

A STUDY ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ORIENTATION PROCESS AND CROSS-CULTURAL TRAINING FOR THE EXPATRIATE

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the effectiveness of the orientation process and cross-cultural training (CCT) and its impact on cross-cultural adjustment for the expatriate. The objective of the study on which this paper is based is to evaluate the effectiveness of the orientation process for expatriates and to determine the need for a separate orientation and culture training. By improving the orientation process and identifying a need for culture specific training, the company can thus eliminate relocation and replacement costs. The main objective of this research is to design a guideline for the implementation of a culture specific orientation process for the expatriate. This will be done based on the recommendations made by the respondents of the survey. The paper reviews different writings in the areas of cross-cultural training, cross-cultural adjustment, the orientation process and the expatriate. The study highlights specific issues regarding cultural training, assignment failure and success, and the expatriate experiences. The research is motivated by the need to reduce assignment failure and the subsequent costs associated with engaging expatriation, and ensure smooth transition into a new culture. The research methodology utilized was qualitative, based on structured questionnaires and personal interviews. The study attempts to recommend, based on the findings, a culture centered orientation process for the expatriate.

Key Words: Expatriation, Cross-Cultural Training, Orientation Process, Cross-Culture Adjustment, Culture Shock, Globalization

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Introduction

As enterprises develop globally, there is a growing challenge to utilize expatriates in international assignments to complete strategically significant tasks (Brewster 1998; Downes and Thomas 1999; Gregersen and Black 1996). Multinational corporations (MNCs) utilize expatriates, not only for reasons of corporate organization and expertise in critical global markets, but also to smooth the process of entry into new markets or to extend international management abilities (Bird and Dunbar 1991; Boyacigiller 1991; Forster 2000; Rosensweig 1994; Shaffer, Harrison and Gilley 1999). For that reason, in order to maintain competitive in today's international marketplace, enterprises not only acknowledge that transferring competent employees adds crucial skill and knowledge to their overseas performances, enabling them to compete more efficiently in all international positions, but also expatriate employees, particularly managerial and professional employees, are vital to the success of overseas assignments such as implementing international corporate tactics and managing and coordinating subsidiaries (Black, Gregersen and Mendenhall 1992). Expatriates are able to play

tremendously significant roles during worldwide assignments. Expatriating employees out of the parent company to work in an overseas subsidiary serve three major functions: filling staff vacancies, management development and organizational development (Edstrom and Galbraith 1997; Ondrack 1985; Tung 1982).

Expatriates undertake executive practices in an unfamiliar work context; deal with a different mode of life and experience profound personal transformation. 'Culture shock', the stress and alienation experienced when confronted with normally incomprehensible surroundings (Odberg 1960), sets the expatriate job apart from other jobs and is repeatedly revealed as the primary cause of an ineffective or unsuccessful expatriate assignment. As a result a great deal of expatriate management literature has paid attention to the management of cross cultural adjustment (Berry, Kim and Boski 1998; Black and Gregerson 1991; Harris and Moran 1989). This focus appears reasonable when the high cost of expatriate failure, attributed to incapability to adjust (Adler 1986), is well considered. Expatriates are regarded as to have "failed" in their overseas assignment if they return to the parent company prematurely.

In fact virtually 40 percent of American expatriates return earlier than they planned (Kealey 1996). A number of factors may contribute to this phenomenon, including difficulty in adjusting to different physical or cultural environments, family-related problems, personality or emotional maturity issues, job-related technical competence, and lack of motivation to work overseas. For both employees and their families, adjusting to life overseas can be regarded as a significant barrier (Black and Gregerson 1991; Tung 1988). Adjustment literature (Black 1998; Nicholson and Imaizumi 1993; Shaffer and Harrison 1998) suggests that expatriates who do not adjust satisfactorily to their international assignments will not function well, will withdraw psychologically, and will almost certainly return prematurely. The better adjusted expatriates are, the more likely they will be to complete their overseas assignment (Kramer, Wayne and Jaworski 2001; Stroh, Dennis and Cramer 1994). Accordingly, well adjusted expatriates will be more competent in and committed to their new job because they experience less stress and better cultural integration (Aycan 1997b). An expatriate's successful adjustment to the host culture environment is shown over and over again to be the leading determinant of expatriate's job performance. For this reason, the importance of cross-cultural training cannot be over-emphasised.

Background of the Research

As the world continues to become globalised, firms are being required to manage an increasingly diverse workforce with expatriation being just a subset of this challenge. As more and more companies go global, the expatriates who help to run overseas operations are becoming an increasingly critical asset, often making the difference between a company's success and failure in the marketplace. Any workplace in any society in the world is always a very dynamic and complex environment with a host of variables and forces at work that influence social interaction patterns and resultant levels of productivity and performance. The cross cultural workplace has an even higher level of dynamic complexity because you have culture shaped institutional structures and norms interacting with people of different cultures.

It is a fairly common organisational practice to ship expatriate families abroad with hardly any or no preparation for the substantial transitions they are to experience. Yet troubles with culture adaptation are one of the major reasons why expatriate assignments fail. International assignees would be better equipped to handle cultural adjustments if organisations were more consistent in providing pre-departure culture and language training programs. An effective pre-departure culture and language orientation program can be developed that would adequately prepare expatriates and their families.

Employees to be assigned overseas should be given cross-cultural training so that they will be able to deal with difficulties associated with living and working in another country. Potential problems include family lifestyle adjustment, social relations, on-the-job-communications, and negotiation styles. Organisational support for international employees can improve the success rate of these expatriates. With personnel who are equipped to deal with global issues, companies can better cope with the increasing globalisation of the business world.

Most business leaders focus on the functional skills needed for international work and overlook the importance of cultural knowledge. But most expatriate failures aren't caused by problems with job skills. They are caused by an inability to adapt to an unfamiliar culture. This paper focuses on the usefulness of the orientation process for the expatriate and its contribution to the successfulness of an overseas assignment.

Companies today are challenged to expand globally. Employees often work outside their country of origin or work with employees from other countries. Expatriate is a term generally used for employees sent by a company in one country to manage operations in a different country. Once an expatriate manager has been selected, it is necessary to prepare that manager for the upcoming assignment. Because these individuals already possess job-related skills, some firms have focused development efforts on cross cultural training. However, cultural training is hardly universal. According to one 1995 survey, nearly 40 percent of the respondents offered no cross cultural preparation to expatriates. Cross cultural preparation involves educating expatriates and their families who are to be sent to a foreign country. To successfully conduct business in the global marketplace, the employees must understand the business practices and the cultural norms of different countries (Noe, 2000).

Motivation for the Research

The main objective of the research for this article is to design a guideline for the implementation of a culture specific orientation process for the expatriate. A survey by the Simon Fraser University in British Columbia was conducted to evaluate the expectations of expatriates assigned in overseas operations and how they felt about their jobs in such settings. Results from some 409 employees from 49 multinational companies revealed that while most reviewed overseas assignment as positive, more than 2 out of 3 believed that they could have been better prepared through cross cultural training and information. The lack of information and training not only adds to the stress of relocation but also extends the time it takes for expatriates to feel comfortable in their new environment. Furthermore, the survey found out that while expatriates generally enjoy working overseas,

more than two thirds believe that their companies are not doing a satisfactory job of providing a clear preview of what to expect from assignments. In addition two-thirds said that companies do not pay enough attention to cross cultural training. This lack of information and training not only adds to the stress of relocation but also extends the time it takes for expatriates to feel comfortable in their new surroundings. Managers need to consider the effect of such neglect on productivity (Fishman, 1996).

To be successful in overseas assignments, expatriates need to be:

- Competent in their area of expertise.
- Able to communicate verbally and non-verbally in the host country.
- Flexible, tolerant of ambiguity, and sensitive to cultural differences.
- Motivated to succeed, able to enjoy the challenge of working in other countries, and willing to learn about the host country's culture, language and customs.
- Supported by their families (Arthur & Bennet, 1995).

One reasons for U.S expatriates' high failure is that companies place more emphasis on developing employees' technical skills than on preparing them to work in other cultures (Noe, 2000).

Noe et al (2000) states that foreign assignments consists of three phases: 1.pre-departure. 2. On-site. 3. Repatriation. Pre-departure is of particular relevance to this study as, at this stage, the employees need to receive language training and an orientation in the new country's culture and customs. It is critical that the family be included in the orientation programmes. Cross cultural training methods range from the presentational techniques, such as lectures that expatriates and their families attend on the customs and culture of the host country; to actual experiences in the home country in culturally diverse communities.

The Research Problem Statement

With globalisation, expatriation is becoming increasingly important and with the costs involved in this process, it is imperative to be properly oriented and with not just the company, but with the culture of the country as well. This article then aims to look at the orientation process and to provide a set of guidelines for proper cross cultural training. This article will discuss the effect that cultural orientation has on the success of the assignment given to the expatriate.

The study investigated the perceived uses or purposes of assessing employee-customer service interactions, including the perceived fairness of the assessment process, and how perceptions of fairness relate to employee satisfaction with assessment outcomes. Before employees can develop an opinion on the fairness or unfairness of the assessment tool

utilized by the organization, they must first understand the objectives of the system. These objectives could be: the improvement of the organizational/customer relationship, rating employees' effectiveness or generating an input into remuneration or promotion decisions.

The study attempted to gain insight into the perceptions of the people who interact with customers and who are the recipients of the outcomes of the appraisal or assessment process, in terms of their views on the uses or functions associated with this tool. In addition, it is necessary to understand whether employees perceive that the outcomes from the tool used to assess their performance are fair as well as their satisfaction with the assessment outcomes. Testing the relationship between employees' perception of fairness and their satisfaction with the assessment outcomes, encompassing the impact of fairness on satisfaction with assessment outcomes, can then be carried out.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of the research for the article was to evaluate the effectiveness of the orientation process for expatriates and to determine a need for a separate orientation and culture training. By improving the orientation process and identifying a need for culture specific training, the company can thus eliminate relocation and replacement costs.

Literature review

With globalization, international assignments have always played an important role in the operations and activities of multinational companies. A lot of enterprises have invested their ventures in foreign countries to avoid the high cost of land and labour, also the shortage of manpower. The research literature on international expatriates is reasonably consistent in reporting rather high failure rates among these expatriates (Black, 1998; Dunbar and Ehrlich, 1986). The costs related to these expatriate failures are relatively high as well (Black, 1998; Oddou, 1991; Stone, 1991; Wederspahn, 1992). It has been estimated that the first year cost of posting expatriates on international assignments is no less than three times the base salaries of their domestic counterparts (Wederspahn, 1992). However, sixteen percent to forty percent of overseas assignments are still not successful in the end (Black, 1988), and costs of expatriates have increased from as much as US\$250,000 a decade ago (Copeland and Griggs 1985) to US\$1 million per failure for U.S. enterprises (Shannonhouse, 1996). Even though the cost of expatriates is fairly high, MNCs are increasingly using plenty of expatriates as an international strategy, not only for traditional control and expertise reasons, but also to overcome barriers and smooth the progress of entry into new markets (Torbiorn, 1994).

Due to the internationalization process, enterprises should devote to provide an adequate expatriation programme for expatriates due to that working in a new environment that is dissimilar to that of the parent company, expatriates are often faced with an entirely new work role, with increased challenges, opportunities and prestige, as well as more responsibilities and pressures to perform (Harvey, 1985).

The main intention of this section is to present a general background on the available academic literature that relates to the study and explores: (1) the orientations process, (2) expatriate assignment failure; and (3) cross cultural training and its impact on cross cultural adaptation.

Orientation Process

Orientation is the planned introduction of new employees to their work environment and co-workers. However, since all employees are different, a sensitive awareness to anxieties, uncertainties and needs is important. Orientation should not be a mechanical process. The overall goal of orientation is to help new employees learn about their new work environment and get their performance up to acceptable levels as soon as possible. This impression begins even before the new employee reports to work. Providing sufficient information about when and where to report the first day, handling all relevant paperwork efficiently, and having personable and efficient individuals assist the new employee, all contribute to creating a favorable impression of the Company

The general ideas that follow highlight the major components of an effective orientation system: preparing for new employees, providing them with needed information, presenting orientation information effectively and conducting evaluation and follow-up on the initial orientation.

Often new employees receive a large amount of information, some of which they may not immediately need, and at times might fail to get the information they really need the first day. HR uses an orientation checklist which indicates items to be covered by the HR unit and the new employee's supervisor or manager. Using an orientation checklist will ensure that all necessary items have been covered. The employee signs the checklist to verify that they have been informed of all pertinent information.

Orientation is used for the following purposes:

- To Reduce Startup-Costs: Proper orientation can help the employee get "up to speed" much more quickly, thereby reducing the costs associated with learning the job.
- To Reduce Anxiety: Any employee, when put into a new, strange situation, will experience anxiety that can impede his or her ability to learn to do the job. Proper orientation helps to

reduce anxiety that results from entering into an unknown situation, and helps provide guidelines for behaviour and conduct, so the employee doesn't have to experience the stress of guessing.

- To Reduce Employee Turnover: Employee turnover increases as employees feel they are not valued, or are put in positions where they can't possibly do their jobs. Orientation shows that the organizations values the employee, and help provide tools necessary for succeeding in the job.

- To Save Time for Supervisor & Co-Workers: Simply put, the better the initial orientation, the less likely supervisors and co-workers will have to spend time teaching the employee.

- To Develop Realistic Job Expectations, Positive Attitudes and Job Satisfaction: It is important that employees learn early on what is expected of them, and what to expect from others, in addition to learning about the values and attitudes of the organization. While people can learn from experience, they will make many mistakes that are unnecessary and potentially damaging.

Basic Elements of the Orientation Process

1. Orientation should begin with the most important information (basic job survival).
2. Orientation should emphasize people as well as procedures and things. Employees should have a chance to get to know people and their approaches and styles in both social and work settings.
3. Buddy an employee to a more experienced person, but make sure the more experienced person wants to buddy up, and has the inter-personal skills. This provides ongoing support.
4. Introduce employees to both information and people in a controlled way. A new employee can't absorb everything at once, so don't waste your time.

The need for cross-cultural training

Researchers (Black and Mendenhall, 1989; Mendenhall, Dunbar and Oddou, 1987) estimated that 20 to 40 percent of expatriates posted to perform international assignments return prematurely due to the incapability of the expatriate and their spouse to adapt to a new culture and environment. For this reason, cross cultural training can smooth the progress of efficient adjustment and performance, and is essential for financial and strategic issues. Chen and Starosta (1996) believe that people have to develop their intercultural communication competence in order to live meaningfully and productively in the global village. According to Landis and Brislin (1983), as the workforce in various countries becomes more culturally diverse, it is necessary to train people to become more competent and thus to deal effectively with the complexities of new and different environments. Thus, the issue of cross-cultural training in developing intercultural communication competence can no longer be

neglected. People who are sent abroad must develop such competence in order to be successful. Cross-cultural training has long been advocated as a means of facilitating effective cross-cultural interaction (Bochner, 1982; Harris and Moran, 1979; Landis and Brislin, 1983; Mendenhall and Oddou, 1986; Tung, 1981). The importance of such training in preparing an individual for an intercultural work assignment has become increasingly apparent (Baker, 1984; Lee, 1983; Tung, 1981). As Bhagat and Prien (1996, p. 216) put it, "as international companies begin to compete with each other in the global market, the role of cross-cultural training becomes increasingly important." A comprehensive literature review by Black and Mendenhall (1990) found strong evidence for a positive relationship between cross-cultural training and adjustment. In addition, another survey revealed that 86 percent of Japanese multinationals report a failure rate of less than 10 percent for their expatriates who have received training (Hogan and Goodson, 1990).

Numerous benefits can be achieved by giving these expatriates cross cultural training. It is seen as:

- a distinct advantage for organizations;
- a means for conscious switching from an automatic, home-culture international management mode to a culturally appropriate, adaptable and acceptable one;
- an aid to improve coping with unexpected events or culture shock in a new culture;
- a means of reducing the uncertainty of interactions with foreign nationals; and
- a means of enhancing expatriates' coping ability by reducing stress and disorientation.

It can reduce or prevent failure in expatriate assignments (Giacolane and Beard, 1994). Furthermore, in a survey of 200 corporate clients, Berlitz International found that companies needed cultural orientation training programs more than foreign language training (Lubin, 1992).

Further benefits of receiving cross cultural training prior to relocation are that it:

- Prepares the individual/family mentally for the move,
- Removes some of the 'unknown',
- Increases self-awareness and cross cultural understanding,
- Provides the opportunity for questions / anxieties to be addressed in a supportive environment,
- Motivates and excites,
- Reduces stress and provides coping strategies,
- Eases the settling-in process,
- Reduces the chances of relocation failure.

As the world continues to become globalised, firms are being required to manage an increasingly diverse workforce and expatriation being just a subset of this challenge (Deresky, 2000). As a result,

expatriation has been popularly used as means by which information sharing and knowledge transfers can be undertaken (Harzing and Van Ruysseveldt 2003).

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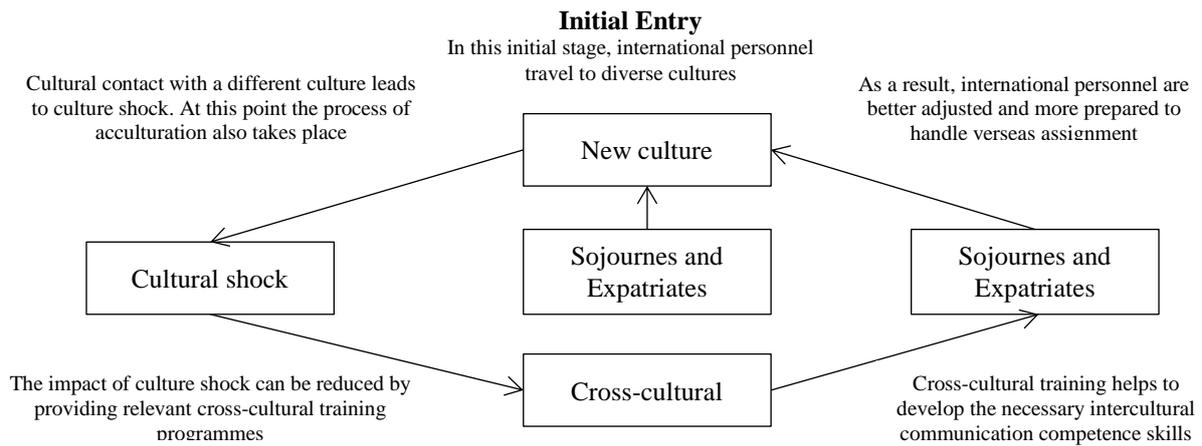
A major objective of intercultural training is to help people cope with unexpected events in a new culture. An individual overwhelmed by a new culture will be unable to perform required work duties effectively. Further, an ill-prepared individual may inadvertently offend or alienate a foreign host and perhaps jeopardize existing long term relations with a host country. Thus, an objective of training is to reduce conflict due to unexpected situations and actions. The generalized trauma people experience in new and different cultures because they must learn and cope with a vast array of new cultural cues and expectations is referred to as culture shock (Harris & Moran, 1987:88-89).

Cross-Cultural Training Models

Three models of cross- cultural training will be discussed in this section: the acculturation model, the training effectiveness model and the integrated cross-cultural training model. Before expanding on the various models of cross-cultural training it is imperative that we first have an understanding of the cross-cultural cycle.

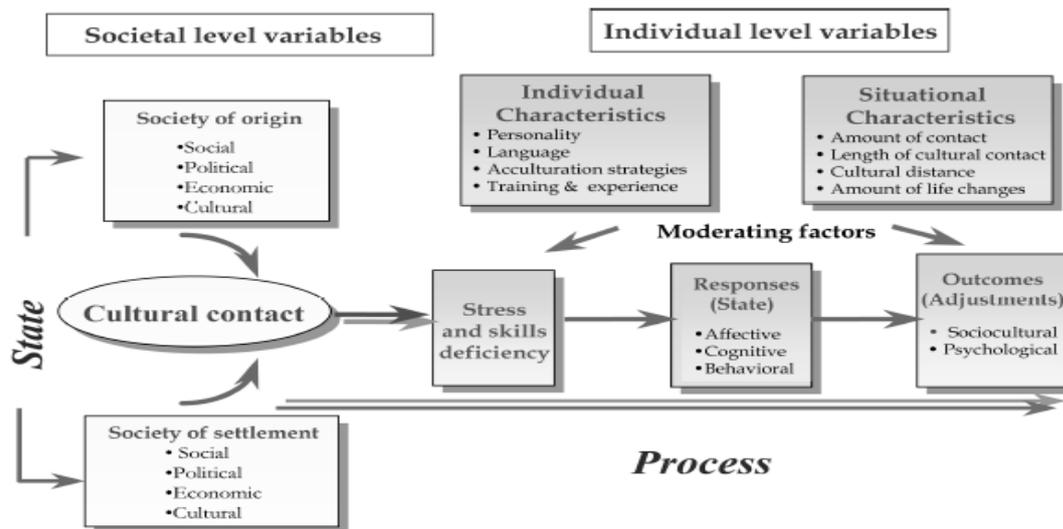
The above model is based on the concept of "cultural change," which represents a transition between one's own culture and a new culture. Cultural change is part of a problem-solving process undergone by users (Havelock, 1963; Conner, 1993). Here, the users are identified as sojourners and expatriates who experience a new culture which is unfamiliar and strange. In the initial stage of confrontation with the new culture, the user experiences a culture shock. Then, full or partial acculturation takes place, depending on factors such as former experience, length of stay, cultural distance between home and new culture, training, language competency among other factors. The greater the user's ability to acculturate, the less the impact of culture shock on them. The ability to acculturate and reduce the impact of the culture shock can be developed through an appropriate and effective cross-cultural training. Apart from that, training can also help the users develop intercultural communication competence, which is needed to adapt better and perform well in the new environment. As a result, once sojourners and expatriates have succeeded in completing the cycle, they will be more familiar with it the next time they confront a new culture. The change process will be improved and become less complicated. However, the success or failure of the users to adjust and perform depends on how they respond to the cycle (Zakaria, 2000).

Figure 1. Model of Cross-cultural cycle



Source: Adaptation from Havelock (1963) and Conner (1993)

Figure 2. Acculturation process model



Source: Lazaurus & Folkman (1984), Ward (1988), & Berry (1994)

The acculturation model

Acculturation is defined as, “Changes that occur as a result of first-hand contact between individuals of differing cultural origins” (Redfield et al, 1936). It is a process whereby an individual is socialized into an unfamiliar or new culture. In short, it refers to the level of adoption of the predominant culture by an outsider or minority group. According to Gordon, 1967; Garza and Gallegos, 1985; Domino and Acosta, 1987; Marin and Marin, 1990; Negy and Woods, 1992, the greater the acculturation, the more the language, customs, identity, attitudes and behaviours of the predominant culture are adopted. However, many sojourners and expatriates experience difficulty in acculturating; only adopting the values and behaviours they find appropriate and acceptable to

their existing cultures. It is a question of willingness and readiness (Zakaria, 2000).

The acculturation process begins at the societal (macro) level, where cultural contact and cross-cultural communication take place between the society of origin and settlement. The difference between the two societies is called the cultural distance. The societal variables for both societies consist of four main dimensions, which affect the acculturation process: social, political, economic, and cultural. The acculturation process is further influenced by the variables at the individual level, which may be divided according to two moderating factors; characteristics associated with:

- the acculturating individual (e.g. personality, previous training and experience, language competency, and acculturation strategies); and

– the acculturation situation (e.g. amount and length of cultural contact, perception of cultural distance, and amount of life changes).

This model considers culture contact as a major life event. It is characterized by elements such as stress, disorientation, and learning deficits; it demands cognitive appraisal of the situation, behavioral and affective responses for stress-management, and the acquisition of culture-specific skills. All the cultural contact factors, together with the psychological and socio-cultural outcomes, are influenced by both the societal and individual-level variables (Ward, 1988). Ward (1988) further points out that researchers may also conceptualize acculturation as relating to the acculturated individual state in which acculturation is defined and measured in relation to the three markers: cognitive, behavioral, and affective. However, she did not define these states further because her model is framed as an ongoing process.

The theory of acculturation represented in the first model (Figure 2) also addresses some essential issues that have been brought up by intercultural trainers. For example, Martin (1986) regrets the lack of conceptual clarity about what constitutes cross-cultural orientation and which outcomes should be considered. In response to this, the model offers a basic distinction between psychological and socio-cultural adjustments and suggests that adjustment

outcomes can be integrated with training objectives. Further, this model also supports Martin's claim that both culture-general and culture-specific training are relevant to cross-cultural orientation programs. However, the model has some drawbacks. For example, although Ward includes macro-factors, such as politics, social, economics, and culture in both the society of settlement and society of origin, which undoubtedly affect individual acculturation, the macro-factors are given less attention than the individual-level factors. The individual-level variables, but not the macro-factors, are shown to be moderating factors in the acculturation process. Furthermore, Ward concluded that situational factors were more relevant than the individual factors. This implies that, although both factors can moderate the process of acculturation, the degree of impact each factor has on the process is different. This may be true, but the implication can be confusing because, in the model, both variables were shown to be equal moderating factors. The model also suggests that adjustment outcomes can be integrated with training objectives. The model, however, does not explicitly show how a training program can play a critical role in ensuring successful acculturation outcomes.

The training effectiveness model

Figure 3. The training effectiveness model



Source: Bhagat & Prien, 1992

This model developed by Bhagat and Prien (1996), called intercultural training effectiveness (Figure 3), was produced on the assumption that a precise assessment of the various needs associated with intercultural training needs could be conducted. Basically there are three main attributes which have an impact on both training effectiveness and individual success in overseas assignments, job-specific, and organizational strategy and culture. The individual attributes associated with overseas success

include: cognitive flexibility, adaptability, tolerance for ambiguity, non-ethnocentrism, positive self-image, outgoingness, cultural sensitivity, intercultural competence, and extroversion. The job-level attributes include: level of technical skill, need for information about the host country and of the operations headquarters, and complexity of interpersonal and administrative activities. The authors felt that these attributes were likely to have profound complicating effects. At the organizational-

level, strategic and cultural factors have the highest relevance in designing effective training. They ensure that the training objectives are consistent with the design of the training program. In addition, cultural differences or "cultural distance" between the country of origin and the host country also impact on success in overseas assignments. Following training, the success of overseas assignees is conceptualized at three levels: intercultural competency, especially effectiveness in the work role; organizational success, reflected in the impact of the training programs; and training effectiveness from the point of view of the host country (Triandis, 1994).

In the training model (Figure 3), successful adjustment in overseas assignments is greatly affected by cultural differences between the country of origin and the host country. Again, this is similar to the acculturation model, which suggests that the culture of origin and the culture of settlement modify cultural contact and psychological and socio-cultural adjustment in a number of ways based on overall cultural similarities and differences. The unique significance of the training model lies in its focus on organizational attributes. These help to highlight such key questions: whether training is seen as a strategy to gain competitive advantage, and is incorporated into the "work-cultures" and whether the organization invests heavily in training and development (T&D). In essence, the training model succeeds because it explicitly explains what constitutes training effectiveness in the cross-cultural context and defines various variables affecting it. However, the model also has some limitations. It assumes that learning is based on the acquisition of knowledge, rather than on changes of attitudes. In a cross-cultural setting, training requires not only recognition, but also acceptance of differences. This helps the expatriates to make the necessary changes in attitudes, which may be the most difficult part of training in a cross-cultural setting. In their review of cross-cultural training, Hesketh and Bochner (1994) addressed some of these shortcomings. They suggested that the training model of Bhagat and Prien (1996) should be modified and expanded, specifically in the context of cross-cultural settings. People should be taught how to learn by developing specific skills, which, in turn, can be used to adapt and transfer to the demands of changing jobs in a dynamic environment.

Lastly, they suggested that the focus of training should be on the trainee, and not on the trainer or the training method. On the contrary, Bhagat and Prien (1996) believed that overall effectiveness can be enhanced only with an explicit, articulated strategy, which is then incorporated into the design of training. Thus, some parameters for training design must be provided. This is because effective and appropriate training design can have beneficial consequences for the individuals, organization, and members of the host country coming into contact with expatriates. Nevertheless, they also feel that more research is

needed on the links between training and organizational outcomes, especially in the commitment of firms towards training resources, in order to develop training in more meaningful programs for expatriates.

While the acculturation and training models are based on two different concepts: the acculturation process and the effectiveness of training, the factors affecting the success of the two models are similar. For example, the individual factors predicting success in the training model in overseas assignments involve similar competencies as the individual characteristics moderating successful adjustments in the acculturation model.

An integrated cross-cultural training model

The two previous sections presented two models of acculturation and training effectiveness. However, both models have certain limitations. Consequently, both models are combined to create a third model, the "Integrated Cross-Cultural Training Model," which links the effectiveness of training programs to the process of acculturation (Figure 4). Cross-cultural training can help expatriates adjust more successfully and decrease distressing experiences during the confrontation of uncertainty in foreign cultures. This model defines acculturation as both a process and a state.

This suggested model maintains the same societal-level variables that were examined in the acculturation model (Figure 2), with slight but important modifications in the individual-level variables. In the original model training and experience was one of the individual-level characteristics. However, in this model, training is explicitly shown as a sub-process to stress the importance of providing training prior to cultural contact and before the acculturation process. Some individual and situational characteristics have also been added to the individual level of variables by integrating relevant attributes from the training effectiveness model (Figure 3). For individuals, these added characteristics are family support and willingness to acculturate. The new situational characteristics are type and length of assignment and training. The major enhancement in the integrated model is the addition of another critical process before cultural contact takes place, both of which are antecedents to the acculturation process. This new process is called the moderating process and it requires effective training programs. The objectives of the moderating process are: to modify the individual and situational characteristics; to reduce such factors of culture shock as stress, disorientation, and learning and skills deficiency; and to achieve better acculturation outcomes than by the unmoderated process alone. Training is the critical component.

Global experts recommended that when the need to send people abroad arises, overseas personnel and their families must be given adequate preparation ahead of time for their new cultural experiences (Laabs, 1993). The training will help to bring about a continuous learning process to help them to adapt better. In fact, it is critical for them to get adequate preparation, both socio-culturally and psychologically, if they are to acculturate successfully.

There are many training programs available today, but two best enhance situational and individual characteristics: experiential and cognitive training. Both types of training add new characteristics to the situational variables since the types and durations of training programs have different effects. Length of assignment is used to classify a person as an expatriate or visitor, since they need different types of training programs. Looking next at individual characteristics, it is important to provide training for both the individual and family. It is not effective to prepare only the affected individual for an overseas assignment since family support has a paramount impact on the success of adaptation.

The acculturation model (Figure 2) presented failed to include this element in the acculturation process, whereas according to Tung (1988), one of the most frequent reasons for failure relates to the inability of the family to adapt to life in the host country. Over 80 percent of the firms surveyed found that training is only given to the employees and not to the spouse and family (Arvey et al., 1990). As a result, many employees return prematurely because of the spouse's failure to adjust to a dissimilar culture (Briody and Chrisman, 1991; Solomon, 1994; Tung, 1987). Both individuals and their families have to adapt. Hence, for successful acculturation, they need to go through a training process first.

In addition, another new individual characteristic is willingness to acculturate. Sometimes expatriates refuse to fully acculturate because of the many difficulties they face. Instead, they become bicultural, adopting only those cultural traits or values they think are relevant to their work performance. By providing appropriate and effective training programs before cultural contact, sojourners and expatriates can develop greater intercultural communication competence and thus enhance the ability to acculturate. Once both the situational and individual characteristics are modified and enhanced by appropriate training programs, individuals develop intercultural competence and are prepared to confront the new culture. Borrowing from Chen and Starosta (1996), intercultural competency is a three-part process that leads to cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, and cultural adroitness.

Cultural awareness

This cognitive process consists of two main attributes, self-awareness and cultural awareness. These attributes provide the framework for communication competence in a diverse society. Once people become more self-aware, they tend to be better at predicting the effects of their behavior on others. After they learn something about other culture and begin to understand the cultural "map" they know how to modify their behavior to meet the expectations of the new society.

Cultural sensitivity

A sojourner must be able to incorporate values, such as open-mindedness, high self-concept, non-judgmental attitudes, and social relaxation, in order to understand the value of different cultures and become sensitive to the verbal and non-verbal cues of people from the foreign culture.

Cultural adroitness

With respect to intercultural communication competence, people learn how to act effectively when in contact with the new cultural environment. When they know what to do and what not to do, they will be able to communicate effectively without offending any parties.

In this model, three types of intercultural competence have been explicitly incorporated as important processes for acculturation, as emphasized by Chen and Starosta (1996). These competencies are seen in another form as responses to culture shock. Training programs, which create better states after individuals are in contact with the culture, can moderate the responses of sojourners and expatriates. After the moderating process, the individual responses may be different because of intervening factors such as the situational and individual characteristics. Different training programs promote various aspects of competence. For example, while cognitive training should enhance a person's cognitive level (i.e. cultural awareness and interpersonal skills), experiential training should enhance a person's affective and behavioral levels (i.e. their intercultural effectiveness skills).

However it is also important to understand that although training is directly related to competence, the moderating factors, which consist of both the situational and individual characteristics, also impact and give rise to variations in the responses. Training moderates the initial state prior to cultural contact thereby optimising the state of cross-cultural competence. Looking at acculturation from a state viewpoint can explain a wider range of outcomes in the Integrated Cross-Cultural Training Model. On the other hand, training can also make the acculturation process easier and less stressful by developing both

culture-general and specific factors as both training state and process have a positive relationship to the outcome. Thus, effective process of acculturation may achieve an effective state of response.

The importance of the suggested integrated model has been clearly addressed through the description of the effects training can have on acculturation. The next step is to discuss how the model affects the contrasting skills developed by experiential and cognitive training affect responses and outcomes. Experiential training is expected to enhance personal and family adjustments, as well as work performance overseas because it tends to concentrate on individual characteristics rather than situational ones. Therefore, an experiential training program should aim to develop intercultural effectiveness skills, especially the three basic skills of adaptation, cross-cultural communication, and partnership. Furthermore, it should include other skills, such as work transition, stress-management, relationship building, and negotiation techniques. By going through an experiential program, individuals and family members become more sensitive and able to respect the differences between their culture of origin and the contact culture. In addition, they learn skills that will enable them to choose the "right" combination of verbal and non-verbal behaviors to achieve a smooth and harmonious relationship with their hosts in the foreign culture. These skills enhance both their affective and behavioral responses, which in turn, trigger more successful psychological adjustments. Ward and Kennedy (1993) support this interpretation in their finding that locus of control, life changes, social difficulty, and social support variables are predictors of psychological adjustment.

By contrast, cultural awareness training is a cognitive method that aims to enhance interpersonal skills. Such training focuses on understanding the host culture in a more personally relevant way to develop performance-enhancing interactive skills. The best known technique for creating such cultural awareness is through the self-learning tool called the "cultural assimilator" which stimulates and enhances sojourners' and expatriates' cognitive responses. As a result of cognitive training, people understand host social systems and values better (Deshpande and Viswesvaran, 1992). These cognitive responses then lead to better socio-cultural adjustments because they increase the level of satisfaction with the host national contact; reduce cultural distance; and help expatriates develop a more positive attitude towards the host culture. Ward and Kennedy (1993) also support this as they found that factors associated with intercultural awareness account for 52 percent of the variance in socio-cultural adjustments.

The Integrated Cross-Cultural Training Model is an improved model of acculturation; the explicit effects of training have been shown prior to cultural contact and the acculturation process. By looking at the effects of training theoretically, the model

successfully explains how different types of training can promote different competencies (both culture and culture-specific skills) and trigger different responses, which consequently result in different adjustment outcomes. The three models (acculturation, training, and integrated cross-cultural training) share many common traits or factors. Each model attempts to describe: a process, which reflects the personal development of expatriates who interact with foreign nationals within a specific environment (the foreign culture) by developing culture-specific and general skills through training. The first two models differ in terms of their emphasis, goals, and content; the third model attempts to reconcile these differences.

While numerous studies have responded to the issues raised in this paper in the affirmative, there are also some contradictory responses. According to Black and Mendenhall (1990), many people are not convinced that training can do much to resolve expatriates' working problems, even when they are fully aware of them. For instance, companies such as IBM, require as many as forty two hours of management training on topics such as managing multinational groups of people and internationalization. However, surprisingly, many studies concluded that expatriate employees in this kind of company still face cross cultural obstacles and high failure rates in spite of the training efforts. Overall, the number of expatriate failures has been variously estimated at between 16 percent to 40 percent by Dowling and Schuler, (1990), 20 percent to 50 percent by Bird and Dunbar (1991), and approximately 30 percent by Tung (1987). Although many scholars agree that training is the best approach or tool for developing intercultural competence, not everyone sees it as the principal solution to cultural problems (Kealey and Protheroe, 1996). Other people question the effectiveness of cross-cultural training more explicitly. Since prolonged international business travel is increasingly important in today's global market, the need to develop successful training programs is also critical. Many first-time expatriates face cross-cultural adaptation problems stemming from the ignorance both of "self-culture" and "cross-culture" and from their tendency to depend on their previous set of ethnocentric beliefs (Smith, 1998).

Implications

Some of the important implications of inadequate adjustment to international assignments are:

- Costly for both the organizations and individuals in terms of absenteeism;
- Early return to the home country; and
- Lower performance according to Tung, 1982; Copeland and Griggs, 1985; Black, 1988.

In order to reduce the numbers of sojourners and expatriates returning early, Japan Overseas Educational Services (JOES) provides training over a period of several months to the wives and families of

Japanese businessmen being sent overseas to psychologically prepare the Japanese women for life in the new culture (Tung, 1988). In Great Britain, the Women's Corona Society offers a similar program for families preparing to live abroad. Both these efforts emphasize the importance of giving adequate training prior to cultural contact to better prepare both expatriates and their families. O'Brien (1998) believes that the development of specific cross-cultural skills and competencies are also important. He adds that the two most important cross-cultural competencies are: "A mindset that observes successful people and the ability to modify one's own behavior to work with that successful person in their culture." Learning new habits of behavior is the outcome of successful observation and changes in mindset, which both are a great foundation for cultural awareness and skill building.

Mindset shift is like the concept of paradigm shift in change management. One must be able to be flexible and open to any changes in order to facilitate the adaptation process, even when it does not involve national boundaries. Letting go of the existing work culture, values, and norms, which can be a very difficult task in one's own culture, is even harder if different national cultures are involved. Consequently, many organizations find the best way to manage change in order to achieve success, reduce resistance, and increase receptiveness is through continuous training. Courses should be given to employees on a regular basis to increase their skills and knowledge and maintain their mental flexibility. Employees on overseas assignments need even more support. Without such training, business exchanges involving different national cultures have often been difficult.

According to O'Brien (1998), the effectiveness of training depends largely on how "trainable" people are. He points out that many top management people refuse to receive training because they feel, that being at the top, they should already know about cross-cultural communication. However, O'Brien (1998) argues that, regardless of position or past experiences, training can always help people increase their knowledge and develop new competencies. One should not regard training as limited to a period of time; instead it should be a continuous education. Training should achieve the desired result if organizations and individuals put the same level of effort, commitment, and motivation into identifying and achieving common goals throughout the business person's sojourn. The organization has a role to play in ensuring that people are given an adequate amount of knowledge and skills, strong support, and clearly communicated goals. Individuals also need to be willing to face the new culture, look forward to meeting a diverse group of people, and, most of all, be willing to make the necessary mental and social adjustments. Such individuals play an interface role

in the confrontational organization and foreign cultures.

Training expatriates

The study identifies several new areas for training the better prepared expatriate. Current thinking advocates two types of training:

- language training for improved communication in the host environment (Andreason, 2003); and
- cultural training for intelligent responsiveness in different psychosocial and cultural milieus (Tung, 1982; Yavas and Bodur, 1999). Descriptions of best practices in expatriate training are also reported in the literature (Tung, 1987).

There are, however, two issues relevant to real-world expatriate experiences that remain unaddressed. First, expatriate training in any meaningful form seems largely absent in practice, resonating with the writings of Forster (2000) and Leiba-O'Sullivan (1999). It is found that pre-departure training, when it occurs, is often limited to provision of materials to familiarize managers with facts about the host-country and the key aspects of their overseas assignment. Second, while we can see how pre-departure training in language and culture can be useful to expatriate managers, such training seems inadequate for managing some of the key challenges of their day-to-day reality; i.e. unexpected situations that require extensive renegotiation, ethical dilemmas that defy solutions, and the loss of composure and temper that can severely impede effectiveness. Provision of facts and figures, and language training, however, does not make a training program. Our study implicates pre-departure training in skills such as active listening, ethical reasoning, and conflict management. Additional research and new thinking about training is clearly needed for developing well-prepared expatriates.

In this regard, the use of sensitivity training to help expatriates suspend judgment, listen, reason, and win hearts and minds in foreign locations is clearly implicated. Our sample suggests that they need to learn:

- new and effective ways of building relationships and trust with people in foreign locations; and
- Informed perspectives into how host nationals define and interpret situations, and why they behave the way they do in light of their culture-bound interpretations.

While scholars have referred to the importance of such sensitivity training (Cavusgil et al., 1992; Dowling et al., 1999), and computer-assisted learning modules seem available (Cushner and Landis, 1996), practice has trailed the thinking in the literature by a wide margin. Future research on the following is forthcoming:

- types and methods of pre-departure training that firms actually provide their expatriate managers; and
- contrasting those expatriates who receive interpersonal skills training versus those who do not in terms of their cross-cultural adjustment.

Research methodology

Predominantly there are two types of research methods, a qualitative and a quantitative approach. The former approach uses methods to collect descriptive and contextually situated data to seek an understanding of human experiences (Mann and Stewart 2000). The latter approach presents data as numerical relationships and typically has a formalized form and style (Glesne and Peshkin 1992). This study was undertaken using qualitative research methods, which Maxwell (1996) identifies its strength to be their inductive approach. The qualitative approach was ideal for this research project for two main reasons: (1) theories and results are derived that are understandable and experientially credible to the sample group and others and (2) conducting formative evaluations will help to improve existing literature rather than simply assessing the value of it. Therefore a quantitative approach was believed to be insufficient, as presenting data in numerical terms would not have captured the human element of the responses or provide in-depth explanations that were sought after (Van Maanen, Dabbs and Faulkner 1982).

Data Collection

Data was collected in two ways: personal interviews and emailed responses. Firstly, personal interviews were conducted in the form of semi-structured interviews. This format allowed the researcher to encourage conversations from participants, and gave participants the flexibility to contribute additional information that they thought were relevant to the research topic (Mann and Stewart 2000). Interviews took place at a mutually agreed place and time, and all personal interviews were recorded on audiotape and subsequently transcribed. The tape recording helped maximize accuracy and enabled the researcher to concentrate on the quality of the responses rather than on writing down the responses.

The use of the semi-structured, open-ended questionnaire is described by Jankowicz (1995:195) as being characterized by the fact that:

Content and sequence are not fully specified in advance, but the researcher has a clear idea of his/her purpose.

Questionnaires are open-ended, so respondents are encouraged to use their own words. While a script of guideline questions may be developed, the researcher's actual questions will be led by the prevailing atmosphere and rapport between the

participants. There are four techniques that can be used, namely, conversation, the individual interview, key informant interview and focus group. Content analysis is the main technique of analyzing the mass of data that will come out of the open-ended responses.

The second means of data collection was via emailed responses to identical interview questions. All documentation was emailed to potential participants in advance so that they were aware of what types of questions would be asked. Eleven people were contacted by email and all responded. Those who agreed, emailed responses back within a week. The researcher chose this second mode of data collection, as it presented many advantages (Mann and Stewart 2000). Firstly, it has the ability to obtain a larger sample group. This helped to increase the relevance of generalizing the findings because it applied to more people. Secondly there was significant time and cost savings, especially when all personal interviews needed to be transcribed. Lastly, emailed responses allowed the respondents to answer the questions in their own time and at their own pace, which helped facilitate in-depth and well thought-out responses.

Population Size and Sampling Procedure

Initially, all participants were my work colleagues. Thereafter, all participants were asked whether they knew of any other expatriates, repatriates or spouses who may be interested in being involved with the research project. Participants helped by contacting other friends or colleagues who might be interested. However it was relatively difficult to find participants who were willing to take part in personal interviews. Overall, it was relatively easier to gain commitment from participants if there was an opportunity to communicate with them initially over the telephone to answer any questions. From this point, arrangements were made for a personal interview at a mutually agreed upon place. In all four cases where the researcher was able to talk to the potential participant over the telephone, he/she agreed to be interviewed personally.

Recruiting participants for emailed responses was much easier than finding participants for personal interviews. This was because emailed responses overcame the issue of the physical location of the respondent. Interested members were able to email the researcher directly.

All respondents found the interview questions clear and relevant. Participants responded well to the questions and were more than happy to share their experiences. Overall, the responses were of a good quality and depth, confirming the appropriateness of a qualitative approach to this research as opposed to a quantitative approach.

The breakdown of respondents is presented in table 1.

Table 2. Summary of participants

	REPATRIATES	EXPATRIATES
Personal Interviews	2	6
Emailed Responses	1	11
Total by Category	3	17
TOTAL	20	

Research Design

In order to increase its validity and reliability, the questionnaire for this study was partly developed by integrating the research objective and literature review. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part consisted of multiple choices, demographic data and the second part consisted of open ended questions pertaining to expatriate adjustment.

Demographic Factors

The questionnaire began with individual background variables: age, educational level, expatriation duration, gender, marital status, length of assignment, level of foreign language proficiency, level of formal cross-cultural experience before this assignment, relevance of cross cultural training to work performance.

Cross-Cultural Adjustment

Interview questions were formulated after a review of the existing literature on expatriate management to ensure sharper and more insightful interview questions about the topic (Yin 1994). As the current literature on expatriate management lacks standardized questions, questions needed to be developed. The questions were deliberately designed to be open-ended and to avoid leading questions. The interview questions for the expatriates and repatriates (termed (re) expatriates) centred primarily on exploring their experiences, or lack thereof, of cross-cultural training. A pilot test was first conducted with one participant, a repatriate, to determine whether the interview questions were understandable and applicable in addressing the issues of the study.

In the analysis of the data collected, responses from expatriates and repatriates were presented together. Respondents were able to record multiple answers to any particular question. Patterns and trends were then identified and presented. Some direct quotes were used from the participants, who remained anonymous, and reported in the results chapter. The quotes chosen were insightful and provided evidence for the support or lack of support for propositions.

Research Results

This chapter will present the results of the research. The objective of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the orientation process for expatriates and to determine a need for a separate orientation and culture training. By improving the orientation process and identifying a need for culture specific training, the company can thus eliminate relocation and replacement costs. In light of the above statement, the results of the research proved quite interesting, in that none of the expatriates who responded, either by personal interviews or email, ever had any type of cross cultural training whatsoever.

The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part consisted of multiple choice questions which focused on marital status; length of expatriate tenure; level of foreign language fluency; level of formal cross-cultural experience before this assignment; when was the most recent cross-cultural training conducted; whether the knowledge gained from the cross-cultural training helped the expatriate perform his/her daily job; how much of the training was actually applicable to perform their job; the most important characteristic that an expatriate manager must possess; and what, in their opinion, based on Tung’s findings, is the main reason for expatriate failure.

The second part of the questionnaire consisted of semi-structured questions. The limitation of this was seen in the response to emailed questionnaires. Respondents did not elaborate on their answers. For example, in response to the question “what were the cultural differences that you found most challenging?”, one respondent replied “the African setting is a more different setting in terms of culture and they are just different”.

The aim was at least to receive a response rate of not below 25 percent.

Data Collection Strategies

The methodology used to collect data entailed a self-administered questionnaire; the advantage of this approach was that the participants’ responses were free from any undue influence from peers and their superiors. The disadvantage was that, given that it was a self-administered questionnaire, the response rate was lower than the researcher anticipated. This could have been due to employees not trusting the confidentiality guarantees and not being brave enough to express their independent views if they

were contrary to management's thinking. In order to overcome these disadvantages, an email was resent to the participants via their human resource department appealing to them to respond, highlighting the importance of doing so and again reiterating the guarantee of the individual's confidentiality as well as non-disclosure of their identity in the final report.

As stated earlier a total of 410 questionnaires were distributed to the call centres situated in Gauteng, Bloemfontein and Cape Town. The reason why all employees were targeted for the survey was to try to achieve a response rate of 25 percent and above which will be sufficient to write a report.

Data Analysis

In order to address research question number one i.e. the perceived uses or purposes of assessing or evaluating employee-customer service interactions, the appropriate statistics were used in the analysis, which are known as frequencies. This provides an indication of how many respondents selected each of the items listed. Given that this type of question comprises multiple-response type questions, the percentages obtained did not add up to 100% because the respondents may have selected more than one of the listed uses or functions served by the assessment of employee-customer service interactions.

Discussion and presentation of the findings

As is well-known, an increasing number of firms are conducting business globally, seeking to multiply benefits by exploring opportunities worldwide. It is widely recognized that utilizing expatriate employees effectively on international assignments is a critical factor in enterprises succeeding in their global projects. On average, international organizations spend over two and a half times more to place an employee on an expatriate assignment than they would if they employed locally.

Adjustment generally refers to the changes which individuals actively engender or passively accept in order to achieve or maintain satisfactory states within themselves. In the same way, cross-cultural adjustment also can be regarded as the degree of comfort, familiarity, and ease that the individual feels toward new surroundings. The majority of expatriates who return prematurely, that is, return expatriates before the completion of their overseas assignment, do so for several reasons such as poor performance, job dissatisfaction, cultural shock and family dissatisfaction.

The non-completion of an international assignment by an expatriate necessitates replacement with a new expatriate. Consequently, expatriate failure is costly and results in a crisis for the multinational corporation. And while the direct costs of expatriate failure are calculated in monetary terms,

the indirect costs of these failures, such as their implications for future career prospects, are often concealed. Furthermore, they tend to be more damaging, and the consequences underestimated by both expatriates and international enterprises.

Because of the relatively high frequency of expatriate turnover and the related direct and indirect costs, international business literature has highlighted efforts to isolate the factors causing difficulty in cross-cultural adjustment. Because of the relatively high frequency of expatriate turnover and the related direct and indirect costs, international business literature has highlighted efforts to isolate the factors causing difficulty in cross-cultural adjustment.

Individual factors may result in expatriates having dissimilar cross-cultural adjustment experiences owing to the different emotional states and reactions, and the different things they may learn from the experience. This section discusses how individual factors: age, educational levels, expatriation duration, gender, overseas study experience, previous overseas experience, previous cross-cultural training, and marital status of expatriates as well as partner-employment situation impact on cross-cultural adjustment. The correlation between cross-cultural training and cross-cultural adjustment was significant in this study.

Cross-cultural training appears to be an important factor in the adjustment of expatriates. Nevertheless, the statistical results revealed that MNCs often neglect to provide any kind of cross-cultural training for their international expatriates. In review, the high costs related to difficulties in expatriation such as adjustment difficulties, premature returns, repatriation difficulties and career management problems, are also widely noticed. From these standpoints it is stressed that the training of employees for their international careers is a very important HRM challenge.

Normally, different countries have different climates, cultures, customs and dissimilar barriers. Consequently, international organizations should offer expatriates cross-cultural training relevant to expatriate needs and the overseas location. In fact, most cross-cultural training for expatriates is generally superficial in degree, incomplete or non-existent. Many researchers advocate the use of cross-cultural training (Berry et al. 1993; Black and Mendenhall 1990; Deshpande and Viswesvaran 1992; Gregersen and Black 1992; Hammer and Martin 1990; Naumann 1993; Oddou 1992). Extensive studies indicate that training is advantageous in reducing the perceived need of expatriates to adjust. In other words, a positive relationship existed between cross-cultural training and cross-cultural adjustment (Befus 1988; Deshpande and Viswesvaran 1991; Earley 1987; Gudykunst et al. 1977; Latta 1999; Mitchell et al. 1972; Newbold et al. 1982; O'Brien, Fiedler and Hewett 1970; Salisbury 1971;

Steinkalk and Taft 1979; Worchel and Mitchell 1972).

For international expatriates who are completely unfamiliar with the customs, cultures and work habits of the host nation, cross-cultural training may be a critical element in their effectiveness and success in their overseas assignments. Because cross-cultural training familiarizes expatriates with the new culture, it is predictable that expatriates would feel adaptable and familiar with the host culture more directly and effortlessly. Equally, owing to the subsequent cultural familiarity and advanced cross-cultural understanding on the part of the expatriates, cross-cultural training would lead to reduced anxiety and culture shock, and would thereby facilitate cross-cultural adjustment. In terms of adjustment, which is defined as effective interaction with host nationals, expatriates gain knowledge through cross-cultural training that enhances their self-efficacy, which enables expatriates to emulate behaviors that would result in effective interactions more efficiently than non-trained expatriates. Training should include pre-departure training, overseas on-the-job training, host cultural awareness training, and language programs. It is a norm, at least theoretically, for organizations to offer some sort of orientation to employees posted to international assignments. This, it is assumed, will assist the expatriates to deal with some important issues while working in the new surroundings.

The importance of such training in preparing the individuals for intercultural work assignments has become increasingly apparent. A comprehensive review of the literature demonstrated that there was strong evidence for a positive relationship between cross-cultural training and adjustment.

Numerous advantages can be gained through providing expatriates with cross-cultural training prior to departure for international assignments, and this sort of training are concluded as several meaning as following. Firstly, cross-cultural training can be explained as a method for conscious change from an automatic, home-culture mode to a culturally appropriate, adaptable, and acceptable mode. It also can be defined as an aid to dealing with unexpected events or culture shock in a new culture. Thirdly, cross-cultural training can be described as a way of lessening the uncertainties of interactions with foreign co-workers and nationals. Lastly, cross-cultural training should be clarified as a system of increasing the ability of expatriates to manage the reduction of pressure and uncertainty in overseas environments, work performance and general living problems.

Underlining the complex nature of culture, nevertheless, even as international organizations try to equip employees mentally, it is not easy to develop the appropriate mental frame of reference for dealing with different cultures worldwide. A frame of reference in this sense includes a basic awareness of cultural differences, which exist between the 'home'

culture and those with which people are doing, or would like to do business. In conclusion, the degree to which cross-cultural training is needed and is effective is a function of the degree to which the international assignee interacts with members of the host culture. In addition, empirical experiences of international enterprises and academic researches exposed that the cross-cultural training is an imperative factor in facilitating cross-cultural adjustment process.

Recommendations

The interplay of job novelty, degree of interaction and culture novelty determines the degree of training rigor. The recommended training model takes into consideration the required training intensity and the profile of the expatriate manager.

The recommended training methods are intended to provide the type of CCT that best fit the expatriate manager. The concept of benchmarking for identifying good CCT practices is also mooted.

In view of the business world's state of constant flux, corporations like Intel have resorted to Just-in-time CCT (Odenwald, 1993). We may want to go one step further by introducing preemptive CCT. This means that the training department organises topical courses on selected countries that are deemed to be potential growth areas.

For companies that are new to CCT, fresh emphasis on this aspect of global competition may entail significant re-engineering of organisation culture and individual value system. How traumatic the changes are, and how much resistance is displayed, depend on the organisation's and the individual's determination and mental readiness to succeed globally..

The importance and complexity of CCT imply that companies cannot afford to be haphazard in their attitude towards expatriation. A 4-step method to determining the trainees' level of CCT need has been proposed. On the basis of the intensity of their CCT need, the trainees participate in one of the three recommended training programs, each representing different degree of training rigor to match the training needs.

To prepare the typical manager effectively, the CCT begins with the intellectual training approach, before blending in the experiential approach for learning synergy. The assumptions are that as a citizen of a meritocratic and culturally diverse country he is more adept to cognitive learning and is more in need of culture-specific rather than culture-general CCT. The focus is on developing his attitudinal flexibility and readiness to assume the role of a visionary qualities he apparently lacks to succeed independently overseas. Centralisation of the training function, preemptive CCT and benchmarking for training excellence are also discussed, with a view to reinventing the value of CCT and inviting further

discussion on how attention to CCT in MNCs can be promoted.

The CCT model specifically targeted the expatriate or to-be-expatriated managers. Although it is assumed that their family members would also be relocated, to model the combined CCT needs of the expatriates and their family members would complicate the recommended CCT model. Another limitation of this study is issues that may draw the readers' attention in the course of examining this study have been left unanswered. These issues, such as trainer competency, conflict of interest and trainees' adjustment problems, together with, the resultant costs to the individuals, their families and their companies, merit in-depth study. In the interest of conducting a more focused study, these issues are not discussed in this study, but it is hoped that they will stimulate future research.

Finally, the recommended general CCT model is meant to be adapted to specific companies' unique business realities, not adopted wholesale.

Conclusion

For international expatriates who are completely unfamiliar with the customs, cultures and work habits of the host nation, cross-cultural training may be a critical element in their effectiveness and success in their overseas assignments. Because cross-cultural training familiarizes expatriates with the new culture, it is predictable that expatriates would feel adaptable and familiar with the host culture more directly and effortlessly. Equally, owing to the subsequent cultural familiarity and advanced cross-cultural understanding on the part of the expatriates, cross-cultural training would lead to reduced anxiety and culture shock, and would thereby facilitate cross-cultural adjustment. In terms of adjustment, which is defined as effective interaction with host nationals, expatriates gain knowledge through cross-cultural training that enhances their self-efficacy, which enables expatriates to emulate behaviors that would result in effective interactions more efficiently than non-trained expatriates. Training should include pre-departure training, overseas on-the-job training, host cultural awareness training, and language programs. It is a norm, at least theoretically, for organizations to offer some sort of orientation to employees posted to international assignments. This, it is assumed, will assist the expatriates to deal with some important issues while working in the new surroundings.

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