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John Neill  
*University of Rhode Island*

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# **THE EXPATRIATE VENTURE: WHAT ROLE DOES CROSS-CULTURAL TRAINING PLAY AND WHAT THEORIES GUIDE RESEARCH IN THE FIELD?**

JOHN NEILL

University of Rhode Island

Relocation of U.S. companies into an overseas country is an all too common occurrence in the global market of today. Organizations that attempt to initiate business in a foreign environment must understand not only the intricacies of the host country's culture but also how that culture meshes with the business acumen of the expatriate who accepts the overseas position. Cross-cultural training, implemented through the lens of a theoretical framework customized to the learning style of the expatriate may be the answer to a successful venture into foreign markets. Given the fact that up to 40% of U.S. expatriate managers fail in their newly formed overseas assignments (Hogan & Goodson, 1990), a customized training curriculum may just hold the answer to a successful expatriate experience. To answer this question it becomes important to review research that contains experimental design in an attempt to remove subjectivity and ascertain causality.

A successful expatriate training program is of growing importance to multinational companies seeking to gain an advantage in the growing world of global mergers and acquisitions. There has been significant research completed on the subject of cross-cultural training and its effectiveness in supplementing an expatriate's overseas assignment. Researchers in the field of expatriate training agree that providing training does supplement the likelihood that an expatriate will successfully complete his or her assignment therefore benefiting the expatriate, as well as the home and host country organizations. It is widely accepted that pre-departure and cross-cultural training can aid an expatriate in adapting to living and working in new environments (Foster, 2000). Further evidence to support the effectiveness of training can be found in the research completed by Black and Mendenhall stating that pre-departure cross cultural training is an essential tool for aiding in the socialization of expatriate managers (Black & Mendenhall, 1990). What is uncertain is whether empirical research in the field supports the idea that cross-cultural training alone is the contributing factor in the success of the expatriate.

In the era of global mergers, outsourcing, off shoring and acquisitions, the United States is in the driver's seat. The United States accounts for approximately 30 percent of the world's Gross Domestic Product and is the home of approximately 62 of the 100 most valuable

brands in the world (Emmons, 2005). In an ever increasing push to control costs and remain competitive in this global economy, U.S. corporations and manufacturers have actively pursued mergers with foreign industries as well as the relocation of manufacturing and service centers to foreign countries. Globalization allows for an increase in permeability for traditional boundaries, economies, industries and organizations and less tangible borders such as cultural norms or assumptions (Thomas, 2002). This internationalization or global expansion is an effect of the heightened competition present in today's market. The expansion into an overseas market offers the possibility of spreading costs related to research and development as well as promotional costs over a much larger area. This global expansion exerts heightened competition and puts pressure on costs and prices which in turn leads companies into off-shore manufacturing as well as administrative process outsourcing (Lawrence, 2002). Often executives and managers who are sent to initiate and manage foreign operations are chosen based on their skills and accomplishments noted within their work here in the states, unfortunately cross cultural differences usually make many skills ineffective in a new environment. This facet of the movement forces the U.S. based companies to consider a broad view of the differences in both management/industrial culture as well as the national culture of the foreign countries in which

they are expanding. The ability to understand the behaviors, values, and attitudes of individuals within various countries is paramount to knowing how to successfully conduct a new business venture within the foreign country. Recognizing that each respective country has a culture distinct from the culture of the U.S. and being able to function effectively in that new culture is the key to a successful venture. Globalization has increased cultural contacts and corporations should recognize this in order to gain a competitive advantage. The executives and workers of the expanding corporation must understand and learn about the culture of the country into which they are expanding. The host country into which the United States is expanding operations often experiences a challenge to the ideologies inherent to their national and organization culture which can result in a clash of cultures. This idea, commonly coined expatriation, has been defined as the process of moving from the parent headquarters to a foreign subsidiary or overseas operation. There is however a more contemporary definition that considers an expatriate to be an upper level executive sent on an international assignment for longer than one year to manage the operations of the foreign subsidiary (Littrell, Salas, Hess, Paley, Riedel, 2006). Expatriates are generally assigned to the new location to initiate or reinforce the skill levels in the newly found international subsidiary. Corporations generally choose expatriates over locally hired counterparts of the host country due to the perception that expatriates are generally believed to have a better understanding of overall corporate priorities, an acceptance of headquarter determined rules, and in general a greater commitment to the overall corporate goals. The additional difficulty associated with an overseas assignment combined with the critically important nature of the expatriate role has created an interest in studying the experiences of these employees and has generated significant research on this topic. In addressing this issue research has identified cross-cultural training as an important component in providing the expatriate with a realistic preview of what can be expected in the overseas position (Tung,

1998). Cross cultural training or CCT is defined as the process implemented to improve intercultural learning through the development of cognitive, affective, and behavioral competencies that are fundamental for successful interactions in diverse cultures according to Littrell, Salas, Hess, Paley, and Riedel. The need to work with people of other countries has raised the awareness of corporations to accommodate the differences expatriates and workers are exposed to in the business venture to which they have engaged. Up to 40% of U.S. expatriate managers fail in their newly formed overseas assignments (Hogan, Goodson, 1990). Many companies do not realize the impact of expatriate success and do not adequately prepare expatriates for their respective overseas assignments. From 1965 to 1985 the expatriate failure rate fluctuated between 25 percent and 40 percent as noted by Hogan and Goodson. Many U.S. companies believe that expatriate training programs are a waste of resources due to the relatively temporary assignment of the expatriate and fewer than 25 percent of companies that responded to a survey completed by Hogan and Goodson, offered any type of pre-departure training program. In contrast Japanese corporations understand the importance of pre-departure training and a survey completed by SAM Advanced Management Review reflects that 86 percent of multinational corporations in Japan had failure rates below 10 percent for their expatriates as uncovered in research by Hogan and Goodson.

This paper will review the elements of cross-cultural training and whether and to what extent the training can make a difference by providing the expatriate with skills and knowledge that augment their abilities to function effectively in an unfamiliar culture. This question will be answered by reviewing the research and writings of individuals within the field of cultural relations and international human resource training and management. In addition, several theoretical frameworks will be examined in terms of implementing CCT with an application of the Transtheoretical theory of

change being utilized within two of the aforementioned frameworks.

### **EXPATRIATE JOB CHARACTERISTICS AND FAILURE OF ASSIGNMENT**

Multinational Corporations (MNCs) have realized that in order to be successful in their international business efforts they must implement global human resource management strategies. A multinational corporation is characterized as a company in which national or regional operations act independently of one another which cause problems with communication and efficiency of operations. Additionally MNCs often adapt successful domestic market models to cultural contexts, adapt systems and processes to international competitive conditions and develop multinational alliances and ventures leading to the development of cross cultural work teams. MNCs must be capable of responding and adapting to change by being flexible in reallocating resources across national markets and therefore require their managers to work effectively in cross cultural situations (Brake, Walker, Walker, 1995). The most popular avenue of implementing a MNC's global human resource strategy is to send an expatriate to manage the foreign subsidiary. The expatriate often is charged with the varied tasks of transferring and introducing technologies, overseeing the operational implementation, establishing organizational culture, establishing new market operations, and developing communication skills (Bennet, Aston, Colquhoun, 2000).

MNCs often view expatriate assignments as a key human resource strategy for successful expansion despite the fact that many expatriates are unsuccessful in their foreign organization endeavors. Inconsistencies in defining expatriate success abound. No one definition of what constitutes a success or failure on an expatriate assignment exists. Generally the success or failure rate of an expatriate assignment is based on the early return of the expatriate to the United States. Management is often concerned with explaining the expatriate failure and correcting the conditions under which the failure occurs. This need to correct

the failure is not surprising given the cost associated with a failed expatriate assignment. Early return rates of expatriates have been estimated to be as high as 40% (Black & Mendenhall 1990). An early return is also costly to the home country MNC. These failures can cost an organization up to a quarter of a million dollars each not to mention that a significant portion of talent may leave the organization upon return of successfully completing their expatriate assignment (Littrell, Salas, Hess, Paley, Riedel, 2006). In addition a corporation must take into account the expenses involved in transportation, rent, schooling for children, salary, and hiring replacement labor at headquarters for the vacated expatriate position. If the expatriate returns from the assignment prematurely, the organization has to absorb these financial costs not once but possibly twice if another expatriate takes on the assignment. Even if the expatriate remains in the host country for the duration of the overseas assignment, the expatriate's assignment may be defined as unsuccessful for several reasons. Often failure is very conspicuous and hard to detect. Failure on behalf of the expatriate has the potential to be more dangerous and damaging than an early return. Some of these reasons for failure include delayed start up time, a disruption of the relationship between the expatriate and the host country, damage to the expanding or multinational corporation's image, as well as expatriate specific issues such as inability to adapt to the physical and cultural differences of the environment (Bennett, Aston, Colquhoun, 2000). If the expatriate does not interact well with the host country and refuses or is simply ignorant in practicing the customs of the host country, the end result, even if the expatriate remains for the duration of the assignment, could be more devastating to the organization than the early return. The expatriate may have difficulties initially with the move to another culture. These adjustment difficulties manifest in the social as well as work life of the expatriate. When these difficulties surface at work they could delay the start up time of the assignment. An expatriate who arrives in the host country and blindly practices western management principles in a non-western culture may end up damaging the MNC's image

within the host country. For example reprimanding an Asian worker in front of his or her co-workers is considered an unacceptable business practice. An American expatriate may think nothing of this action and even believe that reprimanding the worker in front of co-workers will reinforce the likelihood that the behavior does not occur again. All of these failures could be contributed to inadequate preparation of the expatriate thereby reflecting the need for CCT.

### **The Successful Expatriate Assignment**

In terms of success a successful expatriate assignment is often defined as one in which the expatriate remains in the host country for the duration of the assignment, achieves a high degree of personal adjustment to the new host country, achieves a high degree of professional effectiveness in accomplishing the assignment responsibilities, and achieves a high degree of interpersonal adjustment (Bennett, Aston, Colquhoun, 2000). A successful expatriate venture is often more difficult to define than failure due to the myriad variables involved. Each MNC must determine what constitutes success as based on their respective global strategies and how and to what degree the international assignment meshes into or agrees with those strategies. The MNC often will view success as having the right person in the right place at the right time. A successful expatriate as defined by a MNC must be prepared to adjust to the local environment, to achieve a satisfactory lifestyle while on assignment, and of course to accomplish the specific objectives of the assignment. In order to measure assignment success, an organization must determine whether the expatriate assignment is merely a calculated action with the simple purpose of getting a specific job completed, or whether the organization has a more strategic long term goal of developing the organization's global capability within the host country. The more an organization believes in the globalization process, the more it will desire to achieve both the short term goal of getting the job done as well as the longer term developmental goal of making the organization global by building global competencies. Within the last decade

there has been a primary shift in the expectations of corporations in the global arena. In order for organizations to maximize their return on investment in the costly overseas assignments of an expatriate, they have begun to perceive the expatriate role as that of a change agent for the organization. Individuals who choose or are assigned to overseas assignments are expected to both transfer and acquire skills and knowledge over the duration of the assignment. In order for an expatriate to develop individually and for the organization to compete globally, the success of the expatriate will have to be based on the expatriate possessing skills, knowledge, and attitudes to perform effectively in a different environment. They must be able to adjust to living in the host country, and they must understand how to maximize their developmental opportunities while on assignment as found by Bennett, Aston, and Colquhoun. CCT should contain these ideas as training components to support the success of the expatriate.

### **What Do Expatriates Receive From CCT?**

Intercultural or cross cultural training is often argued as the key to success based on the various social, personal, and intercultural factors that influence overseas performance of the expatriate. An expatriate is confronted with various difficulties ranging from inadequate introduction of managerial practices of the home company into the host country, to adjustment issues to the foreign culture. These many and varied stressors often lead to the expatriate deciding to leave the host country prior to completion of the assignment. The key component to cross-cultural training is to what extent the training makes a difference by adding skills and knowledge that will enable the expatriate to enhance his or her ability to operate effectively in an unfamiliar culture and quite possibly in a less than ideal environment. Cross-cultural training targets the interactions of working and socializing with people from different cultural backgrounds. The main emphasis of the cross -cultural training being on building an understanding of how culture affects the working relationships, interpersonal

behaviors, culture shock and stress that is sometimes experienced, business practices and behavior between the host and expatriate companies, as well as the influence of differences across culture that impact teamwork and productivity. Cross-cultural training is implemented with the objective of bringing the expectations of individuals within different cultural backgrounds in line with the presented situation of working in a multicultural context. Once an employee has been selected for an expatriate position, cross-cultural training becomes the crucial step in preparing for overseas effectiveness. Expatriates may adjust well to their new location, find other expatriates for social interactions, and even learn to navigate the local merchants. This type of adjustment does not necessarily mean that the expatriate will adapt to the culture or effectively perform in the business environment of the host country. Given these factors, cross-cultural training must address the ability to form positive, mutually respectful relationships with host nationals and people of diverse backgrounds.

Depending on the country of assignment the expatriate can be faced with a culture that extends beyond just a language barrier and may also include differences in social life, political atmosphere, as well as religious beliefs (Katz & Seifer, 1996). Socialization assists the expatriate in learning the appropriate national culture of the host country and encompasses the process of being made a member of the host culture. Organizational socialization transforms the expatriate from an organizational outsider to a participative and effective member of the organizational society. Katz and Seifer note that this process of socialization is obtained by a three step process; acquiring appropriate role behaviors, developing work skills and abilities and adjusting to the work group norms and values. In order to acquire appropriate role behaviors the expatriate should be able to clarify their own roles within the host organization. This requires the expatriate to receive clear, realistic, and accurate information about their role within the organization. This can be achieved by providing a detail description of the job responsibilities within the organization. Appropriate role behavior also involves the

expatriate knowing how to deal with those in his or her immediate work group as well as those workers throughout the organization. This can be accomplished by providing the expatriate with inter-group training as well as interpersonal role training. Appropriate role behavior also considers the way in which the expatriate deals with conflicts between their work and personal lives. Unresolved issues in these areas may lead the expatriate to experience a negative effect of the job on the quality of home life. Expatriates must possess some degree of job related technical competency in order to develop work skills and abilities that relate to their assignment. Providing training on job skills specific to the assignment should assist the expatriate in this area. The previous ideas are typically implemented prior to assignment departure. The remaining idea of adjusting to work group norms and values usually occurs post arrival to the assignment. To assist the expatriate in adjusting to work group norms and values the organization should establish and coordinate a support system. This arrangement allows the expatriate to receive organizational information on the politics and day to day operations of the organization. Additionally, Katz and Seifer suggest that providing the expatriate with a copy of the company newsletter or any other announcements that are provided to the host country workers indicate to the expatriate that the organization is willing to include them in the activities of the organization.

### **Elements of Cross-cultural Training**

The multinational or soon to be multinational corporation of the expatriate should implement pre-departure cross-cultural training to ease the process of acclimation to the host country. Cross-cultural training serves to reduce the degree of culture shock and aids in reducing the time required to reach an acceptable level of cultural proficiency. The central aim of cross-cultural training is to teach expatriates how to bridge cultural differences more effectively.

### **REDUCTION OF CULTURE SHOCK**

Cross-cultural training has shown to reduce culture shock as well as miscommunication

among expatriates and host nationals as noted by Bhawuk and Brislin. Culture shock manifests itself by presenting the expatriate with personal problems of both a psychological and psychosomatic nature when moving to other cultures. Culture shock provided MNCs with a legitimate reason to provide CCT as it could lead to the avoidance and possible elimination of culture shock altogether. Culture shock by its very nature provided a barometer of the successful adaptation of an expatriate to the host culture. Ironically culture shock leads to the idea of shocking people in a cross-cultural training session by presenting values and behaviors that are essentially opposite of one's own cultural values. This culture shock training session allowed trainees or expatriates to discuss cultural differences to better prepare themselves for dealing with culture shock upon arrival to the host country, the very precursor of CCT. Communication or reduced miscommunication is another area that can be helped by CCT. The various cultures that an expatriate can be placed into have many avenues of communication beyond just the verbal communication differences. Cultures have nonverbal avenues of communication such as crowd behavior or personal space area and eye contact. These subtle ways of communication can be presented in very different ways among differing cultures and have different meanings such as an American in Greece who may wave their hand palm up and facing out, in a friendly manner, would be perceived as exhibiting utmost contempt in Greece where an open palm is a rude gesture. CCT would provide the expatriate with exposure to these communication differences pre-departure for the assignment preventing a potential cultural catastrophe (Bhawuk, Brislin, 2000).

### **Managing Change**

According to Bennett, Aston, and Colquhoun, cross-cultural training should be designed to allow the expatriate to manage change, cultural differences, and professional responsibilities. In order to manage change, CCT should create a personal as well as professional action plan to the expatriate

allowing for managing change, achieving goals of the assignment and maintaining key relationships during the assignment. The cultural adaptation process should be reviewed along with identification of effective coping strategies. The personal and professional transition of the expatriate should be reviewed in CCT to allow a grasp of the impact of the change on the expatriate, his family, and friends. In terms of managing cultural differences there should be a focus on the meaning of culture and how it influences values, expectations and behaviors. Information about the host country should be learned with respect to recognizing cultural differences between the home and host country. This component of training teaches the expatriate about the other culture and includes what values are important within the culture, how the host culture is reflected in historical, political, and economic data, and how cultural values are expressed in behavior. The training should allow the absorption of practical information about daily life in the host country and allow the expatriate to develop intercultural communication skills.

### **Managing Cultural Differences**

Cultural differences training within CCT should enable the expatriate to understand and analyze cross-cultural interactions and assist in developing skills to reconcile these differences. In looking at managing professional responsibilities, CCT should enable the expatriate to understand how business and specific responsibilities of the job are handled in the host country. Learning how to live and work effectively in the host culture is a pivotal aspect of CCT. This component of CCT teaches expatriates how to recognize the influence of culture on social relationships, management styles and systems, strategic planning within the host organization, and the general business environment of the host country. Additionally CCT should present the expatriate with guidance on how to adapt individual style and approach to be the most effective with host nationals (Bennett, Aston, Colquhoun, 2000).

## Managing Professional Responsibilities

The content of the CCT program should be customized to meet the needs of the organizations involved in the venture. In order to tailor the CCT program to the specific requirements of the organization, the assignment and the expatriate, a thorough needs assessment of the expatriate and the HR representative should be conducted. This needs assignment should contain input from the expatriate's manager which would allow the CCT trainer to collect pertinent data relative to the assignment objectives, any past international experience, the job responsibilities and goals, as well as any unique issues or concerns with the assignment. It is helpful for the expatriate to have completed a preview trip to the host country prior to training. This will eliminate many of the questions that expatriates have before departure and allow them to focus on the issues of cultural adaptation which is critical to their successful integration into the host country (Bennett, Aston, Colquhoun, 2000).

At a minimum CCT should include all of the above mention components as well as the topics of planning for a successful international assignment, international transition and stress management, information on daily living issues, and special issues to address such as partners and families living abroad with the expatriate. Additionally CCT should provide training on repatriation or return to the home country after completion of the assignment. This repatriation training should be received on a pre-departure basis as to equip the expatriate with the skills needed to acclimate back into the home country prior to the anticipated return (Bennett, Aston, Colquhoun, 2000).

Despite the claims that CCT is necessary to increase the probability of expatriate success on foreign assignments many MNCs are not following suit. Estimates vary as to the exact percentage of MNCs that offer their employees CCT and most of these programs are only a 1 day briefing session (Black, 1998). Many MNCs continue to question the effectiveness of intercultural training and hold the belief that managers who operate well in their home country will be just as effective in their new host country. Other reasons include MNCs belief

that there is too little time between selection of the expatriate for the assignment and the expatriate's departure as well as the costs associated with implementation of the CCT. Although there is considerable research to support that CCT is effective, the idea is not reaching many of the corporations who are sending expatriates on an overseas assignment (Selmer, J., Torbiorn, I., de Leon, C.T., 1998). There is a widely held belief that short-term training cannot turn a highly inappropriate individual into an excellent communicator in a foreign land or allow them to overcome highly unfavorable conditions in their newly located country. Initial selection of the expatriate to place into the overseas assignment and project planning in making for effective performance overseas takes care of these factors. Although selection of the expatriate is an important component of the expatriate assignment and its success, the selection process for all practical purposes is not reviewed in this paper. This review of the expatriate venture begins after the selection process has occurred and examines the avenues in which training can make a difference by adding skills and knowledge that enhance the abilities of individuals to operate effectively and efficiently in an unfamiliar culture and an inexorably less than perfect working environment.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS FOR CCT

There is a lack of unitary theoretical framework for CCT. There have been a variety of theoretical frameworks developed to explain why CCT should facilitate an expatriate's success on an overseas assignment. Some of these frameworks include social learning theory, adjustment, expertise development, and culture shock. Some researchers argue that these theoretical frameworks can be used in the development of CCT programs (Littrell, Salas, Hess, Paley, Riedel, 2006).

Social learning theory as noted by Bandura states that learning is a process influenced by experience and observation in which the experiences and observed consequences of behavior shape learning. Under the social learning theory new behaviors are maximized



when an individual observes other performing the behaviors and begins to practice this behavior in return. Bandura noted that direct and vicarious experiences shape learning and direct future behavior. Social learning theory allows the individual to observe the consequences associated with behavior and learn to model the behavior to result in increased learning (Bandura, 1977). If one applies social learning theory to CCT, the expatriate would observe appropriate and inappropriate behavior in the host country and by observing these behaviors the expatriate can base his or her own behavior on these models presented by the host nationals. In utilizing this framework, the expatriate would have the skills necessary to interact appropriately during encounters in the host country. By observing appropriate behavior, the expatriate would be better equipped to recognize the model behavior within the host country. This would in-turn allow the expatriate to reproduce that type of desired behavior based on his or her observing the behavior (Littrell, Salas, Hess, Paley, Riedel, 2006). CCT viewed as a social learning process would enable an expatriate to acquire social skills through observation and practice.

The U curve of adjustment is a theory that explains the various phases that an expatriate goes through while adjusting to the host country. The process follows a U-shaped curve progressing through a honeymoon period, culture shock period, attempted adjustment period, and then mastery period. Within the honeymoon stage everything is new and exciting much as it would be to a tourist on vacation in the host country. In the culture shock stage the differences between what the expatriate is used to in the home country and what the new host culture provides becomes apparent. The individual either learns by developing his or her own cultural intelligence or does not learn how to adapt. Individuals who become accustomed to the routines of daily life in the host country eventually move into the stage of mastery, while other may never adjust (Thomas, Inkson, 2004). In applying the U curve theory of adjustment an expatriate adjustment can be described as a function of time. Initially the expatriate is

optimistic and excited to be a part of the new environment. As the assignment progresses, the expatriate may experience frustration or confusion in response to the host country's environment. The expatriate eventually begins to recover and progress to near complete adjustment. In viewing CCT and the expatriate's location on the U curve it becomes important to recognize that individual expatriates may have very different experiences at different times within the assignment. It is important to note that CCT may need to be customized to the period of adjustment the individual is encountering (Littrell, Salas, Hess, Paley, Riedel, 2006).

The U curve theory of adjustment can be followed using the Transtheoretical model of behavioral change (Prochaska, DiClemente, Norcross, 1992). If one superimposes the five steps of the Transtheoretical model of change over the U curve theory, the similarity of progress from step to step along the U curve will immerge. Along the U curve the initial point of the honeymoon period exist when the expatriate is not experiencing any discomfort with the new culture. This point of the U curve corresponds with the precontemplation stage of the Transtheoretical model. The expatriate does not perceive any gap in their home country culture and the new host country culture and feels no pressure to utilize any of the CCT strategies. Along the U curve as the honeymoon period comes to an end, the downward shift begins along the curve. At this point along the U curve the expatriate perceives a problem between his or her actions and the host culture but is not yet convinced that the problem is severe enough to warrant a change in behavior. This point along the U curve corresponds to the contemplation stage of the Transtheoretical model. Proceeding down the U curve the expatriate continues to experience discomfort concerning the new culture and is heading towards the lowest point of the curve known as the culture shock period. In the culture shock period the expatriate is frustrated and confused on how to relate to the host country's culture. This point along the U curve corresponds to the preparation stage of the Transtheoretical model as the expatriate is

painfully aware of the need to change his behavior but not exactly sure how to proceed. The expatriate at this point will review the training received in the CCT program and attempt to develop an action plan they believe will address and alleviate the presenting problem. The expatriate will begin to evaluate various alternative plans of action to address the issue. At this point on the U curve the curve begins an upward slope as the expatriate begins to understand his or her role within the new culture and the initial culture shock has ended. The expatriate is moving into the action stage of the Transtheoretical model and has a plan of action developed to resolve the conflict experienced. Along the U curve the expatriate has entered into the adjustment phase. Once the chosen plan of action as learned from the CCT received is put into action and a success, the expatriate continues an upward move along the U curve and moves into the mastery phase. The expatriate has now adjusted to the new culture and has entered the maintenance stage of the Transtheoretical model as the problem experienced with the new culture has been resolved. The expatriate now will maintain the learned response and will enter the precontemplation stage to address any future or new issues experienced in the host culture.

The Culture shock theoretical framework relies on the belief that the design of CCT programs can be enhanced if the training used addresses the problems associated with culture shock. If the CCT program addresses these issues the expatriate should experience lower levels of psychological distress and will have been provided with coping skills for dealing with the physiological, behavior, emotional, and intellectual effects of culture shock. Another theory that is often used in an attempt to address culture shock is the theory of met expectations. This theory is based on the premise that an expatriate holds expectations regarding the assignment before he or she enters the organization. The initial expectations of the expatriate are then compared to the job experiences that the expatriate actually experiences on the job. If the initial expectations of the expatriate are consistent with the actual occurrences of the job, the expatriate is more likely to be well satisfied and adjusted.

If the expatriate is less than satisfied or discrepancies exist between job expectations and actual job experiences, the expatriate is more likely to be dissatisfied with the assignment and leave. Inconsistencies between the expatriate's expectations of the assignment and the reality of the assignment may encumber the cross-cultural adjustment. If the CCT training addresses this issue, the likelihood that the expatriate develops accurate expectations should increase as well (Littrell, Salas, Hess, Paley, Riedel, 2006).

The fifth theoretical framework, also the newest model of CCT training, is the Sequential model that is based on the viewpoint that training is a process, not a onetime event. Utilizing the Sequential model, the CCT program should be structured as to correspond to the cycle of adjustment that the expatriate is experiencing as he or she adapts to the host country's culture. Within the Sequential model four phases of adjustment exist; the ethnocentric stage, the culture-shocked stage, the conformist stage, and the adjusted stage. The timing and content of the CCT should correspond to the adjustment stage being experienced by the expatriate and should include pre-departure training. The idea of pre-departure training is that the expatriate is prepared for culture shock and the many changes needed to adjust to the host culture. This pre-departure training is thought to reduce ethnocentrism. The next stage in the Sequential model, the culture shock stage, begins once the expatriate has been in the host country for some time and begins to experience culture shock. During this stage the expatriate should receive CCT structured as to provide learning about his or her environment in an attempt to learn how to sort out the many experiences they are encountering. The next phase of the Sequential model is the conformist phase in which the focus of CCT moves to learning by doing. In this phase the expatriate may not be sure that their behaviors are appropriate and should interact with host nations to observe and learn the appropriate behaviors. This is very similar to Bandura's Social Learning Theory. CCT training should allow the expatriate to interact with host nations in both structured and unstructured situations, and then be provided with feedback regarding the

appropriateness of the behavior (Littrell, Salas, Hess, Paley, Riedel, 2006).

The Sequential model of adjustment can also be superimposed onto the Transtheoretical model of change with many similarities. In the ethnocentric phase of the Sequential model the expatriate does not perceive a problem with their beliefs. The differences between the home culture and host culture are not presenting a problem to the expatriate. They feel no need to change their beliefs and are in the precontemplation stage of the Transtheoretical model. The Sequential model of adjustment attempts to prevent this view by providing pre-departure training to address ethnocentric beliefs. Between the ethnocentric phase and the culture-shocked phase, the expatriate begins to perceive differences in the cultures and enters the contemplation stage of the Transtheoretical model. The expatriate is not sure the problems experienced are severe enough to warrant a change in behavior. Moving into the culture-shock phase of the Sequential model, the expatriate perceives the need for change but is unsure of how to proceed. They begin to develop plans of action based on the CCT received and evaluate various alternative plans of action. The next phase of the Sequential model moves the expatriate into the conformist phase. In the conformist phase the expatriate begins to form and firm up their plans to address the issues being experienced. This phase corresponds to a rather blurred line between preparation stage and the action stage of the Transtheoretical model. The expatriate is learning how to appropriately behave and has developed a plan and placed the plan into action. The last step of the Sequential model is the adjusted phase which is parallel to the maintenance step of the Transtheoretical model. The expatriate has learned and is effectively practicing the new behavior.

These theoretical frameworks can be used to aid in the designing of CCT programs for expatriates and possibly to explain why CCT facilitates an expatriate's performance on an overseas assignment. All of these frameworks have not been empirically tested in relation to CCT. Researchers within the area of CCT warn

that these theoretical frameworks should be used cautiously when applied to CCT design and evaluation (Black, Mendenhall, 1990).

### **LEARNING STRATEGIES FOR CCT**

Many research studies have been conducted to study cross cultural training and its effectiveness in terms of cross cultural adjustment of the expatriate. Cross-cultural training or CCT is defined as the process implemented to improve intercultural learning through the development of cognitive, affective, and behavioral competencies that are fundamental for successful interactions in diverse cultures (Littrell, Salas, Hess, Paley, Riedel, 2006). An earlier study by Brislin identified the three noted methods (Brislin, 1979). A closer look at each of these three areas methods follows. The cognitive method relies on a diffusion of information through the avenues of conferences or non-participative sessions on behalf of the expatriate, on a foreign cultural environment. In other words cognitive learning allows the expatriate to obtain and absorb information as acquired by the mind in typical learning fashion. This cognitive method brings to mind the typical training session in which a trainer lectures to the attendees in a lecture or class room style. This method would not encourage participation on behalf of the attendee and the expectation is simply that they retain the information presented to them via the trainer. This method of presentation mirrors the unilateral method of implementation in which the trainer provides the content to the attendee and there is no participation by the attendee. The expatriate in this example does not participate in the presentation or training and simply receives the information as dictated by the trainer. This method is referred to as didactic training or information giving and typically covers the topics of working and living conditions of the host country, cultural differences, and the essential information of the host culture that will enable the expatriate to understand events and behave in accordance with the customs and beliefs of the host country. Information giving is used to enhance the cognitive skills that will enable the expatriate to

better understand the host culture. Examples include pre-departure orientation to the host culture and topic specific training such as conducting business internationally.

The affective method aims at allowing the expatriate to develop individual reactions that they can draw upon to deal with any critical cultural incidents that they may experience while on assignment. Affective learning focuses primarily on the emotions and aims at confronting negative feelings in order to grow emotionally stronger and self-reliant in the new environment. This avenue of cross cultural training is designed to address the individual specific responses that the expatriate may have in relation to cultural incidents they may experience while on assignment. Affective training attempts to equip the expatriate with the skills needed to develop their own emotional responses to situations presented while on assignment. Examples of this method of training may include how to work with a specific nationality or culture specific training. The cultural assimilator is a tool used to deliver this affective type of training. The cultural assimilator requires the expatriate to read a cross-culturally oriented scenario along with four alternatives in which the expatriate will indicate which of the four courses of action he or she would take to address the issue being presented. After the expatriate indicates his or her response, the facilitator provides an expert view regarding the most appropriate response (Bhawuk, Brislin, 2000). The cultural assimilator allows the expatriate to practice responding to realistic cross-cultural situations that they are likely to encounter while on assignment.

The behavior method has the objective of improving the expatriate's capacity to adapt their communication style and to establish positive relationships with individuals of the host culture. Behavior training provides the expatriate with the knowledge to change or adapt their communication style to a communication style that accommodates the ideas of the host culture in an effort to foster a positive relationship with the host country and its culture. Examples of this method include learning a set of basic phrases and expressions in

the host language. The use of these phases and expressions relays a meaningful emphasis on the expatriate's interest in the host culture. Other examples of this method include training to make one aware of the importance of the communication delivery specific to the culture such as the fact that some cultures may consider it offensive to correct a subordinate in front of other subordinates (Brislin, 1979). The idea behind cross cultural training as applied to these three types of training is that cognitive and behavioral aim to develop knowledge acquisition and the affective category aims at skill acquisition. Together these different strategy areas equip the expatriate with the cross cultural skills and knowledge needed to succeed in an overseas assignment.

Present day cross-cultural training encompasses these issues but also typically ensures coverage of two broad sets of activities. The activity of information giving is the first set. Information giving includes the giving of practical information on living conditions in the host country. Additionally, area studies of the host country including political, economic, and cultural facts about the host country are provided. Cultural awareness information that focuses on understanding the host culture in a way that is more personally relevant than the area studies is provided as well. These three forms; information giving, area studies, and cultural awareness all operate at the intellectual or cognitive level of the expatriate. The second set of activities covered consists of experiential learning activities that combine cognitive and behavioral techniques. This set component relies on the theory that the assimilation of information is reinforced if accompanied by experiences such as simulating critical incidents the expatriate may experience overseas and therefore allowing for the development of alternative response strategies for use when needed. The main objective of this training is the gaining of intercultural effectiveness skills which are believed to enhance adjustment on a personal and family level as well as work performance overseas (Kealey, Protheroe, 1996).

Other strategies to consider with CCT are the duration of the training and the timing of the training. MNCs may choose to provide CCT

prior to departure, after the expatriate has arrived in the host country or as a combination of both. There are many programs that provide one to twelve week classes that integrate language study, the majority of MNCs today implement two to three day programs prior to departure (Brislin, Yoshida, 1994). The shorter programs are often dictated by the expatriate and family time constraints rather than by costs. One day training is an option, but should be considered a briefing rather than training because it primarily provides information only and does not offer enough time for the expatriate to process or engage in dialogue with the trainer that is normally associated with CCT. CCT training that is shorter than one day in duration is simply an overview and would not provide effective sustaining value to the expatriate (Bennett, Aston, Colquhoun, 2000).

The timing of the training should be considered as there is much debate over whether training is best provided pre-departure or post-arrival. If the expatriate receives the training prior to arrival, he or she will enter the assignment equipped with the tools needed to successfully navigate the new culture. These pre-departure training would equip the expatriate with a basic understanding of the culture, information related to living in the area, familiarity of how to handle any culture shock experienced, and a generally greater confidence about their being successful. Post-arrival training is considered to be valuable by some due to its potential to expose expatriates to real time issues and experiences. In post-arrival training the expatriate brings their issues and experiences to the training and their learning readiness is magnified as they are already immersed in the cultural challenges of the host country (Black, Gregersen, Mendenhall, Stroh, 1999). Receiving CCT both pre and post-arrival would be ideal although the cost and logistical difficulties could be a potential deterrent.

According to Bennett, Aston, and Colquhoun, the strategy of CCT implementation should be considered with the optimal time to provide pre-departure training being three to five weeks before the departure for the assignment. This time frame is based on the premise that

providing the training too far in advance will result in a less than keen learning readiness on part of the expatriate. Much of the learning is at risk of being forgotten by the time of departure. On the other side of the issue if the CCT is provided too close to the departure date of the assignment, the pressures of the relocation and the work demands on part of the expatriate can be a distraction thereby making it difficult for the expatriate to provide full attention during the CCT. If possible, a preview trip to the host country followed by pre-departure training would be ideal. Any information gathered on the trip can be drawn upon while attending the pre-departure CCT allowing the expatriate to enter the CCT program with some primary ideas around the host country and its culture. A post-arrival program is best implemented around the eight to twelve week period after the expatriate reaches the host country. This implementation time allows the expatriate to bring their own cross-cultural experiences and challenges to the session and supports the real time learning concept. The post-arrival strategy works well if services to address the practical day to day relocation and orientation needs are provided immediately upon arrival to the host country. This allows the expatriate to use the CCT to deepen their cultural awareness, knowledge, and transition management skills. Bennett, Aston, and Colquhoun suggest that if these practical issues are not addressed prior to the in-country training, the expatriate may focus the CCT time on simply trying to survive their relocation as opposed to the cultural adaptation that CCT is meant to provide.

The idea behind cross cultural training is not to transform the expatriate's basic personality or character, but to enhance the social skills, coping techniques, professional skills, and facts to the existing person's repertoire while respecting their individual culture and make up. This way of viewing cross cultural training stems from the idea that expatriates experience interpersonal difficulties across cultural boundaries due to not possessing the required social skills and not from a personal deficiency. This follows that the aim of cross cultural training today is to build cross cultural competency in the expatriate

rather than attempt to change the expatriate's fundamental personality (Kealey, Protheroe, 1996).

Regardless of which training method is used, there are several key elements that all CCT programs should take into account. All CCT programs should consider the needs of the expatriate, the customization of the training contents, and the quality of the program implemented (Bennett, Aston, Colquhoun, 2000). Before an expatriate training program is initiated a needs assessment should be completed. During this needs assessment the strengths and weakness of the expatriate in terms of interpersonal and cognitive skills should be assessed. In addition, Bennett, Aston and Colquhoun suggest that family and spousal needs that could potentially have a direct impact on the expatriate's success should also be identified. Assignment objectives, previous international experience, job description, and family needs should all be included in the needs assessment.

The second key element of the CCT program is that it should be customized to meet the expatriate's needs. The content of the CCT program should be tailored to the expatriate's individual situation. Additionally the training design of the CCT should be customized to meet the needs of the expatriate in terms of skill development (Caligiuri, Phillips, Lazarova, Tarique, Burgi, 2001).

The third element of CCT that should be addressed is program quality. The MNC should ensure that the CCT program is designed and implemented by experts of the host country as well as on the expatriate process in general. In terms of quality measurement the program should contain a component of evaluation. The assessment of the expatriate's performance as well as allowing the expatriate to express his or her opinions regarding the relationship of the training received and his or her level of preparedness should be present (Bennett, Aston, Colquhoun, 2000).

### **EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE OF CCT EFFECTIVENESS**

Most of the CCT research completed to date has been theoretical in nature and there have

been few empirical studies conducted to research the relationship between CCT and expatriate performance. Since 1971 with Fieldler, Mitchell and Triandis' study of culture assimilators and the development of assimilators (Fieldler, Mitchell, Triandis 1971) there have been a plethora of articles published that theoretically examined various components of CCT. Given the fact that the majority of studies that have examined the relationship between CCT and expatriate success have inadequately identified the effect of intercultural training, additional research is needed relative to CCT and its impact on expatriate performance. There are methodological problems associated with empirical studies of CCT as well. Kealey and Protheroe state that a reliable experimental study of the short and long term impacts of CCT should incorporate the components of comparison groups, pre training and post training measures, random assignment, longitudinal measures, and multiple measures of training outcomes. Kealey and Protheroe clarify that the comparison should include an experimental group that receives the CCT training and an untrained but sociologically similar control group. The pre and post measures of change would include the cognitive country and cultural knowledge awareness as well as behavioral competencies such as specific intercultural skills. These two features are considered as minimal requirements and as such this is where many of the existing studies fall short. A more in-depth or rigorously designed study would include the last three components of random assignment, longitudinal measures, and multiple measures of training as well. The assignment of the subjects to a treatment and control group on a random basis would be included. Also the study should test for change at various intervals such as immediately after the CCT and at a later date such as six months later. This design would ensure that one is actually measuring the long term effect of training and not just the immediate results. Additional measures of training such as using not only self reports of the trainees themselves but also the trainer, supervisor, peer, or a representative of the host country would provide a more objective measure of the CCT effect. This measure or application of feedback is often referred to as

360 degree feedback and allows for a more global measure of performance than relying on self reporting measures. Additionally it is important to have a clear understanding of the independent variables such as types of training, training methods, and length of training so that any measured outcomes can be related to the type of training received. Equally important is a clear understanding of the dependent variables or the intended outcome of the training. The measure of success in the expatriate assignment should consider all of its major dimensions with an emphasis on task performance against the goals of the assignment. Proper research on the effectiveness of CCT should measure the expatriate's actual performance on the assignment and should also control for alternative reasons for effectiveness such as the intrinsic talents of the expatriate. This can be accomplished by implementing a method to measure the specific role that CCT makes to performance outcomes. Since CCT is only one aspect influencing overseas success, it is imperative to control for external influences on the expatriate's performance as noted by Kealey and Protheroe.

Often these external impacts are not easy to measure. One should remember that the degree of commitment on part of the host organization, the clarity of the assignment objectives and the quality of supports, all influence the success and performance of the expatriate. Most empirical evidence that examines CCT is often inadequate because researchers are not conducting studies that meet the requisite criteria for reliable studies as proposed by Kealey and Protheroe.

In 1981 Rosalie Tung completed a survey to discover if the content of an area study contributes to the assignment success. An area study is noted to provide the expatriate with information about the host country's history, culture, social structure, economy, and the goals of both the home and host country in terms of the assignment. Tung's survey suggested that providing the expatriate with purely informational briefing content about the host country was not sufficient to produce a significant change in the attitude of the expatriate in terms of having an effect on their

interpersonal or professional effectiveness overseas (Kealey & Protheroe, 1996).

Christopher Earley followed up on Tung's research in 1987 and disagreed with Tung. Earley's study found that area studies as well as experiential based interpersonal skills training or role playing exercises did correlate with a higher evaluation of the expatriate's effectiveness as rated by their supervisors at the end of their assignments. The supervisors provided lower evaluations to those who did not receive training of either kind. The best evaluations were given to those expatriates who received both the area study and role playing training. Earley's study found evaluations to be essentially equal for those who received information only or experiential only training (Earley, 1987). A critique of Earley's study is that the assignments of the expatriates were of short duration, approximately three months and had a relatively structured and clear objective of the teaching by Americans of manufacturing techniques in Korea. Earley's research leaves an uncertainty of correlation to longer term assignments and ones that are vaguer or less concrete and less technical in nature such as the work of a manager (Kealey, & Protheroe, 1996).

In 1993 a study by Bird also reviewed the effects of informational training as presented by area studies. Bird's finding supported Tung's in that area studies are insufficient. Bird's findings did lead him to support Tung but with one significant difference. Bird did not agree that area studies have little value as he set out to discover what area studies can and cannot do. Bird conducted his research by providing a treatment group with a one week series of area studies, readings, and films about Japanese history and culture. Bird assured that prior to the training there was little difference between the attitudes and knowledge of the control group which would not receive the seminar information, and the experimental group which received the information. Bird found that the experimental group had greater conceptual knowledge of the foundations of Japanese culture and a greater awareness of what constitutes appropriate behavior in Japan. The results of Bird's study indicate that area studies

do have a positive impact on the expatriate's adaptation and performance on the overseas assignment. A critique of Bird's study is that it was unable to measure actual performance overseas as it relied on assessing changes in the knowledge and behavioral intentions of the groups only. Another critique of the study was that the measurement tests were given to the subjects eight days after completion of the training. This eight day period is too short of an interval to provide reliable inferences relating to the long term impact of the training (Kealey & Protheroe, 1996).

Another form of CCT that has received considerable attention is the area of cultural awareness training. Cultural awareness training is cognitive in nature and aims to provide a personally relevant feel to the values, traditions, and customs of the host culture. The cultural assimilator technique as described earlier is the widely known technique for providing cultural awareness. The empirical evidence for cultural awareness is similar to that of area studies in that it recognized as supportive but has its limits. A study conducted by Fiedler, Mitchell and Triandis found that assimilator training, which emphasizes daily life incidents, is more effective in relation to interpersonal relations and adjustment than are general area studies. In 1972, a study conducted by Worchel and Mitchell took the idea of the cultural assimilator one step further by providing evidence that the cultural assimilator enhances work performance overseas. In this study Worchel and Mitchell gave 45 U.S. Air Force and civilian advisors on assignment in Thailand and 76 Army advisors in Greece culture training in the form of either Thai cultural assimilator or the Greek cultural assimilator. A series of essays was provided to the Thailand subjects and no training at all to subjects from Greece. Questions were designed to measure the subject's impression of his performance and adjustment in the host country. The study found that the assimilator trained subjects felt that they were more productive and had better impersonal relationships with Thais than did subjects who were trained by essay. The results of the study were replicated for the assimilator trained subjects in Greece when their ratings were compared to the subjects who received no training (Worchel & Mitchell,

1972). A critique of this study is that it relied on self reported measures of in-field effectiveness.

Intercultural effectiveness skill training is yet another area in which empirical studies have been conducted to study the role of CCT. A study completed by Harrison in 1992 sought to measure the impact of cultural assimilator training and behavior modeling. In this study the behavior modeling was implemented by having the trainees observe effective cross-cultural behavior, from observing someone directly or on video, and then practice their own approach. The trainee would then receive feedback from the trainer. Within this study experimental and control groups were measured in regard to several outcomes, including expatriate important components of individual learning and behavioral changes. The subjects of the study were civilian employees of the U.S. military who would be interacting with host country personnel at bases overseas. Harrison's research found that combining cultural assimilator training and behavior training had a significantly greater effect on behavior than did no training or receiving either cultural assimilator or behavior training alone (Harrison, 1992). A critique of Harrison's research is that there is an absence of outcome measures of the expatriate performance concerning the experimental and control groups as the measures were taken immediately after the training was received.

## **CONCLUSIONS, DIRECTIONS AND UNANSWERED QUESTIONS**

There has been a vast quantity of research conducted on CCT in the past 25 to 30 years. This quarter of a century of research has completed an excellent job of presenting the features of CCT, examining the varying types of delivery mechanisms, and has offered theoretical frameworks to explain how and why CCT works. This noted research remains deficient on many levels as it is often not clearly defined as to what the implications of this research are and how the connections can be made between the various studies conducted and the numerous literature reviews completed. Due to the relative lack of empirical evidence and the methodological challenges involved, much of



the research conducted leaves one pondering whether any conclusive answers regarding design, effectiveness, and implementation of CCT exist.

Several of the studies reviewed meet the minimal criteria for reliable research as noted by Kealey and Protheroe. A reliable study of CCT and its effectiveness should incorporate the components of comparison groups, pre training and post training measures, random assignment, longitudinal measures, and multiple measures of training outcomes (Kealey & Protheroe, 1996). Many of the empirical studies completed to date lack some degree of satisfying all of the intended requirements as noted by Kealey and Protheroe. Christopher Earley's study relating to supervisor evaluations of the expatriate revealed the importance of training but lacked the component of longitudinal measures given the studies relatively short duration of three months as noted by Kealey and Protheroe. Bird's study completed in 1993 found support for areas studies stating that area studies do have a positive impact on the expatriate's adaptation and performance on the overseas assignment. Bird's research failed in its attempts to measure pre and post-training measures as his study was unable to measure actual performance overseas as it relied on assessing changes in the knowledge and behavioral intentions of the groups only. Kealey and Protheroe suggest that another critique of the study was that the measurement tests were given to the subjects eight days after completion of the training so Bird's study also failed to meet the longitudinal component of a reliable study. Worchel and Mitchel's cultural assimilator study completed in 1972 relied on self reported measures of success and therefore failed its attempt to meet the component of multiple measures of training outcome (Worchel & Mitchell, 1972). Harrison's study on intercultural effectiveness skills training lacked comparison groups and longitudinal components (Harrison, 1992).

To date there doesn't appear to be a study on intercultural training for expatriates which meets the full set of criteria. In particular there appears to be a commonality among the studies

completed that the requirements for the use of longitudinal measures of expatriate performance overseas and the use of multiple measures beyond self reporting of perceived learning and effectiveness are lacking. Does this mean that CCT is not effective in supplementing an expatriate's success on an overseas assignment? The answer to this question requires one to look closer at the literature regarding the effectiveness of CCT. If one examines the effectiveness of CCT on the expatriate assignment it becomes apparent that two avenues of thought appear. One avenue relates to those things that one would reasonably state that are known facts and the other relates to those things were empirical or experimental efforts leaves one wanting answers.

In terms of what is known in the field of CCT and expatriate assignment success, the literature has fairly well established a link between informational training and experiential skills training in that they work best when implemented simultaneously. Bird's 1993 study and Harrison's 1992 study both acknowledge that the most effective CCT programs contain informational training and experiential skills training. These particular studies of CCT also come close to confirming that CCT training does achieve immediate learning results for the expatriate.

In terms of what is unanswered one can look at domestic multicultural training and its relative success. There is empirical support for the value of domestic multicultural training that would meet the scientific criteria of Kealey and Protheroe. In 1982 in the Republic of South Africa, Sorcher and Spence conducted a survey to determine whether behavior modeling training would change the attitudes and behavior of white supervisors and black employees toward each other. This study found that dramatic improvements in the sensitivity and positive attitudes of the white supervisors toward blacks, and in the attitudes toward whites and the eagerness of work of the black employees (Sorcher & Spence, 1982, as cited in Kealey & Protheroe, 1996). This study met five of the five criteria as stated by Kealey and Protheroe. The question becomes whether this finding is

effective to the same extent for international contexts. Such an inference does not appear to be justified as there are important differences between domestic and international contexts. This leads us back to our initial question of whether CCT is an effective means to aid in expatriate success. In summary the findings of last 20 to 25 years appear to confirm that pre-assignment cultural training has a positive effect on the expatriate's adaptation to international assignments. This finding remains true in spite of the fact that the area of cross-cultural training has received little empirical attention. A review of the empirical evidence seems to support that CCT is effective in developing important cross-cultural skills, facilitating adjustment and enhancing job performance of the expatriate. In looking at specific research relating to cross-cultural training it becomes important to exclude case studies and research that examine the effectiveness of cross-cultural training and to concentrate on research that contains experimental design in an attempt to remove subjectivity and ascertain causality. In other words is cross-cultural training the only variable that influences a successful expatriate experience? In taking this view there are two avenues to consider. The first is whether communication skills and intercultural sensitivities are important to an expatriate worker. The evidence points to yes as the globalization of business and the increasing use of expatriates makes the need for cross-cultural competencies a most important issue (Gertsen, 1990). The other issue to consider, as verbalized by Kealey and Protheroe is whether cross-cultural training can provide an expatriate with the desirable qualities to succeed on an international assignment. If CCT training is customized to the needs of both the expatriate and the MNC, then the answer should most definitely be a resounding yes. In order to make this come to fruition MNCs should act ethically as a socially responsible entity and begin to practice flexibility in the theoretical approach and practice of CCT. By customizing the CCT to both the expatriate and to the MNC, both parties will benefit. Additionally, understanding which theoretical construct to follow may require MNCs to go beyond a standard theoretical construct and implement the most

appropriate construct for the given situation posed by the present expatriate experience. Perhaps applying the Transtheoretical Model of Change to a theoretical framework of CCT is the answer to producing an effective CCT program with positive results on behalf of the expatriate and organizations involved. This application could lead to future research on CCTs effectiveness through the lens of the Transtheoretical model. Understanding the learning processes of the individual expatriate and customizing the CCT to this may be the key to a successful CCT program. More research needs to be conducted to address the ability of CCT to influence the success of an overseas expatriate assignment so that conclusive answers regarding the relationship between CCT and expatriate performance can be achieved. The literature reviewed in this paper has demonstrated a link between the expatriate's personal characteristics, the complexity of the overseas assignment, the perceived needs for expatriate training, and the effectiveness of the training received. These findings have provided an understanding of the moderating effects of the expatriate's learning style and cross-cultural differences on the effectiveness of the training. All of these results can contribute to the effectiveness of expatriate training in multinational companies. Cross-cultural training for an international assignment is a complex endeavor and one in which the efforts of skilled and experienced professionals are required. From the literature reviewed in this paper it becomes quite evident that despite the nearly 40 years of research devoted to understanding CCT, it still remains an area with many opportunities for theoretical as well as empirical future research and advances.

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