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WHAT KEEPS CHINESE EXPATRIATES IN GLOBAL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS? MULTI-COUNTRY EVIDENCE ON CROSS-CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT, COMPENSATION, AND TRAINING

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Abstract:

The management of international operations by expatriate workers has been linked to growth in the construction industry, aided by advances in globalization. Nevertheless, retaining expatriates from a developed country like China is a major challenge. This study aims to evaluate the factors that influence Chinese expatriates' retention in construction by focusing on cross-cultural adjustment, benefits and compensation, and training. The study also addresses the concern that many expatriates are planning to return due to cultural difficulties, inadequate funding, and a lack of training. With a quantitative approach, this study adopted a purposive sampling strategy, employing a snowball technique to reach the target population of 213 Chinese expatriates (general managers, middle managers, & operational staff). A total of 213 expatriates from Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Zambia, and South Africa comprised the sample. Findings from the study indicate that cross-cultural adjustment and compensation are connected to the retention intentions, while training has a trivial effect. Further findings reveal that there are varying factors that influence the retention of expatriates across countries. The findings aim to assist construction firms in improving expatriate retention by dealing with key issues that lead to the departure. Based on the researcher's findings, this study is the first to examine this topic across multiple countries using data on Chinese construction expatriates.

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Compensation And Benefits, Construction Industry, Cross-Cultural Adjustment, Chinese Expatriates, Expatriate, Retention, Training.



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Introduction

In a growing globalized economy, multinational companies (MNCs) depend on expatriate workers to manage international tasks, most importantly in construction sectors where project-based deployments are crucial (Lazarova, M. et al., 2023). Specifically, Chinese expatriates have played an important role in leading infrastructure and development projects across evolving economies, including Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and other countries that belong to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). (Gao, L., et al., 2024). Despite their tactical relevance, efficiently retaining and adjusting expatriates is deemed problematic for international human resources management (IHRM), with considerable consequences for organizational performance, progressiveness, and cost effectiveness (Phan Thi Hang, N., 2024).

It has been widely found that the failure of international assignments often stems from difficulties with cultural adaptation, personal adjustment, and organizational integration (Okpara & Kabongo, 2017; Fangling & Ali, 2023). As the implications of such policies are significant, both for budget and operational efficiency, it is of utmost importance that the variables most determining expatriate effects are identified and controlled. Prior research highlights cross-cultural adjustment (CCA), compensation and benefits, and training as key elements contributing to expatriate success and retention (Fan, D, et al., 2022). CCA, among them, measures the psychological and behavioral aspects of adjustment (Black and Mendenhall 1991) to the host country's culture that impact the expatriate's psychological well-being and job performance. Adjustment refers to the acclimatization to living conditions, social assimilation (interaction adjustment), and work-related practices and expectations (He, G., & Ge, T., 2025). Studies have shown that effective CCA reduces stress, increases performance, and significantly increases expatriates' willingness to stay (Mabkhot, H, et al., 2023).

Compensation and benefits remain important for attracting and retaining expatriate talent. A fair and competitive employment package (Breitenmoser & Bader, 2019), when international living costs, taxes, and family expenses are considered, has been found to be related to high satisfaction and low turnover intentions. In addition, cross-cultural and language training has long been regarded as important for preparing expatriates for success (Bennett, R., 2000; Chenyang, L., 2022). However, there is advancing evidence of a separation between the the content and the actual difficulties that expatriates face, raising worries about the efficiency, cultural significance and timing of their training. This study investigates the relationships between the trio core components of cross-cultural adjustment, benefits and compensation, and training linked to Chinese expatriates and employment retention. On the other hand, the

research underscores crucial discrepancies between retention intention, training satisfaction, and Chinese expatriates experience as they are separated across countries of Malaysia, Zambia, Saudi Arabia and South Africa. In all places, dissatisfaction with training events was prevalent, even though, countries like Malaysia and Saudi Arabia recorded higher in both compensation and retention. This means there may be a mismatch between how training is planned and the real needs of Chinese expatriates as they adapt. To evaluate how these three factors influence retention, this research can give a whole new scope for management to apply theory and practice with respect to expatriates. It suggests specific strategies, such as workplace language and structured opportunities to engage and interact with local colleagues, to ease adaptation. The study suggests that the findings also highlight the importance for MNCs to transcend a universalization of HR practices and to be guided by flexible evidence-based methods to adapt to the social and cultural differences observed in a global construction environment.

Theory and Framework

The present study draws on two critical theories: the Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA) model of Black, Mendenhall, and Oddou (1991) and Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory. Combined, these models offer an integrated perspective on the impact of training, compensation, and cultural adaptation on the retention of Chinese expatriates in the international construction industry. The CCA model discusses expatriate adjustment in terms of overall adjustment to normal day-to-day activities, adjustments in interactions with host nationals, and adaptation of work to the job and the work environment. The concept distinguishes between anticipatory adjustment that is based on the training process and expectations going into the departure, and in-country adjustment formed through experience and continual support.

This study examines the influence of workplace-based language training and conversation with local co-workers on the blending and retention processes. Based on Social Learning Theory, expatriates earn cultural skills by observation, conversation and experiences. It places emphasis on the fact that adaptation happens through the social modeling of a new culture and support, not just through formal training. It brings interventions, most especially integration events and language training, about what works effectively and what does not work effectively. The combinations of these theories construct a perfect theoretical underpinning for investigating the influence of cultural adaptations, benefits and training concerning international expatriate retention (see figure 1.0). Hence, expanding Social Learning Theory and CCA to the project-based international construction industry advances this study, both theoretically and practically.

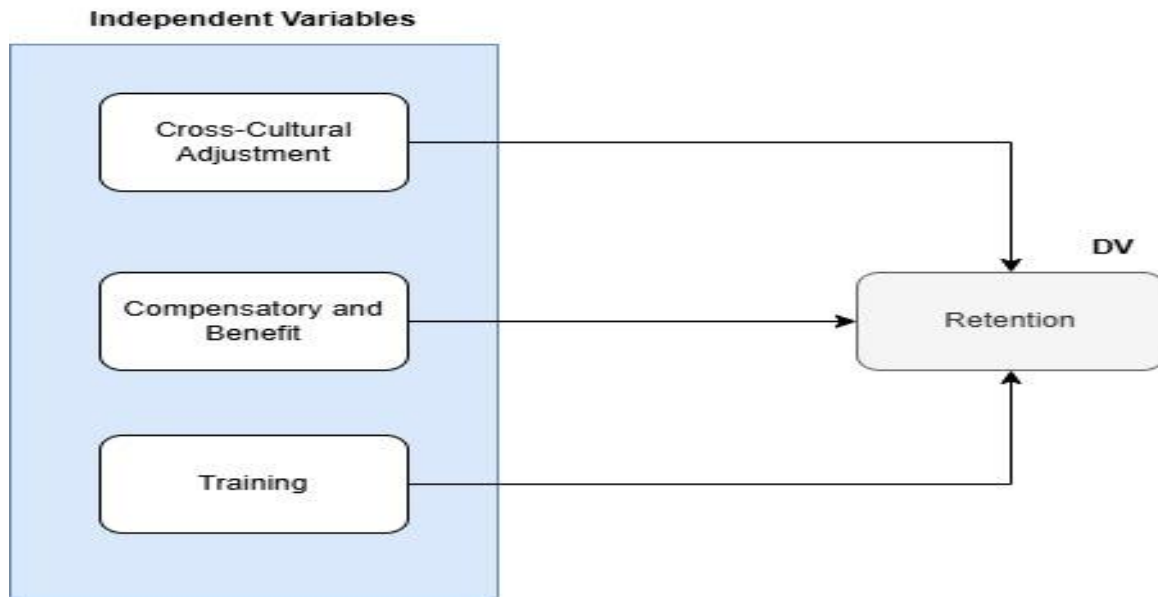


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of The Study. Source: Authors

Review Of Literature and Hypothesis Development

Employee Retention

The retention of expatriate workers is influenced by organizational assistance, emotional intelligence work culture in the construction industry. From literature perspective, emotional intelligence is a vital factor influencing personnel retention and productivity in international construction project and has been revealed as what would significantly grow expatriate performance and activities in the construction industry. Expatriate who are emotionally stable communicate more efficiently and create a stronger relationship, which is required to manage projects as efficiently as possible in different cultural settings (Huang et al., 2022). This characteristic not only reinforces their efficiency but also reduces turnover, as satisfied employees are likely to stay with the organization for longer (Mohamed et al., 2024). The construction industry is featured by challenging working conditions and high workers turnover. Inadequate support during transitions, work security, and emotional burden of high stress cases such as pandemic are all major issues (Gao et al., 2022).

Nevertheless, expatriates confront significant stressors that can adversely influence their psychological health and job satisfaction (Gao et al., 2022). As a result, organizations must proactively grow a robust support system to strengthen resilience and ease adaptation to the new work location, therefore improving and encouraging retention (Gao et al., 2023).

Ensuring the effectiveness of Human Resource Management practices is a key factor in the construction industry for developing retention strategies for expatriates. Research indicates that businesses with fair and supportive HR practices can significantly reduce employees' intentions to leave. Careers, access to mentorship, and fairness of treatment are several key factors that create a sense of belonging and commitment for expatriates (Song et al., 2019; Fathima & Umarani, 2022). Aligning HR strategies with employee needs has direct implications for performance and loyalty, and overall job satisfaction (Mahfouz et al., 2021). Tackling the cultural barriers expatriates face is essential for retention. Finally, to improve retention, they

should address the cross-cultural issues they encounter. Specific pre-departure training and continued cultural integration can prevent miscommunication and provide an advantageous transition for expatriates into their host country (Dousin & Sulong, 2021). In this study, organizations could increase employee engagement and retention rates by employing these insights through cultural adaptation and by supporting employees in making modifications (Ling, P. et al., 2022).

Cross-Cultural Adjustment and Retention

Cross-cultural adjustment (CCA) is important to the successful incorporation of expatriates into separate work locations, most especially for Chinese expatriates who are working in cultural settings like South Africa. According to U-Curve Theory (UCT), expatriates go through a phase of elation, then frustration, and lastly adaptation to the new environment (Church, 1982). In addition, personal differences influence this adjustment process, where social learning theory assists in clarifying the transition (Black & Mendenhall, 1991). CCA relates to knowing and merging the behavior, values, and beliefs of the culture of the host country into one's own cultural framework (Constantine et al., 2004). Black's (1983) socio-cultural adjustment model defines three main dimensions, namely, general adjustment, work adjustment, and interaction adjustment, which represent both personal and professional adjustment of expatriates into the host culture (Ge, 2022; Qomariyah, 2022). This help keep expatriates and aid in assimilation by reducing culture shock, alleviating stress, and promoting harmony at the organizational level. In contrast, failing to adjust properly may result in lower job performance, dissatisfaction, and repatriation (Chang, 2023; Vromans, 2013). This will make a well-adapted expatriate more likely to remain in his/her job and improve the organization's overall contribution. Cultural intelligence (CQ) is a critical contributor to supporting CCA. Expats with a high CQ are better able to read and react to unfamiliar cultural signals, enhancing their effectiveness and reducing turnover intentions (Basuni et al., 2024; Akhal & Liu, 2019).

Similarly, emotional intelligence aids expatriates in managing social and emotional challenges that can arise abroad, enabling them to interact more effectively with local cultural norms (Liao et al., 2021; Arokiasamy & Kim, 2020). Also, organizational support, including pre-departure and post-arrival training, is important for expatriate adjustment success (Lee, 2021; Ren et al., 2020). These programs prepare expatriates to fit into a culturally diverse environment, which plays a significant role in their business success, with the added benefits of professional mobility and personal wellness. Importantly, however, the adjustment of Chinese expatriates is affected by the importance of *guanxi*, or relationship-building, which is central to Chinese culture. Profound human networks that contribute to higher performance and social inclusion in the job market are highly correlated with positive performance in the professional and social context overall (Fangling & Ali, 2023). Huang et al. (2020) emphasise the need to build "simulated home" environments that utilize known cultural features in workplaces. This strategy facilitates the transition and allows continuity in the host country. Thus, understanding factors affecting cross-cultural adjustment will help expatriates to benefit from an enhanced and better experience which will reduce their turnover. Adaptation is likely to be easier if there is a high level of cultural and emotional intelligence and strong organizational support. For Chinese expatriates, building close local relationships in a familiar place is particularly important. By this token, CCA is key not just to personal and professional success but also to long-term retention in the organization. Consequently, our hypothesis goes like this:

H1 Cross-cultural adjustment (CCA) has a positive impact on retaining Chinese expatriates in the construction sector.

Compensation and Benefits, and Retention

In organizational research, the linkage between compensation, benefits, and worker retention has been one of the most salient research areas when exploring how various methods of compensation, both financial and non-monetary, influence employees' intention to leave. Understanding this relationship is crucial for maintaining a motivated workforce. Data on retention shows that satisfaction with monetary and non-monetary compensation plays a major role. It has been revealed by (Mustika et al., 2021) that satisfaction with separate kinds of compensation influences turnover intentions through perceived organizational support (POS) and affective organizational commitment (AOC). Kannan et al. (2024) note that workload, funding or pay, and training are keenly associated to retention, most especially in healthcare sectors. It underscores the importance of greater worker satisfaction with compensation to efficiently decline turnover. A more detailed investigation of non-financial rewards underscores their relevance in inspiring employees. Nevertheless, many organizations, most especially those with small budgets, seek non-monetary deals on the basis of retention. Such perks are beneficial even when resources are plenty; hence, (Tripathi and Professor, 2023) emphasize that they affirmatively influence the retention of staff in extreme circumstances. The job satisfaction, together with a sense of a good working setting, is also of great relevance, as (Kannan et al., 2024) opined that executing training and non-monetary benefits into employee involvement strategies increases retention.

Fernando and Nishanthi (2021) argue that total rewards, whether monetary or non-monetary, play a pivotal role in ensuring employee engagement and, in turn, employee retention. Recognition and development opportunities are among the few types of rewards that have a powerful impact on organizational performance over time. Based on the research, compensation must not be limited to financial rewards but must also align with the internal drivers of the workforce, resulting in employees who are loyal and satisfied (Umar et al., 2024). The value added to compensation systems will also depend on equity and fairness in rewards. Rai et al. (2019) showed that workers' perceptions of fairness in reward may have a considerable influence on the relationship between total rewards and intention to remain in the company. This highlights the relevance of transparent and fair compensation processes for easing motivation and retention. As such it follows that the following hypothesis is formulated: H2: Compensation and benefits positively influence the retention of Chinese expatriates in the construction industry.

Training and Retention

For multinational corporations (MNCs), training, development, and retention of expatriates is a complex challenge. Expatriates during their overseas assignments are often faced with numerous factors that impact their successful performance and development, all of which help shape their future career prospects. They have received a thorough education in developing their skills to be able to cope with the demands of their new cultural environment. As an add-on, managing expatriate talent effectively not only enhances individual performance and satisfaction but also strengthens the company's knowledge and competitiveness in the global market.

Training for expatriates also plays an important role in their transition and adjustment to international assignments. These courses should also include skill-building and cultural orientation, which would help expatriates to be able to know and handle the cultural subtleties in their host countries (Du & Du, 2025). Multinational companies (MNCs) need investment in formal selection processes and extensive pre-exit training focused on cultural orientation and language proficiency (Hooi, 2022) to ease this transition phase. Kuki et al. (2021) have already suggested that such preparatory efforts considerably influence expatriate behaviours, attitude and activity, thereby assisting to make an easy transition (Kuki et al., 2021).

In addition, progressive educational opportunities and mentorship can aid in improving expatriate retention (Lauring et al., 2019). For instance, intercultural mentoring events that entail expatriates and host-country nationals establish assisting networks, encourage professional development, and eliminate feelings of isolation (Bakel et al., 2021). The commitment of expatriate is reinforced when they form workplace relationships, which supply important assistance during problematic adjustment times and bolster total satisfaction (Fangling & Ali, 2023).

Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3 : Training and development are positively linked to retaining Chinese expatriates in the construction sector.

Methodology

Sampling And Data Collection Procedure

Informed by suggestions from previous studies, which pointed out the benefits of a survey over case studies and interviews for efficient data collection (e.g., better data collection), a questionnaire was developed to gather data based on these suggestions. This research was conducted from April 3rd, 2025, to June 12th, 2025. Participants in this study focused primarily on Chinese expatriates employed abroad in the construction sector. The term population refers to something within a population of research (Blumberg, B., et al., 2014), and sampling is a small subset of this community that can be evaluated with respect to its findings.

This study adopted a purposive sampling strategy, employing a snowball technique to reach the target population of 213 Chinese expatriates (general managers, middle managers, & operational staff). Given the absence of an accessible sampling frame for Chinese expatriate construction professionals across the five host countries, initial participants were purposively selected based on predefined eligibility criteria: individuals with a year or more of construction experience, to ensure that their expertise was relevant. The industry was chosen for the study because of a large number of expatriates from China. These initial participants then referred additional eligible contacts within their professional networks via WeChat, the most widely used social media platform (Zhang, 2022), to reach further contacts and communities in South Africa, Zambia, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, and Qatar, generating a final sample of 213 respondents. All participants would be informed of the purpose of the study, and their responses would be treated anonymously and used only for academic purposes.

Instruments

The construct of Cross-cultural adjustment (CCA) for Chinese expatriates was evaluated using a 6-item scale adapted from Konanahalli, A., & Oyedele, L. O. (2016), with items listed in Appendix A. This scale comprises 2 items for general adjustment, 2 for interaction adjustment, and 2 for work adjustment. Variables such as compensation and benefits were assessed using 6 items adapted from Teclmichael Tessema et al. (2006). The training variable was measured with 5 items obtained from Rogg, K. et al. (2001), and the retention of expatriate was investigated with 11 items from Kyndt, E. (2009).

Data Analysis

Data analysis was carried out with IBM SPSS Statistics version 26 for Windows (see Appendix B). The primary aim was to investigate how independent variables, cross-cultural adjustment (CCA), benefits and compensation, and training, impact the dependent variable, expatriate retention. To get this done, a multiple regression analysis was carried out to examine the predictive impact of each independent variable on retention among Chinese expatriates who work in the construction sector abroad.

Furthermore, on regression analysis, a comparative study was conducted to establish any clear differences in perceptions of the study variables across countries. Participants were classified into four groups: Malaysia, Zambia, Saudi Arabia and South Africa. This approach enabled an investigation of how geographical and contextual factors could impact expatriate experiences and retention.

Demographic Profile

Table 1 summarizes the main demographic details of the expatriate participants who participated in the survey.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	111	
	Female	102	
Age Group	25-34	103	
	35-44	68	
	45-54	25	
	Under 25	17	
Education Level	Bachelor's Degree	96	
	Master's Degree	47	
	College And Below	46	
	Doctoral Degree	24	
Work Life Experience	1-5 Years	85	
	11-20 Years	48	
	More Than 20 Years	43	
	6-10 Years	32	
	Less Than 1 Year	5	
Marital Status	Unmarried	108	

	Married	105	
Job Position	General Staff	91	
	Middle Manager	46	
	Professional	29	
	Technician	21	
	Senior Manager	13	
	General Manager	12	
	Other	1	
Company Nature	Chinese Enterprise	89	
	Sino-Foreign Joint Venture	73	
	Wholly Foreign-Owned Enterprise	46	
	Other	6	
Country Of Work	South Africa	106	49.8
	Zambia	52	24.4
	Saudi Arabia	27	12.7
	Malaysia	23	10.8
	China	4	1.9
	Qatar	1	0.5

Statistical Analysis

Descriptive Statistics and Regression Results

Table 2 indicates the average values, standard deviations, and correlation coefficients for each primary variable: Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA), Compensation and Benefits (CB), Training, and Retention. It is recorded that CCA is considerably and positively linked with Retention ($r = 0.640$), hence, the best psychologically and socially adapted expatriates will be more likely to remain in their job responsibility. This is constant with extant studies that suggest that adapting to culture is the key to expatriate success and retention. According to our findings, Compensation and Benefits are positively connected to Retention ($r=0.408$), showing that attractive financial incentives and compensation systems have a significant effect on the willingness of the expatriate to stay on their assignments.

This aligns with extant studies connecting satisfaction with pay and organizational assistance to higher levels of organizational loyalty. Interestingly, the Training variable is negatively linked to both Retention ($r = -0.318$) and CCA ($r = -0.363$). Such an uncommon finding might show that the importance or effectiveness of training events is at concern. Expatriates may see the training as not tackling their actual challenges or as inadequately preparing them for cross-cultural job. These findings stress the relevance of reviewing the content of the training, usability and timing. In general, the findings stress the importance of culturally appropriate adjustment and compensation methods for easing expatriate retention and call for investigating and upgrading training events to better meet expatriates' requirements.

Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviation, and Correlation of Study Variables

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	CCA	Training	CB	Retention
Cross-Cultural Adjustment	3.89	0.78	1.000	-0.363	0.457	0.640
Training	2.16	0.78	-0.363	1.000	-0.286	-0.318
Compensation & Benefits	3.58	0.89	0.457	-0.286	1.000	0.408
Retention	3.83	0.74	0.640	-0.318	0.408	1.000

The regression analysis, as revealed in Table 3, examined how Cross-Cultural Adjustment, Compensation and Benefits, and Training impact the retention of Chinese expatriates in construction globally. The results show that Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA) is a noteworthy and strong predictor of Retention at ($B = 0.231$, $p < 0.001$). This implies that a one-unit rise in CCA is associated with approximately a 0.47-unit rise in expatriate retention, underscoring the relevance of efficient cultural adaptation in encouraging expatriates to stay in their tasks or assignments.

Compensation and Benefits (CB) also proved to be a statistically important predictor ($B = 0.267$, $p < 0.001$), even though its effect size was not much. This aids the idea that, while financial inducements are important for retention, their impact is less common than the general adaptation experience of expatriates. Contrariwise, the training variable did not meet statistical significance ($p = 0.011$), consistent with the findings of the correlation analysis. This may show limitations in the existing design, content, or timing of training events offered to expatriates, most especially in terms of their importance and suitability.

Table 3: Results of Regression Analysis

Variable	Unstandardized		T	Sig. (P)
	Coeff. (B)	Std. Error		
Constant	2.206	0.325	6.901	<0.001
Cross-Cultural Adjustment	0.231	0.064	3.605	< 0.001
Training	-0.154	0.060	-2.570	0.011
Compensation & Benefits	0.267	0.055	4.867	<0.001

Comparative Analysis by Host Country

Tables 4 and 5 present a descriptive comparison of expatriate experiences across four host countries, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Zambia, and South Africa, in terms of cross-cultural adjustment (CCA), training, compensation and benefits, and retention. To examine whether

these observed differences were statistically significant, a one-way ANOVA was performed for each variable. The ANOVA results (Table 5) indicate that none of the four variables differed significantly across host countries: cross-cultural adjustment ($F = 1.425$, $p = 0.2367$), training ($F = 1.289$, $p = 0.2793$), compensation and benefits ($F = 1.659$, $p = 0.1771$), and retention ($F = 1.923$, $p = 0.1269$). As all p -values exceeded the 0.05 significance level, the findings indicate that host country was not a statistically significant factor influencing expatriates' perceptions of cross-cultural adjustment, training, compensation and benefits, or retention within the present sample. Although the inferential analysis revealed no statistically significant differences, the descriptive statistics (Table 4) show some numerical variation across countries. Saudi Arabia recorded the highest mean score for cross-cultural adjustment ($M = 4.19$), whereas Malaysia and Zambia reported the lowest mean scores ($M = 3.83$). Zambia had the highest mean score for training ($M = 2.34$), while Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, and South Africa reported similar training scores ($M = 2.08$ – 2.09). Saudi Arabia also recorded the highest mean score for compensation and benefits ($M = 3.85$), followed closely by Malaysia ($M = 3.79$). Regarding retention, Malaysia ($M = 4.05$) and Saudi Arabia ($M = 4.03$) recorded slightly higher mean scores than South Africa ($M = 3.79$) and Zambia ($M = 3.77$). These descriptive variations should be interpreted with caution because they were not supported by statistically significant ANOVA results. Consequently, no firm conclusions can be drawn regarding true differences between host countries in expatriates' experiences. Instead, the findings suggest that expatriates across the four host countries reported broadly comparable perceptions of cross-cultural adjustment, training, compensation and benefits, and retention. Future studies employing larger and more balanced country samples may provide greater statistical power to determine whether meaningful country-specific differences exist.

Table 4. Country-Wise Comparison of Study Variables

Country	Cross-Cultural Adjustment	Training	Compensation & Benefits	Retention
Malaysia	3.83	2.09	3.79	4.05
Saudi Arabia	4.19	2.08	3.85	4.03
South Africa	3.90	2.09	3.57	3.79
Zambia	3.83	2.34	3.44	3.77

Table 5: One-way ANOVA Results by Country

Variable	F-Statistic	P-Value
Cross-Cultural Adjustment	1.425	0.2367
Training	1.289	0.2793
Compensation & Benefits	1.659	0.1771
Retention	1.923	0.1269

Discussion

This study evaluated the impacts of cross-cultural adjustment, training experience, and financial benefits on the retention of Chinese expatriates in the construction sector across four countries: Malaysia, Zambia, Saudi Arabia, and South Africa. Quantitative data from a

controlled questionnaire were analyzed with descriptive statistics, regression analysis, and comparative mean analyses across countries via ANOVA. The results have vital implications for employment practices related to expatriates in international HR development and academic research. The regression analysis revealed that cross-cultural adjustment is the most important predictor of retention, with a strong and statistically significant positive relationship. This means that expatriates who change well to the host country's cultural, social, and professional environment are more likely to stay with their organization.

Compensation and benefits also have a positive and statistically significant effect on retention. In this scenario, the impact of cross-cultural adjustment on this result is smaller. This highlights the persistent importance of financial and material inducements in expatriate management. On contrast, training did not predict retention, and in fact, a negative connection emerged in the descriptive analysis. This could be evidence of a lack of connection between the training opportunities available and what expatriate workers actually need to deliver.

Given the variation in variables across those studies, it can be deduced that Malaysia and Saudi Arabia have the highest average retention scores, and Zambia recorded the highest average training satisfaction. While these differences in means suggest some contextual variation, ANOVA analysis found that these differences were not statistically significant. This means that the patterns observed might not be generalized across samples, and a cautious attitude should be used. However, the p-value for retention is slightly smaller ($p = .1269$), which suggests a possible phenomenon that would merit additional study, particularly in a larger and more representative sample.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

There are some important theoretical insights of this study. First, it highlights the role of cross-cultural adjustment in expatriate life and draws on well-established models, such as Black, Mendenhall, and Oddou's (1991) model of expatriate adjustment. Findings confirm the importance of psychological and sociocultural adaptation as factors in expatriate retention. Second, while compensation and benefits are a subject of expatriate studies in literature, this study empirically evidences their continued importance in the construction industry.

Finally, the surprising lack of significance of training as a predictor raises meaningful questions about the design, timing, and delivery of training during expatriate assignments. The research provides practical implications for practitioners in human resources and corporate leaders working in international environments. Workers are required to invest in cultural adaptation events or programs for expatriates, such as mentoring, awareness programs, and social performances. They must make sure that payment is fair, competitive, and corroborated with local living standards. Organizations also are required to review the existing approach to training programs critically. Rather than standardizing pre-exit training, corporations should execute progressing, context-specific training that adjusts to the wide variety of expatriates' requirements as they begin their tasks.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the sample comprised only Chinese expatriates working in the construction industry; therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to expatriates of other nationalities or those employed in

different industries. Second, the study relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to common method bias, memory errors, and social desirability bias. Third, the cross-sectional research design limits the ability to establish causal relationships among the study variables.

In addition, the distribution of respondents across the four host countries was not equal, which may have reduced the statistical power to detect country-level differences. As indicated by the one-way ANOVA results, no statistically significant differences were observed across host countries. Future studies employing larger and more balanced country samples may provide greater power to examine whether meaningful contextual differences exist.

Furthermore, the present study adopted a parsimonious model that focused on the direct effects of cross-cultural adjustment, training, and compensation and benefits on expatriate retention. Although this approach enabled a clear examination of the primary relationships, it did not incorporate mediating, moderating, or control variables that may further explain the mechanisms or boundary conditions underlying expatriate retention. Future research is therefore encouraged to extend the proposed model by examining relevant mediating variables (e.g., job satisfaction, organizational commitment, or perceived organizational support), moderating variables (e.g., cultural intelligence, family adjustment, or host-country support), and appropriate control variables (e.g., age, expatriate experience, organizational tenure, and assignment duration) to provide a more comprehensive understanding of expatriate retention. Finally, future research could employ longitudinal designs to examine changes in expatriate retention over time and incorporate qualitative approaches, such as interviews or case studies, to gain deeper insights into expatriates' experiences, particularly regarding the perceived effectiveness and relevance of organizational training programmes.

Conclusion

This study focuses on the importance of cross-cultural adjustment, compensation, and benefits in securing Chinese expatriate retention in the construction sector. Results show that while financial inducements remain relevant, adjusting to the cultural and organizational environment of the host country is the most crucial factor for retention. The ineffectiveness of current training programs or events shows the vitality to transform the preparation and career development approach for expatriates. The data did not show considerable differences at the country's level, but descriptive results suggest potential contextual influences that are worth further study and consideration. Overall, this study offers practical guidance and theoretical perspectives to improve global HR practices.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire items

Cross-Cultural Adjustment

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements related to your cross-cultural adjustment in the host country. Use a scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

1. **GA1:** I have adjusted to the non-work aspects of the foreign country (e.g., housing, food, healthcare, shopping).
2. **GA2:** I overcame the culture shock that may distract me from adjusting to the culture of the country of assignment.
3. **WA1:** I have adjusted to the level of responsibility associated with my job assignment.
4. **WA2:** I have gained knowledge and expertise about the foreign country's operations, markets, customers, and business practices.
5. **IA1:** I have established and maintained relationships with local staff.
6. **IA2:** I interact with host nationals very well outside of work.

Training

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding the training provided by the company. Use a scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

1. Sufficient time is allocated for training.
2. Sufficient money is allocated for training.
3. Training currently provided is leading to satisfactory results.
4. Training plans are developed and monitored for all employees.
5. Training programs are consistently evaluated.

Compensation and Benefits

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding compensation and benefits. Use a scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

1. There is an attractive compensation system in place.
2. The internal salary structure is equitable.
3. The external salary structure is competitive.
4. My salary reflects my performance.
5. My salary encourages better performance.
6. My salary reflects the standard of living in the host country.

Section 7: Retention

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding your retention within the company. Use a scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

1. I'm planning on working for another company within a period of three years.
2. Within this company, my work gives me satisfaction.

3. If I wanted to do another job or function, I would look first at the possibilities within this company.
4. I see a future for myself within this company.
5. It doesn't matter if I'm working for this company or another, as long as I have work.
6. If it were up to me, I will definitely be working for this company for the next five years.
7. If I could start over again, I would choose to work for another company.
8. If I received an attractive job offer from another company, I would take the job.
9. The work I'm doing is very important to me.
10. I love working for this company.
11. I have checked out a job in another company previously.

Appendix B

SPSS ANALYSIS

Analysis of Demographic Variables

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	102	47.9	47.9	47.9
	Male	111	52.1	52.1	100.0
	Total	213	100.0	100.0	

Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	<input type="checkbox"/> 25-34	103	48.4	48.4	48.4
	<input type="checkbox"/> 35-44	68	31.9	31.9	80.3
	<input type="checkbox"/> 45-54	25	11.7	11.7	92.0
	<input type="checkbox"/> Under 25	17	8.0	8.0	100.0
	Total	213	100.0	100.0	

Education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Bachelor's degree	96	45.1	45.1	45.1
	College and below	46	21.6	21.6	66.7
	Doctoral degree	24	11.3	11.3	77.9
	Master's degree	47	22.1	22.1	100.0
	Total	213	100.0	100.0	

WorkLife

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-5 years	85	39.9	39.9	39.9
	11-20 years	48	22.5	22.5	62.4
	6-10 years	32	15.0	15.0	77.5
	Less than 1 year	5	2.3	2.3	79.8

More than 20 years	43	20.2	20.2	100.0
Total	213	100.0	100.0	

Marital Status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Married	105	49.3	49.3	49.3
	Unmarried	108	50.7	50.7	100.0
	Total	213	100.0	100.0	

Job Position

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	General Manager	12	5.6	5.6	5.6
	General Staff	91	42.7	42.7	48.4
	Middle Manager	46	21.6	21.6	70.0
	Other	1	.5	.5	70.4
	Professional	29	13.6	13.6	84.0
	Senior Manager	13	6.1	6.1	90.1
	Technician	21	9.9	9.9	100.0
	Total	213	100.0	100.0	

Company Nature

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Chinese enterprise	89	41.8	41.8	41.8
	Other	5	2.3	2.3	44.1
	Sino-foreign joint venture	73	34.3	34.3	78.4
	Wholly foreign-owned enterprise	46	21.6	21.6	100.0
	Total	213	100.0	100.0	

Country You Are Working in Now

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	China	4	1.9	1.9	1.9
	Malaysia	23	10.8	10.8	12.7
	Qatar	1	.5	.5	13.1
	Saudi Arabia	27	12.7	12.7	25.8
	South Africa	106	49.8	49.8	75.6
	Zambia	52	24.4	24.4	100.0
	Total	213	100.0	100.0	

Descriptive Analysis**Statistics**

		CCA	T	CB	TR
N	Valid	213	213	213	213
	Missing	0	0	0	0

Mean	3.8889	2.1596	3.5814	3.7286
Std. Deviation	.78386	.77952	.89102	.74921
Minimum	1.17	1.00	1.67	2.00
Maximum	5.00	5.00	4.83	4.82

Correlation Analysis

		Correlations			
		CCA	T	CB	TR
CCA	Pearson Correlation	1	-.363**	.457**	.445**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	213	213	213	213
T	Pearson Correlation	-.363**	1	-.286**	-.338**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001	<.001
	N	213	213	213	213
CB	Pearson Correlation	.457**	-.286**	1	.474**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001		<.001
	N	213	213	213	213
TR	Pearson Correlation	.445**	-.338**	.474**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	
	N	213	213	213	213

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

Regression Analysis

Variables Entered/Removed^a

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	CB, T, CCA ^b	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: TR

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.558 ^a	.312	.302	.62593

a. Predictors: (Constant), CB, T, CCA

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	37.116	3	12.372	31.578	<.001 ^b
	Residual	81.884	209	.392		
	Total	119.000	212			

a. Dependent Variable: TR

b. Predictors: (Constant), CB, T, CCA

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.206	.325		6.799	<.001
	CCA	.231	.064	.242	3.605	<.001
	T	-.154	.060	-.160	-2.570	.011
	CB	.267	.055	.317	4.867	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: TR