

# INFLUENCE OF ETHNOCENTRISM ON THE WORK BEHAVIOUR OF EXPATRIATES

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## ABSTRACT

*With the surge in internationalisation of corporations, the number of expatriates in the workforce of organisations across the globe has dramatically increased. Presence of expatriates in the workforce has given rise to unique set of challenges. One of such is the effective management of expatriates' work behaviour in the workplace. Whereas earlier studies have indicated that ethnocentrism is a fundamental determinant of expatriates' work behaviour. Accordingly, this study aims at identifying the extent to which expatriates are ethnocentric in their work behaviour by analysing the variables intercultural communication apprehension (ICA), patriotism, and xenophobia. This is because it has been identified that these three constructs are related to ethnocentrism. A quantitative methodology was utilised for this study where data were collected from expatriates using an online self-administered questionnaire. Multivariate data analysis techniques were used in data analysis. The study's results revealed that ICA, patriotism, and xenophobia are related with expatriates' ethnocentric work behaviour. Thereby, the current study has offered a mechanism to measure the extent to which expatriates are ethnocentric in their work behaviour. A major outcome of this study would be providing insights into ethnocentrism and its influence on the work behaviour of expatriates.*

**Keywords:** Ethnocentrism, Expatriates, Intercultural communication apprehension, Patriotism, Xenophobia

## 1. Introduction

Continuously increasing number of expatriates has created a culturally diverse workplace. Whereas, managing this culturally diverse workforce has become a complex task (Amaram, 2007; Podsiadlowski et al., 2013; Siddiqui et al., 2020). Research has identified several challenges that have emerged when managing this diverse workforce, some of them are, influence of culture on job satisfaction, intergroup biases, stereotyping and prejudices, and discrimination (Amaram, 2007). With these challenges in place, concerns have been raised about the effectiveness of expatriates (Kealey & Protheroe, 1996). While some researchers have highlighted on the importance of effective management of a diverse workforce and thereby improving expatriate performance (Dowling et al., 2013; Patrick & Kumar, 2012). Ensuring higher level of expatriate performance will benefit both the organisation as well as the expatriate (Li, 2016). As mentioned earlier, it would be a tiresome task for organisations to ensure that expected levels of expatriate performance are being achieved, due to the complexities associated with managing expatriates in a culturally diverse workforce.

A deep investigation into organisational literature has derived the notion that the root cause of issues associated with managing a culturally diverse workplace (workplace with expatriates) is ethnocentrism (Patrick & Kumar, 2012). Ethnocentrism is viewed as the consideration that one's own group is at the core, and everyone else being measured with reference to it (Sumner, 1906). Furthermore, it was revealed that one of the major factors which will determine expatriate success or failure is ethnocentrism (Caligiuri et al., 2016), and it was identified by Florkowski and Fogel (1999), that ethnocentrism will have a negative influence on the work adjustment of the expatriate. Whereas the likeliness of expatriates failing in the expatriate adjustment process is higher among ethnocentric expatriates (Sims & Schraeder, 2004). Hence empirical literature has proven that ethnocentrism is one of the key causes which results in expatriate failure (Caligiuri et al., 2016; Florkowski & Fogel, 1999), it is crucial to identify what leads to or influences such ethnocentric behaviour among expatriates. Which will in turn be of immense support to expatriate management.

### *1.1 Research Problem*

As previously highlighted, effective management of expatriates has become a key priority of organisations which employs a multicultural workforce. Further, numerous research has been conducted in the field of expatriate management practices (e.g., Benson, 2011; Caligiuri & Colakoglu, 2007; Dowling et al., 2013; Finken & Pilz, 2023), yet studies concerning the organisational behaviour of expatriates tend to be limited (e.g., Mendenhall et al., 2002; Shaffer et al., 2006; Yorozu, 2023). Out of which, research that addresses expatriates' ethnocentrism is minimal (e.g., Caligiuri et al., 2016), and the written literature is conflicting most of the time. Furthermore, hardly any study has focused its attention on identifying and understanding variables which would influence ethnocentric work behaviour among expatriates. Therefore, a major study gap exists in the field of analysing the ethnocentric behaviour of expatriates and factors which result in such ethnocentric behaviour. Moreover, the lack of research on the ethnocentric behaviour of expatriates would hinder the effective management of expatriates and cause many other adverse consequences. Because the decision-makers in organisations would not be able to unravel the exact reasons resulting in the ethnocentric tendencies of expatriates and the extent of ethnocentrism among expatriates. This study attempts to provide a solution for this topical issue, which is to identify, to what extent ethnocentrism would influence the work behaviour of expatriates.

### *1.2 Research Questions*

1. What is the influence of ICA on the ethnocentric work behaviour of expatriates?
2. What is the influence of patriotism on the ethnocentric work behaviour of expatriates?
3. What is the influence of xenophobic attitudes on the ethnocentric work behaviour of expatriates?

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1 Ethnocentrism*

Ethnocentrism originated in anthropology comprising of two segments namely, ethnos (ethnic) and centric (centred), which was primarily identified as a mechanism to differentiate

one's ethnicity from others (Michailova, et al., 2017). According to Sumner (1906), "ethnocentrism is the technical name for this view of things in which one's own group is the centre of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it" (p.13). The people's view of the group they belong to is at the vantage point while other social units need to be assessed according to their own group's standards and the tendency to accept culturally similar individuals while rejecting those who are not, can also be referred to as ethnocentrism (Shimp & Sharma, 1987). Bizumic (2019), argues that ethnocentrism is an attitude hence it consists of cognitive, behavioural, and emotional aspects. From the point of view of the expatriate, ethnocentrism is the thinking that the expatriate's country's values, norms, and customs are correct or more virtuous while those of the other countries are wrong or inferior (Caligiuri et al., 2016; Tsai, 2022).

It was said that expatriates with high ethnocentrism would experience extreme angst when moving to a workplace with a different cultural orientation (Caligiuri et al., 2016). Yet according to Leiba-O'Sullivan (1999), the longer the period an expatriate spent in a foreign work assignment, the degree of ethnocentrism which is possessed by that expatriate reduces. The tendency of an individual to become ethnocentric should not be viewed as a personality defect, rather it is best said that every person is ethnocentric to a certain extent (Neuliep et al., 2005). When expatriates become cross-culturally effective they would show a weak inclination towards ethnocentrism (Mendenhall et al., 2002). Similarly, when expatriates possess high cultural empathy, they are unlikely to be ethnocentric (Qomariyah et al., 2022). Presence of ethnocentrism would act as a barrier to maintaining organisational harmony where the workforce or teams consisting of employees from different cultures (Cramton & Hinds, 2005; Neuliep et al., 2005; Panicker & Sharma, 2021). Yet the literature is to answer what influences ethnocentrism among expatriates and the way to measure the extent of ethnocentrism present among expatriates, which the current study is attempting to provide an answer.

## *2.2 Realistic Group Conflict Theory*

According to Bizumić (2012) and Grant (1992), pioneers of realist group conflict theory have reasoned that ethnocentrism and hostility towards outgroups originate from competition over resources which can be either tangible or intangible (e.g.: employment, material rewards, prestige etc.) or threats on accessibility or attainment of resources by ingroup members. Further, the realist group theory states that the occurrence of intergroup conflicts is rational as groups lack goal compatibility and it will promote in-group cohesion (Bizumić & Duckitt, 2012; Jackson, 1993; van der Dennen, 1987). Findings by Bizumić and Duckitt (2012), also suggest that ethnocentrism would come into function when the in-group is faced with a threat. In studies, realistic group conflict theory is being abundantly used to test organisational work relationships in an ethnically diverse workforce, and empirical evidence suggests that it is effective (Brief et al., 2005). Further, most studies on ethnocentrism have also used realistic group conflict theory as the theoretical base (Bizumić, 2019; Fernández-Ferrín et al., 2015).

## *2.3 Work Behaviour*

In developing a framework for work behaviour, Korman (1970), defined work behaviour as the nature of performing work and the attitudes towards work where individuals would

engage in work, based on their liking or satisfaction level. Expatriate work behaviour would largely depend on the effectiveness of their work adjustment. Favourable work adjustment would lead to active employee engagement (Ahmed & Islam, 2018). Black and Stephens (1989), were able to empirically prove that the three facets of adjustments are, general adjustment, interaction adjustment, and expatriate work adjustment. It was found that both work adjustment and general adjustment are proportionately related to organisational support that expatriates receive (Yogeswaran et al., 2017). A study conducted by Chen et al. (2010), proved that work adjustment and work performance of expatriates are related to the cross-cultural motivation that they perceive. A crucial finding by Friedman et al. (2009), is that ethnocentrism plays a key role in shaping the work behaviour of expatriates, which is commonly then said to be ethnocentric work behaviour. Considering the limited research that was conducted in this field, the need has been aroused to investigate further.

#### *2.4 Intercultural Communication Apprehension (ICA)*

When investigating the extent that ethnocentrism influences the work behaviour of expatriates, several influencing variables can be identified with the ethnocentric work behaviour of expatriates. The concept of ICA can be identified as one of such variables. Neuliep and McCroskey (1997b), define ICA as “the fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated interaction with people from different groups, especially different cultural or ethnic groups” (p. 152). Accordingly, Neuliep and Ryan (1998), brought up the argument that interactions among individuals with different cultural backgrounds would cause a high level of eccentricity and lower level of intimacy, which would then lead to situations of ICA as defined by Neuliep and McCroskey (1997b). ICA is a common occurrence in communication setups where people of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds engage in communication (Neuliep, 2017). In organisational context, ICA among employees would differ based on their cultural background (Trisasanti et al., 2021).

It has been identified that ethnocentrism is the source of intense communication issues and hinders intercultural communication through misperception and misinterpretation (Chen, 2010; Lin & Rancer, 2003; Washington, 2013). Empirical evidence from the research conducted by Neuliep (2012), suggests that ICA and ethnocentrism pose a barrier and also deteriorate communication between cultures. Further, a study conducted by Lin and Rancer (2003), revealed that individuals with a high level of ICA would appear to be more ethnocentric.

#### *2.5 Patriotism*

Patriotism is defined as the feeling of being attached and loyal to one's country, while also being committed and prepared to sacrifice their selves for their nation (Balabanis et al., 2001; Druckman, 1994). Where Sharma et al. (1995), indicate patriotism as one's likeliness or devotion to their country. Patriotic orientations are static temperaments which cannot be easily changed (Druckman, 1994). This is because patriotism would touch the emotional aspects of an individual's feelings towards his or her country (Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989). Canovan (2000) states that patriotism is lenient towards diversity because cultural similarity is not expected by it.

When considering the degree of patriotism among expatriates, if they perceive that their home country delivers higher security, confidence, stability, and responsibility, then that will increase their patriotism (Segismundo, 2019). According to Hail (2015), cultural misunderstanding, value differences, or language barriers are not the sole reasons for cross-cultural conflict, but the intention to protect the national reputation driven through patriotism is also one of the reasons for such conflicts. Empirical evidence by Segismundo (2019), suggests that when explaining the connection between expatriates' job success and their international experience, the sense of patriotism is a key variable. Hardly any study has focused on evaluating the patriotism of expatriates in the context of their ethnocentric work behaviour. While Balabanis et al. (2001), have also called upon to conduct research on such critical areas in future.

## 2.6 Xenophobia

The rapid increase in the movement of labour across the globe due to globalisation has led to the development of xenophobia in the workplace (Zaman et al., 2021). According to Campbell and McCandless (1951), xenophobia refers to the terms that are used to show anxiety or hatred towards foreigners. While Hjern (2001), defines xenophobia as “a negative attitude, or fear of, individuals or groups of individuals who are in some sense different (real or imagined) from oneself, or the group(s) one belongs to” (p. 43). It needs to be understood that xenophobia denotes the fear that arose due to the threat that is perceived from foreigners, which is different from prejudices such as racism (van der Veer et al., 2011). Mistrust, fear, hostility, dislike, and social complications perceived to be resulting because of foreigners are common elements of xenophobia (Altintas & Tokol, 2007; Bizumic & Duckitt, 2012).

Cashdan (2001), identifies xenophobia and ethnocentrism to be the corresponding sides of a single coin and xenophobia to be a result of ethnocentrism. Whereas Bizumic and Duckitt (2012), state that due to the similarity in the concepts of xenophobia and ethnocentrism, they both are being used interchangeably, yet the two concepts are not the same. Even though studies have shown that there is a relationship between xenophobia and consumer ethnocentrism (e.g., Vadhanavisala, 2014), it is unlikely to find a study that has investigated whether the xenophobic attitude of expatriates influences their ethnocentric work behaviour.

## 2.7 Conceptualisation

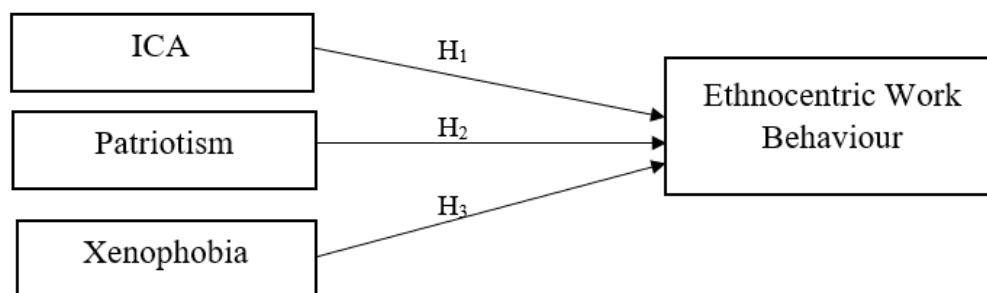


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

*Note.* This figure represents the conceptual framework that was built to identify the relationship between the variables in concern. Researcher's construction.

## 2.8 Hypothesis Development

Research into ICA revealed that the concepts of ICA and ethnocentrism move hand in hand and hence they are related (Chen, 2010; Lin & Rancer, 2010; Neuliep & Ryan, 1998). Neuliep (2012), found that both ICA and ethnocentrism contribute to increased uncertainty during intercultural interactions. Further strengthening this argument Miczo and Welter (2006), suggest that people who experience ICA tend to behave in an ethnocentric manner. Whereas Chen (2010), and Lin and Rancer (2003), have empirically proven that there is a positive relationship between ethnocentrism and ICA. Based on that stance, the following hypothesis has been derived.

*H<sub>1</sub>*: There is a positive influence of ICA of expatriate employees on their ethnocentric work behaviour.

When analysing sociopsychology related literature, the presence of a close connection between patriotism and ethnocentrism is evident (Klein & Ettenson, 1999). Even though studies conducted with regard to analysing expatriate ethnocentrism are limited, consumer ethnocentrism studies have shown that there is a significant relationship between ethnocentrism and patriotism (de Ruyter et al., 1998; Costa et al., 2018; Shankarmahesh, 2006). Similarly, it is reasonable to presume that extent of expatriate ethnocentrism and their patriotic orientations are related. Most of the studies which have used patriotism as an antecedent of ethnocentrism have experienced an outcome where a positive relationship was revealed between ethnocentrism and patriotism (Costa et al., 2018; Fernández-Ferrín et al., 2015). Thereby, an alternative hypothesis can be derived as follows.

*H<sub>2</sub>*: There is a positive influence of patriotism among expatriate employees on their ethnocentric work behaviour.

Altintas and Tokol (2007), argued that xenophobia is also demonstrated through ethnocentric ways of thinking. While studies on consumer ethnocentrism have also revealed that xenophobia influences ethnocentrism (Vadhanavisala, 2014). Hence, xenophobia is considered as the negative attitude towards out-group members (Hjerm, 2001), and ethnocentrism refers to the superiority of the in-group over other out-groups (Shimp & Sharma, 1987), this shows that the concepts of xenophobia and ethnocentrism are related. Furthermore, empirical evidence revealed that people with high levels of xenophobia would also possess a high degree of ethnocentrism thereby demonstrating a positive relationship between the two constructs (Altintas & Tokol, 2007; Vadhanavisala, 2014). Generalising this relationship to ethnocentric work behaviour, the following hypothesis was derived.

*H<sub>3</sub>*: There is a positive influence of xenophobic attitude among expatriate employees on their ethnocentric work behaviour.

## 3. Research Methodology

The research methodology of this study follows a positivist philosophy, laid on objective ontology and positivist epistemology (Saunders et al., 2019). This will then be supported by a deductive approach to research, based on which the research design was built up. Quantitative choice of research was utilised, where a survey strategy will be adopted when collecting data through a self-administered questionnaire. Time-horizon of the study will be cross-sectional,

and mono-method quantitative technique is used as the methodological choice of data collection. Finally, the data analysis will be conducted using multivariate data analysis technique where multiple regression analysis is used to test the relationships between variables. The SPSS version 22 software package was used to initiate the data analysis process.

Considering the fact that a survey strategy is adopted to conduct this study, a questionnaire was utilised as the data collection technique. The questionnaire was self-administered for the convenience of data collection, and it was designed through Google Forms. It is being used to investigate the research questions involving the influence of ICA, patriotism, and xenophobic attitude on the ethnocentric work behaviour of expatriates. Ethnocentric Work Behaviour (EWB) was measured using eight questions that was drawn down out of the 24 items in Neuliep and McCroskey (1997a) revised Generalised Ethnocentrism (GENE) scale. ICA was measured using seven questions derived from the Personal Report of Intercultural Communication Apprehension (PRICA) formulated by Neuliep and McCroskey (1997b). Patriotism was measured using seven questions, where four of them were adopted from Kosterman and Feshbach (1989), and the other three questions were adopted from Schatz et al. (1999), blind and constructive patriotism scale. Xenophobia was measured using seven questions, where three of them were adopted from van der Veer et al. (2011), a 9-item xenophobia scale, and the other four questions were derived from Campbell and McCandless (1951), Campbell's Xenophobia scale. This scale was designed in such a way that it allows the user to modify based on the context. Respondents were asked to rank each of these items on a 5-point Likert-type scale, where 1 being strongly disagreed and 5 being strongly agreeing.

### *3.1 Sampling Techniques*

The sampling size was set between 90 to 120 expatriates who are working in organisations in the corporate sector of 10 selected countries. (Australia, Canada, Germany, Haiti, Japan, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, the UAE, the UK, and the USA). Only 88 responses were received, which is lower than the targeted response range. This was due to various unexpected and uncontrollable situations that were experienced during the data collection process. The sampling method was convenience sampling, which is a non-random sampling technique.

### *3.2 Data Collection Procedure*

Data was collected from expatriate employees by sharing the questionnaire through the HR department of the organisations where they are being employed. Request letters inquiring about the possibility of collecting data from expatriates were sent prior to data collection, and upon their approval data collection process was commenced. Further, in order to avoid incomplete responses, the questionnaire was arranged in a way that respondents could not refrain from answering any question.

## **4. Findings and Discussion**

According to the data sample, 55% were male while 44% were female whereas 17% of them were in the less than 30 age group while 51% of them were in the 30 – 40 age bracket, and 32% of them were above 40. Nearly 74% of the respondents were married while 24% were unmarried. Out of the 88 respondents 48 were Sri Lankan expatriates (55%), 18 Indian

expatriates (21%), eight Maldivian expatriates (9%), three Filipino and Pakistani expatriates (3% each), two Bangladeshi expatriates (2%), and one Ukrainian, French, Venezuelan, Romanian, American, and Bulgarian expatriates (1% each). 47% of these expatriates are employed in the UAE, 15% in Japan, 14% in Sri Lanka, 7% in Australia, 5% each in the UK and Haiti, 3% in Canada, 2% each in the USA and New Zealand, and 1% in Germany. 31% of the expatriates are engaged in professional or technical level positions, 27% of them are in middle or lower management positions, 21% of them are operational level employees and 11% of them are in senior management positions. When considering the expatriates' duration of stay in the country of employment, 47% of the expatriates have stayed for more than four years, 19% have stayed for 1 – 2 years, 14% have stayed for 2 – 3 years, 11% have stayed for less than one year, and 9% of them have stayed for 3 – 4 years. A significant majority of the expatriates, which is almost 86% are self-initiated expatriates while nearly 14% of them are assigned expatriates.

#### *4.1 Multivariate Assumptions*

According to Kline (2016), distribution can be considered normal (not severely non-normal) if the absolute value of skewness is less than 3.0 and the absolute value of kurtosis is less than 10.0. The results indicate that the absolute values of skewness for each construct are less than 3.0 and the absolute values of kurtosis for each construct are less than 10.0 in the current study. Therefore, it can be concluded that the data set used in this study is normal. The scatter plots were derived based on the relationship between the dependent variable of EWB and the predictor variables of ICA, PAT, and XEN. The linearity test results indicate that there is a linear relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. This is because all the variables indicate a straight-line relationship with the standardised estimates (Al Anazi et al., 2016). Therefore, the current study satisfies the multivariate assumption of linearity.

It is also said that the relationship between variables can be considered homoscedastic if the multivariate assumption of normality is being met because they are related (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Hence the current study has already satisfied the assumption of normality, it further emphasises the fact that the variables utilised in the study are homoscedastic. According to Hair et al. (2010), if the tolerance value is more than 0.1 and the VIF value is below 10.0 then it would indicate the absence of multicollinearity among independent variables. Based on the results of the multicollinearity diagnostic it can be seen that the tolerance values of the three predictor variables are 0.769, 0.916, and 0.802, while the VIF values of the three predictor variables are 1.300, 1.091, and 1.246. This indicates that both the tolerance values and the VIF values of the predictor variables used in this study satisfy the condition of not being multicollinear.

#### *4.2 Reliability and Correlation*

According to Tavakol and Dennick (2011), after analysing several reports regarding acceptable values of alpha it has been evident that alpha values between 0.70 and 0.95 are acceptable. Respectively, when the reliability test was conducted for the constructs involved with the current study, the results indicated that the scales used to measure all four variables



EWB, ICA, PAT, and XEN are highly reliable with alpha values ranging between 0.708 and 0.895. Based on the correlation analysis conducted for the current study (Table 1), a moderate negative relation is prevalent between EWB and ICA with a  $r$  value of -0.474. The relationship between EWB and PAT tends to be a weak positive relationship with an  $r$  value of 0.221. Whereas EWB and XEN reported a moderate positive relationship with an  $r$  value of 0.544. Moreover, all relationships appear to be statistically significant.

Table 1: Mean, SD and Correlation

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>
EWB (1)	2.118	0.576	-		
ICA (2)	4.149	0.587	-.474**	-	
PAT (3)	3.524	0.514	.221*	.118	-
XEN (4)	2.042	0.644	.544**	-.408	.083

Note. Pearson correlation ( $r$ ) between variables used in the study is indicated here.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

#### 4.3 Multiple Regression

Results related to the regression model of the present study indicate the value of the intercept (constant) as 2.141. Whereas beta weights for each predictor variable, ICA, PAT, and XEN were identified as -0.359, 0.382, and 0.187 accordingly. When relating this interpretation of beta weights to the current study, it can be said that a change in one-unit of XEN would result in a 0.382 variance in EWB of expatriates. Then again, one-unit change in ICA would result in -0.359 variance in EWB of expatriates, and one-unit change in PAT would result in 0.187 variance in the EWB of expatriates. Based on the afore mentioned intercept value and beta weights the regression equation of the present study can be derived as:  $Y = 2.141 - 0.359ICA + 0.187PAT + 0.382XEN$

Moreover, the current study resulted in a multiple correlation coefficient ( $R$ ) of 0.636. Whereas squared multiple correlation coefficient also known as coefficient of multiple determination ( $R^2$ ) measures the proportion of variation in the dependent variable that is explained by the independent variables (in the regression equation) while having control over their intercorrelation (Hahn, 1973; Kline, 2016). Accordingly, the current study derived at an  $R^2$  value of 0.404 and this value can be interpreted as 40.4% of variation in the EWB of respondents is explained through the variables ICA, PAT, and XEN. Further, the F-statistic of the current study is statistically significant at a p-value of 0.000 and hence the regression model used in this study better fits the data than a model without any independent variables.

#### 4.4 Hypothesis Testing

Testing hypotheses through the use of confidence intervals is regarded as a more instructive way to test hypotheses (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Hence  $\alpha = 0.05$  is said to be the most commonly used standard when it comes to behavioural sciences (Cohen et al., 2002), the current study too will consider the same standard when testing hypothesis. According to the results of the significance test, it appears that  $H_1$  seems to be statistically significant at a p-

value of 0.000 and therefore, hypothesis 1 can be accepted. The second hypothesis ( $H_2$ ) also appears to be statistically significant at a p-value of 0.037 and therefore,  $H_2$  can be accepted. Finally, it can be observed that  $H_3$  as well to be statistically significant at a p-value of 0.000 and therefore, the third hypothesis can be accepted. Altogether it can be said that all the test hypotheses considered in the study are accepted at 95% confidence interval.

Table 2: Regression Model Summary

<i>Variables</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
ICA	-0.359	-3.733	0.000**
PAT	0.187	2.124	0.037*
XEN	0.382	4.066	0.000**
<i>Model Summary</i>			
R <sup>2</sup>		0.404	
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>		0.383	
F		18.987**	
Sig. F		0.000	

*Note.* The beta coefficients, t-values, and significance levels of the predictor variables of the study are indicated here. \* $p < 0.05$ . \*\* $p < 0.01$ .

#### 4.5 Discussion of Hypotheses

##### 4.5.1 ICA and Ethnocentric Work Behaviour

Even though the first hypothesis satisfies the significance criteria, it can be observed that the standardised beta coefficient of ICA is negative, which would suggest an inverse relationship between ICA and ethnocentric work behaviour. This is because when considering the indicators of ICA in the questionnaire, it must be noted that seven of the negatively worded items from Neuliep and McCroskey's (1997) 14-item PRICA scale were included in it. Meaning, agreeing response for indicators of ICA would mean a low level of ICA and vice versa. Therefore, the variable ICA having a negative standardised beta coefficient in the regression model can be interpreted as, a negative relationship exists between not having ICA and ethnocentric work behaviour. Similarly, it can also be interpreted as a positive relationship exists between ICA and ethnocentric work behaviour of expatriates. In other words, the findings suggest that expatriates who experience a high degree of fear or anxiety when communicating with their fellow employees from diverse cultural or ethnic backgrounds appear to be more ethnocentric in their work behaviour. This indicates that the results of the current study satisfy the first hypothesis.

These results of the current study are incongruent with studies conducted by Bhargava and Paicker (2021), Chen (2010), Lin and Rancer (2003), and Miczo and Welter (2006), which indicates that a positive relationship is evident between ICA and ethnocentrism. Therefore, it is justifiable to consider that the current study corresponds with the existing literature with respect to ICA and ethnocentrism.

##### 4.5.2 Patriotism and Ethnocentric Work Behaviour

Hence the standardised beta coefficient of patriotism in the regression model takes a positive value, it can be suggested that there is a proportionate relationship between patriotism of expatriates and their ethnocentric behaviour. This means that the findings suggest that

expatriates who love and/or are devoted towards his/her nation appear to be more ethnocentric in their work behaviour. Therefore, the results of the current study indicate that the second hypothesis is satisfied. Yet the strength of the effect that patriotism has on ethnocentric work behaviour tends to be relatively lower when compared to other two constructs. When analysing the studies conducted regarding patriotism and ethnocentrism, results of the current study correspond with them as a positive relationship between patriotism and ethnocentrism was revealed through those studies as well (Balabanis et al., 2001; de Ruyter et al., 1998; Costa et al., 2018; Sharma et al., 1995). Hence it is identifiable that the findings of the current study are in line with that of existing literature related to patriotism and ethnocentrism.

#### 4.5.3 Xenophobia and Ethnocentric Work Behaviour

When considering the value of the beta coefficient of xenophobia in the regression model, it can be seen that a positive relationship exists between xenophobic attitude of expatriates and their ethnocentric work behaviour. Similarly, this can be interpreted as expatriates who are anxious or/and hostile towards their colleagues from a country that is different to theirs tend to be more ethnocentric in their work behaviour. Therefore, the results of the current study agree with the third hypothesis and hence satisfy the condition proposed by it. A key observation here is that out of the three constructs used in this study, the strength of the effect of xenophobia towards ethnocentric work behaviour is the highest. Moreover, the results of the current study correspond with the studies conducted by Altintas and Tokol (2007) and Vadhanavisala (2014), which indicate that a positive relationship exists between xenophobia and ethnocentrism. Despite the fewer studies that were undertaken in the arena of ethnocentrism and xenophobia, the past studies that were performed in the respective field show that the two constructs are positively related.

### 5. Implications

The main contribution made by the study is that it was able to bridge a key research gap that exists in the HRM literature. Which is the gap between ethnocentrism and its influence on the work behaviour of expatriates. It was identified through the study that ICA, patriotism, and xenophobia together would result in ethnocentric work behaviour among expatriates. To the researcher's knowledge, none of the previous studies has considered all three aspects of ICA, patriotism, and xenophobia together as antecedents of ethnocentrism. The findings of the current study provide evidence that almost 40% of the variation in expatriates' ethnocentric work behaviour is explained through xenophobia, ICA, and patriotism. This offers major theoretical implications, as it indicates that conceptual models can be developed by solely considering the constructs used in the study. For example, the current conceptual framework can be adopted to test consumer ethnocentrism using the same set of predictor variables utilised in the current study. In addition, it was also revealed that each of the antecedents ICA, patriotism, and xenophobia individually correlate with ethnocentric work behaviour of expatriates. This would imply the possibility of considering each variable separately when measuring ethnocentric work behaviour of expatriates.

Moreover, theoretical evidence based on the studies conducted by Caligiuri et al. (2016) and Shaffer et al. (2006) notion that ethnocentrism is a key influential variable in determining

expatriate effectiveness/performance. While Caligiuri et al. (2016), revealed that expatriates who have low ethnocentrism tend to be successful in their work performance. Even though the current study has not tested for expatriate effectiveness, the findings of the study will be helpful in expanding earlier research, as it reveals the factors influencing ethnocentric work behaviour of expatriates. Hence it can be suggested that expatriates with low levels of xenophobia, ICA, and patriotism would perform better in their work assignments.

Based on the findings of the present study, managerial implications can be offered to minimise ethnocentric work behaviours among expatriates and obtain the expected level of performance from them. An ethnocentric attitude will cause the expatriate to be distant from his/her fellow colleagues who are from different cultural backgrounds and might even cause conflicts among them. This will result in adverse consequences for the work organisation. In order to avoid such situations, it is crucial to pre-identify the traits of ethnocentric behaviour among expatriates and take proactive actions. Current study has identified three such antecedents which are highly likely to cause ethnocentric behaviour among expatriates, hence offering employers a mechanism to diagnose the presence of ethnocentrism among expatriate workforces.

## **6. Limitations and Avenues for Future Research**

In terms of limitations of the current study, the sample size of the current study being a relatively small sample of 88 respondents has made the sample less representative. Hence the data was collected from expatriates in 10 different countries, the sample would weakly represent the expatriate population in each country that data was collected. Whereas the study has used the convenience sampling technique as the sampling method, and this is a non-probability sampling technique which largely limits the generalisation capacity of the outcomes derived through the current study. The researcher was tempted to use a non-probability sampling technique due to the difficulties in determining the size of the expatriate population in 10 different countries and the inability to obtain a list of the entire expatriate population in each country. Moreover, prior studies that were conducted in the field of accessing expatriate ethnocentrism were sparse and it led to the development of a new research typology to conduct the study. Further studies in this arena will be required to validate the typology used in this study.

## **7. Conclusion**

This research was aimed at identifying the influence of ethnocentrism on the work behaviour of expatriates. Accordingly, three hypotheses were built up stating that there is a positive relationship between, ICA and ethnocentric work behaviour of expatriates, patriotism and ethnocentric work behaviour of expatriates, and xenophobia and ethnocentric work behaviour of expatriates. All three hypotheses were accepted through the data analysis. Whereas the quantitative analysis revealed that ethnocentrism influences the work behaviour of expatriates through the presence of xenophobia, ICA, and patriotism among them. This study has identified xenophobia has the highest impact on expatriate ethnocentrism followed by ICA and patriotism. The study was able to effectively identify the influence that ethnocentrism

would make on expatriate work behaviour through the identification of factors that trigger ethnocentric work behaviour among expatriates.

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