

# A Study on factors affecting the success of women expat in international assignments

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**ABSTRACT:** In the past few decades, the number of women employees who go outside India and work has increased dramatically. The reasons for the same are freedom given to females and equal opportunities given to them in the organizations. Women these days are considered equal to men in taking up responsibilities and fulfilling them even in the international scenario. But like the male counterparts, the success ratio of women expats is very less. The paper aims to find out the relationship between the factors that contribute to the success of women expats in the current times. Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation and multiple linear regression analysis have been done for the purpose of data analysis. Managerial suggestions and recommendations have been made to increase the women success ratio in international assignments.

**KEYWORDS:** Expat, Women, International Assignments, Success, Factors

## I. INTRODUCTION

It has increased in the current times of globalization. In India during the past two decades the number of global organizations is increasing continuously and as a result more and more employees are sent on international assignments. A significant chunk of these employees are the women working in the organizations.

It was observed in the earlier times that the management was biased towards sending male employees on international assignments which led to women employees' exclusion from promotion in the careers.

As per a survey conducted by a leading agency only 14% of the women employees form the part of workforce in international assignments. The factors which contribute to this are unconscious bias towards female employees, lack of women who volunteer for international assignments, lack of organizational and family support to women in such assignments. There are four types of approaches in

staffing in international assignments which are the ethnocentric approach, the polycentric approach, Regio centric approach and the geocentric approach. In the 21st century women are still underutilized in organizations according to Adler 1993. They employ these days are also sending more and more women employees abroad to work as a part of the equal opportunity initiative. But working in international scenarios along with the pressure associated with it also has a lot of cultural adjustment issues and a plethora of problems like emotional issues, work-related issues which contribute to expat failures, especially with females.

The following are the research objectives:

- i. To find out the factors which have a relationship with women success in International assignments
- ii. To find out the reasons for failures of women in International assignments
- iii. To recommend managerial suggestions which would result in a high success ratio of women in International assignments.

of these systems (mainly cam-based) have been

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to Kartika and Lee (2014) emotional and Cultural intelligence, experience abroad, the support of family, the adaptability of the family has a positive influence on the expat adjustment in an international assignment. (Dowling, Festing and Engle, 2008, 90; Hyde, 2002) noted that short-term International assignments arise because of contingency issues and are less expensive than long-term assignments. In short-term assignments the relationship-based factors affect the performance of employees.

(Dowling, Festing and Engle, 2008, 90; Hyde, 2002) concluded that long-term International assignments usually range from one year to five-

year duration and the employees are expected to perform clear cut responsibilities duty and roles. Danisman (2014) observed that in International assignments cross-cultural transfer of human competencies takes place'. Andreason (2003) believes that during International assignments the expats should concentrate not only on adjusting to new working conditions but also learning the culture of the new places. (Goodall et al, 2007) observed that 16 to 40% of employees in international assignments return early because of their inability to adjust in a new environment. And those were not able to cope but do not return less effective in their work. (Ren et al., 2014; Sinangil and Ones2001) , pointed that in order to succeed in international assignment the person should have the right ability ,right attitude and the right adaptation skills along with job satisfaction and confidence .(Ghafoor et al., 2011).observed that 20% of the expatriates return home early.

According to Harzing (2001), Those expats who contribute to the networking of the organization are known as spiders in international assignments. Rosalie Tung (1981) after thorough study of 80 MNC's concluded that four factors are vital for success of expats in international assignments which are namely Technical competency, Personal factors, Ability to cope with environment and the Family situation of the expat. Blackhurst and Cummins, (2005) found that in case of dual career couples the companies should make family friendly International assignments for overcoming the challenge of diminished candidate pool in case of dual career couples. Adler's books, Competitive Frontiers: observes that organizations have become more inclusive in nature which are giving women employees the opportunities to grow in their respective careers.

Nancy Adler's (1984) points out that women do not want to take overseas assignments in the careers. The other problem which the face is the unwillingness of their spouse to relocate because of their International assignments. Linehan and Walsh 1999 pointed that the host country reactions determine whether the women employees will be given the role of expat by an MNC.

Kanter (1977) found at gender biases in organizations are not because of males and females working in the organization but are because of the organizational structure.Colinson and Hearn (1994 )concluded that when women were not in the work force the organization structures were made according to the males working in the organization. Adler (1993) found that companies are reluctant to send women on international assignments due to the attitude of people based at corporate headquarters

and also that that their safety concerns discourage organizations to select them on international assignment. Selmer and Leung, 2002 & 2003 pointed that women need to smash the glass ceiling at the domestic level and then move to International assignments.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Research design is series of steps which helps the researcher in doing research in a cost-effective and scientific manner. The design in the study is analytical and diagnostic in nature. The dependent variable in the research is women success in international assignment and the independent variables are organizational support, family support, personal characteristics, host country support and job satisfaction. For the purpose of the study the following hypotheses have been framed.Ho1 There is no relationship between Organizational Support and success of women in International assignments.

H1 There is a relationship between Organizational Support and success of women in International assignments.

H02 There is no relationship between Family Support and success of women in International assignments.

H2 There is a relationship between Family Support and success of women in International assignments.

H03 There is no relationship between Personal Traits and success of women in International assignments.

H3 There is a relationship between Personal Traits and success of women in International assignments.

H04 There is no relationship between Host Country Support and success of women in International assignments.

H4 There is a relationship between Host Country Support and success of women in International assignments.

H05 There is no relationship between Job Satisfaction and success of women in International assignments.

H5 There is a relationship between Job Satisfaction and success of women in International assignments.

### IV. SAMPLING DESIGN

The sampling frame used in the study was judgmental and convenience based in nature. 168 women employees who had been on international assignments was the sample size used in this research. A scientific data Collection instrument and was sent to 200 women employees who had worked in international environment. 180 respondents filled the survey instrument. Twelve incomplete questionnaires were rejected. Both quantitative and qualitative information was collected during the

research phase for analysis and interpretation of the results. The survey form was sent to the females on Google Forms.

**V. STATISTICAL DESIGN**

For the purpose of data analysis Pearson Coefficient of Correlation and Multiple Linear Regression analysis was carried out. Multiple linear regression analysis is used to find the degree of statistical relation between variables. The data was tabulated using the MS Excel. For the purpose of data analysis SPSS statistical package for Social Sciences was used along with other online calculators.

A scientific data collection instrument was prepared which was both reliable and valid. The construct had the following parts.

1. Demographic information
2. Questions about the international assignments
3. Organizational support
4. Family support
5. Personal characteristics
6. Host country support
7. Job related questions
8. Problems and issues faced in international assignments.
9. Suggestions for better efficiency of women employees in international assignments.

The limitations of the survey method applied to the research along with the unwillingness of the respondents to speak on confidential and controversial matters.

**Table 1 Correlations**

	WS	FS	OS	PT	JS	HCS
WS Pearson Correlation	1	.878**	.632**	.542**	.158*	.108
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.041	.162
N	168	168	168	168	168	168
FS Pearson Correlation	.878**	1	.463**	.794**	.231**	.159*
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.003	.040
N	168	168	168	168	168	168
OS Pearson Correlation	.632**	.463**	1	.343**	.250**	.171*
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.001	.026
N	168	168	168	168	168	168
PT Pearson Correlation	.542**	.794**	.343**	1	.600**	.412**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
N	168	168	168	168	168	168
JS Pearson Correlation	.158*	.231**	.250**	.600**	1	.943**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.041	.003	.001	.000		.000
N	168	168	168	168	168	168
HCS Pearson Correlation	.108	.159*	.171*	.412**	.943**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.162	.040	.026	.000	.000	
N	168	168	168	168	168	168

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Table 2 Variables Entered/Removed<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	HCS, FS, OS, PT, JS <sup>b</sup>		Enter

a. Dependent Variable: WS

b. All requested variables entered.

**Table 3 Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	1.000 <sup>a</sup>	1.000	1.000	.00000

a. Predictors: (Constant), HCS, JS, FS, PT, OS

**Table 4 ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12.500	5	2.500	60649797042579 31.000	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	.000	84	.000		
	Total	12.500	89			

a. Dependent Variable: WS

b. Predictors: (Constant), HCS, JS, FS, PT, OS

**Table 5 Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.000	.000		254348416.243	.000
	FS	-9.360E-16	.000	.000	.000	1.000
	OS	1.000	.000	2.000	67444308.716	.000
	PT	-9.328E-15	.000	.000	.000	1.000
	JS	4.882E-15	.000	.000	.000	1.000
	HCS	-1.000	.000	-1.342	-77877979.585	.000

a. Dependent Variable: WS

The regression equation between the variables is as follows = 5.000000 + 1.000000 FS - 1.000000 PT + 1.000000 JS - 1.000000 HCS

**1. Y and X relationship**

R square ( $R^2$ ) equals **1.000000**. It means that the hundred percent of the variance of the dependent variable Y is because of the predictors. There is also strong positive relationship among the variables.

**2. Correlation:** The Correlation (r value) between Women Success and Family Support, Organizational Support, Personal Traits and Job satisfaction is .878, .632<sup>\*\*</sup>,.542<sup>\*\*</sup>,.158, .108,respectively.

**3. Goodness of fit**

The regression values right tailed are right-tailed,  $F_{(1,163)} = 6.166413591e+25$ , p-value = **0.00000**. Since p-value <  $\alpha$  (0.05), we reject the  $H_0$ .

**4. Residual normality**

The linear regression assumes normality for the residual errors. Since the Shapiro Wilk p-

value equals **2.23900e-9**. It is assumed that the data is not normally distributed, but the sample size is sufficiently large.

**5. Homoscedasticity - homogeneity of variance**

The White test p-value equals **1.000000** (F=0.00000). It is assumed that the variance is homogeneous.

On the basis of the above the null hypotheses are not accepted. The factor which has the highest correlation with women success in international assignments is family support followed by the organizational support. The personal traits are also responsible for some of the success in international assignments, but job satisfaction and host country support does not have a strong correlation. The factor which has the highest positive correlation with women success in International assignments is Family Support followed by Organizational Support and Personal Traits. Rest other variables have a

positive relationship but is weak which are Job Satisfaction and Host Country Support.

The companies should look at the reasons which are contributing to the workforce disparity, why women are less in international assignments and when the reasons should be identified finding solution for those would be easy. If the problems and unconscious bias towards women employees' efforts should be made by the top management to remove such biases. It should be properly communicated to the employees that the organizations are equal opportunity employers.

The needs of the requirement of the women employees going on international assignment should be identified, and maximum support should be provided to them like spouse employment assistance, children education, housing, and other needs.

A very thorough and proper pre-departure training should be provided to women employees on psychological and emotional issues. The use of structured techniques should be done while selecting female employees on international assignments.

The task of selecting the women employees on international assignments should be done by women HR managers so that their problems and issues can be openly and freely discussed.

The women employees along with their families should be given cross cultural training security briefing and Language training so that they do not face any cultural issues in international assignments.

The experienced women employees who have been on international assignments should be asked to mentor females going for international assignments so that they can brief them on the hardships and the problems faced by them during the course of such assignments. A supportive environment should be fostered for the women employees working abroad which include Flexi workers and more employer support from top to bottom

## VI. CONCLUSION:

Diversity and inclusion are keywords in today's international environment and these initiatives will help the employers in creating a diverse and competent workforce and international organizations in which women have equal rights and opportunities. And if the companies follow these initiatives the success ratio of women in International assignments will definitely increase.

## Area for further Research

In the future the research can be extended to women employees on international assignments in other countries apart from Indian nationality. The research can be focused also on international assignments in specific countries. The research can also be extended to the male counterparts.

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