Cross-Cultural Adjustments and Expatriate's Job Performance: A study on Malaysia

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is identifying the impact of cross-cultural adjustments on expatriate's job performance. A conceptual framework comprises of four (4) factors (cross-cultural training, organisational and family support, personality, and emotional intelligence) is used to examined the impact of cross-cultural adjustments on expatriate's job performance. A multivariate likert-scale questionnaire (scale from 1-5) has been developed. A sample of 100 respondents has been used from five private colleges in Malaysia to collect the data using convenience sampling method. Simple linear regression and correlation analysis was conducted using SPSS 20. Regression beta coefficient and correlation coefficients were generated to test the hypotheses and to establish the causal effects of cross-cultural training, organisational and family support, personality and emotional intelligence on expatriate's job performance. Also regression analysis was conducted on to establish the overall cross-cultural adjustments and its impact on expatriate's job performance. The result of the research shows that personality and organisational and family support have significant and positive impact on improving expatriates job performance. The result shows a positive relationship between cross-cultural training, and emotional intelligence and expatriates job performance, although these relationships are not significant. However, the overall cross-cultural adjustment has a significant and positive impact on expatriate's job performance. Therefore this study concluded that improved cross-cultural adjustments would improve expatriate's job performance, where personality, organisational and family support has most significant impact on performance. Therefore managers at education sector should take initiatives and pay more attention to the personality of expatriates during its recruitment of expatriates, which would enable them to perform better. Further research could be undertaken on different context or by increasing the sample size to test the all the cross-cultural adjustment initiatives to confirm previous research finding. Also future research should be undertaken on different context or by increasing the sample size by widening the research context to ensure validity and reliability of the results.

Keywords—Cross-cultural adjustments, cross-cultural training (CCT), organisational and family support (OFS), Personality (PER), and emotional intelligence (EMI) and expatriate's job performance, education sector, Malaysia.

1. Introduction

Malaysian higher education providers are aiming to increase number of students studying with them over the next five to ten years. In terms of international trade in higher education services takes place within the OECD countries received almost 85% of the world's foreign students (Larsen, and Vincent, 2006). Foreign students in Malaysia represents an important source of foreign income, although creates challenging teaching environment due to the different learning styles, different cultural backgrounds and attitude differences causes many leadership issues for lecturers (Salvarajah, 2006). This causes the number of expatriates
working in Malaysia to grow in recent years. There are more than 4 million expatriates working in Malaysia.

When global companies need to maintain their identity, they rely on expatriates (Edstrom 1977, Gupta 1991, cited in Tan & Mahoney, 2006). The use of expatriates is that a larger cultural difference between the parent company and the overseas business guides to an apparent need for control and communication, and for this reason results in a greater dependence on expatriates (Harzing, 2001 cited in Tan & Mahoney 2003). Lee and Croker (2006) conclude that expatriates execute a vital role for their organisation such as managing, coordinating and sending information in between multinational and international businesses. It is also believed that expatriates ease the link of companies with other operations in nearby countries, improve the company’s international knowledge and promote a clear understanding of international business (Boyacigiller, 1990 cited in Selmer & Leung, 2002).

However, the use of expatriates is costly to firms. It is believed that sending workers and their families for 3 years abroad can cost up to US$1 million. Beside the cost involved with the expatriates, a failure can also affect the company in terms of business opportunities that have been lost and bad reputation (Storti, 2001 cited in Ramalu, Rose, Uli and Kumar, 2010). The reason that expatriates job satisfaction is important is that studies have indicated a huge failure rate of foreign assignment about 25 to 40 percent (Sanchez et al, 2000 cited in McCaughey & Bruning, 2005). These issues most of the times come from the fact that expatriates are unable to familiarise themselves in the new environment they live in. Alongside the company losing some good opportunities, the expatriates also get affected by the lost of self-esteem, self-confidence, and prestige among peers (Hechanova, Beehr and Christiansen, 2003).

Although many studies have been conducted on expatriates work life related issues, (Heraty & Morley 2008; Pires, Stanton and Ostenfeld, 2006; Fish & Bhanugopan, 2008; Haslberger & Brewster 2008; Boyar et al, 2008), little is known on expatriates within the Malaysian context (Ramalu et al, 2010; Tahir & Ismail 2007). Malaysia is a developing country. Organisations consider the country as a major market place for business expansion. Thus, this has pushed the inflow of expatriates into the country. As of 2009, Malaysia had 32,647 foreign workers with the service sector employing about 22,018 of them (Malaysian Immigration Department, 2009). As a result, there is a need to explore the factors behind expatriates adjustment as well as success. This perhaps will help organisations elaborate on things they should do prior to sending the expatriates on international assignment which will eventually help them experience good jobs performance from their employees and avoid premature return which has become a problem.

This research is going to be addressing the reasons that make expatriates adjust while working outside their home countries. The aim of the research is to view what are the motives that make expatriates adjust in their new environment. This means this study has formulated the following objectives:

(i) To identify the methods or factors that affects to adjust into new cross-cultural environment among the expatriates in education sector of Malaysia
(ii) To determine the impact of cross-cultural adjustments on expatriate’s job performance

This paper is divided into four sections: first, it discussed the existing literature regarding cross-cultured adjustments and expatriates job performance. Second, it described a methodology employed for this study. Third, it presents the results and findings of the research and discussion. Finally the conclusion and future research.

2. Literature Review
Expatriates is defined as employees who transfer in a foreign country to work under contracts for their company for a specified time (McGinley, 2008 cited in Naithani and Jha 2010). Adjustment is a term frequently used in the literature to illustrate the course and result of change that occur to people by the move into unknown cultural surroundings (Aycan, 1997, cited in Haslberger & Brewster, 2007), while Job satisfaction is generally described as the perception one has towards a job (Kreitner & Kinicki, 1992 cited in Bonache, 2005).

Similar research done on cross-cultural adjustments shows various factors that contributes to expatriates adjustments to the new environment. Some of the key factors include cross-cultural training (Waxin & Pannacio, 2005; Lee & Croker, 2006; Farh, Bartol, Shapiro and Shin, 2010; Dowling, Welch and Schuler, 1999; Osman-Gani & Rockstuhl, 2009), organisation and family support (Martin and Anthony, 2006; Dowling et al, 1999; Harris, 2004; Tahir & Ismail 2007), personality (Guthrie, Ash and Stevens, 2003; Hechanova et al, 2003; Kumar, 2008; Ramalu et al 2010) and emotional intelligence (Musten, Raud and Titarenko, 2003; Jassawalla et al, 2004; Lopes, Grewal, Kadis and Salovey, 2006; Lii and Wong, 2008). These factors will be reviewed under each subsection.

**Cross-cultural Training**

The purpose of cross-cultural training is to educate people of one culture to get involved efficiently with people of other cultures, to help them get accustomed quickly in their new environment (Waxin & Pannacio, 2005). Moreover, cross-cultural training not only aid the expatriates in terms of communication, but also exhibit an approach of trying to discover about the host traditions, allowing someone to be respectful and enabling the expatriates to accept the culture (Selmer, 2005). Waxin and Pannacio (2005) also believe that training expatriates and their families prior to sending them abroad is crucially important. In recent times, expatriates’ training has been acknowledged as a key factor in companies’ success abroad (Lee & Croker, 2006). Some research have also proven that expatriates who have gone through cross-cultural training adjust themselves better in different environment (Parker, & Stoeberl, 2001 cited in Osman-Gani & Rockstuhl, 2009). Moreover, companies should be able to establish training courses which will help expatriates ahead of time to discover areas where they will need support (Farh, Bartol, Shapiro and Shin, 2010).

In contrast, some research findings shows that there is no relationship between cross-cultural training and job performance (Pruegger & Rogers, 1994). Similarly Cerdin (1996) cited in Waxin and Pannacio (2005) also found no connection between cross cultural training and adjustment. However, we should acknowledge that in Cerdin study, the host country traits were not taken into consideration during the cross cultural training. Similarly the earlier study's sample is too small to generalise the findings. Thus we will have the following hypothesis:

**H1-Cross-cultural training positively affects the expatriate's job performance**

**Organisation and Family Support**

Martin and Anthony (2006) argue that it is good for a company to provide counselling to spouse before their partners are sent to international assignment. They believe that spouse play critical roles in the success of their partners as well as the perception the expatriates receive about the company. Studies on US expatriates in Taiwan and Japan showed a favourable opinion about international assignment by spouse was positively related to the spouse adjustment and performance (Dowling et al, 1999, pp 87-88). Linehan (2002) cited in Harris (2004) also believed that the positive support of the partner is one of the key factor in successful adjustment of a woman expatriate leading to better performance. Spouses can help each other provide useful information during stressful periods, give affection and also guarantee the expatriate spouse of his or her ability to succeed (Payne, 1980 cited in Kraimer, Wayne and
Jaworsky, 2001). The same is true from organizational support which positively helps employees to adjust in their new environment (Foster, 2000; Hutchings, 2003 cited in Tahir & Ismail 2007). Thus supporting expatriates during his/her early stages in the host country would diminish their concerns as well as improve their confidences which could lead to better satisfaction and improved job performance (Downes et al, 2002). Knowing the challenges faced by expatriates and their families in the host country, it is important that organisations offer full support to their expatriates' families especially to spouse in terms of job search, housing and schooling (Hechanova, Beehr and Christiansen, 2003).

In contrast, some research found that there is no relationship between organisational or family support with expatriate’s job performance and successfes of the assignment (Kraimer, et al, 2001). They argue that most of the literatures are stressed on spousal support while the studies examined spousal adjustment. Possibly, spousal support is simply significant when the spouse is well adjusted (Aycan 1997, cited in Kraimer, et al 2001). Hence, we will have the following hypothesis:

**H2-O rganizational and family support positively increases expatriate's job performance**

**Personality**

A personality is a comparatively constant antecedent of behaviour; it lies beneath a lasting manner of thinking, feeling and acting (Guthrie, Ash and Stevens, 2003). Some studies have indicated that personality characteristics like consciousness, being open to experience new things, and self efficacy are vital predictor of cross-cultural adjustment (Hechanova et al, 2003; Ones and Viswesvaran, 1997 cited in Guthrie et al, 2003). Caligiuri (2000a) and Sternberg (2006) cited in Kumar (2008) illustrated that expatriates who are open (interested to gain knowledge of new things and change in new situation), have greater curiosity in the new environment, acquire additional occasions to learn about it from being involved with people of the host country adjust better than those who are not open. Thus companies should send expatriates on international assignment based on other things such as their personalities (Jassawalla, Truglia and Garvey, 2004). A study on expatriate assignees in Malaysia by Ramalu et al (2010) indicated a perfected relationship between personality and adjustment. Their study indicated that personal abilities such as friendliness, openness were highly related to the general adjustment of expatriates. Because these traits ease expatriates communication efficiency towards host country nationals, they are likely to fit in the country. As a result, we will make the following hypothesis:

**H3-P ersonality is positively influences to improve expatriate's job performance**

**Emotional Intelligence**

Emotional intelligence is the ability to discover our own feelings, knowing how to manage them in situations, having the knowledge of others’ emotions or empathy and managing relationships (Barling, Slater and Kelloway 2000). Emotional intelligence has to concentrate on essential aspects in international business such as the skills or aptitudes to build positive, equally respectful, trusting ties with host country nationals (Musten, Raud and Titarenko, 2003). Expatriates with high emotional intelligence are capable of managing stress, supporting each other, and building considerable paces in setting up the necessary balance in the new working environment (Lanser, 2000 cited in Musten et al, 2003). It was also found that companies should look into emotional intelligence prior to sending expatriates on international assignment (Jassawalla et al, 2004). Furthermore, employees with high emotional intelligence usually hold higher job ranks because it improves their productivity due to their ability to cultivate positive relationships (Lopes, Grewal, Kadis, Gall and Salovey, 2006). Lii and Wong (2008) in their study of Taiwanese expatriate adjustment and commitment in China Mainland
also found that job position was associated with expatriate effort dedication towards a company (productivity). However, Earley and Peterson (2004) argued that a person possessing high emotional intelligence in one culture may not necessarily generalise it across other cultures. They argue that emotional intelligence can only be practicable in places with similar cultures. Thus, we will conclude by formulating the following hypotheses:

\textit{H4: Emotional intelligence is positively influences to improve expatriates job performance}

3. Conceptual Framework

Based on the previous research findings, this study proposed the following conceptual framework as a basis of analysis.

\textbf{Source: Researchers own development}

\textit{Figure 1: Cross-cultural adjustments and job performance}

As this study is about establishing a relationship between cross-cultural adjustments and job performance, the above mentioned five practices are considered as key cross-cultural adjustments. Therefore this research will also will test fith hypothesis as follows:

\textit{H5: Overall-cross cultural adjustment positively influence to improve expatriate’s job performance}

4. Research Design and Methodology

\textbf{Subjects}

A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed and a total of 117 questionnaires were returned (response rate 78%). However, some of these returned questionnaires were excluded from the sample as some respondents failed to complete the questionnaire. This means the study only used 100 completed questionnaires, where 24 respondents were female (24%) and 76 respondents of the sample of 100 were male (76%). 52% of the respondents were aged between 20-30 years, 45% of the respondents were aged between 31-40 years and only 3% of the respondents were aged between 41-50 years. These respondents were distributed to two categories of jobs: academic and non-academic, where 84% of the respondents were academic staff while 16% of the respondents were non-academic such as marketing, student services etc. The maximum number of overseas assignment by one individual is 4. 3% of respondents do not take any international assignment prior to the current one. 56% of respondents took 1 international assignment prior to the current assignment, 25% of respondent took 2 assignments prior to their current assignment, 14% of respondents took 3 international assignments prior to the acceptance of their current job and only 2% of respondents took 4 international assignments prior to their current job.
**Procedure**

The researchers independently contacted the expatriates using convenient sampling technique as most of the institutions were not willing to disclose the total number of expatriates they employed in the institution. However, researchers obtained permission from the educational institutions to meet some of the expatriates in the hallway, break hours in the canteen and also through personal contacts. A time period of 6 hours were spent for seven (7) weeks on data collection process. The completed questionnaires were collected by the researchers and a follow up were made on the following week during the same hours before the classes were started and during the break-hours.

**Measures**

The questionnaire’s content was administered through various sources which relates with the suitability of instruments (Bartol, Shapiro and Shin, 2010; Dowling, Welch and Schuler, 1999; Osman-Gani & Rockstuhl, 2009; Martin and Anthony, 2006).

**Variables**

This research study considered four independent variables and one dependent variable.

**Expatriate’s Job Performance (PERF):** The dependent variable is expatriate’s job performance. This is measured using universal statements such as “organisational and family support has reduced my stress level”, “my personality has improved my performance”, “the ability to adapt well has reduced my level of absenteeism” etc. overall there five (5) scale items to measure dependent variable.

**Scale items**

- Organizational and family support has reduced my stress level
- My personality has improved my performance
- Cross cultural adjustment helped me increase my productivity
- My awareness of cultural differences has allowed me to become an effective team member
- The ability to adapt well has reduced my level of absenteeism

Independent variables of this study were included to measure the cross-cultural training (CCT), organisational and family support (OFS), personality (PER) and emotional intelligence (EMI). All items were rated on five-point Likert-type scale.

**Cross-cultural Training (CCT):** This is six (6) item scales where it measures the degree that cross-cultural training provided to expatriates and how it helps to improve performance.

**Scale items**

- My Pre-departure training helped me adjust well in my working environment
- Induction programs have facilitated my adjustment in my new company
- Environmental briefing has allowed me to understand the culture better than before
- Cross-cultural training has helped me succeed in my company
- The training I have received was designed to offer the knowledge of
skills required to operate effectively abroad
• Prior to my departure abroad, I was involved with other expatriates during training activities

Organisational and Family Support (OFS): This is six (6) items scale where it measures the degree that organisational and family supports provided to the expatriate to adjust him/her self to the new working environment to increase job performance.

Scale items
• My company strongly considers my goals and values
• My company does care about my well-being
• My company is willing to help me if I need a special favour
• I do receive time off for my family when needed
• I am encouraged to contribute ideas for organizational enhancement
• The parent company puts all expatriates through the same set of learning experiences

Personality (PER): There are six(6) items scale where it measures the degree that own personality traits enable them to adjust the new cultural environment to improve or successfully perform their job/assignment.

Scale items
• I can perform well in a job that involves cross-cultural interactions
• I like having a job that involves regular cross-cultural interactions
• I feel comfortable when interacting with someone from a different cultural background
• I like having a profession that involves working abroad
• I can perform well in a job that involves working abroad
• I am interested to learn other cultures

Emotional Intelligence (EMI): There are six (6) items scale where it measures the degree that emotional intelligence of expatriate could influence cultural adjustment causing to improve job performance.

Scale items
• I understand other people’s feelings
• I initially make contacts with people from different background
• I take other people’s habits into consideration
• I do easily approach other people
• I know how to act in social settings
• I do enjoy unfamiliar experiences
Reliability and Validity of the Scale items

Mean and Standard Deviation

The mean or central tendency of the data and standard deviation can help to give an overview of the way respondents answered the questions (Bryman and Bell, p.360). The table 2 below shows the statistical mean and standard deviation for each cross-cultural adjustments and expatriates job performance in the measurement construct.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCT</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>3.7383</td>
<td>0.43115</td>
<td>-0.849</td>
<td>1.844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFS</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>3.8533</td>
<td>0.38876</td>
<td>-1.025</td>
<td>1.464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PER</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.1917</td>
<td>0.39383</td>
<td>-0.440</td>
<td>0.166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMI</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>3.7416</td>
<td>0.37336</td>
<td>-0.615</td>
<td>0.768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCADJ</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>3.8813</td>
<td>0.28329</td>
<td>-0.658</td>
<td>0.183</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Summary descriptive mean and standard deviation

Over the 29 items the average means value of 5 elements, the means ranged from 3.74 to 4.19 indicating that these factors significantly influences cross-cultural adjustments. Personality of expatriates scored the highest mean value of 4.19 with a standard deviation of 0.39 followed by organizational and family support with a mean value of 3.85 (SD=0.39) indicating that educational institutions in Malaysia recruits or hires expatriates who already have high potential in adjusting themselves in Malaysian culture where by these expatriates would be able to demonstrate high job performance.

Normality

Normality often refers to shape of the data distribution (Hair et al, 2010, p.71). In multivariate analysis, normality is an important assumption and testing that do not vary too much from the normal distribution (Hair et al, 2010, p.71). It argued that too much variation from the normal distribution can cause negative impact on the data analysis. There are two key areas that are being tested in normality are skewness (normally shows that the shape is balance like a bell shaped). The second area is kurtosis, being whether the curve is peaked or flat (Hair et al, 2010). The skewness of this data set sites between -1.025 to -0.578 suggesting that this range falls between -1 to +1 indicating that skewness of this data set is in acceptable range, except one item , which is OFS where it has a skewness value of -1.025. Also as kurtosis value falls on an acceptable range, suggesting that the data set is normal.

Reliability and Validity

In this research reliability is measure by using Cronbach’s Alpha and inter-item correlation. Inter-item correlation outlines the correlation between individual items and should exceed or must be greater than 0.3 (Hair et al, 2010, p.125). Cronbach’s Alpha measures internal consistency or how the items are closely related as a group. Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.7 and above is considered acceptable, where scale between 0 (no internal reliability) and 1 (greatest internal reliability is present (Bryman and Bell, 2010).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha Based on Standardized Items</th>
<th>N of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.792</td>
<td>0.800</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Reliability Statistics

The construct has a standardized Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.8 which is higher than 0.7 suggesting that there is a high internal consistency and the items can be retained (Haire et al, 2010).

5. Results and Findings

Due to the data available, it was possible to examine a variety of sub samples; however for this current paper, only the main finding from the frequency analysis based on the respondent’s feedback, statistical means and standard deviations, and regression analysis are presented.

5.1 Analysis of respondent’s feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profile</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Academic</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of prior international assignments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>56</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Profile of respondents

In this first instance, data were analysed to explore the means, the standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis to measure the degree of cross-cultural adjustments and its impact on job performance and the normality of the data that was being analysed.

5.2 Analysis of Relationship between Cross-cultural Adjustments and Job Performance

In the second stage of analysis, stepwise a correlation analysis was done on all constructs to determine Pearson’s Correlation Coefficients with a Two-tailed significance test. Cross-cultural adjustments elements such as cross-cultural training, organizational and family support, personality and emotional intelligence are considered as independent variables and student satisfaction is considered as dependent variable.
**Table 4: Relations of Cross-cultural adjustments and job performance**

With reference to the above table 4, the result shows that all the dimensions of cross-cultural adjustments including cross-cultural training, organizational and family support, and personality, emotional intelligence and overall cross-cultural adjustments has a positive relation with the correlation of coefficient of expatriate’s job performance, where R=0.295, 0.425, 0.641, 0.500 and 0.645, respectively. It is also found that the correlation coefficient values of the elements of cross-cultural adjustments associated with expatriate's job performance is significant at both level (where P<0.05, P<0.01). However only personality and overall cross-cultural adjustments has a moderately above significant relationship with expatriate’s job performance.

### 5.3 Regression Analysis of Cross-cultural Adjustments and Expatriate’s Job Performance

For this study, regression analysis was performed to predict the level of expatriate’s job performance based on four (4) independent factors. The four independent factors of cross-cultural adjustments are cross-cultural training (CCT), organizational and family support (OFS), personality (PER), and emotional intelligence (EMI). In addition, this study also tested the overall cross-cultural adjustments and its impact on expatriate’s performance.

#### Table 5: Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
<th>F Change</th>
<th>Sig. F Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.694*</td>
<td>.482</td>
<td>.460</td>
<td>.35832</td>
<td>22.118</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), EMI, CCT, PER, OFS

#### Table 6: Coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>-0.451</td>
<td>0.496</td>
<td>-0.909</td>
<td>0.366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCT</td>
<td>0.104</td>
<td>0.095</td>
<td>1.091</td>
<td>0.278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFS</td>
<td>0.237</td>
<td>0.109</td>
<td>2.161</td>
<td>0.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PER</td>
<td>0.603</td>
<td>0.117</td>
<td>5.142</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMI</td>
<td>0.165</td>
<td>0.123</td>
<td>1.340</td>
<td>0.183</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: Perform
For this study, regression analysis was performed to predict the stress level based on four independent factors. The four independent factors are cross-cultural training, organizational and family support, personality and emotional intelligence. The appended Table 5 summary in predicting expatriate’s performance shows that R is 0.694, R square is 0.482 and adjusted R square is 0.460, meaning that 46% of the variance in expatriate’s performance can be predicted by the other independent variables.

The result of the regression analysis shows that out of the four indicators, only two are significant as shown in Table 6. The two significant factors are organizational and family support with P value = 0.033 and personality of expatriate with P value = 0.000 at 5% significant level. This means the following hypotheses are rejected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Regression Value, R</th>
<th>Significant Level, P</th>
<th>Hypothesis Accept/Reject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cross-cultural Training (H1)</td>
<td>0.092</td>
<td>0.278</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Org &amp; Family Support (H2)</td>
<td>0.189</td>
<td>0.033</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality (H3)</td>
<td>0.487</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Intelligence (H4)</td>
<td>0.127</td>
<td>0.183</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Hypotheses

Therefore the overall model can be written as:

Expatriate Job Performance = 0.189 (OFS) + 0.487 (PER) - 0.451

Overall the model is significant. From the prediction equation, it means that an increase of one point rating for Organizational and family support, given no change in the disregarding and personality, the expatriate’s job performance will increase by 0.189. On the other hand, the expatriate’s job performance will increase by 0.189 and 0.487 if the disregarding and personality factors are increased respectively by one pair, given no change in organizational and family support.

For this study, regression analysis was performed to predict the expatriate’s job performance based on overall cross-cultural adjustments as an independent factor. The appended Table 8 model summary in predicting expatriate’s job performance shows that R is 0.645, R square is 0.416 and adjusted R square is 0.410, meaning that 41% of the variance in expatriate’s job performance can be predicted by the overall cross cultural adjustments (CCADJ). The result of the regression analysis shows that CCADJ is significant as shown in Table 9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
<th>Change in F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.645</td>
<td>0.416</td>
<td>0.410</td>
<td>0.37456</td>
<td>69.908</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Model Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>-.318</td>
<td>.517</td>
<td>-.615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CCADJ</td>
<td>1.111</td>
<td>.133</td>
<td>8.361</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: Coefficients
Overall the model is significant. From the prediction equation, it means that an increase of one point rating for CCADJ given other things remain constant, the expatriate's job performance will increase by 0.645. As a result the fifth hypothesis "overall-cross cultural adjustment positively influences to improve expatriate's job performance" will be accepted.

5.4 Discussions and Conclusion

In recent years numerous theories on cross-cultural factors and its impact on adjustments being investigated (Waxin & Pannacio, 2005; Lee & Croker, 2006; Farh, Bartol, Shapiro and Shin, 2010; Dowling, Welch and Schuler, 1999; Osman-Gani & Rockstuhl, 2009; Martin and Anthony, 2006; Dowling et al, 1999; Harris, 2004; Tahir & Ismail 2007; Guthrie, Ash and Stevens, 2003; Hechanova et al, 2003; Kumar, 2008; Ramalu et al 2010). However, there appears to be little research available on cross-cultural adjustments and its impact on job performance, especially in education industry of developing countries such as Malaysia. Therefore, in this particular research, we attempted to shed light on the cross-cultural adjustments and its impact on expatriate's job performance in Malaysian education sector by selecting respondents from five private higher education providers in Kuala Lumpur. However the variables included in the questionnaire to measure cross cultural adjustments could vary from Malaysia to other countries due to the contextual difference in terms of culture, politics and development. In addition, the instruments used in this research are adequate as it covers most of the issues under four(4) dimensions of cross-cultural adjustment developed by researchers based on past literature. In terms of the methods used or factors that influences cross cultural adjustment is personality. Personality factors such as positive attitudes, liking to work overseas and those who feel comfortable to work outside are found to be more successful to adjust themselves to the new working places. In overall, all the factors or methods were used or influences expatriates in successfully adjusting to the new cultural environment. This finding is similar and supported by the recent researches conducted by (Ramalu et al, 2010), where they found "personality predicts job performance, and both the interaction and work adjustment mediates the relationship" (p.113).

Also we found personality has significant and positive impact on expatriate's job performance. This is similar to previous studies such as Guthrie, Ash and Stevens (2003), Hechanova et al (2003), Kumar (2008), Ramalu et al (2010). Similarly we found that organizational and family support has positive and significant impact in expatriate's job performance. This finding is supported by the previous researches done by Martin and Anthony (2006), Dowling et al (1999) Harris (2004), Tahir and Ismail (2007). Our finding that shows that PER and OFS has a positive influence on expatriate's job performance. This finding is very similar to many previous studies undertaken by Hechanova et al (2003), Ones and Viswesvaran (1997) cited in Guthrie et al (2003). Also more recently, studies conducted by Jassawalla, Truglia and Garvey (2004) also found personality plays an important role in cross-cultural adjustments and job performance. Similarly, Ramalu et al (2010), a study done on Malaysian environment, also revealed that personality significantly influences expatriate's job performance. However in terms of OFS, many previous research such as Kraimer, et al (2001) found no significant relation between spousal support and expatriate adjustment although many empirical studies indicated otherwise. They argue that most of the literatures are stressed on spousal support while the studies examined spousal adjustment. Possibly, spousal support is simply significant when the spouse is well adjusted (Aycan 1997, cited in Kraimer, et al 2001).

However, in terms of performance, we found no significant impact of CCT on performance. Our finding is very similar to previous findings done on other part of the world namely Pruegger & Rogers (1994), Cerdin (1996) cited in Waxin and Pannacio (2005). It is important to note that both studies considered a very small sample size, which we did the same
using 100 respondents considers to be small to generalize the findings. Also the latter studies failed to include country origin traits in the CCT programs. In terms of EMI, we found that there is no significant relationship between expatriate’s performance and EMI. Because of the small sample size and due to the limited coverage (100 expatriates) of educational providers in Kuala Lumpur itself, it will be appropriate to repeat this research with a large sample size covering the whole Malaysia, especially all the key education providers including public universities. By conducting research on these areas, we can re-examine the impact of cross-cultural adjustments on expatriate’s performance to ensure the validity and reliability of the results. Moreover, future research should continue to address specific business sectors (private vs. public) as each sector may have different range of foreign workers from different countries and may face different challenges in improving their performance. As this study attempted to cover some of the demographic factors, a future study could examine how each of these factors could affect the way they influences expatriate’s to adjust themselves in a foreign culture.

Overall, we found that this research fulfilled its purposes by identifying the factors that influences cross-cultural adjustments and how such adjustments could influence job performance. In short the conclusion is that personality is the most significant influencing factor that helps expatriate’s to adjust them to the new environment followed by organizational and family support. Therefore it is important to consider the personality of the expatriate before organizations can recruit or select the candidates for the job. This might help the organization to save cost in terms of training (CCT), which we found no significant impact on performance. Therefore this research concludes that by improving the cross-cultural adjustments through various initiatives such as organizational support and through personal preferences could improve expatriate’s performance and enable them to complete international assignments more successfully. Also it is important to provide organizational support and assess family willingness to help expatriates while they are on international assignments.

Implications for Practice: Based on the findings, it is evident that cross cultural adjustment is an important aspect in improving job performance. Therefore to avoid any conflicts and to improve institution’s teaching performance, it is important to consider personality when selecting foreign workers to ensure they will perform better.

Future Research Direction: This study encountered several constraints. Time constraint was a key issue which prevented to conduct the research with a larger sample. The study also faced geographic limitation because it was impossible to do the research in the whole country. Moreover, other tools of research could have been used that could help generate best results such as interviews and focus groups. These methods would have helped explore the issues in depth. As this study was conducted around the Kuala Lumpur area, further longitudinal studies across the country or in more industries would be helpful to validate the findings. Additionally, the future studies could focus on asking expatriates supervisors about the level of performance and productivity of expatriates in relation to their adjustment as this would generate best results. These future studies could also include the relevance of cultural differences in terms of adjustment to further explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and some aspects of adjustment.

References


