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Hsiu Ching Ko

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STUDY OF THE SUCCESS OF TAIWANESE EXPATRIATE MANAGERS ON
OVERSEAS ASSIGNMENTS: A GROUNDED THEORY APPROACH

By

HSIU CHING KO

Presented to the School of Graduate Studies and Research of the
University of the Incarnate Word
in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

The University of the Incarnate Word

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ABSTRACT

Study of the Success of Taiwanese Expatriate Managers on Overseas Assignments: A

Grounded Theory Approach

by

Hsiu Ching Ko

Dissertation Chair: Francis Musa Boakari, Ph.D.

University of the Incarnate Word, August 2008

Multinational corporations (MNCs), in order to compete in today's global economy, need to have trained professionals who can succeed as expatriates. However, what demands do such professionals face? The purpose of the study was to explore critical influences on expatriate performance during overseas assignments. Thirteen former Taiwanese expatriate managers from 5 Taiwan-based MNCs participated in the study. Data were gathered from in-depth interviews about the participants' experiences during their overseas assignments. Through open, axial, and selective coding procedures associated with micro- and comparative analyses of a grounded theory research approach, a conceptual model explaining the nature of the success of expatriate managers on their out-of-home-country assignments was developed. Five major explanatory categories that were constructed from 11 propositions included competency, resistance to challenges, motivation, personality characteristics, and benefits for the professional and his organization. These results indicated that the identified competencies and characteristics complemented one another because they were all highly interrelated.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Background

The researcher used to run her own business in Taipei, Taiwan, as a consultant in the area of real estate management. After 11-years of operation, she found that there was a need for her to explore a world different from the place she grew up, in an attempt to improve upon her capability and knowledge, and to enhance her competitiveness in preparation for a second career. Therefore, in December 2003, with limited knowledge about western culture she came to the United States to pursue a Ph.D. degree. As one would expect, the researcher had difficulties in expressing herself during the first few weeks about her difficulties in facing a new cultural environment. But with English training from the English Language Services (ELS) and classes on the Acculturation and Belief System on campus, she slowly adjusted and began to appreciate the cultural differences between Taiwan and the United States.

During her second semester in the United States, she had an opportunity to work as a student employee at the university. The challenges were enormous, but the advantages invaluable. It was the first time she had to work with a culturally-diverse team made up of Mexicans, Turks, Americans, Chinese, and Taiwanese. She quickly found out that working with people from different cultural backgrounds requires that each team member not only possess enough English language fluency, but also enough competency in cross-cultural communication. Thanks to the researcher's cultural background and personality, she would rather observe and listen than speak during the first few months. Not surprisingly, misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and miscommunication occurred, and her frustration was to be expected. Yet, challenges are priceless learning

opportunities, and she learned how to gain cultural insights while facing the difficulties inherent in her cross-cultural encounters.

After nine months as a student employee, the researcher interned for six months in a non-profit organization funded by the International Program of the United States, in San Antonio, Texas. This organization provides support and information for international visitors. In fact, this internship is a requirement of the university's doctoral program. The more the researcher became involved in the international visitors' programs, the more deeply she appreciated the importance of understanding, embracing, appreciating, and respecting different cultures. The more she widened her perceptions, the more she realized how the forces of globalization bind together people together from all around the world, and change our present world.

By tying together her own previous experiences and the new experience of working in a culture different from her own, she began to realize how difficult it is to adjust to new and strange environments and how hard it is to effectively communicate and work with people from different cultures. These invaluable experiences acquired through studying, living, and working in a different culture inspired the researcher to devote herself to this research.

The rapid pace of globalization and global competition has led to a growing realization of the importance of multinational corporations whose numbers have risen considerably in recent years. One of the results of this growth has been an increased mobility of human resources all across the globe. According to Dowling and Welch (2005), data from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development indicate that there were 65,000 transnational corporations, with 850,000 affiliates in 2003,

employing a total of 54 million people worldwide. When compared to 24 million in 1990, this figure graphically shows that international business has become much more global (Dowling & Welch, 2005), resulting in stiffer competition among multinational corporations (MNCs). As MNCs expand businesses globally, the big challenge for each corporation is how to maintain and advance global competitiveness. This is where the role of expatriate managers rises to the top. In order to enhance their global strategy and integration, MNCs continually use expatriates to reach their global goals. Therefore, the effective management of international human resources is increasingly recognized as a crucial determinant for success in the global market (Black, Gregerson, Mendenhall, & Stroh, 1999; Caligiuri, Phillips, Lazarova, Tarique, & Burgi, 2001). Within this general framework, the effectiveness of the expatriates in doing their job is crucial to both MNCs' global success and the individual career development of each expatriate.

The advantages of using expatriates for MNCs have been identified in many studies. For example, Scullion (1991) indicates that expatriates' knowledge of corporate culture and international reporting systems as well as their opportunities to teach employees at subsidiaries how to relate to headquarters are the key advantages for MNCs in using expatriates. In addition, Boyacigiller and Alder (1991) also state that using expatriates may facilitate communication and coordination between subsidiaries and headquarters. From the perspectives of expatriates, the experience of international assignments may serve to advance career development. In addition to expected financial gains, career advancement is considered to be the primary reason for expatriates to accept an international assignment (Dowling & Welch, 2005).

By contrast, the high ratio of expatriate failure and its cost are significant concerns for the MNCs' goals of expanding overseas operations. The reality of a ratio of expatriate failure has become an important issue, widely discussed in the literature, with different statistics for different regions (Scullion & Collings, 2006). Although some research suggests a declining rate of expatriate failure (Dowling & Welch, 2005), the performance of this group continues to be problematic because expatriate failure or underperformance is almost always costly (Scullion, 2005).

Estimates of the financial costs of expatriate failure vary. For example, it has been estimated that the average cost ranges from U.S. \$55,000 to U.S. \$150,000 per case (Copeland & Griggs, 1985). A survey conducted by the U.S. National Foreign Trade Council in 1994 found that the estimated cost of failed overseas staffing ranged from U.S. \$200,000 to U.S. \$1.2 million (Ashamalla, 1998; Swaak, 1995; Graf & Harland, 2005; Solomon, 1996). Copeland and Griggs (1985) contend that, to U.S. firms, the direct costs of a failed expatriate assignment tops the U.S. \$2 billion a year mark, and this does not include losses unaccounted for. Today, these costs would be much higher.

In addition to the direct financial costs, "the greater concerns are those failures that are less apparent, but just as costly, and that can often be more dangerous and damaging than the early return" (Bennett, Aston, & Colquhoun, 2000, p. 241). Delayed productivity and start-up time, disrupted relationships with local nationals, damage to the company's image, and lost opportunities are failures that cost MNCs in many invisible ways and surely hits them hard (Ashamalla, 1998). Furthermore, Ashamalla (1998) contends that "there are many of these hidden failure cases all over the world costing their firms dearly in both money and reputation" (p. 54). Similarly, Zeira and Banai

(1985) suggest that failure “almost invariably has a negative impact on future interactions between the MNCs and the host countries” (p. 34).

In light of the significant financial costs of expatriate failure and its intangible impact on MNCs as well as the expatriates’ critical role in enhancing global competitiveness, understanding the effectiveness of expatriate managers and the factors critical to their success are imperative (Alder & Bartholomew, 1992; Black, Gregersen, & Mendenhall, 1992; Harzing, 1995; Kealey, 1996; Harada, 1999)

Preliminary Considerations

In the face of economic globalization, organizations must determine how to stay ahead in the competitiveness in the global market and find ways to enhance their global integration. Using expatriates for global integration and other functional strategies is necessary and critical for MNCs’ global success (Caliguiuri et al., 2001). Working in a culturally different environment is a challenge. Thus, learning about cultures, being aware of cultural differences, and having competence in cross-cultural communication all become necessary for expatriates to be able to adjust to new cultural environments and carry out successful overseas assignments.

Harris and Moran’s study (as cited in Chen & Starosta, 1998) note that there are five attitudinal imperatives that will be needed in the age of economic globalization:

1. Possessing a cosmopolitan mind with sensitive and innovative abilities to operate comfortably in the global environment;
2. Acknowledging the importance of intercultural communication by understanding cultural influences on personal needs, values, expectations, and the sense of self;
3. Becoming culturally sensitive by integrating a general understanding of culture with insights gained from service in multicultural organizations or from activities that bring one into contact with ethnically and culturally different persons;

4. Adjusting to the norms of a new culture, whether it is a domestic or international culture; and
5. Building upon similarities and common concerns while integrating and understanding differences, to further expatriates' personal growth and to aid them in dealing with people from other cultures that are unfamiliar to them. (p. 50)

These attitudinal dispositions are crucial for success in today's global environment because they have all to do with culture. Culture is what makes us what we are and our cultural backgrounds influence everything we do at all times and in all places (Boakari, 2004). Our contemporary world is one of cultural diversities and MNCs are normally diverse cultural environments. As such, we can assume that for the expatriates, cultural issues, both of the home context and of the host country are fundamental in all ways. From childhood on, we learn and live our local cultures through the processes of socialization and acculturation. In order to be functional in another culture, its values, norms, beliefs, and behavior patterns have to be learnt and adopted as much as possible. The levels of this cultural learning and adaptation are influenced by the proficiency level of the stranger in the foreign language. How much the expatriate knows about the host culture, how many of its values and expectations that he or she lives up to, and how well he or she functions in that language, will affect his or her performance at all levels in a different culture. Cross-cultural learning (including learning another language) could be helpful to the expatriate, and should be considered important in trying to understand more about a professional's life and his or her effectiveness in an organization in a different culture.

The Role of Cross-cultural Training

While international human resources management is considered essential to MNCs' global success, expatriate failure associated with its considerable costs, including

financial and non-financial costs, continue to be one of the major concerns for MNCs. Research in the field has suggested that culture and language difficulties and the inability to adapt to the local culture are part of the major reasons for expatriate failure (Dowling & Welch, 2005). As such, MNCs need a strategy to help ensure the success of expatriates on overseas assignments and to advance their cross-cultural competence (Caligiuri et al., 2001).

Successful expatriate assignments are essential to MNCs for both developmental and functional reasons (Brake, Walker, & Walker, 1994; Caligiuri et al., 2001; Dowling, Welch, & Schuler 1999; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985; Tung & Miller, 1990). To cope with fierce and unprecedented competition and to sustain or increase their global competitiveness, more and more MNCs have provided their expatriate workers with cross-cultural training programs to equip them with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to deal with cultural differences (Ashamalla, 1998). There is no surprise, then, that an increasing number of MNCs are funding cross-cultural training. The following statistics illustrate the trend.

In the early 1980s, Tung (1981, 1982) contended that 32% of MNCs offered cross-cultural training. In 1997, a survey conducted by Arthur Andersen and Bennett Associates indicated that over 60% of the U.S. companies were providing cross-cultural training for their international assignees (Bennett et al., 2000, p. 239). These statistics seem to confirm the perception of the growing need for cross-cultural training on the part of the MNCs (Caligiuri et al., 2001). This is consistent with the 2002 survey of global relocation trends, conducted by GMAC Global Relocation Service, which indicates 64%

of U.S.-based respondents provide expatriates with cross-cultural training (Dowling & Welch, 2005).

Most importantly, many studies have suggested that cross-cultural training is a vital means of facilitating effective cross cultural interaction and cross cultural adjustment (Ashamalla & Crocitto, 1997; Brewster, 1995; Li, 1992; Kealey & Prothro, 1996). Eschbach, Parker, and Stoeberl (2001) note that expatriates with cross-cultural training appear to be more satisfied with their jobs than those with little cross-cultural training. Black and Mendenhall (1990) examined 29 empirical studies which evaluated the effectiveness of cross-cultural training and found that it has a positive impact on cross-cultural skills development, adjustment, and performance. Since an overseas assignment involves general living, interacting, and working with the host country locals and co-workers, having cross-cultural skills will impact on the adjustment of the expatriates, and in turn, will influence their performance. Consequently, it is of the utmost to provide expatriates with cross-cultural training.

The Importance of Cultural Competency and Communication Skills

Cultural competency is the ability to effectively have appropriate attitudes and behaviors that elicit a desired response within a specific environment, thus requiring not only knowledge about a culture, but also the ability to effectively interact or communicate with people from that culture. On the other hand, communication skills give one the appropriate tools to effectively deal with people, especially people from a different culture. To effectively communicate with people from different cultures, knowing about those cultures is a prerequisite.

Not unexpectedly, the rapid growth of economic globalization and the increased number of multinational corporations have led to an increase in cross-cultural interactions and communication within and between the corporations. Moreover, demographic changes are quite apparent today. In the United States, for example, African Americans account for 12.5%, a 15.6 increase from the 1990 percentage. Asian-Americans and Hispanic Americans account for 3.6% and 12.5% respectively (Nixon & Dawson, 2002), and the researcher suspects that the latter have surpassed the 18% mark because of their high birth rate and the flow of immigrants into the United States. The latest figures have shown that counting only the so-called “illegals,” more than 12 million are now in the country. This has clearly resulted in an increasingly diverse cultural population, a phenomenon that can complicate cross-cultural interactions and communication even further, with a major impact upon the environment of the domestic marketplace. The same holds true for MNCs all over the world. Hence, the opportunities to work in a culturally diverse marketplace have multiplied enormously for those willing to work overseas. It follows that an expatriate manager must equip himself/herself with cultural competency and communication skills in order to effectively complete his/her assignment.

Thus, the global expansion of the MNCs and the demographic changes occurring around the world make effective cross-cultural communication even more imperative, calling for a more refined and effective training for the expatriates. As Harris and Moran (1979) note, it is an attitudinal imperative in the age of economic globalization to acknowledge the importance of intercultural communication by understanding cultural differences and cultural influence on personal needs, values, expectations, and sense of self. Consistent with Harris and Moran’s argument, Matveev and Nelson (2004) suggest

that competency in cross-cultural communication is a vital component of a manager's ability to work effectively with people from different cultures. Similarly, Scullion and Collings (2006) argue that the "soft skills" of international management, such as relational and intercultural abilities, are often undervalued by many MNCs (p. 69). It will come to no surprise, then that expatriates with cultural competency and communication skills will be more likely to be successful in performing their international assignments.

Problem Statement

Along with their global expansion and strategy, multinational corporations have continued to increase the number of expatriates for various reasons. However, the persistence of expatriate failure and its considerable costs have led to greater care in the selection of the candidates for overseas assignments. To contribute to sending the right people to the right positions for MNCs, an abundant number of studies focus on exploring factors critical to expatriate success. However, these studies focus mainly on U.S.-based or Europe-based MNCs. Subsidiaries headquartered in Asia, especially in Taiwan, have not been adequately addressed. As Dowling and Welch (2005) observe, literature regarding expatriate experiences from Asian countries is limited.

There have been numerous studies in the field of international human resources management that focus on expatriate management, which shows how important they are for MNCs. However, the majority of those studies have dealt with the issues of cross-cultural adjustment and adaptation. Not much has been said about the effectiveness of expatriate performance (Deshpande & Viswesvaran, 1992; Harada, 1999; Kealey, 1996), so a qualitative research study of their performance through a more holistic and systematic analysis can be very valuable and revealing.

Moreover, while the importance of cross-cultural training remains unchallenged as having a significant relationship with the success of expatriates, its context and methodology are designed from the perspective of Westerners. This obviously will lead to doubts about their applicability to non-Western contexts and their usefulness to non-Westerners.

In fact, the literature itself suggests that international assignments must be studied in their much broader context, for this is an imperative of the new global era (Forster, 1997). Similarly, Kealey (1996) notes that research related to the effectiveness of expatriate performance should take a multidimensional approach.

Consequently, based upon the suggestions and considerations made above, a study attempting to explore the success of expatriate managers should integrate the critical dimensions of cross-cultural training, cultural competency, and communication skills. This could provide a more integrated understanding of issues related to the success of expatriate professionals. In addition, exploring the experiences of former Taiwanese expatriate managers could be helpful in this regard because what is learnt could provide insights for understanding non-western expatriates on a general level.

Purpose of the Study

This was a qualitative study that investigated the professional effectiveness of a group of Taiwanese expatriates who were managers in two different multinational industrial corporations. The purpose of the study was to explore critical influences, particularly those related to the issue of culture, on the success of these Taiwanese expatriate managers on overseas assignments.

Research Questions

Main Questions

1. What are the critical determinants of the success of Taiwanese expatriate managers while on overseas assignments?
2. How does culture influence the effectiveness of these expatriate managers while on overseas assignments?

Sub-Questions

1. What are the strategies a Taiwanese expatriate manager adopts in order to effectively complete an overseas assignment?
2. What are the characteristics of an effective expatriate manager from Taiwan?

Limitations of the Study

This study was based on the experiences of a small number of people from one culture, namely, the Chinese culture of Taiwan. Therefore, it cannot be generalized without further investigation across cultural differences. Besides, the dynamics among different industries may produce different perceptions of factors critical to the effectiveness of an expatriate manager on overseas assignments. As a result, this study is bounded by the industry or corporation type.

The various countries and /or cultures to which the Taiwanese expatriate managers were assigned were another aspect of the study that needs special attention. Data were collected from the retrospection of the interviewees, which may have resulted in oversights and gaps that might weaken the conclusions of the study. Like any study that involves human experiences and cultural factors, the researcher's own background also must be taken into consideration in the overall evaluation of the study. Furthermore,

this study is limited by time (the year of 2007) and place (Taipei, Taiwan), although efforts were made to dialogue with the global community.

Significance of the Study

Hopefully this study may make a contribution to the understanding of the management of human resources across international lines and shed some light on what makes a successful overseas manager in many ways. First, incorporating the perspectives of the cross-cultural training, cultural competence, communication skills, and other cultural factors for understanding the critical influences on the success of expatriate managers, is a significant contribution to developing the theory or conceptualization of an effective expatriate manager. Moreover, much of the published literature on the study of the management of expatriates focuses on exploring or examining the expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment or adaptation; this study tries to integrate the three critical dimensions of cultural factors, including cross-cultural training, cultural competence, and communication skills in order to better explore and understand expatriate performance in a broader way.

Secondly, this study could enhance the understanding of how cultural factors affect the success of expatriate managers on overseas assignments through an analysis of the values, attitudes, behavior, and experiences of former Taiwanese expatriate managers. Furthermore, the result of the study may contribute to the ability of the expatriates to deal and work effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds. Finally, its results may provide critical insights into the selection and training of personnel for overseas assignments.

Social Learning Theory in Understanding the Effectiveness of Expatriate Managers

It goes without saying that an overseas manager has to go through a series of adjustments to a culturally-different environment, so challenges and difficulties are to be expected. His or her success will depend on which strategies are adopted to successfully deal with all the challenges. Successful strategies are born out of a process of learning. The purpose of the grounded theory itself is to explain a process, an action, or interaction about a substantive topic shaped by the view of a number of participants (Creswell, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This research is likewise concerned with the process it takes to produce a successful overseas assignment. Therefore, this fundamental research background is composed of the theory of social learning and certain of its central categories. It is expected that some understanding of these conceptual elements will help our understanding of cross-cultural questions as these relate to the effectiveness of expatriate managers on overseas missions.

The theory of social learning, developed by Bandura (1977), emphasizes that learning is affected by learners' experience and observation, and that attention, retention, reproduction, and incentives are four central elements of social learning theory. Later in his book *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory*, Bandura (1986) renamed social learning theory as social cognitive theory, and incorporated some of his previous ideas, such as the self system in reciprocal determinism, self-efficacy mechanism, and self-referent thought, into this book. Social learning (cognitive) theory "approaches the explanation of human behavior in terms of a reciprocal and continuous interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental determinations" (Bandura, 1977. p. vii). Furthermore, Creswell (2003) notes that "social learning theory not only

deals with learning, but seeks to describe how a group of social and personal competences could evolve from social conditions within which the learning occurs” (p. 129). To help explain and explore the research questions of this study, Bandura’s social (cognitive) learning theory in terms of the observational learning elements of attention, retention, reproduction, and incentive as well as self-efficacy described below, were utilized (Bandura, 1977, 1986; Black & Mendenhall 1991; Gibson, 2001).

Observational Learning and Effect

Bandura (1986) contends that “most human behavior is learned by observation through modeling. By observing others, one forms rules of behavior, and on future occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action” (p. 47). By paying attention to the performance of others, observers are able to acquire cognitive skills, knowledge, and new patterns of behavior. There are a number of forms of learning, among which are new behavior patterns, cognitive competencies, judgmental standards, and generative rules that create behaviors.

As for modeling, it has a significant impact in many ways:

1. It teaches component skills and provides rules for organizing them into new structures of behavior.
2. It strengthens or weakens inhibitions over behavior that has been previously learned.
3. It functions not only as prompters of similar actions, but also draws the observers’ attention to particular objects or environmental settings favored by others.

4. It can function as an emotional arouser while observing because social interactions usually involve displays of emotion.

Now, observational learning is governed by four constituent factors: attention, retention, production, and incentive processes. Each of these elements will now be briefly discussed.

Attention

In order for people to learn from observing behavior, they must first pay attention to the most important components of the model behavior. In other words, before behavior can serve as model, people need to see it. The processes of attention regulate exploration and perception of modeled activities and determine what is selectively observed in the abundance of modeling influences and what information is elicited from ongoing modeled events (Bandura, 1986). A number of factors influence attentional processes, including the properties of modeled activities, the observers' capabilities of processing modeled information, past reinforcements, the attractiveness of the model, and the similarity of the model to the observer (Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Bandura, 1986).

Retention

Retention is a process by which "transitory experiences are converted for memory representation into symbolic conceptions that serve as internal models for response production and standards for response correction" (Bandura, 1986, p. 51). To be able to remember the modeled behavior, observers must represent the response patterns of memory in symbolic form, imaginally or verbally (Bandura, 1986; Gibson, 2001). Observational learning relies mainly on imaginal and verbal construction. Imaginal representations are abstractions of events, in which observers extract distinctive features

and form enduring images of the behavior patterns which result from repeated exposure to modeled events. After a representational imagery has been developed, images can be readily summoned up for events that are physically absent because modeled information is largely retained in nonverbal form. In addition, the representational verbal system, which captures the intricacies and complexities of behavior in words, accounts for the notable efficacy of observational learning and retention.

Reproduction

The process of reproduction involves converting symbolic conceptions into appropriate action which leads to responses that are organized spatially and temporally in accordance with the conception of the activity (Bandura, 1986).

Incentive or Motivation

Incentive processes “determine whether or not observationally acquired competencies will be put to use” (Bandura, 1986, p. 51). As Bandura (1986) argued, observational learning is directly translated into action when positive incentives are provided. Incentives can come from the environment, vicarious association, or the individual.

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is the belief that people can succeed even in the face of challenges and refers to people’s judgments of their capability to reach a certain level of performance (Bandura, 1977). The concept of self-efficacy can be applied to learning and performance (Gibson, 2001). Self-efficacy beliefs are affected by individual achievements or failures, similar tasks, verbal persuasion, observations of models performing similar tasks, and the intensity of one’s emotional reaction or arousal

(Bandura, 1986). Bandura (1977) argued that individuals with high perceived self-efficacy are likely to persist at imitating modeled behavior longer, to be more willing to try to imitate novel behavior, and to be able to overcome challenges facing them.

Though the researcher plans to use a Grounded Theory approach, a discussion about social learning was judged to be necessary in order to elucidate the research problem. Social learning theory may help develop the different categories for the grounded theory. However, this researcher depended much more on the latter to develop meaning from and about the data.

Definition of Terms

The terms used throughout the study can be defined as follows:

Communication Competency

Communication competency refers to an expatriate's ability to exchange information, understand, and collaborate effectively with host nationals. It also involves adequate adjustment in a new culture to achieve objectives.

Culture

Culture is difficult to define because it determines and shapes what we are and what we do (when, how, where, and with whom). Though very complex, culture can best be understood as the combination of our (personal and group) values, beliefs, expected attitudes and behaviors at all times and in all places. Cultural factors can be said to include everything that makes an individual what he/she is.

Cultural Competency

Cultural competency refers to the expatriate's capacity and the acquired ability to effectively interact with host nationals and work well in a different cultural environment.

Expatriate

Expatriate refers to an employee who is assigned by a multinational corporation to overseas subsidiaries for employment. Someone working in a place (country) other than his/her own.

Expatriate Manager

Expatriate manager refers to an employee who was assigned by a Taiwan-based multinational corporation to overseas subsidiaries for employment at the level of management.

Former Expatriate Manager

Former expatriate manager refers to a managerial employee who had been assigned by a multinational corporation to another country for employment with the duration of at least one and half years. It is expected that during this period of stay, an expatriate would be better able to either adjust functionally or decide upon an early return home.

Globalization

The term globalization in this study refers to the force that leads organizations to invest globally and that brings about increasing exports and developing international alliances to penetrate new markets.

International Human Resources Management

According to Welch (1994), international human resources management was essentially concerned with four core activities: recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation, and reparation. In the constitutive definition, "it is concerned with identifying and understanding how MNCs manage their geographically

dispersed workforce in order to leverage their human resources for both local and global competitive advantage” (Scullion, 2005, p. 5).

Job Performance

Job performance refers to the effectiveness in carrying out basic job responsibilities and facilitating peer and team performances.

Knowledge Transfer Performance

Knowledge transfer performance refers to an expatriate’s effectiveness in transferring information and technical skills across strategic units, from one group to another group. In this study, this will more frequently apply to cross-cultural transfers.

Multinational Corporation

A multinational corporation is a highly developed organization with overseas operational subsidiaries that has an extensive worldwide involvement.

Overseas Assignment

An overseas assignment is defined as an assignment that involves relocation to a foreign country where companies have operational units.

Relational Performance

Relational performance refers to the effectiveness in establishing relationships and communicating with host nationals as co-workers and outside the workplace.

Success

Caligiuri (1997) contends that there are three separate constructs associated with success on an international assignment: premature termination, cross-cultural adjustment, and actual job performance. Caligiuri and Tang (1999) define expatriate success by each of these three criteria for success. According to the premature termination construct,

success is perceived as an expatriate remaining in the host country for the entire duration of his or her assignment (Caligiuri & Tung, 1999). However, in this study, an early return resulted from expatriate managers' promotion or filling another position is still considered to be successful. Cross-cultural adjustment refers to how well an expatriate psychologically and behaviorally adjusts to living abroad (Black & Mendenhall, 1991). In this regard, an expatriate's success is determined by how well he or she adjusts to a host country and the given assignment (Cui & Awa, 1992). Oddou and Mendenhall (1999) contend that the primary factors relating to expatriate actual job performance include technical job know-how, personal adjustment to the culture, and various environmental factors that positively affect how well an expatriate performs his or her job in another country or culture. Hence, to comprehensively explore factors related to the effectiveness of expatriate managers, the term *success* in this study was defined along each of these three constructs.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Introduction

Global expansion has become a must development for most multinational corporations (MNCs) to survive and compete in the global market. This makes global staffing center to a global strategy for multinational corporations to control overseas subsidiaries, management development, and organization development. In order to achieve all this, the services of expatriates seems to have become an increasing trend for the success of the MNCs (Dowling & Welch, 2005). However, the effectiveness of expatriate managers is still problematic, and the costs of failure are considerable. These factors make exploring the determinants affecting their effectiveness a necessity.

Although abundant research focuses on the issue of the management of expatriates, most of them focus on selection criteria and cross-cultural adjustment. Few if any studies, have been devoted to exploring factors critical to the success of expatriate managers who are from Taiwan-based MNCs. On the other hand, literature in the field of international human resources management from Taiwan indicates that research focused on the success of expatriate managers seems to be still in the infant stage.

Consequently, this study focused on exploring what is not adequately addressed in the literature. In interviewing 13 Taiwanese expatriate managers, the researcher was interested in exploring: (a) How Taiwanese expatriates perceived their overseas assignments, (b) what challenges these expatriate managers encountered while they were on international assignments, and (c) how they overcame challenges they encountered in order to successfully complete their overseas missions. Several propositions were

suggested through systematic comparisons that necessitated moving forward and backward while developing inductive and deductive analyses of the data.

The perceptions and opinions of some Taiwanese expatriate managers about their performance on overseas assignments were the core elements of the study. This study was a qualitative research carried out in order to understand critical determinants that were believed to affect the effectiveness of these expatriate managers. This chapter, Review of the Literature, discusses five areas related to the research problem which include: international human resources management in MNCs, expatriate performance, cross-cultural training, cross-cultural communication competence, and cultural factors.

International Human Resources Management in the MNCs

International human resource management basically refers to all concerns and considerations that relate to providing the organizational infrastructure and conditions to enable professionals engaged in activities that are global and go beyond national boundaries. In short, this field fundamentally focuses on everything that relates to work and working in a global market with a market economy.

Laurent (1986) describes the development of international human resources management as a field in its infancy. Similarly, Scullion (2005) indicates that international human resources management is a recent problem which is critical to the success of global expansion and overseas assignments for MNCs. There is no doubt that the increased economic globalization is a major catalyst for this movement. To expand globally, MNCs rely on assigning the right people to the right places to effectively manage and operate overseas businesses (Dowling & Welch, 2005). As a result, successful international human resources management has required emphasis on the

management of expatriate assignments (Sparrow, Schuler, & Jackson, 2000). Although research in this area has been limited, relatively recent research on international human resources management has blossomed (Bird & Beechler, 2000).

Research issues in the area of expatriate management vary. In order to provide information and knowledge regarding expatriate assignments, the researcher focused on three major issues critical to expatriate management identified in the literature. These included advantages of using expatriates, factors crucial to the success and failure on expatriate assignments, and the cost of the failure associated with such assignments.

The Advantage of Using Expatriates

Many researchers have identified the critical advantages of using expatriates in host countries. Although the advantages of using expatriates vary, they can be grouped into two major categories: achieving important strategic objectives (Bonache, Suutari, & Brewster, 2001) and enhancing global integration (Evans, Pucik, & Barsoux, 2002).

In terms of achieving important strategic objectives, Scullion (1991) indicates that the advantages of utilizing expatriates are that they have knowledge of the corporate culture and can teach the locals how to relate to headquarters. In this respect, expatriates play an important role in the transfer of knowledge and technology to the locals. Bennett et al. (2000) suggest that expatriates are used to transfer technologies and to transmit organizational culture. Evans et al. (2002) suggest that an objective of expatriate assignment is to maintain control over the subsidiaries and to transfer know-how to international branches of the parent company. Furthermore, Bonache and Fernández (2005) also contend that control and coordination of local operations and knowledge transfer are benefits from using expatriates.

Expatriate management has also been defined as a tool for MNCs to enhance global integration (Evans, et al., 2002). Bonache and Fernández (2005) argue that “to take advantage of different national production levels, to leverage different economies of scale into activity, and to share costs and investments across different markets and subsidiaries, MNCs should be able to integrate their international subsidiaries globally” (p. 124). This idea highlights the importance of using expatriates as a tool for global integration. As Evans et al. (2002) argue:

An expatriate allows the firm to avoid the pathologies of excessive centralization, business decisions can be made locally but with the global perspective in mind. Second the standards of the parent firm are transferred abroad via expatriates. Third, mobility promotes the diffusion of shared values – a key element in global integration. (p. 116)

On the other hand, a different perspective regarding using expatriates is proposed by Inkson, Arthur, Pringle, and Barry (2003) who argue that “the acquisition of overseas expatriate and its importation to the ‘home’ environment is primarily performed fortuitously by individual career builders pursuing personal objectives rather than strategically by expatriate company servants pursuing corporate goals” (p. 340). Several advantages were identified from the perspectives of expatriates. For example, Oddou and Mendenhall (1991) suggest that an overseas assignment can be presented as a career opportunity that will increase global perspectives, and facilitate short-term career progress for expatriates. Consistent with Oddou and Mendenhall’s (1991) findings, Tung (2000) indicates that “the vast majority of expatriates view overseas positions as an opportunity to acquire skills and experience that are not usually available at home” (p. 492).

Similarly, Bennett et al. (2000) indicate that expatriate assignments can facilitate the development of international skills and knowledge within the workforce. Research conducted by Oddou and Mendenhall (2000) shows that the experience and valuable managerial skills developed abroad dramatically facilitate the development of expatriates as effective senior management staff. For example, Oddou and Mendenhall (2000) surveyed and interviewed more than 150 expatriates and found that the most valuable skills they developed during their expatriation include the ability to manage a culturally diverse workforce, have open-mindedness and flexibility in solving problems, possess the ability to deal with people and systems, and comprehend independence among host and domestic operations in the same corporation. Although these advantages do not benefit every expatriate, the trend appears to suggest that the experience of working and living in a different cultural environment is invaluable for expatriates, who learn to effectively manage business operations at the national and multinational levels (Oddou & Mendenhall, 2000).

Expatriate Failure

The advantages of sending expatriates to run foreign subsidiaries were discussed above. However, expatriate overseas assignments are not always successful. Evidence from several studies indicates that failure is not rare. Research conducted by Tung in 1981 sampled 300 of the largest firms in the U.S., with 150 questionnaires returned, indicated that the expatriate failure rate was between 20% and 40% (Tung, 1981). Similarly, the failure rate was found to be 16%-40% from studies conducted from the 1980s to the 1990s (Black, 1988; Dunbar & Ehrlich, 1986). More recently, a survey conducted by Employee Benefit Plan Review (2001) contends that expatriate failure rate

is 20%. These failure rates were estimated based mostly on the premature termination of assignments. However, it has been argued that the definition of expatriate failure rate is too narrow (Dowling & Welch, 2005; Scullion & Collings, 2006) since the success or failure of an expatriate is a complex one (Briscoe & Schuler, 2004; Scullion & Collings, 2006). Premature termination is not an adequate manner of explaining expatriate failure. As Dowling and Welch (2005) suggest, "An expatriate may be ineffective and poorly adjusted yet, if not recalled, this person will not be considered a failure" (p. 86). As such, the term *underperformance* has been added to the definition of expatriate failure and supported by researchers such as Dowling and Welch (2005) and Scullion and Collings (2006).

While the research has been concerned more with these premature terminations of assignments, expatriates who do not return early but function ineffectively were estimated at 50% (Copeland & Griggs, 1985). In addition, research conducted by Shay and Tracey (1997) suggested that the failure rate of expatriates who were sent to less industrialized countries was 70%. Moreover, in their study of 750 U.S., European, and Japanese companies, Black and Gregersen (2007) suggest that U.S. expatriate failure rate based on early return is between 10% and 20%. However, of those who completed the entire duration of an overseas assignment, "nearly one-third did not perform up to the expectations of their superiors" (Black & Gregersen, 2007, p. 119). On the other hand, Dowling and Welch (2005) suggest that two global surveys conducted in 2002 and 2003 indicate a declining rate of expatriate failure. The result of the first global survey, conducted in 2002 by Organizational Resource Counselors, indicated that less than 10% of international assignments were terminated by early recall. However, almost 56% of the

MNCs had no data about it. The second survey, conducted in 2003 by Global Relocation Service, reported that 39% of respondents did not have the figures of the expatriate failure rate. Those who had the figures indicated the average rate of expatriate failure was around 17%.

The failure of an expatriate is generally regarded as an error in selection. This has caused the MNCs to be careful in their selection criteria and to find out the reasons for expatriate failure. Studies have shown that MNCs focus on technical and managerial skills when selecting overseas assignees (Boyacigiller, 2000). However, expatriates with technical and managerial skills do not automatically have the competence to effectively function in cross-cultural work and living environments. In fact, a number of studies have contended that expatriate failure is a consistent problem in MNCs (Black & Gregersen, 2007; Fukuda & Chu, 1994; Tung, 1981). Briscoe and Schuler (2004) have summarized the reasons for expatriate failure as shown below:

1. Inability of spouse/partner to adjust or spouse/partner dissatisfaction
2. Inability of expatriate to adjust
3. Other family-related problems
4. Failures in expatriate selection
5. Expatriate's personality or lack of emotional maturity
6. Expatriate's inability to cope with larger responsibility of overseas work
7. Expatriate's lack of technical competence
8. Expatriate's lack of motivation to work overseas
9. Dissatisfaction with quality of life in foreign location
10. Dissatisfaction with compensation and benefits
11. Lack of cultural and language preparation
12. Lack of support for expatriate and family while on overseas assignment. (p. 244)

By contrast, Black and Gregersen (2007) suggest that the main reason for expatriate failure seems to be that "many executives assume that the rules of good business are the same everywhere. In other words, they don't believe they need to – or

should have to – engage in special efforts for their expats” (p. 120). Furthermore, Boyacigiller (2000) has argued that international assignments are often decided hastily and that may result in the high failure rate of expatriates.

Given that the assignments are often decided hastily, expatriates might not have been properly selected or provided adequate training and so, could suffer from a lack of the awareness of cultural differences in the business transactions. It is, therefore, not surprising to see that expatriate failure continues to be problematic for MNCs with figures still of concern in different regions. MNCs that decide not to use expatriates because of this concern have to pay careful attention to other factors since significant advantages of using expatriates, as discussed above, are critical for the success of the global strategy that MNCs need for survival and a balance growth.

Costs of Failure

The cost of expatriate failure can be tangible and intangible. Tangible costs are generally measured in monetary value, while those that cannot be estimated by money are intangible. Studies have indicated that the financial cost of expatriate failure is tremendous. While studies have estimated that the cost per failure on an expatriate assignment to the parent company is 50,000 to 150,000 U.S. dollars (Harris & Moran, 1979; Misa & Fabricatore, 1979; Mendenhall, Dunbar, & Oddou, 1987), a survey conducted by NFTC in 1994 suggests that the financial cost of a poor international staffing decision may range from 200,000 to 1.2 million U.S. dollars (Swaak, 1995). Similarly, according to Solomon (1996), the average financial cost of an expatriate failure is placed at 200,000 to 1.2 million U.S. dollars. On the other hand, Thornton and Thornton (1995) estimate that the total final cost to U.S. firms from expatriate failure is at

least 2.5 billion U.S. dollars a year. Similarly, Copeland and Criggs (1985) estimate that the direct costs to U.S. firms of failed expatriate assignment are over 2 billion U.S. dollars a year. These estimates do not include unmeasured losses and unidentifiable costs (Thornton & Thornton, 1995).

In addition to monetary costs, expatriate failure can lead to negative impacts on MNCs in terms of damage to the organization's reputation, lost business opportunities, delayed productivity, poor relationship with local nationals, negative perception of the company, and difficulty for expatriate successors (Bennett et al., 2000; Graf & Harland, 2005; Dowling & Welch, 2005). Failure also may result in loss of market share, difficulty with host-government officials—an overseas assignment may involve negotiating or dealing with host-government officials—and key clients (Dowling & Welch, 2005). Thus, these indirect or intangible costs of expatriate failure may be more expensive than those measurable financial costs for MNCs.

Furthermore, another concern about expatriate failure is its impact on expatriates themselves. Research has suggested that expatriate failure may cause expatriates to lose self-esteem, self-confidence, and prestige among their peers (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985; Dowling & Welch, 2005). In addition, it may also impede the expatriates' future career development. He or she may be prevented from having promotional opportunities (Dowling & Welch, 2005). These negative impacts on expatriates may result in decreased productivity in future performance, and that, in turn, could affect the whole organization.

Factors Critical to Expatriate Success

As was mentioned earlier, the high ratio of failure in international assignments and the considerable financial costs to MNCs has led researchers to continue to focus on

expatriate management. In these studies, the issue of possible factors critical to the success or failure of expatriate assignments is significant to understanding the effectiveness of expatriate managers. To clearly review the key factors for expatriate success, Tung's (1981) pioneer findings were used to facilitate categorization. Seven main factors critical to the success of expatriates have been grouped as follows to facilitate our discussion here: technical competence, relational abilities, environmental variables, family situation, intercultural competence, managerial knowledge, skills, and ability, as well as the alignment of expectations between the expatriates and their organizations.

Technical competency. Hay (1971) and Tung (1981) argue that the element of technical competency is a critical determinant of the success of overseas assignments. Similarly, Goldsmith and Walt (1999) and Holt and Wigginton (2002) argued about the importance of technical capability and know-how for expatriates to succeed in overseas assignments. The key perspective of this dimension is that expatriates with technical competency "almost always prevent immediate failure on the job, particularly in high pressure situations" (Tung, 1981, p. 70)

Relational ability. Relational abilities refer to "the capability of the individual to deal effectively with his superiors, peers, subordinates, business associates and clients" (Tung, 1981, p. 69). In the literature, relational abilities were considered to be an important factor affecting expatriate performance (Tung, 1982). Consistent with Tung's (1981) perspective, other research has shown that relational skills are critical to success in overseas assignments. (Arthur & Bennett, 1995; Caligiuri, 2000; Tung & Anderson, 1997).

Environmental variables. Environmental variables refer to the political, legal, and socioeconomic structures and systems of the host country. They are critical to expatriate adjustment and performance (Tung, 1981). An expatriate in a foreign country will face an unfamiliar working and living environment and systems which are different from his or her home country. Thus, having the ability to be aware of the host country's environmental constraints becomes instrumental to expatriates for effectively working and making decisions (Ashamalla, 1998; Feldman & Thompson, 1993).

Family situation. Family situation refers to "the ability of the expatriate's family to adjust to living in a foreign environment" (Tung, 1981, p. 69). Furthermore, family issues have been identified as key criteria for selecting expatriates (Selmer & Lam, 2004). Family support is critical to expatriate success or failure (Bennett et al., 2000; Harvey, 1985; Selmer & Lam, 2004; Tung, 1981). A number of studies have shown that family members' adaptation, especially of spouses, plays an important role in the success of expatriates' overseas assignments. For example, in the 1980s, researchers such as Tung (1981, 1982) and Harvey (1985), contended that spouses or family members who failed to adjust to or deal with the stress of relocation would affect an expatriate's performance and morale. In the 1990s, much research argued that the satisfaction of expatriate's spouse and family members has an impact on the effectiveness of expatriates' overseas assignments (Black, Gregerson, & Mendenhall, 1992; Adler, 1997). More recently, research conducted by Franke and Nicholson (2002) contends that spouse support is listed to be the most important criterion in selecting expatriates. In this regard, researchers, such as Black and Mendenhall (1990), Arthur and Bennett (1995), and

Bennett et al. (2000), argue that spouses and family members should be included in cross-cultural training.

Intercultural competency. More recent research has emphasized that intercultural skills, and competency as well as cross-cultural communication abilities are significant for the success of an overseas assignment. For instance, to enhance the chance of an expatriate's success, Bennett et al. (2000) emphasize the importance of skills, knowledge, and attitudes to perform effectively in a different cultural environment. Similarly, Bolino and Feldman (2000) indicate that cross-cultural and communication skills were considered to be the first and second factors to account for expatriate success. Along the same lines as this argument, Beamish, Morrison, Inkpen, and Rosenzweig (2003) contended that a well-developed set of relational and cross-cultural skills are important to attain expatriate success.

Managerial knowledge, skills, and ability. Managerial knowledge, skills, and abilities are remarkable factors for expatriate success (Dowling, Schuler, & Welch, 1994; Hanada, 1984; Katz & Seifer, 1996; Williams & Dobson, 1997). Ashamalla (1998) contended that managerial and decision making abilities are necessary, in particular when a manager is operating under conditions of isolation or physical distance from the center of decision-making in the home office or in situations where expatriates have full autonomy in their foreign positions (Ashamalla, 1998; Marquardt & Engel, 1993).

Alignment of expectations between expatriates and organizations. While traditional literature argues that the success on an expatriate assignment largely depends on cross-cultural adaptation and the selection and training practices (Black & Gregersen, 2007), Yan (2002) and Bonache and Fernández, (2005) contend that the success of

expatriate assignments in both expatriation and repatriation, depends on the alignment of expectations between expatriates and their organizations. In their study of international compensation, Bonache and Fernández (2005) argue that “a key factor in the success or failure of international assignment is the initial alignment of expectations between the organization and employee, the psychological contract between both parties” (p. 128).

In brief, most of the studies focus on exploring relevant issues of expatriate management with samples from the American MNCs. This is clearly insufficient and limits many of the overall conclusions. Still, these studies about other people’s experiences are useful to shed some light on how Taiwanese expatriates perform in host countries. Furthermore, although the literature indicates that the high cost of expatriate failure has led some U.S. firms to reduce the number of expatriates, some studies have suggested that their number is increasing in different parts of the world, with Asian being one of them.

Taiwan’s MNCs are increasingly expanding their overseas investments and formulating their global strategies in order to maintain and foster global competitiveness. This implies the potential increase of expatriate managers and highlights the importance of their overseas assignments. In this regard, there is a need to develop a theory which can sustain practices and is suitable to Taiwanese MNCs. Hopefully, a review of the critical issues discussed in many studies, will help see what needs to be done specifically for the MNCs of Taiwan.

Expatriate Performance

Due to the multi-faceted advantages of using expatriates associated with the high cost, the success of an expatriate during an overseas assignment is critical to the global

success of companies (Black et al., 1999; Dowling et al., 1999; Harvey, 1996). However, while there have been a considerable number of studies in the field of international human resources management focusing on expatriate overseas assignments, few of these studies investigated expatriate job performance (Harada, 1999; Riepe, 2005; Werner, 2002). Thus, in the review of the literature concerning the issue of expatriate performance, topics related to expatriate performance studies, such as expatriate performance management, will be discussed.

As mentioned in the preceding section, technical competence, personal traits or relational abilities, environmental variables, family situation, intercultural competence, managerial knowledge, skills and ability, and the alignment of expectations of the expatriates and their organizations are the major factors critical to an expatriate's success identified in the literature. Some studies devoted to investigating expatriate performance were based on these indicators.

An empirical study conducted by Shay and Baack (2004) examined the correlations of the reasons for assignment, expatriate assignments, and managerial effectiveness among 194 expatriate managers and 505 subordinates working in the multinational hotel industry. Data regarding expatriate performance were collected from both self-reported ratings of expatriate performance and subordinate ratings of expatriate effectiveness. The reasons for the assignment were grouped as a source of managerial development or as a source of overseas subsidiary control. The major findings of this study were that first, managerial development as a reason for assignment was positively related to expatriate role innovation; in turn, expatriates' role in innovation was positively related to expatriate self-reported performance. Second, control as a reason for

assignment was positively related to subordinates making personal change; in turn, the scores of subordinates making personal change were positively related to subordinate rating of expatriate managerial effectiveness. The authors further argued that the reasons for assignment influenced expatriate adjustment, which in turn had an impact on both expatriate self-reported performance and subordinate rating of managerial effectiveness.

Another study by Kraimer, Wayne, and Jaworski (2001) investigated American expatriates and the role of perceived organizational support, leader-member exchange, and spousal support in facilitating expatriate adjustment and performance. Performance ratings were collected from supervisors' evaluations. Results of this research have shown that expatriates who received more organizational support from their parent company were found to have better general adjustment levels. Expatriates who received more organizational support from foreign facilities were more significantly adjusted to working and to interact with the locals. This notion may suggest the importance of alignment of expectation between expatriates and organizations to expatriate success, which was identified by Yan, Zhu, and May (2002). In addition, spousal support was found to have no significant relationship with expatriate work and general adjustment. This finding was counter to the suggestion in the literature that spousal support is critical to expatriate success. Furthermore, expatriates who reported being well adjusted to work were rated higher on task performance by their supervisors. This finding is consistent with the notion of expatriate failure that resulted from expatriate's poor adjustment (Aycan & Kanungo, 1997; Parker & McEvoy, 1993; Tung, 1981).

Liu and Shaffer (2005) investigated 147 American expatriates working in Hong Kong, Beijing, and Shanghai to understand the effect of host country nationals on

expatriate adjustment and performance. These researchers drew upon social capital theory to develop and test their hypotheses. Expatriate performance was based on self-reported ratings and was construed to have three dimensions: rational, job related, and knowledge transfer. Some significant findings suggested were as follows:

One significant finding was that network density and depth of relationship with the host country nationals had a significant influence on job performance. Besides this, the depth of relationship had a significantly positive relationship with interaction adjustment and the dimension of knowledge transfer performance. These findings may suggest that cultural differences affect expatriate performance and adjustment because these places were in a Chinese-based cultural background, in which people emphasize the importance of social network or *guan xi* to reach their goals or achievements.

Furthermore, the ability of host country nationals in terms of intercultural competence played an important role in facilitating an expatriate's general and work-related adjustment. In addition, cultural empathy had a significantly positive impact on expatriate performance in the dimensions of job and knowledge transfer. Although the researchers did not examine the effect of the expatriates' intercultural competence on their performance, these findings may suggest that intercultural competence is critical to expatriate adjustment and performance. Since there was no relationship between host country nationals' intercultural competence and expatriate performance, there is a need to examine the effect of expatriate intercultural competence on an expatriate in general.

Another remarkable research conducted by Caligiuri and Tung (1999) compared the success of male and female expatriates from a U.S.-based multinational company, in which the authors used Hofstede's (1980) four dimensions of power distance, uncertainty

avoidance, individualism/collectivism, and masculinity to construct their hypotheses. Expatriate performance was based on supervisor-rated performance. Success on an expatriate's assignment was associated with three dimensions: premature termination, cross-cultural adjustment, and job performance on the assignment. The results have suggested that all of the dimensions, except masculinity, were related to the participation of women in managerial roles. Although the dimensions of power distance and masculinity negatively affected the cross-cultural adjustment of female expatriates, there were no significant differences between female and male expatriates in supervisor-rated performance levels and the desire to terminate the assignment prematurely.

In summary, there are several similarities and differences between these studies. First, these studies discussed above adopted different theories and variables to explore expatriate adjustment and performance through a quantitative research approach. In addition, the data pertaining to expatriate performance were collected using different approaches, including expatriate self-reported performance, supervisor-rated performance, and subordinate-rated performance. Furthermore, there is no consensus among researchers about the definition of expatriate performance. The majority of these studies focus on studying American expatriate performance. This makes it necessary to collect data from various regions. Consequently, this present study used former Taiwanese expatriate managers to explore their effectiveness using a qualitative research design. The effectiveness of these former expatriate managers was measured based on their self-evaluation on the dimensions of relational effectiveness, job performance, and knowledge transfer, as developed by Caligiuri (1997).

Cross-cultural Training

Based on the purpose of the study, the researcher adopts Parkinson and Morley's (2006) definition about cross-cultural training (CCT). "Cross-cultural training is any formalized intervention designed to increase the knowledge and skills of international assignments to live and work effectively in an unfamiliar environment" (Parkinson & Morley, 2006, p. 118).

Cross-cultural training (CCT) has long been regarded as one of the effective ways in facilitating expatriates' developing competencies necessary in working or living in a foreign country (Bochner, 1982; Brislin, 1981; Harris & Moran, 1979; Mendenhall, Dunbar, & Oddou, 1987; Scullion & Collings, 2006; Tung, 1981). As mentioned in Chapter one, an expatriate works within a multicultural team in which he or she needs not only to work with colleagues from different cultures, but also to negotiate or deal with different clients, suppliers, and so forth. In addition, the main reasons for expatriate failure or success all have to do with culture, as discussed above. In this case, to effectively perform an overseas mission, an expatriate with cross cultural competence is imperative. However, the literature has shown that some top management of U.S. multinationals doubts the effectiveness of CCT, and thus, tends to think there is no need to provide CCT (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985; Black & Mendenhall, 2007). The primary reason for this doubt is because the top management assumes that a good manager can be a good manager everywhere the world (Black & Mendenhall, 2007).

Although literature in the field of international human resources management indicates some MNCs are trying to reduce the number of expatriates for overseas assignments and doubt the effectiveness of CCT, research on the issue of cross-cultural

training is still necessary (Littrell & Salas, 2005). Reasons for the increased interest in cross-cultural training have been argued from three major directions: “financial loss associated with expatriate assignments, the lack of a conclusive answer regarding the effectiveness of cross-cultural training, and the continue evolution of the workplace toward increased diversity” (Littrell & Salas, 2005, p. 306). This can be supported by the evidence of the increased number of MNCs offering CCT to facilitate the success of expatriates on overseas assignments. For example, in her study of U.S., West European, and Japanese expatriates, Tung (1982) argued that only 32% of the U.S. sample received formal training before their relocation abroad. Later, a survey conducted on Fortune 500 firms showed that only 30%-45% of respondent firms offered some forms of cross-cultural training to their expatriate managers before relocation (Ashamalla, 1998). More recently, research conducted by Bennett et al. (2000) has indicated that more than 60% of companies provide CCT.

In order to clearly provide a comprehensive picture of cross-cultural training, discussions of the objectives of cross-cultural training, cross-cultural training methodology, and the content of cross-cultural training programs are addressed below.

Objectives of Cross-cultural Training

According to Caligiuri, Lazarova, and Tarique (2005), the goals of cross-cultural training are to help employees who are working across cultures comfortably live and work in a host country, increase cross-cultural adjustment and increase their ability to understand and appreciate multiple cultural perspectives. Caligiuri et al. (2005) further summarize that CCT can facilitate expatriates to:

1. Learn appropriate cultural behaviors and suitable ways of performing necessary job tasks in another country;

2. Develop coping methods to manage unforeseen events in the new cultural environment, and to reduce conflict due to unexpected situations; and
3. Form realistic expectations with respect to living and working in the new country. (p. 77)

Moreover, based on the concerns about the high ratio of expatriate failure, the high cost of these failures and impact on MNCs, Bennett et al. (2000) have contended that to enhance the success of expatriate assignments and avoid failure, cross-cultural training program objectives should be crafted to help assignees (a) manage change in terms of personal and professional transition, (b) manage cultural differences, and (c) manage their responsibilities in another cultural environment.

Cross-cultural Training Methodology

Many researchers have outlined various cross-cultural training methodologies in the literature. Tung (1981, 1982), Brislin (1979), Brislin, Landis, and Brandt (1983), Grove and Torbiörn (1985), Mendenhall et al. (1987), and Black and Mendenhall (1989) are the major studies. The skills and abilities required are tremendous, and the approaches advocated by these authors are different. In 1979, Brislin grouped cross-cultural training methodologies into three major approaches: the cognitive or information giving approach, the affective approach, and the behavior/experiential or immersion approach. Furthermore, Tung (1981, 1982) outlined five types of cross-cultural training methods, which include area studies (including environmental briefing and cultural orientation), cultural assimilator, language training, sensitivity training, and field experience. Similarly, Brislin et al. (1983) proposed six categories of cross-cultural training methods, consisting of fact-orientation, attribution learning, cultural awareness, cognitive behavior modification, experiential learning, and interactive learning.

In this section, various cross-cultural training techniques and designs are classified into three major methodologies to facilitate the discussion. These include: the cognitive approaches, the affective approach, and the experiential approach, based on Brislin's (1979) classification of cross-cultural training methodologies indicated above.

Cognitive approach. The cognitive or information giving approach is "the learning of information or skills from a lecture-type orientation" (Mendenhall et al., 1987, p. 339). The cognitive or information giving approach is also called *lecture method* or *university method* which was advocated by Harrison and Hopkins (1967), who argued that the lecture method was the most pervasive method or approach to cross-cultural training in the 1960s. The major lectures of this approach involve the target culture's history, geography, religion, people, business, and way of life (Bhawuak & Brislin, 2000). The basic assumption of this approach is that "knowledge will increase empathy, and empathy will modify behavior in such a way as to improve intercultural relationships" (Campbell, 1969, p. 3). Tung's (1981, 1982) area studies, and Brislin et al.'s. (1983) fact-orientation training can be classified into this approach.

Fact-orientation, advocated by Brislin et al. (1983), is similar to Tung's (1981, 1982) area studies, includes environmental briefing and cultural orientation programs "designed to provide trainees with information regarding a particular country's sociopolitical history, geography, stage of economic development, and cultural institutions" (Tung, 1981, p. 70).

Tung (1981) argued that "although there is some indication that increased knowledge will remove some of the fear and aggression that tend to be aroused by the unknown, the evidence that knowledge will invariably result in increased empathy is

sparse and usually not the result of rigorous experimental control” (pp. 70-71). Thus, the information giving approach is not adequate to prepare trainees for assignments which require extensive contact with the locals (Tung, 1981; Bhawuak & Brislin, 2000).

Although the lecture method was the most prominent approach for cross-cultural training in the 1960s, and is still popular to date (Bhawuak & Brislin, 2000), Harrison and Hopkins (1967) found that the information giving approach, which provides trainees with the information regarding the target culture’s history, geography, religion, people, business, and way of life, was not effective in cross-cultural training programs. Therefore, it was recommended that “the experiential method was superior to the lecture method, and this led to a growth in the development of experiential exercises and cultural assimilators” (Bhawuak & Brislin, 2000, p. 168).

Affective approach. The affective approach is “the learning of information or skills via techniques that raise affective responses on the part of the trainee, which results in cultural insights” (Mendenhall et al., 1987, p. 339). Tung’s (1981) cultural assimilator and sensitivity training as well as Brislin’s (1983) attribution training, cultural awareness, and cognitive behavior modification are grouped into the affective approach of cross-cultural training.

Cultural assimilator is a contribution by psychologists from the University of Illinois (Triandis, 1995). According to Bhawuak and Brislin (2000), “cultural assimilator is a cross-cultural training tool that consists of a number of real-life scenarios describing puzzling cross-cultural interactions and explanations for avoiding the resulting misunderstanding” (p. 169).

In this approach, trainees are given a package of training materials consisting of a lot of critical incidents, alternatives, and explanations to study at their own pace (Bhawuak & Brislin, 2000). Critical incidents describe intercultural interactions between a sojourner and a host country national, in which some misunderstanding is involved; alternatives are variant behavioral choices for a sojourner facing such a critical incident; explanations give the rationale for why a particular behavior is inappropriate in the given situation. Fiedler and Mitchell (1971) have commented that “these programs provide an apparently effective method for assisting members of one culture to interact and adjust successfully with members of another culture” (p. 58).

While this method is particularly useful as a cross-cultural training tool because different people are at different levels of cultural sensitivity (Bhawuak & Brislin, 2000), it is suggested that this approach should be coupled with the more rigorous training programs because overseas assignments require extensive contact with the host country nationals (Tung, 1981). Tung (1981) further suggested that the cultural assimilator method should be supplemented by language training, sensitivity training, and field training.

Attribution training refers to the training which enables trainees to make isomorphic attribution and to handle discomfort expectation as well as to internalize values and standards of the host country (Eschbach et al., 2001; Littrell & Salas, 2005). Behavior is interpreted differently in different cultures. It will be a problem for expatriates, therefore, if they use attribution techniques from their home country in evaluating or assigning the meaning of the behavior of host country nationals. To reduce misinterpretation between expatriates and the host country nationals, attribution training

focuses on the development of the attitudes and skills necessary for making isomorphic attributions (Littrell & Salas, 2005).

This approach provides trainees with reading materials which summarize problems that people encounter while living in another culture. Trainees then make choices among different reasonable explanations, in which only one explanation is correct from the hosts' point of view. While studying a variety of readings, "trainees may develop internalized standards that will allow them to understand many aspects of the other culture without imposing their own country's standards" (Brislin et al., 1983, p. 9)

Cultural awareness training is "the study of the trainee's home culture and its effect on his/her behavior to enable the trainee to understand the nature of cultural difference" (Eschbach et al., 2001). Essentially, trainees learn to understand their own values and culture and to be aware of cultural differences through the demonstration of a behavior that is completely different from their own culture. As a result, by participating in cultural awareness training, expatriates will appreciate cultural differences (Befus, 1988).

The strength of cultural awareness training is that it helps the trainees to understand their own culture and values. It also helps trainees to appreciate cultural differences, and enables them to apply what they learn to improve the effectiveness of cross-cultural interactions (Bennett, 1986). On the other hand, the weakness of cultural awareness training is that "it does not necessarily help the trainees to learn anything specific about the host cultures in which they will be interacting" (Bhawuk & Brislin, 2000, p. 170).

In terms of sensitivity training programs, Tung (1981) argued that,

These programs focus on learning at the affective level and are designed to develop an attitudinal flexibility within the individual so that he can become aware of and eventually accept that unfamiliar modes of behavior and value systems can also be valid ways of doing things in a different culture. (p. 71)

Ronen (1989) argued that sensitivity training may be more appropriate when the trainee requires extensive contact with the locals during his or her overseas assignment. Also, Rubin (1967) contended that "Sensitivity training may well be a powerful technique in the reduction of ethnic prejudice, particularly among those who are low in psychological anomaly" (p. 30).

Brislin (1983) argued that cognitive-behavior modification helps trainees to obtain rewards and avoid punishment in the host culture. Furthermore, this type of training focuses on assisting expatriates in developing appropriate behaviors in the host culture and teaching expatriates to identify inappropriate behaviors (Befus, 1988). As Bhawuk and Brislin (2000) contended, "Behavior modification training is necessary for habitual behaviors that people are usually aware of, especially behaviors that are acceptable, even desirable, in one's own culture but which may be offensive in another culture" (p. 181).

Although Black and Mendenhall (1990) proposed that behavior modification training may be more effective than other types of training programs, this method has not been used much in cross-cultural training programs because it is expensive and requires a trainer constantly working on one behavior at a time (Bhawuk & Brislin, 2000).

Experiential approach. As mentioned above, the experiential approach evolved as a reaction to information giving, which was criticized for not being adequate for cross-cultural training. As a result, the experiential technique "focuses on involving the trainees a great deal" (Bhawuk & Brislin, 2000, p. 174). In addition, the key difference between

the experiential approach and other forms of cross-cultural training is that trainees are maximally involved as participants (Brislin et al., 1983, p. 16). Experiential, or immersion, refers to “techniques that provide realistic simulations or scenarios to the trainee, such as assessment centers, field simulations, etc.” (Mendenhall et al., 1987, p. 339). Brislin’s (1983) experiential learning and interaction learning as well as Tung’s (1981) field experience are classified under the experiential approach.

Experiential learning, “Learn by doing” (Littrell & Salas, 2005, p. 312) is the major assumption in this approach. Look-see visits, role-plays, intercultural workshops, and stimulations are the major techniques for experiential learning (Kealey & Protheroe, 1996; Littrell & Salas, 2005; Morris & Robie, 2001). “The goal of experiential training is to introduce the nature of life in another culture by actively experiencing that culture or a functional simulation of it” (Brislin et al., 1983, p. 16).

Several advantages of experiential training have been identified in the literature. For example, expatriates participating in experiential training are able to develop the skills necessary for effective performance, for positive interaction with the locals, and for cognitive skills to make correct attributions (Kealey & Protheroe, 1996; Littrell & Salas, 2005; Morris & Robie, 2001). In addition, by participating in experiential training, the expatriate will develop the ability to respond to a situation as if he or she were a member of the host culture and to see things from the view of host country nationals (Morris & Robie, 2001).

On the other hand, there are weaknesses in experiential training approaches. Bhawuk and Brislin (2001) argued that experiential training lacks research evidence. Besides this, they further contended that “though the debriefing at the end of the exercise

is useful, it seems that only some very simple conclusions like ‘cultures are different’ and ‘intercultural interactions are puzzling’ can be drawn from the exercise” (Bhawuk & Brislin, 2001p. 174).

Interaction learning refers to training “for trainees to feel more comfortable with host nationals and to learn details about life in the host country” (Eschbach et al., 2001, p. 272). According to Littrell and Salas (2005), the most popular international training strategy used in expatriate preparation is overlaps. Overlaps, in which the incoming expatriate learns from the expatriate whom he or she is replacing (Befus, 1988), are a form of on-the-job training (Littrell & Salas, 2005).

The assumption of this approach is that “if trainees can learn to become comfortable with hosts during training, and if they can learn from old hands, then they will be able to begin productive work much earlier during the actual overseas assignment” (Brislin et al., 1983, p. 9). The advantage of experiential training is that the host nationals and the “old hands” are able to provide more information than a trainer (Brislin et al., 1983). By contrast, the major disadvantage of this approach is that it still lacks adequate analyses and discussion in the literature (Brislin et al., 1983)

Field experience involves sending the candidate to the country assigned to him/her or to the micro-cultures nearby so that he/she can experience the emotional stress of living and working in different cultures (Tung, 1981). There is no consensus on how long the candidate should be exposed to the country of the assignment or the nearby micro-cultures. However, Tung (1981) proposed a full week of living and working with members of micro-cultures to expose the candidate to the emotional stress of living and working in different cultures.

Language Training

“There is a need for trainees to have a basic idea of the language to help them understand the host culture so that the trainee can project a more positive image of the culture from which he or she comes” (Gudykunst & Hammer, 1983, p. 138). Ashamalla (1998) argued that cross-cultural training should be accompanied by foreign language training because knowledge of the language of the host country is vital to successfully living and working in that country. Similarly, Gudykunst and Hammer (1983) contended that “language is an integral part of any training program for a specific country” (p. 138).

Expatriation involves working and living in the host country with not only co-workers but the host country nationals. If expatriates have proficient language ability, the potential for misunderstanding and misinterpretation will be reduced. As a result, the period of adjustment will be shortened and expatriates will be able to adjust to their working and living environments more easily. As Hogan and Goodson (1990) concluded, language ability is essential for both expatriates and their families to have a pleasant and productive expatriation. Dowling and Welch (2005) also argued that language fluency is a key for expatriates to adjustment and to improving their effectiveness and negotiating ability.

Cross-cultural Communication Competency and Performance

In the context of a highly competitive global business environment, working in a different cultural system requires of expatriates the abilities to understand and be proficient regarding cultural differences and cross-cultural communication. Because expatriates have been playing important roles in the coordination between headquarters and foreign subsidiaries, maintaining control over subsidiaries, and transferring

technologies to the locals, competence in cross-cultural communication is considered necessary for an expatriate to effectively perform in the host country.

Many studies have identified a variety of characteristics constituting cross-cultural communication competency, including relational skills, communication skills, cultural knowledge, and personal traits. For example, Lustig and Koester (1998) suggest that “competent intercultural communication is contextual, it produces behaviors that are both appropriate and effective; and it requires sufficient knowledge, suitable motivation, and skilled action” (p. 66)

In addition, several models of cross-cultural communication competency have been developed in the literature (Abe & Wiseman, 1983; Cui & Awa, 1992; Matveev & Milter, 2004; Matveev & Nelson, 2004). For example, Abe and Wiseman (1983) suggest the following five dimensions of cross-cultural effectiveness in terms of the ability to: communicate interpersonally, adjust to different cultures, perform well in different social systems, establish interpersonal relationships, and understand others. Another significant cross-cultural communication competency model established by Cui and Awa (1992) suggests that interpersonal skills, social interaction, cultural empathy, personality traits, and managerial ability are the five dimensions of cross cultural effectiveness. The most recent cross-cultural communication competency model developed by Matveev and Nelson (2004), called the 3C model, suggests the competence in interpersonal skills, team effectiveness, cultural uncertainty, and cultural empathy as necessary to increase the performance of multinational teams.

Research conducted by Shear (1993) explored an effective model of cross-cultural training programs incorporating the theories and concepts of cross-cultural adjustment,

cross-cultural communication, communication competency, creative thinking, and cognitive process into her construction of theory-building. The findings have shown that communication skill has been cited as the single most critical skill necessary for effective cross-cultural adaptation. The author also contended that communication skill can be taught through training programs to facilitate sojourners' cross-cultural encounters, negotiations, and relationships. Similarly, a study by Nixon and Dawson (2002) suggested the need for cross-cultural communication training for effectively working within a co-cultural workforce. The authors argued that cultural training can reduce hesitancy, help people from different cultures relate to each other, and improve the effectiveness of communication across cultures.

However, the limitation of the above two studies is that Shear's model of cross-cultural training programs was formulated for Anglo- American sojourners, purposefully and necessarily. On the other hand, Nixon and Dawson's research was designed for dealing with the changes in the demographics of the U.S. population, and consequently its workforce and consumer market. In fact, the phenomenon of the changes in demographics exists not only in the U.S. but in many countries around the world. As a result, cross-cultural communication is crucial to effectively work in a culturally diverse environment and that requires and justifies research exploring its influence on expatriate success.

A qualitative research conducted by Chairsakeo and Speece (2004) explored how cultures, intercultural communication competency, and organizational cultures affect sales-people's negotiation styles. Results of the study have shown that intercultural communication competency not only plays the most powerful parts in affecting

salespeople's negotiation strategies and styles, but probably has a moderating effect on how national and organizational cultures affect negotiating styles. The authors further argued that "intercultural communication competence can be developed, so training should include real experience in cross-cultural negotiations to give salespeople skills in accommodating cultural differences" (Chaisrakeo & Speece, 2004, p. 279). Since an overseas assignment involves interaction not only with co-workers but also with customers, clients, and the locals, negotiation is one of the major tasks for expatriates. Therefore, it may be suggested that cultural and intercultural communication competencies will affect expatriate managers' negotiation, and in turn, will influence their success on overseas assignments. Although this study did not focus on exploring expatriates' experience in negotiation, it provides a feasible model for understanding the influence of cross-cultural communication competency on job related issues and activities.

Matveev and Nelson (2004) investigated the relationship between cross-cultural communication competency and multicultural team performance. National cultural dimensions were incorporated into the study between Russian managers and American managers working in multicultural teams. Results of their study have suggested that cross-cultural communication competency impacts multinational team performance. Although this study did not focus on expatriates in other countries, the results may imply that cross-cultural communication competency may impact expatriate performance.

In summary, cultural difference in a workforce can cause conflict, misunderstanding and poor performance (Milliman, Taylor, & Czaplewski, 2002; Shenkar & Zeira, 1992). "Communication skills bridge cultural boundaries and are therefore critical to both employee and organizational effectiveness" (Ayoko, Hartel,

Fisher, & Fujimoto, 2004, p. 157). To establish an effective interpersonal relationship with people from different cultures requires expatriate managers to have the abilities of cross-cultural and communication skills. Cross-cultural communication competency improves the decision-making and problem-solving abilities of managers in the global marketplace. It also increases multicultural team performance (Mateeve & Nelson, 2004). However, while many models of cross-cultural communication competency were developed, little research has been done exploring the influence of cross-cultural competency on expatriate success. Thus, to explore and understand the effectiveness of expatriate managers, investigating the influence of cross-cultural communication competency seems to be necessary.

Cultural Factors

To understand expatriate performance, it is necessary to understand cultural differences. Therefore, Hofstede's national cultural dimensions individualism/collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and Confucian dynamism, as well as Hall's communication context, and Kluchhohn and Strodtbeck's orientation towards nature will be utilized to explore expatriate performance. These elements will be discussed briefly.

Hofstede's Dimensions of National Cultural Differences

The dimensions of national cultural differences were identified by Hofstede in his study of 160,000 managers and employees, across more than 60 countries, working for American MNCs. The dimensions he discussed included power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, and Confucian Dynamism.

Individualism/collectivism refers to “the emphasis that societal members place on their self-interests related to those of the group” (Harrison, McKinnon, Wu, & Chow, 2000, pp. 490-491). People in collectivist cultures are required to have an absolute loyalty to the group, the extended family, or even an organization in which a person works (Lustig & Koester, 1998). Moreover, collectivist cultures believe in obligation to the group and an emphasis on belonging. On the other hand, individualism stands for the preference of a loose social network wherein people take care of themselves and their immediate family only (Adler, 1997; Hofstede, 1983). In individualist cultures, “decisions are based on what is good for the individual, not for the group” (Lustig & Koester, 1998, p. 120).

The national cultural dimension of power distance established by Hofstede (1980, 1983) measures the extent to which members of organizations accept an unequal distribution of power within the group: “A society’s power distance norm is presented in the values of both the leaders and the subordinates and reflected in the structure and functioning of the society’s institutions” (Hofstede, 1983, p. 295). According to Lustig and Koester (1998), while people in a high power distance culture believe that “the actions of authorities should not be challenged or questioned” (p. 113), people in low power distance cultures “believe in the importance of minimizing social or class inequalities, questioning or challenging authority figures, reducing hierarchical organizational structures, and using power only for legitimate purposes” (p. 113).

The dimension of uncertainty avoidance “measure[s] the extent to which people in a society feel threatened by ambiguity” (Adler, 1997, p. 51). People with low uncertainty avoidance have a high tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity and are more

likely to take risks and are tolerant of change. Conversely, individuals with high uncertainty avoidance prefer to avoid uncertainty and are risk averse and feel insecure in the face of change (Lustig & Koester, 1998). These two researchers also contend that “differences in level of uncertainty avoidance can result in unexpected problems in intercultural communication” (Lustig & Koester, 1998, p. 118)

Confucian Dynamism, established by Hofstede and his Hong Kong-based colleague, Michael Bond, measures employees’ devotion to work ethic and their respect for tradition (Adler, 1997; Hofstede & Bond, 1988). As Lustig and Koester (1998) state,

Those at one extreme on this dimension admire persistence, thriftiness, a sense of shame, and status differences within interpersonal relationships; Hofstede suggests that these attributes all characterize people who have a long-term orientation toward life. Those at the other extreme on this dimension have a deep appreciation for tradition, personal stability and steadiness, maintain the face of self and others, balance or reciprocity when greeting others, giving and receiving favors, and give gifts, all of which reflect a short-term orientation toward changing events. (p. 127)

According to Adler (1997), many observers attribute Asia’s rapid economic growth, in particular, that of Asia’s “Four Tigers” (p. 58)—Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan—to commitment to their traditional strong work ethic.

Hofstede’s national cultural dimensions are the most widely used in research and have provided the best available work-related value measurement for both conceptual and empirical studies. According to Sivakumar and Nakata (2001), Hofstede’s national cultural dimension framework had been used in 134 conceptual and empirical studies between 1981 and the first half of 1998. Although Hofstede’s classic work is not without criticism (e.g. data are over 20 years old), “it is still the best available proxy of the societal characteristic on a worldwide basis” (Caligiuri & Tung, 1999, p. 778). Additionally, Caligiuri and Tung (1999) argued that “while other researchers have

introduced additional work-related dimensions, they still included Hofstede's dimensions in their studies" (Caligiuri & Tung, 1999, p. 778).

Communication context, developed by Hall in 1977, in discussing cultural factors as they relate to success on overseas assignments, is the information or circumstances surrounding a particular communication incident or event, in which the information consists of "meanings and the frame of reference for communication messages" (Milliman et al., 2002, p. 35). Lustig and Koester (1998) argue that,

High-context cultures prefer to use high-context messages in which most of the meaning is either implied by the physical setting or presumed to be part of the individual's internalized beliefs, values, and norms; on the other hand, low-context cultures prefer to use low-context messages, in which the majority of the information is vested in the explicit code. (p. 10)

Orientation towards nature refers to whether people believe that they dominate their environment, control it, or live in harmony with it. In their study of cross-cultural performance feedback in multinational enterprises, Milliman et al. (2002) utilize this dimension to examine performance feedback and contend that people in cultures attempting to live in harmony with nature "believe that people are not in control of much of what happens in the world" (p. 36), whereas people in cultures who believe in mastering or dominating nature "believe that people are mostly in control of their destiny" (Milliman, et al., 2002, p. 36).

Moreover, according to Robbins (1993), the value of orientation towards nature applied to the workplace is to explore whether individuals attribute the success of job performance to external factors or whether they believe they are in control of their job performance.

Literature has shown that Hofstede's dimensions of cultural differences have been

widely adopted by researchers to compare the impact of national cultural differences on business performance, expatriate adaptation, and joint venture performance. Hall's high-context vs. low-context is also a key element in articles related to cross-cultural studies (Ripley, Hudson, Turner, & Osman-Gani, 2005).

A study by Harrison et al. (2000) investigated cultural influences on adaptation of fluid workgroups and teams in Australian and Taiwanese societies in terms of the dimensions of individualism/collectivism and power distance. The findings of the study have shown that Taiwanese employees, perceived as a collectivist society with high power distance, have greater difficulty adapting to fluid teams with changing membership and leadership, and are less prepared to take on team leadership on a project-by-project basis than Australian counterparts, who are perceived as having an individualist society with low power distance. Furthermore, the researchers concluded that the significantly different behavioral expectations between Taiwanese and Australian employees were driven by cultural differences. Although the authors did not include the dimension of uncertainty avoidance in their study, their findings may suggest that uncertainty avoidance plays an important role in working behaviors and attributives. Moreover, this study suggested the need for future researchers to explore a deeper complexity of cultural influence on employee behavior.

Literature has shown that the influence of national culture on the performance of a firm is significant (Li, Lam, & Qian, 2001; Pothukuchi, Damanpour, Choi, Chen, & Park, 2002). For example, Li et al. (2001) examined 1,379 overseas-funded firms in China across 12 different countries in an attempt to investigate whether culture affected behavior and a firm's performance. Among these samples, 548 were from Taiwan, Hong

Kong, and Macao. Results of this study have contended that cultural factors had significant effects on firm productivity. Furthermore, in addition to Hofstede's national cultural dimensions, the authors incorporated the value of moderation and *face saving* to test their hypothesis. The results suggested that these values affect the behavior and performance on joint ventures. Most importantly, the authors suggested that joint ventures established by East Asian collectivistic cultures failed to achieve a better performance than those from individualistic cultures. This finding may suggest that expatriates working with people from similar cultural backgrounds do not necessarily guarantee effective performance. Additionally, this finding may suggest a need for exploring the effectiveness of expatriate performance from multiple dimensions.

Another study concerning the success of expatriates compared male and female expatriates from a U.S.-based MNC based on Hofstede's work-related national cultural dimensions. Caligiuri and Tung (1999) applied Hofstede's four dimensions of national culture to compare male and female expatriate performance in a host country and found that female expatriates were less adjusted in masculine countries and highly uncertainty-avoidance countries. However, there were significant differences in performance in the dimensions of power distance and individualism/collectivism countries between female and male expatriates. Although this study focused on the comparisons of female and male expatriate performance, it goes to underline that cultural factors are critical to expatriate performance.

In summary, while literature has shown that national cultural dimensions are related to business performance (Kochan et al., 2003), managerial network (Manev & Stevenson, 2001), joint venture performance (Li et al., 2001; Pothukuchi et al., 2002),

adaptation to fluid workgroups (Harrison et al., 2000), and business expatriates in a host marketplace (Jun, Gentry, & Hynn, 2001), research focused on exploring a culture's impact on expatriates is not addressed adequately. Moreover, some important issues concerning the effectiveness of expatriate managers are unclear and limited, which suggest the need to consider more factors in exploring expatriate overseas assignments. Additionally, Kealey (1996) argued that research focused on studying expatriates should be multidimensional in nature. Consequently, it is important to explore how cultural factors influence the effectiveness of expatriate managers. Additionally, the qualitative design which demanded a more active participatory role for the study's expatriates, added an important dimension to the discussion and our understanding of the complexity of the question of expatriate effectiveness on assignments away from the home culture.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

To enhance global integration and improve competition, multinational corporations (MNCs) use expatriates to maintain control over subsidiaries and to transfer knowledge and technical skills. However, expatriate failure is persistent and continually occurring and the financial costs of failure on an overseas assignment are high. This situation highlights the need for understanding the effectiveness of expatriate managers. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to explore critical influences on the effectiveness of some former Taiwanese expatriate managers. The researcher particularly focused on those factors related to their success on overseas assignments including cultural factors, cross-cultural training, cross-cultural competency and skills, and cross-cultural adjustment. To better understand Taiwanese expatriate managers' working and living experiences while they were on overseas assignments, a grounded theory research approach was adopted in this study.

Using 13 former expatriate managers of Taiwanese MNCs as research subjects, the dimensions of cultural factors, cross-cultural training, and cross-cultural communication competency were used to create an initial interview framework in an attempt to explore the critical influences of their effectiveness during overseas assignments. In this study, data were collected through semi-structured interviews. An "elite" interview, one conducted with people who are influential or well-informed in the field, was utilized for supplemental data. Such data was expected to provide different views relevant for understanding related topics in the study, such as policies or strategies of international human resources management. The researcher adopted the approach of

constant comparative analysis proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1998), to identify the perceptions of Taiwanese expatriates on factors critical to success in overseas assignments.

To better understand the effectiveness of expatriate managers, a self-reported performance evaluation, which used a more structured but less rigid interview protocol, was developed. The researcher also consulted with some of the interviewees' previous supervisors in order to strengthen data trustworthiness.

The Appropriateness of Conducting Qualitative Research

The characteristics and differences between qualitative and quantitative research approaches have been identified by many researchers in the field of research methodology, such as Patton (1990), Miles and Huberman (1994), and Creswell (2003). Basically, the qualitative approach provides researchers with multiple methods which are interactive and humanistic to collect data and elicit participants' perceptions and experiences in detail (Creswell, 2003). This is in contrast to a quantitative study, wherein researchers follow a standardized format and frequently use questionnaires for data collection. In addition, qualitative study provides researchers a variety of strategies in data analysis. In contrast, researchers using a quantitative study adopt validated instruments to test hypotheses and investigate relationships among variables which are predetermined.

Because qualitative research can draw upon and utilize a variety of approaches, methods, and strategies, qualitative inquiry is advocated as more appropriate to "provide important insights and knowledge" about social phenomena (Nelson, Treichler, & Grwssberg, 1992, p. 2). In addition, Creswell (2003) recommends this kind of

investigation because “qualitative research studies appear as broad, panoramic views rather than micro-analyses and qualitative researcher uses complex reasoning that is multi-faceted, iterative, and simultaneous” (p. 182).

As the purpose of the study was to explore the participants’ perceptions and experiences based on the data collected from them, which reflected the “essence of people, objectives, and situations” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 3), the best way to interpret the participants’ views was to display the data in the form of words rather than numbers. In addition, the issue of the success of expatriate managers is complex, and the researcher was concerned that a quantitative inquiry would not be helpful to provide opportunities to completely describe the participants’ living and working experience and perceptions regarding how they performed in the cross-cultural working and living environments. To get this information requires rich, detailed and holistic data. The important strengths of qualitative data advocated by Miles and Huberman (1994) are their richness and holistic nature, which can assist researchers in “revealing complexity and provides thick descriptions that are vivid, nested in a real context” (p. 10). Moreover, Creswell (2007) observes that qualitative inquiry is conducted because researchers need to explore a problem or because researchers “need a complex, detailed understanding of the issue” (p. 40). Since the purpose of the study and the nature of the research problem required rich, holistic, and detailed data, as well as a detailed and complex understanding of the issues, the researcher utilized a qualitative research methodology.

Research Design

Grounded Theory Research

Grounded theory research, as developed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967, is a systematic, qualitative procedure used to generate a theory that explains, on a broad conceptual level, an action, a process, or interaction about a substantive topic shaped by the views of a number of participants (Creswell, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The primary characteristics of grounded theory research are that the researcher has to set aside theoretical ideas to allow a substantive theory to emerge, make a constant comparison of data with emerging categories, and maximize the similarities and the differences of information by the theoretical sampling of different groups (Creswell, 2007; Dey, 1999).

Grounded theory research has been utilized in this study in an attempt to not only describe the Taiwanese expatriates' working and living experiences while on international assignments, but also in the hope of generating a mid-range theory about the effectiveness of their performance on behalf of Taiwanese multinational corporations. Some of these are struggling to improve the effectiveness of their overseas subsidiaries and are devoting themselves to formulating an effective cross-cultural training program. Others have not yet realized the importance of cross-cultural training programs. The appropriateness of using the grounded theory approach can be illustrated as follows.

First, Strauss and Corbin (1998) contend that a key element of the development of a theory is its grounding on the experiences of those who have already gone through the process. The researcher, then, attempted to put together a process generated by the actions or interactions of Taiwanese expatriate managers who have already completed an assignment. Thus, she explored the critical factors that may have affected their

performance as overseas managers. All of them have gone through the cross-cultural experience of living in a foreign country for a minimum of one and one-half years as well as the pressures that come with the responsibility of being in charge of an overseas subsidiary. All these participants have had at least one and one-half years of experience overseas, thus they were immersed in cross-cultural interactions and faced the critical issues that come with the responsibility of management. They also were aware that success would enhance their careers and the expanding goals of their organization while failure might have a negative impact upon their future and the prospects of their corporation. It seems clear, then that the grounded theory research approach, first through theoretical sampling, then through constant comparison analysis, provided an effective instrument to gauge the experiences of all these expatriates.

Secondly, although some research on this topic has looked into the effectiveness of expatriate managers, few studies have been done through a qualitative approach. Moreover, the literature that deals with the subject lacks models developed from the perspective of a qualitative inquiry.

Finally, because the purpose of the study is to generate a mid-range theory about the success of expatriate managers, the grounded theory approach opens a valuable pathway for the researcher to meet the objectives of this study. Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggest that "A theory does more than provide understanding or paint a vivid picture; it enables users to explain and predict events, thereby providing guides to action" (p. 25).

Thus, grounded theory research was considered the best suited to study the research problem. To best utilize this approach to study the research problem, and achieve the purpose of the study, the researcher followed the steps below.

First, in designing and conducting this study, the researcher started by identifying a research problem about the success of expatriate managers and tried to avoid preconceived ideas. Second, to learn or understand the central phenomenon of the study, the researcher primarily conducted purposeful sampling during the study. Third, data were collected through interviews. Fourth, constant comparison analysis was utilized to identify categories and properties of the data and to generate a middle-range theory.

The Role of Researcher

In qualitative research, the role of the researcher is defined as a critical factor in the process of data collection and analysis. The importance of his/her role in the process of qualitative research can be gauged from a comment by Patton (1990): “Qualitative evaluation inquiry draws on both critical and creative thinking – both the science and the art of analysis” (p. 434). Similarly, Strauss and Corbin (1998) indicate that “analysis is the interplay between researchers and data, which is both science and art” (p. 13). The researcher plays the key in the collection and analysis of data. The more personal experience the researcher has in the area of his/her study and the greater his/her creative and critical thinking abilities, the more he/she will draw from the data and the more original will the study be (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Having worked in a different culture and with a culturally diverse team, the researcher could gauge from experience what it means to have to adjust to a new and different cultural environment and to communicate and work effectively with people from different cultures. However, she is also keenly aware that these cross-cultural working and living experiences can be both strengths and weaknesses. But she has no doubts that her invaluable experiences facilitate her understanding and her evaluation of

the stories of these expatriates, especially in processing and analyzing the data. While discussing how researchers have greatly benefited from being involved in qualitative research, Strauss and Corbin (1998) make insightful observation that “they are unafraid to draw on their own experiences when analyzing materials because they realize that these become the foundations for making comparisons and discovering properties and dimensions” (p. 5). Besides, the researcher believes that her background will add to the accuracy of the findings because her experiences will come handy in critically evaluating and exploring the issues and in conducting an in-depth analysis of the data.

On the other hand, these previous experiences may bring some inevitable bias into the study. Nevertheless, because the researcher has experienced the difficulties inherent in cross-cultural interaction and communication, she will try to point out some specific cross-cultural competencies that are required for success in a culturally diverse environment. Also, having been educated and immersed in both Eastern and Western cultures, the researcher is very interested in cross-cultural business management. She will like to share some of her experiences. In putting together this research as one of the requirements of the course in International Education and Entrepreneurship, which is part of her Ph. D. curriculum, she chose to focus on the experiences of those Taiwanese expatriates who have been involved in business management overseas. Drawing from her experiences in both working and living in cross-cultural environments, she believes the MNCs, in order to facilitate the success of their expatriate managers and advance their own business interests, must provide effective cross-cultural training.

The researcher is also keenly aware that the extent of the success of this study depends also on developing a trust between her and the research participants. As Wax

(1971) suggests, the reciprocal relationship between host and field-worker enables the latter to avoid foolish, insulting, and potentially dangerous behaviors; to make valuable contacts; and to understand the acceptance and repayment of obligations. Thus, the researcher made every effort to be sensitive, flexible, and patient so as to draw the trust and confidence that are necessary for the success of such a study.

Furthermore, the researcher has placed priority on the voices of the interviewees and has made every effort to avoid rushing to conclusions. She has endeavored to properly balance all the information and data from non-primary sources with her own perspective and experiences and, most importantly, to give priority to the voices of her interviewees, her primary sources. She tried to play the role of a critical researcher trying to find the possible meanings and the lessons that can be drawn from the experiences of other professionals.

Research Procedure

Selection of the Research Site

In order to best portray and elicit the expatriates' views regarding their cross-cultural encounters and gauge their perceptions of what strategies facilitated an effective performance of their overseas assignments, the researcher decided to target multinational corporations expanding their international business. Specifically, this study centers on the experiences of expatriate managers who worked for five MNCs headquartered in Taiwan, all operating in service industries. Service industries were chosen because their business requires that their overseas employees interact with all kinds of people in different cultural environments. Sampling from service industries elicited deeper and wider cross-cultural data which added to the validity of a mid-range theory.

To identify the list of Taiwanese multinational corporations active in service industries, the researcher consulted the May 2007 issue of Commonwealth which lists Taiwanese top 500 service-based firms and top 100 financial corporations. In Taiwan, the Commonwealth is viewed as the standard of business publications. In fact, if one wishes to find out about big business, and specifically the Taiwan-based MNCs, this particular issue has to be consulted. Hung (2002) has confirmed that “Commonwealth is viewed by Taiwanese readers as reliable, for it has been consistent and credible in its reporting about Taiwan’s social, political, and economic issues”(p. 106).

Selection of the MNCs

“Well-developed sampling decisions are crucial for any study’s soundness” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 72). Intent on insuring the soundness and reliability of this study, the researcher followed the strategies of purposeful sampling, applying homogeneous sampling, convenience sampling, and snowball sampling throughout the study. Homogeneous sampling was utilized to select the MNCs targeted for this study, for it helps locate the MNCs which are at similar stages of internationalization. Convenience sampling and snowballing were used to complement inadequate homogeneous sampling where it was inadequate.

Homogeneous sampling. Given the main objective of this study, MNCs involved in service industries currently undergoing expansion or integration were the major targets of this research. Homogeneous sampling was utilized because it involves sampling sites with similar characteristics. The researcher started by sending letters to the CEOs of 165 MNCs selected in order to introduce herself and elaborate on the purpose of the study. Unfortunately, only two of the CEOs replied and provided the researcher with

information on how to contact expatriate managers and recruit them to participate in this study. Those recruited, however, were current, not former expatriates, which forced the researcher to adopt convenience sampling.

Convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a procedure whereby “the researcher selects participants because they are willing and available to be studied” (Creswell, 2005, p. 149). According to Creswell (2005), the weakness of convenience sampling is that the researcher will lack the confidence to say that his or her participants truly represent the targeted population. Patton (1990) also stresses that convenience sampling should be the last resort of a sampling need.

The researcher did her best to avoid adopting convenience sampling and started with homogeneous sampling. However, homogeneous sampling did not pan out very well because those who were recruited did not meet all that is required by the purpose of this research. Therefore, the researcher had to seek help from an acquaintance of hers and utilized convenience sampling in order to lessen the insufficiency of homogeneous sampling. Her friend and family members then helped recruit some very successful former Taiwanese expatriate managers for the interviews. Thus, 12 participants from 5 multinational corporations were recruited through the sampling procedure.

Snowball sampling. To avoid the possibility of an inadequate number of participants, snowball sampling was also used in this study. The researcher requested participation as a question during an interview or through informal conversations with participants (Creswell, 2004). As a result, one participant in the banking industry was recruited by one of the participants in the study.

Selection of Participants

As for the participants of this study, two major selection criteria were adopted so as to make the selection richer, more holistic, and detailed, thus contributing to a more in-depth exploration and understanding of the issues discussed in this study:

1. The participants must be former expatriate managers.
2. The participants must have experience in overseas management and must have resided in the host country for at least one year and a half.

The data were collected from November 2007 to December 2007. A total of 13 were invited to participate in the study. All are Taiwanese and were former expatriate managers in service industries, including transportation and banking. They were recruited from ABC Airlines, AM Marine Transport Corp, HM Line Corp, SH Line Corp, and GD International Commercial Bank. Six of the interviewees were recruited with the help of the Board Chairpersons of ABC Airlines and GD International Commercial Bank. Another interviewee from GD International commercial Bank participated in the study through snowball sampling. Two interviewees were also recruited thanks to the help of the top management of AM Marine Transport Corp. The other interviewees were recruited by this researcher's friend, who used to work in the transportation industry. They were employed by HM Line Corp. and SH Line Corp. Before the interviews took place, a letter introducing the researcher and elaborating on the purpose of the study was e-mailed to the people who had helped with the recruiting so that they could communicate with the willing participants of the study. After these recruitments were done, the researcher contacted each participant individually by phone to make interview appointments. All participants and their organizations were assigned a pseudonym for

their names to protect their confidentiality and identification. All participants were asked to fill in a demographic form to provide their brief backgrounds (Appendix J). Their backgrounds were summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Participants' Backgrounds

MNCs	Number of participants	Position on overseas assignments
ABC Airlines	3	General Manager(CEO)
AM Marine Transport Corp	2	Assistant Vice President Assistant Vice President
HM Line Corp	2	Director of Operation General manager of Marketing
SH Line Corp	2	Representative of the headquarters
GD International Commercial Bank	4	Director of Controller General Manager

Data Collection

Data Collection Strategies

In order to reduce the risk and the biases of research conclusions coming from only one specific source or method and to obtain a variety of data for facilitating understanding the research issues (Maxwell, 2005), the strategy of triangulation was adopted in data collection. Fielding and Fielding (1986) and Maxwell (2005) contend that one of the purposes of triangulation is to collect information through a variety of sources and methods. Similarly, Marshall and Rosmman (1999) argue that “studies making more objectivist assumptions would triangulate interview data with data gathered through other methods” (p. 110). Therefore, semi-structured interviews, elite interviews, and self-

reported performance evaluation were the primary avenues of eliciting information to assist the researcher in “building on the strengths of each types of data collection while minimizing the weaknesses of any single approach” (Patton, 1990, p. 245). On the other hand, to prompt the researcher to increase the density of initial or tentative categories which were discovered in the early process of data analysis but still remained questionable or unfirm, the strategy of theoretical sampling was used to collect pertinent data to elaborate and refine categories and to develop a theory in this study (Charmaz, 2006).

Interview. Holstein and Gubrium (1999) assert that “interviewing is undoubtedly the most widely applied technique for conducting a systematic social inquiry and has been regarded as a window to the world” (p. 105). Thus, an in-depth semi-structured interview approach without constraints was utilized in an attempt to allow interviewees to describe, as much as possible, what they experienced and how they perceived, acted, behaved, and interacted cross-culturally. All interviews were conducted by following a set of questions to avoid leaving out any important ones. Eight of the 12 interviews were conducted in the meeting room of the organization’s headquarters while four took place in coffee shops. All the participants signed and turned in the consent form (Appendix A). The researcher clearly spelled out the nature and purpose of the study to all participants before beginning the interviews. All understood that they had the right to terminate their participation before the study was completed. While 10 of the interviews lasted from one to two hours, two were completed in one hour. All were audio-taped with the permission of interviewees in order to make sure that both interviewee and interviewer’ stayed focused and reported as accurately as possible what they wished to reveal, explore, and

understand (Keng, 1997). This greatly facilitated the processing and the analysis of the data. Furthermore, the researcher also took notes during the interviews in order to elicit further questions critical to the study and to help her develop concepts and categories during the process of coding.

“Elite” interviews. “Elite” interviews are interviews conducted with people who are influential, prominent, and well-informed in their fields (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The advantages of using such interviews have been identified by Marshall and Rossman (1999). They emphasize that researchers are able to gain valuable information, obtain an overall view of an organization, and understand an organization’s policies, past histories, and future plans from a particular perspective.

The effectiveness of expatriate assignments was complex and multidimensional as well as critical to the global success and competitiveness of the MNCs. The management of overseas subsidiaries is all-important to the MNCs, because the views, experiences, and expertise of their expatriate managers can greatly help them improve and expand their business. That is why an interview with an “elite” manager was collected and compared with the data available from former Taiwanese expatriates. In addition, the elite interview was included in this study because this interviewee is currently in charge of international business investments and is involved in the selection of expatriate managers and in devising effective strategies for the management of the organization he serves. Besides, he used to be an expatriate manager.

The in-depth semi-structured interview method was utilized in order to elicit the best possible results from this elite interviewee. It turned out to be one of the best decisions of this researcher, for this elite interviewee clearly understood the purpose of

this study and constantly volunteered his insights about his experiences, offered suggestions to further refine the study, and even detailed what strategies were being currently utilized by his organization to achieve their goals in terms of expatriate management. The entire interview was conducted in the meeting room of his organization's headquarters and lasted 45 minutes.

Self-reported performance evaluation. Self-reported performance evaluation was either conducted during the interviews or completed through email. The content of self-reported performance evaluation consists of issues about relation, job, and knowledge transfer performance (Appendix G).

Theoretical sampling. Theoretical sampling is a strategy that researchers use to gather and seek pertinent data to elaborate and refine categories constituting a theory (Charmaz, 2006). It is the process of data collection for generating a theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to generate a theory as it emerges (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As Creswell (2007) stresses, theoretical sampling can best assist a researcher to develop a theory (Creswell, 2007). In addition, Ritchie, Lewis, and Elam (2003) emphasize that the process of theoretical sampling is iterative: "the researcher picks an initial sample, analyses the data, and then selects a further sample in order to refine researcher's emerging categories and theories" (p. 80). Therefore, the researcher also relied on the strategy of theoretical sampling to direct her "where to go" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 100) in order to find relevant materials to construct robust categories and to saturate categories. Consequently, events or incidents considered relevant to help the researcher explicate

categories were collected, analyzed, and added to the initial categories when they were not adequately represented for developing a theory.

Data Analysis Procedure

Data analysis is the process requiring researchers to organize the raw material gathered from data collection in order to make evidence-based interpretations (Rubin & Rubin, 2002). Marshall and Rossman (1999) speak of six phases for the analytic process that includes organizing the data, generating categories, delineating themes and patterns, coding the data, testing emergent understandings, searching for alternative explanations, and writing out the report (p. 152). The grounded theory is a research approach whereby a hypothesis or theory evolves from the data during analysis and data collection. Strauss and Corbin (1998) identify three types of coding procedures for the data analysis including open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. In order to systematically organize and analyze data, the researcher decided to rely primarily on Strauss and Corbin's data analysis procedures and apply some analytic procedures suggested by Marshall and Rossman. The ways the researcher developed the data analysis and coding strategies are more fully described in Chapter four. Below is a brief description of the data analysis process with the procedures that make it up.

Step 1: Data Organization.

The interviews and self-reported performance evaluations served as the primary data sources of this study. The following strategies and tools were utilized to organize these data and the follow-up analysis:

Transcribing interview. The interviews were done mostly in Mandarin Chinese. The participants, however, answered some items in English. All interviews were

transcribed *verbatim* into Mandarin first, and then sent to the interviewees for verification and corrections. Once the Mandarin version of the transcription was confirmed by the interviewee, the researcher read them carefully several times, then had some sections considered necessary translated into English for data analysis procedures. The interviews translated into English and reproduced here may not have the same original flavor. Still, their essential meaning was not affected, and it is the meaning of what the interviewees wished to convey that really matters, not the grammatical correctness of the translation

In addition, the researcher created two inch margins on each side of the text of the interview transcripts in order to jot down observations during the reading and analyzing of the data. Moreover, interview questions were highlighted to be properly differentiated (Creswell, 2005).

Systematic organization of the data. Data collected from the interviews, including the elite one, and self-reported performance evaluations were first systematically organized by developing a table that classified different information sources. Next, in order to facilitate the future coding procedure and analysis, the various types of information were further classified as “Interviews,” “Elite Interviews,” “Notes,” and “Self-reported Performance Evaluation.” Finally, to avoid the risk of losing data, all forms of data were duplicated and kept in different locations. For example, the raw data of the interview transcripts and self-reported performance evaluations were not only kept in the researcher’s notebook, but were also saved as separate, individual documents in two different memory sticks. Several copies were made of the notes and at least one copy kept in a safe box.

An initial careful reading of each set of interviews prepared them for future analysis. This was to help take care of errors or doubts.

Step 2: Coding the Data

Coding is the process of segmenting and labeling texts to form descriptions and broad themes in the data (Creswell, 2005). Microanalysis, asking questions, and comparative analysis, the kind of data analysis methods advocated by Strauss and Corbin (1998), were utilized in the process of coding and analyzing the data in this study.

Microanalysis, defined as detailed line-by-line analysis, is a necessary method utilized at the beginning of a study to generate initial categories and suggest relationships among categories; it involves a detailed examination and interpretation of data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, pp. 57-58). The three critical aspects of a microanalysis examination are: “(a) data; (b) their interpretation by observers and actors regarding events, actions, objects, and happenings; and (c) the interplay that occurs between the data and the researcher in both the gathering and the analyzing of the data” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 58).

Asking questions is “an analytic device used to open up the line of inquiry and direct theoretical samplings” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 73). Asking effective questions is essential to any type of research methodology. It is impossible to build a theory by working with a single case. In order to gauge what a single case teaches about a general pattern or other similar cases, it is essential to “move from the specific to the more general” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 88). It is through the open question- and-answer process that the open-mindedness of a study will become apparent. As noted by Strauss and Corbin (1998), asking questions during the process of analyzing the data, the

meaning, the properties, dimensions, categories, and relationships inherent in the data could shape the open-minded attitudes of the researchers.

Making theoretical comparisons is “an analytic tool used to stimulate thinking about properties and dimensions of categories” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 73). Making comparisons is an essential feature of grounded theory. It stimulates the researchers’ thinking about properties and dimensions and directs theoretical sampling. Comparisons are formed from incident to incident at the dimensional level or property in order to classify data, explore similarities and differences, and ground them into a category or several categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Concepts, main categories, sub-categories and their properties were established by breaking down the raw data according to the procedures of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding as outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1998).

Open coding is “the analytic process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in the data” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 101). At this stage, the major task was to uncover, name, and develop concepts. The researcher closely examined each form of data collected from different information sources in order to arrange these different forms into discrete parts to make comparisons and find similarities and differences through a line-by-line analysis. Data concerning events, objects, and actions/interactions that were identified to be conceptually similar in nature or related in meaning, were grouped into categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). As a result, five major categories were identified and they were (a) competency, (b) challenge, (c) influential factors, (d) motivation, and (e) organizational context.

Axial coding refers to “the process of relating categories to their subcategories, termed ‘axial’ because coding occurs around the axis of a category, linking categories at the level of properties and dimensions” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 123). Once the categories and subcategories were identified, the researcher continued to ask all types of generative questions, making constant and theoretical comparisons until the relationships between different categories and subcategories were developed. In addition, during the process of axial coding, the researcher conducted theoretical sampling in order to develop new categories when new dimensions or properties emerged. The process of open coding and axial coding continued up to the point of saturation, when no new categories could be detected.

Selective coding refers to “the process of integrating and refining the theory” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998 p. 143). The first step is to decide on a central category that pulls together other categories in order to form an explanatory whole that helps account for considerable variations within categories. At this stage, the researcher followed Strauss and Corbin’s (1998) suggestion to choose two or more possible central categories and relate them to one another. For example, although the personality characteristics emerged as an important concept in this study of the effectiveness of expatriate managers, the researcher also worked on cultural factors or career development in order to see how they were inter-related. In addition, to facilitate the integration of the theory, the researcher developed diagrams to facilitate the sorting out of the interrelationships of the concepts. As a result, the “mission” of the expatriate managers to effectively complete their overseas assignments emerged as a central phenomenon of this study.

Step 3: Refinement

Once the theoretical scheme had been developed, the researcher refined the theory, trimmed off the excess categories and filled-in information about poorly developed categories. As suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998), filling-in was done through reviewing memos and raw data to look for what might have been overlooked and through expanding the theoretical sampling until the data were saturated.

Protection of the Human Subjects

Lewis (2003) indicates that “any study topic can raise sensitive issues for people” (p. 68), not only for the participants themselves, but also for people relevant to their conversations. Although the researcher developed carefully prepared and carefully constructed questions before the interview, the reactions of the interviewees varied. Certain questions evoked unhappy memories or spiked some concerns which, in turn, may have hampered their willingness to share relevant information. Besides, interviewees may have felt regret about what they shared or disclosed (Lewis, 2003). In order to avoid or alleviate the discomfort caused by these situations during the interview process, the researcher tried to play a careful and thoughtful role during the interview, and was “alert to the sign of discomfort, asking the participants’ whether they were willing to keep up with the interview” (Lewis, 2003, p. 69). Moreover, based on the need for protecting the participants from any harmful consequences, they were provided with an opportunity to withdraw from the study or to withhold any information they might regret or cause discomfort if divulged.

As to the consideration of ethics, an informed consent form clearly indicating the purpose of the study, the background of the research, the procedures of the research, and

how the data were to be used was given to each participant who read and signed it before the interview was conducted.

Regarding the issue of confidentiality, all participants were assigned a number to prevent disclosing their identities. The researcher also avoided identifying the participants in the attribution of comments made either in reports or presentations (Lewis, 2003). Moreover, a research consent and exemption form was filed with the Institutional Review Board (see Appendix K) after this dissertation proposal was approved by the dissertation committee at the University of the Incarnate Word.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

Unlike quantitative research, a qualitative research study has no specific tests to validate its findings. As Creswell (2003) notes, in a qualitative study, validity neither carries the same connotations as it does in quantitative research, nor is a comparison of reliability possible (p. 195). To ensure trustworthiness and credibility, the following strategies were applied in this study:

1. Triangulation: A variety of data collection methods conducted in this study facilitated examining evidence from the diverse sources to ensure the credibility of the findings (Creswell, 2003). To deal with the possibility of data bias, data were collected through: personally interviewing the expatriates, conducting an elite interview, and collecting performance evaluation forms, all designed to increase the credibility of this study.
2. Comparison and contrast: By making use of the strategy of the constant-comparison method in analyzing the data, credibility was enhanced. This

means that this study constantly compared different categories, events, themes, and individuals.

3. Prevention of assumptions and non-sequiturs in the interpretation and the conclusions through feedback from her peers (Maxwell, 2005).

Chapter Four: Data Analysis

Profile of Participants

A total of 13 participants from five MNCs in the Transportation and Banking industries were interviewed to collect data for this study. While 11 interviews lasted from one and half hours to two hours, two interviews were done in one hour. Except for one participant who studied in the United State for three years, no other had an overseas experience, whether living or working, before their first relocation.

All participants were male and Taiwanese, with ages ranging from 33 to 65. Seven out of the thirteen had taken one international assignment, three had worked in two international assignments, one had four experiences overseas, and one had five. Their international assignments ranged from 2 to 27 years. Their relocations included the United States, Singapore, Germany, Holland, Thailand, Malaysia, Korea, Hong Kong, and China (See Table 2).

This study was primarily devoted to studying the success of expatriate managers on overseas assignments, with a special emphasis on the critical factors influencing their effectiveness in their new jobs. No attempt was made to recruit only expatriate managers who had successfully completed an overseas assignment, and all participants in this study met the broad definition of success. Consequently, participants had either successfully completed overseas missions or had been recalled for promotion to fill staffing positions at the home headquarters.

All participants were male and Taiwanese former expatriate managers. There were no female because all participants in the study were recruited from convenience sampling and snowball sampling.

Table 2

Participant Demographics

Participant	Industry	Gender	Age	Number of international assignments	Duration of international assignments-years	Years working in current industry	Countries of relocation
Case 1	Transportation	Male	33	1	3	7	Germany
Case 2	Transportation	Male	33	1	2 years and 8 months	7.5	U.S.A
Case 3	Transportation	Male	50	1	4.5	20	U.S.A
Case 4	Transportation	Male	49	2	6	21	Germany & U.S.A
Case 5	Transportation	Male	35	1	3	6.5	Thailand
Case 6	Banking	Male	55	1	6	26	U.S.A
Case 7	Banking	Male	52	2	6	29	Japan & U.S.A
Case 8	Transportation	Male	50	2	5.5	25	Singapore & Korea
Case 9	Transportation	Male	62	3	11.5	32	U.S.A & Hong Kong
Case 10	Banking	Male	65	1	6	35	Australia
Case 11	Transportation	Male	51	1	2	23	Malaysia
Case 12	Transportation	Male	38	4	5	24	Malaysia & China
Case 13	Banking	Male	63	5	27	37	Japan U.S.A, Holland, Singapore, and Thailand

Coding Procedures

The procedure for data analysis in this study involved open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. These systematic procedures, developed by Strauss and Corbin (1990), were utilized to discover categories, properties, and dimensions from the data in an attempt to develop a theoretical model which explains the process of effectively completing overseas assignments. As was mentioned in Chapter three,

microanalysis, asking questions, and comparative analysis—which are critical methods of data analysis in grounded theory as recommended by Strauss and Corbin (1998)—were employed to be associated with coding procedures to facilitate coding and data analysis. To develop a theoretical model of the success of expatriate managers on overseas assignments, the researcher consistently and purposefully moved between the procedures of open coding and axial coding during the entire analysis procedure. As Strauss and Corbin (1998) emphasize, axial and open coding are not sequential analytic steps; rather, the process of coding is dynamic and fluid. In the early stage of coding, the researcher moved between conceptualizing data for discovering a category in the open coding and relating categories in axial coding. Once the relationships between categories were identified through open coding and axial coding, the researcher endeavored to use selective coding to make the integration of categories, subcategories, and their relationships to establish a story line and generate a theoretical model.

Open Coding

Open coding consists of the functions of identifying, naming, and categorizing data. “Open coding is the part of analysis that pertains specifically to the naming and categorizing of phenomena through close examination of data.” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 62). To effectively group concepts into categories, each concept was labeled by breaking down and conceptualizing raw data by closely examining interview transcripts, field notes, and memos. Data collected from the 13 participants were coded individually to facilitate comparisons between similarities and differences.

Microanalysis, defined as line-by-line analysis, was adopted to be associated with open coding of transcripts in order to discover and label concepts and categories. Concepts discovered in this study are shown in Appendix I. To stimulate the researcher's thinking about the properties and dimensions of the categories, and to enhance the process of grouping concepts into categories, the tool of making theoretical comparisons advocated by Strauss and Corbin was used to classify data, explore similarities and differences from incident to incident at their dimensional levels in this study. Thus, concepts pertaining to the same phenomena were developed and grouped into 11 initial categories included career development, cultural influence, cultural intelligence, communication skill, cross-cultural adaptation, expatriate reaction, support, personal characteristics, language ability, family issue, leadership, mission, responsibility, professional knowledge, and training.

The above 11 initial categories that emerged in the early stage of data analysis, provided the researcher with insights, thoughts, and ideas for developing the follow-up questions and subsequent interviews. As the researcher continued conducting subsequent interviews and analyzing data, the researcher gained deeper insight and comprehension about the participants' experiences. Later, the researcher moved back and forward between the categories and properties identified in the early stage of the open coding. The new concepts and evidence, discovered in the subsequent interviews were added to the identified categories until the researcher reached saturation about the category. As it appeared necessary, categories were renamed and relationships between various categories and subcategories were formed. The resulting broad categories that were developed included challenge, influential factors, management competency,

motivation, and organizational context were developed. Table 3 is the summary of these five broad categories, subcategories, and their properties. Each of these categories will now be discussed.

“Challenge” was a collective term used to represent difficulties, stress, depressions, and other problems participants suffered while they were on overseas assignments. In the context of an overseas assignment, cross-cultural adjustment, cross-cultural interaction, language barriers, and operating business overseas were identified as the most stressful challenges by participants. Difficulties in cross-cultural adjustment included cultural shock, the feelings of boredom, isolation, helplessness, and an absence of friends. Cross-cultural interactions referred to challenges resulting from cultural differences in social norms, work attitude and behavior, and customs, environments where misunderstanding and misinterpretation occurred. Language barriers consisted of the difficulty in speaking the local language and lack of knowledge about local language and culture. The stress caused by operating the business overseas mentioned by participants was related to management, the business expansion, and the requirements coming from headquarters.

“Influential factors” made up a compounded category reflecting conditions which constrained or facilitated the success of expatriate managers on overseas assignments. Family situations, including the care for one’s parents, the children’s education, and spouse adjustment, were the main concerns of the participants. As a whole, salient personality characteristics influenced the success of expatriate managers on overseas assignments in many ways. For example, participants with self-learning characteristics were more likely to acquire knowledge about the local culture, and this,

in turn, facilitated their adjustment to a new cultural environment. Culture played an important role in the success of expatriate managers because its influence was intangible. Its impact was either positive or negative. Cultural differences exposed in the work attitude and behavior, social systems, norms, laws and regulations, values, and customs often gave rise to problems of adjustment for expatriate managers and their accompanying families.

“Management competency” referred to skills, ability, and knowledge necessary for expatriate managers to manage and handle challenges or stress faced while they were on overseas assignments. This category consists of concepts like cultural intelligence, leadership, communication skills, language ability, and professional knowledge and skills. All participants revealed their willingness to change their attitudes, to learn and to accept the local culture. By observation and learning about the local culture, they became aware of cultural difference and developed cultural sensitivity. These properties constructed the subcategory of cultural intelligence. Leadership was a significant competence participants employed in leading and managing local-cultural staff members. Within it, integrity, cohesion, team work, full empowerment, and leading with heart were the main strategies participants adopted in order to successfully accomplish their task overseas. Communication skills consisted of the properties of sincerity, respect, clarity, and understanding local culture. Language ability was thought to be a prerequisite competence. Professional knowledge and skills were also regarded as prerequisite competencies facilitating participants’ management performance, and was the source of self-confidence, the power of managing, controlling, and leading the local-cultural staff.

“Motivation” was a category representing various incentives to encourage expatriate managers to successfully complete their overseas assignments. An overseas assignment was regarded as an opportunity to advance one’s career and to expand one’s learning. The mission to complete an overseas assignment was triggered by motivation and reinforced by the participants’ loyalty and responsibility to their organization. Becoming an expatriate manager was perceived as an honor, and this, in turn, was turned into the participants’ mission to accomplish an overseas assignment. Growth consisted of the benefits participants gained from the success of an overseas assignment. This included career progression, the enhancement of knowledge, establishing new connections, enriching one’s experience, reinforcing one’s competence, and developing a global mindset.

“Organizational context” referred to the global strategy and training that the corporation headquarters employed or provided in response to the competition of the global market. Data from the participants indicated that global expansion, control over subsidiaries overseas, and talent cultivation were the major objectives of the global strategies. Training including pre-departure, on-the-job training, and language training was either funded or provided by the organizations in order to enhance the participants’ competencies.

Table 3

Categories, Subcategories and Properties

Categories	Subcategories	Properties
Challenge	Business operation	Expanding business Headquarters' expectations Management
	Cross-cultural adjustment	Cultural differences Cultural shock
	Cross-cultural interaction	Cultural differences Misinterpretation Misperception Misunderstanding
	Language barrier	Difficulty in adjusting Miscommunication Misinterpretation Misunderstanding
Influential factors	Culture	National cultural differences Norms Values Regulations Customs Communications context
	Family situations	Children's education Parents' care Spouse adjustment
	Personality characteristics	Adventurous spirit Bear hardship and hard work Challenge-taking Extroversion Flexibility Mission Open-mindedness Outgoing attitude Responsibility Self-confidence Stress resistance

Table 3 (continued)

Management Competency	Communication skills	Clarity Respect Sincerity Understanding local culture
	Cultural intelligence	Cultural awareness Cultural sensitivity Willingness to accept Willingness to change Willingness to learn
	Language ability	Fluency Prerequisite
	Leadership	Cohesion Direction Full empowerment Integrity Mission Problem-solving Team work
	Professional knowledge and skills	Control Leadership Management Prerequisites Self-confidence
Motivation	Growth	Career advancement Competence reinforcement Experience enrichment Establishment of Connections Global mindset Knowledge enhancement
		Honor Loyalty Responsibility
		Career development Invaluable experiences Learning
		Business expansion Effectively manage and control subsidiaries Talent cultivation
		Business expansion Control over subsidiaries Talent cultivation
Organizational context	Benefit	Language training On-the-job training Pre-departure training
	Global strategy	
	Training provision	

Axial Coding

While open coding broke down the data into different categories, axial coding is “the act of relating categories to their subcategories along the lines of their properties and dimensions” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 124). To discover the ways that categories related to each other, the researcher utilized the paradigm, an analytic tool as suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998), to study the data. The basic components of the paradigm are conditions, actions/interactions, and consequences (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Strauss and Corbin (1990) further propose the paradigm model, in which they suggest that “in grounded theory we link subcategories to a category in a set of relationships denoting causal conditions, phenomenon, context, intervening conditions, action/interactional strategies, and consequences” (p. 99).

Causal conditions are events or incidents that influence phenomena.

Phenomenon is a term that represents “the central idea, event, happening, about which a set of actions/interactions is directed at managing or handling, or to which the set is related” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 100). Intervening conditions are broad and general conditions that facilitate or mitigate the actions/interactional strategies; the action/interactional strategies are purposeful or deliberate acts that are taken to resolve a problem and in so doing, manage or respond to the phenomenon; consequences are the outcomes which actions or interactions were taken in response to, or to manage the phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

During the process of axial coding, the researcher continued to utilize the analytic tools of asking questions, making constant and theoretical comparisons among categories, subcategories, and their properties that emerged in the open coding in order

to enhance the development of connections and relationships between categories and subcategories so as to posit categories to fit the paradigm model.

Simultaneously conducting open coding and axial coding, the researcher was able to create a pattern which denoted the linkage between the categories and subcategories. This pattern indicated that career development and an organization's global strategy were the main motivations for expatriate managers to accept an overseas assignment. It also identified the expatriates' mission to complete overseas assignments that strongly influenced their success. Moreover, several factors were found to influence expatriate managers' overseas assignments. Furthermore, challenges related to completing an overseas assignment were found, and various competencies employed to overcome these challenges were identified. Once these linkages were developed, the researcher used selective coding procedures to facilitate the integration between the categories and subcategories, which were developed in the open and axial codings, into an emerging theory.

Selective Coding

Selective coding is "the process of selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 116). Following the guidelines recommended by Strauss and Corbin (1990), the researcher began selective coding by explicating the story line based on the pattern which identified the linkage between categories and subcategories in the open and axial codings.

Step 1: Explicating the story line. As defined by Strauss and Corbin (1990), story line is the conceptualization of the story to explain what this study is all about. To facilitate developing the story line, the researcher reviewed the data by moving back and forth not only among categories and subcategories, but also among three types of coding procedures: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The researcher also began to write a paragraph to describe the central phenomenon that best encompassed the essence of the success of expatriate managers on overseas assignments. Therefore, the term “mission to successfully complete overseas assignments” evolved from categories identified as the core category in the study. It seemed to be sufficiently abstract to lead to the development of a middle-range theory about the success of expatriate managers on international assignments.

Step 2: Relating subcategories around the core category through the paradigm. Relating subcategories around the core category was done by means of the paradigm – conditions, context, action/interactional strategies, and consequences (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). To make categories and subcategories adequately fit the story line, the researcher returned to the story to rearrange and order categories which could best place the sets or happenings into the components of the paradigm model. Consequently, participants’ “motivation for career development” (defined as casual conditions) evoked their strong “mission to complete international assignments” (center phenomenon), in which they encountered various challenges (context), the issues of “family situations,” “training,” “personality characteristics,” and “cultural factors” (intervening conditions) had an impact on the success of expatriate managers on international assignments. To effectively manage and overcome context conditions

which occurred during their relocations, these expatriate managers utilized various “management competencies” (arranged as action/interactional strategies) to effectively perform and complete their overseas assignments. As a result, both the organizations and expatriates gained “strength and benefits” (consequences) in the process.

The phrase, mission to complete international assignments, was defined as the central phenomenon. It was in “a vivo term”, and can be conceptualized as a combination of three main properties: loyalty, honor, and responsibility. These three properties transformed the participants’ motivation for career development into mission to successfully complete overseas assignments.

The causal condition that evoked the expatriates’ strong mission to complete international assignments was the motivation for career development. Triggered by the global strategy of the organization focusing on global expansion, control over subsidiaries overseas, and talent cultivation, an overseas assignment was perceived as an opportunity for career development and a learning experience.

Cultural differences, cross-cultural interactions, language barriers, and operating a business overseas were the main challenges or stresses participants encountered while on overseas assignments. These context conditions required participants to employ management competencies (action/interaction strategies) in order to handle and manage in response to the central phenomenon (mission to successfully complete overseas assignment).

Family situation, training, and personality characteristics were identified as intervening conditions which either mitigated or facilitated action or interaction strategies. Some of these intervening conditions permeated the entire process of

successfully completing overseas assignments, facilitating or shaping the participants' various management competencies (action/interactional strategies) in dealing with different challenges or stress (context). Besides, some intervening conditions influenced the participants' motivation in terms of career development as well as the mission to successfully complete overseas assignments.

The action/interaction strategies, including communication skills, cultural intelligence, language ability, leadership, and professional knowledge and skills were employed to manage and handle challenges (context) in response to the need to successfully complete the overseas assignment (central phenomena).

Finally, meeting the consequences, including career advancement, knowledge enrichment, experience enhancement, the development of a global mindset, and competencies reinforcement contributed to motivating career development (causal condition).

Step 3: Validating the relationships. The statement about the process of the success of expatriate managers on international assignments sounds like this:

Motivated by career development and learning, an expatriate manager who had a strong mission to successfully complete an overseas assignment took actions or adopted various strategies. These included communication skills, cultural intelligence, language ability, leadership, and professional knowledge and skills needed to overcome challenges or stresses connected with cultural differences, language barriers, and cross-cultural interactions while operating a business overseas.

To validate the relationships among categories which were ordered into the paradigm model and were illustrated as in the statement above, the researcher went

back to closely examine the data, memos, code notes, and field notes to compare the scheme against the data in order to make sure that this “theoretical scheme should be able to explain most of the cases” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 159).

Step 4: Filling gaps in categories. In the grounded theory, “it is necessary to give conceptual density to the theory and to add increased conceptual specificity” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 141). To do this, the researcher continued to review the raw data and memos until the stage of final writing.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) stress that, in reality, the above steps were conducted through moving back and forth. Therefore, these selective coding steps were not done distinctly; rather, they were taken through an interactive process and were associated with open coding and axial coding. In other words, open coding, axial coding, and selective coding were conducted simultaneously and interactively almost throughout the entire coding procedure.

In summary, the procedure of data analysis created the theoretical model, including causal conditions, a central phenomenon, context, intervening conditions, actions/interactional strategies, and consequences explaining the process of effectively performing international assignments among 13 expatriate managers. The findings of an established theoretical model with detailed explanations and its propositions are illustrated in chapter five and chapter six respectively. Chapter seven includes a summary, a conclusion, and pertinent recommendations.

Chapter Five: Theoretical Model

Strauss and Corbin's (1998) coding paradigm model was adopted in order to develop a middle-range theory that explains the process of effectively completing overseas assignment by 13 Taiwanese expatriate managers. Following the paradigm model, the researcher linked subcategories to a category in a set of relationships which denoted casual conditions, phenomenon, context, intervening conditions, action/interactional strategies, and consequences (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 99).

Causal conditions are sets of events or happenings influencing the central phenomenon; intervening conditions are those which lessen or alter the impact of the causal conditions on the phenomenon; and context conditions are specific conditions creating a set of circumstances or problems (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Hence, both intervening factors and context conditions influence action/interaction strategies used to achieve the central phenomenon. These relationships will now be presented in detail.

Causal Conditions

The need for a global strategy is a driving force for the MNCs to expand their business all over the world so as to survive and compete successfully in the present global market. This requires having representatives and a staff everywhere. This also means creating a system of global management, an important issue which concerns the MNCs. On the other hand, people working for the MNCs are aware of the need to work abroad in order to further their career development. There is, then an interplay of personal factors and organizational context that provides motivation for an expatriate to advance his/her career by working overseas.

An organization's global strategy that includes business expansion, effective control over subsidiaries, and a policy that cultivates talent, are important factors that trigger the expatriates' desire to pursue their career development. All the participants in this study also agreed that these factors connected with an organization's global strategy played an important role in their desire to relocate overseas. Said one participant:

Our organization's line of deployment focuses mainly on serving Asian countries. However, our organization has had one service which operates a new line from Mainland China to Europe since April, 2004. But this is the first time we are actually going to enter Europe by establishing a subsidiary there. Therefore, to enhance our control of the business operation in Europe we need to increase the staff there so that we can understand European culture. And I could have the opportunity to relocate to Europe. (Case 1, personal communication, November 20, 2006)

In terms of talent cultivation, one participant succinctly expressed that there were two primary purposes for the organization to assign him to work abroad: "One was to continue to keep the business well. Another was talent cultivation, for the organization hopes you will have more opportunities to devote yourself to other areas of the organization." (Case 11, personal communication, December 7, 2007)

In this regard, while the participants understood and sensed the responsibilities and challenges they might face abroad, they considered it an opportunity to develop their career as well as an invaluable experience in their lives. Challenges were perceived by the participants either in the stage of pre-departure or of post-departure. The perception of the challenges, responsibilities, opportunities, and invaluable experiences provided an impetus for career development, which was made clear by many statements on the part of the participants.

Of course, I felt feverous because I had never been there. Besides, you went there to work, not to play. You worry about what you need to do and what you have to do, and how to do it... Then, I could sense how great a responsibility I was going to take upon myself there... Because the organization sends you there for a specific purpose, and not just to have fun, and this means a lot of pressure on you. (Case 8, personal communication, November 29, 2007)

Another participant put it this way:

Sure, the opportunity the organization offered you was the dream of all its employees. Because not everyone in the organization has this kind of opportunity. It was quite a privilege to be assigned to work overseas... Of course I was happy to have the opportunity for faster promotion gives you a sense of pride. (Case 11, personal communication, December 7, 2007)

And a third participant said:

You can imagine how excited you become to have the opportunity to go work overseas. This kind of reaction was common to many of us in the organization, including myself. It is an affirmation of the trust the organization has in you. Then I began to realize I needed to adjust attitude in order to face the differences between working in the home headquarters and in an overseas subsidiary... The third issue was learning how to adjust to stress regarding a new language, local life overseas, a different culture. (Case 1, personal communication, November 20, 2006)

The expatriates' complex reactions to their relocation can be best understood from a statement made by one of the top managers from the banking industry:

Team work is an important issue. Each of them (expatriates) carries great expectation, they could not become a burden of others. We recall them back home if they become a burden because we send them there to expand our business territory. If they become a burden, then they are like an injured soldier that has to be taken out of the battlefield. Thus, team work is important, and I know it from experience. We found out that some of the expatriates had difficulties adjusting to the local environment and had become a burden, so we had to recall them. (Case 10, personal communication, December 7, 2007)

Positive affirmation by the organization was identified as another motivation for career development. One participant (Case 11) described it as "a reason for pride and confirmation of your work." Other participants talked about it indirectly, with expressions such as: "My performance in the host country appears not to have been too

bad and my adaptation was good. So I had several opportunities to be selected. To be an expatriate who represents his home corporation means that you are trusted" (Case 1). Case 13 expressed himself in a similar way: "Being in charge of an official post is an affirmation, at least on the part of the organization. It gives you added motivation to overcome all the difficulties of an overseas assignment."

Central Phenomenon

To effectively complete an overseas assignment requires that the expatriates perform multi-dimensional functions because the process is tremendously complex. It carries within it too many unpredictable factors, both internal and external, connected with the working and living environments that will impact the expatriates' physical and psychosocial lives. Therefore, the researcher moved back and forth in using the data and endeavored to comprehensively understand the participants' stories in all their aspects so as to discover the central phenomenon.

To discover the central phenomenon, the researcher explored their stories from two dimensions. First, the researcher made efforts to understand what happened and what responses these participants did make to situations and events taking place during their overseas assignments. Secondly, the researcher also considered why these participants made such responses, and what their concerns were while responding to certain situations. Although data collected from these participants were retrospective and convoluted, and sometimes fragmented, the participants' desires to perform and complete their overseas assignments were obvious and evidently emerged from the data. By understanding the organization's expectations and the significance of their responsibilities, almost all participants emphasized the fact that an overseas assignment

was an “honor” (Case 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13) and a “responsibility” (Case 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13). This perception made them feel strongly that they “could not lose the organization’s good name” (Case 8 and 9). When the researcher asked the participants to describe their reactions to receiving the notice of an overseas assignment, the above quotations taken from the data, defined as “in vivo codes” in grounded theory research, indicate how they responded to the news. In addition, some participants used the term “mission” to explain the reason or motivation that enabled them to effectively complete an overseas assignment. Case 13 stressed that, “it was a mission; you could not fail the assignment that the organization gave you.” Case 11 briefly referred to the motive for completing an overseas assignment as “fulfilling a mission.” Consequently, a “mission to perform and complete international assignments” was labeled as the central phenomenon.

Loyalty, Honor, and Responsibility elucidate the pervasiveness of the participants’ sense of mission to perform and complete their international assignments.

Loyalty

Loyalty was one prominent property that all participants described as central to the mission to perform and complete the international assignments. Although the participants described loyalty in different ways, their attachment to their organizations played a key role in stimulating their sense of mission and in propelling them to fulfill their tasks. Case 8 said it well: “We regard ABC Airlines as our home, therefore, we manage it as the same as we manage our assets.” In a similar way, Cases 8 and 9 regarded increasing the profits of the organization as the most important issue while on overseas assignments:

As it was announced that I was being assigned to be the CEO of the New York subsidiary, my previous officer, the CEO of the Los Angeles subsidiary, commented: New York is a huge step upward in your career, so be cautious... Before you decide to do anything, consider acting on the principle that "you should invest in it as if it were your own company." Thus, I think that as the manager of an overseas subsidiary, you must put the organizational profits first and your personal issues second because you represent the organization overseas. (Case 9, personal communication, December 4, 2007)

Case 13 clearly revealed his loyalty to the organization while sharing his reaction to his second overseas assignment. He stated that "personally, I pretty much like to work overseas. I decided to experience it again. Therefore, I accepted it. It seems that I should not say, 'I accepted it, but rather, I was under orders.'"

On the other hand, one participant (Case 12) described "loyalty" from a different perspective. He believed that support from the headquarters was one of the critical elements for an expatriate to effectively perform his/her task overseas because "where there's no loyalty, there's no trust." So he goes on:

One of the important characteristics of being an expatriate is loyalty because it is inevitable for an expatriate to have some temptations from outside forces while he/she is on an international assignment. Everyone, from agents to locals, wants to flatter you. Whether you are able to accomplish your tasks effectively or not depends on the headquarters' support. It is impossible for you to play a great role if the headquarters has doubt about your loyalty. (Case 12, personal communication, December 16, 2007)

The other participants (Case 2, 8, 9, 11, 12, and 13) accentuated the importance of honor from the aspect of the organization's reputation and of their integrity. Case 2 made an impressive statement:

You must have the sense of honor when you are on your international assignment. You cannot lose the organization's good name while on your international assignment. You must do right things for yourself and if so, then you won't do the wrong thing for the organization. You must protect the name of the organization. (Case 2, personal communication, November 20, 2007)

Honor

Honor was another attribute which evoked the mission of the participants in performing and fulfilling their tasks overseas. Almost all participants from the two industries stated that the opportunity to relocate overseas was an honor, which provided “motivation” to accomplish their tasks. The incentive for some participants was the arrival of a long-awaited opportunity, which represented another form of praise by the organization and a compliment regarding their previous performance. Encouraged by the organization’s affirmation, the participants exuded confidence in performing their tasks. Case 8 described how he did while on an overseas assignment in order to repay the organization for the honor of having been “placed in an important position:”

I have been working in this organization for many years; the organization promoted me to the position – assigned me here – it was my motivation. You must execute your task very well because the organization places its trust on you to do this job. This gave me motivation, so you are able to work overseas not because the organization expatriated you to have fun, but rather because the organization trusted you with an important position. So you have all the motivation to complete your task. It is your job! (Case 8, personal communication, November 29, 2007)

In contrast to Case 8, Case 11 saw completing his international assignment from the perspective of “opportunity” and “growing experience.” He emphasized the equal importance of honor, described his international assignment as “being on the top of a wave,” and noted the significance of “being more humble than before.” “If you believe it (an international assignment) will be a big part of your personal growth, you must work harder than before,” he observed. Case 11 also made statements regarding the rotation system of the organization. He was referring to the pressure that comes

from the perception of honor and how he turned the pressure into a driving force for his mission towards completing his international assignment:

The rotation system is an important indicator of what is going on within the organization. Therefore, you will be assigned overseas if you go through the rotation system of the different operation units and meet their requirements. In fact, during the entire process of rotation, you will be evaluated to see whether you have enough leadership competence, whether you possess righteousness, whether you have integrity, and whether you have a great emotional intelligence. In fact, as part of management, you must demonstrate your competence to your supervisor. (Case 11, personal communication, December 7, 2007)

Responsibility

Responsibility is a strong characteristic associated with the concepts of honor and loyalty. In other words, honor and loyalty served as rationale and motivation for the participants to strengthen their desire to successfully complete their international assignments.

The participants showed responsibility in taking care of their assignments in a number of ways. To meet the headquarters' requirements of work efficiency, some participants emphasized that they often spent their after-hours completing urgent tasks which were supposed to be done by the local staff, but the local staff did not want to work overtime. As Case 2 recalled, "We always hurried to complete the tasks which were urgent for the headquarters." Another participant (Case 8) said, "I had to complete my task and there could be no mistakes." He continued:

I have worked here for quite a long time. Based on my working experience and qualifications, my job was that I had to complete the task at hand and there could be no mistakes. I have worked in the airline industry for so many years; I have been always ready to go with this working attitude because the organizations do not assign to overseas assignment to have fun. (Case 8, personal communication, November 29, 2007)

Similarly, Case 11 stressed that, “You must cope with whatever the task demands, as assigned by your supervisor because it is your job.” Case 12 emphasized this point in the following words:

As an expatriate, you not only needed to settle yourself down, but also need to get the business of the organization on the right track. One of the core tasks an expatriate manager should be responsible for is to assist the organization in expanding overseas subsidiaries. If an expatriate manager is aware of the need to maintain the reputation of the organization, he must know that if he makes a mistake, the entire organization will be blamed for it. (Case 12, personal communication, December 16, 2007)

The Context

A context “represents the specific set of properties that pertain to a phenomenon and is also the particular set of conditions within which the action/interaction strategies are taken to manage, handle, carry out, and responds to a specific phenomenon” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 101). The context conditions in this study are the challenges the participants faced while performing international assignments that required them to take certain necessary actions or engage in more interactions. Challenges refer to the difficulties or the stress associated with international assignments, including cultural differences, cross-cultural interactions, language barriers, and operating the business overseas. These challenges demand that an expatriate has a strong sense of mission in order to effectively complete an international assignment.

Challenges on Overseas Assignments

Cultural differences. Cultural differences included different social norms, values, behavior, customs, and regulations between the expatriates and the local environment. These were the most pervasive challenges the participants mentioned in

the data while describing the working and living situations they experienced. In terms of working experiences, most participants admitted that they faced “challenges” because of cultural differences, which, to a certain extent, impacted the ways they conducted their tasks and managed the local staff. Some participants perceived cultural differences as the major reason for the local staff’s work attitudes and behaviors, which were different from their home country’s staff and required the participants not only to adjust, but also to cope by resorting to a number of strategies.

Different working behaviors and attitudes created problems for the work of most participants. Participants who relocated to Southeast Asia, to countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia, said that they noticed cultural differences in work, attitudes, and behavior by local staff and these required them to adjust their management skills accordingly. Case 5 described his reactions to the job performance of the local staff in terms of attitudes about which he was very angry at first:

The biggest challenge of an international assignment is staff management.... In fact, the living conditions in Thailand were pretty good. And you did not need to worry about the issue of safety. However, the one thing that irritated me the most was management. In fact, everyone should know what the problem of management entails in Southeast Asia. There people are the more relaxed.... This seems to be in no hurry. We Taiwanese like to do things fast, especially in our company. Slowing things down is not our style. So I often was unhappy in the beginning because they were kind of slow. They [the local staff people] always delayed the tasks I assigned to them. They would suddenly tell you they did not know how to perform the jobs when you were already expecting the completion of the assignments. And they would tell you, “Calm down!” when you asked why they did not say anything the first day the assignments were given, as if you were the one at fault. (Case 5, personal communication, November 22, 2007)

One participant stated practically the same regarding the dramatic differences in work attitudes between members of the host and home staff:

You would think the drop in productivity had to be very large when you saw the work attitudes of the people in the host country because we worked very

hard in Taiwan, but these people worked so slowly. (Case 2, personal communication, November 20, 2007)

Case 11, who relocated to Indonesia, noted that his local staff's work behaviors and attitudes were issues that required dealing with:

The Indonesian pace is slow. Therefore, you have to push them. They will have express some opinions when you push them. In this area, then, you have to constantly talk to them. (Case 11, personal communication, December 7, 2007)

Some participants emphasized the importance of "been alert about violating local regulations" (Case 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13) because "it may cause a lot of trouble if you violate local codes" (Case 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13). The issues of "sexual harassment," "discrimination," and "Labor Laws" created the most common situations which the participants wanted to call to attention. Case 9 said, "You would often face a bigger challenge while on international assignments because you violated the host country's regulations by not paying attention to them." To further emphasize his point, Case 9 demonstrated the importance of understanding local regulations by sharing incidents that happened with his delegation:

For instance, at that time our organization was encouraging early retirement. I dealt with this issue very carefully when I was in the New York subsidiary. I consulted an attorney who recommended me a professional labor attorney. After conversations with this lawyer, I found out that you could not layoff your employees just because you had made a decision to do it. You had to have a reason to do it. For example, you can layoff your employees if you have difficulties continuing the operations of the office and you must shut it down. Then, as for early retirement, you can only deal with it by encouraging the employees into early retirement, for would violate local laws. (Case 9, personal communication, December 9, 2007)

On the issue of how cultural differences may impact business operations overseas, Case 9 gave his further insightful opinions:

In addition, on the issue of certain laws, which in the United States, imposes a heavy fine on violators, it is very important to pay attention, especially now. Because they violated the American fair-trade law, the British Airlines and the

Korean Airlines were both fined 300 million dollars, the equivalent of almost 13.1 billion Taiwanese dollars. It was a big shock to these two companies. Ten executives of the British Airlines and several executives of the Korean Airlines were found guilty by a U. S. court. I heard that two of them are currently serving their sentences and several of them were banned from life from entering the United States. Therefore, violating local regulations and laws will result in great harm, damages, and losses for an organization. So be aware! To be frank, an expatriate growing up in Taiwan's environment without global a global perspective can have a very negative impact on the organization and also on himself/herself. (Case 9, personal communication, December 9, 2007)

Just like Case 9, Case 7 restated that "local regulations and laws were the biggest pressure on the job for me and it bothered me the most." He said:

I was frightened to death when I received a subpoena from the court. It was the first time I received a subpoena in my life, and it was in English. It made me feel really alienated. So I was quite frightened at first. (Case 7, personal communication, November 28, 2007)

One participant (Case 4) reported that "workers in Germany have, by law, the right to three weeks off every year," which "made him feel so tired because once they are gone, I had to take over everything."

Although cultural differences regarding living conditions seemed to have no direct impact on the participants' performance, there was evidence of a number of difficulties resulting from cultural differences. Cultural shock and "lack of knowledge about the local social system" (Case 2, 4, 7, 9, and 13) were two major factors noticed by the participants as challenges requiring strategies to be overcome.

"Culture shock is the expatriates' reaction to a new, unpredictable, and therefore uncertain environment" (Adler, 1997, p. 238). Almost all participants suffered from culture shock, differing only in its severity. "No friends," "isolation," "loneliness," "difficult," "helplessness," "chaotic," "depressed," "frustrated," and "stressed" were expressions used by the participants when responding to the question, "How do you describe the living conditions?"

Most participants mentioned specific situations they experienced in their overseas adventures. "Catching fire on both sides" was the graphic description given by Case 7 when talking about how he felt during the first few weeks due to the pressures and challenges of having to adjust to work and the new life simultaneously.

Basically, it was a situation of burning from both sides. It was so in the beginning because everything was so messy at home, nothing was settled. Still, at work I was doing all right. (Case 7, personal communication, November 28, 2007)

A participant (Case 4) who relocated to Germany described how he "faced an uncertain future" when he arrived because of the emotional feeling of "unfamiliarity" and "helplessness:"

You thought that this was your first time far away from home and you realized that you must be there for several years. It was like having chills and feeling weak because you did not have anything nor anyone to rely on. You must rely on yourself when you were in a foreign country. You did not have any backup since we had only a few expatriates at that time and only 6 employees from Taiwan at the Hamburg subsidiary. And I did not know any of them. On the other hand, there were 6 to 7 local employees in my team at that time, and they were all Germans. Therefore, you felt you were facing an uncertain future and did not know whether you could handle the job. (Case 4, personal communication, November 21, 2007)

Another cultural difference that influenced the participants' adjustment to the living environment was the nature of the local social systems, which greatly frustrated the participants, as one of them observed:

Now, after 9-11 there are some very strict regulations and laws in the United States. Basically, we became, in the U. S., people without identification papers. The first time I was in the United State, I went to the bank to open an account and the bank teller asked me for my social security number. At that time, it was easier to get it; I got mine in one week. Then the bank asked me for a photo ID and asked to show things like bill receipts with my mailing order address, and they would accept only utility bill receipts. I had just arrived, so how could I show them any utility bills? As it turned out, I could not open an account because I did not have utility bills. I was thinking to myself: "I have been working in the banking industry for more than 20 years, but I cannot even open

an account in an American bank.” That really depressed me. (Case 7, personal communication, November 28, 2007)

Cross-cultural interactions. Cultural differences include working attitude, norms, regulations, and misunderstanding involving misperceptions and misinterpretations which become critical factors influencing or increasing the challenges faced by the participants to effectively interact with the host country nationals.

Misunderstandings involving misperceptions and misinterpretations emanating from cultural differences were critical factors leading to a certain degree of difficulties and challenges for the participants to effectively interact with the locals. Often, misunderstandings, misperceptions, or misinterpretations occur between people from different cultural backgrounds because of the lack of awareness of cultural differences and of knowledge of these cultures.

Cultural differences can become negative factors when combined with the lack of accurate knowledge of the local culture and, as a result, sow the seeds of ineffective interaction with the host country nationals. The participants related their diverse experiences of knowing that “it is difficult to blend into local life” (Case 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7) while interacting with the host country nationals. Case 7 believed that cultural differences were a major reason for the misunderstanding between himself and his Japanese subordinates, which led to difficulties in blending into the local life.

Basically, I think there were a lot of expatriates in our organization who have difficulty blending into local life. It is hard to blend into local life because of the cultural differences. Therefore, misunderstandings or miscommunication will occur. Or gaps would occur. For example, when I was in Japan as a supervisor, I thought I was doing them a favor to the locals I contacted. But they did not appreciate it at all. They even thought that I was insulting them.

But I was sincere. It is a difference in culture. As you can see, it was not easy to blend into their life. (Case 7, personal communication, November 28, 2007)

Echoing Case 7, Case 2 admitted:

It is very hard to blend into local social life. It has a certain degree of difficulty.” There is no secret that this is due to the differences between Westerners and Orientals. It is hard to envisage Asians and Americans getting together after work. Indeed, it seldom happens. (Case 2, personal communication, November 20, 2007)

By contrast, Case 4 added something else to the realization of the “difficulties to blend into local social life” (Case 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7). Having twice received international assignments, he relocated to Hamburg, then to New York on different occasions. Case 4 related how he felt it necessary “to keep a certain distance” in order not to cause unnecessary misunderstanding. He elaborated:

Life in New York, we called it bizarre. There are too many people there. And, basically, everyone is an immigrant, so you don’t know what is the background of this or that person. And you will feel that everyone tends to keep a certain distance because everyone seems to be an immigrant and does not know the next person. ... He/she will naturally keep a certain distance from you. He/she might not want to blend into your life and hopes you won’t bother either. Even we look like Asians, I don’t know whether he/she is a Korean or a Japanese or ...; and you don’t know what reaction you will get by approaching him/her. (Case 4, personal communication, November 21, 2007)

He continued to talk about his attitude about interacting with the host country nationals:

As to interaction with people outside the company, in fact, it was very scarce because of New York’s social life and make-up. You would not be willing to greet people because the relationship between one person and the other is very “iffy...indeed it is a city jungle! If someone is approaching, you would not want to get to know who it is, you just wish to be left alone! In fact, everyone is living in his own little world in the United States. Europe is different. (Case 4, personal communication, November 21, 2007)

These examples explain why participants suffered from many challenges while trying to adjust to local social life. It mirrors the participants’ psychological reactions

of “isolation” and “loneliness,” but they also highlight the importance of devising coping strategies:

Discrimination” and “harassment” are two critical issues participants who have relocated in the United States discussed, so they emphasized the need to give more attention to them while interacting with host country nationals. As Case 4 said, “you must be very careful about the way you speak. Do not make comments about how local nationals dress or how they look. This can lead to a charge of harassment in the United States. (Case 4, personal communication, November 21, 2007)

As to the issue of discrimination, Case 2 described how he felt “discriminated” against when he communicated with his American customers:

I was the representative of the headquarters. In fact, local clients who were Americans were prone to talk with my local staff when I went to visit them, for they were reluctant to talk with us, Asians. They were actually discriminating. This is how I felt. Even when I was accompanied by only one local staff person and they knew I had more power than the local staff person, they still would rather communicate with the local staff than with me. (Case 2, personal communication, November 20, 2007)

On the other hand, the different working attitudes of host country nationals work as a challenge for the participants to adjust to the new work environment. Case 1 mentioned how different he felt about his local staff members in Germany:

Take, for example, our local staff agents in Hamburg: Some had a very stubborn working attitude. What I described as hard is that sometimes they would do whatever they pleased about the work. (Case 1, personal communication, November 20, 2007)

Case 4 spent much time coping with the host country nationals’ different working attitudes, which arose from the difference in their national cultures:

The difference in culture is very substantial. I, for example, if I ask my subordinates in Taiwan to do something, they will just go ahead and do it. As to my subordinates in Germany, if you ask them to do something, they would start debating. Although you are their supervisor, you had to convince them. Thus, you needed to spend a lot of time coping with it. (Case 4, personal communication, November 21, 2007)

The language barriers. Language was a barrier that made participants, both those who relocated to English-speaking and non-English speaking countries, feel insufficient in interacting with the people and the culture of the local nations. Those who relocated to non-English speaking countries noted that the language barrier particularly hampered further interactions with the locals and made them feel panicky or uncomfortable when they did not understand what those people were doing or talking about. This barrier made their lives overseas more difficult.

But even participants who were relocated in English-speaking countries commented that insufficiency in English influenced job performance and hampered further interaction with the locals. One typical problem with language was that they had to spend more time trying to understand what the natives were discussing, particularly during their meetings. Case 3 admitted that language was one of the main factors influencing the effectiveness of an overseas assignment because

English is only our second language. Thus, you even had trouble arguing with the local staff. I think our English proficiency is far from being enough to fully understand the locals. I was not able to speak fluently at meetings. This led me to spend more time than the local staff in trying to understand and deal with the problems. (Case 3, personal communication, November 21, 2007)

Another barrier was the inability to understand what the locals were saying because of their accent. Case 2 said he did not have much of a problem with cultural differences, but sometimes he felt depressed not understanding the clients because of their accent. Case 4 had a similar experience, complaining of his inability to understand the announcements made in the New York subway system because of the speakers' accent. Furthermore, the "anticipatory fear" (Case 7) of speaking posed another barrier that impeded full cross-cultural interactions by the participants. Some observed that they were afraid to speak when they first arrived because their partners might not understand

what they were saying. One participant (Case 13) found himself unable to answer phone calls during the first three weeks because he thought his English was not good enough.

As to how the language barrier influenced their living conditions, participants that relocated to English-speaking countries encountered similar problems. One serious situation caused by the anticipatory fear of not knowing how to exactly express oneself occurred with some participants who got sick. Case 7 even emphasized that the importance of trying to stay healthy:

If you were relocated to the city where Chinese population is scarce, it is difficult to locate a Chinese doctor. In such situation, the biggest problem was illness because you really are unable to explain your illness and the pain you feel. (Case 7, personal communication, November 28, 2007)

In addition, the language barrier also impeded some participants from blending into local social life. Although he appreciated a party invitation from his local staff, Case 7 found himself worrying about the ability to make longer conversations, and this, sometimes made him see a party invitation from a member of the local staff as trouble.

Given these experiences shared by the participants, it was not surprising to hear a very succinct comment by Case 6, who was expatriated to the United States for six years. He said, "It will make you feel overwhelmed with sorrow if your language ability is not sufficient." Case 6 likewise emphasized that working abroad without sufficient language ability can be very painful.

On the other hand, the situations encountered by those who relocated to non-English-speaking countries appeared more complicated. The reason is that, although English is a common language in the service industry of the world, English was the second language for both expatriate participants and the locals. This created large barriers in communication for both participants and the local office staff. Case 5

admitted to noticing the barrier while conveying information, such as teaching them how to make a comprehensive report. He thought that the local staff's insufficient English ability, plus the fact that English was his second language, created quite a barrier between him and the local staff members. To some extent, the participants' unfamiliarity with the local language gave rise to uncertainty and fear about the local work environment during the initial stage of relocation, particularly when local staff people communicated with each other in the local language. Case 4 shared his feelings of fear partly caused by the language barrier he face when he first arrived in Germany:

I felt panic the first time when I made acquaintance with the local staff because I did not know what they were doing. I wouldn't feel secure until I had understood the task and had a grip on what I was going to do. I felt like a fool because I did not have any idea about what they were doing. You are a supervisor! A supervisor? So what! I was unable to step in and get involved. I was unable to sit down to talk about their problems. Besides, I did not know what to do. (Case 4, personal communication, November 21, 2007)

Case 7 shared how he felt the difficulties of the language barrier while in Japan:

The local staff people were like monitors scanning the newcomers' language ability and that they try to use language the newcomers would understand. At times, however, the locals intentionally adopted language which they thought you were unable to understand. They knew well you had a language barrier, particularly if you were their supervisor, so they knew how to talk to you. However, the problem was that although you were able to talk to the local staff and understand what they said to you in the office, you were unable to figure out what they were saying outside the office. (Case 7, personal communication, November 28, 2007)

Case 12 who relocated to Malaysia described how "panic" struck him when he was holding the first meeting and realized there was a language barrier. He admitted that because English is his second language, difficulties in listening and speaking, plus his lack of knowledge about Malaysia resulted in panic in the beginning:

In fact, I was all nerves in the beginning because English is not my mother tongue. Besides, English is the dominant language at all formal occasions and at all meetings in the local office. I was in panic. And this was not only within

the work environment. I was also nervous when I arrived at Malaysian airport, for their language uses the alphabet, but the phonetics are quite different. So the signs in the airport did not make any sense to me. That's why I became quite nervous and things got worse when I faced the Immigration official because English is only my second language; I did not have too much difficulty in reading and writing, but listening and speaking were big problems. (Case 12, personal communication, December 16, 2007)

Case 1 who worked in Germany admitted that "language was the biggest difficulty" because he sensed that, "although some Germans [outside the office] understood English, they were unwilling to talk to you or respond in English." Often he had to say it so many times because the locals could not express themselves in English. He said he had to rely on the pictures on restaurant menus because all entrées were written in German. He did not even know how to shop at the supermarket because all labels for products were in German.

In addition, both Cases 8 and 5 discussed how the language barrier between them and their local clients influenced the effectiveness of their transactions. Things got even more complicated for them because none of their parties could express themselves in English. Case 8 stated, "I communicated with my agent in Korea in English, but usually there was no effective communication from either side. To be frank, the Korean's English ability was not that good."

Operating business overseas. Getting the business into operation at the foreign subsidiary was the central mission the corporate headquarters assigned the participants. As mentioned in the causal conditions, business expansion and control over the subsidiary were the two main goals of the organizations' global strategy. The research participants were responsible not only for the management, but also for business expansion. This is why the participants' international assignments involved much

greater empowerment than their domestic assignments. They were expected not only to deal with the issue of management, but also of the control of the business. On the other hand, more empowerment means bigger responsibility, which resulted in tremendous stress. Case 8 said it clearly and precisely: "Work stress is enormous because you understand that the organization assigned for a reason." As to the distinction between domestic assignments and international assignments, Case 8 noted that "you must think carefully before making any decisions because the corporate headquarters gave you all this power. This is quite different from your job on domestic assignments."

Concerning the stress from business operations, most participants reported that they were responsible for not only maintaining the business operation, but also for expanding the business. "You are responsible for the operation's quota, which places much pressure on you, unlike it used to be at the corporate headquarters", stated Case 9 emphatically. Case 5 acknowledged the importance of business success. He observed:

Performance is the most important thing, for you have to manage everything. In fact, the major task of a representative assigned to a foreign country was to take care of the ships, keep track of them, and prevent any damage to them. Performance is what counts. I had to know how many talented people I needed to hire. And, of course, we needed to understand the financing as well. These were the major tasks. In other words, you must manage everything. (Case 5, personal communication, November 22, 2007)

As to how participants perceived stress resulting from management, some expressions they used were: "overall management" (Case 12), "manage everything relevant to the host office" (Case 8), "too many things to do simultaneously" (Case 4). Case 8 described his experience that "overseas assignments are different from domestic work because domestic jobs are operated by the corporation headquarters.

The responsibility of international assignments includes everything relevant to the host office. You must do everything relevant to the organization.”

Case 4 described how “managing too many things simultaneously” led to stress, so that he “felt so tired” and “was concerned about comments made by others.”

I was in charge of all of Europe, from the Mediterranean to the North Sea. I had to take care of many things there besides management. Things like tracking the ships, visiting them to see whether they needed repairs, purchasing steel parts, and managing M and R. Consequently, my desk was always full of memos, which kept piling up while I was away from my desk for meetings or something else. Therefore, it was seven days a week job, and I got very tired. (Case 4, personal communication, November 21, 2007)

Case 12 elaborated more as to how stressed participants were while playing the role of bridgemakers between the corporate headquarters and the local office.

“Sandwich biscuits” was the term he used to describe the situation of dealing with conflicts between the corporate headquarters and the local office. He said, “You feel as if you were a sandwich biscuit, sandwiched between local questions and questions from the corporate headquarters.”

Cultural differences are critical factors influencing the participants’ management. Since it has been discussed and addressed in the sections about cultural differences and cross-cultural interaction, it will not be repeated here.

In summary, it seemed that the stress of the business operation was caused by a mixture of responsibilities of managing the local office, expanding the business, and meeting the corporate headquarters’ expectations or requirements. Case 12 illustrated how stressed he was while facing staff management, business expansion, and the demands of the organization.

If you do not have strong beliefs, you will be easily defeated by too much stress. I said you must watch over the overall management. Besides, I not only

managed the Malaysian subsidiary and its branches around Malaysia. I was also responsible for their performance in both the expansion of business and its operation. I was equally the representative of the region of Southeast Asia, not just of one country. Therefore, the stress was tremendous. The Taipei office [the corporate headquarters] would correct and blame you. You must write a self-critical report to the corporate headquarters. Too much stress! (Case 12, personal communication, December 16, 2007)

The Intervening Conditions

“Intervening conditions are the broad and general conditions related to action/interactional strategies and are those mitigating or otherwise altering the impact of causal conditions on a phenomenon” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 131). The intervening conditions “act to either facilitate or constrain the action/interactional strategies taken within a specific context” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 103). The broad conditions that either constrain or facilitate action/interactional strategies or mitigate or otherwise alter the impact of causal conditions of the phenomenon in this study are: family situation, training, and personal characteristics. Each will be presented below.

Family Situation

Family situation was one of the critical factors influencing the participants’ performance on international assignments. Within this factor, the major issues are spouse adjustment, children’s education and adjustment, and care for parents. Most participants emphasized their concerns about family members when receiving notice of their relocation overseas. “What do I do with my family?” (Case 8) “What do I do with my girl friend?” (Case 1) “What do I do with my children?” (Case 8) These, plus the “fear of losing their familiar connections” (Case 1 and 2), were the most common reactions to their international assignment in terms of family situations. Therefore, their main problem was how to make the best arrangements for their family while they

were on international assignments. The actions taken and attitudes adopted by the participants while dealing with family situations were quite varied.

Ten of the 13 research participants on international assignments were married. The strategies for dealing with the issue of whether to bring the family along or not were multiple. Some participants, thinking about the cultural differences and the adjustment needed, were worried about their wives becoming a burden if they came along because they themselves had to worry about their own adjustment, and having to deal with their wives' problems would be too much. A participant (Case 8) who relocated to Korea succinctly summarized it all: "There are some advantages in living with the family, but the burdens will multiply." By contrast, Case 5 presented a very different viewpoint on this issue. He thought his spouse may become more of a "burden" if he left her alone with his parents in the home country since his spouse and his mother did not quite get along. He said, "It will become a burden psychologically if I leave my spouse alone in Taiwan. I live with my mother. Conflicts between my wife and my mother will often occur when there is no husband or son to smooth things out."

Since loneliness, boredom, and helplessness are the terms participants used to describe how they felt when encountering difficulties in living in a culturally different environment, the participants who had no family members accompanying them remarked that technological advances and the Internet have greatly reduced homesickness and relieved their worries over family situations.

Spouse adjustment. Participants, who did not have previous experience living or working in culturally different countries accompanied by their spouses, stressed that when they brought them along, they had more trouble with cultural adjustment and

“felt hurt” (Case 7) because they had no friends, had to face the language barrier, and experienced a feeling of helplessness and boredom and so on. One participant (Case 9 and 12) noted that “basically, the life of an expatriate’s spouse is very hard. In fact, she did not have any friends there.” Another participant (Case 7), relocated to New York and Tokyo, emphasized that his wife had “a very poor adjustment” during his first relocation to New York because of no friends, and being totally dependent on others. These made her reluctant to stay any longer.

My wife is a person who is not very independent. Life for her was very hard. I think the major problem was that she had no friends, since she had just arrived at a culturally-different environment. Besides, I was too busy with my work. Usually, I went out to work at 7:30am and returned home at almost 8:00pm. Therefore, she stayed home alone the whole day. She did not have any friends at first; she felt very lonely. No wonder, then, that she had problems adjusting. Her pressure index was much higher than mine. She, of course, suggested we do not stay much longer. (Case 7, personal communication, November 28, 2007)

Another participant described how his spouse had to suffer because of the language barrier. Her adjustment problems triggered quarrels between him and his wife during a certain stage of his first relocation to the United States:

For my wife, life in the U. S. was very difficult. She was not proficient in English. I could not deal with a lot of her problems because I had to work. Therefore, she had to deal with them by herself, taking care of children, even paying utility bills and making phone calls. These were all big challenges for her. No wonder, then that she felt so depressed for some time. We often quarreled. The pressure was just too much at that time. It is really too much. (Case 9, personal communication, December 4, 2007)

Children’s education and adjustment. Another major concern of the participants was the possible negative impact on the children’s education because of different educational systems. The consistency of children’s education when they were

in the host country and when they returned home was the main concern. As one participant who did not bring his children along attested:

Personally, I did not bring my children with me because I believe it is better for them to grow up in the environment they belong to. They will suffer if you relocate them along with you, and it will be very painful for them. I have had my own personal problems adjusting. The children's difficulties with adjustment will be much more serious. Some people think that living aboard will enhance children's views and knowledge. I agree, but we cannot predict our next relocation. And their education will become a big issue when they come back from our overseas assignment. (Case 8, personal communication, November 29, 2007)

Case 9, by contrast, believed that it is important for teenagers to stay with their parents. Taking this into consideration, he decided to have his spouse and children over during the third year of his first relocation in the United States because he had been given notice that he would stay in the U. S. for another three years. He noted that, yes, his children "suffered tremendous pressure" right after moving to the U. S. due to language problems and cultural differences. Continuing their studies in Chinese was very hard for his children when they were going to school in the U. S.

Care for parents. The care of one's parents, especially one's parents' health conditions, was another family issue many participants mentioned as an inevitable concern while they were on international assignments. One of the participants (Case 8) clearly expressed his concern: "I worried about my mother's age. She is getting old, she is over 70. Fortunately, her health is in good condition." Another participant (Case 9) thus spoke of his grim "dilemma."

The most difficult situation for us [expatriates] to deal with regards our family members. It is not an easy matter to handle. In my case, for example, I was facing a dilemma by going abroad. My wife, my children, and I all lived together with my parents. My father was 85 and my mother was 75 at the time. I was the only male adult who could take care of them and of the family's children. So when I left, my parents felt very helpless. I used to always drive my

father to the hospital when he had a heart attack. This became my wife's task while I was on international assignment. It put an enormous pressure on her. Sometimes she had to call a taxi at 2:00 am to drive my father to the hospital because he had a heart attack. After two years, my parents felt that it was not good for a couple to be apart for such a long time and suggested that my wife and children move to the United State. The said it was up to us. (Case 9, personal communication, December 4, 2007)

Personality Characteristics

An international assignment involves multidimensional functions and purposes for both the organization and the expatriates. The expatriate managers are not only responsible for sustaining or expanding international business operations, but also for maintaining or advancing personal career development. The fulfillment of these goals requires from the participants multiple and salient personal characteristics because doing business overseas means facing dynamic and culturally different living and unpredictable working conditions which may have no defined paradigm to be followed. External factors which may terminate the participants' international assignments earlier are discussed in the section about "The Context." Family situation, discussed above, is another variant factor that impacts on the participants' determination or mission to complete their international assignments. This study led to finding out that participants' personal characteristics play the most prominent role in avoiding or preventing an early termination of international assignments.

All the participants of this study as former expatriate managers strongly emphasized the importance of personal characteristics in facilitating the completion of international assignments. One participant (Case 13) with 27 years of experience in international assignments asserted that "professional skills and knowledge won't work if an expatriate does not have certain salient personal characteristics." A variety of

personal characteristics emerged from the data regarding the participants' management skills and ability to cope with the different challenges they encountered and how these affected their management and performance level. Personal characteristics were believed to be critical to advancing the participants' determination to succeed. The relationships with their competence, determinations and interrelationships will be further illustrated in detail in Chapter six.

Each participant revealed different personal characteristics in dealing with or facing different challenges or incidents. To best demonstrate how personality characteristics affected their decision-making and their attitudes in facing challenges, comparisons showing the contrasts will be presented and discussed case by case.

As was commented by Case 1:

I think that to be a successful expatriate, personal characteristics are critical factors facilitating the completion of an international assignment. You must learn how to empty yourself out in order to accept new things. Besides, you must be brave to ask when you encounter defeats: "How can I do better?" (Case 1, personal communication, November 20, 2007)

Case 1 also provided an example of how his flexibility facilitated his adjustment to a new environment:

Like I just mentioned earlier, he [a German man] may be unwilling to talk to me in English when I asked him the directions. If not, I can ask someone else, right? I don't have to go directly to him. There are so many people on the street. I could... or I can ask people who look like us, same complexion, yellow skin, or people who look friendlier. I think I adjusted because I was willing to try several ways. (Case 1, personal communication, November 20, 2007)

Case 2 thought that open-mindedness is a necessary characteristic for an expatriate to interact with people from different cultures. He also mentioned the significance of resistance to stress because an expatriate will encounter many difficulties in a foreign country.

Personality characteristics is another issue; you must be open-minded because you will contact people from different cultures, especially, in the United States, a cultural melting pot where you find people from many different countries - Anglos, Hispanics, African-Americans, Native Americans, Asians like the Koreans and the Japanese, many people from India. Thus, open-mindedness is really important. Also important is your ability to resist stress, for the difficulties will be many. I did not know how to get fuel for my car when I just arrived in the United States. You must know how to get fuel by yourself in the United States. I met an American who did not have a good attitude because of I was an Asian applying for my social security number. (Case 2, personal communication, November 20, 2007)

Case 2 consider himself easygoing, and that facilitated his adjustment. He indicated, "I feel I am the person who easily cooperates with others. Due to this personal characteristic, I will make an effort to blend into the local life if I enter a new environment which requires me to undergo some change."

Case 4 pointed out that to bear hardship without complaining and have resistance to stress are two major personal characteristics relevant to an expatriate's success. He said an expatriate has to face many comments from people and even expressions of dissatisfaction about his performance. Therefore, to overcome these situations, an expatriate who knows how to resist stress and bear hardship without complaining, is overcoming crucial obstacles to his/her success:

In trying to figure out who is a successful expatriate, we first must consider first the ability to bear hardships without complaining because he/she will hear a lot of negative comments and complaints about his/her job performance. Therefore, you have to be able to adjust.... Then, you must be able to adjust to stress. Thus, stress resistance is significant. I can talk from experience. At first I was too concerned about the comments made by other people about me. After all, the company assigned me there to be manager, and stress is part of the job. Maybe I did a good job. I had very little office time in the United States and in Europe. Perhaps, for whatever reasons, people were not satisfied with my performance, so I had to take it without complaining. (Case 4, personal communication, November 21, 2007)

Case 4 thought that a one month pre-departure training provided by the organization before his assignment was not enough because the “differences between the old and the new jobs were very many.” However, his independence and persistence made it easier for him to overcome his concerns.

Our company follows a certain procedure before relocating its people: training and specific focus on the assignments etc. However, not much is said about cultural differences or folk customs related to the new environment. The company will spend about one month training the expatriates. But, in reality, it is not enough because the differences in the professional tasks are worlds apart. Therefore, I depended on myself. That’s our destiny: we have to handle whatever comes our way, good or bad, and get it over it. Therefore, I went for the relocation. (Case 4, personal communication, November 21, 2007)

Case 5 thinks that being proactive and a self-learner are the major criteria his organization uses to select a candidate for an international assignment. He stated:

I often told them [members of the local staff] that you have to be proactive if you want to get into management. Because of this approach, people in Taiwan are very professional about their jobs. Besides, you must learn by yourself. The organization would not like to give you an international assignment if you are not proactive and a self-learner. (Case 5, personal communication, November 22, 2007)

Case 5 feels that he loves to help people and this made him willing to assist his local staff in solving the problems they faced. This, in turn, earned him the respect of the local staff:

It is a personal characteristic of mine to want to help people. But everyone knew why: When they [the members of the local staff] were unable to solve some problems, I jumped in to give them extra assistance. They respected you because I was helping them. (Case 5, personal communication, November 22, 2007)

Case 7 considered himself an extrovert, and that made him immediately active and willing to understand the culture in an attempt to narrow the gap between people from different cultural backgrounds. In order to overcome work stress stemming from the different regulations, Case 7 made use of his time to attend seminars related to his

profession and thus gain professional knowledge and information. He also learned how different the new culture was in comparison with his home country. Thus his self-learning ability made him much more aware of the cultural differences he was faced with in the new position.

Independence, confidence, self-learning, and proactiveness are the main characteristics of Case 8. These were enhanced by his ability to cope with cultural differences and adjust to the new work environment.

The beginning, the first month was the most difficult in terms of adjusting to the new environment. You not only had to adjust to life in a foreign country, but also had to manage office jobs. You must think about general living issues. The first month was the most painful for me. However, these problems did not impact on my job performance because I pretty much pride myself on doing business; my business ability is very strong; I am very familiar with the business. As to those things I have never learned, my attitude is that I have to get started. (Case 8, personal communication, November 29, 2007)

Thus, his self-learning was critical in adding to his cultural know-how and his cross-cultural adjustment did not take too long. When he just arrived in Korea, Case 8 immediately went on to learn the Korean language in order to understand directions and cultural differences. In order to know how to find places, he used to drive the whole day around the city.

The company provided me with a brochure on Korean culture. It was very simple. Because of the way I am, I spent time surfing on the Internet to collect information like transportation directions and so forth. One of the things that frustrated me the most in Korea was driving. I always got lost. To solve this problem, I came up with a solution: I carried two bottles of water with me on the weekends and picked up several streets to drive from the beginning to the end. I drove whole day. After that, I seldom got lost again. (Case 8, personal communication, November 29, 2007)

Case 9 highlighted the fact that integrity was “chapter one.” He believed that “management without integrity would have a lot of problems gaining respect from

subordinates.” Besides, he thought that an overseas subsidiary won’t work out well if the company assigned an expatriate without integrity to lead it. Furthermore, he emphasized the importance of “extroversion” and “challenge-taking” because what an expatriate faces living and working in a foreign country, is full of constant challenges.

As I mentioned earlier, you must be always honest with your officers and men for your subordinates to respect you. Besides, in terms of your personality, the most important is integrity – that’s “chapter one.” Your subordinates would not like to work under your management if you deal behind their backs. Thus, you must earn the respect of your subordinates to be able to work effectively with you. This way you will have a dynamic team work. As to what personal characteristics an expatriate should have in order to be a better fit for an international assignment, basically, he/she should be more of an extrovert. Besides, he/she should want to work for a job which offers constant challenges. (Case 9, personal communication, December 4, 2007)

In order to abide by local regulations, Case 9 consulted an attorney for recommendations and to put together an appropriate way to cope with the organization’s strategy of encouraging early retirement while he was a CEO at the New York subsidiary. This shows the personal trait of foresight, which played an important role in directing him and reducing the mistakes.

Case 11, in citing his experiences, emphasized the significance of integrity, ethics, emotional intelligence, courage, and patience for an expatriate to effectively complete an international assignment.

As an expatriate, basically he/she must possess several traits, such as a high IQ, integrity, and ethics. Integrity and ethics are very important. You can not arbitrarily engage in improper business, steal money from the organization; and do not let your family down. To reach these requirements, you must possess integrity; you must possess ethics and you must possess courage and patience. (Case 11, personal communication, December 7, 2007)

On the other hand, in order to better understand his local staff’s work behavior and attitudes, Case 11 consulted his predecessor in order to know the local customs and taboos with regards to his management position. In addition, he also spent time

observing his local staff to understand them in an attempt to implement an appropriate strategy in management. These actions adopted by case 11 revealed how his personal traits of prudence shaped his leadership style:

In addition, you had to consult your predecessor so as to understand local taboos and customs. We call this "management comparison." You would have a certain period of observation after listening to this information. You would have a certain period of observation after you arrived. Then, you would find out whom you can talk with or who required further understanding. Do not implement a strategy immediately, but allow yourself more time to observe and implement a strategy. (Case 11, personal communication, December 7, 2007)

Another example Case 11 shared with the researcher was about how his self-learning and self-expectation propelled him to learn the local language, which was not the organization's requirement. He described the situation this way:

Before I went to the destination of the relocation I spent time learning local language. In fact, you must prepare for your fundamental competence if you want to become a very successful top management of public relation. Therefore, as I mentioned earlier, language is like a basic skill. How well you hope you can do it, it is your own requirement. The organization won't ask you to do it. Therefore, you must do it on your own initiative. (Case 11, personal communication, December 7, 2007)

Case 11 further emphasized the significance of personal characteristics in dealing with challenges. He stressed that "you are the only person who can help yourself when facing difficulties." Therefore, he considered imperturbability critical to cope with challenges, especially those one should respond to immediately.

For example, while I was in Indonesia... the ways and attitudes I deal with challenges was as the same as I did in the headquarters – I was very imperturbably in response to questions asked by those mass media while the organization faced serious risks. What trained me to have this characteristic? It was self-request; you must tell yourself you are the only person who can help you out while you face difficulties. No one can assist you if you are unable to calm down. Therefore, in essence, you must face them. (Case 11, personal communication, December 7, 2007)

Case 12 shared about many aspects with regard to personal characteristics, in which he emphasized that optimism and courage were very important for an expatriate to adjust to a foreign country and to get rid of the fear of living in a culturally different environment. He briefly described that “you went to a foreign country alone; everything was started from zero. Therefore, you must be optimistic.” In addition, he also stressed that “If an expatriate is more likely to resist stress, be willing to learn, and love to absorb knowledge, then he or she will be able to find out a way to adjustment.” Furthermore, he also succinctly expressed that “I, personally, am very willing to accept various challenges.”

Case 12 spoke directly about sincerity as a critical factor for an expatriate manager in earning trust from the local staff. His sincerity not only assisted him in earning trust from the local staff, but also combined with his open-mindedness, facilitated his blending into the local social life.

Your personality must be easy to get along with others....You must be able to get along with others. For example, I went to attend Indian or Malaysian wedding ceremony or any rituals; I would attend them I wouldn't reject if they [local staffs] invited me. If they sit down and had meals by hands, I had meals by hands. That is you must blend into their life. The language communication, of course, was imperative. In addition, sincerity, you must be sincere – you must let them feel that you are standing with them, rather than you are standing over them or you are standing beside them. You must make them feel you are on their side and that you are fighting for them with the headquarters. (Case 12, personal communication, December 16, 2007)

Self-reflection was another personal characteristic Case 12 said he possessed and that facilitated his leadership in managing the local subordinates and in coping with underproductive staff members. He emphasized that sometimes a staff member's underproductive problem resulted from both sides, staff and supervisor; therefore, being a supervisor you not only have to think about what are the problems that make

the staff under productive, but also reflect about the fact that you must have some problems in management. He stated,

In fact, sometimes local staffs' performance was not good. But the reasons resulted in their poor performance was not because he or she did not do a good job, but rather you might put him or her in a wrong position, or you might not educate him or she well, or you did not clearly convey your requirement of objectives to him or her. In addition, it was probably because of cultural differences so that he or she did not grasp your key point....Therefore, this problem was resulted from two sides, not only his or her personal problems, but also how did you manage him or her – you had problems! (Case 12, personal communication, December 16, 2007)

Case 13 suggested that personality characteristics are very significant and should be considered by the organization while selecting expatriate candidates. He emphasized that “to be willing to accept an overseas assignment does not represent having the competence [to succeed in overseas assignments].” He went on to indicated, “Possessing the characteristic of open-mindedness is critical to assist an expatriate in his or her ways of getting along with people.” Case 13 explained that being willing to take risks and accept challenges were important for the effectiveness of overseas assignments because he believed that only if you are willing to take risks would you be motivated to learn what you need to know. He stated,

Having the willingness to take risk is very important. Accepting challenge will motivate you to learn and to ask. You might make mistakes while you are learning. You might do not know what will happen next. But at least, you have the characteristics to try and to accept challenges. (Case 13, personal communication, December 26, 2007)

On the other hand, Case 13 revealed diverse personal characteristics in different settings and happenings. These varied personal characteristics not only influenced Case 13's decision on accepting overseas assignments but either shaped or facilitated his competencies in engaging in cross-cultural encounters and in operating business

overseas. For example, Case 13 thought that “contacting some different cultures and accepting some different challenges are a personal growth to me” as he faced each new overseas assignment. His personality characteristics of accepting challenges and remaining optimistic made him accept his first overseas assignment, in which the decision was made only in three days, and he continued his expatriation career for 27 years. In addition, his personality characteristics of mindfulness and sympathy assisted him in dealing with the challenge of operating a business in Thailand, where the international financial system was not soundly established and so he had to deploy strategies to cope with the local unpredictable situations and the local officers’ inadequate knowledge about international financial systems in order to smoothly set up a new branch in Thailand. As he mentioned,

In order to effectively cope with such unsound financial system in Thailand, I felt that in such country you need to understand more about their culture and thoughts. I think you must understand Thai people and know what they think about. I think it probably a culture issue. Don’t think that are from more industrialized country. And, don’t adopt high status tune to communicate with the local nationals. They won’t accept. Reversely, you must say that ‘is this like this?’ or think about how to place yourself in their positions? If you do so, they will ask you that ‘may I consult you?’ (Case 13, personal communication, December 26, 2007)

Training

Training that included pre-departure training and on-the-job training, was provided by the organization. Basically, each participant went through a similar training procedure before departure that focused on business familiarity around different departments. Mostly, pre-departure training that focused on business familiarity lasted from three days to one month. It was perceived to be planned and provided by the organization. This type of training primarily focused on previous

expatriates' experience sharing and orientation from different departments. As Case 1 explain,

In general, an expatriate will be given expatriates training before they departed for their relocation in our company. And this was purposefully planned. In fact, the expatriates training program included a lot of previous expatriates' experiences exchange. Besides, it also comprised earnest exhortation from the top management of each department. This training lasted about one week... one to two weeks' job introduction. (Case 1, personal communication, November 20, 2007)

Similar to Case 1, Case 4 reported, "We had a certain procedure before departure; training was given, but did not include cultural difference in living environment or folk's customs. Therefore, it mainly focused on job training. We [the company] spend about one month to train an expatriate." Similarly, Case 7 also stated that job related training and language learning were the main focus in his organization.

Basically, if the organization complete the selection procedure ...Language learning will be given as early as possible; or if the job of international assignment is not related to your current job, then you may need to go to some relevant departments for some training given. (Case 7 personal communication, November 28, 2007)

Training about cross-cultural issues was not included. However, each participant received a brochure on local cultural information. While some participants received language training before departure, some indicated that English proficiency was one of the competencies an expatriate should possess. Case 1 observed, "Regarding language ability, in fact, the Encouragement Committee of the organization provides employees with fund to take English class annually." Case 7 stated, "Before I was assigned to Japan, I got fund to take Japanese class one year before I was assigned to Japan. I took the class. But that did not mean you would go."

In terms of on-the-job training, some participants, especially those whose relocation was in the United States, stated that the organization provided them with funds to attend seminars with regard to cultural awareness training in an attempt to increase the expatriates' cultural awareness. As Case 4 stated, "I attended training on harassment while I was assigned in the United State, therefore, I was very careful when I talked." Regarding the content of the training, Case 4 described,

This training taught you to be very careful about the way you are speaking. Besides, it taught you how to make an exact judgment as you staffs come to tell you he or she felt he or she was harassed. I think probably I was given this training; therefore, I really became very careful whatever I interact with male or female. (Case 4, personal communication, November 21, 2007)

On the other hand, due to the stress that resulted from national differences in regulations and laws, Case 7 attended some seminars related to his profession. He admitted this type of training provided him with some enlightenment, in which he learned what he needed. He was able to make some revisions in what he already knew. Case 7 explained,

To overcome work stress, the first, I went to attend seminars. ...I gained some enlightenment from these seminars. Although what they did didn't entirely fit my situation, I learned their strengths to make some revises of mine. If you only stayed home and closed the door, how could you construct good idea? It was really difficult. (Case 7, personal communication, November 28, 2007)

He continued to state, "Compliance, for example, is a big issue in the United States currently. However, we do not have this similar regulation for banking industry in Taiwan. You must pay attention to it anytime."

Strategies

Management Competencies for the Success

Participants in this study adopted various strategies, including competencies in communication skills, cultural intelligence, language ability, leadership, and professional knowledge and skills, to manage cross-cultural encounters and business operations so as to effectively complete their international assignments. From these assignments, participants widely gained personal growth as well. Strategies employed to effectively complete international assignments were shaped by personal characteristics, training, and cultural factors. Each of the elements that constituted these relevant strategies will now be briefly discussed below.

Cultural intelligence. “Cultural intelligence, the capability to deal effectively with people from different cultural background, is a multifaceted competency consisting of cultural knowledge, the practice of mindfulness, and a repertoire of behavior skills” (Thomas & Inkson, 2003, p. 182). In brief, a culturally intelligent expatriate has “(a) the knowledge to understand cross-cultural phenomena, (b) the mindfulness to observe and interpret particular situations, and (c) the skill of adapting behavior to act appropriately and successfully in a range of situations” (Thomas & Inkson, 2003, p. 20).

In contrast to domestic assignments, an international assignment involves interaction not only with the host country’s nationals, but also with host country’s staff, which require an expatriate to have multifaceted competencies to effectively complete international assignments. Cultural intelligence is the critical necessity here.

Participants in the study shared the experiences of how they coped with cross-cultural encounters, both in living and work environments. The strategies they developed, which might be enhanced through study and the accumulation of experiences, were mainly designed to help them overcome barriers or challenges existing in the cross-cultural context so as to effectively complete their international assignments. Most participants revealed their capabilities in recognizing cultural differences, understanding the need to and having a willingness to acquire knowledge of local cultures, and developing a repertoire of appropriate behaviors while dealing with certain cross-cultural interactions. Within these cross-cultural interactions, which required participants to adopt suitable strategies to cope, participants' personality characteristics were essential in combination with their cultural intelligence. This combination allowed participants to effectively interact with people from culturally different backgrounds and to better adjust or blend into the local life.

To clearly illustrate how each participant effectively interacted with people from culturally different backgrounds through adopting appropriate behaviors, and in doing so to reach optimum effectiveness on an international assignment, the researcher will describe some incidents or happenings in terms of cultural intelligence. Some of the research participants, referred to again as Cases, will be discussed individually.

Case 1

Although Case 1 encountered a language barrier in Germany, he never gave up or felt frustrated; both his willingness to communicate with the locals and his cultural awareness helped him to overcome difficulties or challenges in his living situation. He stated,

I felt the most difficult situation in living was language because the consciousness of German's national identity is very strong and their Germanic ethnocentrism makes them unwilling to talk to you in English.... For some Germans, they showed their willingness to talk to you but they were unable to express themselves in English. As a result, we had to ask several Germans so that we could get what we wanted. You, for example, had to try many times as you might want to buy things locally....I did not feel depressed; I just continually tried and tried. (Case 1, personal communication, November 20, 2007)

After experiencing a period of interacting with his local staff members, Case 1 realized that cultural differences really affected work behavior and that he adopted different methods to teach his staff how to execute their job duties effectively. Besides, he also used a "case study" strategy to facilitate his understanding of their model of thinking, and to make them understand him more reciprocally. In this way, Case 1's mindfulness and openness assisted him in developing his cultural intelligence.

In fact, their job performance was not bad. But there was one thing which was a little bit.... What on earth should I say?....Sometimes I just felt that we are learn easily from analogy, but for foreigners, when you talked about A, they only perceived A; they did not easily read between the lines. Therefore, I might spend a lot of time, probably twice the normal amount of time, explaining in a very detailed way about how they had to work, what they should do, or what results I expected to receive. You must depict things very clearly. They were not like our Taiwanese. You occasionally will give one dollar to your boss even though your boss only asks you for five cents.... Therefore, after I understood these differences, I either explained things in a very detailed way to them or made use of some case study to lead them to accommodate our thinking models. We also need to adapt to their thinking model as well. In fact, it was a reciprocal interaction. (Case 1, personal communication, November 20, 2007)

Case 2

Case 2 perceived differences in work behavior and attitude between the local staff and headquarters, especially in terms of the degree of involvement and the issue of overtime. At first, these differences made him perceive a huge gap between the two. However, after becoming aware that cultural difference was the major factor leading to

differences in work behavior between the local and domestic staff, he noted that it was not appropriate to impose the headquarters' culture on a foreign subsidiary. Besides, to better understand what the local staff members were thinking about, he adopted the strategy of "listening" in order to get to know them and then assist them in reaching their expectations.

To effectively interact with local staffs, I primarily needed to listen, to listen to what they wanted, to listen to what they really thought about. And then I would examine whether or not I could make use of the company's resources to assist them in reaching what they expected to fulfill in their mind. If I did not use this strategy to listen to them, it would end up that we were the only voice, and we knew nothing about what they thought. (Case 2, personal communication, November 20, 2007)

Case 3

After noticing that "there are two main different cultures – oriental culture and western culture – within the local unit organization" (Case 3) and understanding that "Americans are more straightforward and explicit" (Case 3), Case 3 adopted a straightforward strategy and sincere attitude to communicate with and conduct his task of transferring knowledge to the local staff. In addition, Case 3 mentioned that "in fact, to the local staff, having a new supervisor from different culture has a huge impact." Thus, he highlighted the importance of emotional intelligence (EQ) to the success of overseas assignments. He stated, "I think to be an expatriate manager, EQ is very important, meaning communication and negotiation competence are very significant." He always reminded himself that the expatriate should not "hold the attitude that I came here to command or to order only because I am the representative of the headquarters because that will bring me a negative response and will not result in any

positive help on work if I hold this attitude.” Consequently, the local western staff members gradually understood his good intention and accepted his suggestions.

Case 4

Case 4 developed a repertoire of skilled behaviors to appropriately respond to cross-cultural interactions by acquiring knowledge of the local culture and general cultural awareness from interactions with the culture and its people. After understanding characteristics of the German culture, such as “if you want to survive there, you must be stronger than them” (Case 4) and be “straightforward” (Case 4), Case 4 believed that “when in Rome, you do as the Romans do.” He stated,

When it comes to Germany, basically, this country discriminates against foreigners very much. Besides, this country encourages... There is a saying in Germany; Germans say, ‘The brave go first when people meet face-to-face on a narrow path’....This established the idea that you must be much stronger if you want to survive in that place. You must be in the right and self-confident.... Meetings were face-to-face and were a challenge. You needed to be straightforward. If they were wrong they would admit they were wrong and apologize. Therefore, straightforwardness was their work style, resulting from their national characteristic. You must follow this work style, otherwise they will think you are not reasonable if you are right but you do not defend yourself. In Germany, they emphasized professional knowledge and skills. (Case 4, personal communication, November 21, 2007)

Also, he appreciated the local culture and was willing to learn and to mimic what the locals did. For example, he mentioned that “European culture treats ladies with respect and males must serve ladies in many ways in the public.” He went on to emphasize that “this was what we needed to learn.”

From a harassment course he took in the United States, he was aware of the need to avoid violating local taboos or regulations, which helped him to develop appropriate behaviors in intercultural interactions. This acquisition of cultural

knowledge allowed him to appropriately interact with not only his local subordinates but also people from the culture in general.

Case 5

Although Case 5 became angry in the beginning of his international assignment when he faced his local subordinates' work behavior, which he identified as too relaxed and focused on face-saving, he gradually adjusted to his new work environment through understanding the local culture and making use of after hours to get together with his subordinates. His willingness to learn, and further, to "accept cultural difference," made him reshape his management attitudes toward his local subordinates. In dealing with the local subordinates' slow and leisurely work behavior, he made some adjustments in order to effectively manage them. He stated, "I slowed down my steps, but not as slow as they did. I only made some adjustments. I adjusted from 100 points to 70 points. But it was impossible to adjust to 20 or 30 points." He became more sympathetic to the local culture and adopted a more open-minded approach to interact with local subordinates so as to effectively conduct his task. As he observed, "You must blend into them; you must accept. Otherwise, it will lead to an employee's resignation."

Thai people are very keen on face-saving; they don't accept being blamed in public. You only can blame them privately. This leads to the problem that you can not immediately correct or guide them during a meeting because they will perceive that as losing face. This is very different from the Taiwanese. A Taiwanese employee is very prone to modestly accept correction or guidance from his or her boss, or instructions regarding what your boss wanted you to do during the meeting. However, Thai people feel that they lose face not only when you blame them in public but even when you teach them in public. But very strangely, they tend to open-mindedly accept what you say to them privately. I am not saying that Thai people are not smart; this is because of the entire environment and Thai culture over time. You must very clearly tell them

about an incident and what about this and that so that they will be able to understand the situation. (Case 5, personal communication, November 22, 2007)

Case 9

To expand his business and attract non-Chinese customers while he was a chief executive officer in the New York subsidiary, Case 9 implemented a low-price marketing strategy to attract certain target customers. To effectively execute this strategy, he made efforts to understand the culture of the target group. He tried to learn about their buying and eating habits, and to create a repertoire of necessary services and corresponding behaviors. Therefore, kosher meals, were provided in the aircraft to serve his target customers. Not surprisingly, this business strategy, resulting from the combination of his personality characteristics of mindfulness and his competency in cultural intelligence, earned high reward, and, in turn, promoted his business. He went on to say,

Our price was cheaper than our competitors, such as Cathy Airline. The Jewish people are very careful and meticulous in expenditure. Therefore, this [cheaper price] was important to them.... Therefore, they came. But regarding how to provide them with acceptable service is an issue.... You must follow their customs. What are their customs? For example, the meal they eat in the aircraft must have been used to worship the God before serve. It is kosher meal. The kosher meal has to be used to worship the God before serve. They do not eat it if it is not used to worship the God.... To serve kosher meal, I did some surveys near the airport and that found out there were two restaurants providing kosher meals. To make sure the kosher meal has been used to worship the God, I visited their factories through the owner's guiding. There was a church within the factory. Therefore, the kosher food was worshiped to the God first and then was preserved in a refrigerator. Therefore, I started to offer [kosher meal]. Not bad. The response was very good. (Case 9, personal communication, December 4, 2007)

Before he departed for his international assignment that had him relocated to Indonesia, Case 11 was aware of the importance of the local language and devoted time to learning it although "the company did not require that you have to learn [the

language].” Although this was his first time being assigned to a foreign country to be a chief executive officer of local unit organization, he was mindful of what he had to learn, acquire, and adjust to. He explained,

In fact, for an expatriate, at first, living can be divided into two major parts. One is becoming familiar with transportation; another is becoming familiar with environment. Therefore, I spend time getting familiar with the transportation conditions and paying attention to what I needed to know and memorizing local unique environmental conditions.... There was a lot of information you could read in the office. (Case 11, personal communication, December 7, 2007)

Case 11 has a well-developed sense of his personality characteristics and a willingness to learn and to blend into the local culture, which he believed were the primary motivations to help him adjust effectively to a new cultural environment. He emphasized that his ability to adapt and his openness to pursue and understand the local culture were critical to facilitating his harmony with a new cultural environment and fostering his management in the local unit organization. Case 11 went on to state the following:

You had to adjust your mindset when you were transferred from a very rushed environment to a foreign county. Everything was different; you had to adjust your mindset, including your steps, to accommodate yourself to the local environmentTherefore, for us, the Chinese characteristic of a strong ability to adapt played an important role in facilitating our adjustment to a foreign country and increasing the degree of adaptation. This was the adjustment of mindset....In addition, you had to consult your predecessor for understanding local taboos and their living customs. We called this comparison in management. (Case 11, personal communication, December 7, 2007)

Similar to Case 11, Case 12 believed that it was important for an expatriate manager not only to be willing to easily get along with people, but also to avoid showing any preference. “You must be absolutely fair in front of the staff members

and do not show any preference because it is very important for an expatriate manager to manage a multicultural team.” Case 12 stressed.

In the face of Thailand’s unsound financial system and unfamiliar regulations, and in order to foster effective communication between himself and Thai officers, Case 13 drew on his professional knowledge in the banking industry and his own openness to cultural differences to solve the difficulties in the business operation he encountered in Thailand. With his professional knowledge, personal characteristics, and high cultural intelligence, he not only solved difficulties with the operation environment in Thailand, but also “made the host unit organization become a subsidiary company” in Thailand. He attributed to the success of the approval for establishing a subsidiary company in Thailand that involved the combination, integration and comprehension of organizational culture, the local culture, and the host nation’s culture. He humbly said, “I am not very knowledgeable in these issues. ... A willingness to blend into the local subordinates was very important because they will help you and understand you.” Besides, to enforce the effectiveness of communication between different cultures, Case 13 emphasized that “you must pay more attention to understanding the local culture and host nation’s thoughts in countries where the financial system and regulations are not sound enough.” Furthermore, to remove barriers to conducting business in a foreign country and to reach business goals, he suggested that forgetting where you are from and “placing yourself in their position” can result in positive interactions. This awareness, combined with an active acquisition of knowledge of the host nation’s regulations and laws, facilitated the establishment of harmony in the

workplace and that improved the employees' productivity. Case 13 believed that "a happy employee is a productive employee."

In sum, culturally intelligent expatriates develop the necessary and effective repertoire of appropriate behavioral skills in dealing with cross-cultural interactions, in which the participants' personal characteristics support the development of cultural intelligence; cultural intelligence, in turn, helps the performance of the participants in many ways. First, cultural intelligence is critical to the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication. Second, cultural intelligence facilitates cross-cultural adjustment. Third, cultural intelligence advances leadership. Finally, cultural intelligence fosters success in overseas business operations.

Communication skills. It is generally recognized that communication competency is one of the most powerful abilities that helped the research participants deal with cross-cultural interactions with host country nationals and adjust to general living conditions. "Communication involves a complex multilayered, dynamic process through which we exchange meaning" (Adler, 1997, p. 68). The process of communication between people of different cultures increases the possibility of misunderstanding and misinterpretation. Therefore, to effectively communicate with people from culturally different backgrounds, it is necessary for an expatriate to possess multilayered characteristics and skills related to effective communication.

Participants depicted the role of communication competency from different points of view. Case 1 directly expressed that the most important capability for an expatriate to have in order to succeed is "communication competency." He regarded communication competency as a "weapon," through which one's capabilities can be

enriched when it is combined with one's other abilities. Therefore, he suggested that training programs should include training in "communication skills." On the other hand, Case 12 briefly accentuated that "whether you can adjust well or not, the first important factor is communication competency." Case 2 noted that, "playing the role of the 'communicational bridge' between the local office and the headquarters is one of the most important functions for an expatriate who is assigned to a foreign country." He found that the ability to foster communication between headquarters and the local unit is significant because an expatriate should be able to recognize those problems which cannot be solved in the local unit, and report those problems to headquarters. Moreover, Case 2 believed the ability to communicate can be used to overcome the local staff members' doubts about his management qualifications, arising from the fact that his own work experience was less extensive than theirs.

Some participants stated that communication competency in relation to various factors facilitates their success with respect to interpersonal interactions and business; they also explain why communication skills are critical to their success. "Respect" (Case 9, 11, 12, and 13) and "sincerity" (Case 1, 2, 5, 9, 11, 12, and 13) are the important elements to consider while interacting or communicating with the local customers. As Case 9 described it, "you must make your customers feel you respect them. In other words, you must avoid letting them feel your status is higher than theirs as much as you can." An "interrelationship" existed between the local unit and its suppliers; therefore, you must "show your respect to them" even when they "make mistakes," Case 12 stressed. "Although you can blame your suppliers when they make mistakes, you must make use of the right tones and methods. If you adopt a wrong one

[tone or method], it may cause your own organization much damage.” Case 12 believed that positive communication was critical in order for an expatriate to expand business deals and establish good relations with everybody.

“Communicating with subordinates is very important,” Case 9 stressed when commenting on how to establish effective interaction with coworkers in order to succeed in an overseas assignment. “Being aware of introspection” and “taking the entire benefit of the organization into consideration” are the main attitudes Case 9 adopted to communicate with his subordinates when their performance was substandard or when the mistakes they made were understandable when considered from their point of view. On the other hand, Case 12 stated that “clearly conveying orders” to subordinates, who are host country nationals, is very important because of cultural differences. Specifically, “you must consider whether he or she can understand the information you are going to convey to him or her” (Case 12). Case 12 also took into consideration the connection of human kindness, which is a characteristic of Chinese culture, when he communicated with his subordinates who were local Chinese. As he stated, “It is different when you communicate with the local Chinese. Since you are in a foreign country, what you might pay more attention to are some very delicate connections of human kindness. It may be more complicated.” Unlike Case 12, Case 11 reported his belief that “all human beings are the same and are difficult to deal with;” therefore, “the difference in communication strategy between the subordinates in the host country and the headquarters is only the tone.” He also stressed the importance of clearly conveying information or orders to other people.

“Misunderstanding in communicating with colleagues is the major factor leading to conflicts” (Case 7). To cope with these situations, providing “clear explanation of ‘why’ and ‘because’” (Case 11, 12, and 13) is the best way to improve the effectiveness of communication and reduce the conflicts that result from misunderstanding. Cultural difference is perceived as a “barrier” (Case 7, 12 and 13) to effective communication in a multicultural team. As Case 12 observed, “In fact, it is necessary for a multicultural team to communicate more because without communication, barriers will definitely exist.” Therefore, he believed that “having adequate communication can help you avoid the barrier.”

In order to cope with Thailand’s unsound financial system and establish a new subsidiary in Bangkok, Case 13 explained the importance of “understanding local culture and the local nationals’ thoughts” in facilitating communication between himself and the officers in Thailand’s Central Bank. He also emphasized that,

We must make allowance for them [officers in Thailand Center Bank] when they made mistakes and even euphemistically made an offer of ‘I can help you with collection information or data’ or ‘I can help arrange for you to visit Taiwan’s Center Bank. This helped them to understand that we operate business honestly and we have very sound system.... They visited Taiwan three times under my arrangement.... They came to Taipei and we had very good communication.... We had an opportunity to transform a branch in Bangkok into a sub-bank in Bangkok. (Case 13, personal communication, December 26, 2007)

This is a very typical example demonstrating how an expatriate with high cultural competence will facilitate his or her communication skills and so improve upon the effectiveness of an overseas assignment.

Language ability. It was generally accentuated by the participants that English ability is a key prerequisite for success on an overseas assignment, and that it is critical

to adjustment. Countries to which the participants relocated can be divided into three categories: English-speaking, non-English-speaking countries, and Japan. English ability was identified to be important for all participants' assignments and adjustment whether they were relocated to English-speaking countries or non-English speaking countries. This was because English is the communication language in their industry. Participants who relocated to non-English-speaking countries emphasized the importance of learning the local language as they encountered difficulties in their living environments. However, the ability to speak the local language, except Japanese and English, was neither a criterion for an overseas posting nor was it critical to job performance. This is in contrast to participants relocating to Japan or English-speaking countries who indicated that the ability to speak the local language – Japanese or English – was a criterion for their overseas assignments and was critical to their professional effectiveness.

While a few participants relocating to non-English speaking countries expressed that their organizations encouraged and funded them to learn the local language before their departure, most participants who relocated to non-English-speaking countries stated that their organizations did not require them to learn the local language, but rather emphasized that they should be willing to learn and to understand the local culture and society.

Participants relocating to both English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries indicated that "English ability is a basic prerequisite skill" an expatriate should possess. Case 8, assigned to the United States, emphasized that "to be an expatriate, your English ability has to be fine; you must be able to handle yourself.

What can you contribute to the organization if you are unable to control yourself?

Therefore, an expatriate needs a certain level of English ability.” Case 2, who was also assigned to the United States, considered English ability to be a “very important prerequisite.” Case 1, who was assigned to Germany, stressed that English ability was a “prerequisite” to success. In addition, he emphasized the importance of English ability from the perspectives of facilitating cross-cultural communication and interaction. He stated, “I feel that the ability to speak English is a critical component an expatriate should possess for facilitating communication and interaction with the local nationals. Besides, from the perspective of this international industry, language ability is a requisite.”

Similar to Case 1’s comment stating that English ability was considered to be a component in facilitating cross-cultural communication, Case 2 stressed that “Language ability is a prerequisite of cross-cultural communication competence.” Case 2 also emphasized the importance of cross-cultural communication competence. He clearly stated, “There was no barrier to prevent me from communicating with others, because my English ability.”

Furthermore, English ability was seen to be crucial to adjustment. Case 8 sincerely suggested, “I still have some suggestions. First, you must master English. It will be very difficult for you if you are unable to master English.” While accentuating the importance of English ability to assist in cross-cultural communication, Case 12 stated that it also facilitated adjustment.

With his abundant experience of expatriation, Case 13 provided very insightful comments on the issue of language ability. He stressed that language is very important

and critical to business, leadership, and communication. Because an expatriate manager needs to expand a business, lead teamwork, and communicate with others, language ability was considered crucial for success at work and off-work.

For those who relocated to non-English-speaking countries, although English ability was required, understanding the local language seemed to have had a certain degree of importance in facilitating living adjustment and improving the effectiveness of overseas assignments. To facilitate adjustment to their living environment, most participants who relocated to non-English-speaking countries learned the local language in different ways. Although Case 5 thought his English ability was good enough to deal with general living requirements in Thailand, he still learned basic Thai conversation skills. As he mentioned,

I feel that my English ability is fine. Therefore, I did not learn the local language in the beginning. But I still learned some simple Thai, such as what you use for eating, paying bills, and using transportation. Besides, I had to learn how to say turn left or turn right, and how to say thank you. These were very practical. (Case 5, personal communication, November 22, 2007)

Similarly, Case 8 expressed that although he could not speak Korean, he learned how to spell in order to understand Korean. To facilitate his listening skills, Case 8 forced himself to watch Korean dramas to get used to the sound. As he acquired listening skills, his Korean customers were very surprised. Case 8's willingness to learn the local language resulted from the fact that knowing some of the local language helped him to feel more comfortable with the unfamiliar environment in which he resided.

Case 11, assigned to Indonesia, pointed out that "the requirement of language [English] is not up for discussion; rather it is a prerequisite, the same as the ability to

speak Chinese, because you are working in a service industry, especially in a global service industry.” As to his attitude toward learning the local language, he stressed the importance of the willingness to engaging in self-learning and preparing himself although his organization did not require him to learn Indonesian. He reported,

I paid attention to understanding Indonesian. I even found out that some of my colleagues spoke very well....I learned some before I went.... You must prepare yourself for basic skills and abilities.... Language is just like a basic ability. How much you achieve depends upon how much you ask of yourself. The organization won't ask you to do this [learning Indonesian]; so you must encourage yourself to learn. (Case 11, personal communication, December 7, 2007)

Leadership. Adler (1997) states, “Leadership involves the ability to inspire and influence the thinking, attitudes, and behavior of followers” (p. 154). An international assignment for expatriate managers includes managing people from culturally different backgrounds; an expatriate’s leadership skills are critical for success. All participants in the study were at the management level. Several of them were general managers in overseas subsidiaries, and were responsible either for maintaining business operations or for expanding their company’s business in the foreign country. The participants were involved in managing people from different cultures and were also responsible for the business of the department of which they were in charge. In such cases, the ability to inspire and influence subordinates and to make sound judgments are key components for the effective completion of overseas assignments.

Participants revealed various leadership styles and competencies which they implemented while conducting overseas missions; certain personality characteristics, elements of Chinese culture, or having cultural intelligence were associated with these styles and competences in facilitating the participants’ leadership. For example, to

assist local national staff members in reaching goals, Case 2 noted the importance of “listening” and concerned himself with factors which could influence staff members’ performance. Consequently, he made sure to “listen to what they want to say and to their thoughts” in order to “make use of the available resources of the organization in order to help them reach their goals.” Similar to Case 2, Case 5 showed his willingness to sincerely communicate with local-national staff members as he discovered that cultural difference was a major factor in constructing their attitudes. Over time, the local-national staff members were willing to make an effort to change their work attitudes, although they admitted that “it was not easy to change because it was the way they worked from childhood” (Case 5). By interacting with his local subordinates, Case 5 came to understand their difficulties with performing certain tasks. In such cases, he not only encouraged them but provided them with help. As a result, he was respected by his local subordinates. As he stated, “Although the status of representatives of headquarters can be regarded as rather high, I feel that to receive this high status you need to use other methods to earn their respect. The result of it was great.” Both Case 2 and 5 displayed their concerns for the local-national subordinates and inspired them to learn how to effectively perform tasks through their own willingness to understand the local culture. Their experiences may illuminate how personality characteristics and cultural intelligence facilitated their leadership in managing people from different cultures.

Being a leader in foreign subsidiaries for many years, Case 9 sincerely recognized that the success of each person depends on the help and support of numerous people surrounding him or her. Therefore, he highly recommended that

“everybody unite as one,” whether he or she is the local co-worker or an assignee from the headquarters. In addition, he repeatedly stated the principle of “full empowerment” and the importance of “teamwork,” stressing the fact that “It is impossible for you to do everything by yourself.” He believed that “full empowerment” is a way to “inspire subordinates to receive the sense of achievement from their job” and that it “is important to make each co-worker within the team share everything.”

Similar to Case 9, several other former expatriate managers emphasized the importance of “full empowerment” (Case 8, 10, 11, 12, and 13) and “teamwork” (Case 8, 10, 11, 12, and 13) to the effectiveness of overseas assignments. For example, Case 11 illustrated his philosophy of leadership from the perspective of “teamwork” and “cohesion.” He believed that the effective formulation of teamwork was associated with good performance of assigned roles, improving the effectiveness of the organization. Case 11 shared his experience,

What I felt proud of while I was in Indonesia is that I was in Hainan while I received the information that the Vice President was planning to visit Indonesia and gave me the opportunity to deal with.... We implemented the formulation of teamwork to make this mission. Therefore, you must make people trust you.... We played our roles well there [Indonesia] and indeed we brought the best effectiveness of the organization into play. I feel this is wonderful. (Case 11, personal communication, December 7, 2007)

Case 11 attributed effective performance to teamwork. As he stated, “I felt this is because of teamwork; I was able to effectively accomplish tasks because the colleagues there [Indonesia] and I worked together.” To illustrate his principle of management, he stressed two important strategies. One was that he allowed his subordinates to make mistakes because he believed that “making mistakes is a way of learning and growth.” Consequently, “it is very important to clearly tell the

subordinates about this.” Another strategy was that he stressed that a leader must “regard his followers as family members.” Knowing this, “they [the subordinates] will realize what you do for them. Although they don’t sincerely appreciate you, at least they won’t generate problems for you.” Case 13 holds a similar leadership philosophy. Being the CEO of an overseas subsidiary, Case 13 highlighted the importance of sincerely showing concern for subordinates because he noticed that people who work overseas face huge challenges from many different angles. Therefore, he stressed that “being a leader, you must regard subordinates as your brothers and relatives.” In order to help subordinates to settle in, he added that “a leader should be concerned about newcomers to help them settle in, to lead them, and to give them opportunities to bring their talents into full play.”

Case 11 further emphasized the importance of the concept of “building up a connection” which he believed is relevant to “cohesion” and therefore is crucial to effective management. With his explanation, the concept of “building up a connection” refers to an expatriate at the management level, in which he or she facilitates contact between headquarters and its overseas subsidiary, resulting in various responsibilities from the headquarters and its subsidiary; the manager should be responsible to his or her supervisor and be able to simultaneously manage his or her subordinates well. As such, an expatriate manager, in essence, plays a bridge role in the structure of MNCs. Consequently, being able to establish an intangible mechanism of “connection” seems to be imperative for an expatriate manager to succeed. As Case 11 shared,

To be a good administrator, you should build up a connection, in which you must be responsible for the tasks your supervisor assigned you because that is your job; simultaneously, you must provide your subordinates with direction. You must very clearly tell them what they should do; you must provide them

with a definite formulation. You must guide them forward. Therefore, building up a connection is critical to an administrator....You are able to accomplish overseas missions if you build up a connection. Pay attention to management and accomplish the setting of goals through the work and assistance of subordinates. (Case 11, personal communication, December 7, 2007)

Case 11 also believed that “cohesion” is a condition of the effectiveness of management for which an administrator has to strive. As to how he considered “cohesion” to be critical to effective management and teamwork, he explained,

You must make the subordinates feel that they respect you in earnest admiration without criticism and are willing to strive with you. If so, you are like a President and will gain admiration or everyone would like to follow you. This reaches the condition of cohesion, a centripetal force. Therefore, this is what an administrator has to do. (Case 11, personal communication, December 7, 2007)

Showing both similarities and differences, Case 12 and Case 13 accentuated the similar concept of “cohesion” but adopted different terms. Case 12 explains, “The most important thing an administrator should avoid while operating and managing a company is the formation of different factions; therefore, an administrator has to try his or her best to create a climate for avoiding the formation of small groups.” Case 12 also used an impressive metaphor to highlight how important cohesion was in a multicultural team, the image of a circle. He explained that it was very important to “think of how to bind together all team members are in order to form a very strong power to serve customers and to compete with competitors.”

“Harmony,” “leading with heart,” “understanding local culture,” and “cultural integration” were the major concerns Case 13 paid close attention to while playing a bridge role between the headquarters and the subsidiary and managing the local and non-local subordinates. In dealing with the headquarters, he emphasized that he was like a “communicator,” because there are too many ‘windows’ in headquarters, and

that you must adjust to them; therefore, “from the internal consideration, harmony is very important.” As to his philosophy of managing a multicultural team, he pointed out that the importance of “leading with heart,” “understanding local culture,” and “cultural integration.” As he explained,

You must lead them with heart. I felt that it lacked sincerity if an administrator managed people in a militarized way. Besides, integration is another issue. As I mentioned earlier, the different configurations of the local and the parent country – there are some differences of culture and thoughts Thus, except communication, which I mentioned earlier, you must understand what they think, their personality, and their culture; or to educate, to train them. (Case 13, personal communication, December 26, 2007)

Case 13’s experience demonstrated how the interplay of leadership, cultural intelligence, and communication skills facilitates overseas assignments.

Both Case 11 and Case 9 mentioned another noticeable characteristic of leadership: integrity, which Case 9 described as “chapter one.” They coincidentally regarded integrity as an important and basic criterion for an administrator to demonstrate in order to motivate and influence subordinates. From the perspectives of Cases 11 and 9, integrity is the fundamental characteristic an administrator should possess for gaining subordinates’ respect and trust and so encourage them to commit to the organization’s goals. As Case 9 stated,

Your basic integrity is very important.... Being a leader, you must require yourself not to have any fault in this respect so that you are able to command your followers. Otherwise, you are not able to accomplish any tasks or goals, if people find that you have defect in your integrity.... Therefore, I felt integrity is chapter one. (Case 9, personal communication, December 4, 2007)

Another significant characteristic of leadership which Cases 11 and 9 emphasized throughout the interview was that a leader should “set an example for the rank and file.” Similar to their respect for “integrity,” Case 11 and 9 also believed that

a leader with the characteristic of “setting an example for the rank and file” will be more likely to gain respect from subordinates. As Case 11 stated, “Today, to be a good administrator, a leader must not only follow the pattern set by his or her superior, but also set an example for the rank and file.” To further explain his meaning, he continued to say,

I do not promise you a position so that you are willing to follow me because you want to get a promotion and get rich; rather, a leader is to lead subordinates to work together and to offer subordinates with fulfillment as well as to make subordinates learn what they should learn from you [the leader]. (Case 11, personal communication, December 7, 2007)

Furthermore, some participants pointed out that providing subordinates with definite directions was critical for effective performance. “Strong strategic direction” (Case 9) is an important leading force for an expatriate manager looking to provide subordinates with clear directions and to motivate them to work toward the vision. Case 9 stated,

You are assigned to manage a subsidiary overseas; you are to lead followers; you must give the followers direction. If you are unable to figure out how to handle a condition, then how do you guide followers? Besides, your leadership is important too. Actually, leadership is multidimensional. Being an administrator in any position, you must have a very strong strategic direction in terms of how you are going to guide them. (Case 9, personal communication, December 4, 2007)

Although participants’ management styles varied, their capacity to lead subordinates with directions and strategies is evident and critical to their effectiveness on overseas assignments. As Case 9 stressed, “leadership is multidimensional;” Case 11 emphasized that “management is an art;” in order to effectively manage and lead a multicultural team, it seems that an expatriate manager’s personal leadership philosophy and style can become more effective when combined with characteristics

related to cultural competences, thus facilitating their success. This can be summarized from statements made by Case 11, which show that a combination of leadership, personal characteristics, and cultural intelligence allowed him to effectively expand his company's overseas business, manage people from different cultures, and develop relationships. Case 11 stated,

Every detail and every link was very important; each person was your ...just like running in a election. Each person becomes a very important supporter of you in the future because he or she is your potential client. Therefore, you cannot treat them lightly.... My management style is more humorous and open; I prefer to regard subordinates as brothers and sisters because this is the way of my personal growth. Therefore, within it I would adopt.... My attitude toward management is that I always emphasize that I would be there to interact with customers at the moment the airplane arrived. From unfamiliarity with the customers at first to familiarity at the second meeting, to becoming friends – this is a wonderful way to establish a relationship. In terms of work, I also make subordinates know how I value the work at the same time the airplane arrives. Thus, I made use of the available time of the airplane after it arrived to go down to see my product, my plane, to ensure...; I even walked down in person to look at the inner clean conditions or the entire maintenance of the plane. Although I did not understand, I intended to make them know I was at the scene and paid attention to ...; I wanted to make these colleagues understand I was very honest. For myself, I have put so-called “action management” into action. I would stand by the airplane to interact with customers when the airplane was going to take off.... I spent much time in the issue of security and image. In terms of business, I will get operation strategy done; I fully empowered the director of business or my post agent, who helped me with supervising and directing office tasks. Therefore, I only checked the direction when I returned to the office....Of course, the time of night was very good timing. I made use of it to interact with all Chinese associations, or Taiwanese businessmen, or some governmental officers. In fact, we are very proactive there; first, you must proactively attend these local friendship activities, or some local associations related to our industry. (Case 11, personal communication, December 7, 2007)

Professional knowledge and skills. Participants indicated that professional knowledge and skills, regardless of what countries expatriates were assigned to or how much the local culture differed from the expatriates' home country, were basic requirements to effectively performing an overseas assignment. Although all

participants accentuated the necessity and importance of professional knowledge and skills, some participants did not elaborate too much on this point. This is probably because professional knowledge and skills have been abilities they were well-versed in and exercised at headquarters every day. As Case 8 stated, because of his confidence in his professional skills he felt that the “challenge of the actual job on an overseas assignment was not huge.” Case 11 briefly pointed out, “You must have professional knowledge so that you are able to face all challenges.”

Professional knowledge and skills were perceived to be crucial to effective guidance of teamwork on overseas assignments, especially for a multicultural team. In other words, professional knowledge and skills are critical components of leadership. “You must be professional in the field. In your field, you must have professional knowledge so that you are able to go abroad to charge and shatter enemy position [grab market share] and to guide your team.” Case 10 stressed.

In another impressive perception of professional knowledge and skills, some participants stated that it was critical that they have professional knowledge and skills in order to earn prestige and authority, and likewise to earn respect from their local staff. From the perspective of establishing prestige and authority, the role of professional knowledge and skills assisted participants in “accurately responding to what the local nationals asked about the business and things related to the business” (Case 9). Case 12 said, “Your prestige and authority are established if you are able to accurately respond to questions asked by the local nationals. And then, you were able to play your role well.” Similarly, Case 1 emphasized the importance of professional knowledge in managing the local staff because the local staff regarded him as “an

airborne troop” from the headquarters and doubted his working experience and seniority. He elaborated on his reasoning:

Although you were from the headquarters, you were regarded as ‘an airborne troop.’ If you did not have strong professional knowledge, you will have a very difficult time because they may think you have become their supervisor only because you are from the headquarters. In fact, they felt that their experiences were much more extensive than yours since they have been working in this industry more than twenty years, and you only have seven or eight years of experience in the industry. (Case 1, personal communication, November 20, 2007)

On the other hand, another participant emphasized that “Germany is a country where people stress whether you are professional enough or not” (Case 4).

Being the CEO in the New York subsidiary, Case 9 sincerely reported “the success or failure of a subsidiary is largely dependent upon business operation;” therefore, “professional knowledge is very significant because your competitors are dynamic.” Besides, to make an “accurate judgment” requires that a general manager to “have a high level of professional knowledge.” He further argued that to avoid “distrust” from subordinates, it is imperative that an expatriate manager have professional knowledge. Moreover, it is impossible to be a good leader if the manager does not have enough professional knowledge. As Case 9 explained,

Another important ability [for an expatriate to have in order to successfully complete an overseas assignment] is that he or she should possess professional knowledge; otherwise, it is possible that there will be one or two subordinates who distrust you... or even generate problems. Therefore, without professional knowledge, you are unable to guide them. (Case 9, personal communication, December 4, 2007)

Consequences

“Action and interaction taken in response to, or to manage, a phenomenon have certain outcomes or consequences” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 106). Outcomes

or consequences resulting from strategies developed to manage the contextual conditions of cultural differences, cross-cultural encounters, language barriers, and business operations in response to the central phenomenon (effectively complete overseas assignments) can be classified into two dimensions. One is the dimension of job-related performance. Another is the dimension of expatriates' personal growth.

All participants except Cases 11 and 5 indicated that they completed their overseas missions. Case 11 was recalled earlier than the term of expatriation not because of his maladjustment or underperformance, but rather because of being promoted to a top management post in headquarters. Case 5's early recall was because of filling in another important position in headquarters. Most participants completed their overseas assignments by adopting different strategies and bringing various skills or competencies into full play, as mentioned in the preceding section. As a result, most of them were satisfied with their job-related performance. "I have established a pretty sound system in Europe," Case 1, who was a pioneer expatriate in Europe, stated; building up an operation system was the mission of his overseas assignments. He went on to remark, "I have stayed in Europe for three years. Although I do not dare to say I got one hundred points, I felt I have accomplished the responsibility the organization assigned to me." He was very satisfied with his overseas assignment. As he described it, "I felt honored and very lucky because I enjoyed this assignment from the very beginning to the end." Although Case 4 suffered some difficulty in cultural adjustment during the first three months of his assignment, he stressed that "I started to feel I was able to handle the situation after three months of 'risking my life' [hard work]. This kind of feeling was wonderful. It was about one year later that I felt I was competent

and happy.” He continued to describe his mindset as one “from the low point to the turning point to the saturation point.”

One participant (Case 2) used the term “successful” to describe his overseas assignment, in which he was confident with the success of the task the organization assigned to him, the relationship he had with his local co-workers, as well as his repatriation. He stated,

I felt that the phased task is successful at least because the local co-workers liked me very much.... As such, it can be regarded as success at the local level. Regarding my performance, I have smoothly accomplished the requirements. In this case, this should be part of the success. As to the repatriation, my boss and co-workers in Taipei did not dislike me as I returned to Taiwan. Therefore, this should be regarded as accomplishing the mission to a certain extent. (Case 2, personal communication, November 20, 2007)

Similar in some ways, but also somewhat different, Case 11 talked about relation performance not only from the perspective of the local co-workers but from the perspectives clients, supervisors, and friends. He emphasized that “relation performance is a reflection from outside.” Although he did not directly state “I am outstanding,” in essence, he has reached this distinction. As he emphasized, “It was actually another kind of affirmation if you still received compliments from people after you had been gone from the company for a long time.” In other words, this implies that he was very much supported by his clients, supervisors, and friends as well as by the local co-workers, even though he had already left that post. As to teamwork performance, he stated,

Since you led the team and reached the goal you set, thus your performance was considered effective. Because the organizations gave you ... which might be a quota or specific figures or directions for quota management, you reached the quota, and thus you accomplished your goal.... It was evaluated by the result. (Case 11, personal communication, December 7, 2007)

Therefore, “the purpose of teamwork performance is to reach the goal. In other words, it is team management; thus, it does not have too many differences,” he continued to stress.

Case 12 held similar perspectives of teamwork performance as those held by Case 11. He reported that the overall performance of teamwork was pretty satisfactory except business performance because he believed that there is still some room to “push” the business. As to reasons for his dissatisfaction with his business performance, he impressively explained that he spent most of his time in establishing inner cohesion during the first stage of the establishment of the overseas subsidiary because he believed that the inner integration would influence the quality of the subsidiary’s service, and, in turn, would impact the subsidiary’s business.

All participants in the study engaged in management and most of them were responsible for business operations in an overseas subsidiary; some of them were even involved in establishing the overseas subsidiary. Consequently, these participants’ overseas assignments were much more complicated than their jobs had been at headquarters. In this case, participants’ personal growth could be expected if they accomplished their goals. All participants confirmed and shared a variety of elements of personal growth or strength that they gained from their overseas experiences. As mentioned in the preceding section, since talent cultivation was part of the purposes of global strategy for some of the participants’ organizations, almost all participants admitted that their capabilities in dealing with job-related issues were advanced in general.

“An invaluable experience” was the *in vivo* term which most participants used to describe their overseas assignments both before their departure and after repatriation. The entire experience of the overseas assignment was an “invaluable experience,” Case 1 notably recalled. Case 1 also confirmed that his experience of completing an overseas assignment enlarged his international perspective. He believed that “contacting with different cultures” and “the omni-bearing overseas assignment” were two major factors contributing to the enrichment of his international view. In addition, Case 1 emphasized, “Your perspective will become wider, and your ways of thinking will become more varied.” He went on to stress that “I felt, in terms of my job, it [the experience of overseas assignments] helped me a lot.”

Due to “making the acquaintance of many people” (Case 2) while on overseas assignment, Case 2 believed his career path would become wider. Besides, he confirmed that “it brought about strength in his work” because he became “very familiar with the entire US line” after his overseas assignment in the United States. It also “enhanced my English ability,” “changed my point of view,” and “made me have different ideas when I was making judgments.”

By interacting in a practical way with clients and interline partners while on overseas assignments, Case 9 was able to “gain the front line and firsthand information. And personally, it was a very great gain.” He also agreed that his overseas assignments advanced his knowledge and enlarged his point of view. As he mentioned, “It allows you to be able to understand different types of countries and different national conditions. It is really interesting.” Case 9 confirmed that his overseas assignments, for which he relocated to the United States, also provided an opportunity for his

children to study abroad, which brought about very positive career preparation for them.

Case 11 regarded his overseas assignment as “an invaluable experience, which was a very important experience and qualification for me and was a very important life changing point.” He added, “With the experience of overseas assignment, I have gained a wide range of abilities. And it enlarged my point of view.” In addition, “it was very helpful to my career development in the future because I interacted and formed contacts with government entities and people both inside and outside the organization.” He continued on to confirm that his experience of overseas assignment “was very helpful to his current position.”

In summary, there is no doubt that clearly all participants benefited tremendously from the experience of overseas assignments, regardless of how stressful or difficult they were at the time. It is also clear that overseas assignments bring about personal growth or strength either in their career development or their future. These very positive consequences of completing overseas assignments support the idea that participants learn through the experiences of working hard to effectively complete overseas assignments, and, in turn, that they benefit from these “invaluable experiences.” “No pain, no gain” is a metaphor which can best illustrate participants’ reality, a combination of hardships and delights.

The Theoretical Model

The theoretical model explaining the process of successfully completing overseas assignments was developed as shown in Figure 1. This theoretical model denotes that expatriate managers’ motivation for career development (causal

conditions) trigger or stimulate their mission to successfully complete overseas assignments (the central phenomenon); expatriate managers' family situations, personality characteristics, and the given training (intervening conditions) may lessen or alter the impact of their motivation for career development (causal conditions) on their mission to successfully complete overseas assignment (the central phenomenon); and cultural difference, cross-cultural interactions, language barriers, and business operations overseas (the contextual conditions) create a set of circumstances or problems which require the expatriate managers to employ various management competencies: communication skills, cultural intelligence, language ability, leadership, and professional knowledge and skills (action/interaction strategies) to cope with in order to achieve their success and to bring about benefits and growth for both expatriate managers and the organizations. Hence, both intervening and contextual conditions influence action/interaction strategies used to achieve success.

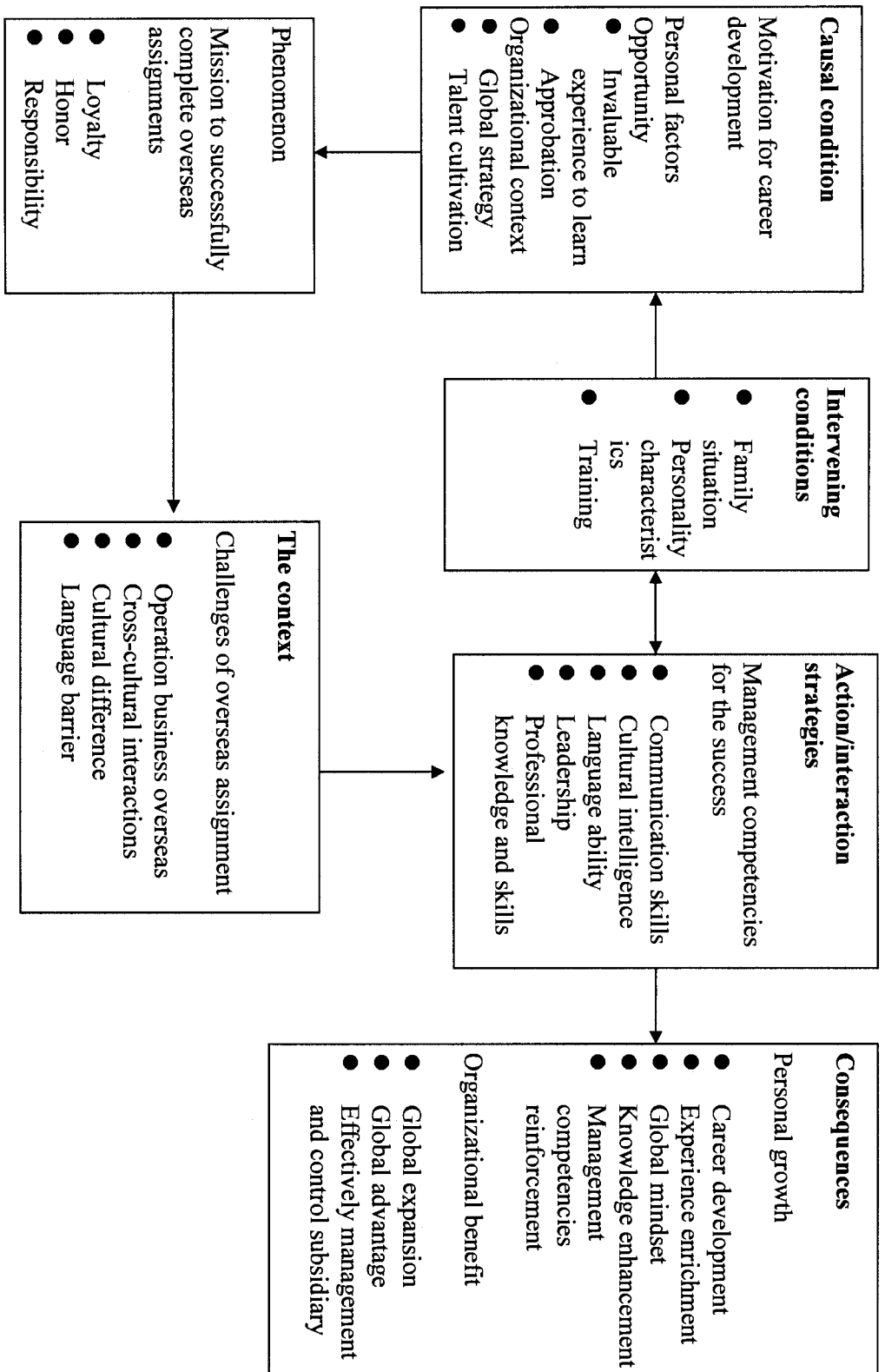


Figure 1. Theoretical model of "Successfully Completing Overseas Assignments".

Chapter Six: Theoretical Propositions and Discussions

Theoretical Propositions

In presenting the findings of this study, it would be more comprehensive to do so in terms of propositions which are an integration of the theoretical model developed in Chapter five. The propositions also guide the theoretical model. Eleven propositions with a set of explanatory statements, which are an integration of categories, were generated and grounded in the data of the study. The propositions and their explanations will now be presented and briefly discussed.

1. Proposition One

Successfully completing an overseas assignment is a process of the interplay of motives, mission, learning, and management. This requires expatriate managers to display a strong sense of responsibility and loyalty to the organization and to be competent in the various aspects of management. A mission entails honor, loyalty, and responsibility. Management competence includes communication skills, cultural intelligence, language ability, leadership, and professional knowledge.

1.1. Honor serves as a stimulus for fostering the mission of expatriate managers to successfully handle overseas assignments.

1.2. Responsibility is the fundamental characteristic of expatriate managers, shaping the mission to effectively carry out during overseas assignments.

1.3 Loyalty to the organization serves as the driving energy of the mission in terms of successfully completing overseas assignments

2. Proposition Two

Expatriate managers are motivated by their overseas assignments. The factors that motivate them are two-dimensional. One is their personal expectations regarding their assignment, and the other is the organization's global strategy.

2.1. Global expansion, controlling overseas subsidiaries, and talent cultivation are the major purposes of an organization's global strategy. These factors provide expatriate managers with an incentive to work abroad.

2.2. Expatriate managers regard an overseas assignment as an opportunity for career development and learning, and this is considered a great motivation to work overseas.

2.3. An overseas assignment is perceived as an invaluable experience for career enhancement, and it adds another incentive to work overseas.

3. Proposition Three

Cultural differences are quite a challenge. They can impact the effectiveness of overseas assignments, requiring that expatriate managers adopt strategies to manage and handle them in order to successfully complete their assignments.

3.1. Cultural differences in work attitude and behavior between expatriate managers and the host country nationals is a challenge for the former, for they affect the effectiveness of management and can have a negative impact if appropriate strategies are not adopted.

3.2. Culture shock could occur if expatriate managers lack fluency in the local language and knowledge about that culture. The greater their cultural ability, the

smaller will their culture shock be. Likewise, the more knowledgeable they are about the local culture, the fewer the chances that they will suffer culture shock.

4. Proposition Four

Cross-cultural interaction is a challenge which influences the effectiveness of expatriate managers on overseas assignments, and that requires them to employ strategies to cope with these interactions in order not to have a negative impact on their assignments.

4.1. Misunderstanding and misinterpretation occur when expatriate managers lack

knowledge about the local culture. The more knowledgeable they are in this respect, the smaller the probability of misunderstandings and misinterpretations.

4.2. Cultural differences, coupled with a lack of awareness and knowledge about the local culture, will make it difficult for expatriate managers to blend into the local social life.

4.3. Being aware of cultural differences and having knowledge of the local culture will facilitate the effectiveness of cross-cultural interaction either within or outside the organization.

5. Proposition Five

The language barrier is certainly a challenge which will have an impact on the effectiveness of overseas assignments, and requires that expatriate managers put to work strategies to overcome it.

5.1. Expatriate managers without the proficiency in the local language will have problems adjusting to the local living conditions.

5.2. Expatriate managers without English language proficiency will see their effectiveness in cross-cultural interaction with the local staff and the local nationals handicapped, and this will affect the success of an overseas assignment. Expatriate managers with English language fluency will have an easier time communicating, which clearly makes a difference in their performance.

6. Proposition Six

Operating business overseas is a challenge and a source of much stress, requiring expatriate managers to employ strategies to deal with them in order to perform their duties in the best possible way.

6.1. Different regulations and business environments are dramatic challenges for expatriate managers, and will affect their effectiveness if they lack the knowledge about local regulations and do not adopt strategies to competently deal with these issues.

6.2. Managing host country nationals is a challenge for expatriate managers, and will influence their effectiveness on overseas assignments if they do not have the necessary leadership and management skills to handle cultural differences and cross-cultural interactions.

6.3. Effectively negotiating with host country government officials is a challenge when it comes to expanding the business overseas, and will affect the effectiveness of their overseas mission if they do not have adequate professional knowledge and competencies to deal with in dealing with cross-cultural issues.

7. Proposition Seven

Personal characteristics form a major determinant that strongly influences an expatriate manager's motivation regarding his/her career development, thus affecting the mission and facilitating or shaping strategies employed to manage the challenges they encounter while on overseas assignments.

7.1. Personal traits will influence the ways expatriate managers engage in dealing with cross-cultural encounters.

7.1.1. Expatriate managers with the personal traits of self-learning, open-mindedness, extroversion, or a relaxed approach to issues may advance cultural intelligence which, in turn, could facilitate cross-cultural interaction with either the local staff or the local nationals.

7.1.2. Expatriate managers who display sincerity, self-reflection, and integrity will enhance leadership and facilitate cross-cultural interaction with the local staff.

7.1.3. Expatriate managers with open-mindedness will have better communication skills to assist them in cross-cultural interaction, either with the local staff or the local nationals.

7.1.4. Expatriate managers with great professional skills will see their professional knowledge facilitate their job performance and assist their cross-cultural interaction with the local staff.

7.2. Personal characteristics have also much to do with how an expatriate engages in the management of the business operations overseas.

7.2.1. An expatriate manager who shows independence, integrity, willingness to take on challenges, is an extrovert, ethical, persistent, active, has a self-learning disposition, is level-headed and confident, will advance his/her business operations overseas.

7.3. Personal characteristics also influence the ways expatriate managers tackle cultural differences, which will affect their adjustment to the local living conditions.

7.3.1. An expatriate manager who is flexible, optimistic, courageous, open-minded, open to self-learning, and challenge-taking, and is an extrovert, will have an easier time adjusting to a different cultural environment.

8. Proposition Eight

Family situations include the spouse's adjustment, the education of the children, and caring for parents. These are all factors which influence an expatriate manager's decision as to whether or not he/she will accept an overseas assignment for career development, and may influence the effectiveness of his/her overseas assignment.

8.1. The spouse's adjustment is a concern for expatriate managers, but it does not impede their mission and completion of their assignment.

8.1.1. The extent to which an overseas manager goes in order to facilitate the spouse's adjustment to the local living environment, will weigh on his/her decision to accept another overseas assignment. The more easily the accompanying spouse adjusts, the more willing the expatriate manager is to accept a similar assignment in the future.

8.1.2. The extent of the problems that a spouse who stays behind in the home country faces will greatly weigh on the decision of an expatriate manager

about whether or not he/she will accept the new job. The better things go with the spouse at home, the greater will be the success that the expatriate manager can expect.

8.2. Spouse's support is critical to the success of an expatriate manager on overseas assignments.

8.3. Care for parents and their health conditions are major concerns for prospective expatriate managers that may lead them to refuse an overseas assignment.

8.4. The education of the children is another major concern of expatriate managers.

9. Proposition Nine

Training will advance an expatriate manager's job competence to cope with the challenges of an overseas assignment if the training is sufficient and efficient.

9.1. Pre-departure training was given before departure focusing on job-related familiarity and training.

9.1.1. Expatriate managers will have an easier job if pre-departure training focuses on adequate knowledge of and familiarity with all job-related issues.

9.1.2. If pre-departure training is not adequate, expatriate managers will see that there is a great deal to learn professionally after they relocate.

9.2. Expatriate managers are more likely to effectively interact with the local staff and the host nationals when adequate job-related training is provided.

9.2.1. Expatriate managers are more likely to effectively interact with the local staff and the nationals if pre-departure job training on cultural issues is provided.

9.2.2. Expatriate managers add much to their professional knowledge when on-the-job training about profession-related issues is properly funded.

9.3. The language ability of expatriate managers will be so much more functional if language training is provided or funded.

10. Proposition Ten

Management competencies and skills are the strategies adopted to manage and handle challenges expatriate managers experience so as to effectively carry out the mission in completing their assignments. Communication skills, cultural intelligence, language ability, leadership, and professional knowledge and skills are the core competencies needed for the effective management of overseas assignments. These core competencies complement and reinforce one another.

10.1. If an expatriate manager possesses high cultural intelligence, he or she will be more likely to effectively interact with the local nationals and staff, and will successfully carry out his/her overseas assignments.

10.1.1. An expatriate manager with cultural intelligence is willing to interact with the local nationals, making it easier for him/her to overcome difficulties and challenges posed by a culturally different environment.

10.1.2. An expatriate manager with cultural intelligence will be more open-minded while facing the different work attitudes and behaviors of the local staff, thus enhancing the effectiveness of his/her assignment.

10.1.3. An expatriate manager with cultural intelligence will be more willing to listen to the voices of the local staff, understand how the local staff

thinks, and determine what the problems are so as to put together an appropriate strategy to effectively assist and manage them.

10.1.4. An expatriate manager with cultural intelligence will be able to avoid violating local regulations while establishing his/her office policies, and will be more likely to take cultural differences into consideration when formulating business strategies.

10.1.5. An expatriate manager with cultural intelligence may make his his/her leadership less cumbersome by establishing a harmonious work environment in the local unit, and that will greatly increase the productivity of his/her subordinates.

10.1.6. An expatriate manager with cultural intelligence may see his/her line of communication facilitated when dealing with local government officials, which, in turn, will foster the business operations overseas.

10.2. If an expatriate manager knows how to communicate effectively, he/she will likely be more successful in cross-cultural interaction and adjustment, which will enhance the success of an overseas assignment.

10.2.1. Awareness of cultural differences, respect, sincerity, clear communications skills, is all key elements in communicating with local subordinates. Respect and sincerity can reduce the conflicts between people from different cultures; clear communication can diminish misunderstandings and promote the effectiveness of assignments.

10.3. If an expatriate manager possesses language proficiency, he/she will be more likely to adjust faster to a different cultural environment and to succeed on overseas assignments.

10.3.1. English fluency is seen as a key prerequisite for expatriate managers to succeed because English is the main language in world communication within the service industry.

10.3.2. Knowing the local language is critical in being able to adjust to the local living conditions.

10.3.3. An expatriate manager who has the necessary language fluency will be more effective in cross-cultural communication, leadership, and in handling the business of an organization/corporation.

10.4. An expatriate manager with great leadership qualities will be more likely to effectively manage team work and successfully complete his/her overseas assignments.

10.5. If an expatriate manager has adequate professional knowledge and skills, he/she will be more likely to successfully complete an overseas assignment.

10.5.1. Professional knowledge and skills are the fundamental criteria to effectively perform an overseas assignment.

10.5.2. An expatriate manager with professional knowledge and skills may enhance his or her self-confidence on overseas assignments, and will alleviate the challenges of working overseas.

10.5.3. An expatriate manager with professional knowledge and skills will enrich his/her leadership in leading a multicultural team.

10.5.4. An expatriate manager with professional knowledge and skills will be more likely to establish his/her prestige and authority within the subsidiary, and to earn the respect of the local staff.

10.5.5. An expatriate manager with professional knowledge and skills will find it easier to make judgments about job-related issues and to assist in the operation of the business overseas.

11. Proposition Eleven

Expatriate managers will benefit from the success of overseas assignments. Major benefits comprise career advancement, knowledge enhancement, experience enrichment, competence reinforcement, the establishment of connections, and the development of a global mindset.

Discussions

The purpose of this study was to draw upon the insights of expatriate managers in order to identify critical influences for success on overseas assignments and develop a theory of the effectiveness of expatriate managers on overseas assignments. Based upon the findings identified above, the discussions will focus on the theoretical model and the propositions, regarding the expatriate managers on overseas assignments.

The theoretical model presented in Chapter five reflects the insights of 13 expatriate managers about their effectiveness on overseas assignments. By adopting Strauss and Corbin's coding process, a theoretical model explaining the process and actions of the effectiveness of expatriate managers emerged from the data. Although some answers to the interview questions were different from the original anticipation, the theoretical model is distinctive. It describes a process that explains a

multidimensional interplay of several critical influences regarding the effectiveness of expatriate managers. This model is built on previous assumptions about what may be critical to the success of overseas assignments. It attempts to explore the critical influences that impacted the success of overseas assignments, from factors inherent in the local unit of the organization, factors connected with the local cultural environment, and factors associated with the expatriate managers themselves. The model also attempts to provide support for explaining the motivation for starting the process, the contextual conditions in which strategies are used to manage and handle challenges successfully in order to attain the goals of overseas assignments. The intervening conditions which may constrain or facilitate the strategies adopted, and the conclusions about the effectiveness of the expatriate managers' assignments are also clarified.

Motivation for career development, mission to effectively accomplish overseas assignments, management for the success of overseas assignments, and personal growth are the main themes of the model that explains the major process or actions leading to the effectiveness of the expatriate managers. In addition, within the model, cultural differences, cross-cultural interactions, language barriers, and the operation of the business overseas are listed as the major challenges that require expatriate managers to adopt various competences in order to be able to successfully carry out the mission. Moreover, family situations, training, and personal characteristics are intervening conditions which either constrain or facilitate the competences to effectively complete their overseas assignments. These intervening conditions also influence their motivation or willingness to accept an overseas assignment for career development. A successful overseas assignment means substantial individual growth.

Motivation for Career Development

The organization's global strategy for business expansion, control over subsidiaries, and talent cultivation provides expatriate managers with an opportunity for career development, and the accumulation of knowledge and experiences. These increase the determination of the participants to accept an overseas assignment. In other words, it can be expected that an expatriate manager who successfully completes his/her assignment will more likely be promoted or will see advancement in his/her career. Besides, participants in the study see such an assignment as an invaluable experience to learn from and to accumulate other experiences critical to their career development. This finding in the study is congruent with the argument suggested by Mendenhall, Black, Jensen, and Gregersen (2007). They suggest that "international assignments were found to be the single most powerful development experience" (p. 30).

To emphasize the importance of overseas assignments in developing global leadership, which is the current concern of international human resources management, Mendenhall et al. (2007) point out that because an international assignment is the single most powerful development experience, "a number of companies – such as 3M, Chevron Corp., Citicorp., GE, Nokia AB Oil, Shell Oil Co., and Texas Instruments Inc. – add an international assignment as one of the experiences managers need in order to be promoted to senior, corporate executive positions" (p. 30). As one of participant commented,

Working in an airline company is like being a diplomat. An overseas assignment is not only a very important task, but a necessary career path one must take. Another purpose of an international assignment is to cultivate talent in a hopes of enabling expatriates to have more

opportunities to make various contributions to different fields in the organization. (Case 11, personal communication, December 7, 2007)

Similarly, Black and Gregersen (2007) argue for the importance of an overseas assignment in cultivating a global leader: "An executive cannot develop a global perspective on business or become comfortable with foreign cultures by staying at the headquarters or taking short business trips abroad" (p. 122). From this perspective, an overseas assignment is regarded as a vehicle to cultivate management leaders for the MNCs and as a valuable opportunity for career development for expatriate managers.

Clearly, the participants of this study were aware of the importance of the experience of working abroad in terms of their future careers. They also seemed to understand the possible results of an overseas assignment to them while also appreciating the opportunity provided by the organization. These considerations not only added to the participants' motivation to accept an overseas assignment, but also represent a great incentive to successfully carry it out. Therefore, the research suggests that motivation makes expatriate managers accept an overseas assignment in expectation of a rosier future, and, in turn, these expectations act as triggers to carry out the mission successfully.

The Mission to Successfully Complete Overseas Assignments

Although the global strategy of the organization is critical to worldwide success, the main player, an expatriate manager, is, in fact, the decisive determinant. Besides having the required competencies, the attitude and determination of expatriate managers vis-à-vis their organization and their overseas assignments are crucial to the outcome of these assignments. The most impressive of the findings mentioned in the

model was the realization that the participants' mission plays a key role in facilitating their success.

Selected for an overseas assignment is regarded as an "honor," a "reason for pride," and a kind of "affirmation." To a great extent, this makes participants responsible for their success and enhances their mission to successfully perform the task overseas. Thus, the participants, regardless of which post they occupy in their overseas assignment, come to realize how important it is to succeed, both for their organization and their own career development. As emphasized one participant, "I could not let the organization lose face" (Case 8)! Said another, "An overseas assignment is dream come true" (Case 11)! Their loyalty to the organization stimulates their mission and propels their will to fulfill the expectations of their job. One special finding in this case is the observation made by one participant that loyalty has a reciprocal dimension and that it is also the best way to gain the trust and support of the headquarters.

On the other hand, the participants were aware of how great the challenges were of relocation abroad. One participant (Case 4) stated, "I used to be an engineer and was never involved in managing people before my first overseas assignment. So I was a little bit nervous about it all." Nevertheless, they all recognized their responsibility for the success of their new job. If the successful performance of an overseas assignment rests with the expatriate managers, the driving motivation to fulfill this responsibility is the "mission." Several participants emphasized that "mission" is what propelled them to be successful.

Although not every participant in the study used the term “mission” to describe their determination to successfully complete the overseas assignment, a sense of mission was very much what was behind their enthusiasm to succeed. The sense of mission made them feel responsible, while loyalty and honor reinforced the mission. Thus, mission and responsibility reinforced each other and contributed to the success of the assignment.

The Challenges of Overseas Assignments

The participants of this study faced a variety of challenges while on the assignments. The major ones were cultural differences, cross-cultural interaction, language barriers, and the operation of a business overseas.

Cultural differences. Cultural differences have an impact on the effectiveness of overseas assignments, and they also include the work environment and living conditions. Cultural differences were found to impact the ways expatriate managers conducted their jobs and managed the local staff. In other words, in order to effectively carry out the assignment, expatriate managers had to adjust to the local work environment. This included the local staff’s behavior and attitudes that mirror the national culture. These exposed the cognitive gap that existed between the members of the local staff and the expatriate managers. “Too loose,” “too easy,” “too relaxed,” and “reluctant to work extra hours” were terms that expressed major cultural differences stressed by the participants relocated to Southeast Asia. Interestingly enough, “too easy” and “reluctant to work extra hours,” were also expressions of major cultural differences noticed by the participants who relocated to the United States. These differences frustrated some participants in the beginning, regardless of where they had

been relocated. Over time, however, they put together strategies to cope with them. These allow us to infer that the ones without the ability to deal with cultural differences were probably less effective in fulfilling their mission.

Another dominant factor impacting an overseas assignment had to do with cultural differences spelled out in local regulations and laws which required the close attention of expatriate managers. Disregarding local laws and regulations could result in costly law suits against the subsidiary. One participant described it as costly lessons. Participants relocated to developed countries such as the United States and Germany, recognized the importance of being aware of local regulations and laws. For example, the issues of harassment, discrimination, compliance, early retirement, unfair trade practices, and others are crucial to business operations in these countries. This required participants to share their experiences and spend more time figuring out and implementing one strategy or the other, in order not to be caught off guard and be ready to respond appropriately when necessary. Therefore, in order to avoid infringing upon local laws and regulations and so reduce conflicts and monetary losses, an expatriate manager should spend time “learning and interpreting the local ways of doing business and the general code of conduct regarding activities such as gift giving” (Dowling & Welch, 2005, p. 12).

Cultural differences can also result in cultural shock. Almost all participants experienced some degree of difficulty in adjusting to a new living environment. Housing was the first item with which they had to deal. If the organization provided them with housing accommodations, the severity of cultural shock was lessened or

shortened. This suggests that there are ways for the organization to facilitate the expatriate managers' cross-cultural adjustment in terms of living conditions.

However, a key finding here was that, although the participants suffered through different degrees of cultural shock, all of them indicated that cultural differences in living conditions did not affect their job performance. As one research participant (Case 8) noted, "A job is a job, period!" This may suggest that personal traits can lessen the negative impact cultural differences can have on work performance. Besides, this is probably because the employees of the subsidiary are a mix of native locals and overseas Chinese, and the parent country's culture seems to prevail in the office.

Cross-cultural interaction. An expatriate manager on overseas assignment engages in interactions with the host nationals within and outside the organization. Within the organization, cross-cultural interaction comprises interaction with peers, subordinates, and supervisors. This requires that the expatriate manager be knowledgeable about the local culture, displays sensitivity and awareness of cultural differences in order to be able to effectively interact with the locals for the benefit of the whole organization.

Cultural differences were found to be a major factor in creating misunderstanding or misinterpretation in the relations between the expatriates and the locals. Another significant finding was that most participants who relocated to the United States and Europe were prone to stay with people whose culture was similar to their own. Typically, those who relocated to the United States, except Case 9, stressed that it was not easy to make friends with the Americans, not to mention being able to

blend into their social life. Cultural distance may explain this phenomenon. Americans are thought to be individualistic and tend to care more about themselves. This cultural characteristic is probably one of the main reasons why U.S. employees were reluctant to work after hours. By contrast, Taiwanese society is collectivistic, as are all Asian cultures, and they tend to emphasize in-group harmony. Working after hours is a very common habit in Taiwanese society. Besides, according to some participants, Americans were perceived as arrogant and self-sufficient. The Taiwanese, by contrast, are humble and less self-absorbed. Moreover, American society is described as a low-context culture, one where people overlook external and contextual stimuli, but emphasize accurate communication, with lots of details and specifics (Milliman et al., 2002). On the other hand, Taiwan is a country with a high context culture where people emphasize the art of conversation and sometimes attach a great deal of meaning to the context and those involved in the communication.

These differences at work or in the living environment will naturally create problems in terms of difficulties in establishing deeper relationships. Another possible factor that might explain this phenomenon is the impact of culture shock. As Harris and Moran (1979) suggest, cultural shock can lead sojourners to have negative feelings about the host country and its nationals. The negative impact of cultural differences in terms of cross-cultural interaction may hinder an expatriate managers' ability to cope with the challenges.

Operating business overseas. The research participants were not only involved in management but were also responsible for maintaining and expanding the business of their corporations. Stress is the opposite of motivation. But they are intertwined. In

terms of running the organization, managing and leading a multicultural team is quite a challenge because of differences in values, norms, attitudes, regulations, and so forth. In terms of maintaining the business and expanding it overseas, the domestic market and the international market are different.

According to the data, the stress of operating a business overseas is enormous and a major source of all kinds of pressure or stress. Managing and expanding a business are certainly not easy jobs. Management of a local subsidiary means supervising people with a variety of cultural backgrounds. The expatriate manager has to deal with the ways of different cultures, governments, and practices of doing business. In the long run, he/she is responsible for everything that affects the business overseas. In other words, he/she has to meet the expectations and requirements of the corporate headquarters. Consequently, the expatriate manager needs to be competent and capable of resisting the stress that comes with the job.

Intervening Conditions

Training, family situations, cultural factors, and personal characteristics were found to be most significant in constraining or facilitating the management of a subsidiary. As such, these factors were either obstacles or motivators affecting the motivation and the mission of these entrepreneurs.

Training. Pre-departure training, lasting three days to one month depended on the MNCs. It was generally provided to expatriate managers. It primarily focused on the business and familiarity with its various departments, which the participants perceived as necessary, but found it to be lacking in effectiveness. Some blamed the ineffectiveness on inadequate time. Primarily because some overseas assignments were

made at the last minute, pre-departure training was not adequate. However, those who experienced a month long pre-departure training noted that the effectiveness of pre-departure training was still limited. This researcher believes it was because the content of the training focused too much on familiarity with the various departments.

Furthermore, there was little training that focused on the competencies or knowledge needed for the performance of the overseas assignments. This suggests that organizations assumed that “the rules of good business apply everywhere” (Black & Gregeren, 2007, p. 120), and, as a result, they assume that specific business training for overseas expatriates is not necessary

On-the-job training was provided by two MNCs. One participant was given formal training regarding harassment, something he had to know about when going to the United States. Another participant attended job-related seminars, not mandated, but funded by his company. These two types of on-the-job training were seen as very useful for their new job. Primarily because in these two cases on-the-job training aimed at teaching how to cope with specific conditions of a foreign country, they were perceived to have better options than those without any pre-departure training. Given the fact that being aware of the consequences of harassment entails a form of cross-cultural training, this researcher will draw from some of the elements of social-learning theory in order to show how this type of training may have contributed to the research participants’ adjustment, skills development, and cultural performance.

As mentioned above, the participants as expatriates, were given training regarding issues of harassment because of necessity. Thus, they paid attention to both modeled behavior and information given during the training, imbedding them in their

memory (retention) and learning how to reproduce the model behavior through appropriate actions (reproduction). This can be best gauged from a statement made by Case 4 when he said, "I think that because I was given this kind of training, I became much more careful while interacting either with males or females."

Furthermore, in order to learn how to cope with work stress, Case 7 attended job-related seminars, where he received enlightened information on how to advance professionally. In other words, he had an opportunity to find out how to increase his effectiveness and reduce stress. This goes along with the conclusion drawn by Black and Mendenhall (1991) that "Even if the models are not perfect or not perfectly imitated, the increased self-efficacy that the trained individuals have gained would lead them to persist longer than non-trained individuals in maintaining more novel behaviors in the actual cross-cultural situations"(p. 123).

However, the participants in this study manifested a variety of viewpoints and insights on how to incorporate cross-cultural training into pre-departure training. It was interesting to discover that the CEO of an overseas subsidiary affirmed the necessity of cross-cultural training either before or on arrival at the new job. But they emphasized this should be based on the condition that there are qualified trainers and an adequate budget. By contrast, participants who were in mid-level management expressed that there was no need for expatriate managers to attend cross-cultural training before departure. They took to the view of "no pain, no gain" (Case 4). Besides, they doubted the effectiveness of cross-cultural training because they perceived it to be more theoretical than practical. Therefore, they did not think it was necessary. One participant (Case 6) was even quite directly saying that "your perceptions and thoughts

are too westernized” when the researcher consulted his opinions about the issue of cross-cultural training. This is really informative because, although these participants were primarily in mid-level management and had experienced different degrees of cultural shock, they still insisted that the provision of cross-cultural training before departure was not necessary.

Most participants in this study indicated that they were not given formal or rigorous cross-cultural training before departure or even after arrival at the new post. They all tried to gain information regarding their relocation from various sources. But they all admitted it was not enough because they all had much trouble adjusting either to the work or the living conditions. Despite the fact that some of them regarded cross-cultural training as unnecessary, this researcher would still argue that it is imperative for a successful performance of overseas assignments. It may be difficult to predict how effective the cross-cultural training will be. However, its effectiveness has been proven by those who underwent anti-harassment training. Its necessity was also highlighted by the participants who were CEOs at overseas subsidiaries. Besides, the effectiveness of much training has also been confirmed by the literature based on research by experts in the field.

Family situation. Family situation, including spouse adjustment, the children’s education, and the care for older parents, appeared to influence the decision on whether to accept an overseas assignment as well as the overall adjustment in a new environment. But it seems to have no direct influence on job performance. Perhaps this was because the participants of this study underwent culture shock only in the initial stage of their assignment. In addition, each of them developed repertoires of

appropriate behaviors so as to be able to respond promptly to cross-cultural situations. Moreover, the participants possessed various management competencies and a variety of personal characteristics that helped them cope with job-related issues.

The support of the spouse was critical for the success of the expatriate managers and influenced their decisions to accept another overseas assignment or not. Some participants clearly stated that once their spouses adjusted to the local life, they preferred not to move back to Taiwan, but stay in the country of their relocation. The researcher discovered that this frequently happened with expatriate managers who relocated to a developed country such as Japan and the United States. Besides, those whose spouses were able to quickly adjust to the local environment did so primarily because they had the support and friendship of the local Taiwanese community. Most importantly, the expatriate research participants accompanied by their spouses confirmed their spouses' desire to get the whole family become adjusted to the new environment. They credited their willingness to do so to the traditional virtue of the Chinese women.

On the other hand, most accompanying spouses suffered more serious culture shock than the expatriate managers themselves before being able to adjust. The major factors were the language barrier and loneliness. This made the expatriate managers believe that there was a need to incorporate spouses and children into the cross-cultural training program when this was available.

One of the important findings here is that traditional Chinese culture has an impact on the decision about an overseas assignment. For example, some participants whose parents were advanced in age expressed concern about their care and health

conditions. Actually, no matter where they are, on overseas assignment or not, care for their parents was always on their minds. This is typically a case of the influence of a traditional Chinese cultural value, namely, filial piety.

Of the 13 participants, six were accompanied by their spouses, and three brought their children along. Although most accompanying spouses and children suffered serious problems of adjustment in the initial stage of the overseas assignment, and this situation caused concern for the participants, these problems did not hinder their determination to pursue their career development.

The education of the children who accompanied their parents, and the adjustment problems were the major concerns in the initial stages of the overseas assignment. Over time, once the children had adapted well to the local living conditions and the educational environment, these concerns turned into appreciation. The expatriates were appreciative to the companies for giving them the opportunity to work overseas and also have their children get the opportunity to study abroad, have a solid education and enhance their own future careers. They also sounded very grateful for the devotion of their accompanying spouses. From this perspective, the researcher would argue that the children's education and adjustment problems became priorities for the accompanying spouses, and their own difficulties were seen as secondary or even trivial. The good of the children came first.

Personality characteristics. Personal characteristics are a predisposition that allows you to predict the quality of job performance. Researchers and scholars have been interested in exploring the influence of personality on the success of expatriates. Some of them are Caligiuri (2000), Ones and Viswesvaran (1997), Bond (1997), and

Costa and McCrae (1992). While many personal traits were found to be linked to the success of an expatriate's performance, five major factors were grouped together and labeled "the big five personality characteristics" (Earley & Ang, 2003, p. 219), which are extroversion, emotional stability, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness.

Earley and Ang (2003) systematized the main effects of the big five personality characteristics on expatriate success as follows:

1. Extroversion is likely to predicate the acceptance of overseas assignments, help develop good interpersonal relations, apply good efforts, and the pro-social performance of the expatriates;
2. Emotional stability predicates acceptance of overseas assignments, successful adjustment to new cultures, and the completion of assignments;
3. Openness to new experiences is expected to predicate acceptance of overseas assignments, ability to adjust to a new culture, and successful completion of assignments;
4. Agreeableness is expected to predict good interpersonal relations and help with the compliance or acceptance of authority; and
5. Conscientiousness is expected to predict job performance, and development of a sense of responsibility. (p. 219)

Arthur and Bennett (1995) classified the factors contributing to the success of expatriates into five categories: family situation, job knowledge and motivation, flexibility/adaptability, relational skills, and extra-cultural openness. Among these five categories, there are two categories, flexibility/adaptability and extra-cultural openness which are personality-based characteristics. "This study, however, is limited in that it is based on the expatriates' perceptions of what was needed for success, rather the true validity of the evidence" (Caligiuri, 2000, p. 68).

Salient personality characteristics have a major influence on motivating career development and success in completing assignments overseas. They particularly facilitate competencies necessary for the success of the expatriates. Each participant revealed various personality characteristics in different settings and during cross-

cultural interactions. Evidence from the data which come from real-life stories and experiences attest to the importance of personality traits not only from their own viewpoints, but also from an objective study of the reality of the environment overseas.

Each participant possesses a variety of personality characteristics and brings them into play in different ways in confronting different environments and challenges. The major personal traits that help them cope with all the challenges during the overseas missions were these traits - self-confidence, self-learning, independence, self-reflection, pro-activeness, courage, patience, integrity, high emotional intelligence, extroversion, open-mindedness, resistance to stress, risk-taking, challenge-taking, flexibility, hardship-bearing, persistence, sincerity, modesty, responsibility, and a sense of mission. Among these, open-mindedness, self-learning, stress resistance, independence, courage, risk-taking, and challenge-taking were revealed in more than two participants. Self-learning, open-mindedness, extroversion, and the ability to take things not too seriously were found to enable and advance the participants' cultural intelligence, and, in turn, facilitate the effectiveness of cross-cultural interactions. This is consistent with the theory of the evolutionary personality, which suggests that extroversion may help facilitate interactions (Buss, 1991). Similarly, Caligiuri (2000) concludes that extroversion predicates the expatriate's desire to complete an overseas assignment. In exploring which characteristics employees of an international joint venture should possess, Schuler, Jackson, and Luo (2004) propose five major characteristics, including openness, systemic thinking, creativity, self-confidence, and empathy.

Significantly, sincerity, self-reflection, and integrity were found to help enhance leadership which, in turn, facilitates the effectiveness of cross-cultural interaction with the local staff. For an expatriate manager, the task of effectively leading a multicultural team is more complex in view of the fact that local staff members may have different social norms and values in the workplace. Thus, personal traits appear to be critical for managers to be able to effectively interact with the local staff, gain their respect and trust, and build cohesion and harmony in the workplace. Besides, given that talent cultivation is one of objectives of the MNCs' global strategy, expatriate managers possessing unique positive personality traits are excellent candidates for global leadership.

Imperturbability, prudence, independence, integrity, challenge-taking, extroversion, ethics, persistence, activeness, self-learning, and confidence were found to enable expatriate managers to advance the business operation or expansion of their corporations. Among these different characteristics, prudence, integrity, challenge-taking, extroversion, self-learning, and confidence were displayed by more than two participants. For an expatriate manager, operating or expanding the business overseas is a complex task because he/she faces different cultures, different governments, regulations and laws, different rules, in sum, different cultures. To achieve the goals of successful business operation, some personal characteristics are critical. For example, imperturbability will help a manager cope with the risks inherent in the operation of an overseas business. This is to say that the business risks are much greater overseas than in the home country.

It has been established that integrating self-learning, challenge-taking, and extroversion facilitates both cultural adjustment and business operation. In the context of an overseas assignment, being able to learn by yourself is a significant asset, given the fact that the participants were not cross-culturally trained before departing on their assignments. Thus, an expatriate manager with self-learning skills will likely be more willing to absorb knowledge or information about the local country, which, in turn, will facilitate the development of a repertoire of appropriate behaviors and attitudes vis-à-vis the cultural and the work environments. It is obvious that, given the complexity and magnitude of the challenges, not all assignments bring about the same set of problems or follow the same pattern. If the information about the country of relocation is obtained before departure and if the work environment is not what was expected, termination of assignment will be an option. In this regard, an expatriate manager who is up to the challenges will have an easier adjustment.

By making further comparisons and drawing contrasts from the data, this researcher discovered that self-learning and extroversion facilitated the adjustment in three major areas: living conditions, business operation, and cross-cultural interaction. These two personal traits were also found to contribute particularly to the participants' cultural intelligence. Consequently, this researcher would argue that the ability to deal with cultural differences and cross-cultural encounters seems to be the core competencies of successful expatriate managers. Most importantly, personality characteristics greatly added to cross-cultural competency, especially for those who were not given cross-cultural training. This argument is congruent with Doweling and Welch's (2005) evaluation:

In practice, although inter-cultural competence is reconsidered as important, it is difficult to precisely define what this comprises, let alone assess a candidate's suitability in this regard. One has to take into consideration aspects such as the individual's personality, attitude to foreigners and ability to relate people from another cultural group. (p. 99)

The Interplay of Management Competencies for the Success of Overseas Assignments

Different conditions will obviously demand different competencies. Dowling and Welch (2005) note that "human competence refers to the knowledge, skills, and abilities required in competent work performance and is fundamental to organizational viabilities" (p. 22). Competency here, then, is what it takes to successfully complete an overseas assignment, thus becoming fundamental to the viabilities of the organization and its expatriate managers. These management competencies are the main determinants affecting success. Cultural intelligence, language ability, communication skills, leadership, and professional knowledge and skills constitute their "collective stock" (Dowling & Welch, 2005, p. 22). Figure 2 illustrates the major challenges and areas of stress which require multidimensional management competencies.

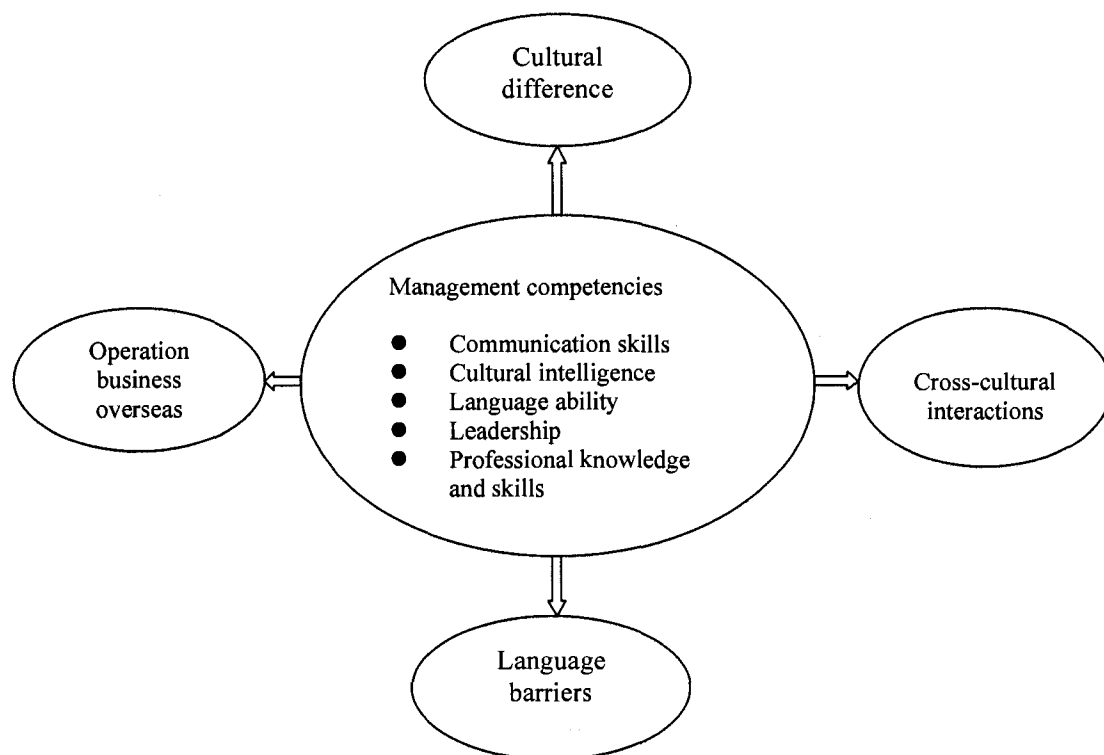


Figure 2. Management competencies required for the success of overseas assignments.

As illustrated in Chapter five where the Findings were presented, this researcher has discovered that all the required competencies are multidimensional and mutually complementary. Their integration and mutual interplay are what determine the success or failure on an overseas assignment. These management competencies will be briefly discussed in the pages to follow.

Cultural intelligence. Although all participants were not given cross-cultural training before departure; all were considered culturally intelligent and proved to be so. It is clear, however, that cultural intelligence is not born overnight. One of the most effective ways participants became culturally intelligent was by diving into cross-cultural interactions, observing, listening, and learning what they needed and what

drew their interest, then shaping the necessary and appropriate behaviors. In this manner, these experiences are transformed into knowledge and skills. This process of developing cultural intelligence is consistent with the process of social learning.

Thomas and Inkson (2003) suggest that the improvement of cultural intelligence is a process of social learning. To improve cultural intelligence, one learns from social experience by paying attention to critical difference between oneself and others in culture and background, retaining knowledge which was gained from the experiences of cross-cultural interaction, and reproducing the knowledge gained in future interactions. As a result, the more frequently and mindfully behaviors are tried out, the more quickly cultural intelligence improves (Thomas & Inkson, 2003)

By observing and staying alert about cultural differences (attention), the participants gained knowledge about culture (retention) and developed a repertoire of appropriate behaviors (reproduction). They deployed cultural intelligence (incentive) while dealing with issues related to cultural differences. They have been identified as one of the major sets of challenges the participants and their accompanying families faced during the duration of the assignment. Thus, in order to overcome or reduce their impact, the participants used cultural-intelligence in cross-cultural situations. For example, in order to overcome the language barrier in non-English speaking countries, Cases 8, 11, and 12 made efforts to learn the local language to be ready to quickly adjust and be effective. Their self-learning ability added to their competency of cultural intelligence. This also supports the theoretical proposition of 7.1.1. Thus, cross-cultural competency is maximized by salient personality characteristics. Caligiuri (2000) concludes that personality characteristics associated with cultural competence

facilitate the effectiveness of adjustment and “personality characteristics are the most important factors to the success” (Case 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13) achieved by almost all participants of this study.

Besides, as indicated in Chapter five, cultural intelligence facilitated communication skills which, in turn, added to the effectiveness of cross-cultural interaction. Participants were placed overseas to supervise subsidiaries and to expand the business. All of these responsibilities involved intensive communication and interactions, which required the ability to effectively interact with the local staff. It is to be expected, however, that cultural differences will be a key factor in creating misunderstanding or misinterpretation between expatriate managers and the local staff. In addition, this researcher discovered that the culture in the parent country continued to be the dominant one within the local subsidiaries. In Chapter five it was discussed how to overcome existing and potential challenges which are critical in order to develop sound cross-cultural interactions. Not surprisingly, the assets connected with cultural intelligence helped the expatriates achieve a harmonious relationship within the local organization. Honesty, open-mindedness, and self-learning ability provided the impetus for the development of cultural intelligence.

Furthermore, different local regulations and laws, different styles of doing business, and different types of government place much stress and compound the challenges of overseas assignments. That is why having the competence of cultural intelligence is critical for success. Amazingly, all participants were able to make successful use of strategies to reduce stress. Again, their personality characteristics

played a major role in facilitating leadership and advancing their professional knowledge and skills.

Based upon the discussion presented above, it can be said that there is a pattern in the process of employing various strategies to deal successfully with the stress and challenges of an overseas position. This pattern involves the fact that:

1. Personality characteristics are critical determinants in developing cultural intelligence.
2. Cultural intelligence facilitates competences such as communication skills, leadership, and professional knowledge and skills.

It follows that cultural intelligence is a required competency for a successful overseas job. Dowling and Welch (2005) confirm this conclusion when they state, "Apart from the obvious technical ability and managerial skills, expatriates require cross-cultural abilities that enable the person to operate in a new environment" (Dowling & Welch, 2005, p. 99). Similarly, Thomas and Inkson (2003) highlight the role of cultural intelligence as a key managerial competence for the 21st century.

Language ability. Language ability can be divided into three categories according to the different countries in which the Taiwanese expatriates had their overseas experiences. These groups were English-speaking countries, non-English-speaking countries, and Japan. Participants relocated to both English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries emphasized that English ability was a "prerequisite" to succeed in overseas assignments. Those who were relocated to non-English speaking nations spoke of the need to learn the local tongue, even though it was not a prerequisite of the organization and was not a criterion for selection for an overseas

assignment. However, participants assigned to Japan indicated that fluency in Japanese, in contrast to the other countries, indicated that fluency in Japanese was used as a criterion for their selection, for it was considered critical to the success of the overseas assignment.

In addition, fluency in the language that dominates the industry or the native language of the staff of the subsidiary can facilitate everything enormously. Thus, fluency in both the dominant language of the industry and the language of the locals plays a major role in adjustment to the new environment, in cross-cultural interaction, cross cultural communication, and leadership. As said above, in Japan it is very important to speak Japanese as well. But, most importantly, the realization that English dominates the business world means that expatriate managers learn both the local language and English in order to maximize the prospects of success in their assignments.

Communication skills. Communication is, in essence, interaction. In the context of an overseas assignment, interaction involves communicating with the host nationals, host staff, host-culture clients and suppliers, as well as government officials of the host-culture. It is clear that the success of an overseas assignment is predicated on overcoming challenges and the stress caused by cultural differences, cross-cultural interaction, language barriers, and the demands of operating an overseas enterprise. The greater the ability of an expatriate manager to communicate, the more successful in adjusting to the living environment, in establishing relationships, and in running the business.

Both a “weapon” (Case 1) and “the most important determinant of the success of the participants’ overseas assignments” (Case 2) were expressions used by the former expatriate research participants in describing the importance of communication skills. This finding is congruent with other expatriation studies. Abe and Wiseman (1983), Black et al. (1999), and Brewster (1995), all suggest that communication skills play a central role in the success of an international assignment.

Significantly, the researcher discovered that the communication skills or competency could be translated into six main attributes that include respect, sincerity or straightforwardness, cultural awareness, introspection, care for the success of the organization, and the ability to convey clear commands or orders.

Introspection, respect, and sincerity are associated with personality characteristics that may facilitate communication skills. As for caring for the success of the organization, loyalty plays a key role. It strengthens the mission to successfully carry out the assignment.

Interestingly enough, the other two attributes, namely, cultural awareness and the ability to issue commands and orders relate to other competences discussed in this study. Cultural awareness is tied to cultural intelligence. Given that cultural differences are major barriers to effective communication, cultural intelligence will facilitate communication with the host nationals. As indicated by the participants, understanding the local culture, knowing how the local nationals think, is very important for establishing proper communication. Also, the ability to clearly convey orders to local subordinates is a major asset for a successful leader and for effective team work. Thus,

cultural intelligence can be said to facilitate communication skills, and a combination of such competencies will, in turn, strengthen one's leadership practices.

Professional knowledge and skills. In addition to language ability, professional knowledge and professional skills, described as multidimensional, were understood by the participants as pre-requisites for success, since they were considered critical determinants for overseas assignments.

It seems that professional knowledge and skills impact the operations of a professional on an overseas job. They are pre-requisite competencies that spell out the main criterion necessary to earn the respect and trust of local subordinates. It also can lead to self-confidence and self-efficacy, thus enabling expatriate managers to earn the respect and the trust of the local staff through a professional carrying out his duties and remaining dedicated to his mission.

Case 8 noted that the challenges of his overseas assignment did not appear too overwhelming because of his knowledge and skills, which he regarded as an extension of his domestic job and previous experience. In fact, Earley and Ang (2003) confirm that "expatriates will command the respect and trust among the coworkers only if they are able to perform competently on the job" (p. 224). Given that in the eyes of local coworkers or subordinates, an expatriate manager is just like a newcomer and a stranger with whom they have no familiarity, the selection of who is going to supervise them makes professional knowledge and skills absolutely necessary. Thus, a well-prepared overseas manager will be able to break down the initial barriers. This is why professional knowledge and skills will go a long way in earning the respect and trust of

the local staff. In this way, the prestige and authority of the expatriate manager can be smoothly established.

Again, it seems that professional knowledge and skills are necessary components of sound leadership. The more professional knowledge and skills one has, the more competent is one's leadership and the more successful teamwork will be. A competent, professional leader will make correct judgments and decisions; he or she will set up appropriate strategies for the operation of the business, and will communicate well with subordinates.

Leadership. Perhaps because the participants in this study were either the CEOs of the local units or mid-level managers, adequate leadership skills were found to be very important for the success of an overseas assignment. Among all required management competencies, leadership was perceived by the participants to be one of the determinants to their success. This was demonstrated by their own ability to create harmony, cohesion, and effective team work, by their enthusiasm, by the establishment of all kinds of connections or links, by leading through example, by integrity, by the wise use of full empowerment, and an understanding of the local culture.

Among these attributes, integrity and leading subordinates by example, was what earned the expatriate managers trust and respect. On the other hand, loyalty led to integrity and, in turn, earned them the trust of the home office, the headquarters. They also learned that full empowerment has its rewards in terms of career advancement and increased knowledge and experience. In turn, these added to their level of motivation, and shaped their leadership style.

Given the collectivistic orientation of the culture of the Taiwanese expatriate managers, it is not surprising that almost all participants placed emphases on the importance of harmony, cohesion, and team work. Adler (1997) remarked that “members of collectivist cultures place importance on fitting in harmoniously and saving face” (p. 48). Therefore, with regards to cultural differences, it was expected that the cultural orientation of the expatriate managers would influence their leadership style.

Similar to other findings indicated in preceding discussions, personality characteristics and other competencies were found to have an impact on the quality of leadership. This may be explained from the perspective of motivation. As already pointed out, the success of expatriate managers on overseas assignments was a combination of motivation and management skills, with motivation being the driving force of the mission. Attracted by the opportunity of career development and of an invaluable learning experience, the participants drew up the inspiration and the desire to learn, understand, and appreciate local cultures. They then developed the competence of cultural intelligence which, in turn, helped reinforce leadership. Here is evidence of this taken from expressions and descriptions used by the participants themselves:

1. A willingness to listen to what their subordinates were saying and thinking.
2. A concern for and the ability to inspire the local subordinates by being open-minded and interested in learning about the local culture.
3. The willingness to spend extra time observing their own subordinates before making decisions and implementing policies.

This evidence suggests that the personality characteristics of self-learning, open-mindedness and mindfulness were major factors that shaped the participants' attitudes toward local cultures and increased their desire to learn from and understand the local culture. This finding is coherent with the earlier discussion about the role of personality characteristics in shaping or facilitating the adoption of successful strategies to reach goals.

Most importantly, these findings are in line with the argument proposed by this researcher, that the competencies required to effectively perform an overseas assignment are multidimensional and mutually complementary. Figure 3 was developed as an attempt to provide a visual and a supplemental explanation about how these various competencies complement and reinforce one another.

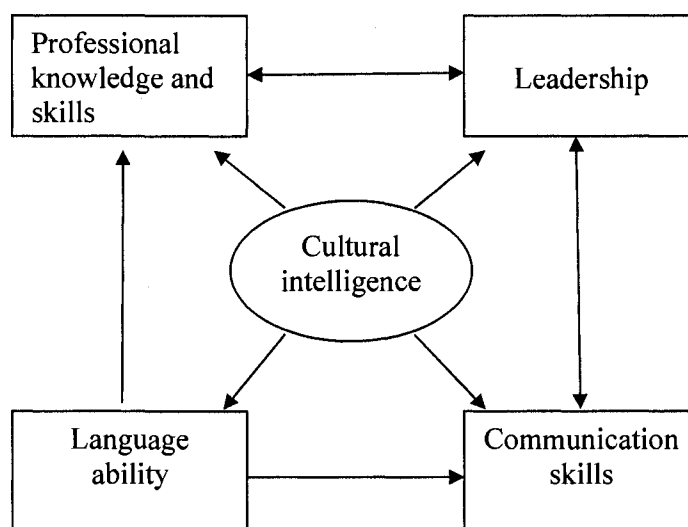


Figure 3. The relationships among management competencies.

Relationship between personality characteristics and management competencies

By integrating the above discussions, a model about the relationship among personality characteristics, management competencies, and the success of expatriate assignments emerged as seen in Figure 4. It shows how the participants successfully performed overseas assignments. In the center of the model are the personality characteristics which, as stated above, are critical to the success of expatriate assignments.

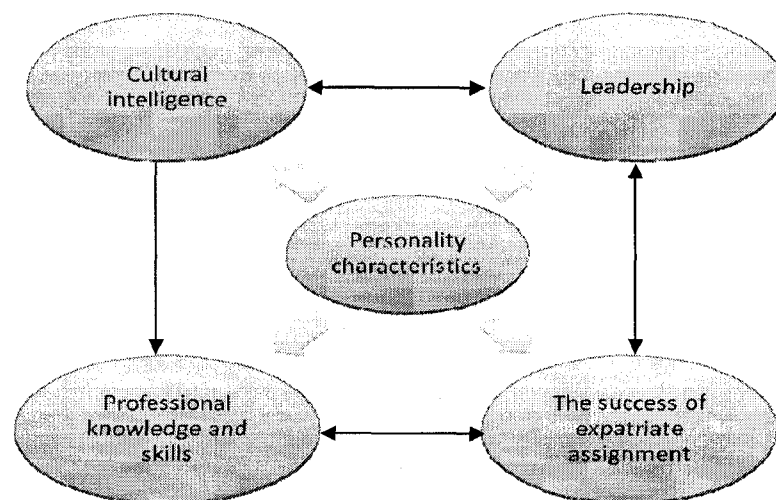


Figure 4. Relationship between personality characteristics and management competencies.

It can be said that overseas assignments are multi-faceted, with multi-dimensional challenges and stress factors. Accordingly, to achieve the desired success of overseas assignments, it is imperative to have a variety of management competencies and to know how to effectively integrate them, is crucial for success. Personality characteristics were found to be key determinants because they facilitated the participants use their management competencies in many relevant ways. As Figure 1 shows, the researcher argues that the success of an overseas assignment is, in essence,

a process of management which requires from the expatriate manager, a variety of competencies for the successful completion of the mission that his/her management represents.

Individual Growth

The consequences or outcomes of the success of an overseas assignment demonstrate that the expatriate managers' motivation for career development was met and, in turn, resulted in the development and advancement of a number of valuable competences. It also opens up the horizons of the participants. All this confirms that the success of an expatriate manager is predicated on an interplay of motivation, learning, and management strategies.

Finally, although the global strategy of the organization is critical for global success, the main player, the expatriate manager, is in fact the decisive determinant. An overseas assignment, then, comprises multidimensional functions for both the organization and an expatriate manager. Thus, it is particularly important to devise the best possible strategies for achieving the original expectations of the organization. What this research revealed is that the expectations and motivation of the overseas managers must be aligned with the commitment of the organization for success to become reality. It is a reciprocal relationship, as is the relationship between the expatriate managers, their subordinates, and the organization. Morrison (1994) sums it all up this way: "Reliability in individuals and organizations make them credible. Credibility generates loyalty. Predictability, reliability, credibility, loyalty and trust all reinforce each other" (p. 359). This researcher cannot spell it out in a more convincing way than through these same words.

Link among Personality Characteristics, Management Competencies, and the Outcomes of the Success of Overseas Assignments

Figure 5 illustrates the link among expatriate managers' personality characteristics, various management competencies, and the success of overseas assignments. There are multiple relationships among them. First, personality characteristics play a critical role in facilitating or shaping their various competencies, including cultural intelligence, professional knowledge and skills, leadership, communication skills, and language ability, and this, in turn, will facilitate their success on overseas assignments.

Secondly, cultural intelligence was found to assist expatriate managers in developing or advancing professional knowledge and skill, leadership, communication skills, and language ability. Depending on how they make use of their cultural intelligence, they will reinforce their professional knowledge and skills, and thus increase their leadership ability to deal with the challenges of overseas assignments, which, in turn, will facilitate their success. This relationship is illustrated by the arrow from Cultural intelligence, Professional knowledge and skills, Leadership to Success of overseas assignments. In addition, because of their cultural intelligence, the language ability of expatriate managers will be improved, thus assisting them in dealing with cross-cultural communication, which, in turn, will reinforce their leadership ability in coping with the various challenges of leading a culturally diverse team that can bring success to their jobs. This relationship is illustrated by the arrow from Cultural intelligence, Language ability, Communication skills, Leadership to Success of overseas assignments.

Finally, once the expatriate managers successfully complete their overseas assignments, their various management competencies will be enhanced. Consequently, the relationship of their management competencies to the outcomes and the success of their overseas assignments is mutual and reciprocal.

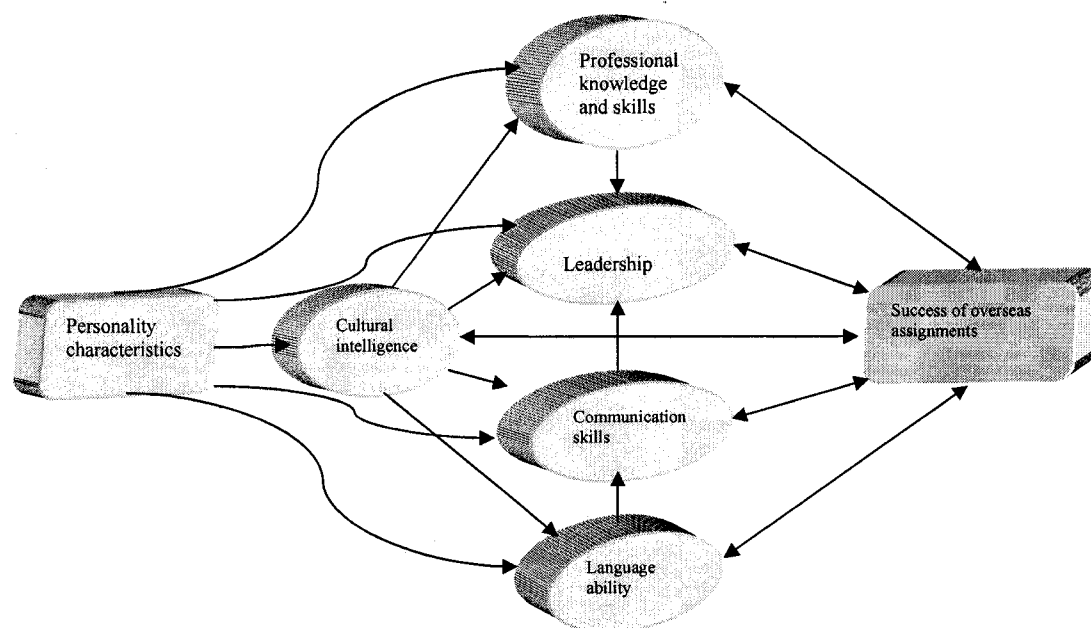


Figure 5. The link among personality characteristics, management competencies, and the outcomes of the success of overseas assignments.

Conceptual Diagram of "The Success of Taiwanese Expatriate Managers"

Figure 6, a conceptual diagram regarding the success of Taiwanese expatriate managers on overseas assignments, is the integration of the discussion developed above. It illustrates that expatriate managers' motivation for career development, mission to successfully complete overseas assignments, management competencies for success, personality characteristics, family situation, and provision of training are critical and decisive factors for their success when they were on overseas assignments. Furthermore, this conceptual diagram also depicts that these determinants are highly interrelated and all add to the success of the expatriate managers who contributed to this research. Moreover, once expatriate managers successfully complete their overseas assignments, these various determinants could be reinforced and enhance one another. Consequently, it can be said that the relationship between these various determinants and the success of the expatriate managers involved in this study, is mutual and reciprocal.

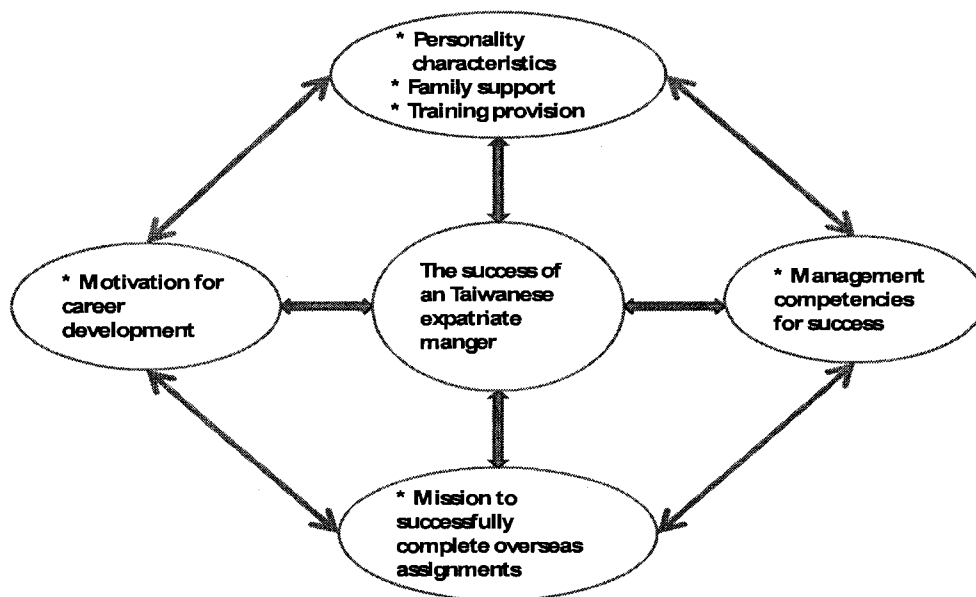


Figure 6. Conceptual diagram of "The Success of Taiwanese Expatriate Managers".

Chapter Seven: Integration of Study, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Integration of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore critical influences on the success of Taiwanese expatriate managers on overseas assignments. Grounded theory research, a systematic and qualitative methodology, was used to generate a middle-range theory that explains, at a broad conceptual level, the nature of the success of expatriate managers on overseas assignments. Thirteen Taiwanese expatriate managers from five Taiwan-based MNCs in the service industry participated in the study. Data were gathered by conducting in-depth interviews, asking questions about their success on overseas assignments.

Following the process of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding associated with the analysis tools of microanalysis, asking questions, and comparative analysis, a model explaining the success of expatriate managers on overseas assignments was generated and can be discussed as follows.

Motivated by individual career development and the global strategy of organizations, expatriate managers' mission to successfully complete overseas assignments was triggered. The corporation's global strategy provided an overseas post which was regarded as an opportunity for career development and learning by participants. Due to this motivation combined with loyalty, honor, and responsibility, mission was the core impetus for the success of overseas assignments.

Cultural differences, cross-cultural interaction, language barriers, and operating business overseas were the main challenges or stressors expatriate managers encountered while they were on overseas assignments. These stressors required expatriate managers to employ strategies to successfully complete their overseas assignments. Cultural

differences included different work attitudes and behaviors, different social norms. Local laws and regulations were identified to have a direct impact on the work environment, which required participants to employ various strategies to cope with this general situation if they wanted to successfully complete overseas missions. On the other hand, culture shock that resulted from cultural differences depressed participants and accompanying family members while they adjusted to the local living environment. Although this influenced participants and accompanying family members' adjustment in the local living environment, participants indicated that it did not directly impact their job performance.

In addition, cultural differences were perceived as the major factor causing misunderstanding and misinterpretations between participants and the local-cultural nationals; these in turn did impact the effectiveness of cross-cultural interactions. Cultural differences exposed in work attitudes and behaviors served as a challenge influencing the effectiveness of cross-cultural interaction between the research participants and staff members of the local-cultural. Moreover, operating business overseas involves not only maintaining operations but also expanding business deals which caused the research participants high levels of stress. Particularly, business performance was the most important result that the corporate headquarters demanded. To overcome these challenges and stressors, various strategies that complimented each other were employed. Cultural intelligence, language ability, communication skill, leadership, and professional knowledge and skill were the critical competencies participants employed to handle various challenges or stresses they encountered in response to the mission to effectively complete their overseas assignments. Various

intervening conditions were found to constrain, facilitate, or shape the varying competencies employed to manage the challenges. These intervening conditions were family situation, personality characteristic, and type of training the manager had had.

Family situations, including spouse, children, and parents, influenced participants' decision on whether or not to accept an overseas post. If the concerns of parents' care and children's education were settled, and spouse's attitudes tended to support accepting the post, then participants accepted an overseas assignment. If participants were accompanied by family members, the problem of family members' adjustment generally became an issue which frustrated some expatriate managers. Isolation, lack of friends, boredom, and language barriers were the major factors that gave rise to maladjustment for the accompanying spouse. However, over time, almost all accompanying spouses gradually adjusted to the local environment and found ways to live well in the new place. With this change, the spouse, in turn, was transformed into a supporting power for participants. Accompanying children's education was the main concern for participants at the initial stage of their overseas assignments. Once the children gradually adjusted to a new education system and were fluent in the local language, they enjoyed their education and life, according to participants with accompanying children. All the research participants with both accompanying spouse and children attributed the success of their children's education and adjustment to their spouses' dedication. They all highly appreciated and approved of their spouse's devotion and contribution.

Personality characteristics played the most influential role in successfully performing an overseas mission, and were pervasively identified as the most critical

determinant affecting participants' success in many dimensions. Central to overcoming challenges or stresses was the influence of personality characteristics. Some salient personality characteristics were identified as facilitating or shaping the participants' various management competencies, and these, in turn, were believed to determine the participants' success in overseas missions. In addition, these characteristics also influenced participants' motivation for pursuing career development and learning. Moreover, personality characteristics gave rise to participants' feeling of mission to effectively complete an overseas assignment. Without the association of personality characteristics, achieving the success in overseas assignments would have seemed tougher. Likewise, without the association of personality characteristics, to fulfill the goal of career learning on overseas assignments would not have been accomplished easily.

Training was another intervening condition facilitating or shaping competencies and strategies participants employed to cope with the challenges that they faced on overseas assignments. Most research participants received pre-departure training that emphasized job related familiarities. For a few, this type of training was not given before departure. Most participants thought that this type of training was necessary but was not sufficient. Except language training, there was no cross-cultural training provided before departure. Participants' personal opinions about the need of cross-cultural training are distinct. Participants who were the CEOs of local unit organizations said that cross-cultural training was necessary. Some middle level managers who participated in the study directly said that they do not believe in the effectiveness of cross-cultural training because there are "no gains without pains." For

these managers who participated in the study, facing the problems of a new culture as an individual and with courage, could lead to more personal advantages. With help from cross-cultural trainers, the gains would be less. Conversely, some of the middle level management participants expressed that cross-cultural training was important and should include family members. Some participants took different types of training courses after they arrived. One participant said that he was given training about harassment when he was assigned to the United States. He confirmed its effectiveness as this facilitated his cross-cultural interactions.

The interplay of contextual conditions, intervening conditions, and action/interactional strategies employed to handle and manage these conditions affected the success of overseas assignments. Successfully accomplishing overseas assignments was beneficial to participants. Participants' benefits—including the advancement of various competencies, the development and enrichment of international views, the establishment of good connection, the promotion of knowledge, and career development—were consistent with the driving force of motivation. As a result of the success of expatriate managers on overseas assignments, the whole process was a combination of motivation and learning, in which motivation facilitated learning, and, in turn, learning advanced management and competency.

Conclusions

This study has developed a model of the success of expatriate managers on overseas assignments. This model suggested that these participants went through similar processes of successfully completing overseas missions regardless of their differences in age, type of organization, and position. Although the literature indicated that perceived career development served as a primary motive for accepting an overseas assignment, there is a paucity of research demonstrating the link between an overseas assignment and career development (Dowling & Welch, 2005). In addition, Dowling and Welch (2005) argue that "there is a need for research that establishes career path as a direct consequence of international assignments" (p. 130). This is because participants involved in the existing scarce research, which indicated career development as a motive for accepting overseas assignments, were selected from those who were working as expatriates at the time. For this study, former expatriate managers who were interviewed supported that an overseas assignment was a feasible and effective way to advance career development if and when participants successfully completed overseas missions. In this study, there is evidence supporting a link between successful overseas assignment and career development.

Although data were collected from participants' recollections and were culture-bound and industry-bound, propositions emerged from the data that do provide significant perspectives for MNCs in the selection process and formulating training programs. The results of the study do not support nor refute the assumption about the importance of cross-cultural training because participants' opinions about cross-cultural training were not very distinct. While some Taiwanese expatriate research

participants considered cross-cultural training to be necessary, others did not think so. Literature regarding the core competencies of expatriate managers supports the findings of this study. Particularly, the theory of cultural intelligence which facilitates or shapes other core competencies identified in the study is consistent with the findings. The influence of personality characteristics on the success of overseas assignments was challenged by some researchers because of the lack of empirical evidence. However, the findings from this present study strongly proved that personality characteristics were a critical determinant that influenced the success of expatriate managers on overseas assignments. The literature further indicated that spouse adjustment is one of the major reasons for the success or failure of expatriates. According to the results of the study, participants' spouses indeed suffered difficulties in adjusting to new cultural environments, but they all found ways to adapt to the local life. All participants with accompanying spouses affirmed that their spouses' devotions, contributions, and support were essential to the success of their assignments.

Moreover, the model developed from the study provided a systematic and holistic picture of the success of expatriate managers from Taiwan on overseas assignments. The model helped explain the research questions of the study. Each of these research questions will be presented, and the answers based upon the data and grounded theory research approach will also be discussed.

Research question 1: What are the critical determinants that affect the success of expatriate managers while on an overseas assignment?

Critical determinants that affected the success of expatriate managers on overseas assignments were identified as the following below:

1. Conditions related to personal factors that included family situation, motivation for career development, personality characteristics, and mission to succeed.
2. Conditions related to the organizations' context such as global strategy, talent cultivation, and training provisions.

Research question 2: How does culture influence the effectiveness of expatriate managers while on an overseas assignment?

The results of the study regarding the influence of culture on the effectiveness of expatriate managers can be illustrated from these two dimensions:

1. Participants' cultural background shaped some of their salient personality characteristics, such as the Confucian dynamism, hard work and courage to put up with hardship which facilitated their adjustment either at work or in the living environment.
2. Cultural differences between expatriate managers and the local nationals brought about various challenges and stress to the managers. The main challenges or stress resulting from cultural difference were related to cross-cultural interactions and cross-cultural adjustment in general.

Sub-research question 1: What are the strategies an expatriate manager adopts in order to effectively complete an overseas assignment?

Strategies expatriate managers from Taiwan employed to cope with challenges or stress in attempts to successfully complete an overseas assignment were the use of some kinds of cultural intelligence, leadership skills, language abilities, communication skills, and professional knowledge and skills.

Sub-research question 2: What are the characteristics of an effective expatriate manager?

By integrating the findings from this study based upon expatriate managers of Taiwanese nationality, two main characteristics that an effective expatriate manager must possess in order to succeed in overseas assignments were found to be these. First, he or she should possess some silent personality characteristics. Second, he or she should possess various management competencies and be able to effectively employ them. In other words, the central requirements for success as an expatriate on an international assignment in a business organization were found to be personality characteristics and professional competencies.

Furthermore, the model developed in the study explained the influence of motivation on the mission to successfully complete overseas assignments, the impact of personality characteristics, family situation, and training. This model provided explanations about the context that required expatriate managers to employ strategies in order to succeed. It also explained and emphasized the interplay between management competencies, personality characteristics, and success on an overseas assignment. The results of the study finally indicated that the identified management competencies complemented one another because they are all highly interrelated.

Recommendations

Based upon the findings from the study, some recommendations for professionals, multinational corporations, and future research are presented below. It must be clarified that though the study focused on participants from Taiwan, the recommendations forwarded below could be useful to people from other parts of the world. Because of globalization and global economy, experiences about expatriate assignments and professional performance in other cultures do have important lessons for people from all parts of the world.

Professionals

Individuals who are interested in working overseas or even those who are current expatriates should be aware of the importance of understanding cultural differences for the success of overseas assignments. It is essential for such persons to have the ability to deal effectively with people from culturally different backgrounds. As was discussed in Chapters five and six, issues related to cultural differences are the main challenges and stresses participants in the study encountered while on overseas assignments. As a result, to successfully accomplish an overseas mission, learning and understanding knowledge about local culture and developing a repertoire of appropriate behaviors are imperative. The more cultural knowledge and appropriate behavior a person possesses, the more confidence he or she will develop in interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds. He or she can also adjust to local work and living environments more easily.

In addition, the findings of the study suggest that language ability is pervasively regarded as a prerequisite. In order to increase the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication or interactions, proficiency in the host country's language is critical.

Fluency in the local language will assist in the expatriation in every dimension. Conversely, expatriates without language ability may hamper their opportunities or even lose opportunities to learn and to succeed in overseas assignments. It is strongly suggested based on the findings of the study that acquiring some competency in the language before departure, particularly English, is needed, and this will assist in mitigating the challenges identified in the study.

Furthermore, individuals who are interested in working overseas or who are now working as expatriates should make efforts to advance their knowledge about and skills in their profession because it was found that professional knowledge and skills were the most powerful competencies that enable an expatriate manager to receive respect, employ relevant leadership skills and establish trust and authority among the local staff.

Finally, individuals who are interested in working overseas should be aware of the significance of communicating effectively with people from different cultures. Cross-cultural interactions give rise to challenges or stresses for expatriates. How well or effectively an expatriate is able to overcome these challenges will directly determine the outcome of an overseas assignment. Consequently, efforts should be made by such individuals to reinforce their competency in cross-cultural communication through acquiring skills needed for effective communication, learning about other cultures, and developing cultural awareness and sensitivity.

Multinational Corporations

The results of the study provide insights into the success of expatriate managers on overseas assignments. Relevant knowledge of the commonalities among these expatriate managers in terms of personality characteristics, training, family situation

and critical management competencies related to their success could provide practical information for MNCs in the development of international human resource management.

First, the findings demonstrate that personality characteristics are crucial to the success of expatriate managers on overseas assignments. Given that people working overseas must face acute differences in both the workplace and living environment, to effectively deal with such differences or changes simultaneously requires an expatriate to possess salient personality traits, such as openness, open-mindedness, open to self-learning, risk-taking, and challenge-taking and so forth. Thus, to train professionals to make overseas assignments more likely to succeed, specific attempts should be made to identify candidates who possess personality characteristics that indicate potentials to succeed in overseas assignments. Below are important and salient personality characteristics that international organizations may take into consideration while conducting the process of selection for candidates to occupy posts in other countries. .

1. Personality characteristics related to attitudes such as open-mindedness, risk-taking, and ready acceptance of challenges.
2. Personality characteristics related to values that include integrity, self-learning, and self-respect.
3. Personality characteristics related to behaviors that include sincerity, extroversion, activeness, easygoing, persistence, self-confidence, calm, patience, and introspection.

Furthermore, it is necessary to incorporate cross-cultural competence into training programs, either pre- or post-departure. The results of the study indicate that

the core management competencies of expatriate managers complement one another. Additionally, among these core management competencies, cultural intelligence is central to the success of an overseas assignment and facilitates other core management competencies in coping with the challenges or stress encountered by expatriate managers. On the other hand, cultural difference is identified as the major challenge or stress factor for expatriate managers on overseas assignments. Integrating these two critical findings, it becomes obvious that a training program that emphasizes the competencies needed to deal effectively with cross-cultural issues is imperative.

In addition, as it is indicated that career development is one of the main motives for the acceptance and the success of an overseas assignment, this points to the importance of the initial alignment of expectations between the organization and the employee (Dowling & Welch, 2005; Scullion & Collings, 2006). “Highly effective expatriates are more likely to have strong commitment and loyalty to the organization” (Dowling & Welch, 2005, p. 97), but this may be accompanied by great emphasis on employment relationship, particularly reciprocal obligations, including fair treatment and trust. Given that the success of overseas assignments cultivates global leaders, it is important to understand that these cultivated leaders “are likely to have exit options, as they are somewhat of a scarce resource and therefore are attractive to competitors” (Dowling & Welch, 2005, p. 98). Therefore, MNCs should provide a clear, fair, and feasible reward system—including monetary and non-monetary rewards—that motivates expatriate candidates to accept and to devote themselves to successfully accomplishing overseas assignments. In terms of monetary rewards, this may comprise compensation, which is one of the major incentives for expatriate managers to take on

and complete the entire duration of an overseas assignment, providing expatriates with a fair package including housing and salaries that motivate expatriate managers and may result in a positive outcome of an overseas assignment. Additionally, if possible, a sound monetary rewards strategy should be taken into consideration while remembering the problem that is the current priority. As one of the participants described the situation, he sold his house before working overseas and could not afford to buy a comparable house after he returned to the parent country. As to strategy related to non-monetary rewards, MNCs should provide expatriate managers with posts enabling them to put their international experience to work while they are repatriating. By doing this, it is clear that the initial alignment between expatriates and MNCs will be met, and this, in turn, both expatriate employees and MNCs will benefit from these strategies. As Scullion and Collings (2006) suggest,

Establishing and maintaining a relationship of mutual loyalty is the best way to ensure that the expatriates' high costs are beneficial to the company, since these are the grounds on which the company can greatly benefit from international assignments (p. 200).

Moreover, the findings of the study indicate that the accompanying spouse makes contributions to the success of an overseas assignment. On the other hand, however, it is very true that all accompanying spouses in the study suffered very severe cultural shock. Children's education and care for parents are the main issues of concern to the participants. Integrated with these issues related to family situations, MNCs should incorporate spouses into cross-cultural training programs, particularly language training. MNCs should also provide expatriates who have children accompanying them with a clear picture of the education system of the country or city where they will be

relocated. Furthermore, MNCs should provide expatriates who have aged parents in the home country who need care, some support for this purpose.

Future Research

The findings of this study contribute a variety of insights to researchers interested in international human resource management, particularly regarding issues related to the effectiveness of overseas assignments. These findings provide valuable information about influential determinants of the success of expatriate managers on overseas assignments. Therefore, they could serve as cornerstone for future research in many aspects.

First, future researchers can use the findings of the study to explore different industries or populations either by adopting the same approach or a different methodology. Researchers can also embrace the perspectives of the organizations to explore how they actually benefit from the success of a global strategy and examine how organizational culture influences expatriate managers' motives to accept an overseas assignment and the mission to successfully complete such an assignment.

Second, future researchers can recruit staff from the local culture as participants to identify the critical characteristics of a successful expatriate manager from their perspectives. Data from this approach will create a holistic picture that can really demonstrate critical determinants of the success of expatriate managers. Besides, this approach may help a researcher explore the actual gaps which give rise to barriers or challenges in the relationships between expatriate managers and local staff. It also could provide important insights to either expatriate managers or the organizations in their search for rooms to make progress.

Third, future research should incorporate the perspectives of the spouses of expatriate managers. Literature indicates that there is little knowledge about the experiences of expatriate spouses (Black et al., 1999). Having data collected from the spouses of expatriate managers will enrich information about the context or conditions influencing the success of expatriate assignments.

Fourth, because personality characteristics were found to pervasively facilitate or shape the performance of expatriate managers in many ways while on overseas assignments, future research can test these findings through a quantitative methodology. Various statistical tests can be employed to examine different kinds of relationships between the variables.

Fifth, although the results of this study confirmed the link between international assignments and career advancement, the number of the participants is limited. Besides, according to Dowling and Welch (2005), the existing limited research devoted to explore the above relationship, research participants were taken from those currently on overseas assignment. The results of these studies only can confirm that career development was a primary motive for expatriates to accept overseas assignments. However, issues regarding whether, when, or how these expected career progression are met remain unknown (Dowling & Welch, 2005). Therefore, there is a need for future research to devote to testing the consistency of the relationships between international assignment and career development from quantitative research methodology, in which participants involved are taken from former expatriates.

General Lessons for this Research

Nothing can replace experience. The researcher opted to focus on the experiences of some Taiwanese expatriate managers who had gone through all the trials and tribulations, as well as the thrills, of an overseas assignment. Experience seems to have taught the expatriates about what worked, what failed, what was expected and what was unexpected. They were also able to tell how well they were prepared for their overseas assignments, and what was missing from the training they received. It seems nothing can replace the lessons learned while living and working overseas in different cultures, within different settings, with different languages; while practicing strange customs, employing different ways of seeing and doing things, as well as having to obey different laws and follow new regulations. In this general process, there are many kinds of frustrations and challenges that the sojourner or expatriate normally faces. The expatriate subjects of this study demonstrated that if an individual finds himself or herself in such a situation, then it seems that he or she has to do his or her best in order to gain the most from the experience.

It was also possible to learn that as many people may know from their own experiences, knowing the English language within a strictly business setting is good, but such proficiency may not be enough for effective communication and successful dialogue with those who are native speakers of English everywhere. It also became evident that the different work ethics and behaviors which the expatriates faced did cause a lot of frustration. Furthermore, the expatriates demonstrated that getting involved with the local community makes a big difference in being accepted and in

feeling welcome. They quickly discovered that there was no substitute for personal contact and interaction.

As for the specifics of doing business overseas, it seemed clear that it puts a lot of pressure especially on managers and supervisors. They are the ones who must deliver positive results by expanding the business, increasing the profits, helping to keep the company's good name high, dealing with the demands of the headquarters and the management of the subsidiary at the same time; they must please both sides of the company. These professionals soon found out that they only succeeded if there were teamwork, adequate communication, true dialogue, friendly relations with the locals, and a sense of mission to do the best possible. Ultimately, they learned that an overseas manager is under so much pressure that if he/she does not know how to handle stress, he/she would be doomed to failure.

The final lesson from this research, which was greatly helped by the researcher's own experiences, included the fact that an overseas manager can never be too prepared; that the MNCs need to refine their approach to training their professionals for overseas assignments; that being fluent in the local language and knowing the local country's history and culture are invaluable assets; and that in business world of multi-national corporations, expatriates are not only dealing with numbers, statistics, and profits, but also, and most importantly, with people, with individual persons, with families, with a host of human needs, feelings, and interests. If these latter factors are not properly addressed, the business will ultimately fail and the expected global village could easily turn into a battlefield. And it is clear that a world in conflict is bad for business. The researcher hopes that the lessons from this study

will shed some further light on the realities of expatriate business managers, and contribute to better international relations through more successful multi-national corporations.

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Appendix A

Informed Consent Form

A Study of the Effectiveness of Taiwanese Expatriate Performance

The following information is provided to help you decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. Your participation will be voluntary.

The purpose of the study is to explore critical influences on expatriate performance, particularly those related to success on overseas assignments including cross-cultural skills and competencies, cross-cultural adjustment, and cross-cultural training.

Your participation will include being interviewed twice for one hour each time. A third interview of the same duration may be added if it seems necessary. All interviews will be audio taped and coded to protect your identity. The tapes will be kept in a secure place such as a safe deposit box and will only be used by me. The interviews will be transcribed using a pseudonym for your name and for the organization for which you work. The transcription of each of your interviews will be sent to you for your confirmation. Any information you share related to this study and that can identify you will remain confidential and will only be revealed with your permission. You should be aware that you have the right to decide not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without any obligation.

There are no known risks and discomforts expected from this study. The benefits associated with your participation are information for advancing knowledge and perceptions toward cultural differences and enhancing global competence.

This study will be shared with my dissertation committee and other appropriate members of the University of the Incarnate Word. The results of this dissertation will be published in a hard copy or electronic version and made available at the J. E. & L. E. Mabee Library on campus. I may also present the results of this study at academic conferences or in academic journals.

If you have any questions, please feel free to either call me at 0910232717 or email me - ching_khc@hotmail.com. You may also contact my dissertation committee chairman, Dr. Francis Musa Boakari (Phone: 210 – 8055885). We will be happy to answer your questions.

Please sign this consent form. You are signing it with full knowledge of the nature and purpose of the procedures. A copy of this form will be given to you to keep.

Signature of interviewee

_____ Date _____

Principal Investigator

_____ Date _____

Appendix B

Mandarin-Language of Informed Consent Form

台灣外派工作人員的績效效力研究

以下的資訊是提供並協助你，決定是否願意參與本研究。你是自願參與本研究。本研究的目的，是探討對於影響外派人員績效的關鍵性的影響力，特別是與跨文化技能與能力，跨文化調適以及跨文化訓練等外派工作成功與否有關。

前外派人員的參與本研究的活動將包括兩次各一個小時的訪談，但在第一、二次訪談後，如果有需要我會再做第三次一小對的訪談。

所有的訪談都會被錄音，但會被編成密碼保護他們的身份。另外這些錄音的資料將被圖存在安全的地方，譬如：保險箱，而且只有我聽得到這些訪談，這些訪談會被譯成文字，但每位訪談者的名字以及服務的公司將會被指定成一個假名或符號。

每個訪談所譯成的文字檔案將會送給每位被訪談者做為確認，任何有關他們對本研究所分享的資訊，將會被保密且不會洩露身份，只有在他們同意之在，身份才會被曝露。你應該知道你有權隨時決定不參與或者撤銷對本研究的參與。

對於本研究，沒有已知的風險。而有關你參與本研究可預期的收穫是，本研究結果，可增加你對於文化不同的相關知識及認知的提升，並且加強你的全球能力。

本研究，將會跟我的論文委員及其它在聖道大學合適的對象分享，本論文研究結果將會出版檔案，將被印成冊子且用成電子檔案，將放在美國聖道大學裡面。我也有可能，在國際學術研討會或學術期刊發表這篇論文研究結果。

我很感激撥冗參與本研究，這將對於我研究影響外派人員績效重要因素，同時我也想要對於訪談期間所造成的不便，先致上歉意。

如果你有任何的問題，請隨時打電話給我，電話號碼：0910-232717。或者E-MAIL 給我 (ching_khc@hotmail.com)。你也可以跟我的論文委員會主席 Dr. Francis Musa Boakari. 聯絡 (Tel: 210-8055885)。我們將會很高興的回答你的任何問題。

請在這本同意書上簽名。在簽名的同時，你對本訪談的目的與特質，有完全的認知。同時你將會得到本同意書的副本。
受訪者簽名:

日期

Appendix C

Letter sent to the selected MNCs

Dear CEO,

My name is Hsin Ching Ko, I am a doctoral student at the University of the Incarnate Word in the United States. My area of study is International Education and Entrepreneurship in the School of Education. I would like to invite your organization's former expatriate managers who had the experience of overseas assignments lasting at least two years, to participate in a research study about critical influences on expatriate performance. I am interested in exploring the critical influences on expatriate performance by investigating the effectiveness of cross-cultural training and how this influenced working and living experiences while they were on overseas assignments. The information from former expatriate managers' interviews will be used for research purposes for my dissertation. Your organization was selected as a possible participant in this study because your organization is at the stage of expansion or integration and may provide expatriates with pre-departure cross-cultural training or on-the-job cross-cultural training.

Their participation will include being interviewed twice for one hour each time. A third interview of the same length may be added if it seems necessary. All interviews will be audio taped and will be coded for protecting their identities. The tapes will be kept in a secure place such as a safe deposit and will only be used by me. The interviews will be transcribed using a pseudonym for each interviewee and for the organization. The transcription of your interview will be sent to each participant for their confirmation. Any

information they share related to this study and that can identify them will remain confidential and will only be revealed with their permission.

This study will be shared with my dissertation committee and other appropriate members of the University of the Incarnate Word. The results of this dissertation will be published in a hard copy or electronic version and made available at the J. E. & L. E. Mabee Library on campus. It is possible that I will present this study at academic conferences or in academic journals.

The expected benefits associated with their participation are twofold: 1) the results of the study may generate profound information about how MNCs effectively select and train expatriates and about developing strategies for enhancing expatriate performance; and 2) the results of the research may advance knowledge and perceptions toward cultural differences and enhance global competence.

I appreciate your giving time to this study, which will help us learn more about critical influences on expatriate performance. I also would like to express my apology for the potential intrusion of the study into your workplaces and lives.

If you have any questions, please feel free to either call me at 0910232717 or email me - ching_khc@hotmail.com. You may also contact my dissertation committee chairman, Dr. Francis Musa Boakari (Phone: 210 – 8055885). We will be happy to answer your questions.

Thank you,

Hsiu Ching Ko

Appendix D

Mandarin-language of letter sent to selected MNCs

親愛的執行長您好:

我的名字是柯秀卿，我是 University of the Incarnate Word 的博士研究生，我的領域是國際教育與企業創業精神。我想邀請貴公司的前外派人員(需有二年外派經驗)參與有關對影響外派人員績效的關鍵因素之研究。

我對於藉由研究調查跨文化訓練的效力以及外派經理人國外的生活與工作經驗來探討影響外派人員績效的重要關鍵影響很有興趣。訪談資料將會用於我的博士論文的研究目的，貴公司之所以被選中為可能參與本研究的對項是因為貴公司是處於擴大或全球整合的發展階段，因此是屬於比較有可能提供外派人員做出發前跨文化訓練或在職的跨文化訓練的企業。

前外派人員參與本研究的活動將包括兩次各一個小時的訪談，但在第一、二次訪談後，如果有需要我會再做第三次一小時的訪談。

所有的訪談都會被錄音，但會被編成密碼保護他們的身份。另外這些錄音的資料將被存放在安全的地方，譬如：保險箱，而且只有我聽得到這些訪談。這些訪談會被譯成文字，但每位訪談者的名字以及服務的公司將會被指定一個假名或符號。

每個訪談所譯成的文字檔案將會送給每位被訪談者做為確認，任何有關他們對本研究所分享的資訊，將會被保密且不會洩露身份，只有在他們同意之在，身份才會被曝露。

本研究，將會跟我的論文委員及其它在 University of the Incarnate Word 合適的對象分享，本論文研究結果將會被編印成冊或製成電子檔案，放在 University of the Incarnate Word 的圖書館裡面。我也有可能，在國際學術研討會或學術期刊發表這篇論文的研究結果。

有關他們參與本研究，所預期的收穫有二方面，第一、本研究結果，對於跨國公司如何有效選訓外派人員以及如何發展提升其績效之策略上應有相當程度的幫助。第二、本研究結果，可增加參與者對文化不同的相關知識及認知的提升，並且加強他們的全球能力。

我很感激貴公司能撥冗參與本研究，這將對於本研究在影響外派人員績效的重要因素很有幫助，同時我也想要表達對於訪談期間所造成的不便，先致上歉意。

如果你有任何的問題，請隨時打電話給我，電話號碼: 0910-232717。或者 E-MAIL 你也可以跟我的論文委員會主席 Dr. Francis Musa Boakari (電話號碼: 210-8055885) 聯絡。我們將會很高興的回答你的任何問題。

最後在致上我的謝意
柯秀卿

Appendix E

English-Language Interview Protocol

As a semi-structured interview guide, the researcher will ask questions about the following themes and issues:

1. Personal information
2. Selection process
3. Pre-departure preparation
4. Experiences in host culture
 - a. Living experience
 - b. Work experience
 - c. Relational issues
 - d. Job issues
 - e. Knowledge transfer issues

Appendix F

Mandarin-Language Interview Protocol

英文版的訪談內容

本研究員將針對下列的主題及問題作為半建構式訪談的原則:

1. 個人資料
2. 遴選過程
3. 出發前準備
4. 在外派國家文化的經驗
 - a. 生活經驗
 - b. 工作經驗
 - c. 關係的議題
 - d. 工作的議題
 - e. 知識傳授的議題

Appendix G

English-language Expatriate Self-Reported Performance Interview Protocol

I. Relational Performance

In this study, relational performance refers to the effectiveness of establishing relationships with and communicating with host national co-workers.

1. How would you evaluate your relational performances?
2. What kinds of relationship did you establish with host national co-workers?
3. Can you explain more about why you evaluated your relational performance the way you did?

II. Job performance

In this study, job performance refers to the effectiveness in carrying out basic job responsibilities and facilitating peer and team performance.

1. What kinds of basic job responsibilities did you perform while you were on your overseas assignment?
2. How did you appraise your job performance in terms of carrying out these basic job responsibilities?
3. Can you explain more about how you evaluated your job performance in terms of basic job responsibilities?
4. How did you facilitate peer or team performance?
5. How did you evaluate your job performance in terms of facilitating peer and team performance?
6. Can you explain more about how you evaluated your job performance in terms of facilitating peer and team performance?

III. Knowledge transfer performance

Knowledge transfer performance refers to an expatriate's effectiveness in transferring information and technical skills across strategic units.

1. What kinds of knowledge and technical skills did you transfer across different cultures?
2. How did you evaluate your knowledge transfer performance in terms of transferring information and technical skills across strategic units?
3. Explain more about how you evaluated your knowledge transfer performance.

Appendix H

Mandarin-Language Expatriate Self-Reported Performance Interview Protocol

目錄 H

外派人員績效自評訪談要點(中文版)

I. 關係績效

在本研究裡，關係績效是有關與駐派地主國同事建立關係以及溝通的效益。

1. 對於你的關係績效你的自我評價如何
2. 你與駐派地主國同事建立何種關係
3. 對於你的關係績效所作的評價，你是否能夠再進一步解釋

II. 工作績效

在本研究裡，工作績效是指執行工作的基本職責以及促進同儕和團隊績效的效益。

1. 當你被派駐在海外時，你的基本工作職責為何
2. 在執行這些基本工作職責方面，你對於你的工作績效評價如何
3. 對於你的工作績效所作的評價，你是否能夠再進一步解釋
4. 你如何促進同儕和團隊績效的效益
5. 對於促進同儕和團隊績效的效益，你如何自評
6. 對於你如何自評促進同儕和團隊績效的效益，你是否能夠再進一步解釋。

III. 知識傳授的績效

在本研究裡，知識傳授是指外派人員對於跨文化傳授資訊與技能的效益

1. 在跨文化當中，你傳授哪些知識和技能
2. 在跨策略部門傳授資訊和技能，你如何自評你的知識傳授績效
3. 請進一步解釋你如何自評你的知識傳授績效

Appendix I

Concepts Discovered in Open Coding

1. Expanding the business
2. Enhancing control over subsidiaries overseas
3. Cultivating talents
4. Adaptation
5. Previous performance
6. Confidence
7. Open and clear
8. Stress resistance
9. Trust
10. Having a sense of honor
11. Connecting jobs
12. Excitement
13. Opportunity
14. Stress about the local living environment and culture
15. Worrying about language ability
16. Language ability
17. Worrying about family situation (parents, spouse, and children)
18. Worrying about losing connection with parent country
19. Training provided by the organizations
20. Sharing experiences with former expatriates
21. Trained to be familiar with operating systems of different departments
22. Invaluable experiences
23. Helpful for future career development
24. Seeking support from family
25. Learning English
26. Having support from the locals
27. Clear goal oriented
28. Sensitive to cultural differences
29. Willingness to adjust to the local working environment
30. Importance of communication skills
31. Professional knowledge
32. Empty yourself and accept new culture
33. Willingness to ask, and to learn
34. Communication skills
35. Open-mindedness
36. Playing a bridge role between headquarters and the overseas subsidiary
37. Cultural difference as a barrier to effectively interact with the local nationals
38. Openness
39. Cultural difference
40. Responsibility
41. Management skill
42. Importance of understanding local regulations

43. Listening to what local staff says
44. Persistence
45. Role change
46. Involving management
47. Cultural shock
48. Adjustment problems
49. Inconveniences in living
50. Fear
51. Uncertain future
52. Willingness to help local staff solve their problems
53. Gaining respect from local staff
54. Loyalty to the organization
55. Difficulties making friends with Americans
56. Difficulty in blending into local social life
57. Functional considerations
58. Extroversion
59. Getting along with Chinese overseas
60. Information brochure
61. Dormitory provisions
62. Difficulty in adjusting to new environment
63. Depression
64. Misunderstandings
65. Gaps
66. Willingness to understand knowledge about local cultures and regulations
67. Challenges on the job because of different cultures and regulations.
68. Attending seminars
69. Effectiveness of on-the-job-training
70. Influence of spouse
71. Children's education
72. Caring for parents
73. Burning from both sides
74. Monitoring overseas agents
75. Causing loss because of a lack of knowledge of local business standards or habits
76. Miscommunication
77. Cultural distance influences the degree of adjustment
78. Growth in career development
79. Being aware of and appreciating differences among different people
80. On-the-job training facilitates cross-cultural communication and interaction
81. Not making judgments about westerners' appearance
82. Understanding what the local staff members are thinking about and then adjusting oneself to cope with them
83. No gain without pain
84. Being concerned about the comments made by peers
85. Protecting the organization's benefits and reputation
86. Developing global mindset
87. Gaining a comprehensive understanding about the organization and the local unit

88. Expecting to have an opportunity to be assigned to work overseas
89. Being excited about working abroad
90. There is not enough time to do pre-departure preparation
91. Worrying about the difference between the host country and the parent country
92. Monetary incentive
93. Advise on local living and working situations from the organization
94. Pre-departure orientation focusing on job related training
95. Emotional intelligence
96. Mindfulness
97. Power distance
98. Motivation
99. Having clear direction on business operation
100. Full empowerment
101. Meeting the organization's quota requirement
102. Straightforward
103. Leadership
104. Self-reflection
105. Overseas assignment is an important experience for career development
106. Pre-departure training is inadequate
107. Learning opportunity
108. Overseas assignment is great opportunity and positive training in the reinforcement of management competencies
109. Understanding subordinates' straits
110. Confidence
111. Expanding personal connections
112. Prudence
113. Sexual harassment
114. Business quota
115. Effective team work
116. Professional judgment
117. Sincerity
118. Building connections
119. Being aware of yourself
120. Avoiding discrimination
121. Euphemistic
122. Placing oneself in another's position
123. Respecting the local cultures and local national's thoughts
124. Cohesion
125. Be willing to change oneself
126. Organization funds language learning
127. Seeking information regarding the new country's culture before departure
128. Awareness of the differences of the local culture and living conditions.
129. Willingness to explore, learn, and experience cultural differences
130. Language barriers
131. Confronting difficulties in a new environment
132. Independence

133. Having helps from local co-workers
134. Ethnocentrism
135. Stereotyping local culture
136. Challenge taking
137. Risk taking
138. Flexibility
139. Willingness to communicate with the local nationals
140. Problem-solving oriented
141. Parent country culture is dominant in the local unit organization
142. Isolation
143. Discrimination
144. Reinforcement substitution
145. Willingness to change in order to blend into the local life
146. Inadequate preparation before departure
147. Ineffective communication with the local nationals
148. Experience accumulation is the key to interact with the locals
149. Active
150. On -the -job training
151. Respecting the local customs
152. Cultural sensitivity
153. Conflict with the local staff
154. Self-learning
155. Bearing hardship without complaining
156. Growth in experience
157. Opportunity to learn
158. Unlimited opportunities in overseas assignments
159. Being scrupulous in separating public from private interests
160. Proactive
161. Adjusting to the local living environment
162. Homesickness
163. Spouse's adjustment
164. Challenges in management
165. Cultural differences influence management
166. Accepting cultural differences
167. Blending into local life
168. Learning local languages
169. Willingness to communicate with the local staff
170. Not lose the face of the organization.
171. Easygoing
172. Successfully completing the tasks assigned by the organization
173. Enjoying a lot during overseas assignment
174. Great experience
175. Having a broad view of the world
176. Improving English abilities
177. Enhancing management competences
178. Very helpful to the current job

179. Being confident with the next assignment
180. Success
181. Building connections
182. Seeing the world from a different view and angle
183. Suggestions on passing on or sharing experiences of overseas assignments within the organizations
184. Sharing the experience of overseas assignments is helpful
185. Concerned about the benefits and reputation of the entire organization while on overseas assignments
186. The local staff shows no willingness to work after hours
187. Jumping to take over tasks which the locals are supposed to do
188. Multiple tasks on the job
189. Feeling happy while being able to handle the local working situation
190. Keeping distance from people in New York
191. Helplessness
192. Gaining knowledge about professions and the local country
193. Sharing experiences with former expatriates before departure
194. Challenge on managing people from different cultures
195. Too relaxed
196. Getting mad
197. Saving face
198. No willingness to ask questions
199. Willingness to accept one's destiny
200. Information from human resource department
201. Upset
202. Desire to terminate the overseas assignment because of the difficulties in living environment during the first few weeks
203. Difficulty in opening a bank account in the United States
204. Miscommunication
205. Having a great fear of different regulations
206. Having no friends
207. Moderate
208. Mission
209. Watching TV to learn the local language
210. English ability is the basic criterion to work overseas
211. Frustration
212. On the top of a wave
213. Local customers' inability to talk in English
214. Integrity
215. Mutual respect
216. Respecting and understanding local customs
217. Listening to subordinates' opinions
218. Direction/vision
219. Honor/pride
220. Approbation
221. Important position and job

- 222. Self-demanding
- 223. Family support
- 224. Making observation before employing a strategy
- 225. Ethics
- 226. Expanding world view
- 227. Important work experience and qualifications
- 228. Important change in life
- 229. Developing multiple talents
- 230. Valuing every opportunity in life
- 231. Leading with heart
- 232. Receiving respect and trust from subordinates through setting a good example with one's own conduct.
- 233. Regarding subordinates as family members
- 234. Persistence
- 235. Patience
- 236. Regarding the organization as your home and asset
- 237. Having a dream to live abroad
- 238. Spouse's devotion
- 239. Work-oriented
- 240. Humility
- 241. Insisting on taking into consideration the organization's benefits
- 242. Cultural empathy
- 243. Understanding and being concerned about the subordinates
- 244. Providing an appropriate position to the subordinates
- 245. Providing opportunities for the subordinates

Appendix J

Demographic Form

Please circle the appropriate answer and briefly answer the questions below.

1. Gender Male Female
2. Age _____
3. Marital status Single Married
4. Nationality _____
5. What is your highest level of education? _____
6. How many times have you been assigned to a foreign country? _____
7. Had you ever lived in a culturally different environment before your first overseas assignment? If so, how long have you live there? _____
8. Where was your relocation of your first overseas assignment? _____
9. What were your job and position of your overseas assignment? _____
10. How long have you been working in the current industry? _____
11. What are your current job and position? _____

Appendix K

APPLICATION FOR INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL FORM
University of the Incarnate Word

(PLEASE TYPE INFORMATION)

1. Title of Study:
A Study of the Effectiveness of Taiwanese Expatriate Performance: Examining cross-cultural training program outcomes.
2. Principal Investigator (type name, telephone number, e-mail address and mailing address):
Name: Hsiu Ching Ko,
Tel: 210-264 4795, e-mail address: hko@uiw.edu.tx
3. Co-Investigator; Faculty Supervisor; Thesis or Dissertation Chair:
Dissertation Chair: Dr. Boakari Musa Francis
4. Division/Discipline:
5. Research Category: a. ☐ * ☐ Exempt b. ☐ Expedited Review c. ☐ Full Board Review
6. Purpose of Study
The purpose of study is to explore critical influences on the performance of Taiwanese expatriate while they were on overseas assignments.
7. Number of Subjects: 21 Controls: _____
8. Does this research involve any of the following:

	YES	NO	YES
NO			
Inmates of penal institutions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> *	Fetus in utero <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> * Institutionalized mentally retarded	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> *	Viable fetus <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> * Institutionalized mentally disabled	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> *	Nonviable fetus <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> * Committed patients	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> *	Dead fetus <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> * Mentally retarded outpatient	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> *	In vitro fertilization <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> * Mentally disabled outpatient	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> *	Minors (under 18) <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> * Pregnant women	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> *	

For each "Yes", state what precautions you will use to obtain informed consent.
9. Duration of study:
Two years.
10. How is information obtained? (Include instruments used)
Information will be primarily obtained through interviews.
11. Confidentiality – Are data recorded anonymously? (☐ * ☐ Yes ☐ No)
12. If #11 is answered "No", how will the study subjects' confidentiality be maintained?
13. Benefit of research:
The benefit of research will be information for advancing participants' knowledge and perceptions toward cultural differences and enhancing participants' global competence.
14. Possible risk to subjects:
There are no known risks and discomforts expected from this study.

IF CHANGE IN RESEARCH OCCURS THE BOARD MUST BE NOTIFIED BEFORE RESEARCH IS CONTINUED.

Principal Investigator signature _____
Date _____

Responsible Faculty signature _____

Date

(Required if student is Principal Investigator)

IRB Approval signature _____

Date

Application # _____