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A. Ahad M. OSMAN-GANI
Nanyang Technological University

Wee Liang TAN
Singapore Management University, wltan@smu.edu.sg

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AAhad M. Osman-Gani
Nanyang Business School (Box: S3-B3A-27)
Nanyang Technological University
Nanyang Avenue, Singapore 639657
Tel: (65) 790-4982; Fax: (65) 791-3697
E-mail:aahad@ntu.edu.sg

&

Wee Liang Tan
School of Business, #03-07
Singapore Management University
469 Bukit Timah Road, Singapore 259756
Tel: (65) 822-0157; Fax: (65) 822-0333
E-mail: wltan@smu.edu.sg

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Human Resource Development Programs for Overseas Assignments in the Asia-Pacific: A Study of Managers in Singapore

Abstract

Asia-Pacific region form a major arena of increasing interest for overseas business operations. In this regard, human resource development (HRD) issues are found to play significant roles in major international business decisions. Yet little is known about the international HRD programs and practices employed by companies to train and develop managers for this dynamic region. This paper presents the empirical findings of a study on the relative importance of training on several key factors that are crucial to companies for their managers to succeed in overseas assignments in the Asia Pacific region. The study is based on a sample of managers from Singapore-based companies that have internationalized business operations in the region. In addition to identifying the profiles of international managers, the study attempts to identify the types, contents, effective methods and duration of such training programs. A comparison between multinational enterprises (MNEs) and the local Singaporean companies was also done to identify the natures and extent of differences. Drawing upon these findings and the review of the literature, a conceptual model for successful expatriation is proposed.

Key Words: *International human resource development, overseas assignments, expatriate training, Asia-Pacific, Singapore*

In today's competitive global business environment, international human resource development (HRD) programs are of significant importance for developing corporate managers (Dowling, Welch and Schuler, 1999; Goldstein, 1989). Although some companies have programs to develop global executives, most of the programs are new, and many are in the planning stage suggesting that management and executive development with a global focus is still fairly uncommon (Galagan, 1990). At the point where global strategy and human resource management intersect, there is a void of knowledge and practice (Adler, 1997). According to an ILO report, one of the most important areas of research in international management is the identification and development of suitable managers for overseas assignments in different cultural settings. In regard to international HRD, Ronen (1989) concluded that the limited quantity and quality of pertinent literature was the biggest obstacle to pursuing the tasks of

identifying the behavioral characteristics, developing the optimal skills and evaluating the HRD techniques for this purpose.

Increased internationalization of economic, political, and social arenas has led to greater interpersonal contact. As a significant proportion of this contact has not been successful, international HRD, most of which is embodied in cross-cultural training has been proposed by many scholars as a means of facilitating more effective interaction (Harris and Moran, 1991; Black and Mendenhall, 1989; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998). International management development programs bring people from different subcultures together and broaden their outlook, thus providing socialization in their managerial subcultures (Hofstede, 1997). Global and cross-cultural training and career-path planning have become necessary for managers in the global corporation, regardless of their domestic or international assignments (Landis and Brislin, 1983; Landis & Bhagat, 1996).

Organizations find globalization difficult since the international management literature does not provide much guidance so far (Rhinesmith, 1991). Mendenhall and Oddou (1985) concluded that the available knowledge of the cognitive dynamics of international assignees' cross-cultural adaptation process is quite limited. Latham (1988) observed that interest in conducting empirical research on various issues of cross-cultural training has declined in North America since the late 1960s and 1970s. In a review of empirical literature, Black and Mendenhall (1989) examined the effectiveness of cross-cultural training relative to three outcomes: cross-cultural skill development, cross-cultural adjustment, and job performance. The review found that most empirical work was not founded on a theoretical framework. The lack of a theoretical framework has left managers with little means of deciding who would benefit most from the HRD programs, or what training and development method would be

most effective, or how to best design such international HRD programs. Three types of training for successful assignment have been prescribed: pre-departure training (Tung, 1987; McEnery and DesHarnais, 1990), post-arrival training (Tung, 1987), and repatriation training (Tung, 1989; Harvey, 1989). Earley (1987) demonstrated that training had beneficial effects on the managerial performance overseas of American managers sent to South Korea. A number of training models have been proposed by Tung (1982), Rahim (1983), Mendenhall and Oddou (1986), Black & Mendenhall (1989). Brewster and Pickard (1994) proposed a model of the influence of the expatriate community upon the adjustment and perception of the expatriation training by the program participants after examining the underlying assumptions behind expatriate preparation. However, studies on the details of the relevant HRD/raining programs are sparse, and very little is known about the training that is done for assignments in the Asia-Pacific region.

With the rapid rate of economic growth and opening up of new markets in the Asia Pacific region, a great deal of attention is being focused on the management and HRD programs of large successful companies with cross-border operations in this area. In addition, the regionalization thrust of the Singapore government has created substantial awareness among its business organizations of the need to venture overseas. This is especially important as there appears to be a shortage of key management personnel for cross-border assignments within Asia. The growth of the newly emerging economies of China, India, Vietnam and Indonesia, has created excess demand for such professionals. The issues of international HRD are also receiving increasing attention among the "emerging multinationals" of this region. But, very little is known about international HRD practices in this region, a process model and more empirical data are required (Osman-Gani, 1995; Osman-Gani, Tan & Toh, 1998). The purpose of this paper is to present the findings of an empirical study on the relative importance of

training on several key factors that are crucial to companies for their managers to succeed in overseas assignments in the Asia Pacific region. In addition to identifying the profiles of international managers, the study also attempts to identify the types, contents, effective delivery methods and duration of such training programs.

Research Methodology

This is a descriptive exploratory study conducted on a selected group of managers from companies identified with the help of a leading Singapore government agency on the basis of their overseas business operations. A survey was conducted to collect information from the CEOs/Senior Managers of 288 selected companies representing domestic companies as well as MNEs from various business sectors. A structured questionnaire was developed for the purpose of the study using the conceptual framework and theories of international business and HRD.

The draft questionnaire was pilot tested on a randomly selected group of forty managers before its actual administration. Tests for reliability and validity were conducted using test-retest methods and a panel of experts consisting of university faculty members and senior officials of the Singapore government agency. The questionnaire was administered using local mailing and facsimile communication system. A total of 203 companies responded to the survey providing an overall response rate of 70.49%. Of all the responses, 139 questionnaires could be used effectively for data analysis. Frequency analyses, cross-tabulations and relevant summary statistics were used in analyzing the data for this descriptive study.

Findings

Profile of Expatriate Managers. In selecting the expatriate managers, almost half (49.61%) of the companies indicated that gender did not matter, with the remainder indicating a preference for males. About 82% of the companies employed selection criteria that is a combination of experience, education, age, gender, technical knowledge, salary/benefits and language proficiency. Few (15.39%) utilized a sole criterion based on a trait or skill: experience, education, or technical knowledge. The selection criteria would be tempered by the functions the managers are expected to perform overseas, for example, a manager being assigned as a general manager would be expected to possess certain skills and competence. The functions listed by the companies are shown in Table 1.

INSERT TABLE 1

As to the duration of overseas assignment, 61.02% of the companies expect their managers to stay up to two years in their overseas assignments and the mean duration of overseas assignments was 2.16 years.

Frequency, Duration and Providers of Training Programs. The international training programs were mostly (62.2%) conducted on an ad-hoc basis. Among the rest of the companies (37.8% of the sample) providing such training, more than half of this group (25.53% of the sample) offer one to two international training programs a year.

The average duration of the training programs provided by the companies was varied; a majority (54.35%) had programs of an average duration of one to four weeks per program in a year. However, in response to a question on what should be the reasonable duration of training programs for some areas of management (referred to subsequently in this paper as the

list of functional management areas) - general management; human resource; socio-cultural; accounting, finance and tax; production and technology; marketing; legal and environmental issues - the preferred duration of training varied widely with mean hours of 17.05 to 50.92 hours (ranging from 2 to 1000 man-hours per person).

The training programs were generally conducted by external consulting organizations (38.18%), and by university/academic institutions (9.09%), with others providing for the training through in-house facilitators (which in the case of MNEs, conducted at the headquarters in their home countries).

Types of Training Provided. It was found that a majority of the companies (53.72%) were providing some form of training for overseas assignment; 46.23% did not provide any training for their expatriate professionals. Most of the companies provide some orientation training (38%), and the others provide language (21%) and cross cultural training (17%).

The company managers were also asked to rate the relative importance of each of the three types of training (pre-departure, post-arrival and repatriation training) to the success of overseas assignment as prescribed by the literature. They were asked to rate the importance on a four-point scale with 1=least important and 4=most important. The respondents attributed greater importance to pre-departure training (mean=3.34) and rated repatriation training as being the least important (mean=2.26).

Specific Training Needs. In ascertaining the training needs of the participating companies, the questionnaire included a list of seven functional management areas (identified by prior studies) to determine their relative importance. The companies rated General Management as the most

important area, Socio-cultural Issues was ranked fifth and the ranking of the rest of the functional management areas is depicted in Table 2.

INSERT TABLE 2

Each of the functional management areas were expanded upon with a series of specific topics or content areas the companies rated their importance on a four point scale (1=least important to 4=most important). The findings are extremely relevant as they would provide guidance to the HRD professionals in their design of international training programs. Further, they would be of use to other companies, who may wish to send employees overseas and wish to prepare training programs, as the responses are from companies, a majority of which have extensive experience with overseas assignment. Instead of presenting all the findings on the specific topics for each functional area only the detailed results for top two preferred areas (General Management, and Human Resource and Labour) and the other two areas that were ranked as less important (Social-cultural issues and marketing) are presented. Socio-cultural issues and marketing are ranked fifth and seventh in importance in the list of seven management areas. Accounting, finance and tax is ranked sixth but its low ranking is not surprising as most companies outsource these functions to professionals. For the accounting and legal matters, there are international accounting and legal firms that are located in the countries. Further, the countries of the region are at less sophisticated stages in the development of accounting and legal requirements. As such, the companies would have higher requirements internally than those required in the host countries. The rating of the various aspects of General Management and Human Resource and Labor are shown in Tables 3 and 4; and the rating of the various aspects of Socio-cultural issues and Marketing are shown in Tables 5 and 6.

INSERT TABLE 3

INSERT TABLE 4

It can be seen from Table 3 that in the area of General Management Issues, two aspects rated as important are coping with business philosophies or practices, and familiarity with economic systems and industry structure. In the area of Human Resource and Labor Issues, almost all the aspects were rated as important (See Table 4). Of the Socio-cultural issues (See Table 5), knowledge of business ethics or manners and customs, knowledge of language, and coping with family adjustment issues were rated as more important than others. In the Marketing area (See Table 6), none of the issues were rated more important considering the mean scores.

INSERT TABLE 5

INSERT TABLE 6

Effective Methods of Training Delivery. There seems to be a significant need for developing effective training programmes in these areas with specific focus on the identified topics. In identifying the effective methods of training delivery it was found that lecture or classroom training is still the most preferred method of delivery for all the functional management areas. Other preferred methods of training delivery were: workshop/symposia for General Management Issues, Human Resource and Labor, Marketing and Accounting, Finance and Tax; field trips or site visits for Socio-cultural issues and Production and Technology; seminar/conference for Legal and Environmental Issues.

It would appear from Table 7 that the preferred method of training delivery for the functional management areas that are less technical in nature, is the lecture/classroom teaching. This preference can be seen in the areas of General Management, Accounting, Finance and Tax, and Legal and Environment. The exception appears to be only in the area of Production and Technology where workshops/symposia was the most preferred method, which may be explained by the need for interactive discussions on new technology or designs. In areas that involve less technical content such as Socio-cultural and Human Resource and Labor the lecture/classroom method of training delivery was closely followed by others such as field trips, seminars and case study analysis. The managers' preference for the classroom setting of the training program may be due to the fact that it provides better opportunities for discussion and interaction with other managers, who might have valuable lessons from their past overseas assignments.

INSERT TABLE 7

MNEs versus Local Companies. The authors conducted comparative analyses of the managers' responses from the MNEs (foreign companies based in Singapore) and the local companies to ascertain differences, if any, in their training programs and HRD strategies. It was found that there was no significant difference in the rating of the importance of pre-departure, post-arrival and repatriation training. The MNEs and local companies both rated repatriation training as less important than pre-departure and post-arrival training. More managers from local companies (42.9%), rated repatriation training as important than the MNEs (34.8%). A comparison of the companies' assessment of the importance of various functional areas revealed that the MNE managers attached higher importance to Socio-cultural

Issues. About 43% of the MNE managers ranked it among the top three most important areas whilst only 29.4 % of the local company managers ranked it among the top three. When the various aspects of the functional areas were examined, it was found that the managers from local companies did not rate the aspects very differently from the MNEs. However, in some of the functional areas a larger proportion of the local company managers rated a few aspects as more important than the MNEs. For example, in the area of Production and Technology Issues, 89.2% of the managers from local companies rated dealing with local suppliers and purchasing requirements as important compared to 75.6 % of the MNEs; 91.9 % of the local company managers rated general knowledge of logistic systems as important compared to 73.4 % of the MNEs. In Marketing, 72.2% of the managers from local companies attached importance to dealing with price control policies and cartel situations compared to 54.5% of the MNEs. Almost 92% of the local company managers rated knowledge of the general legal framework and company laws of the host country (in the area of Legal and Environmental Factors) as important compared to 79% of the MNEs.

Discussion and Implications

Since most of the responding managers had experience of overseas business operations and were able to provide effective judgments on the importance of various training and development needs, the findings will be relevant and useful for the formulation of international HRD strategies for expatriate managers in the Asia-Pacific Region. The finding that the expected profile of the prospective expatriate manager is only marginally inclined towards males with the rest being neutral about either gender is interesting. In a society labeled as Confucianist (Bond & Hofstede, 1989), a preference for males would have been expected as an overwhelming response. Furthermore, it would appear to differ from the experience in MNEs where the preference is for male expatriates despite the rapid increase in the number of female managers, women have made little headway in getting foreign assignments (Taoka and

Beeman, 1991). Many women were turned down during the selection process for overseas assignments (Solomon, 1989, Adler, 1997). One reason generally given is the difficulty of acceptance of women expatriate managers by host country as a result of sex discrimination or gender bias (Izaeli, Bania and Zeira, 1980). The finding that most of the companies provided training on an ad hoc basis is no surprise as the timing of overseas operations and the deployment of employees for overseas assignments, often make it convenient to design and deliver training on the basis of needs assessment.

It would appear from the findings of the study that most of the companies are using the expatriate managers for the three main reasons, namely, technical competence, management development and control (Daniels and Radebaugh, 1998). However, the training content (Tables 3 to 6 above) and the importance attached to pre-departure and post arrival training suggest that the key roles intended for the overseas assignees are technical competence and control.

The lower importance attached to repatriation training by both local companies as well as the MNEs operating from out of Singapore is not surprising. This lower importance attached to repatriation may be indicative of a prevalent attitude among the companies, deeming the employees as important for the tasks assigned - specific overseas operations - and not considering their long-term careers. In human resource development terms, this, if it is the case, is short-sighted as the training and development of human resources are crucial to companies and the contributions of the managers have potential beyond the overseas assignment. An alternative explanation is that the experience of the companies with repatriation has been favorable without any high turnover of employees upon their return. However, it is also plausible that, since the companies are likely to be deploying Singapore nationals in the region,

there is less of a difficulty in re-adjusting to the Singapore environment as there are cultural similarities between Singapore and the countries of the region. Be that as it may, this attitude towards repatriation is no different from that in the rest of the world where it has generally been the classic stepchild in international human resource management (Solomon, 1995, Adler, 1997). A larger percentage of the local companies did rate repatriation training as important compared to the MNEs. The difference in the rating by the MNEs and the local companies could possibly be explained by the longer experience and tradition for overseas assignment among MNEs as compared to the local companies.

In their rating of the various aspects of the functional management areas, the choices made by the companies are consistent with the role the managers are expected to play in controlling operations in the newly opened and transitional economies in the Asia-Pacific. In the area of general management, coping with different business philosophies or practices and familiarity with economic system and industry structure are considered more important. Of the human resource and labor issues, the four most highly rated aspects are also consistent with the need to train the team that will run operations and at the same time consider the recruitment of host country staff (and the aspect of disciplinary matters can be of specific importance especially where corruption is rife or where countries are emerging from centrally planned economies, e.g. China, where supervisors may find it difficult to discipline employees used to lower productive work methods).

It does appear contrary to expectations that marketing was considered as less important when compared with the other areas. Of the specific aspects of marketing (See Table 6), only the aspect of dealing with tariff and non-tariff barriers was rated being relatively important. Although it would be plausible to conjecture that since a majority of companies are in

manufacturing, marketing is less important as the companies may be establishing overseas operations to capitalize on cheaper labor and other resources, it is only possible to conclude that training in marketing skills may not be as important as other areas for overseas assignments at this stage. Perhaps the market conditions are such that no specialized marketing skills are required to sell the products and services, and that the companies are now enjoying conditions of a "sellers" market in the region.

Two observations are necessary about the relatively low ranking of socio-cultural issues. This area was ranked fifth among the seven functional areas, and amongst the list of specific content areas, coping with family adjustment was only rated the third most important. This low assessment of the issue is consistent with the finding in this study that only 6.72% of the training programs were on family adjustment. It would appear that a majority of the companies do not yet realize the importance of the family, which has been identified as a key reason for failure of overseas assignment (Black and Gregerson, 1991). Secondly, the companies appear to be less concerned about equipping the expatriates for the impact of unfamiliar culture, and more concerned about the ability to adjust to a different business environment. Yet the manager's ability to adapt to a different social, physical and cultural environment was cited as the second important reason for expatriate failure after spouse and family (Tung, 1987).

On the comparative analyses, it may be noted that there were very few differences in the responses of managers of MNEs and the local companies, except for those that were highlighted earlier. The authors had expected that owing to the recent involvement of the local companies in overseas ventures, there would be disparities in the responses. However, this similarity in responses may be explained by the demographic characteristics of the respondents

- 78.4% of the respondent companies have overseas operations (most of them are emerging MNEs); 42.57% of the respondent companies have established overseas business operations for five or more years; although 21.6% of the respondent companies did not have overseas operations, but 65.52% of these companies have indicated high intention to venture overseas soon.

Conclusions

Results from this study provide first hand knowledge about training and development needs of managers in the Asia Pacific region on various functional management areas for their success in overseas business. This knowledge would help HRD professionals in formulating international HRD strategies in terms of planning, designing and delivering effective HRD/ training programs for managers to be sent on overseas assignments. This study has also succeeded in providing insights of the current HRD strategies and practices of the companies operating out of Singapore for their expatriates in the Asia-Pacific.

It would appear that the companies are adapting HRD strategies that are determined by a number of factors: the intended role to be performed by the employee, the host country conditions, the existing experience, knowledge and skills of the selected employee, and the knowledge and experience of the companies themselves in expatriation. The training programs that are ultimately designed for overseas assignments are thus an outcome of the importance attached to these factors and the perceptions among managers within the companies. A company, for instance deploying expatriates for the first time, without experience of expatriation, and having a priority on the success of the overseas operations would attach greater importance on the intended role of the selected employee and, after considering the existing skills of the selected employee, place the priority of its training on technical skills and knowledge to equip the employee for the intended role in the host country. Another company for whom the individual, his family, and the host country conditions are deemed important might provide cross-cultural training and site visits. From the managers' responses to the question of the relative importance of different types of training, it is fairly clear that the companies' experience of expatriation are an important determinant at present, as the lack of experience with returning expatriates may be the reason for less emphasis on repatriation

training and for training in socio-cultural issues and family adjustment. A diagrammatic presentation of a conceptual framework incorporating these factors is shown in Figure 1.

INSERT FIGURE 1

Conceptual Framework

The focus of this study has been on HRD/training for overseas assignment in the Asia-Pacific. There are a number of factors that make the successful acclimatization of expatriates to their host countries - training is but one. There has been suggestions that the spouse should be included in the orientation training programs (Black and Gregerson, 1991). Another crucial factor is the individual employee. In this respect, the selection criteria may include psychological testing to assess the adaptability of the employee; this would screen out the non-adjusters.

However, successful acclimatization of employees is of only immediate concern to the company. The success of any global company requires not just successful acclimatization but also successful expatriation, which is defined as the completion of the overseas assignment, repatriation and continued employment of the overseas managers in the organization (Osman-Gani, 2000). Successful expatriation of managers is essential to the international HRD process, which is required for the continued success of companies operating in the global arena. The training programs provided by companies for overseas assignment is one component of successful expatriation. Apart from training, the HRD practices and policies of the companies in general would have an effect, if, for example, there is an understanding among the employees

and the management that overseas assignment is a likely essential aspect of their career development. The organizational culture of the company would have an effect on expatriation, too. The individual manager would again feature as a factor but the scope extends beyond the individual's ability to adapt to an overseas assignment and encompasses the psychological make-up, objectives, skills and attributes. This factor could be described as the "black box" of the individual. Further research would be necessary to examine the workings of a model that incorporates these factors: the individual, the organization's existing HRD practices, training for the overseas assignment of the expatriate and spouse. Based on the findings of this study and the review of the literature, a conceptual model is proposed in the following form:

$$\mathbf{S = f \ (T, E, I, F)} \ ....(1)$$

Where S = Successful Expatriation, which is defined to include successful assignment aboard, and subsequent repatriation and continued employment in the company.

*T = Training for Overseas Assignments

 E = Existing HRD practices and policies of the company, which is defined to include the career development policies and present organizational culture of the company.

 I = the Individual manager who has the required psycho-social make-up, ability to adapt to different cultures, interpersonal skills and other attributes.

 F = the Manager's Family

$$\mathbf{*T = f \ (PD, PA, RT)} \ ....(2)$$

Where

PD = Pre-departure training

PA = Post-arrival training

RT = Repatriation training

Underlying the framework and the conceptual model above is the theory of organisational learning. Most of the theoretical perspectives on international HRD has focused on the level of the individual overseas manager. Hence, the focus on the training enables him/her to perform well and adjust to the overseas environments. One aspect of this approach is centered on intercultural training with the emphasis on the design of relevant training that enables the immersion of managers in new cultural milieu (Landis and Brislin, 1983). Whilst that has its place, the authors would like to suggest that there is scope for examining the organization as the unit of analysis and that in this regard, the theory of organizational learning is applicable and can provide another fresh perspective on international HRD. Also the learning organizations have been found to be in the forefront of recent management literature and it is more usually associated with organizational change and innovation rather than international HRD. Be that as it may, there is relevance to the field of international HRD. Most international HRD professionals today are skeptical about the effectiveness of a standardized program of training and development policies, and practices applicable across all countries. It is not as if any company, for instance, wishing to send expatriate managers can buy a programme that once for all equip all their staff across all the different countries. More likely than not, the company would need to experiment with the various elements of its policies and its practices. As companies are increasingly considering expanding to overseas markets especially to the markets that are new where the training and development of human resources for the new operations are matters, which it requires to learn immediately. After all, organizational learning refers to processes that learn to improvements in performance (Leavitt and March, 1988). There is a need for learning loops to be introduced into its system, failing which, improvement to their overseas operations may be thwarted by unsuccessful expatriation of managers and therefore double-loop learning seems to be appropriate means in this respect

(Argyris, 1982; Argyris and Schon, 1974, 1978). The framework and the model that the authors have suggested in this paper are but elements that any organization seeking to deploy managers overseas needs to introduce into its learning processes. Without considering the factors indicated in the framework and the model, the companies may find that there will be some time yet before there is successful expatriation of overseas managers, especially in the Asia-Pacific region.

The authors intend to extend the scope of this study further into other Asian countries in order to examine the elements of the proposed models through the replication of this type of international HRD study. This might lead to the development of a general framework of international HRD strategy for the Asia Pacific region in future. International HRD is an emerging field where future research on various organizational issues is in high demand. As McLean (1991) mentioned, "the field is ripe, and ready to harvest." Attempts should be made in developing comprehensive theoretical models of international HRD by integrating knowledge from relevant disciplines as well as by synthesizing the empirical findings from HRD studies conducted (or to be conducted) at different national/cultural settings of the world.

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Table 1.   Functions to be Performed by Prospective Employees Sent Overseas

Functions	Number of Companies	Percentage of Companies
General Management	79	56.83
Production/Technical	96	69.06
Sales/Marketing	58	41.73
Financial/Accounting	43	30.94

(Some managers responded in more than one functional management areas)

Table 2.   Ranking of The Functional Management Areas in Terms of Training Needs Importance

Functional Management Areas	Rank	Percentage of Companies
General Management	1	35.2
Human Resource and Labour	2	23.0
Legal and Environmental	3	22.2
Production and Technology	4	16.0
Socio-cultural	5	16.0
Accounting, Finance and Tax	6	16.7
Marketing	7	20.3

Table 3.   Training Needs Importance: General Management Issues

General Management Issues (Arranged in order of importance)	Mean*	Standard Deviation	Percentage of Companies
Coping with different business philosophies/ practices	3.32	0.70	95.68%
Familiarity with economic system & industry structure	3.21	0.74	96.4%
Familiarity with political system	2.79	0.75	95.68%
Managing geographically dispersed operations	2.77	0.91	92.08%

(* 4 = Most Important and 1 = Least Important)

Table 4.   Training Needs Importance: Human Resource and Labor Issues

Human Resource and Labour Issues (Arranged in order of importance)	Mean*	Standard Deviation	Percentage of Companies
Dealing with compensation/remuneration issues	3.15	0.75	94.24
Multicultural team building process	3.06	0.68	93.52
Recruitment and selection procedures	3.05	0.83	94.96
Dealing with disciplinary matters	3.05	0.69	94.96
Reward and recognition system	3.02	0.64	94.24
Employee training & development process overseas	2.99	0.65	94.96
Dealing with unions	2.97	0.81	93.52

(* 4 = Most Important and 1 = Least Important)

Table 5.   Training Needs Importance: Socio-cultural Issues

| Socio-cultural Issues (Arranged in order of importance)	Mean*	Standard Deviation	Percentage of Companies
Knowledge of business ethics/manners & customs	3.45	0.63	95.68
Knowledge of language	3.14	0.68	95.68
Coping with family adjustment issues	3.09	0.83	93.52
Dealing with religious and sensitive ethnic issues	2.95	0.80	94.96
Knowledge of non-verbal communication (body language)	2.66	0.75	95.68
Knowledge of education system	2.37	0.71	94.24

(* 4 = Most Important and 1 = Least Important)

Table 6.   Training Needs Importance: Marketing

Marketing Issues (Arranged in order of importance)	Mean*	Standard Deviation	Percentage of Companies
Dealing with tariff and non-tariff barriers	2.92	0.80	90.64
Handling product modification issues for foreign acceptability	2.85	0.76	89.2
Knowledge of marketing research practice & information sources	2.79	0.76	92.08
Dealing with price control policies & cartel situations	2.78	0.84	89.2
Dealing with foreign trade mark & Patent regulations	2.74	0.81	89.92
Dealing with foreign media & advertising regulations	2.47	0.83	91.36

(* 4 = Most Important and 1 = Least Important)

Table 7. Effective Training Delivery Methods for Each Functional Management Area

Functional Management Areas	Top Three Training Methods	Percentage of Companies
General Management	(1) Lecture/Classroom training	32.4
	(2) Workshops/Symposia	23.0
	(3) Seminar/Conference	19.4
Socio-cultural	(1) Lecture/Classroom training	25.9
	(2) Field trips/site visits	23.7
	(3) Seminar/Conference	17.3
Human Resource and Labour	(1) Lecture/Classroom training	28.8
	(2) Workshops/Symposia	25.9
	(3) Case Study/Analysis	23.7
Accounting, Finance and Tax	(1) Lecture/Classroom training	45.3
	(2) Workshops/Symposia Seminar/Conference	20.9
	(3) Case Study/Analysis	12.9
Production and Technology	(1) Workshops/Symposia	31.7
	(2) Field trips/Site visits	28.8
	(3) Lecture/Classroom training	19.4
Marketing	(1) Seminar/Conference	28.8
	(2) Workshops/Symposia	22.3
	(3) Field trips/Site visits	21.6
Legal and Environmental	(1) Lecture/Classroom training	37.4
	(2) Seminar/Conference	26.6
	(3) Case Study/Analysis Workshops/Symposia	13.7
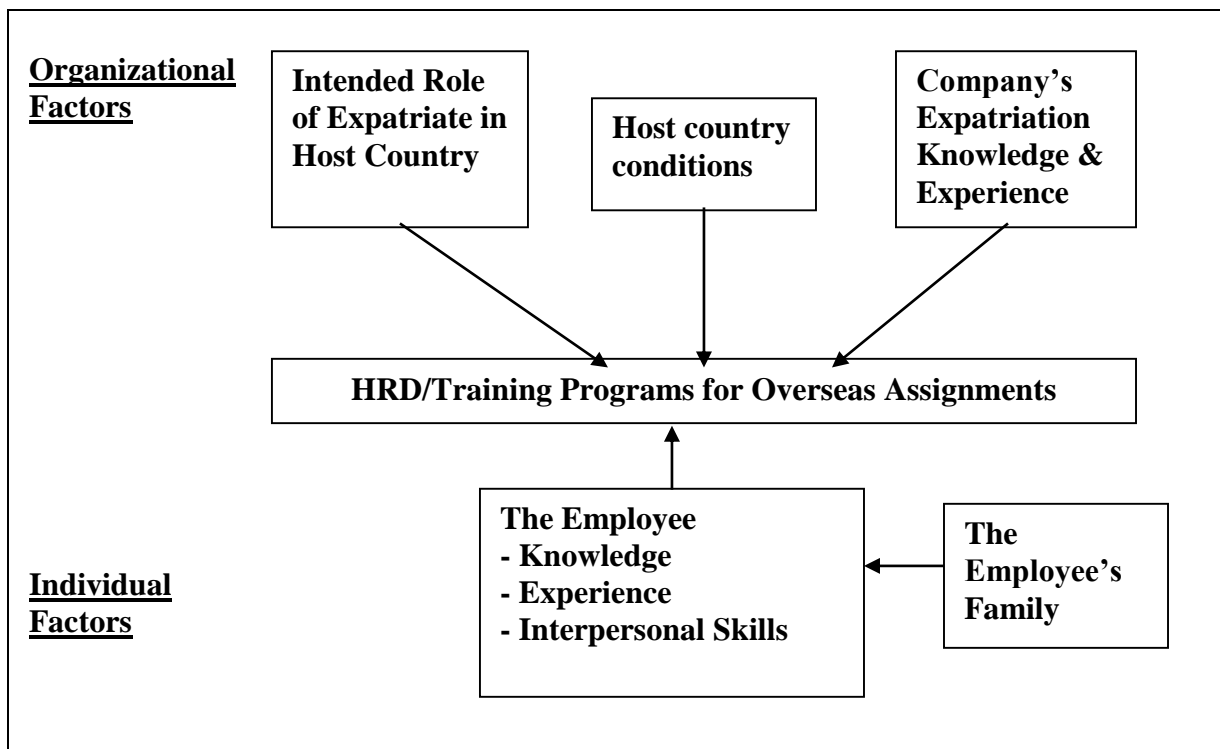
Figure 1. Determinants of HRD/Training Programs Provided by Companies for Overseas Assignments in The Asia-Pacific