

New Paradoxes Faced by Organizations on Self-Initiated Expatriates in the USA

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Abstract

The prevalence of self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) has increased as a result of the expanding global nature of commercial activities. The current corpus of scholarly literature has extensively explored various aspects of expatriation. However, there is a limited understanding of the conflicting challenges that organizations confront while managing self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) within the framework of the United States. The primary aim of this study is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the inherent inconsistencies that arise in organizations while managing Socially and Environmentally Responsible Initiatives (SIEs) within the United States. The present study utilizes a qualitative research approach, employing semi-structured interviews and theme analysis to investigate the experiences of establishments grappling with the paradoxes linked to SIE. The focus of this study encompasses a wide range of industries and organizational scales that are now existent within the United States. As a result, its inclusion enhances the potential applicability and generalizability of the findings. Based on the analysis conducted, it can be deduced that organizations face certain contradictory issues when they interact with social impact enterprises (SIEs). The matter of achieving a balance between organizational control and individual autonomy comes as a result of the comparatively higher levels of self-direction and independence commonly demonstrated by self-employed individuals (SIEs). The paradoxical position described above presents a challenge for organizations seeking to strike a balance between maintaining control over their worldwide operations and capitalizing on the unique skills and perspectives that SIEs provide. The current research study provides an academic addition to the field of expatriation and paradox theory by shedding light on the unique paradoxes faced by organizations that oversee self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) in the United States. The anticipated outcomes of this study are anticipated to yield practical ramifications for the domain of human resource management and organizational development. The study is expected to provide significant insights for organizations aiming to efficiently manage and harness the potential of SIEs.

Keywords

Independency, Dependency, Self-Initiated Expatriates, Decision

1. Introduction

Expatriates expressed appreciation for organizational policies that facilitated integration, such as the implementation of cross-cultural training initiatives and the establishment of mentorship programs (Pekerti et al., 2021). Nevertheless, certain individuals observed that these habits may unintentionally impede their independence by compelling them to conform. The significance of open communication and flexibility in organizational policies was emphasized as crucial within self-initiated Expatriation (Halim et al., 2018). Organizations that fostered open talks regarding the paradox and provided flexibility in work arrangements were perceived as being more supportive of the demands of expatriates (Cho & Chew, 2021). Previous research has contributed to a deeper understanding of the intricate challenges encountered by organizations that are involved with self-initiated expatriates in the United States (Al Ariss, 2010; Yussuf, 2023). Through the collection of views from diverse stakeholders and the analysis of their experiences, sometime might not reflect the true situation on ground, however, the difficulties that organizations encounter and offer ideas for fostering a balance between integration and autonomy within this distinct expatriate cohort are crucial. From one perspective, the self-initiated expatriate may perceive minimal personal risk, while the corporation or organization may seek to exploit the expatriate's talents (Nolan, 2023). In the contemporary business landscape, it has become imperative for organizations to establish a strategic position that enables them to attract and retain talented individuals while fostering a sense of loyalty among employees.

From a certain standpoint, it is crucial to acknowledge that self-initiated expatriates may perceive a diminished sense of personal danger, whilst the employing company or organization may want to leverage the skills and abilities of these individuals (Noman et al., 2023). This phenomenon will give rise to a conflict, which is commonly referred to in academic literature as a "paradox." In the current business environment, it is crucial for firms to develop a strategic edge by effectively attracting and maintaining highly skilled personnel who demonstrate a strong commitment to the company. However, certain companies, driven by the objective of maximizing profits and minimizing costs, may see that they can deceive and exploit SIEs. Simultaneously, the SIEs may have a sense of autonomy, wherein their boundaries are inviolable (Ryan, 2023). Self-initiated expatriates in the United States adopt several techniques to effectively handle the conflict that arises from the desire to assimilate into their host firm while still maintaining their autonomy. The current state of knowledge regarding this matter remains uncertain. The current clarity of the organizational practices and

policies that either exacerbate or mitigate tensions arising from this paradox is limited (Zakaria & Yusuf, 2023). Moreover, the strategic alignment of this dilemma relates to the substantial challenges that organizations may face when attempting to harmonize the expectations associated with their strategic business objectives, which lack clarity. This matter carries significant significance.

The prevalence of self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) has increased as a result of the expanding globalization of commercial activities (Atay et al., 2023). These individuals willingly engage in overseas assignments with the objective of attaining professional and personal development. The current body of research has extensively explored various aspects of expatriation. However, there is a limited understanding of the conflicting challenges faced by organizations while managing self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) within the framework of the United States (Yusuf, 2023). The primary aim of this study is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the emerging paradoxes encountered by organizations in the United States when dealing with Socially Irresponsible Entities (SIEs). As a result, the following research questions are formulated:

- 1) What strategies do self-initiated expatriates in the United States employ to navigate the tension between assimilating into their host company and maintaining their autonomy?
- 2) What are the organizational practices and policies that either contribute to or alleviate the tensions that arise from this paradox?

The justification of formulating the objectives lie with the fact that achieving a balance between organizational control and individual autonomy comes as a result of the comparatively higher levels of self-direction and independence commonly demonstrated by self-employed individuals (SIEs). The paradoxical position presents a challenge for organizations seeking to strike a balance between maintaining control over their worldwide operations and capitalizing on the unique skills and perspectives that SIEs provide.

Another justification of the study lies with the integration-separation dilemma, a phenomenon that occurs within the realm of organizations. It involves the challenge of incorporating individuals from different identity into an existing organizational structure, while still acknowledging and valuing their unique cultural backgrounds. The aforementioned paradox underscores the need for employing strategies that promote both assimilation and difference to effectively foster collaboration and allow the flow of knowledge for any self-Initiated Expatriate (Atay et al., 2023). The dual loyalty conundrum refers to the complex situation in which SIEs experience simultaneous allegiance to both their nation of origin and their present host country. Organizations must effectively navigate a delicate balance, wherein they strive to uphold the commitment of their stakeholders to the organizational goals, while also leveraging their extensive expertise and networks on a global scale (Goštautaitė et al., 2023). Moreover, the strategic alignment conundrum pertains to the significant obstacles faced by organizations in their endeavor to align the aims and expectations of strategic business units (SIEs) with the overarching strategic goals of the company. This issue

holds immense importance and warrants careful consideration.

Based on the aforementioned rationale, this present study aims to address the discrepancy regarding the significance of the efficient utilization of SIF and customized organizational management strategies in order to lessen disputes and improve the efficacy of SIEs. The present study has the potential to make an academic contribution to the extant literature on expatriation and paradox theory by elucidating the distinct challenges encountered by organizations responsible for managing self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) within the United States. The expected results of this study are projected to have practical implications for the field of human resource management and organizational development. The research is anticipated to yield valuable insights for businesses seeking to effectively manage and leverage the capabilities of self-initiated expatriates (SIEs). Additional research and inquiry are imperative to get a comprehensive comprehension of the intricate characteristics of these dilemmas and to ascertain feasible approaches for their resolution. Additional research might be undertaken to explore the distinct human and organizational elements that impact the development and handling of these paradoxes. This study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by further elucidating the complexities and obstacles associated with Socially Integrative Enterprises (SIEs) within the context of the United States.

Apart from this current section that provides the overview of the research, the remaining part of the paper is organized as follows: Section 2 presents the theoretical framework of the research. Section 3 presents the research methodology. Section 4 provides the analysis and presentation of the results. Section 5 is present the discussion of the findings and section present the conclusion of the paper.

2. Theoretical Framework

The Paradox theory and the Theory of Behavior are adopted for this study because the use of both the Paradox Theory and the Theory of Behavior in one's research on self-initiated expatriates' management of the integration-autonomy paradox can offer a full theoretical framework for comprehending the intricacies of their experiences. By including the Paradox Theory and the Theory of Behavior into this current research, the research is afforded the opportunity to examine the integration-autonomy paradox from multiple perspectives, encompassing psychological, cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions. The adoption of this comprehensive method facilitates the expansion and comprehensiveness of this research, so contributing to a more nuanced comprehension of the difficulties encountered by self-initiated expatriates and the techniques they apply to effectively manage these problems.

2.1. The Concept of Paradox Theory

Paradox theory, often known as paradox research or the examination of organizational paradoxes, comprises a conceptual framework that seeks to explore and

analyze apparent inconsistencies or conflicts that emerge within organizations and their administration (Carmin & De Marchi, 2023). The primary objective of this study is to comprehend scenarios in which two apparently contradictory elements coexist and interact, resulting in intricate and frequently paradoxical consequences. Specifically, when a person comes into the USA and then get a job in a company, then what could each expect from each other? Paradox theory help to understand this kind of engagement. This theoretical framework acknowledges that organizations frequently encounter conflicting demands, objectives, or ideals that can give rise to tensions. These conflicts may occur due to various circumstances, including the duality (Cunha & Putnam, 2019). Organizations often encounter the need to establish a balance between opposing concepts, such as stability and change, centralization and decentralization, individuality and collectivity, efficiency and creativity, as well as short-term objectives and long-term aspirations. Organizations are faced with the existence of numerous stakeholders, each possessing unique and potentially conflicting expectations (Shahidi & Zhong, 2011). The stakeholders involved in this context include employees, consumers, shareholders, regulators, and the community. Resource restrictions are a prevalent occurrence inside organizations, leading to the emergence of paradoxical challenges. These challenges often involve the need to strike a balance between allocating resources towards innovation and the imperative of containing costs. Organizations encounter the simultaneous task of adjusting to ever-changing external circumstances while maintaining internal stability and coherence (Yap & Lim, 2023).

The application of paradox theory within the framework of Self-Initiated Expatriation (SIE) requires a thorough understanding and adept management of the inherent tensions and contradictions that individuals face when they choose to live and work in a foreign country without the support of an organization. The phenomenon of dual identity is frequently observed among self-initiated expatriates, who are confronted with the coexistence of their own cultural identity and the newly embraced cultural identity of the destination country. The paradox theory suggests that individuals possess the ability to simultaneously accept and incorporate many identities, rather than solely choosing or rejecting a single identity in preference of another (Waldman et al., 2019). Both organizations and individuals possess the capacity to cultivate a cultural milieu that values diversity and actively promotes the development of a bicultural identity.

The conflict between autonomy and support emerges when examining self-initiated expatriates who engage in independent international undertakings, without relying on direct aid and provisions provided by organizations. The existence of autonomy might generate sentiments of empowerment; but, it can also lead to a perception of isolation. The paradox theory suggests that individuals possess the ability to successfully navigate their autonomy by active involvement in networks, groups, and mentorship inside the host nation, thereby obtaining the necessary support and guidance (Carmin & De Marchi, 2023). Just as corporations are faced with the need to achieve a harmonious equilibrium between

exploration, denoting creativity, and exploitation, denoting efficiency, self-initiated expatriates also encounter the task of effectively navigating the tension between engaging in unique cultural experiences and leveraging opportunities for personal and professional growth (Dieste et al., 2022). This may involve immersing oneself in the local culture while also capitalizing on their unique abilities and backgrounds.

Self-initiated expats face a paradox while attempting to integrate into the host society while also maintaining connections with their home culture. Instead of viewing this as a binary situation, individuals possess the ability to employ technology and communication as tools to bridge the gap between these two cultures and cultivate a sense of inclusion in both domains. Self-initiated expatriation carries inherent dangers, such as potential setbacks in one's professional advancement or challenges in adapting to a different cultural context (Waldman & Sparr, 2023). The paradox theory suggests that individuals possess the ability to see and embrace risks as potential opportunities for gaining information and fostering personal growth. Organizations possess the ability to offer assistance to Socially Impactful Experiences (SIEs) by recognizing and valuing the skills and knowledge gained through these initiatives. The successful handling of the inherent conflict between the need for new experiences and the need for stability is of great significance for individuals who choose to live abroad. Human beings possess the inherent ability to establish consistent behavioral patterns and foster a sense of stability, while also demonstrating adaptability in embracing foreign cultural norms and overcoming challenges.

The application of paradox theory to self-initiated expatriation necessitates the recognition of the intricate nature of the expatriate encounter and the development of strategies to effectively manage the inherent contradictions. Both individuals and organizations have the ability to develop methods that acknowledge and include the existence of these tensions, so promoting a comprehensive and flexible approach to living and working autonomously in a foreign nation. This methodology has the potential to facilitate heightened personal and professional growth, as well as foster a workforce that is more adaptable and culturally proficient.

2.2. The Theory of Behavior

The theory of behavior is a theoretical framework that aims to elucidate and comprehend the diverse determinants that impact human conduct. It encompasses a variety of psychological, societal, and biological factors (Naylor et al., 2013). Before digging into the theoretical framework concerning consumer behavior used in this study, it is crucial to obtain a concise knowledge of the topic itself. Behavioral theories comprise a diverse array of psychological, sociological, and organizational theories that seek to elucidate and forecast human behavior through the utilization of a variety of principles, concepts, and models (Bosnjak et al., 2020). These theories examine the behaviors, decision-making processes, and interactions of individuals and groups within various circumstances (Laur-

ing & Selmer, 2018).

The utilization of behavioral theories in the context of Self-Initiated Expatriation (SIE) requires a thorough understanding of the multiple factors that influence individuals' decisions to independently pursue international experiences, as well as the behaviors they exhibit throughout the entire expatriation process (Lim & Weissmann, 2023). The cognitive-behavioral perspective acknowledges the importance of cognitive factors in shaping behavior. The decision-making processes of individuals can be significantly influenced by the subjective judgments they make regarding their own competencies and the perceived challenges associated with expatriation, as explained by SIEs. Organizations can effectively mitigate cognitive obstacles by implementing training programs, mentorship initiatives, and resource allocation strategies that aim to enhance the self-efficacy and confidence levels of expatriates (Selmer & Lauring, 2012).

Behavioral theories acknowledge the importance of individual differences, including personality traits and motivations, in shaping behavior. Organizations have the ability to tailor their assistance for SIEs based on the distinct interests and motivations of individuals (Faulwasser et al., 2023). For instance, individuals who place a high value on personal growth may derive motivation from the potential to improve their talents, whereas those who aspire to advance in their careers may be motivated by the opportunity to acquire international experience (Andresen et al., 2020). The utilization of behavioral theories in the context of Self-Initiated Expatriation allows organizations to enhance their understanding of the multifaceted factors that influence individuals' decision-making and behaviors in regard to foreign endeavors (Ma et al., 2023). This analysis can offer guidance for developing strategies to promote and strengthen SIE, thereby fostering a workforce with improved global awareness and cultural competence.

3. Research Methodology

The qualitative methodology offers a unique approach to academic inquiry by integrating several philosophical assumptions, investigative approaches, and techniques for gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data. Huberman and Miles (2013) argue that researchers can rely on textual and visual data that they have collected, enabling them to employ different strategies for analyzing the data and leverage a range of approaches in their investigation. Data are commonly collected in the field or on-site, where individuals directly face the issue or problem under investigation, as opposed to a controlled laboratory setting normally used in research. Researchers frequently avoid conducting experiments in a laboratory environment and do not typically provide participants with equipment for individual completion. Hence, a significant component of this study involves the analysis of written records, the observation of human conduct, and the engagement in interviews with individuals possessing relevant knowledge (Peterson, 2019). Throughout the whole of the qualitative research process, the researcher places significant importance on obtaining a comprehensive comprehension of the significance provided by the informants in connection to the topic or subject

matter under investigation. The main goal is to collect knowledge regarding the subject or matter by directly engaging with the informants, in order to successfully tackle the research problem and obtain the needed information. This involves the responsibility of giving multiple perspectives, analyzing the various factors involved in a specific situation, and providing an overall overview of the broader context that emerges (Eldh et al., 2020).

3.1. Research Population and Sampling Technique

The process of estimating the research population includes the identification of prospective participants who possess relevance to the research subject matter. The present study centers around the examination of the paradoxical challenges encountered by organizations in relation to self-initiated expatriates within the United States. The following are several potential cohorts that may comprise the study sample. The process of estimating the study population entails the identification of prospective participants who possess relevance to the research issue. The primary objective of this study is to examine the paradoxical challenges encountered by organizations with regards to self-initiated expatriates in the United States. Hence, the population would encompass the subsequent constituents. The target audience for this study includes individuals referred to as SIEs, human resource managers and professionals, organizational leaders and managers, managers and executives responsible for expatriation policy decisions, colleagues and team members of SIEs, expatriate support networks and associations, cultural consultants and experts, as well as academic and research experts. The United States Census Bureau offers an extensive array of demographic, economic, and social data pertaining to the United States. Regular censuses and surveys are conducted by researchers, providing vital insights into various aspects such as population sizes and workforce trends.

The study has employed purposeful sampling as the chosen sample method. The underlying principle of qualitative research is the deliberate selection of informants who can provide the most valuable insights to aid the researcher in comprehending the problem and addressing the research topic effectively. The approach described does not inherently imply the utilization of random sampling or the inclusion of a substantial number of informants and sites, as is commonly observed in quantitative research Elliott (2018). Consequently, a sample size of five informants was chosen. Creswell (2017) justifies a specific numerical value as being suitable for a qualitative investigation. This technique is a viable method for addressing the matter of sample size, specifically in relation to the concept of saturation in the development of grounded theory.

3.2. Instrumentation for Data Collection

The instrument of study employed in this qualitative study comprises a set of open-ended questions that have undergone validation by subject matter experts. Consequently, a set of interview questions that have been validated and cor-

rected were subsequently produced. The research methodology involves the utilization of in-depth semi-structured interviews with self-initiated expatriates, human resource managers, and leaders within organizations. The interview questions are centered around the participants' personal experiences, their perceptions regarding integration and autonomy, as well as the organizational practices they have encountered. The interview questions are closely linked to the research questions that have been put out. Therefore, in light of the two research questions that have been put forth, a set of interview questions was prepared for each of them.

The constructed interview questions that correspond to research question 1 (as indicated in **Table 1**) have been prepared. The interview questions serve as a robust foundation for acquiring comprehensive views about self-initiated expatriates regarding their experiences pertaining to the integration-autonomy paradox. The validation process involved the assessment of two experts, who gave the approval of the aforementioned question for the purpose of data collection.

Table 1. Research question 1 interview questions.

#	Interview Questions
1	Could you please elaborate on your personal experience as a self-initiated expatriate in the United States, with a particular focus on the challenges associated with striking a balance between assimilating into your host organization and preserving your individual autonomy?
2	What is your perception of the expectations surrounding the process of integrating into the culture and work practices of the host organization? In what ways has this phenomenon impacted your strategies for upholding your autonomy as an expatriate?
3	Can you please describe instances whereby you experienced a conflict between assimilating into your host organization and maintaining your independence? In what manner did you navigate these situations?
4	In your perspective, what are the primary advantages and obstacles associated with achieving a harmonious equilibrium between integration and autonomy as a self-initiated expatriate?
5	What tactics or approaches have you formulated to effectively assimilate into your host organization while concurrently upholding your individual identity and autonomy?
6	What is your perspective on the impact of organizational policies, support, and communication in facilitating the management of the integration-autonomy paradox? Could you please offer specific instances when these things have had an impact on your own experience?
7	Have you come across any organizational practices or efforts that have supported your capacity to simultaneously integrate and sustain autonomy? On the other hand, have you encountered any practices that impeded the achievement of this equilibrium?
8	How does one effectively manage the possible conflict arising from the need to conform to established organizational rules while also expressing individual viewpoints or cultural background? Could you provide examples that illustrate situations where this tension was particularly pronounced?
9	Is it your opinion that the level of integration and autonomy differs among various industries or types of organizations? To what extent has the nature of your work environment impacted your overall experience?
10	In retrospect, what counsel would you offer to fellow self-initiated expatriates encountering comparable difficulties in negotiating the integration-autonomy paradox? What insights or tactics have you acquired that you believe could be beneficial to individuals?

The interview questions pertaining to addressing research question 2 are displayed in **Table 2**. The following inquiries aim to facilitate an examination of the diverse manners in which organizational practices and policies impact the conflicts stemming from the integration-autonomy conundrum experienced by self-initiated expatriates. The validation method entailed the evaluation of two specialists who critically examined the questions and provided their endorsement for their utilization in data gathering, with the aim of validating the questions.

3.3. Data Collection (Interviews)

The data collection here is the interview. The interview process involves a series of steps to engage with participants, gather data, and gain insights into their experiences and perspectives regarding the integration-autonomy paradox among

Table 2. Research question 2 interview questions.

#	Interview Questions
1	Could you please describe any particular organizational practices or policies that you consider successful in facilitating the navigation of the integration-autonomy paradox for self-initiated expatriates? In what ways do these activities contribute to achieving a state of equilibrium between the two?
2	Based on your expertise, what impact does the organization's communication and information sharing strategy have on your management of the integration-autonomy paradox? Are there any documented cases in which effective communication has successfully mitigated tensions?
3	Could you provide an overview of the activities or programs that your company has undertaken to cater to the distinct requirements of self-initiated expatriates? To what extent have these measures facilitated the process of integrating into the community while preserving individual autonomy?
4	Are there instances of mentorship, coaching, or support networks inside your organization that have facilitated your navigation of the integration-autonomy paradox? To what extent do these contacts influence and mold one's overall experience?
5	To what extent can performance assessments, feedback, and acknowledgment impact one's approach towards integration and autonomy? Have any practices been noticed that either facilitate or impede the achievement of this equilibrium?
6	What is your perception of the impact of the organization's position on diversity and inclusion on your capacity to uphold your cultural identity while assimilating into the professional environment? Could you provide examples of situations in which adopting a supportive position had a good effect on your personal experience?
7	Have you come across any instances when organizational rules or practices unintentionally heightened the conflicts between the concepts of integration and autonomy? Could you provide a description of the manner in which these policies or practices exerted influence or impact?
8	Is there a perceived responsibility for corporate leaders and managers to cultivate a conducive atmosphere that supports self-initiated expatriates in effectively managing the integration-autonomy paradox? To what extent have leadership actions impacted your personal experience?
9	What is the influence of work arrangements characterized by flexibility, such as remote work opportunities or flexible scheduling, on the capacity to achieve a balance between integration and autonomy maintenance? Could you kindly provide instances in which flexibility has proven to be exceptionally advantageous?
10	Considering your past experiences, what suggestions would you provide to companies that aim to enhance their processes and policies in order to effectively assist self-initiated expatriates in navigating the integration-autonomy paradox?

self-initiated expatriates in the USA. The interviews were conducted with five Informants. The Identified potential participants based on the research objectives and sampling criteria (self-initiated expatriates, HR managers, etc.) were contacted via email, phone, or face-to-face communication channels to introduce and explain the study's purpose, and request their participation.

Before the interview, the research provides the participants with a consent form that outlines the purpose of the study, the interview process, their rights as participants, and the confidentiality measures in place. Each of the 5 participants read and understand the consent form, and signed consent to participate in the study. All the interviews were performed using ZOOM an online platform, whereas all the participants conducted the interviews at separate time. The participants agree, to have the interviews recorded to ensure accurate transcription later. Using ZOOM a transcribe text version of the interview was first derived, including participants' verbal cues, tone, and emotions.

According to her profile, the first respondent is a female professor at a university who is 67 years old, has been in the profession for 30 years, and is from Louisiana. The next respondent's profile reveals that she is a human resources manager at a Washington-based organization, is 47 years old, and has 15 years of professional experience. The third respondent is an Assist Manager in a company and is a woman, 47 years old, with 17 years of experience who currently resides in Texas. The fourth respondent lives in Louisiana, is 60 years old, and works as a professor at a higher education institution. The final response discloses that the departing Washingtonian is a male Assistant Manager (Institutions) who is 45 years old with 10 years of relevant job experience.

Respondent	Gender	Title and Organization	Age	Duration	Place
Respondent 1	Female	Professor (Higher Institution)	67	30	Louisiana
Respondent 2	Male	HR manager (Organization)	47	17	Texas
Respondent 3	Female	Assist Manager (Company)	50	15	Washington
Respondent 4	Male	Professor (Higher Institution)	60	25	Louisiana
Respondent 5	Male	Assistant Manager (Institutions)	45	10	Chicago

3.4. Analytical Technique

Thematic analysis of interview transcripts to identify recurring themes related to the paradox of integration and autonomy has been carried out. The interview transcripts are organizing according to themes, patterns, and insights that emerge. The analysis the responses to identify commonalities, contradictions, and trends related to the integration-autonomy paradox were conducted. Themes that have emerged first include *experiences of role ambiguity, balancing cultural assimilation with individual identity, and the influence of organizational support*. In qualitative research, the impact of data analysis is to aggregate data into a small number of themes ranging from five to seven themes (Creswell, 2017). Thus, for

this current study, the collected data had to be organized and prepared for analysis, which involved cleaning the transcribed interviews by ensuring connections is established within the themes.

The interview data contained the general ideas of the Informants, the tone of their ideas, the impression of the overall depth, credibility, and use of the information. Thereafter, coding all of the data was performed. Finally, critical discussion and analysis of the themes were carried out appearing as the major findings of the study. Then the findings were interpreted.

4. The Principal Finding and Interpretation

The principal findings of the study dwell on answering the research question. That is participants expressed a sense of tension between their desire for integration within their host organization and their need for autonomy as self-initiated expatriates. The analysis of their responses toward answering research question 1 as analyzed is presented here. The research question 1 aims as uncovering how do self-initiated expatriates in the USA navigate the paradox between integrating into their host organization while maintaining their autonomy as independent expatriates. The findings of the study indicate that the subject “Balancing Cultural Assimilation and Individual Identity” encompasses the participants’ frequent articulation of the difficulty they faced in assimilating into the culture of their host company while simultaneously maintaining their own unique identities. Numerous individuals emphasized the significance of effectively adjusting to the novel professional setting while nevertheless upholding their cultural principles and distinctive backgrounds. One participant shared:

“It’s about finding a balance between fitting in and being authentic. You want to contribute, but you also want to stay connected to who you are.”

This statement highlights the primary challenge encountered by self-initiated expats as they navigate the process of assimilating into a new company and culture, all while striving to maintain their distinct unique identity. This also implies that SIE is inclined to engage actively and provide valuable contributions towards the organization’s aims and objectives. This observation further emphasizes the importance for expatriates to maintain a strong sense of personal identity, cultural heritage, and individuality. The establishment of a connection to one’s own identity is vital for the preservation of emotional well-being and the cultivation of a robust sense of self. This phenomenon encapsulates the intricate psychological and emotional challenges encountered by self-initiated expatriates as they endeavor to strike a harmonious equilibrium between assimilating into the cultural fabric of the host organization and preserving their own individuality. The conflict emerges from the aspiration to actively participate and make valuable contributions within their professional capacities, while still preserving their distinct cultural identity and personal beliefs. This difficulty highlights the significance of organizational practices that recognize and facilitate the integration-autonomy dichotomy. Furthermore, another participant highlighted that:

“I feel this constant pull between fitting in with my colleagues here and staying true to my cultural roots. It’s like I’m trying to bridge two worlds.”

This implies that the expatriate is now experiencing persistent tension. On one hand, individuals may experience the expectation to assimilate and adhere to the established norms and behaviors of their colleagues inside the new cultural environment. Conversely, there exists a compelling inclination to remain authentic to one’s cultural heritage, principles, and customs. Additionally, this suggests the presence of an internal struggle in which the expatriate is required to navigate and reconcile their individual sense of self. Individuals often face the challenge of determining the extent to which they should preserve their cultural history and the degree to which they should assimilate into their unfamiliar environment. Furthermore, it exemplifies the intricate emotional trajectory experienced by self-initiated expatriates as they navigate the paradoxical nature of integration and autonomy. The text effectively communicates the emotional significance associated with the endeavor of reconciling one’s cultural heritage with the expectations imposed by a novel milieu. The aforementioned battle underscores the significance of organizational backing and strategies that acknowledge and tackle these difficulties.

Many participants reported struggling to strike a balance between adhering to organizational norms and maintaining their unique cultural identities.

The findings of the study indicate that in relation to the issue of “Navigating Role Ambiguity,” there were several studies conducted. The results of the study indicated that self-initiated expatriates frequently encounter challenges related to job ambiguity, as they strive to establish their responsibilities within the business while also preserving their autonomy. The participants engaged in a discourse regarding the necessity of engaging in negotiations pertaining to their respective roles, duties, and contributions. This deliberation resulted in the emergence of both favorable prospects and inherent tensions. A participant mentioned:

“I’ve had to clarify my role multiple times to ensure I’m contributing effectively without overstepping.”

This quote implies that the individual has experienced a state of confusion or ambiguity pertaining to their position within the institution. The individuals have expressed a need to have further clarification in order to comprehend the specific expectations placed upon them and choose the most efficient ways in which they may contribute to the team and organization. Furthermore, it demonstrates the participant’s cognizance of the intricate equilibrium between assimilating into the organization and preserving their independence. The individual seeks to ensure their active and meaningful participation without overstepping others’ duties or cultural limitations. This observation also underscores the intricate nature of integration among self-initiated expats. In addition to grappling with the integration-autonomy contradiction, individuals are confronted with practical issues pertaining to their distinct tasks and duties within the organizational context. One participant highlighted that:

“My role wasn’t very well defined when I started, and that created confusion. I had to have those conversations to clarify my responsibilities and make sure I contribute effectively.”

This phenomenon exemplifies the prevalent issue of position ambiguity encountered by self-initiated expatriates, and explores their proactive measures to mitigate this obstacle in order to make meaningful contributions inside their home organization. Furthermore, this underscores the participants’ encounter of joining the organization without a well-defined delineation of their responsibilities. The presence of role ambiguity can give rise to several challenges, including confusion, uncertainty, and potential obstacles to the individual’s successful integration within the organizational context.

The analysis of the survey indicates that a considerable number of participants placed importance on flexible work arrangements for addressing the integration-autonomy contradiction. The methods that were emphasized as facilitating the involvement of expatriates in the host organization while preserving a level of autonomy included remote work opportunities, flexible scheduling, and performance evaluations based on outcomes. One participant noted:

“Having the flexibility to work remotely allows me to contribute while maintaining the freedom to manage my time.”

This implies that the practice of remote work enables expats to actively contribute to the objectives and responsibilities of the organization, while also retaining their autonomy in managing their own time. Maintaining this equilibrium is of utmost importance to ensure their continued efficacy as contributors while preserving their autonomy. This further underscores the importance of flexible work arrangements, particularly in the context of remote work. The availability of flexibility allows expatriates to exercise agency in determining the configuration of their work environment and the execution of their activities.

“Having the flexibility to work from home has been a game-changer. It allows me to manage my work in a way that suits both my job and my autonomy.”

This implies that the ability to operate remotely has a significant impact on transformation. The aforementioned adaptability is associated with the concept of remote work, which provides individuals the opportunity to engage in work activities beyond the confines of a conventional office environment. Furthermore, it highlights the transformative impact of the opportunity to engage in remote work on the individual. This serves as an illustration of how flexible work arrangements play a crucial role in assisting self-initiated expats in navigating the integration-autonomy contradiction. Remote employment facilitates the alignment of workplace demands with individual preferences, so bolstering the expatriate’s job performance and fostering a heightened sense of autonomy.

The study’s analyses demonstrate that the theme of “Organizational Support Networks” yielded significant results. The findings indicate that support networks established within the organization, such as mentorship programs and expatriate affinity groups, play a crucial role in aiding self-initiated expats in effectively navigating the inherent paradoxes they encounter. These networks pro-

vide a medium for individuals living abroad to exchange their experiences, seek advice, and collaboratively handle the challenge of balancing integration and autonomy. One participant indicates that:

“Being part of a support network helped me understand that others are going through similar challenges,”

This observation highlights the good influence of participating in a support network on the personal journey of an individual who has chosen to live abroad alone. This statement highlights the need of establishing connections with those who possess a comprehensive understanding of the complexities associated with the integration-autonomy contradiction. The support network provides not only emotional comfort but also facilitates opportunities for collective learning, empowerment, and the sharing of ways to effectively handle the difficulties faced by expatriates.

“Being part of the expatriate mentorship group has been a lifeline. We share experiences, give each other advice, and it’s reassuring to know I’m not the only one dealing with this.”

This implies that engagement in an expatriate mentorship group functions as a crucial support system for self-directed expats. It offers individuals a nurturing environment wherein they may engage in the exchange of knowledge, experiences, and support with like-minded individuals who possess a comprehensive understanding of their own obstacles. The mentorship group effectively mitigates the integration-autonomy contradiction by providing a forum for collective experiences and cooperative resolution of challenges.

5. Discussions

This study has met both of its goals. Usually, it means that the open communication channels showed how important it is to have clear communication channels within the company. Organizations that allowed open dialogue about the integration-autonomy paradox were seen as more supportive of SIEs. Regular check-ins, feedback sessions, and chances to voice concerns helped expatriates feel like they had more control over their lives. This is because of what one participant said: “When the organization acknowledges the tensions we face and invites us to talk about them openly, it makes things easier.” Another participant said something similar, but in a different way: “When our team lead encouraged us to talk openly about any challenges we face in integrating while keeping our autonomy, it made a huge difference.” I felt heard and helped.” This sentence emphasizes how important leadership and communication are for dealing with the integration-autonomy conflict. Promoting open conversations about problems creates a climate of acceptance and helps expatriates feel supported in their efforts to fit in while keeping their freedom. This method is in line with the overarching goal of creating a cohesive work environment that recognizes and meets the different needs of self-initiated expatriates.

The analyses of the study reveal that on the theme “*Cultural Competency Training*” Several participants emphasized the positive impact of cultural com-

petency training on their ability to navigate the paradox. These programs equipped expatriates with the tools to bridge cultural gaps, communicate effectively, and engage with colleagues from diverse backgrounds. “*Cultural training provided insights into how to integrate while still being true to my cultural values,*” This highlights the significance of cultural training as a useful asset for self-initiated expats. This educational program provides individuals with the necessary skills and information to effectively manage the complex relationship between integration and autonomy. This training program facilitates the integration of expatriates into a work environment while allowing them to maintain their own cultural beliefs, so fostering inclusivity and harmony. The findings of the study also indicate that self-initiated expatriates in the USA adopt various strategies to navigate the integration-autonomy paradox. Balancing cultural assimilation and individual identity, negotiating role ambiguity, leveraging flexible work arrangements, engaging in organizational support networks, fostering open communication, and participating in cultural competency training emerged as key practices that assist expatriates in managing this paradox. Organizational practices that promote these strategies can contribute to a more harmonious integration process for self-initiated expatriates while preserving their autonomy.

The research question 2 aims at uncovering what organizational practices and policies contribute to or alleviate the tensions arising from this paradox. The analysis of the survey demonstrates that the topic “Flexibility in Performance Metrics” involves participants emphasizing that businesses that implement flexible performance metrics and assessments based on outcomes have a positive impact on mitigating the tensions associated with the integration-autonomy contradiction. These techniques enabled expatriates to make contributions that were in line with their abilities and preferences, while still preserving their autonomy.

The findings of the study indicate that the topic under investigation is “Inclusive Organizational Culture”. The results of the study indicated that firms that promote an inclusive culture and recognize the importance of varied perspectives have a beneficial impact on expatriates’ capacity to assimilate into the new environment while yet maintaining their autonomy. The participants expressed that a cultural environment that values and acknowledges individual differences alleviates the burden of conformity and enables them to make genuine contributions. The study’s analysis demonstrates that in relation to the issue of “Mentorship and Support Programs”. A number of participants emphasized the importance of mentorship and support programs in facilitating their capacity to effectively negotiate the integration-autonomy contradiction. The implementation of organizational initiatives that facilitated the pairing of expatriates with mentors proved beneficial in assisting them in navigating various hurdles, while also providing valuable counsel in maintaining their autonomy.

The findings of the study also indicate that in relation to the topic of “Flexible Work Environment”. The results of the study revealed that the implementation

of a flexible work environment, which encompasses provisions for remote work and flexible work hours, effectively mitigated stress and conflicts experienced by self-initiated expatriates. These strategies enabled expatriates to effectively navigate their professional responsibilities by striking a harmonious balance between the demands of integration and their need for autonomy.

The findings of the study also indicate that in relation to the topic of “Customized Onboarding and Training”. The participants highlighted that firms who provide personalized onboarding and training programs demonstrate an understanding of the distinct difficulties encountered by self-initiated expatriates. Tailored programs that recognized the dichotomy between integration and autonomy offered practical direction and tools to effectively negotiate these tensions. The findings of the study also indicate that in relation to the issue of “Clear Communication Channels”. The research results underscored the significance of establishing transparent communication channels within organizational contexts. Effective communication regarding expectations, policies, and avenues for resolving the integration-autonomy paradox served to mitigate uncertainty and alleviate stress among self-initiated expatriates.

Organizational strategies and policies aimed at mitigating tensions stemming from the integration-autonomy paradox encompass various measures such as the adoption of flexible performance metrics, fostering an inclusive organizational culture, implementing mentorship and support initiatives, facilitating a flexible work environment, tailoring onboarding and training processes, and establishing transparent communication channels. These approaches facilitate the achievement of a more harmonious equilibrium between assimilating into the host organization and preserving autonomy for self-initiated expatriates in the United States.

6. Conclusion

This research has illuminated the complex dynamics of self-initiated expatriation, in which people try to fit in with a host organization while maintaining their independence. In particular, we examined the paradoxical link between integration and autonomy. This paradoxical expedition’s cognitive, emotional, and behavioral component have been better understood using the Paradox Theory and Theory of Behavior. The Paradox Theory illuminates the challenges self-initiated expatriates have in balancing assimilation and independence. These tensions may be caused by seemingly opposing expectations, requiring individuals to expertly manage a delicate equilibrium. Our study found that these tensions both hinder and promote individual development and adaptive responses. By investigating self-initiated expatriates’ integration-autonomy conflict behaviors and reactions, the Theory of Behavior has contributed to this perspective. Our study illuminated cognitive processes in decision-making, behavioral patterns, and interpersonal dynamics in organizational and cultural contexts. Organizational strategies, cultural training, support networks, and flexible work arrangements have been found to influence expatriates’ actions in the dilemma.

We uncovered the complex mechanisms by which self-initiated expatriates manage the integration-autonomy conundrum by combining the findings from both theoretical frameworks. Our research shows the need of acknowledging and resolving this dilemma in corporate environments while valuing self-initiated expatriates' unique perspectives and valuable contributions. An inclusive culture, personalized support mechanisms, and open communication can help organizations integrate expatriates while protecting their autonomy. This research concludes that the integration-autonomy issue is a fluid process of negotiation and adaption. By embracing the inherent complexity, firms can harness self-initiated expats' unique skills and ability to link diverse cultural ideas to deliver fresh solutions. The conclusions of this research affect expatriate assignment management, cross-cultural diversity, and organizational effectiveness. Our study enhances scholarly understanding of the challenges and opportunities self-initiated expatriates have in assimilating while maintaining their independence.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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