around you."*

10. Anticipation and Comfort in Similarities:

- *"To be honest with you, I was rather excited to start this new journey and experience something new."*
- *"...reminded me a lot of the previous country that I was located in, so this excitement was also because I could see some similarities of my previous experience, hence it made me really comfortable and happy."*

GROUP B: EXPATRIATE SPOUSES (ES)

ES 1

1. Emotional Rollercoaster of Relocation:

- *"Excited, nervous and a bit scared if I'm being honest."*
- *"...feeling anxious about being in a new environment with something that is completely new."*
- *"...happy to experience something completely new and out of the blue."*
- *"...as I'm a family-centric person...it was like leaving my previous life behind and moving to somewhere completely new."*

2. Challenges of Adjustment and Missing Home:

- *"I think adjusting was the biggest hurdle..."*
- *"...you're missing stuff back home and you just keep on hearing the news via video call..."*
- *"...you just need to accept that you're far away from them."*

3. Spousal Support in Adjustment:

- *"I think he adjusted better than me, he was able to immediately fall into a specific routine..."*
- *"...he's used to it."*
- *"...we both have to be strong and there for each other, especially for the kids as well."*
- *"...I think it even made us stronger as we rely on each other way more now."*

- *"...we only have each other here. So I wouldn't say suffered but actually, we bonded better because of the relocation."*
- *"...especially for the kids as well. If I show that I'm feeling uncomfortable or depressed...it will affect us all."*
- *"...he's always helping me look at the bright side of things..."*

4. Positive Outlook and Nature's Influence:

- *"...when we arrived here it was not what I have expected if I'm honest..."*
- *"I guess the nature here has really calmed me down and just made me incredibly happy."*

5. Establishing Routine for Stability:

- *"Adjustment didn't really happen till we found houses that we were able to settle in and form a specific routine."*
- *"By now, I'm very well aware of my surroundings and know my place around and have my group of friends that make everything better."*
- *"...my role has changed slightly than back home...I'm just doing things differently."*
- *"...I actually have more free time now, especially as we have housemaids to help us."*

6. Family-Centric Daily Routine:

- *"On weekdays I wake around 7 am to get the kids ready for school..."*
- *"After we have lunch, I chat with kids while my husband naps..."*
- *"...then go back home, serve dinner and then get the kids to bed."*

7. Appreciation of Pakistani Culture:

- *"...we're pretty much familiar with Pakistan's culture such as the traditions, food, and people."*
- *"Very welcoming and hospital. So far, we haven't encountered any bad encounter with any Pakistani and that says a lot."*
- *"In general, we noticed that Pakistanis are really kind and generous and very welcoming people."*

8. Enhanced Bond in Marriage Amidst Challenges:

- *"Not at all, quite the opposite, I think it even made us stronger as we rely on each other way more now."*
- *"...we only have each other here. So, I wouldn't say suffered but actually, we bonded better because of the relocation."*

9. Organization's Role in Adjustment:

- *"The organization/embassy has been pretty accommodating to our needs..."*
- *"In terms of any issues that we encounter, I think they're always there to resolve those issues and it's just nice having their support."*

10. Adaptation to New Routines:

- *"...falling into a routine, starting to socialize with new people who eventually become your friends..."*
- *"...doing stuff that you're not used to doing, even as small as taking daily walks around the neighborhood."*

11. Complexities of Spousal Adjustment:

- *"...if I show that I'm feeling uncomfortable or depressed in the new country, it will reflect on my spouse..."*

- *"...it will affect the whole family, hence ensuring they were comfortable was the key issue for me."*

12. Balancing Positivity and Realism:

- *"I've learned to keep on positive emotions, to not complain and focus on the positive aspects."*
- *"...forcing myself to leave the house, take a walk somewhere and just get a fresh of air..."*
- *"...keeping in mind as you live your life here, you're missing stuff back home and you just keep on hearing the news via video call..."*
- *"...I think everyone has one of those days."*

13. Impact of Nature on Well-being:

- *"I guess the nature here has really calmed me down and just made me incredibly happy."*
- *"...missing major events back home such as missing my niece's wedding."*

14. Cultural Adjustment Challenges:

- *"...you never know what to expect but at the same time, you're trying to make a new place as your home..."*
- *"...you're slowly shifting to a new foreign routine, especially something you're not used to doing."*

15. Role of Organizations in Adjustment:

- *"...providing those families prior to their departure to the new country with information guide..."*
- *"...they're always there to resolve those issues, and it's just nice having their support."*

ES 2

1. Language Barrier Challenges:

- *"Definitely, the language barrier was a hurdle at first. Urdu is so different from English!"*
- *"Slowly, I started picking up phrases and basic conversation."*
- *"Learning a new language can be overwhelming, but Ali's patience and the support of my neighbors helped me navigate through the initial challenges."*

2. Adapting to Different Pace of Life:

- *"Another challenge was adapting to the pace of life. Things are more relaxed here..."*
- *"Initially, the lack of punctuality and slower bureaucratic processes threw me off."*
- *"While it took time to adjust, I've come to appreciate the more relaxed pace, understanding that it's a unique aspect of the local lifestyle."*

3. Welcoming Attitude of Locals:

- *"Everyone has been extremely welcoming and kind."*
- *"My neighbors often invite me over for chai and homemade dishes like Haleem or Nihari."*
- *"The curious stares, which I found surprising at first, are simply a reflection of genuine interest and friendliness."*

4. Daily Life Routine:

- *"Mornings usually start with helping Ali get ready for work."*
- *"In the evenings, I spend time with Ali, watch Pakistani dramas with him, and try to practice my Urdu more."*

- *"Exploring local markets like Liberty Market or attending yoga classes adds a unique flavor to my daily routine."*

5. Building Social Network:

- *"I joined a group for expat wives online, and we meet up regularly for coffee or potlucks."*
- *"But honestly, my closest friends are my neighbors. They introduce me to local customs and events..."*
- *"Connecting with Ali's colleagues and their spouses has broadened my social circle, creating a sense of community."*
- *"My online support group has been invaluable for sharing experiences and seeking advice."*
- *"Connecting with fellow expat housewives online has created a virtual support system, making the adjustment journey more manageable."*

6. Surprising Cultural Aspects:

- *"The strong sense of family and community here is heartwarming."*
- *"In the beginning, I was surprised by the gender roles, but I understand it's part of the culture."*
- *"The emphasis on tradition and respect for elders, while initially surprising, has become integral to my appreciation of the culture."*

7. Rewards of Being an Expat Housewife:

- *"Definitely the personal growth. I've become more adaptable, patient, and open-minded."*
- *"Most importantly, I've built a beautiful life with Ali, experiencing a culture so different from my own."*

- *"Every challenge has been a steppingstone to personal growth, and building a life here has been an adventure filled with learning and joy."*

8. Joint Family System Experience:

- *"Initially, living with Ali's extended family was overwhelming."*
- *"Now, I see it as a blessing. They've welcomed me with open arms, included me in celebrations, and become like a second family."*
- *"Navigating the dynamics of a joint family required time and understanding, but it has evolved into a source of support and love."*

9. Safety and Security Measures:

- *"Honestly, I haven't felt unsafe here."*
- *"Of course, I take precautions like being mindful of my surroundings, dressing modestly in certain areas..."*
- *"Despite any concerns, the sense of community and the watchful eyes of neighbors contribute to an overall feeling of comfort and security."*

10. Mental Health and Support System:

- *"Moving to a new country, leaving your familiar support system behind, can be isolating."*
- *"My expat friends understand the struggles, and Ali is incredibly supportive."*
- *"Having a strong support network, both online and offline, has been crucial in overcoming moments of homesickness and maintaining positive mental health."*

11. Pakistani Food:

- *"I enjoy cooking, so I try out Pakistani recipes, recently mastered making a decent Biryani!"*

- *"Every visit to someone's home involves a delicious feast and endless cups of chai!"*
- *"Cooking and sharing meals have been a delightful way for me to connect with the local culture."*

12. Exploration of Local Markets:

- *"Exploring local markets like Liberty Market. But there are also shopping malls like Packages mall and emporium if I want to buy branded clothes."*
- *"Discovering the vibrant markets and shopping spots has added an exciting dimension to my time here."*
- *"From traditional markets to modern malls, the diversity in shopping experiences has been fascinating."*

13. Integration with Traditional Events:

- *"They even helped me decorate my apartment for Eid!"*
- *"Attending a Sufi qawwali, wedding events like Mehndi, Barat, and Walima. Oh, I love how they get dressed in colorful outfits like lehnga."*
- *"Participating in traditional events and celebrations has deepened my connection with the local community."*

14. Supportive Role of Spouse Family:

- *"Ali's family has been amazing. They helped me navigate bureaucratic processes, learn local customs, and even introduced me to trusted vendors and doctors."*
- *"His colleagues and their spouses have also been welcoming, inviting me to events and offering tips."*
- *"Having a supportive husband, along with the warmth of his family and colleagues, has made my transition into this new life much smoother."*

15. Balancing Adaptation and Preserving Identity:

- *"Learning everyone's names, respecting the hierarchy, and adapting to the dynamics took time."*
- *"While adapting to the local culture, it's essential to preserve one's own identity and values."*
- *"Open communication and mutual respect have been crucial in finding a balance between assimilation and preserving my individuality."*

16. Navigating Cultural Differences:

- *"In the beginning, I was surprised by the curious stares, but people are simply genuinely interested in foreigners."*
- *"The emphasis on tradition was initially surprising, but now I appreciate the respect given to elders."*
- *"Understanding and navigating through cultural differences has been a continuous learning process during my time here."*

17. Celebration of Multicultural Experiences:

- *"I hope it encourages others to be open to new experiences and embrace the richness of different cultures."*
- *"Adapting takes time, so be patient with yourself and find your support system, whether it's family, friends, or online communities."*
- *"Embracing multicultural experiences has not only enriched my life but also opened doors to new perspectives and understanding."*

1. Adjustment to New Lifestyle:

- *"The major challenge has been the adjustment to a different lifestyle."*
- *"For instance, back home, I used to work, but here, I've taken on the role of a full-time housewife."*
- *"It was an adjustment for both of us."*
- *"Mornings usually involve coordinating with household staff and planning meals, which is a new experience for me."*
- *"The afternoons are more relaxed, and I try to explore local markets or attend social events."*
- *"Balancing household responsibilities and personal time is a key aspect of my daily routine."*

2. Balancing Personal Time and Cultural Adaptation:

- *"The challenge lies in balancing my personal time with adapting to the cultural expectations."*
- *"Mornings usually involve coordinating with household staff and planning meals, which is a new experience for me."*
- *"The afternoons are more relaxed, and I try to explore local markets or attend social events."*

3. Social Networking Challenges and Solutions:

- *"Initially, it was a bit challenging due to language barriers and cultural differences."*

- *"However, over time, I joined a local expat community, attended events like the vibrant 'EID' festival, and that helped me connect with both expats and Pakistanis."*
- *"The key is putting oneself out there and being open to new experiences."*
- *"I joined a local expat community, attended events like the vibrant 'EID' festival, and that helped me connect with both expats and Pakistanis."*
- *"Connecting with fellow expatriates has added a sense of community and shared experiences."*
- *"Active participation in expat community events has been a positive element in my social life."*

4. Financial Adjustments and Unexpected Costs:

- *"The cost of living has been generally lower than what we were used to, which is a plus."*
- *"However, there were some unexpected costs due to inflation, recession and unstable political circumstances."*
- *"Managing finances requires flexibility and preparedness for unforeseen expenses."*

5. Security Precautions and Political Situation:

- *"We've taken several precautions, like hiring a reliable security company and avoiding certain areas."*
- *"The political situation can be tense at times, but it hasn't directly affected our daily lives."*
- *"Staying informed and being cautious is part of the adjustment process."*

6. Local Welcoming Attitude:

- *"The locals have generally been welcoming and understanding."*
- *"There were instances where cultural norms differed, like the dress code."*
- *"People have been patient and willing to explain things, making the adjustment smoother."*

7. Handling Cultural Differences and Events:

- *"Sure, there was a wedding we attended where the customs were quite different from what I was used to."*
- *"The elaborate ceremonies, the vibrant colors, and the extensive guest list were overwhelming initially."*
- *"However, I embraced the experience, asked questions, and learned about their traditions."*

8. Well-Being and Mental Health Strategies:

- *"It's crucial to find a support system, and I've been fortunate to connect with other spouses."*
- *"We share our experiences, support each other, and explore wellness activities together."*
- *"Taking time for self-care, like enjoying local cuisine or visiting historical sites, has been essential for my mental and emotional well-being."*

9. Positive Reflection on Expat Journey:

- *"Thank you for having me. It's been a pleasure sharing my story."*
- *"It's crucial to find a support system, and I've been fortunate to connect with other spouses."*
- *"Understanding and respecting the local culture goes a long way in making the transition smoother."*

10. Challenges in Language Adaptation:

- *"The major challenge has been the adjustment to a different lifestyle."*
- *"Definitely the language barrier was a hurdle at first."*

11. Cultural Awareness Workshops:

- *"Even his organization has been supportive, providing language classes and cultural awareness workshops for expat spouses."*
- *"Learning local customs has been facilitated by the organization through cultural awareness programs."*
- *"The support from the organization in terms of cultural orientation has been valuable."*

12. Impact of Inflation and Economic Factors:

- *"However, there were some unexpected costs due to inflation, recession and unstable political circumstances."*
- *"Navigating economic uncertainties has been an ongoing challenge."*
- *"Understanding and managing financial adjustments in response to economic factors."*

13. Adapting to Dress Code and Attire:

- *"There were instances where cultural norms differed, like the dress code."*
- *"I had to adapt to wearing more traditional Pakistani attire like the 'shalwar kameez' for certain events."*
- *"Understanding and respecting local dress codes has been part of my cultural adjustment."*

14. Flexibility in Cultural Exchange:

- *"However, I embraced the experience, asked questions, and learned about their traditions."*
- *"Flexibility and openness to cultural exchange have been key elements in adapting to diverse traditions."*
- *"Navigating cultural differences with curiosity and a positive mindset has enriched my experience."*

15. Political Awareness and Adjustment:

- *"Staying informed and being cautious is part of the adjustment process."*
- *"The political situation can be tense at times, but it hasn't directly affected our daily lives."*
- *"Political awareness and adaptability play a role in mitigating potential challenges."*

16. Personal Growth through Expat Journey:

- *"I've become more adaptable, patient, and open-minded."*
- *"I've learned a new language, discovered delicious food, and made amazing friends."*
- *"The expat journey has contributed significantly to my personal growth and resilience."*

GROUP C: MANAGER PERSONNEL (MP)

MP 1

1. Isolation due to Security Protocols:

- *"...expats working in an organization are very much isolated from the other employees because of security reasons..."*
- *"...they have limitations or very strict guidelines while traveling and moving out of their homes..."*
- *"...because they don't have freedom to move without the security clearance. So, they refrain from bringing in their families because they will be in those isolated complexes, and they'll face a lot of security concerns. So, they really don't bring in their families. It's not a preference, because moving out of the complex or moving out of the office zone, they must require proper security clearance. Only then can they move out of the city or visit public places in the Twin Cities. Even then they must be very careful when planning their movements."*

2. Family Separation and Limited Visits:

- *"...far away from their families... limited means to visit back home..."*
- *"...refrain from bringing in their families because they will be in isolated complexes and face security concerns..."*

3. Language Adaptation Challenges:

- *"...mostly, they are Chinese national speakers, and they are not very, very well versed with English..."*
- *"...they have their own accent of English, so they use translators or Chinese-English translation..."*

- *"...they use translators or Chinese-English translation to get a grip, once they are prepared, and they get their hands on it. Pretty much comfortable..."*

4. Cultural Integration and Comfort:

- *"...they gel with the local people; they participate in a lot of engagement activities and get together in the workplace..."*
- *"...they enjoy our cuisine. They love our culture they adopted where possible..."*

5. Adjustment Time and Learning Curve:

- *"...after two to three months, they are pretty much equipped with our basic vocabulary..."*
- *"...experts who are here working for a longer period of time provide a good interface for newcomers to quickly grasp cultural norms and working ethics..."*

6. Security Protocols and Organization Support:

- *"...they have their own protocols they discuss among the group of experts..."*
- *"...dedicated team of security so they interact. They make everything happen for them..."*

7. Interaction with Expat Spouses:

- *"...I had interaction with the family. A couple of expats were here in Pakistan for a brief visit..."*
- *"...they don't restrict them from interacting with Pakistanis..."*

8. Impact of Personal Issues on Work:

- *"...I haven't ever seen an incident or heard of any incident where the long-distance relationship or less interaction with them... has affected the expat in their work..."*
- *"...they are less dependent on each other to create issues in each other's lives..."*

9. Comparison with Chinese Work Culture:

- *"...Chinese culture is...the husband and wife both working is considered normal, so both partners are working independently..."*
- *"...they are pretty much used to this culture. Just like the way Pakistani expats run their families remotely, they run it the same way..."*

10. Organization's Role in Adjustment:

- *"...I think if the comfort of security is given to the expats, they will be more happy..."*
- *"...cultural exchange program or some engagement activity based on culture... make them feel at home..."*

11. Daily Work Environment:

- *"...In the office, they are very comfortable, they gel with the local people, they participate in a lot of engagement activities and get together in the workplace..."*
- *"...they communicate very well in the organization and have a very good comfort level with Pakistani people..."*

12. Personal Adjustment Challenges:

- *"...adjusting was the biggest hurdle... falling into a routine, starting to socialize with new people who eventually become your friends..."*
- *"...keeping in mind as you live your life here, you're missing stuff back home and you just keep on hearing the news via video call..."*

13. Security as a Primary Concern:

- *"...they have limitations or very strict guidelines while traveling and moving out of their homes..."*

- *"...security management here is not very conducive in Pakistan, especially with respect to the expatriates we have in our organization..."*

14. Organizational Support for Adjustment:

- *"...dedicated team of security so they interact. They make everything happen for them..."*
- *"...we try to make them at home as much as we can. It's a continuous process. So, we incorporate whatever the requirements are those security protocols yet ensuring their security and freedom of movement..."*

15. Impact of Cultural Engagement:

- *"...they enjoy our cuisine. They love our culture they adopted where possible..."*
- *"...we have a cultural exchange program, or some engagement activity based on culture like celebrating Chinese nationality here to celebrate a mid-autumn festival, or Chinese new year..."*

16. Family Separation Dilemmas:

- *"...far away from their families... limited means to visit back home..."*
- *"...if they're not happy or face any challenges in the new relocation, it would eventually affect the whole family..."*

17. Positive Impact on Marriage:

- *"...they bonded better because of the relocation..."*
- *"...we only have each other here. So, I wouldn't say suffered but actually we bonded better because of the relocation..."*

MP 2

1. Strategic Importance of Diversity:

- *"So, like I said, diversity and inclusivity is something that is one of the strategic pillars in HR."*
- *"And at PTCL we have a very comprehensive framework in place."*

2. Diversity and Inclusivity:

- *"And we have certain targets to achieve, so we make sure that people from all walks of life have a chance to be evaluated for employment at PTCL."*
- *"And we have monthly and quarterly reporting to the board as well on diversity as a separate subject."*
- *"So, we make sure that we have different sets of people and they are being represented in our workforce."*
- *"I cannot give you the exact number of expats in other businesses but I'm sure there are many working in PTCL."*
- *"And we have monthly and quarterly reporting to the board as well on diversity as a separate subject."*
- *"We make sure that people from all walks of life have a chance to be evaluated for employment at PTCL."*
- *"Diversity and inclusivity...have become important globally and even in Pakistan, it has had a lot of significance in the recent past."*
- *"And we make sure that we have a diverse workforce and inclusivity is ensured at all levels."*

3. Expat Onboarding Support:

- *"Whenever you plan to bring in someone from outside Pakistan, obviously there is administrative support."*
- *"They get a disturbance allowance since they are coming from a different city or for that matter, a different country..."*

4. Communication and Cultural Alignment Issues:

- *"I feel there is a communication barrier..."*
- *"So, at times, the communication barrier is something that is avoided so that they know bits and pieces of the Urdu language..."*

5. Expat Adjustment Timeframe:

- *"So, they have a very subjective question. I cannot give you an exact timeframe."*
- *"I think 3-4 months are good enough to be, you know, familiarized, and well aligned with the culture."*

6. Impact of Spouses on Expat Work Performance:

- *"The mental health of the spouse is directly correlated with an expat or an individual."*
- *"If your spouse is facing a hard time or mental health compromised it directly affects your obviously commitments towards the organization..."*

7. Organization's Contribution to Adjustment:

- *"So, there is a suggestion to improve the security plan for expats here in Pakistan."*
- *"They can do basic prerequisites for an organization and work on their employee experience..."*
- *"Maybe we can add mandatory leave with your family to visit your hometown."*

- *"Another suggestion is to smoothen the touchpoints between the employee and the organization."*
- *"So, there is personal support since they are coming from a different background altogether, so a little handholding is done for a couple of months."*
- *"So, they can be realized with the culture with the environment of the country and the company."*
- *"There is a generic onboarding method in place already for every single expat, and it's part of the process."*
- *"In general, the process of onboarding is very comprehensive itself."*

8. Hybrid Work Options for Expats:

- *"Plus, they can be given an option to work remotely or for hybrid work."*
- *"If someone is not bringing their family, they can be given this option so that they give good performance with focus."*

9. Communication Barrier Avoidance:

- *"So, at times, the communication barrier is something that is avoided so that they know bits and pieces of Urdu language..."*
- *"Whenever you're starting discussions with others, we make sure that they understand whatever is being discussed."*

10. Cultural Alignment Challenges:

- *"Our culture is altogether different from the Middle East, for that matter, because they come from a different culture."*
- *"So, there are problems in cultural alignment and then communication barriers."*

11. Spouse's Impact on Expat Performance:

- *"If your spouse is facing a hard time or mental health compromised it directly affects your obviously commitments towards the organization..."*
- *"So, I think it goes without saying mental health is directly proportional to the performance of that expat for at least for a couple of months."*

12. Security Challenges in Karachi:

- *"In Karachi, yes, we had certain challenges when it comes to security."*
- *"I have worked with a couple of expats who had their families living in Karachi, I was in Karachi before this."*
- *"So, the main problem according to you was the security."*
- *"In Karachi, yes, we had certain challenges when it comes to security."*

MP3

1. Job and Company

- *"I work at XYZ Corporation, a multinational company with operations in Pakistan, Lahore."*
- *"I'm a project manager, which means I'm responsible for keeping projects on track, coordinating team efforts, and ensuring our clients' needs are met effectively."*

2. Diversity

- *"Every day, I'm immersed in a diverse workplace environment. It's one of the most fascinating aspects of my job."*
- *"Having a diverse workforce enriches our work culture immensely. It's like having a palette of colors to paint with; each perspective adds depth and vibrancy to our projects."*
- *"We have quite a few expatriates—around 15 of them—working alongside us, bringing their unique skills and experiences to the table."*

3. Expatriate Onboarding

- *"Our onboarding process for expatriates is quite thorough. We provide comprehensive orientation sessions covering everything from cultural nuances to practical tips for navigating life in Pakistan. Additionally, we assign mentors to guide them through the initial adjustment period."*

4. Challenges faced by Expatriates.

- *"One of the biggest challenges expatriates face is adjusting to the cultural differences. For example, understanding local customs and communication styles can take time."*

5. Security Concerns

- *"Also, security concerns and bureaucratic hurdles can be daunting initially."*

6. Impact of Expatriate Spouses on Adjustment and Performance

- *"Yes, I've had the pleasure of interacting with expatriate spouses during company events and informal gatherings. It's always interesting to hear their perspectives and share experiences."*

- *"Absolutely. If a spouse is struggling to adjust, it can weigh heavily on the working expatriate. After all, it's hard to focus on work when your loved ones are facing challenges."*

7. Support for Expatriates

- *"I try to offer a supportive ear and practical advice whenever I can. Whether it's recommending a reliable translator or sharing insights into local customs, I aim to make their transition smoother."*

8. Support for Expatriate Spouses

- *"Yes, I've had the pleasure of interacting with expatriate spouses during company events and informal gatherings. It's always interesting to hear their perspectives and share experiences."*
- *"Absolutely. If a spouse is struggling to adjust, it can weigh heavily on the working expatriate. After all, it's hard to focus on work when your loved ones are facing challenges."*

9. Suggestions for Improvement

- *"I believe organizations can improve the adjustment process by fostering a sense of community and providing tailored support services for expatriate spouses. Whether it's organizing cultural exchange programs or helping with practical matters like finding housing, every little bit helps. Ultimately, it's about creating a welcoming environment where expatriate families can thrive."*

MP4

1. Workplace Description

- *"I work at a multinational firm in Lahore."*
- *"I'm the Project Manager, overseeing a team of engineers and IT specialists."*

2. Diversity Importance

- *"Our team brings together a wealth of experience and viewpoints, which is fantastic for problem-solving."*
- *"We have about 5-7 expatriates on my project team specifically."*

3. Daily Interaction with Expatriates

- *"I interact with most of them regularly. There's constant collaboration between departments, and sometimes we grab lunch together to discuss project updates in a more informal setting."*

4. Expatriate Onboarding Protocol

- *"Before arrival, we provide extensive pre-departure information about Pakistan, including safety protocols, and visa procedures. Upon arrival, we offer a comprehensive orientation program covering everything from company policies to navigating the local transportation system."*

5. Security Protocol for Expats

- *"We conduct thorough security briefings before relocation, outlining safe areas, cultural sensitivities, and emergency protocols."*

6. Impact of Spouse Adjustment on Work

- *"If a spouse is struggling to adapt, it can definitely impact the expat's focus and morale."*

7. Measures for Spouse Adjustment

- *"We offer resources like language classes and spouse career counseling. Additionally, we connect spouses with local social groups and expat communities to help build a support network outside of work."*

8. Suggestions for Improvement

- *"Companies can create a more welcoming environment by offering practical assistance like finding housing and schooling for children. Building a strong*

support network for spouses through social events and online forums can also be very beneficial."