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Antecedents of Host Country Nationals' Attitudes and Behaviors toward Expatriates: A Review and Future Agenda

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Abstract

Host country nationals have long been recognized as essential stakeholders, and their attitudes and behaviors toward expatriates are crucial for the adjustment and success of these individuals. Although prior research has examined antecedents of host country nationals' attitudes and behaviors toward expatriates, the findings remain fragmented. This study conducts a systematic review of 48 empirical articles published from 1969 to 2025 to consolidate existing knowledge and identify avenues for future research. The review first discusses the types of attitudes and behaviors that have been explored in previous studies. It then organizes antecedents of attitudes and behaviors into three levels: individual (e.g., personality traits), relational (e.g., perceived similarity), and organizational (e.g., work design). By offering a comprehensive synthesis of previous studies, this review contributes to a deeper understanding of the international human resource management literature and provides a future research agenda.

1. Introduction

The rise in international assignments has increased reliance on the global movement of the workforce, commonly referred to as expatriates (Bayraktar, 2019). Expatriates fulfill key roles, such as acting as agents of knowledge transfer and serving as boundary spanners between headquarters and subsidiaries, which is crucial for the success of international operations (Au & Fukuda, 2002; Hsu et al., 2022). However, expatriates often face various challenges that may hinder their effectiveness in these roles, both practically and emotionally. These challenges include a lack of role-related information, cultural differences, language barriers, and feelings of loneliness (Ward, 2001). Given these challenges, understanding the factors that influence expatriates' effectiveness is essential for improving their performance in international assignments.

As important stakeholders, host country nationals play an essential role in the success of expatriates (Takeuchi, 2010). Their attitudes influence expatriates' feelings of acceptance (Shen et al., 2021), and their support is viewed as a vital resource that facilitates adjustment and enhances performance (Takeuchi, 2010; van der Laken et al., 2016). However, these positive attitudes and supportive behaviors are neither automatic nor unconditional. Perceived differences between host country nationals and expatriates can reduce affective responses (Sonesh & DeNisi, 2016). Moreover, supportive behaviors require initiative from host country nationals, as such actions are not always part of their formal job responsibilities and are rarely linked to tangible rewards (Toh & Srinivas, 2012). Even when these behaviors are formally required, their execution may not consistently meet expectations (Toh & DeNisi, 2007). This necessitates a more comprehensive understanding of their antecedents, providing valuable insights into why and how these particular attitudes or behaviors develop (van Bakel, 2018).

Certainly, some prior efforts have sought to address this gap. For instance, Toh and DeNisi (2007) developed a conceptual framework that explains how host country nationals categorize expatriates, which in turn influences their willingness to engage in socialization behaviors. Subsequently, several empirical studies have investigated the antecedents of host country nationals' attitudes and behaviors toward expatriates. However, findings across these studies

remain fragmented and lack a clear consensus (Kang & Shen, 2018). While such research offers valuable insights, the field still lacks a systematic synthesis that provides a more comprehensive and robust understanding of the key drivers of these attitudes and behaviors toward expatriates. Meanwhile, compiling a catalog of the attitudes and behaviors examined in prior studies can clarify the current research focus. Therefore, through a systematic review, this study aims to help clarify what we do and do not know about the antecedents of host country nationals' attitudes and behaviors toward expatriates, thereby contributing to laying a stronger foundation for future studies.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. It begins by explaining the rationale for adopting a systematic review approach, along with the research strategy used to identify relevant literature. The next section presents a discussion of the specific attitudes and behaviors examined in previous research. This is followed by the results of the systematic review, which categorize antecedents at the individual, relational, and organizational levels. The paper concludes by highlighting key insights from the review and discussing implications for future research.

2. Review Strategy

In light of the aforementioned purpose of the current review, we suggest that a systematic review is a suitable research design to achieve the aims. While its methodological origins lie in the medical and health sciences, the application of systematic reviews has expanded into disciplines such as management and organization studies in recent years (Tranfield et al., 2003; van der Laken et al., 2016). Unlike traditional narrative reviews, which are more selective and subjective, systematic reviews employ structured, scientific procedures to minimize bias in identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing relevant studies (Tranfield et al., 2003).

To identify relevant literature, searches were conducted using Web of Science and Scopus—two widely utilized academic databases in business and management research. To capture the most relevant literature, keywords were chosen by referring to a previous review on the topic of host country nationals (Kang & Shen, 2018; Michailova et al., 2023). The search keywords were

“host country national”, “host country workforce”, “local employee”, “local manager”, and “host country mentor.” Keyword searches were applied to the *Article Title*, *Abstract*, and *Keywords* fields within each database.

The inclusion criteria for this review are as follows. Only peer-reviewed journal articles published between January 1969 and May 2025 were considered. The starting year is based on Michailova et al. (2023), who trace scholarly interest in host country nationals back to 1969. To ensure consistency and comparability, only empirical studies written in English were included. This approach excludes books, book chapters, conference proceedings, and other non-empirical or non-peer-reviewed sources. While these criteria enhance the rigor and focus of the review, they also introduce certain biases—for instance, a language bias that overlooks relevant studies published in languages other than English, and a publication bias that excludes potentially valuable insights from practitioner-oriented publications. The summary of the inclusion criteria is provided in Table 1.

Table 1 Inclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria		Exclusion
Time period	1969-2025	1969 and before
Language	Written in English	Written in a non-English language
Study field	Management, Business	Psychological applied
Article type	Journal article	Books, book chapters, or any other non-peer-reviewed works
Target	Host country nationals (employees working in a company)	Locals in tourism, staff at universities

After searching the two databases, 923 initial articles were identified. Upon examining the titles and authors of each article, 219 duplicates were eliminated. Additionally, after reviewing the titles and abstract contents, 545 articles were excluded because they did not meet the three inclusion criteria noted earlier, resulting in 159 articles remaining. Finally, the full texts were comprehensively reviewed, and only 45 articles met the inclusion criteria. By checking the previous review article (Kang & Shen, 2018), three additional articles were identified, resulting in a total of 48 articles remaining for this review. The summary of the study selection process is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Steps in the selection procedure

Step	Specification	Remaining Studies	Exclusive Studies
Step 1	Database searching	923	
	Web of Science		269
	Scopus		654
Step 2	Remove duplicates	704	-219
Step 3	Review title and abstract	159	-545
	No target at host country nationals		-344
	No relation to attitude and behaviors		-152
	No in the workplace		-46
	Others (context incomplete)		-3
Step 4	Review full-text	45	-114
	No target at host country nationals		-20
	No related to attitudes and behaviors		-71
	No empirical article		-22
	No access		-1
Step 5	Snowballing the articles	48	3

3. Host Country Nationals' Attitudes and Behaviors in Previous Studies

A review of the existing literature indicates that host country nationals' attitudes and behaviors toward expatriates have been conceptualized in multiple ways. Therefore, before discussing their antecedents, summarizing these attitudes and behaviors provides an overview of how host country nationals typically respond to expatriates.

Attitudes are often reflected in trust, which serves as a key indicator of the host country nationals–expatriate relationship (Hsu et al., 2022). Trust has been examined as a standalone variable (Ang & Tan, 2016) or conceptualized following McAllister's (1995) distinction between cognition-based and affect-based trust (e.g., Jannesari et al., 2025). Beyond trust, researchers have explored other attitudinal outcomes, including affective responses toward expatriates (e.g., Sonesh & DeNisi, 2016), overall evaluations of their abilities and behaviors (e.g., Varma et al., 2012a), and levels of satisfaction with working alongside them (e.g., Hon & Lu, 2010). In addition, a specialized scale developed by Arman and Aycan (2013) to measure host country nationals' perceptions of expatriates' attitudes and behaviors has also been applied in empirical studies (Sokro & Pillay, 2020).

Compared with attitudes, studies on host country nationals' behaviors show more consistent patterns, typically emphasizing altruism. The most commonly reported behaviors include information and knowledge sharing (e.g., Jannesari et al., 2025) and social support (e.g., Varma et al., 2016a), followed by general helping behaviors (e.g., Wang & Fang, 2014) and other altruistic actions (e.g., Hon & Gamor, 2021). Notably, only one study has examined the negative side, exploring the disruptive behaviors of HCNs toward expatriates (e.g., Ljubica et al., 2019).

4. Antecedents of Host Country Nationals' Attitudes and Behaviors toward Expatriates

As shown in Table 3, by reviewing previous studies and referring to previous review articles (Kang & Shen, 2018; van Bakel, 2018), factors influencing host country nationals' attitudes and behaviors toward expatriates can be categorized into three levels: individual, relational, and organizational. The following section provides a detailed discussion of these factors.

Table 3 Categorization of antecedents in different levels

Aspects		Variables	Citation
Individual Level	Host country nationals' characteristics	Personality	Arman & Aycan (2013); Ng et al. (2015); Wang & Fang (2014); Yoon et al. (2022)
		Ethnocentrism	Arman & Aycan (2013); Singh et al. (2021); Varma et al. (2011a, 2011b, 2012b)
		Collectivism	Singh et al. (2021); Pichler et al. (2012); Varma et al. (2011b, 2016b)
		Cross-cultural working experience	Arman & Aycan (2013); Wang (2023)
		Competence	Fee (2020); Wang (2023)
		Attitude toward diversity	Arman & Aycan (2013)
		Position	Watanabe & Yamaguchi (1995)
	Expatriate' characteristics	Expatriates' multicultural personality traits	Jannesari et al. (2024)
		Expatriates' humility	Varma et al. (2024)
		Expatriates' ethnocentrism	Sonesh & DeNisi (2016)
		Expatriates' interaction adjustment	Mumtaz & Nadeem (2020; 2021)
		Expatriates' competence	Ang & Tan (2016); Ohno, (2021); Peltokorpi & Pudelko (2020)
		Expatriates' knowledge sharing	Lee et al. (2021)

Aspects		Variables	Citation
		Expatriates' micro-management	Ohno (2021)
		Expatriates' justice	Hon & Lu, (2010, 2013); Peltokorpi et al. (2021)
Relational Level	Host country national-expatriate	Perceived similarity	Banai & Reisel (1999); Pichler et al. (2012); Varma et al. (2006, 2011b, 2012a, 2012b, 2016a, 2021, 2024)
		Perceived difference	Sonesh & DeNisi (2016); Ljubica et al. (2019)
		Outgroup categorization	Leonardelli & Toh (2011); Peltokorpi (2020); Pichler et al. (2012); Sonesh & DeNisi (2016); Varma et al. (2006, 2011b);
		Interaction	Heizmann et al. (2018); Mumtaz & Nadeem (2021); Wang & Toh (2023); Watanabe & Yamaguchi (1995)
		Guanxi	Varma et al. (2009, 2011a)
		Gap between host country nationals' behaviors and expatriates' expectations	Ohno (2021)
		Shared goals	Ohno (2021)
	Host country national-organization	Organizational identity	Shen et al. (2018); Yamao et al. (2020)
		Perceived organizational support	Shen et al. (2018); Yamao et al. (2020)
Organizational Level		Work design	Kang et al. (2024a, 2024b); Toh & Srinivas (2012); Ohno (2021); Varma et al. (2012a)
		Compensation gap	Hon & Gamor (2021); Leung et al. (2014); Leung et al. (2011); Leung et al. (2009)
		Human resource management policies	Shen et al. (2018); Yusuf et al. (2022)
		Organizational hierarchy	Ohno (2021)
		Power asymmetries	Heizmann et al. (2018)

4.1 Antecedents at the Individual Level

Individual-level antecedents focus on the characteristics and capabilities that individuals possess. Depending on the subject of the factors, they can be divided into two perspectives: those related to host country nationals and those related to expatriates.

Regarding the individual antecedents of host country nationals, dispositional factors such as *personality*, *ethnocentrism*, and *collectivism* have been highly emphasized in previous studies. Personality traits are latent propensities that shape consistent patterns of behavior across situations and over time (McCrae & Costa, 1996). Four empirical studies have tested the direct

relationships between host country nationals' personalities and attitudes and behaviors toward expatriates. Specifically, agreeableness, interpreted as a prosocial motivation, is related to their helping behaviors toward expatriates (Wang & Fang, 2014; Yoon et al., 2022). Extraversion and openness to experience are related to perceptions of attitudes and behaviors of expatriates (Arman & Aycan, 2013). Openness, specifically to change, and linguistic diversity are correlated with a greater willingness to support expatriates (Ng et al., 2015).

Ethnocentrism reflects an individual's certain expectations (e.g., proficiency in language) of others from different cultures; the extent to which these expectations are fulfilled often guides their attitudes and behavior toward them (Zeira, 1979). Host country nationals' ethnocentrism is negatively correlated with their attitudes toward expatriates (Arman & Aycan, 2013) and reduces the likelihood of providing social support (Singh et al., 2021; Varma et al., 2012b). In contrast, when the host country interacts with expatriates as part of their job responsibility, they are bound by certain work-related practices; the relationship between ethnocentrism and supporting behaviors becomes positive (Varma et al., 2011a, 2011b).

Collectivism implies that individuals prioritize group harmony and interdependence, emphasizing group goals over individual goals (Triandis, 1995). The individual who has higher collectivism tends to maintain the harmony of the interpersonal relationship, hence, collectivism enhances the host country nationals' ingroup categorization of expatriates (Varma et al., 2016b); it also influences social support and information sharing directly (Singh et al., 2021; Varma et al., 2011b) and indirectly (Pichler et al., 2012; Varma et al., 2016b).

Host country nationals' *cross-cultural working experience* has also been identified as a relevant antecedent. Arman and Aycan (2013) demonstrate that host country nationals with high-quality work experience with expatriates exhibited a higher level of positive attitudes toward expatriates compared to those without such experience. Moreover, domestic cross-cultural work experiences are also considered important. These refer to experiences gained within the home country, such as interacting with self-initiated expatriates or participating in global virtual teams, without physically going abroad. Wang (2023) identifies the domestic cross-cultural work experiences of host country nationals as the distal antecedent of their work assistance and social support to expatriates.

Additional influencing factors include host country nationals' *competence* in interpersonal skills and proficiency, as well as their positive emotions or attitudes (e.g., excitement, enthusiasm, motivation, and anticipation), which affect their relationship-building with expatriates (Fee, 2020). In Wang's (2023) study, although no specific hypotheses were proposed, the findings revealed that host country nationals' cultural intelligence and their helping behaviors are positively correlated, with cultural intelligence mediating the relationship between previous cross-cultural work experience and those behaviors.

Host country nationals' *attitude toward diversity* also influences their attitudes toward expatriates and the provision of social support to expatriates (Arman & Aycan, 2013). Lastly, organizational *position* appears to influence perceptions of expatriates: host country nationals in higher-ranking positions tend to hold more negative views toward them because of the gap between their expectations (such as the chance of promotion) and actual conditions (Watanabe & Yamaguchi, 1995).

Regarding the individual antecedents of expatriates, similarly, their dispositions are also examined. *Multicultural personalities* are traits related specifically to multicultural effectiveness (van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000). The multicultural personality of expatriates is positively related to host country nationals' satisfaction with their performance (Jannesari et al., 2024). *Expatriates' humility* has been indirectly linked to host country nationals' willingness to provide both socio-emotional and instrumental support, with perceived trustworthiness and value similarity acting as mediators in this relationship (Varma et al., 2024). In contrast, *expatriates' ethnocentrism* fosters outgroup categorization, thereby impeding host country nationals' affect and prosocial behaviors toward expatriates (Sonesh & DeNisi, 2016).

Expatriate interaction adjustment represents the extent to which expatriates adjust to the socializing and daily interactions in the host country (Waxin, 2004). Mumtaz and Nadeem (2020, 2021) investigate how expatriates' interaction adjustment influences host country nationals' attitudes toward them. In their earlier study, they report an inverse curvilinear (inverted U-shaped) relationship between expatriates' interaction adjustment and the trust of host country nationals. In their later study, the findings indicate a positive correlation between interaction adjustment and trust.

The *competence of expatriates*, such as language skills, facilitates knowledge transfer from host country nationals (Ohno, 2021). At the same time, language competence plays a complex role, showing a curvilinear U-shaped relationship with host country nationals' outgroup categorization of expatriates (Peltokorpi & Pudelko, 2020). Expatriates' work competence, such as delivering expected outcomes, influences host country nationals' initial cognitive trust in them (Ang & Tan, 2016). Their cultural intelligence later enables the conversion of cognition-based trust to a more sustainable affect-based trust (Ang & Tan, 2016).

The behaviors of expatriates also shape the relational outcomes for host country nationals. For example, *knowledge-sharing behaviors* by expatriate managers positively influence employees' affective trust in expatriates (Lee et al., 2021). *Expatriates' micro-management*, including their controlling behaviors, creates a cognitive boundary that hinders the host country nationals' intention to provide supportive behaviors to them (Ohno, 2021). The perceptions of *justice* in expatriates' behavior influence both the affective and cognitive trust of host country nationals toward expatriates (Hon & Lu, 2010; Peltokorpi et al., 2021). These justice perceptions also predict host country nationals' altruistic behaviors toward expatriate supervisors directly (Hon & Lu, 2013) and indirectly enhance their satisfaction and altruism toward expatriates through the mediation of affective trust (Hon & Lu, 2010).

4.2 Antecedents at the Relational Level

Relational-level antecedents refer to factors that arise from the linkage between two entities; depending on the entities involved, they can be categorized into host country national-expatriate relationships and host country national-organization relationships.

Regarding host country national-expatriate relationships, current empirical studies have focused most on *perceived similarity*. In a cross-cultural context, perceived similarities are likely to reduce the salience of outgroup categorization of expatriates, which has a potent influence on attitudes and behaviors (Toh & DeNisi, 2007). In terms of nationality, Banai and Reisel (1999) found that in nationally homogeneous contexts, host country nationals expressed higher levels of trust in superiors who have the same nationality as them, whereas in nationally heterogeneous environments, trust levels between managers and their superiors did not vary with nationality

similarity. In a comparative study, Varma et al. (2012a) found that host country nationals evaluated fellow host country nationals more favorably than expatriates, both in terms of task and trait assessments, and were also more likely to provide role-related information to co-nationals. In terms of values, value similarity has been found to reduce the likelihood of expatriates being categorized as outgroup members (Pichler et al., 2012; Varma et al., 2006, 2011b). It also directly enhances positive affect (Varma et al., 2016a), perceived trustworthiness (Varma et al., 2021), and supportive behaviors toward expatriates (Varma et al., 2024). Additionally, value similarity has been shown to indirectly influence host country nationals' supportive behaviors through underlying mechanisms such as dogmatism and ethnocentrism (Varma et al., 2012b), with trustworthiness also acting as a mediating factor (Varma et al., 2021).

In contrast, some studies have focused on the *perceived difference* between host country nationals and expatriates. Sonesh and DeNisi (2016) examined how perceived national differences influence the categorization of expatriates as outgroup members. Ljubica et al. (2019) adopted a broader perspective, presenting a process model that explains the psychological mechanisms through which host country nationals' perceptions of personal and organizational cultural differences lead to disruptive relationship behaviors toward expatriates.

Beyond explaining how perceived similarity and difference influence host country nationals' attitudes and behaviors toward expatriates, social categorization theory has also been used to examine categorization itself as a focal variable. Specifically, *outgroup categorization* of expatriates shapes host country nationals' affective responses (Sonesh & DeNisi, 2016), and tends to reduce their willingness to share role information (Pichler et al., 2012; Sonesh & DeNisi, 2016; Varma et al., 2011b) as well as the extent of social support provided (Pichler et al., 2012; Varma et al., 2006, 2011b). However, Peltokorpi (2020) reported contrasting findings, suggesting that outgroup categorization can also enhance host country nationals' prosocial behaviors—such as information sharing and affiliative citizenship—through the development of a dual identity, that is, simultaneous identification with both the subgroup and the broader organizational group (Dovidio et al., 2009). Leonardelli and Toh (2011) found that host country nationals' outgroup categorization of expatriates positively influenced their knowledge-sharing behavior, but only when procedural justice was perceived as high.

Intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1954) suggests that the *interaction* between host country nationals and expatriates can predict the perception of host country nationals toward expatriates, as well as their behaviors. However, the differences in how interaction is conceptualized and measured have led to inconsistent empirical findings regarding its effects. The longer the contact with expatriates was, the more negative the perceptions host country nationals hold toward them. (Watanabe & Yamaguchi, 1995). In contrast, intercultural communication between host country nationals and expatriates, which allows both parties to share their perspectives, fosters a common social identity in which host country nationals perceive expatriates as ingroup members (Mumtaz & Nadeem, 2021) and enhances the knowledge-sharing relationship between host country nationals and expatriates (Heizmann et al., 2018). Furthermore, Wang and Toh (2023) noted that the frequency of interaction directly influences host country nationals' support for expatriates, with this effect mediated by the perceived quality of the interaction.

Guanxi is a Chinese cultural context-specific word that is used to describe interpersonal relationship quality. A study finds that Chinese host country nationals' *guanxi* with expatriates was positively related to their willingness to provide general support to expatriates (Varma et al., 2009). A subsequent study examined the positive influence of *guanxi* on different forms of support, distinguishing between role-related information provision and social support (Varma et al., 2011a).

Finally, two other factors were also presented in previous research. The *gap between host country nationals' behaviors and expatriates' expectations* hinders host country nationals' knowledge transfer to expatriates and support behaviors (Ohno, 2021). In contrast, *shared goals* between host country nationals and expatriates promote these behaviors (Ohno, 2021).

While the aforementioned studies focus on relational antecedents emerging from interactions with expatriates, another important relational domain involves the relationships between host country nationals and their employing organizations. Current research has focused on *organizational identification* and *perceived organizational support*. In Shen et al.'s (2018) research, organizational identification and perceived organizational support are found to influence the willingness of host country nationals to help expatriates. Similarly, Yamao et al. (2020)'s research shows that host country nationals' identification with the multinational

enterprises and the subsidiary's career development support are positively related to their extra-role helping behavior toward the expatriates.

4.3 Antecedents at the Organizational Level

Organizational-level antecedents refer to work-related factors, policies, and structures within the organization that shape host country nationals' attitudes and behaviors toward expatriates.

The influences of *work design* on host country nationals' attitudes and behaviors are generally indirect, operating through psychological and motivational mechanisms. Host country nationals' role overload, which refers to the expectation of too many responsibilities or activities (Bolino & Turnley, 2005), inhibits their knowledge-sharing behavior by reducing their perspective-taking of expatriates (Kang et al., 2024a). In contrast, task interdependence fosters a sense of mutual reliance and collective responsibility, which enhances prosocial motivation and encourages advice-giving behavior (Kang et al., 2024b). Task cohesiveness strengthens interpersonal bonds and trust among team members, thereby facilitating information-sharing behaviors with expatriates (Toh & Srinivas, 2012). Additionally, task clarity and task autonomy provide host country nationals with a better understanding of expectations and control over their work, enabling more effective knowledge transfer and supportive behaviors toward expatriates (Ohno, 2021). The availability of performance standards can influence the willingness of host country nationals to provide role-related information to expatriates. When it is not available, host country nationals tend to assume that expatriates require more guidance than fellow coworkers, and they adjust their information-sharing behavior accordingly (Varma et al., 2012a).

Beyond work design, organizational policies also play an important role. Equity theory suggests that individuals assess the fairness of their rewards by comparing themselves with those of others who are in similar situations, and this evaluation influences their attitudes and behaviors (Adams, 1965). Specifically, the *compensation gap* is perceived as an inequality and can significantly shape host country nationals' attitudes and behaviors. Empirical studies have shown that perceived compensation inequity negatively affects host country nationals' attitudes toward expatriates, including: satisfaction with expatriates (Hon & Gamor, 2021; Leung et al., 2011),

evaluation of expatriates (e.g., satisfaction with and perceived competence of expatriates) (Leung et al., 2009, 2014), perceived trustworthiness toward expatriates (Leung et al., 2009). Moreover, it can diminish the prosocial behaviors of host country nationals, including altruism in helping expatriates (Hon & Gamor, 2021; Leung et al., 2011), as well as knowledge sharing (Leung et al., 2014) towards expatriates.

Human resource management policies in multinational organizations influence host country nationals' willingness to help through their perception of the organization (Shen et al., 2018). In contrast, the general gap between host country nationals and expatriates, driven by human resource management policies, creates perceived inequities, which in turn diminish host country nationals' favoritism and altruistic behaviors toward expatriates (Yusuf et al., 2022).

Organizational structural factors, such as *organizational hierarchy* (Ohno, 2021), and *power asymmetries* between host country nationals and expatriates tend to create psychological distance, which inhibits meaningful interactions and reduces opportunities for collaboration and support (Heizmann et al., 2018).

5. Discussion of Findings and Future Research Avenues

Based on the above results, we identify several variables at the individual, relational, and organizational levels that have not been sufficiently examined and warrant further research to advance our understanding of host country nationals' responses to expatriates.

First, regarding the antecedents at the individual level, a range of host country nationals' individual dispositions has been identified as key antecedents of their attitudes and behaviors toward expatriates. However, existing findings remain limited and fragmented, highlighting the need for more rigorous and context-sensitive cross-cultural research to verify and extend current knowledge. For example, personality as a stable pattern of behavior, thinking, and feeling, is widely recognized as a determinant of individual attitudes and behaviors (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Shaffer et al., 2006). Research by Arman and Aycan (2013) demonstrated that the personality traits of extraversion and openness to experience in host country nationals were linked to their willingness to help expatriates. However, a study by Wang and Fang (2014) revealed a stronger

connection between agreeableness and helping behavior, rather than other traits. These inconsistencies stem from the complex nature of cross-cultural contexts. Scholars indicate that when predicting specific outcomes, the Big Five personality traits might not offer enough detail to accurately understand their influence on factors like particular attitudes, intentions, or success across cultures (Hough, 1992). Therefore, more specific and culturally relevant personality dimensions are more helpful in explaining relationship building in such contexts (Brass et al., 2004; van der Zee et al., 2004). Similarly, the inconsistencies are also evident in the relationship between collectivism and social support, as it presented positive (e.g., Singh et al., 2021), negative (Varma et al., 2016b), or even non-significant results (e.g., Yoon et al., 2022). These inconsistencies may stem from variations in how collectivism is expressed across different cultures and contexts. While previous research often measured collectivism at the individual level, the studies above were conducted in diverse cultural settings—the United Arab Emirates, China, and South Korea—each representing distinct forms and boundaries of collectivism that may influence how it manifests at the individual level (Chen et al., 1998). Hence, more precise cross-cultural research is needed to compare the relationship between collectivism and supporting behaviors under different cultural contexts.

Additionally, cultural intelligence, a crucial cross-cultural competence, has received limited attention in existing research on host country nationals, yet holds considerable potential for future investigation. Previous studies have confirmed that host country nationals' cross-cultural experience and competence, including language and cultural knowledge, positively influence their attitudes and behaviors toward expatriates (e.g., Arman & Aycan, 2013; Fee, 2020). This aligns with the broader concept of cultural intelligence, which represents a form of intelligence that emphasizes an individual's capacity to comprehend, reason, and act appropriately in culturally diverse situations (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). It includes and builds on these basic skills. Empirically, it has traditionally been examined from the perspective of expatriates, with predictions of work-related outcomes such as interaction quality, adjustment, and performance (see the review article by Ott & Michailova, 2018). Meanwhile, a growing number of studies have begun to emphasize its relevance in host country national literature (Hsu et al., 2022; Wang,

2023; Zulkifly et al., 2020), as even without relocating, they also encounter culturally diverse interactions and need the ability to function effectively in such contexts (Fee & Michailova, 2021). Following the suggestion in Michailova et al. (2024), we suggest that future research should further investigate the role of cultural intelligence among host country nationals and its implications for workplace behavior.

In terms of the characteristics of expatriates, the antecedents were scattered. The dispositions, including multicultural personality, ethnocentrism, humility, and competence, have been examined in prior research. However, these factors have only been investigated once and are often studied separately, lacking systematic integration across different studies. Therefore, there is a need for replication and further empirical research to develop a comprehensive understanding of how expatriate characteristics influence the responses of host country nationals. Furthermore, expatriates' behaviors, such as knowledge sharing, influence host country nationals' trust toward them (Lee et al., 2021). Their behaviors, like seeking help and support, can also serve as antecedents, which have not been explored in previous research. Mahajan and Hassan (2024) suggest that expatriates seeking advice from host country national coworkers helps them adjust to their work and interaction. Such behaviors can foster frequent and positive contact between expatriates and host country nationals, and are likely to lead to more positive attitudes and behaviors from host country nationals toward expatriates (Allport, 1954).

Second, at the relational level, in terms of the host country nationals-expatriates relationship, most of the focus is on the similarities and differences, as well as the out-group categorization of expatriates. It is worth noting that even though the interaction between host country nationals and expatriates is widely debated in expatriate literature (see the review of van Bakel, 2018), only four studies looked into the impact of interaction from the host country nationals' perspective and verified its relationship with their attitudes and behaviors (Heizmann et al., 2018; Mumtaz & Nadeem, 2021; Wang & Toh, 2023; Watanabe & Yamaguchi, 1995). More importantly, although interaction is not explicitly examined as a variable in some studies, the authors often suggest that antecedents, such as recognizing value similarity, shape impressions via interpersonal interaction (e.g., Varma et al., 2012a). Given the importance of interaction and the significant quantitative

difference in studies on the interaction between expatriate literature and host country nationals' literature, there is promising potential for future research. Studies could further explore this dynamic from the perspective of host country nationals to achieve a more balanced and comprehensive understanding of interactions.

The antecedents of the relationship between host country nationals and the organization are notably scarce. Only two studies have specifically examined organizational identification and organizational support as predictors of host country nationals' helping behaviors (Shen et al., 2018; Yamao et al., 2020). Whether and how these relationships influence the attitudes of host country nationals toward expatriates remains largely unexplored. Drawing on the social exchange theory (Homans, 1958), it can be argued that host country nationals' relationships with their organizations may influence their behaviors toward other group members by shaping perceptions of reciprocity and mutual obligation. This gap highlights a conceptual "black box" that future studies should address to uncover the underlying mechanisms and boundary conditions.

Third, at the organizational level, research remains relatively limited compared to studies at the individual and dyadic levels. When examined, organizational-level factors are often treated as distal antecedents. Most discussions have focused on multinational corporations and their subsidiaries, emphasizing variables related to work design, organizational policies, and structural characteristics. Nevertheless, understanding organizational influences remains a critical area for future research, as it can provide a more holistic view of host country nationals' responses to expatriates in multicultural work environments (Kang & Shen, 2018). For instance, organizational climates that foster inclusion can reduce intergroup bias in gender-diverse settings (Nishii, 2013), yet their applicability in culturally diverse contexts has received little empirical attention. Moreover, while a few studies have examined organizational-level antecedents as moderating variables that affect the strength or direction of antecedent–outcome relationships (e.g., Kang et al., 2024b), this line of inquiry remains underdeveloped. Future research should investigate how these factors function as contingent conditions, shaping the impact of individual- and relational-level antecedents.

6. Conclusion

This literature review shifts the focus from the expatriate to host country nationals by synthesizing previous research on their cross-cultural experiences. Through the systematic review, we classified the antecedents examined and summarized the attitudes and behaviors that have been the focus of previous studies. Building on these insights, we propose directions for future studies on the attitudes and behaviors of host country nationals toward expatriates. By doing so, this study advances the current understanding of the host country national-expatriate relationship in international human resource management research and provides a solid foundation for future research.

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