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## **A study of the adjustment problems experienced by workers undertaking short term international relocation**

Carla Fedora Sharp-Paul  
*Edith Cowan University*

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**Edith Cowan University**

**A study of the adjustment problems experienced by workers  
undertaking  
short term international relocation.**

**By**

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**Faculty of Communications, Health and Science.**

**October, 2000**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study focused on the adjustment problems created by the effects of living and working in a culturally unfamiliar environment. Sixty-five internationally relocated workers, both male and female aged between 30 and 61 years, from different countries, who were on short-term relocation to Singapore, were asked to complete a survey. This survey questionnaire consisted of 56 questions, about the adjustment problems that they faced while on relocation and the availability or non-availability of pre-departure training.

The conceptual framework for this study was developed by referring to difficulties uncovered in the literature review on the topic of international relocation. Questionnaire items were adapted from previously published research instruments. Responses were analysed by using descriptive statistics, one way ANOVAs and Independent sample t-tests. The results of this study highlight the problems associated with international relocation from the workers' perspective and suggests that employers, employees and their families should be made aware of these problems prior to working abroad.

This study, specifically found that workers, whether on relocation with or without their families experienced problems which affected their adjustment to their new environment. Overall, the sample tended to be poorly adjusted in their new environment. Nonetheless, about half of the participants appeared to be satisfied with the level of assistance they were given before departure even though the actual assistance was minimal.

These findings can create a new awareness for multinational organisations and initiate a better understanding of the benefits that pre departure training can have in averting or avoiding potential and costly problems at work.

Recommendations from this study are that appropriate training based on a modified motor skills model would prepare and furnish workers and their families with techniques which will help them to adjust readily to other cultures and thus minimise the mental and physiological effects of “culture shock.” This will provide significant benefits to internationally relocated workers and their families in the areas of health, safety and work productivity as well as contributing to their happiness and the maintenance of stable family relationships.

## THE CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- (i) incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;
- (ii) contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or
- (iii) contain any defamatory material.

CARLA FEDORA SHARP-PAUL

\_\_\_\_\_  
October 2000 .

Date

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

“Vérité au deçà des Pyrénées, erreur au delà”.

(“There are truths on this side of the Pyrenees which are falsehoods on the other”)

*Blaise Pascal, French theologian and scientist (1623–62)*

(cited in and translated by Hostede [1980])

### 1.1 The Background.

The 20th century has seen the development of a global economy and international interdependence has replaced the previous 300 years of colonialism by a handful of (primarily Western) countries. With this increasing tendency towards globalisation and the use of expatriate workers to implement and maintain the worldwide operations of multinational companies, a need has arisen to identify, understand and rectify problems which confront those individuals on international secondment. International relocation was one of the “hottest” issues of the 1990s, as employers expanded their markets and competition in the global marketplace intensified (Leonard, 1994). There are more than 20 million expatriates working within the global workplace, with more than 500 000 coming from Australians alone (P.Leggat, personal communication, December 26, 2000).

The problem under investigation is that of cultural adjustment and the difficulties that this poses for foreign workers seconded to a workplace in an unfamiliar country. The focus of the study was twofold; firstly, to identify, as specifically as possible, the adjustment problem experienced by expatriates living and working in a foreign country and, secondly, to recommend solutions to reduce or eliminate these problems.

Adam Smith, the 18th-century Scottish political economist and philosopher, said that labour was immobile; clearly this judgment is not accurate today (Caligiuri, Hyland & Joshi, 1998). Globalisation of the workplace is a phenomenon of the second half of the 20th century. It has its roots in the expansion of the multinational companies eager to tap into global marketplaces to increase their revenue and their share of the world market. This has major implications for the expatriate workforce which will inevitably have to expand to ensure that the revenue generated abroad increases.

It is clear, therefore, that international companies are becoming steadily more dependent on their expatriate workforces. This new breed of workers is peripatetic in nature and is responsible for cultivating and maintaining new business enterprises away from their companies' home bases. The traditional crusty career expatriates of the colonial and immediate post-colonial eras can still be found, but much more rarely. An increasing proportion of expatriates have university degrees and many hold Master of Business Administration degrees (MBAs) (Brewster, 1997).

The internationalisation of a company often comes about in a series of steps or stages, which could occur as follows:

- Stage 1: The company finds that it is increasing the amount of its product for export.
- Stage 2: It concludes that it should try to forge direct links with its most lucrative markets and decides to set up satellite offices in those locations.
- Stage 3: In the initial period of establishment, the satellite office is still highly dependent on the parent company, using imported commercial and technical talent for the most part.



- Stage 4: As the satellite office/company expands, perhaps alone or in joint venture with a local company, the total (or almost total) responsibility for the satellite business is transferred to the local population.

On completing stage four expatriates have now fulfilled their purpose and can return to their countries of origin. The option of utilising local talent is always attractive, simply because it is cheaper and also makes political sense.

Clearly, cultural adjustment is an essential element to successfully working and living abroad. True cultural adjustment and effective cross-cultural interaction are however more elusive than might be imagined (Storti, 1990). A speedy adjustment to a foreign culture is a valuable and desirable goal and will make a vital contribution to a successful, productive and happy stay abroad.

Within the context of this study, cultural adjustment includes the behaviour of the expatriate individual. Fear and anxiety feed on ignorance and both will result in maladaptation. With globalisation becoming a fact of life, managers are increasingly interacting in a multicultural environment (Lewis, 1996). Would-be expatriates must be given the advantage of pre-departure training programmes to enable them to work effectively in this type of environment.

Developing a tool which can teach people not only how to experience but also how to accept behaviour within culturally diverse societies will go a long way to facilitate successful adjustment. The motor skills model developed by Argyle & Kendon (1967), an adaptation of which is used in this study, is a tool which can be used to facilitate appropriate behaviour and to increase tolerance in unfamiliar circumstances. Therefore behaviour modification can be used not only to identify the problems of adjustment, but also to provide relief by using social skills training in cross-cultural environments

(Furnham & Bochner, 1990). This would be especially beneficial to workers on international secondment.

This study aims to explore the adjustment experiences of individual expatriate workers who are employed in Singapore. It is important to view expatriate individuals from a holistic standpoint; this would encompass their social, psychological and physical well-being in both a work and a social setting. Expatriate workers cannot be seen in total isolation; it is also important to look at how their domestic situations succeed in their new environment. If an expatriate has a family, it is important to remember that it only takes one member of the family to be unhappy to negatively affect the outcome of the relocation for the worker and the rest of the family unit (Caligiuri, Hyland & Joshi, 1998).

An expatriate worker may have to contend with family problems, but he or she also has to settle into a new job position in an organisation that is not only in a foreign country but also has its own organisational micro culture. How are things done? Who does them? What are the policies and procedures? How does one ask for things and how does one behave? These questions are all relevant for anyone settling into a new position, but this stressful situation is compounded when the job is in an unfamiliar country. Cultural integration and social acclimatisation take time and effort. In effect, this can mean that more time is spent at the office and less at home (Caligiuri, Hyland & Joshi, 1998).

The failure of an international relocation can have serious repercussions for both employee and employer. Employees can suffer mental and physical health problems that may not only affect their jobs but also bear upon their positions within the organisation that employs them. Self-esteem and family relationships are also placed at risk.

Employers faced with an unsuccessful overseas secondment may incur a substantial relocation bill and the added expense of trying to find a replacement for the vacated

position. Premature returns of expatriates, even at a modest rate of 7 per cent, can result in a loss of millions of dollars for the company (Garonzik, 1993). Each unsuccessful expatriate posting can cost a company three or more times the domestic salary of the individual (Frazee, 1997).

Several important issues have been raised in the area of international relocation, mainly as a result of research done on American expatriates. These include the inability to adapt, the absences of cross-cultural skills and the lack of pre-departure training (Brown, 1982; Lovingood, 1995). Eighty per cent of expatriate families were found to return to the United States before their contract expired (Rao, 1995). It is clear from previous research that the problem is real and far-reaching.

## **1.2 The purpose of the study.**

The purpose of this study was to identify factors affecting adjustment to relocation amongst expatriate workers on international relocation in Singapore. The beneficiaries of this new found awareness would also include expatriate families and the employers. To the uninitiated it can appear that travel to a far off land and relocation to a new country would be an exhilarating prospect. On the surface it may be, but this image barely scratches the surface of the experience. It is expected that the findings of this study will provide information to the managers of multinational organizations to assist them in making decisions regarding ways in which to help expatriates adjust to working and living in a foreign country. The survey has been designed so that participants can answer the questions while actually experiencing life on international relocation. This means that they can relay their feelings as they happen and not with hindsight. The focus on adjustment is linked to working in a different cultural environment and the problems that can result from cultural conflicts and how workers can be prepared or assisted in resolving these conflicts

### **1.3 Research questions.**

This study aimed to answer the following six questions:

1. What are the socio demographic characteristics of the sample?
2. How well adjusted to international relocation is the study sample?
3. What factors affect the adjustment of employees on international relocation?
4. To what extent do demographic factors affect adjustment to international relocation?
5. What types of relocation assistance were given to respondents prior to international relocation?
6. What is the relationship between relocation assistance and adjustment to relocation?

### **1.4 The significance of the study.**

Singapore is one of the “top ten” international relocation “hot spots” (Laabs, 1993).

With the increasing rate of development of previously untapped natural resources in the Asia–Pacific region over the past few decades, Singapore has developed a unique position both geographically and economically. Its geographical location combined with its history of colonisation by Britain and consequent mercantile and industrial growth within the Commonwealth have ensured that Western (predominantly English-speaking) organizations do not have a language barrier to overcome.

Difficulty in cultural adaptation is one of the leading causes of failed overseas assignments (Frazee, 1998). By addressing the research questions this study set out to identify the adjustment problems pertaining to international workers. The knowledge gained will identify if there is a need for appropriate cross-cultural educational training programmes to assist workers prior to their international relocation. Unfortunately such programmes are seldom seen as a priority and the incidence of participation by

employees is poor (Frazee, 1997). This would indicate that there is a clear need to identify and understand the problems associated with cultural adjustment and to put in place a model on which an appropriate educational programme can be developed to facilitate adjustment for expatriates. Most companies could make the most dramatic improvement in their international mobility programmes by helping managers to more clearly define the objectives of the assignment and select the most appropriate candidate for these assignments (Barton & Bishko, 1998).

### **1.5 Definition of terms.**

- *International relocation*: Working and living in a country which is not the country of the worker's primary residence.
- *Workers/employees*: Individuals from any technical, professional or academic background, male or female who are engaged in full-time employment, travelling with or without a partner or family members,
- *Relocation assistance*: Any educational or informational programme offered to an individual expatriate before his/her departure to a foreign country to take up an employment opportunity.
- *Unaccompanied Status*: Workers who are either married or single but who are on secondment without their wives and family.
- *Married status*: Workers who are on secondment accompanied by a partner.
- *Short term relocation*: A period of time that is more than one month but less than three years.
- *Culture*: For the purpose of the study, culture is seen as a dynamic concept. It is deep-rooted and difficult to change (Fukukuawa, 1997). Culture can be defined as

shared values, beliefs and practices which have been handed down to specific groups of people through generations by tradition.

- '*Culture shock*': This is a natural process that can have a reactionary effect on all parts of the body. It may occur when an individual loses all the familiar signs, symbols and interactions of social intercourse. Culture shock is a four-stage process (Oberg, 1960):

1. The 'honeymoon period'
2. The crisis
3. The recovery
4. The adjustment.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

We eat pork and beef  
With cow-horn-handled knives.  
They who gobble Their rice off a leaf,  
Are horrified out of Their lives;  
  
And They who live up a tree,  
And feast on grubs and clay,  
(Isn't it scandalous?) look upon We  
As a simply disgusting They!  
  
All good people agree,  
And all good people say,  
All nice people, like Us, are We  
And everyone else is They:  
But if you cross over the sea,  
Instead of over the way,  
You may end by (think of it!) looking on We As only a sort of They!

*Rudyard Kipling (1865–1932)*

*“We and They”*

The purpose of this section is to provide a review of the literature related to the subject of adjustment problems in internationally relocated workers. The literature revealed that there were consistent concerns about international relocation; cross-cultural skills,

spouse and family adjustments, pre-departure training and repatriation (Rao, 1995). This study has dealt primarily with the problems created by cross-cultural adjustment as they relate to the participants living and working in a foreign country. Previous research and current literature have concentrated on Americans and their experiences working abroad in Europe and Asia. This study fills a gap in this research by concentrating on workers of various nationalities who have been seconded to the specific geographical area of Singapore.

The literature review is divided into two sections: adjustment and culture.

## **2.1 A definition of adjustment**

For the purpose of this study, adjustment is seen in terms of the fit between the person and environment (Mechanic, 1974). This balance has three major components; firstly, the individual's capacity for learning new social skills which would allow him or her to deal with the new environment, secondly, his or her motivation to succeed in a new environment and thirdly, his or her personal characteristics which would create the psychological climate in which the first two factors can function.

### **2.1.1 The psychology of human adjustment**

It is considered necessary to assume that there is some significant, genetically based pre programming in man; that there is something that may be called human ethology. Such pre programming must be taken into account in understanding human behaviour and human institutions, but, because man is a single species, it cannot account for the differences in such behaviour from one community to another.



Such differences are always differential cultural programming, responsive to situation factors.

W. Goldschmidt (1974, p.13).

The adaptations of animals through the ages was principally through their bodily structure, primarily through the process of natural selection as it pertained to their anatomical size, colour, strength, weight and speed. *Homo sapiens* also evolved in their anatomical structure, but the key to our species' development was the way in which our ancestors were able to cope with their surrounding environment by adjusting their behaviour through their learning experiences. From conception to death, social forces affect an individual's adjustment to life (Crow, 1974).

Accordingly, an individual's degree of successful adjustment is closely related to his or her past experiences, environmental influences and personal strengths (Crow, 1974).

Adjustment problems are not a new phenomenon—human beings are constantly adjusting their behaviour according to the standards laid down by the society or the community in which they live, for example, schools, domestic life, work and leisure. Poor work adjustment gives rise to worker inefficiency, discontent, resentment, feelings of frustration or seriously maladjusted behaviour (Crow, 1974).

From childhood, humans learn successful adjustment behaviour from repeating successful solutions in similar circumstances. People repeat and learn the responses that are satisfying or tension-reducing (Shaffer & Shoben, 1959). It can therefore be assumed that adjustment is a dynamic, evolving and unending process (Mechanic, 1974). Social systems can only exist because human behaviour is not random, but is to some extent predictable (Hofstede, 1980). Consequently certain predictions can be made about the

prerequisite characteristics of a successful international secondee. They should be tolerant, patient, highly motivated and politically sensitive, or as Lovingood (1995) puts it, adaptable, flexible, independent and sincere.

Failure to adjust to an international relocation is difficult to quantify. It is thought that 6–10 per cent of expatriates return early (Solomon, 1996). The assignments where the expatriate has the technical skills to complete the job but is unable or unwilling to communicate effectively with the nationals in the host country can have a devastating and costly effect on business. Organisations need to have operating definitions for assignment successes and failures and monitor them accordingly (Solomon, 1996).

Furnham and Bochner (1990) would dispute the use of the concept of adjustment when discussing the experiences of the expatriate. Adjusting a person to a new culture has connotations of cultural chauvinism (Furnham & Bochner, 1990). These authors suggest that expatriates should not be adjusting to a new culture, but rather learning its salient characteristics. This researcher would see this point of view as simply an exercise in academic semantics. It cannot be denied that adjustment is a learning process; it can have negative connotations but on the whole the process is a positive one. It does not involve change for change's sake, but involves adaptation to a changing environment; therefore it is a process of evolution to aid understanding and the use of appropriate behaviour in an alien environment. The overall effect is to enable the expatriate to achieve the skills necessary to function effectively.

The complexity of human behaviour cannot simply be seen through the learning theories of psychology, although they do have their part to play. Individual personalities moulded by past experiences and constant maturation enable individuals to cope with constantly changing situations and circumstances. Adjustment mechanisms are the habits by which people satisfy their needs, reduce their tensions and resolve their conflicts (Shaffer &

Shoben, 1959). Human beings have one thing in common: their ability to learn. The difference lies in what different people see as necessary or appropriate to learn. People are greatly influenced by the cultural context in which learning takes place (Shaffer & Shoben, 1959).

Charles Darwin in his works “The Origin of Species” (1859) and “The Descent of Man” (1871) argues that there is no fundamental difference in the higher mental processes of animals and humans; hence humans are not unique, or at least not as unique as some would claim. Socio biologists have since found that humans and animals adjust differently to their environments. Humans control and manipulate their environment to aid their adaptation, but for other species an inhospitable environment means either death or an evolving over time which changes the species genetically. In humans, personality traits can inhibit change (Mitchell, Dowling, Kabanoff & Larson, 1988); nevertheless, attitudes are patterned according to cultural standards (Crow, 1974). Hence there is still a part for the individual’s personality to play in the adjustment process. As adjustment can be seen as an evolving process, so too can personality.

It is the dynamic nature of personality which makes it so difficult to measure and categorise. The personality of an individual may be defined as his or her persistent tendencies to make certain qualities and kinds of adjustments (Shaffer & Shoben, 1959). Personality can also be defined as an enduring behavioural disposition that persists across time and situations. These traits are developed very early in life and are fixed in late adolescence (Mitchell, Dowling, Kabanoff & Larson, 1988). There are several personality traits that successful expatriates have in common: flexibility, an outgoing personality, optimism and a willingness to adapt to different cultures (Mumma, 1993). There is no dichotomy between adjustment and personality; there is a concrete

connection given that both are internal continuing processes within the individual that determine how they behave (Staats, 1975).

Strategies for coping with adjustment are not created in an instant. They are developed over time and progressively modified. The management of adjusting should contain four separate variables, communication, self esteem, autonomy and motivation (White, 1974).

An individual's perception of environmental factors may cause a problem in adjusting. Indeed these will pose a problem even if they do not in fact exist. The way in which individuals actually interpret these problems affects their behaviour and their self-perception of these behaviours (Kleinke, 1978). A number of studies have shown that it is possible to influence people to modify their behaviour by making them more conscious about how they are acting and thinking (Kleinke, 1978).

Accepting what is appropriate behaviour in one's own culture is sometimes difficult. Therefore, people cannot be expected to like, or approve of, every aspect of another culture (Storti, 1990). This can present a dilemma. One solution to this problem is to be aware that we have all been subjected to different cultural forces which allow us to lead our lives in a socially acceptable way. In adjustment, acceptance of other people's behaviour may, for some of us, come at too high a price if we have to sacrifice our values for the sake of integration. This has been found to be a problem with some American expatriates and was evident in their failure to function satisfactorily on international assignments (Lovingood, 1995). Shaffer and Shoben (1959, p. 309) make an interesting point when they say that "A fundamental thesis of the psychology of adjustment is that behaviour deviations are evoked by frustration and conflicts; the nature and quality of a person's adjustments are therefore in a sense, determined by the kinds of situations that life presents to him."

Brown (1982) makes the point that the solution of adjustment problems is not solely a question of cause and effect. Rather than moving directly from having an adjustment problem to having no adjustment problem, an expatriate will find that adjustment is a complex process which involves learning new skills and attitudes which can equip him or her, over a period of time, to function in another culture.

### **2.1.2 Adjustment to international relocation.**

According to Windham International and the National Foreign Trade Council (1997) the worldwide expatriate population is increasing, sixty-four per cent of their sample (blue chip American companies) expected their expatriate population to grow in 1997.

The 1997 survey also found that 86 per cent of expatriates were males and only 14% females, although there had been a rise of 1 per cent for females since the 1995 survey. The projected expatriate female numbers by the year 2000 is expected to rise to 18 per cent of the total.

Business on a global scale has existed for centuries. But the interesting phenomenon today is the effect that this globalisation has on the workforce and how organisations are preparing to cope with its results. Fifty per cent of company executives can expect to be offered the opportunity to relocate at least once in their careers (Coyle, 1988). Many organisations still view their international business from an ethnocentric almost colonial perspective. This attitude has to move forward to incorporate a focus on global strategies and management approaches from the perspective of people and culture instead of a total concentration on financial and profit aspects. Understanding the influence of national culture on the way organisations function is imperative (Adler, 1986).

The adjustment to living in a foreign country involves the basic necessities of life. Those things which in a more familiar environment would just take place with the

minimum of thought or action. In an unfamiliar setting to obtain these necessities can seem a Herculean task; thus the seeds of frustration and hostility are sown. Hostility grows from the isolation that is felt in one's hopelessness. Disruption to your every day life routine is quite disorientating especially when you become increasingly aware that everyone around is quite indifferent to your predicament. It is not so much a desire to be back at home as a desire to feel at home in the new surroundings (Storti, 1990).

There is a high level of stimulation and activity associated with an international assignment (Coyle & Shortland, 1992). The demands of the employee's career increase as the expatriate often has greater autonomy and a stronger commitment to the job. This increases the role imbalance of family and work.

International relocation involves a number of life-event changes. These can be seen in Table 1 which is adapted from Holmes and Rahe (1967). This scale gives an assessment of the magnitude of various key life events. The scores for each event experienced by an individual are added together and the total gives an indication of how stressful the period in question is, or has been, to the individual taking the test. A score of below 150 points in one year is deemed fairly safe with only a one-in-three chance of contracting serious health problem within two years. Scores above 150 points are considered hazardous to health. The life events marked with an asterisk are those likely to be experienced with international relocation.

Table 1

The social readjustment rating scale

Rank	Life event	Mean value
1	Death of spouse	100
2	Divorce	73
3	Marital separation*	65
4	Jail term	63
5	Death of a close family member	63
6	Personal injury or illness	53
7	Marriage	50
8	Fired at work	47
9	Marital reconciliation	45
10	Retirement	45
11	Change in the health of a family member*	44
12	Pregnancy	40
13	Sex difficulties	39
14	Gain of new family member	39
15	Business readjustment*	39
16	Change in financial state*	38
17	Death of a close friend	37
18	Change to a different line of work*	36
19	Change in the number of arguments with spouse*	35
20	Mortgage over \$100,000	35
21	Foreclosure on loan	30
22	Change of responsibility at work*	29
23	Son or daughter leaving home*	29
24	Trouble with in-laws	29
25	Outstanding personal achievement	28
26	Wife begins or stops work*	26
27	Children begin or end school*	26
28	Change in life conditions*	25

Rank	Life event	Mean value
29	Revisions of personal habits*	25
30	Trouble with boss	23
31	Change in work hours and conditions*	20
32	Change in residence*	20
33	Change in schools*	20
34	Change in recreation*	19
35	Change in church activities*	19
36	Change in social activities*	18
37	Change in sleeping habits*	16
38	Change in the number of family get togethers *	15
39	Change in eating habits*	15
40	Holidays	13
41	Christmas	12
42	Minor violations of the law	11

- Life changes marked with an asterisk are those likely to be experienced with international relocation (Holmes & Rahe, 1967, p. 216).

However, there are many problems with this simple formulation, including the subjectivity of the score, and the inability to prove causal links between life changes illness, and individual differences (Furnham & Bochner, 1990). The personality and past experiences of the worker and the environment are variables that also have to be taken into account. Nevertheless the scale does give an indication of the type and amount of stress placed on the individual in the area of relocation. These changes can lead to psychological and physical symptoms which ultimately may affect the life and work of the individual.

More important than the life-event changes themselves, whether positive or negative, are the actual number of changes which take place for an expatriate over a short period of time: What is the motivation behind the changes? Are the changes performed under



duress? What control does the individual have over the changes? What is the final outcome? (i.e. when worker is repatriated) As we are dealing with the individual's feelings, we come back to the individual's perception about his or her actual situation. The motivation for the move is a key component of a successful relocation.

For its survey of stress and international mobility, the University College London / CBI Employee Relocation Council (1991) devised the mobility events inventory. This is similar to the Holmes–Rahe social readjustment rating scale (1967) but is related purely to employees who travel and work internationally. Table 2, like the Holmes–Rahe model, can suggest when danger to health might occur when the total scores are added up. What is significantly missing from these two models is the individual's own inner ability to use his or her own coping strategies in stressful situations. This aside, both models are useful in quantifying potential stressful events.

Table 2

The mobility events inventory

	Mobility events	Mean value
1	Living or working where hostile or threatening	52.9
2	Geographical separation from spouse, over one month	31.9
3	Geographical separation from children over one month	29.2
4	Major change in responsibility at work	29.0
5	Spouse/partner no longer able to pursue career	28.7
6	Changes in residence ( finding accommodation)	28.6
7	Working in culture where the language is unfamiliar	28.2
8	Change in residence ( moving self and belongings)	28.1
9	Identifying and arranging suitable education	28.0
10	Returning home after a stay abroad	27.7
11	Change in residence ( disposal of house in old area)	27.6
12	Spouse /Partner unable to work	24.8
13	Working in culture where customs are unfamiliar	23.3

	Mobility events	Mean value
14	Working in country where the transport systems are inefficient	23.0
15	Working in country where telecommunications are inefficient	22.8
16	Loss of communication with colleagues/head office	19.6
17	Geographical separation from spouse, 11 days to one month	19.6
18	Geographical separation from children, 11 days to one month	19.1
19	Living and working out of hotels	18.1
20	Major change in sleeping habits	17.7
21	Major change in type/amount of recreation	17.0
22	Living and working when appearance distinguishes you	15.7
23	Major change in eating habits	15.2
24	Working in country where climate is different	15.2
25	Major change in social activities	15.1
26	Major change in the number of family get-togethers	15.0
27	Geographical separation from own culture, over one month	15.0
28	Working in cultures where alcohol is forbidden	14.0
29	International air journey, long-haul	13.3
30	Geographical separation from children, two to ten days	11.9
31	Geographical separation from spouse, two to ten days	11.8
32	Geographical separation from own culture, 11 days to one month	9.5
33	International air journey, short haul	9.4

University College London / CBI Employee Relocation Council (1991).

Brown (1982), in her study of Americans in Rome, identified major problems in adjustment in the areas of finding appropriate housing, learning shopping procedures, lacking language skills and making friends. She found that the respondents in her study reported having had some or all of these problem of adjustment. Ninety per cent of multinational companies fail to establish adequate selection criteria and testing of a candidate suitable for international relocation (Garonzik, 1993). Sixty-four per cent of

expatriates had not undergone formal screening to determine whether they had the job skills for an overseas assignment (Rao, 1995).

The social-bond hypothesis of Henderson , Byrne and Duncan-Jones (1981) states that humans are distinguished from animals by our capacity to make and form social bonds during adulthood. Bowlby (1969) suggests, in his attachment theory, that social bonds are necessary for the maintenance of normal mood. Marris (1980) says that uprooting oneself produces emotional stress by disrupting the meaning of our everyday existence. He sees emotional attachments and commitments to people and places as important markers. It would therefore appear that relocating undermines our innate need to form bonds within our community (Coyle, 1988).

Human beings are inherently social animals. In fact for many the fear of being excluded or becoming an outcast is greater than the fear of death itself (Brislin, Cushner, Craig & Yong, 1986). Through our need to belong we gain an understanding of who we are. The isolation which results from social incompetencies such as insufficient language and social skills to develop and maintain relationships can be characterised by self-absorption, self-deprecation and a lack of responsiveness. By no longer feeling a part of a group, the self has been distorted and disoriented (Brislin, Cushner, Craig & Yong, 1986).

The stress of relocation can be lessened by approaching the change as a challenge (Adaskin, 1987). Menninger (1983) comments that stressors have the common denominator of a sense of loss. A successful expatriate must have a clear sense of his or her own values, goals and capabilities and believe in their importance (Rao, 1995).

The lack of a selection process in the initial stages of looking for a suitable employee for an expatriate position may be seen as a significant factor in the emotional turbulence felt

by the expatriate. Companies do not place a high priority on the cultural awareness of their expatriate employees. If potential expatriate workers have the technical skills to do the job, this is seen as holding more value than their ability to culturally integrate into their new environment. It takes more than technical expertise and fluency in a language to succeed abroad (Lee, 1994). This approach is short sighted and places both the employee and the company in a precarious position. Working in a culturally diverse environment requires cultural sensitivity to the host nation if the assignment is to be a successful and productive one.

Whether in a working or purely social situation, behaviour is based on attitudes and values which are filtered through from cultures and subcultures. If this is understood and the implications addressed, workers of any culture should be able to communicate, tolerate and respect each other's differences. Cultural adaptation is defined by Park and Burgess (1970, p. 276) as "A process of interpretation and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments and attitudes of other persons and groups and by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in common cultural life".

Expatriates may feel that their inability to communicate with appropriate behaviour in normal social circumstances puts them at a severe disadvantage and if this is kept unchecked it can lead to avoidance of social gatherings and further fuel the cycle of paranoia (Brislin, Cushner, Craig & Yong, 1986).

When anxieties stemming from cross-cultural contact occur over a long period of time the phenomenon of "burnout" can occur (Brislin, Cushner, Craig & Yong, 1986).

Burnout can be described as emotional exhaustion and a loss of control over decisions which have to be taken in unfamiliar circumstances. This inevitably prevents people from achieving the goals that they have set themselves; conversely, anxiety can be used

in a positive sense to motivate and encourage people to change their behaviour by setting achievable goals. This can be done by calling upon the experience of other people who have already encountered and overcome similar difficulties. Garonzik (1993) suggests that having role models is not enough to allay anxiety. The practice of “select, sometimes train and send” is not enough to ensure a successful relocation. He sees company policy and practices that convey a caring and considerate approach to their expatriates to be just as important. Keeping in touch with his or her home base through newsletters, conference calls and occasional visits would add to the quality of an expatriate’s working life abroad.

### **2.1.3 Repatriation**

A well-planned training and orientation programme can ease the adjustment of the expatriate and family (Caudron, 1991). One area which is rarely included in an overseas relocation plan is that of career development and life after an expatriate returns home after relocation (Feldman & Thomas, 1993). Repatriation is an area which has had little written about it. This is presumably largely because the return to one’s home base is not seen as presenting any difficulties. There is no doubt, however, that this is a false perception. Reverse culture shock is experienced by 60 per cent of returning expatriates (Harvey; 1989; Kendal, 1981; Rao, 1995 ; Tung, 1988; Weld, 1991). Although not under study in this dissertation, some mention of repatriation is relevant as it should form part of the overall adjustment strategy for expatriates.

Expatriates are usually unprepared for the difficulties that they will experience on repatriation (Rao, 1995). The changes in foreign and cultural lifestyle (e.g. domestic responsibilities, cash flow, disposable income, readjusting to work in the home-base organisation) are some of the greatest anxieties experienced by expatriates (Clague & Krupp, 1978). Harvey (1989) indicated that only 31 per cent of US-based firms had

formal repatriation programmes. Among the reasons for the paucity of such programmes are lack of experience in their establishment, the cost of their establishment, and the fact that there is often no perceived need for them.

Companies often pay as much as \$250 000–350,000 per family to relocate them internationally and then repatriate them (Garonzik, 1993). Expatriates will be aware of the practical differences that they will encounter on their relocation, but what they will not be expecting is to have to confront their inner feelings and emotions, and their affective experiences, that is, prejudices, anxieties, and a sense of belonging (Brislin, Cushner, Craig & Yong., 1986). When these affective experiences are acknowledged, the expatriate will be well on the way to lessening the difficulties which relocation can bring. Stroh, Grasshoff, Rude and Carter (1998) argue that a global human resource information system would help multinationals and their employees to succeed in the highly competitive international marketplace. It is suggested that this system would help employees address family concerns such as schooling, healthcare, work permits and housing. It does not, however, address the whole problem of international relocation and totally misses the point of preparing employees by giving them pre-departure cross-cultural training to assist in their adjustment. Furthermore it does not take into account the difficulties which can be experienced by workers and their families on repatriation.

#### **2.1.4 Family adjustment to international relocation**

It is well documented that international relocation has a greater effect on family members, wives and children, than on the expatriate worker himself (Seidenberg, 1973; Harvey, 1996; Harvey & Lusch, 1982; Fukuda & Chu, 1994) This is simplistic and does not take into account the vicarious effect that an unhappy family can have on a worker's own mental well-being and his work productivity in his new working environment.

Husbands at the end of the 20th century are not solely categorised as the breadwinners:

today they play a more active and integral part in family life and take an increasing role in raising their children.

The impact of the family, in particular, of the spouse of the transferred international worker has become of increasing interest to international human resource managers (Harvey, 1996; McCollum, 1990). By categorising the family into different sections, for example, “trailing” wives, dual-career couples, and children of various ages, the reality of the situation is lost. What should be looked at is the family unit as a whole, including the employee who has been seconded. It is of course true to say that women usually do give up more when relocating, while husbands still have their support system associated with work when transferred overseas (Coyle, 1988). This point of view, however, does not take into consideration the differences in organisational cultures experienced by workers.

Figures 1 and 2 imply that expatriate workers do not have a problem in adjusting to their working environment, but “trailing” spouses do. What appears to be missing here is a bond between the female and male models which must be inextricably linked. There can be no dichotomy between worker and family, nor can there be separation between working and living in a foreign environment. The models are simplistic and fail to tell the whole story of life as an expatriate. Lynd (1965) suggests that living in the wider world requires the ability to come to terms with conflict, tension, doubt and anxiety without being paralysed by them. Life events and changes surrounding relocation may either result in family stress or be a stimulus for personal and family growth (Adaskin, 1987).

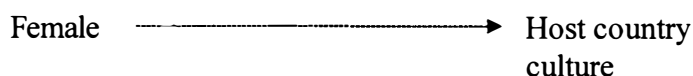


FIGURE 1 Model of female adaptation abroad. (Briody, 1991)

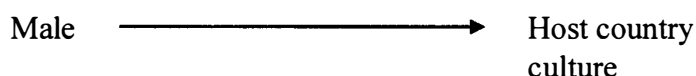
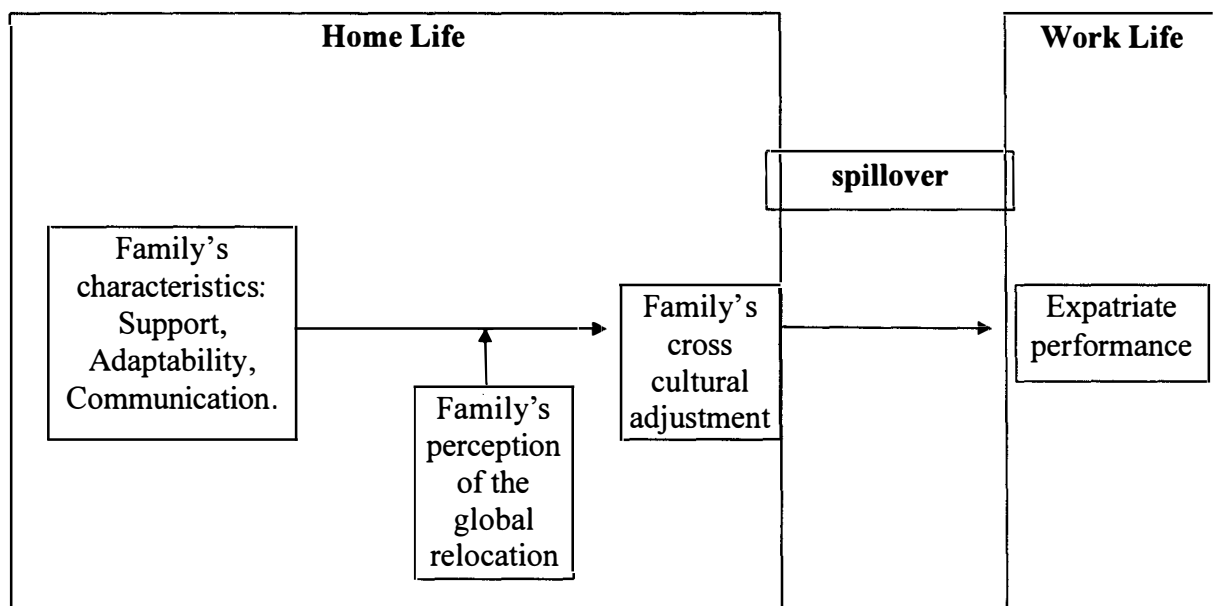


FIGURE 2 Model of male adaptation abroad. ( Briody, 1991).

Companies believe that 37 per cent of their employees refuse a job offer on international secondment because of the potential damage to their partners' careers; eighty-five per cent of couples relocating will be from dual-career families (Dudley, 1994). Families with children face the problem of relocating children. This can bring significant problems to the family as the children have to transfer between schools, leave old friends and make new ones; they leave behind their extended family and familiar surroundings (Fukuda & Chu, 1994). It is imperative that companies respond to these issues by developing comprehensive, flexible and interactive programs (Sievers, 1998).

The theoretical model of family adjustment and expatriate performance (Figure 3) explains the impact of the family on expatriate performance (Caligiuri, Hyland & Joshi, 1998). The model integrates three theoretical perspectives: the first of these theories is the "double ABCX theory" (Hill, 1949; McCubbin & Patterson, 1983). This theory suggests that stresses, and the family's capability to adjust to these and the family's perception of what the stresses are, leads to the family as a unit learning to cope with the stressor, that is, international relocation.





**Figure 3** Theoretical model of family adjustment and expatriate performance (Caligiuri , Hyland & Joshi, 1998)

The second theory is the “spill-over” theory (Aldous, 1969; Crouter, 1984; Piotrowski, 1979). This looks at the relationship and the effect between work and non-work; the spill-over can occur in either direction, from work to family or from family to work.

The third theory involved in the model is the family systems theory (Minuchin, 1984). This has three components: the first of these is the family structure, which is an open socio cultural system; the second is family development, that is, stages of growth; and the third is family adaptation to changing circumstances. This model details the problem of the adaptability of the family and its effects on the expatriate worker.

Coyle (1988) in her Australian Survey reported that 36 per cent of marriages, of relocated workers deteriorated, 35 per cent remained stable and 28 per cent improved. It was found that if the husband was able to give support and meet the wife’s needs for friendship the relationship improved; if he did not the relationship deteriorated. Figure 4 outlines the relationship between social support and stress. It is interesting to see the

relationship that social support has with mental, physical health and intimate relationships. This reinforces the concept of man as a social being.

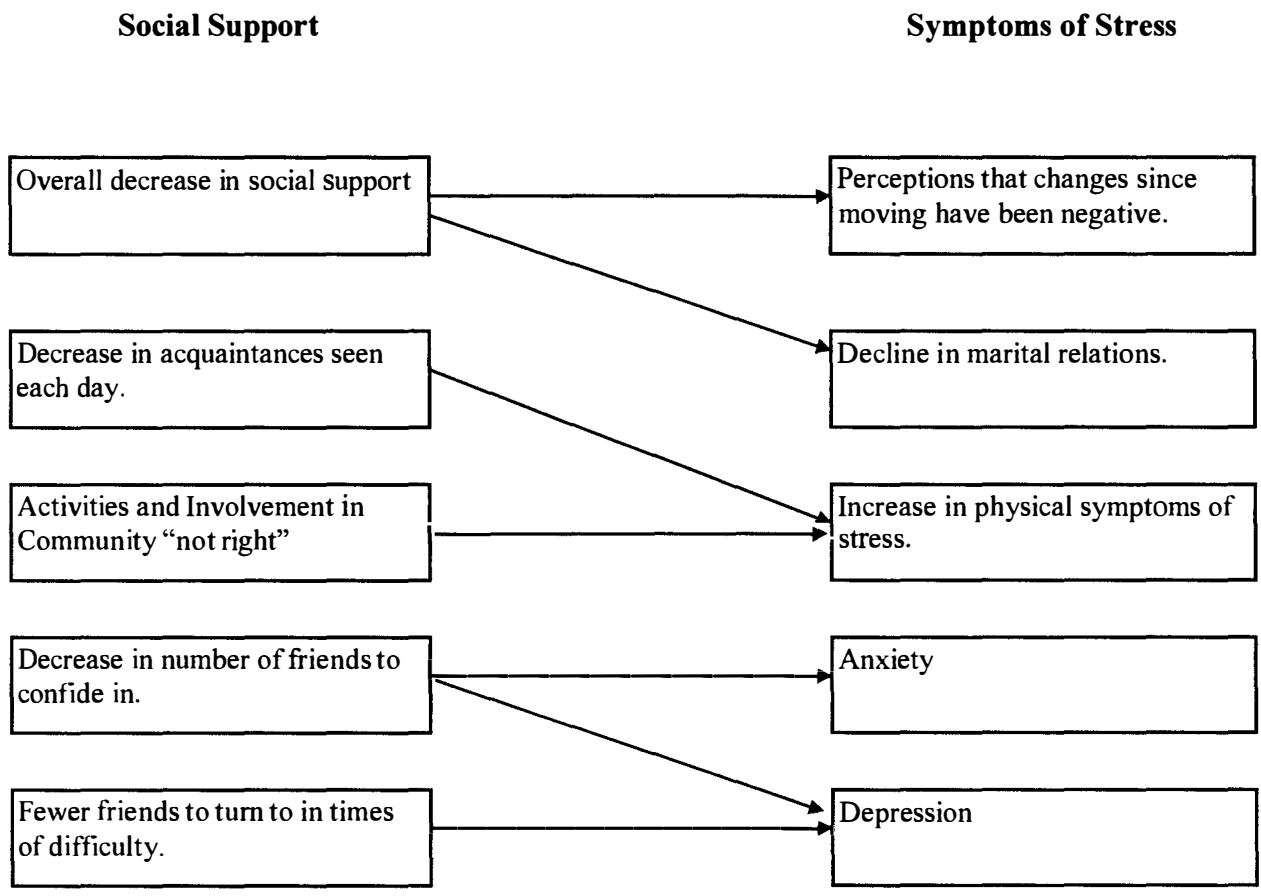


FIGURE 4 Social Support. Coyle & Shortland (1992).

Seidenberg (1973) suggested that wives often suffered because their identities and feelings of self-worth are shattered by continual moves. Stress in the family affects an expatriate worker’s ability to be creative, make decisions and manage employees (Harvey & Lusch, 1982) Therefore it can be seen that problems generated at home have an important effect on the efficiency and effectiveness of the worker. Hay (1972, 1974) reported that an adaptable and supportive family was important in avoiding failure on overseas assignments. Harvey (1996) suggests that obstacles to relocation can be overcome if the characteristics of the couple/family and the environment into which they are to be transferred are taken into account beforehand.

Children in the age groups 3–5 years and 14–16 years are those who find the most difficulty in making adjustments (McClenahan, 1997). The process of leaving one social network and having to create another is for both children and adults alike a difficult period (Coyle, 1988). The thought of rejection can stifle new relationships and can cause people to merely “mark time” in a new environment.

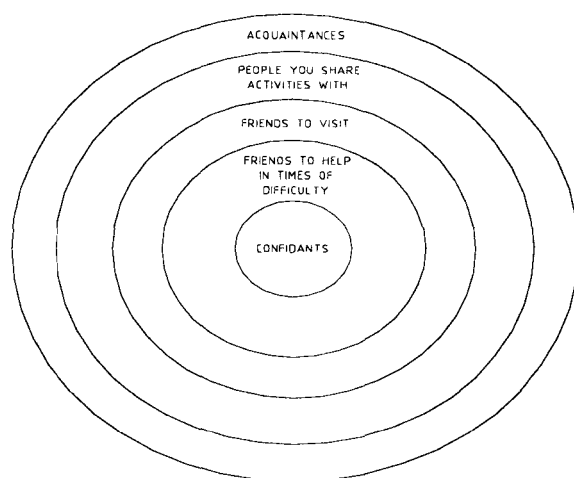


FIGURE 5 A social network. (Coyle, 1988)

Figure 5 shows the different types of social support in a person’s life. When it is understood that a social network is made up of these several layers, it can be seen that to achieve a close friendship is both difficult and time-consuming. However, the outer layers are more easily achievable in day-to-day living and may have the potential to lead to deeper, more personal friendships. Consequently people should be encouraged to meet new people at the acquaintance level for this may in the course of time lead to deeper more rewarding friendships. The families who adapt better are those who move voluntarily rather than have the move imposed on them (Burchinal & Bauder, 1965). As Brown (1982, p. 32) points out, “If we take the time to consider that we are moving people and families, and in so doing convey careful and sincere consideration in each

relocation situation then we will greatly improve the chances for realising the potential benefit and enjoyment to be gained from living and working in a foreign country.”

Munton (1988) in his survey on domestic relocation within the British Isles, found that the families more at risk of stress from relocation were those with school-age children and where both parents are working. However there is a caveat on predicting high-risk families: Munton (1988, p. 26) points out that “the data indicates that it is likely to be difficult to predict, in advance of a move, those families that may experience more stress than average. Certainly it cannot be done on the basis of age, marital status or the limited range of occupational variables. However it is possible to construct an approximate profile of the high-risk relocating family.”

In addition to spousal and family problems in domestic relocation, Munton (1988) sees the need to provide more information on a wide range of local resources for those experiencing isolation in a new location. He also suggests the potential to develop a counselling service for families who experience emotional and psychological difficulties. Coyle (1988) confirms and reinforces the evidence that the experience of both international and domestic relocation are similar, although the initial reaction to the international move is more positive. Spouses and females reported greater problem of adjustment and received less relocation assistance than their male counterparts (Brown, 1982).

There is a trend, as outlined by Windham International and the National Foreign Trade Council (1997), for the number of married expatriates accompanied by their spouses to decline and for the number of unaccompanied married expatriates to increase (from 10 per cent to 13 per cent). If this trend should continue or gain momentum, it would of course solve the well-documented phenomenon of the dual income family and the trailing spouse, this being a wife or partner who accompanies the relocated worker.

Unfortunately, however, it will serve to produce problems of a different nature, whose effects will have an equally unpleasant effect on the family unit.

This trend towards “Unaccompanied” expatriates is probably prompted more by the companies’ efforts to reduce the costs of international secondments for family units and less by the families’ desires to live separately. If this is the case, then the first decade of the 21st century will reveal interesting demographic information for the expatriate population.

The concept of “hardiness” (Kobasa, 1979) is of relevance to relocating families and also to the expatriate workers. The idea is based on the personality disposition of family members for facing stress. The area of focus in this concept are attitudes of control which indicates that a person has a free will to lead his or her life as he/she sees fit. If this is so then control from within the family could influence family events and lessen the feeling of helplessness in facing external stressful situations. This is based on Rotter’s (1966) Locus of control. Commitment by the expatriate in the work situation could certainly lead to him /her coping well at work, but this could have a negative effect on the family unit if inadequate attention is devoted to the family members to help them through their stress situations.

If organisations are to maintain a mobile workforce they need to understand the problems and anxieties faced by the families of the relocating employees (Munton, 1988). But is it really realistic to expect companies to take responsibility for their employees’ families? Practically speaking, the financial burden for this level of involvement cannot be sustained by any one company over a long period of time. This poses the question—how much responsibility should a company fairly be expected to take, and how much time and what level of resources should be applied to this area.

Expatriates are a transient group and their stay in a foreign country can be as little as a few months or as long as five years. Cohen (1979) sees this transience as an obstacle to adjustment, integration and adaptation into the host environment. Tung (1982) suggests that the main reason for the failure of overseas secondments for American expatriates was the inability of spouses to adjust to a different physical, social and cultural environment.

## **2.2 Culture.**

Culture can be singular or plural in dimension, in other words there can be cultures within cultures. A cultural orientation describes the attitudes of most of the people most of the time, not all of the people all of the time (Adler, 1986). Cultural variation is important. Kluckholm and Strodtbeck (1961, p. 375) describe a set of assumptions that allows us to understand the cultural orientations of a society without doing an injustice to the diversity within the society. Their assumptions are as follows:

1. There are a limited number of common human problems for which all people at all times must find some solutions, i.e. each society must decide on how to feed, clothe and house its people. Each society must decide on its systems of communication, education, transportation, health, commerce and government.
2. There are a limited number of alternatives which exist for dealing with these problems. For example, people may house themselves in tents, caves, igloos, single-family dwellings or apartment buildings, but they can not survive the winter without some form of housing.
3. Alternatives are present in all societies at all times, but some are preferred to others.
4. Each society has a dominant profile or values orientation and, in addition has numerous variations or alternative profiles. For example, people may believe that they

can cure disease either with chemotherapy, surgery, acupuncture, acupressure, prayer or nutrition. Although it is a generalisation, it could be said that the Chinese tend to prefer acupuncture and acupressure, the British chemotherapy and surgery, and Christian Scientists prayer.

5. In both the profile and the variations, there is a rank ordering of preference for alternatives.

6. In societies undergoing change, the order of preferences will not be clear-cut. For example, as the computer revolution changes society, organisations' communication preferences for using the Internet, fax, telephone, electronic mail or the postal system become unclear; different organisations will make different choices.

The above assumptions emphasise the stereotype of cultures. They do not, however, take into account cultural variation. The definitions of culture are as varied and diverse as culture itself. Culture is to human society collectively what personality is to an individual (Hofstede, 1980, p. 25).

As Hofstede, (1980, pp. 25–26) explains: “Culture could be defined as the interactive aggregate of the common characteristics that influence a human group's response to its environment. Culture determines the identity of a human group in the same way as personality determines the identity of an individual.”

Kroeber and Kulckholm (1952, p. 181) define culture as follows: “Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiment in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may on the one

hand, be considered as products of actions, on the other, as conditioning elements of future action.”

With global demographic, economic and political changes taking place at such a rapid pace, no nation is now totally homogeneous (Cooper & Denner, 1998). Many countries are, or have become, culturally pluralistic (Furnham & Bochner, 1990). World business has created a demand for cross-cultural management to understand and resolve problems created by workers working in the same organisation but from different cultures.

Multiculturalism adds to the complexity of global firms by increasing the number of perspective approaches and business methods represented within an organisation.

Businesses have been, and many still are, under the impression that a company’s micro culture can override any outside cultural influences; on the contrary, however, research has found this not to be the case. Laurent (1983) found that cultural differences were more pronounced among employees from around the world working within the same multicultural company than among employees working for organisations in their native land. Laurent does not give an explanation for this phenomenon. Part of the answer may lie in the deep-rootedness of culture; people try to hold on to something which is familiar to them in order to give them a sense of security and a feeling of belonging.

Ethnic minorities in intra societies are usually made up of dispossessed aboriginals, immigrants, refugees or guest workers, all of whom have different practices, customs, linguistic forms and religions. It would appear reasonable to suggest that through time and integration of successive generations these barriers would be broken down; unfortunately, however, this appears not to be the case. This can be seen by the explosion of savage “ethnic cleansing” in a number of countries in recent times. The idea of a cultural melting-pot seems destined for the realms of fantasy. At present there is an increasing awareness of the differences and similarities which exist in different



cultures and within these different cultures, but most societies still have a long way to go to try and integrate those societal values which play such an important part in shaping people.

Childs (1981) found that some studies concluded that cultural convergence was evident on “macro” level issues, such as areas of technology and organisational structure.

However cultural divergence was evident on the “micro” level issues, in particular people’s behaviour and ways of communicating within an organisation. In other words, it can be assumed that global organisations and global business are converging and becoming similar, but the employees and their behaviour within these organisations is maintaining its cultural uniqueness. Adler (1986, pp. 45–46) found that national culture explained 50 per cent of the differences in employees’ attitudes and behaviours, while Hofstede (1980) noted that national culture explained more of the differences than professional roles such as age, gender or race.

Culturally rooted instability is omnipresent throughout the world, and always has been. It remains to be seen what the future holds in the next millennium. Fukukawa (1993) believes that cross-cultural management can be promoted in two ways: firstly, by disciplining ourselves to be tolerant to different cultures and different ways of living and secondly, by stimulating cross-cultural studies at all levels of education. The very nature of culture does not lend itself to merging easily with other cultures for they are usually mutually exclusive; this is not to say, however, that they cannot coexist at least on a business level.

Lewis (1996, p. 1) classified culture in a business sense into three major categories:

1. Task-oriented culture. This stresses the importance of planning, organising and executing tasks in an orderly manner. In these

cultures, time is viewed as linear. and a precious commodity to be used effectively. This is found in North America and in most Western European countries.

2. People-oriented cultures are more flexible, emotional and focused on personal relationships. They are accustomed to doing more than one thing at a time. African, Arab and Latin American cultures fall into this category.
3. Respect-oriented cultures are characterised by avoiding confrontation, displaying patience and listening to others. This is a culture in which time is cyclical and in unlimited supply. This is found in China, Japan, Korea, Singapore and Turkey.

To expand on these points, culture can also be data-oriented, or dialogue-oriented and directed towards individualism or collectivism. The American culture is an example of the former; Americans emphasise individual welfare and self-interest, believing that their American values should be understood and accepted by everyone. Collectivism emphasises the needs of the group and involves the group in its decision-making process; it is a feature of the culture of Asian countries. The construct of individualism–collectivism (Hui, 1982, Trandis, 1983) is a useful basis for a comparison between cultures in observing achievement-related values and goals (Niles, 1998).

In the area of cross-cultural goal-setting and achievement McClelland (1961) argued that achievement behaviour was a result of child-rearing practices in Western culture. Singhal and Misra (1989) say that Western and non-Western societies are not necessarily more or less motivated to achieve; they suggest rather that the achievement is attained through different means and that different priorities are given in the goal-

setting process. When in a cross-cultural situation, therefore, sensitivity to possible cultural variations in the concept of achievement is crucial (Duda & Allison, 1989).

Consequently, there is a veritable minefield of problems which can only be recognised and solved by preparing employees to accept these differences and work with and within them. Of course the stereotyping of cultures can also be misleading and result in patronising behaviour; therefore it is important that an expatriate is mindful of what he says and how he says it. Eighty per cent of what people say is conveyed through non-verbal signals (Kleinke, 1978). Silence in a reactive culture is regarded as a form of speech, while other cultures do not see speech and silence in the same way. Sometime what is said is just as important, if not more important, than what is not being said (Kim, 1977). In reactive cultures more attention is given to how something is said rather than to what is being said (Jones & Nesbit, 1971). In every culture there are rules governing behaviour in most common situations. Unless all those present agree on the definition of the situation and the rules to be followed, chaos could ensue (Trower, Bryant & Argyle, 1978).

Each culture has a different attitude towards its work ethic. This is made all the more obscure when the organisation's and society's expectations differ from those of the employees who are expatriates. The resulting conflict is associated with various, mostly negative, emotions which may also be felt and expressed differently across cultures. Emotions are affected by culture because of the different interpretations and appraisal of the same situation (Kozan, 1997, p. 339). Also different behavioural modes and regulative mechanisms are available in each culture for the expression of emotion (Mesquite & Frijda, 1992). The best way to approach this dilemma is to recognise that differences do exist and work with them, not against them. Cultural diversity creates

more problems than it solves. This is a pessimistic point of view, although it has great deal of truth to it.

Cultural synergy (Adler, 1986) is an approach which assumes that we are not all the same and that our differences should have a positive impact on the way we work. The elements of the synergistic approach, according to Adler (1986, p. 88), are:

1. Pluralistic rather than homogeneous.
2. Similarities and differences share equal importance
3. Equi finality exists and no one culture is inherently superior.
4. The best way forward depends on the cultures and the people involved

### **2.3 Culture Shock**

The words “culture shock” conjure up images of fear, anxiety and surprise. To a greater or lesser degree the term has racist and xenophobic overtones. In fact it actually creates a barrier to cross-culturation by implying cultural differences are bad. Oberg (1960) was the first to define the term “culture shock” as a transitional experience of learning to acclimatise to another culture. Many have subsequently redefined the term only by shifting the emphasis on the same problem, yet we are still unsure why it happens and why some people experience it and others do not. Guthrie (1981) coined the expression “culture fatigue”, Smalley (1968) used “language shock”, Byrne (1966) used “role shock” and Ball-Rokeach (1973) used “pervasive ambiguity”. All of these expressions are variations on the same theme.

Furnham and Bochner (1990, p.152) state that, “Staying in a place that does not meet one’s needs is associated with negative health outcomes, while staying in a place that

does meet one's needs is associated with positive health outcomes. The consequences of moving depends on how well the new location compares with previously experienced environments in meeting important needs. Furthermore, various psychological and material benefits of residential change are able to reduce or ameliorate any negative effects."

Cross-culturalisation has occurred all through recorded history. Admittedly, the motivation for experiencing different cultures was not always philanthropic and the outcomes may not have always been benevolent in nature, but the phenomenon was evident. Today's cross-culturalisation still bears the scars and the poor reputation of a supposed "master race" conquering and exploiting the indigenous peoples in different parts of the world and down through the centuries. So it is hardly surprising that the problem associated with cross-culturalisation persists to the present day. If there is a way forward it is through learning awareness and acceptance of the unusual, the different and the exotic.

Another important component is the attitude of the organisations sending their workers abroad. Lack of support aggravates and intensifies feelings of loneliness, isolation and self-doubt (Storti, 1990). Companies must have a commitment to their expatriates (Garonzik, 1993). Commitment is described by Garonzik (1993, p. 63) as a willingness to sacrifice relatively short-term gains for the perceived promise of long-term benefits as well as the willingness to weigh the consequences of one's own actions on the other's outcome.

It is difficult to quantify the feelings that multinationals actually have towards their expatriate employees. Garonzik (1993) identified two important variables in his study as being vital to the success of the international secondment. The first is personal support from the company with work and family and the second is contact with the home base.

The manner in which expatriates are treated, the personal and working support that they get from their employing company, and the amount of contact that they have with their home base all appear to have a direct impact on their assignment and the commitment that they have to it. Instituting a plan is the only way in which problems can be avoided and everyone is made aware of the reality of their expectations (Frazee, 1997).

Prospective expatriates, especially those who have not worked abroad before, often lack the basic knowledge to make informed decisions; a bad decision could well jeopardise both their career advancement and family happiness (Weiss & Grippo, 1992).

Organisations today equate the happiness of their employees with remuneration and this has been a major stumbling-block for employers who are very ineffective in addressing the issues which confront today's international executives (Weiss & Grippo, 1992).

Brewster (1997) sees that technical expertise and a domestic track record are by far the two dominant selection criteria for expatriate selection. Factors such as language skills and international adaptability are further down the list. Organisations concentrate too much on organisational objectives rather than on the cultural sensitivity of the situation according to Rao (1995). Garonzik (1993) suggests that the company's attitude to the expatriate is as important as cultural pre-departure training. If the company is seen as dependable and fair in the handling of an international relocation, the expatriates are stimulated to more successfully manage the challenges and stresses associated with expatriate work.

Integration can more readily take place if an individual is flexible enough to change his preconceived perceptions and embrace reality; this can be achieved through using new information about the new environment and acting upon it (Miller, 1975). The greater the similarities between the host country and the country of origin the easier relocation

appears to be. Cultural compatibility is an important factor in adjustment ( Furnham & Bochner, 1990).

Yet the way cultures themselves view the world can vary dramatically. Are people dominant over their environment, in harmony with it or subjugated by it? In general, the Americans may be said to view themselves as superior to nature, while the Chinese are said to be more harmonious in their view and to try to live as one with nature.

Subjugation is a result of a lesser developed culture which view the forces of nature as inevitable and natural.

In his study of 1000 Swedish businessmen and women, Torbion (1982, p. 73) found for the 30 variables studied that the following facts emerged:

1. Happiness of the spouse was by far the most important factor, followed by the external environment, for example, climate and food.”
2. The fewer barriers that there were to overcome, the easier adjustment was and the happier the individuals were.
3. Previous overseas experiences had no effect on adjustment.
4. Expatriates who socialised more with host nationals were happier than those who socialised solely with expatriates.
5. Men adapted more easily than women and the more educated the individual the easier adaptation was.
6. The motive most strongly associated with successful adjustment was an interest in the host country.

Rao (1995) found that the most significant issues facing expatriates were their families’ inability to adapt, lack of cross-cultural skills (e.g. speaking the local language) and the

lack of pre-departure training. In general, the evidence indicates that as differences (including differences in language) between the cultures of the participants increase, so do the difficulties in communication, due mainly to differences in the elements that enter into and regulate interpersonal behaviour (Furnham & Bochner, 1990).

Cross-culturation is not a one-way experience. Not only do the expatriates experience cultural differences but also the nationals of the host country. The level to which host nations will tolerate outside influences in the form of what might be conceived as deviant behaviour varies enormously from country to country. Saudi Arabia, for example, is intolerant of some aspects of Western cultural values and the behaviour which emanates from them. In a multicultural world, ignorance—not familiarity—breeds contempt (Seelye & Seelye-James, 1995).

Culture shock does exist but it is difficult to quantify as the reality and the effects of the concept differ from person to person. As the effects are highly individual, the stresses of culture shock may be lessened by learning to look at ourselves and our own coping mechanisms to facilitate adjustment. Other dimensions which describe how cultures vary include the qualities that we all possess as individuals, the relationships that we have to other people, to nature and the world (Lovingood, 1995).



Table 3 depicts the countries which present the greatest challenges to expatriates from the U.S.A.

Table 3

Locations which presents the greatest assignment difficulties (ranked in percentages).

Country	Rank
China	39
India	26
Russia	18
Japan	14
Indonesia	9
Mexico	8
Brazil	7
Korea	6
Hong Kong	5
Nigeria	5
Singapore	4
Saudi Arabia	4
Taiwan	4
Philippines	4
Thailand	4
Colombia	3
Germany	3
U.K.	3
Venezuela	3
Australia	2
Belgium	2
Argentina	2
Netherlands	2
France	2

(Windham International Survey, 1997).

### 2.3.1 Values.

Values have a myriad of definitions. A simple one is defined as a broad tendency to prefer certain states over others (Hofstede, 1980). Assimilation into another culture does not mean disregarding one's own attitudes and beliefs in favour of others and it does not mean having to lose one's identity. That value change has to precede behaviour change is an idealistic assumption which neglects the contribution of the situation to the actual behaviour (Hofstede, 1980, p. 27).

Our values are instilled in us from a very early age through our own traditions and culture. We can accept or reject them at any stage throughout our lives. We can even use them selectively in different situations. Making value judgements is a human condition which helps us evaluate our changing environment. Understanding our own values and those of other people is a subjective process which is an important step in cultural adjustment. People fear the unknown; they frequently tend to assume that evil intentions motivate foreigners' behaviour (Adler, 1986). Culture consists of values, attitudes and behaviour, although according to Seelye and Seelye-James (1995, p. 36) at times the word "value" can appear nebulous. "Differences in cultural values can provoke a myriad of misunderstandings, but unless we actually identify a culture with a certain set of values we cannot hope to resolve the dilemma." Seelye and Seelye-James go on to give a list of values associated with American society:

1. Being American is synonymous with being progressive and Americans are the ultimate symbol of progress.
2. Each person is a distinct individual and ought to achieve in dependence from others.
3. Men and women should be treated equally.
4. Competition is a good way to motivate people.

5. Most interpersonal encounters serve to get things done; the social significance of the encounter is secondary.

6. Quantifying aspects of experience with numerical precision increases credibility

### **2.3.2 Theories Relating to Geographical Adjustment.**

The relationships between geographical movement and psychological adjustment are well known. There are a variety of theories borrowed from many diverse disciplines which can be seen to have some bearing on the subject. Care must be taken not to try and squeeze the experience into a particular theoretical concept for the sake of convenience. Bowlby's (1969) theory of loss and grief has been linked to the process of relocation. Bowlby maintains that mourning is a biological and instinctive process and that separation anxiety, grief and mourning are all phases of a single process. Relocation is however only a temporary separation as compared with migration which may be seen as a permanent move and therefore more likely to be viewed as a total loss. Those most at risk from separation anxiety are women and adolescents (Torbion, 1982) who may find themselves going through the grieving process, but for the majority of individuals and their families on secondment this theory is not wholly appropriate.

The fatalism theory (Rotter, 1966; Weiner, 1980) is associated with the feeling or perception that one has that the outcomes of our actions are determined by an outside force, for example luck or fate. Instrumentalism on the other hand is the expectation that outcomes are a direct result of our actions (Furnham & Bochner, 1990). Again generalities cannot be made to compartmentalise "everyone" into a convenient theory.

Oberg's (1960) culture shock theory is a popular and much-cited concept when one is looking at living and working in different cultures. There are four stages to Oberg's culture shock theory which the individual must work through to achieve adjustment:

1. The “Honeymoon” stage. An initial reaction of enchantment, fascination, enthusiasm, admiration and cordial, friendly, superficial relationships with hosts.
2. The crisis stage. Initial differences in language, concepts, values, familial signs and symbols lead to feelings of inadequacies, frustration, anxiety and anger.
3. The recovery stage. The crisis is resolved by a number of methods such that the person ends up learning the language and the culture of the host country.
4. The adjustment stage. The sojourner begins to work in and enjoy the new culture, though there may be occasional instances of anxiety and strain.

The above stages are very simple, straightforward and involve all the emotions that one would associate and expect with the feeling of working and living in another country.

Yet there are several questions which remain unanswered. Does everyone go through the stages exactly as they are described? Is there a time frame for the process? And does the process always achieve a successful readjustment? What part does the individual’s own character and past experiences play? Are all the stages the same for all cultures?

Adler (1997, p. 96) describes five stages in the adjustment process:

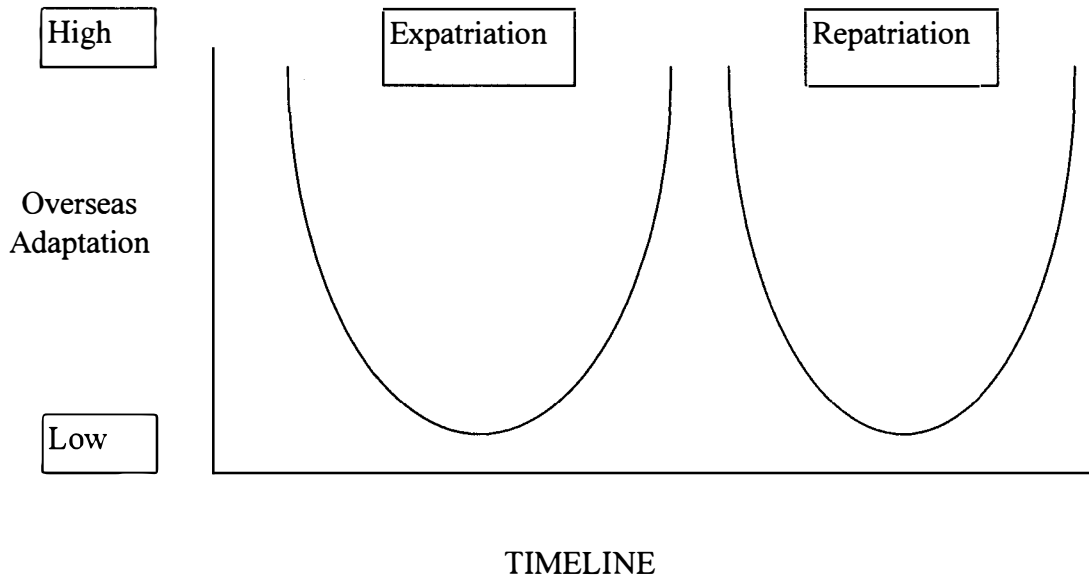
1. Contact. Differences are intriguing, perceptions are screened and selected. Emotions are excitement and discovery.
2. Disintegration. Differences are noted. Confusion, isolation and apathy are evident. The reality of living in a different culture hits home.
3. Reintegration. Differences are rejected, the person becomes angry and frustrated and rejects the host country’s culture. This negative behaviour is an attempt to protect one’s self-esteem.

4. Autonomy. Differences and similarities are legitimised. New experiences are tried, enjoyed and survived.

5. Independence. Differences are valued. Choices can be made.

Adler's stages above present the same problem as those of Oberg—they describe a process but do not let us know how these stages are actually resolved. Both theories fail to take note of the importance of the individuals' characteristics, their motivation for the move, and the actual environment in which the adjustment takes place.

There has been much debate about the U-curve (Lysgaard, 1955) and the W-curve (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963). Both have been proposed to describe the process of adjustment through expatriation and repatriation. One problem has been the dependent variable, that is, which aspect of adjustment is considered. The concept is simple for both. The U-curve describes three stages: 1—high, a state of excitement 2—low, a state of depression and 3—high a state of readjustment over a period of time which may be anything from six to eighteen months. The W-curve is an extension of the U-curve; it describes the process of repatriation and sees this as another form of cultural adjustment. Again it has the same three stages as the U curve.



**FIGURE 6** An adaptation of the U and W Shaped curves.

Adapted from the U-curve (Lysgaard, 1955) and the W-curve (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963).

In Figure 6, both the U- and W-curves are considered to be weak, inconclusive and over-generalised (Church, 1982) and do not take into account people who belong to both extremes—those who will never adjust and those who have no problem in adjusting (Furnham & Bochner, 1990 ). Cultural adaptation is best viewed as a learning process depicted by steps or cylindrical models (Gullick, 1988) Nonetheless, the U- and W-curves do give an overall picture of the general trends of adjustment.

### **3.0 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Although there is considerable literature written on the subject of international relocation of employees, there is a lack of information on the subject of short term international relocation. Furthermore, little has been written about the subject from the point of view of the employees themselves. The conceptual framework for this study is based on the problems identified from the literature review on the general topic of international relocation.

Factors such as the psychology of adaptation, culture shock and the role of the family on the workers' adjustment have been conceptualised not only to highlight the potential problems of the workers but also to indicate possible intervention strategies in the form of pre departure assistance which may reduce the problems associated with inadequate adjustment.

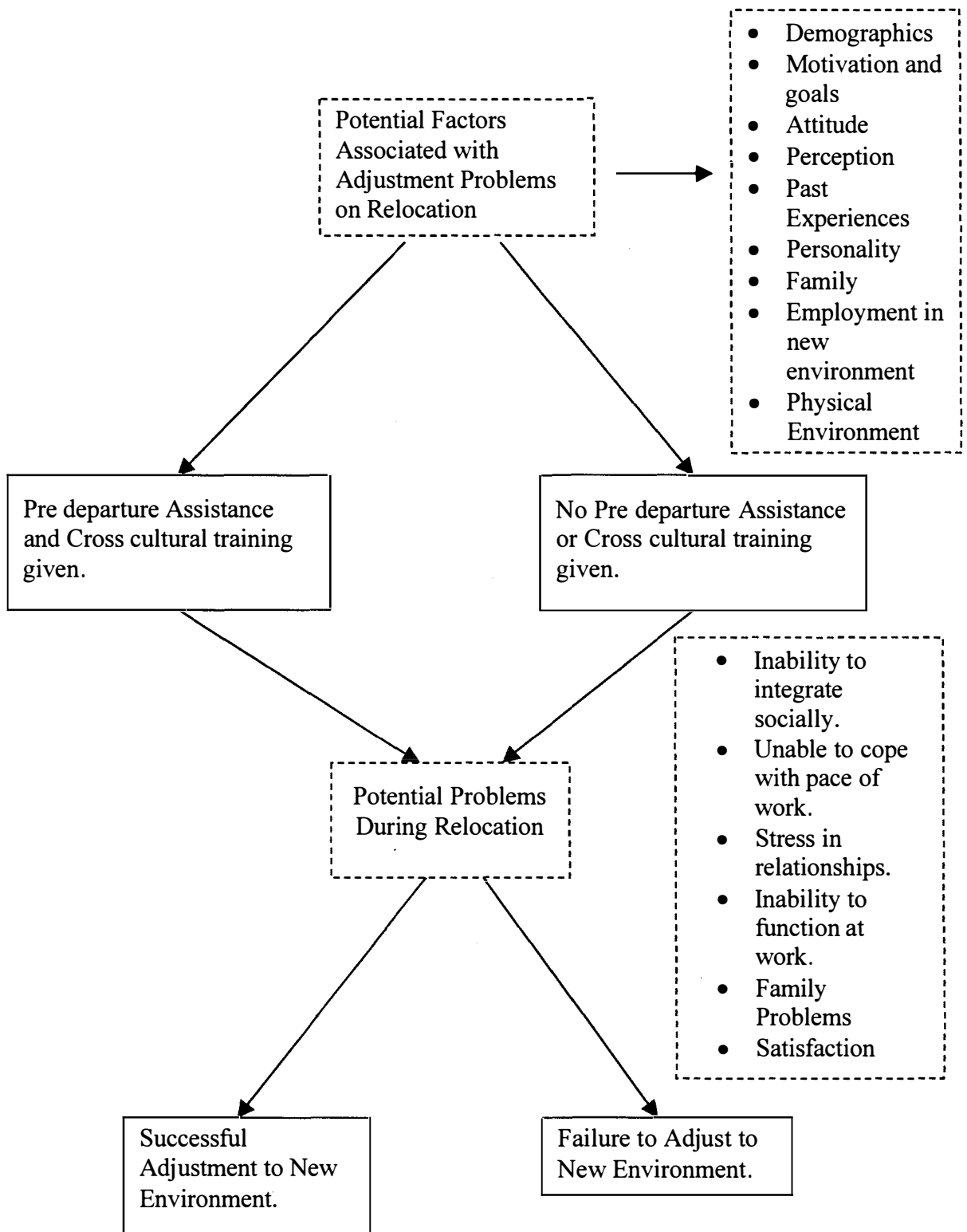
The framework (Figure 7) describes the two pathways which can be taken by employees seconded abroad to work on contracts of less than one year. On the left hand side of the diagram is the pathway which is widely advocated in the literature review. This is the use of pre departure assistance for employees and their families to prevent potential relocation problems and aid successful adjustment to a new environment. The right hand side of the diagram describes the potential problems associated with international relocation. The outcomes of these problems are individually identified in relationship to the relocated employee.

This study assumes that there are potential factors and problems that may be experienced by the participants while on their short term secondment. At the same time it must be borne in mind that individuals are unique in their approach to adjusting to changes,

therefore there will be groups of individuals who will not experience any difficulties and for whom pre departure training would be useless. Conversely, there are people for whom change will not take place regardless of any amount of intervention.

This conceptual framework was used to guide the development of the questionnaire for this study. The potential factors associated with adjustment problems were detailed in section three of the questionnaire. These were ethnocentric behaviour, past experiences in different cultures, individual personalities and characteristics, family dynamics and employment. Section one of the questionnaire dealt with the potential problems that may have been experienced. These are: the inability to integrate socially, the inability to cope with the pace of work, stressors in relationships and the inability to function at work. Section two of the questionnaire detailed the type of assistance which was given to the workers pre departure. Evidence from the literature indicates that assistance is at best sporadic and at worst non existent (Garonzik, 1993; Harvey, 1996; Leonard, 1994), primarily because there are no guidelines on which to base decisions about who should have the assistance and the form which this assistance should take.





**FIGURE 7.** Flow Chart Illustrating the Conceptual Framework for adjustment to international relocation.

The present study primarily focuses on the areas with in the dotted boxes.

## **4.0 METHODOLOGY**

This section identifies the research design of the study and describes the setting and sample together with ethical considerations. The instrument used for data collection and the procedures implemented to collect the data are also outlined.

### **4.1 The target population and setting.**

The sample for this study comprised expatriates from a variety of job classifications and ethnic backgrounds who were working in Singapore for an American multinational consultant engineering company. The company was located in the central business district of Singapore. All the participants could read and write English to a high level of fluency. Both males and females were included in the study and all the participants had to be on short term secondment.

### **4.2 Design.**

The study took the shape of a descriptive survey. The questionnaire which was given to employees at the organization chosen for the study can be found in Appendix A

### **4.3 Instrumentation.**

The instrument takes the form of a questionnaire composed of three separate sections. In a similar study on American expatriates relocated to Rome, Brown (1982) designed a questionnaire around five domains which she hypothesised would pose adjustment problems to her sample. These areas were culture, domestic business /financial, psychological and job-related. In a study by Lovingood (1995) of expatriates relocated to the United States the same instrument was used from Brown's original study but with modifications made to the instrument to adapt the questionnaire to the sample. Brown left out some items, others were added and yet others were rephrased.

#### 4.4 Reliability and validity

Neither Brown (1982) nor Lovingood (1995) used a conceptual framework, instead they based their study on a number of hypothesis formulated from personal observations.

Brown's questionnaire was designed for Americans living in Rome, while Lovingood's questionnaire was designed for expatriates from a wide range of countries living and working in the U.S.A. Therefore both these studies varied in the nature of the population and their size. Brown's study included 50% of expatriate spouses and Lovingood's study included 12.75% students.

The literature review did not reveal any previous studies on expatriates living in South East Asia. Both Brown (1982) and Lovingood (1995) stated that the pilot studies were used to confirm the credibility and quality of their measurement, but they did not report specifically on any psychometric properties.

The questionnaire (Appendix A) used in this study was adapted from Brown's (1984) and Lovingood's (1995) instruments which were modified to include additional questions. The questionnaire was divided into three sections all of which were directly related to the study questions and the conceptual framework. The areas were:

**Section one** relates to the possible adjustment problems to living and working on international relocation in a foreign country. There were a total of 19 questions in this section and an overall adjustment score was calculated by adding the scores for individual items. Thus the minimum score achievable was 19 (good adjustment) and the maximum score achievable was 76 (poor adjustment). The adjustment problems posed in the questions dealt with the physical and environmental aspects, family and domestic problems, feelings in the work environment and problems associated with culture. This section should have taken five minutes to complete, based on the pilot study results.

**Section two** relates to the possible assistance given in adjusting to living and working in a foreign country before departure. The questions in this section were derived from the instrument developed by Brown, (1982). The items were scored as dichotomous categories (Yes and No). There were 15 items concerned with the type of pre departure assistance given to the individual prior to relocating. An overall assistance score was calculated. This section should have taken between three and five minutes to complete.

**Section three** comprised 23 questions designed to gather basic information about the backgrounds and characteristics of the participants. Scoring was achieved by the participants circling the appropriate answer. This information was crucial as the literature indicates that the background and characteristics of a person are important in predicting the success rate that an individual will have in acclimatising cross-culturally to a foreign environment. This section should have taken five minutes to complete.

#### **4.5 Pilot study**

The pilot study (appendix B) was conducted two months before the actual questionnaire was administered. As there had been modifications made to the instrument used in this study from those used by both Brown (1982)) and Lovingood (1995) the best way to confirm face and content validity of this instrument was to do a pilot study. The pilot study group consisted of eight expatriates who completed and returned the survey, by post, within a week.

The participants for the pilot study were all acquaintances of the researcher and her family and were personally asked to participate in the pilot study. All eight participants were from different business backgrounds e.g the Oil and Gas industry, Mining, Defence Forces and the Pharmaceutical Industry. All were males and all were of a European background except one who was of Asian descent.

The participants in the pilot study fulfilled all the same criteria which were laid down for the participants in the actual study. The aim of the pilot study was threefold; firstly, to assess the ease with which the form could be completed. secondly, to assess the clarity of the questions, and thirdly to assess the face and content validity of the questionnaire. After completing the pilot questionnaire the participants were asked to complete an evaluation form (appendix C) which consisted of ten questions relating to the degree of difficulty of the questions, their relevance or irrelevance to the subject matter as they personally experience it and finally, the length of time needed to complete the task and the general feeling about the worthiness of the subject matter.

The results revealed that the questionnaire posed no difficulties to the participants and the length of time needed to complete the form was between ten and fifteen minutes.

Section 3, question 12 was revised, the time scale was increased from five years to fifteen years to capture the individual's relocation experiences over a greater time frame.

Section 2, question 4 was reworded. The original word "client" was open to misinterpretation and was replaced by "employer." These revisions together with the correction of two spelling errors were made to the final questionnaire draft. All the participants were interested in the outcome of the study and expressed an interest in the final results. These would be posted on to them at the completion of the study. The participants in the pilot study were not eligible to take part in the actual study.

#### **4.6 Procedure**

The organisation selected for the study was chosen because it contained a large percentage of expatriate workers. The participants were contacted personally. This was a slow, laborious process but the personal touch resulted in an extremely high return rate.

All the 65 expatriates in the design department of the company were personally asked by a designated assistant (known to the researcher) to take part in the study. The aim of the

study and the instrument to be used was explained. Queries and difficulties were answered on the spot or when the questionnaires were collected. The questionnaire (appendix A) was accompanied by a consent form and introductory letter (appendix D), about the study and a prepaid return envelope. Most surveys were returned to the assistant and mailed in bulk.

The whole process of collection took two weeks. Five participants per day, including Saturday and Sunday, were approached either at their lunch break or later in the afternoon at their work stations. The respondents were given two days to complete the questionnaire and had a choice of posting the completed form through the internal mail system or having it collected by the researcher's assistant after two days. There was a great deal of interest in the study and most of the respondents wanted to be informed of the results at the end of the study. Although the method of recruitment was laborious it was inexpensive and ensured a high return rate. The questionnaires were coded using the numbers 1–65 as they were received.

#### **4.7 Ethical Considerations**

The involvement of all the participants in this study was on a strictly voluntary basis and withdrawal could take place at anytime without penalty. This was outlined in detail in the consent form and letter of introduction letter (appendix D) which accompanied the questionnaire. Although there are some questions which related to the personal characteristics of the individuals, there are no questions of an intimate or offensive nature which would cause embarrassment or distress to the participants. The privacy and confidentiality of the questionnaires was maintained by strict adherence to security. This involved secure storage of material in a locked filing cabinet during the data collection and writing phase of the study. After the completion of the study, the material will be

locked away in a safe with a combination lock for a period of five years and then destroyed.

#### **4.8 Data analysis.**

The purpose of the data analysis was to address the following research questions:

- 1. What are the socio demographic characteristics of the sample?*
- 2. How well adjusted to international relocation is the study sample?*
- 3. What factors affect the adjustment of employees on international relocation?*
- 4. To what extent do demographic factors affect adjustment to international relocation?*
- 5. What types of relocation assistance were given to respondents prior to international relocation?*
- 6. What is the relationship between relocation assistance and adjustment to relocation? .*

Research questions 1,2,3 and 5 were addressed by calculating the frequencies and percentages of responses to each survey item. Mean scores and standard deviations are reported where appropriate. Research question 4 was addressed by comparing mean adjustment scores with a range of variables. Research question 6 was addressed by comparing mean adjustment scores with the variables from section two of the questionnaire (types of assistance). Characteristics of the participants have been summarized according to the frequencies and percentages of responses to each survey item. Mean scores and standard deviations are reported for selected variables from the questionnaire.

The mean was chosen as a measurement as it is regarded as the most reliable estimate of central tendency in a given population. Used in conjunction with the Mean, the Standard Deviation showed the measurement of dispersion. The standard deviation indicated the

amount by which all the values deviate from the mean. Comparisons of mean scores have been undertaken using the independent-sample t test for categories with two variables and a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for categories with more than two groups.

As the sample size in this study was relatively small, to ensure statistical accuracy independent sample t test and a one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) ensured the standard error of the differences between two means. Both the aforementioned statistical tests were used to derive two different estimates of population variance from the obtained data. The tests measured the effect of the independent variable with error variance, to determine whether there was a significant difference between two sets of scores. A significant value indicates that the population means are probably not all equal.

For this study the results were considered statistically significant at the 5% level ( $p = 0.05$ ), however the Bonferroni procedure was used for the sixth research question relating to the relationships between the assistance and total adjustment scores. The Bonferroni correction was used to reduce the chance of making a Type 1 error when multiple t-tests were performed. The procedure involves setting a more stringent alpha level. The calculation was made by dividing 0.05 by the number of t-tests performed.



## **5.0 RESULTS**

This section outlines the results of the study under the headings which relate to the specific research questions. The computer statistics programme SPSS for Windows Versions 8 and 10 were used to analyse the data.

The survey return was 100 %. This excellent response was due in all probability to the method used in the data collection phase, whereby each participant was approached and given the questionnaire personally.

### **5.1 Research question one. What are the socio demographic characteristics of the sample?**

The sample consisted of 65 employees, all of whom were employees of a large international engineering consultancy firm in Singapore. Demographic characteristics of the sample are summarized in Table 4. There appeared to be slightly more male employees (53.8 %) than female employees (46.2 %). The high percentage of females would support the evidence in the literature review that female workers are increasing in numbers in international relocation, (Windham International and the National Foreign Trade council,1997), this in turn would reflect the ever-increasing numbers of professional women entering the workplace (Frazee, 1996). The age group profile of respondents shows a trend towards declining numbers of employees as their age increases.

The marital status of the participants gave an unexpected result, with the majority (56.9%) being on “unaccompanied” status and the minority (33.8%) on “married” status. However, this trend towards “unaccompanied” status might have been due in part to the fact that the secondments were of relatively short duration. The group’s marital status distribution confirms the figures outlined in the Windham International Survey (1997),

that there is an increasing trend towards unaccompanied status secondments: half of the respondents classed themselves as unaccompanied and only a few had travelled with a partner. Table 4 shows that there was a diverse range of nationalities in the group. The research participants came from ten countries and six continents. The three countries that contributed most to the sample (by their country of birth) were the USA (29.2 %), Britain (24.6 %) and Australia (15.4 %). The citizenship status of the participants, again saw the U.S.A. contributing the most (30.8%) with Australia and Britain equal in second place with (21.5%).

The length of time actually spent on secondment at the time of completing the questionnaire was short term, less than six months for most of the participants. Only a minority of participants had been there for more than three years. The results showed that the group was relatively peripatetic in nature, most having had at least one prior relocation and 20% having had four prior relocations.

The trend outlined in the literature review, for international employees to have had a tertiary education is also obvious in this study with over half of the respondents having been to university. The qualification category showed that the majority of workers had been educated at tertiary level, and just over a quarter of the workers had gained a Master's degree. It should be noted that 23% of the workers did not answer the question relating to the level of academic qualifications. The native language spoken was principally English. The majority of workers were full-time employees of the company. Contract workers, visiting scientists and consultants were in the minority.

Table 4

Description of sample

Characteristics	Frequency	%	Valid %
<b>Gender</b>			
Female	30	46.2	46.2
Male	35	53.8	53.8
<b>Age</b>			
30 yrs or younger	5	7.7	7.7
31 - 40	26	40.0	40.0
41 - 50	22	33.8	33.8
51 - 60	11	16.9	16.9
61 yrs or older	1	1.5	1.5
Total	65	100.0	100.0
<b>Marital Status</b>			
Travelling alone	37	56.9	62.7
Travelling with Partner	22	33.8	37.3
Total	59	90.8	100.0
Missing	6	9.2	-
Total	65	100.0	-
<b>Country of birth</b>			
Australia	10	15.4	15.6
Canada	5	7.7	7.8
Britain	16	24.6	25.0
South Africa	2	3.1	3.1
India	2	3.1	3.1
Asia (S.E)	6	9.2	9.4
U.S.A.	19	29.2	29.7
New Zealand	2	3.1	3.1
Belgium	1	1.5	1.6

Characteristics	Frequency	%	Valid %
Switzerland	1	1.5	1.6
Total	64	98.5	100.0
Missing	1	1.5	-
Country of Citizenship			
Australia	14	21.5	21.9
Canada	5	7.7	7.8
Britain	14	21.5	21.9
South Africa	1	1.5	1.6
India	1	1.5	1.6
Asia (S.E)	6	9.2	9.4
U.S.A.	20	30.8	31.3
New Zealand	1	1.5	1.6
Belgium	1	1.5	1.6
Switzerland	1	1.5	1.6
Total	64	98.5	100.0
Missing	1	1.5	-
Total	65	100.0	-
Yes	60	92.3	92.3
No	5	7.7	7.7
Total	65	100.0	100.0
Number of months worked on secondment			
< 1 month	17	26.2	26.2
> 6 months	27	41.2	41.2
< 1 year	11	16.9	16.9
< 3 years	10	15.4	15.4
Total	65	100.0	100.0

Characteristics	Frequency	%	Valid %
<b>Number of prior destinations</b>			
0	6	9.2	9.2
1	10	15.4	15.4
2	24	36.9	36.9
3	10	15.4	15.4
4	13	20.0	20.0
> 4	2	3.1	3.1
Total	65	100.0	100.0
<b>Qualifications</b>			
School leaving certificate	10	15.4	20.0
University level	23	35.4	46.0
Master's level	17	26.2	34.0
Total	50	76.9	100.0
Missing	15	23.1	-
Total	65	100.0	-
<b>Position in the company</b>			
Fulltime employee	52	80.0	80.0
Visiting Scientist	1	1.5	1.5
Consultant	1	1.5	1.5
Contractor	11	16.9	16.9
Total	65	100.0	100.0

Table 5 describes the participants' experiences and their perceptions of culture. The majority of participants were very familiar or familiar, with another culture other than their own. Most of the participants showed some level of interest in their own cultural background, and only a minority had no interest at all in their own culture. It was

interesting to note that the majority saw themselves as tolerant to other cultures, although there was a small percentage who admitted to being intolerant.

Table 5

Description of culture

Characteristic	Frequencies	%	Valid %
<b>Familiarity with other cultures</b>			
Very Familiar	18	27.7	27.7
Familiar	24	36.9	36.9
Not very Familiar	23	35.4	35.4
Total	65	100.0	100.0
<b>Interest in own culture</b>			
Very Strong	19	29.2	30.2
Strong Interest	37	56.9	58.7
No Interest	6	9.2	9.5
Other	1	1.5	1.6
Total	63	96.9	100.0
<b>Tolerance to other Cultures</b>			
Very Tolerant	17	27.7	27.7
Tolerant	42	64.6	64.6
Intolerant	6	9.2	9.2
Total	65	100.0	100.0

Table 6 summarises the frequency and percentage of the variables concerned with attitudes to change and individual personality. Overall the participants felt that they were very capable of learning new skills and amenable to change. About half the participants described themselves as sociable, with almost a third of the sample describing themselves as reserved.

Table 6.

Description of self reported personality traits

Characteristics	Frequency	%	Valid %
Capable of learning new Skills			
Very capable	21	32.3	32.3
Capable	44	67.7	67.7
Total	65	100.0	100.0
Amenable to change in life			
Very amenable	14	21.5	21.5
Amenable	46	70.8	70.8
Not Amenable	5	7.7	7.7
Total	65	100.0	100.0
Personality type			
Outgoing	10	15.4	15.6
Sociable	34	52.3	53.1
Reserved	20	30.8	31.3
Total	64	98.5	100.0
Missing	1	1.5	-
Total	65	100.0	-

## 5.2 Research question two: How well adjusted to international relocation is the study sample?

The total adjustment score for each respondent was calculated by adding together the individual score for each item in section one of the questionnaire. To ascertain how well adjusted the group was overall, the mean adjustment score for the sample was calculated and found to be 36.4, (SD 9.3). The maximum score possible was 76.0 (poorly adjusted) and the minimum was 19.0 (well adjusted) and the neutral score was 28.5. Therefore the group as a whole tended towards being poorly adjusted. According to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality the results showed a normal distribution.

Table 7 summarizes the frequencies and percentages of the variables in section one of the questionnaire. This section was primarily concerned with the possible adjustment problems to living and working on short term international relocation in a foreign country. The items included in the questionnaire were based on variables, found in the literature review which were described as posing problems for people on international relocation.

A large proportion of the sample had family problems. These presented in two forms; the first and most evident difficulty was in dealing with family problems which took place in the expatriates' absence from home. The majority of the respondents (88%) had some problems in this area, with just over half reporting moderate to major problems. Secondly, dealing with the adjustment problems of their families in their new location, presented problems for nearly two thirds of the participants, with almost one half reporting moderate to major problems. Dealing with loneliness and isolation and finding utilities were a minor to moderate problem for more than two thirds of the participants, although nearly half the sample had no problems in making friends.

Over half the participants indicated that obtaining the necessities of life and practicing their religion were not a problem for them. This together with the fact that the majority of the participants did not fear for their personal safety or regard their environment as threatening may be associated with the place of their relocation rather than their adjustment to these problems. Just over half the sample had some problems in experiencing physiological difficulties and meeting their medical needs. However these problems tended to be minor. Two thirds of the sample had some problems in adjusting to the physical environment, but in the majority of cases these were minor.



The items concerned with learning about the local culture and customs posed no problems for half the sample, whereas two thirds had some problems adjusting to the local culture.

Half the sample had no problems in dealing with the pace of conducting business or finding their way around their work area, and just under half had no problem with feeling at home in their working environment. Although nearly two thirds had problems when supervising employees of different cultures, only 3% reported major problems in this area. Just over half experienced minor to major problems in travelling to their new location.

In summary, while all adjustment issues in section one of the questionnaire were associated with some degree of problems for the participants, those relating to family issues caused the highest proportion of problems rated as moderate to major problems.

Table 7.

Frequency of individual items in section one of the questionnaire

Item	Frequencies	%	Valid %
Solving family problems which occur at home in your absence			
No problem	8	12.3	12.3
Minor problem	23	35.4	35.4
Moderate problem	19	29.2	29.2
Major problem	15	23.1	23.1
Total	65	100.0	100.0

Item	Frequencies	%	Valid %
Dealing with the adjustment problems of your family			
No problem	21	32.3	35.6
Minor problem	10	15.4	16.9
Moderate problem	15	23.1	25.4
Major problem	13	20.0	22.0
Total	59	90.8	100.0
Missing	6	9.2	
Total	65	100.0	
Dealing with loneliness and isolation			
No problem	15	23.1	23.1
Minor problem	27	41.5	41.5
Moderate problem	13	20.0	20.0
Major problem	10	15.4	15.4
Total	65	100.0	100.0

Item	Frequencies	%	Valid %
<b>Locating utilities</b>			
No problem	19	29.2	29.2
Minor problem	30	46.2	46.2
Moderate problem	15	23.1	23.1
Major problem	1	1.5	1.5
Total	65	100.0	100.0
<b>Making friends</b>			
No problem	29	44.6	45.3
Minor problem	17	26.2	26.6
Moderate problem	10	15.4	15.6
Major problem	8	12.3	12.5
Total	64	98.5	100.0
Missing	1	1.5	
Total	65	100.0	

Item	Frequencies	%	Valid %
Obtaining the necessities of life			
No problem	36	55.4	55.4
Minor problem	21	32.3	32.3
Moderate problem	7	10.8	10.8
Major problem	1	1.5	1.5
Total	65	100.0	100.0

Finding a place to practice your religion

No problem	48	73.8	80.0
Minor problem	8	12.3	13.3
Moderate problem	4	6.2	6.7
Total	60	92.3	100.0
Missing	5	7.7	
Total	65	100.0	

Item	Frequencies	%	Valid %
<b>Learning to deal with your personal safety</b>			
No problem	44	67.7	67.7
Minor problem	19	29.2	29.2
Moderate problem	2	3.1	3.1
Total	65	100.0	100.0
<b>Experiencing physical danger</b>			
No problem	44	67.7	69.8
Minor problem	11	16.9	17.5
Moderate problem	8	12.3	12.7
Total	63	96.9	100.0
Missing	2	3.1	
Total	65	100.0	

Item	Frequencies	%	Valid %
Experiencing physiological problems			
No problem	28	43.1	43.8
Minor problem	27	41.5	42.2
Moderate problem	9	13.8	14.1
Total	64	98.5	100.0
Missing	1	1.5	
Total	65	100.0	
Meeting medical needs			
No problem	29	44.6	44.6
Minor problem	23	35.4	35.4
Moderate problem	12	18.5	18.5
Major problem	1	1.5	1.5
Total	65	100.0	100.0

Item	Frequencies	%	Valid %
Adjusting to the physical environment			
No problem	21	32.3	32.3
Minor problem	36	55.4	55.4
Moderate problem	6	9.2	9.2
Major problem	2	3.1	3.1
Total	65	100.0	100.0

Learning about the local culture and customs

No problem	32	49.2	49.2
Minor problem	25	38.5	38.5
Moderate problem	6	9.2	9.2
Major problem	2	3.1	3.1
Total	65	100.0	100.0

Item	Frequencies	%	Valid %
Adjusting to the local culture			
No problem	20	30.8	30.8
Minor problem	26	40.0	40.0
Moderate problem	15	23.1	23.1
Major problem	4	6.2	6.2
Total	65	100.0	100.0

Dealing with the pace of conducting business

No problem	32	49.2	49.2
Minor problem	19	29.2	29.2
Moderate problem	10	15.4	15.4
Major problem	4	6.2	6.2
Total	65	100.0	100.0



Item	Frequencies	%	Valid %
Feeling at home in your working environment			
No problem	28	43.1	43.1
Minor problem	27	41.5	41.5
Moderate problem	8	12.3	12.3
Major problem	2	3.1	3.1
Total	65	100.0	100.0
If acting in a supervisory role, relating to workers from different cultural background			
No problem	21	32.3	36.2
Minor problem	18	27.7	31.0
Moderate problem	17	26.2	29.3
Major problem	2	3.1	3.4
Total	58	89.2	100.0
Missing	7	10.8	
Total	65	100.0	

Item	Frequencies	%	Valid %
<b>Travel to a new location</b>			
No problem	28	43.1	43.1
Minor problem	20	30.8	30.8
Moderate problem	16	24.6	24.6
Major problem	1	1.5	1.5
Total	65	100.0	100.0

### **5.3 Research question three: What factors affect the adjustment of employees when working on international relocation.**

This question is primarily concerned with the potential factors (independent variables) that may affect adjustment as outlined in the conceptual framework. These are: motivation and goals, attitudes and perceptions, past experiences, personality, family, and employment in the new environment. The dependent variable, was the total adjustment score calculated for each respondent by adding together the individual scores from each item in section one of the questionnaire. The adjustment scores ranged from 19 (good adjustment) to 76 (poor adjustment). Data from only 51 participants were available for analysis due to missing data.

#### **5.3.1 Motivation and goals.**

Motivation and goals for an international worker are varied and often complex, but they form the first important step as part of the process to successful relocation. Motivation and goals to work on international secondment were measured by responses to the

question: “Which of the following statements best describes why you made the decision to work on international secondment?” Participants chose from a list of responses: job promotion ( $n = 3$ ), happier working life ( $n = 3$ ), financial rewards ( $n = 11$ ), assigned by employer ( $n = 22$ ), to achieve professional goal ( $n = 10$ ) and excitement ( $n = 3$ ).

Mean adjustment scores (with standard deviations in parentheses) for the six motivation groups were job promotion 40.6 (4.6), financial rewards 40.0 (10.5), assigned by employer 35.9 (9.6), excitement 35.3 (7.5), professional goal 34.2 (9.0), happier working life 30.6 (9.0).

The best adjusted people were those who were motivated by a happier working life. Those who went for reasons of promotion were the most poorly adjusted. However, because  $n = 3$ , this result may not be reliable. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) performed on the adjustment scores showed no significant associations with these motivational factors  $F(5,46) = 0.80$   $p = 0.55$ .

### **5.3.2 Attitude and Perception.**

The attitude and perception factors deal with the feelings and preconceived ideas which the individuals have in their foreign setting. This was measured by the responses to the following questions:

A “To what extent do you have an interest in your own cultural background?”

Participants chose one from a list of three statements: very strong interest, ( $n = 18$ ), strong interest, ( $n = 30$ ), no interest, ( $n = 3$ ).

Mean adjustment scores (with standard deviation in parentheses) for the three groups were, strong interest, 37.3 (7.8), very strong 36.1 (12.1), no interest, 29.6 (4.5). This sample had a strong to very strong interest in their own cultural background. Those with no interest in their own cultural background were the best adjusted, whereas those with a

strong or very strong interest in their own cultural background were the worst adjusted. ANOVA performed on the adjustment scores indicated no significant associations with interest in personal cultural background  $F(3, 48) = 0.64$   $p = 0.58$ .

B. "To what extent would you describe your tolerance to other cultures other than your own?" Participants chose from a list of three statements: very tolerant, ( $n = 11$ ), tolerant, ( $n = 37$ ), intolerant, ( $n = 4$ ).

Mean adjustment scores (with standard deviations in parentheses) for the three groups were: tolerant, 37.7(9.4), intolerant, 33.7 (7.5). very tolerant, 32.7 (9.3). There was no obvious relationship between tolerance and adjustment. This finding was confirmed by ANOVA  $F(2,49) = 1.42$ ,  $p = 0.25$ .

C. "Are you familiar with any other culture other than your own?" Participants chose from a list of three statements: very familiar, ( $n = 17$ ), familiar, ( $n = 18$ ), not very familiar, ( $n = 17$ ).

Mean adjustment scores (with standard deviation in parentheses) for the three groups were: very familiar, 38.2 (12.4), not very familiar, 35.7 (7.1), familiar, 35.2 (8.0). There was no obvious trend in the association between culture and adjustment. This was confirmed by ANOVA  $F(2,49) = 0.48$ ,  $p = 0.62$ .

### **5.3.3 Past experiences.**

The past experiences factor was measured by asking the question, "How many different countries have you lived in, over the last fifteen years, as a result of relocation?"

Participants chose from a list of six responses: zero, ( $n = 4$ ), one country ( $n = 9$ ), two countries, ( $n = 21$ ), three countries, ( $n = 7$ ), four countries, ( $n = 9$ ), more than four countries ( $n = 2$ ).

Mean adjustment scores (with standard deviation in parentheses) for the six groups were: one country, 42.7 (10.5), four countries, 38.5 (8.4), three countries, 35.2 (11.1), two countries, 34.7 (9.1), zero countries 34.2 (6.5), more than four countries, 25.5 (0.7). The majority of this group had lived in one other country besides their own. Those who had lived in more than four other countries were the best adjusted while those who had lived in one other country were the worst adjusted. However, there was no obvious trend in the association between the number of countries previously lived in and adjustment. This finding was confirmed by ANOVA,  $F(5, 46) = 1.8, p = 0.12$ .

#### **5.3.4 Personality.**

The personality of the workers is relevant to the way in which they perceive their situation, and this can influence their ability to adapt as is outlined in the literature review (Brewster, 1991; Brown, 1982; Church, 1982; Mumma, 1992). Personality is often very difficult to measure quantitatively without complex psychometric testing. As this was not possible in this study, individuals were asked how they personally rated themselves in the areas of capability, amenability and personality types. These personal characteristics were measured by responses to the following questions:

A. "To what extent do you feel capable of learning new social skills?" There were two responses: very capable and capable. Those participants in the very capable category had a mean adjustment score of 33.9, (SD = 10.1). Which indicates better adjustment than for those participants in the capable category whose adjustment score was 37.5, (SD=8.9). An independent sample t-test indicated that the difference was not significant ( $p = 0.21$ ).

B. "To what extent do you consider yourself to be amenable to changes in your life?" Participants chose one from a list of three responses: Very amenable, ( $n = 10$ ), amenable ( $n = 39$ ), not amenable ( $n = 3$ ).

Mean adjustment scores (with standard deviations in parentheses) for the three groups were: amenable, 37.4 (9.2), not amenable, 35.3 (11.2), very amenable 32.6 (9.2). Those who were amenable were the worst adjusted and those who were very amenable were the best adjusted. There was no obvious trend in association between amenability and adjustment. This was confirmed by ANOVA  $F(2,49) = 1.0, p = 0.34$ .

C. “How would you describe your personality?” Participants chose one from a list of three statements: outgoing ( $n=8$ ), sociable ( $n = 26$ ), reserved ( $n =17$ ).

Mean adjustment scores (with standard deviation in parentheses) for the three groups were: sociable, 37.4 (8.4), reserved, 35.5 (11.0), outgoing 35.5 (9.6). Those who were sociable were the worst adjusted and those who were outgoing and those who were reserved were the best adjusted. There was no association between personality and adjustment. This was confirmed by ANOVA,  $F = (2, 48), = 0.26, p = 0.77$

### **5.3.5 Family.**

Family factors were measured by responses to the question “Was dealing with the adjustment problems of your family a problem for you?” Participants chose one answer from a list of the following responses : no problem ( $n=21$ ), minor problem ( $n = 10$ ), moderate problem ( $n =14$ ), major problem ( $n= 13$ ).

About half the sample reported having moderate to major problems with family adjustment. It was not possible to directly test the relationship between family factors in section one of the questionnaire and adjustment, hence an alternative analysis was undertaken. This involved testing the relationship between family problems ( section 1, item m) and satisfaction with secondment (section 3, item 15).

The mean satisfaction scores (with standard deviations in parentheses) for the four groups were: no problem, 2.1 (0.8), minor problem, 2.1 (0.3), moderate problem 2.2

(0.8), major problem, 3.2 (0.9). Thus, those who were the most dissatisfied with their secondment were those with major family problems. ANOVA performed on family and satisfaction with their secondment indicated that the groups differed significantly on satisfaction,  $F(3, 3,4) = 5.8$   $p = 0.002$ .

Another important family issue was the problems that the participants had with absent family (section 3, question 8) and overall adjustment. This was measured by responses to the question. "If you have left your partner in the country of origin, how difficult do you feel it has been for your partner to adjust to your working on international secondment?" Participants chose one answer from a list of the following responses: no problem ( $n = 7$ ), minor problem ( $n = 16$ ), moderate problem ( $n = 17$ ).

Mean adjustment scores for the groups were moderate problem, 44.0 (7.6), minor problem, 33.0 (8.2), no problem, 30.2 (5.7). The group with the best adjustment score were those who responded as having had no family problems. Those who were the worst adjusted were those who described themselves as having moderate problems.

ANOVA performed on the adjustment scores indicated that these groups differed significantly on adjustment,  $F(2, 697.3) = 11.9$ ,  $p = 0.0001$ .

### **5.3.6 Employment in the new environment.**

The participants' views on the pace of conducting business in their new environment and the satisfaction with their current secondment was gauged by asking the following question from section 1 question r): "Was dealing with the pace of business in your new environment a problem for you?" participants chose from a list of four responses: No problem, ( $n = 31$ ), minor problem, ( $n = 19$ ), moderate problem ( $n = 10$ ) major problem ( $n = 4$ ) The mean adjustment scores (with standard deviation in parentheses) for the four

groups were: no problem, 2.1 (0.6), minor problem, 2.4 (0.8), moderate problem 2.6 (0.8) and major problem 3.5 (1.0).

Those respondents who reported that they had no problem were the most satisfied and those who had major problems were the least satisfied. ANOVA performed on the scores indicated that the groups differed significantly on adjustment,  $F(3, 2.6) = 4.6$   $p = 0.006$ .

The first question that addresses the relationship between adjustment and the relationship between adjustment and the environment was: "How would you describe your feelings about life in the first four weeks of your secondment?" Participants chose one from a list of six responses: very satisfied ( $n = 3$ ), somewhat satisfied ( $n = 16$ ), neutral ( $n = 21$ ), somewhat dissatisfied ( $n = 8$ ), very dissatisfied ( $n = 3$ ). Mean adjustment scores (with standards deviations in parentheses) for the six groups were: very dissatisfied, 48.6 (1.5), somewhat dissatisfied 46.3 (8.4), neutral, 36.4 (7.3), somewhat satisfied, 31.5 (7.1), very satisfied, 29.3 (5.6).

Those respondents who were best adjusted were in the very satisfied group. Those who were the worst adjusted were in the very dissatisfied group.

ANOVA performed on adjustment scores indicated that these groups differed significantly on adjustment,  $F(4, 46) = 8.4$ ,  $p < 0.00003$ .

The second question addressing the relationship between adjustment and employment in the new environment was: "Are you satisfied with your current secondment?"

Participants chose one from a list of four responses : Strongly agree ( $n = 3$ ), agree ( $n = 30$ ), disagree ( $n = 9$ ), undecided ( $n = 9$ ). Mean adjustment scores (with standard deviations in parentheses) for the three groups were: undecided, 43.3 (11.4),



disagree, 40.4 (6.9), agree 33.8 (7.6), strongly agree, 25.3 (6.0). ANOVA performed on the adjustment scores indicated that these groups differed significantly on adjustment,  $F(3, 47) = 5.5, p < 0.002$ .

Those respondents in the strongly agree category were the best adjusted, while those in the undecided category were the worst adjusted. It is worth noting that the mean adjustment scores for those in the categories of very satisfied and agree in the two previous questions are greater than the neutral score of 28.5, hence they tended to be poorly adjusted.

#### **5.4 Research question four: To what extent do demographic factors affect the adjustment to international relocation?**

##### **5.4.1 Gender.**

Females had a mean adjustment score of 33.7, (SD = 7.9). The higher mean adjustment score for males 38.7, (SD = 10.0) indicates that females were slightly better adjusted. An independent sample t-test indicated that this difference was not significant ( $p = 0.54$ ). There was no significant association between gender and adjustment.

##### **5.4.2 Marital status.**

Single status individuals had a mean adjustment score of 38.4, (SD 9.4). For those travelling with a partner the mean adjustment score was 32.2, (SD 8.4). This indicated that those travelling with partners were better adjusted than those participants who were travelling alone. An independent sample t-test indicated that this difference was not significant ( $p = 2.2$ ). Therefore there was no significant association between marital status and adjustment.

##### **5.4.3 Age.**

To measure the age of the participants, they chose one from a list of five categories: *30 years or younger* ( $n = 5$ ), *31–40 years* ( $n = 26$ ), *41–50 years* ( $n = 22$ ), *51–60 years* ( $n =$

11), *61 or older*, ( $n = 1$ ). Groups were not collapsed as it was of interest to see the real distribution of the age range. Mean adjustment scores for the five groups were: *30 years or younger*, 2.1 (.49), *41–50 years*, 1.8 (.48) *31–40 years*, 1.8 (.48), *51–60 years* 1.6 (.48), *61 or older* 1.5 (-).

Those participants who were the best adjusted were in the 61 or older age group, whereas those who were the worst adjusted were in the 30 or younger age group.

ANOVA performed on the adjustment scores showed no significant association,  $F(4, 60) = 0.99$ ,  $p = 0.41$ .

### **5.5 Research question five: What types of relocation assistance were given to respondents prior to relocation?**

Table 8 summarises the frequencies and percentages of variables in section two of the questionnaire. This section was concerned with assistance given pre departure. It relates to the section of the conceptual framework outlining whether or not pre departure and cross cultural training were given.

The pre departure assistance given to the group as a whole was minimal. The majority received little in the way of pre departure notice or a pre departure trip to their new place of work. In contrast, one third of the group had been given a reading list about their new environment. The majority of participants had no help with family matters or self reliance training. Many claimed that they were not trained to work effectively in their new environment.

In relation to issues such as cross cultural training, recognising the effects of culture shock and training in values and culture, the figures again reflected that the majority of workers received very little assistance. The simple and inexpensive types of assistance were the most commonly reported forms of assistance received. Just over two thirds of

respondents were able to talk to people who had been or were still at the new location. It is not clear whether this relatively high percentage may possibly have been due to the participants themselves making the effort to find out about their new location or whether their company had made it possible. Just over half the sample were in touch with their families at home. Nearly half the sample had received assistance from a local person or in the form of orientation meetings. The majority of the participants spoke English as their native language and as they were being relocated to an English speaking country it was predictable that the majority did not have a language course before their relocation.

Table 8

Frequency of the types of assistance given prior to relocation.

Assistance	Frequencies	%	Valid %
Departure notice			
No	51	78.5	78.5
Yes	14	21.5	21.5
Total	65	100.0	100.0
Pre departure trip			
No	47	72.3	72.3
Yes	18	27.7	27.7
Total	65	100.0	100.0

Assistance	Frequencies	%	Valid %
<b>Reading list</b>			
No	44	67.7	67.7
Yes	21	32.3	32.3
Total	65	100.0	100.0
<b>Family assistance prior to relocation</b>			
No	63	96.9	96.9
Yes	2	3.1	3.1
Total	65	100.0	100.0
<b>Self reliance training</b>			
No	59	90.8	90.8
Yes	6	9.2	9.2
Total	65	100.0	100.0

Assistance	Frequencies	%	Valid %
<b>Training to work effectively</b>			
No	56	86.2	86.2
Yes	9	13.8	13.8
Total	65	100.0	100.0
<b>Cross cultural training</b>			
No	57	87.7	87.7
Yes	8	12.3	12.3
Total	65	100.0	100.0
<b>Culture shock training</b>			
No	58	88.2	89.2
Yes	6	9.2	9.2
Missing	1	1.5	1.5
Total	65	100.0	100.0

Assistance	Frequencies	%	Valid %
<b>Values and culture training</b>			
No	51	78.5	78.5
Yes	14	21.5	21.5
Total	65	100.0	100.0
<b>Talking to people at new location</b>			
No	19	29.2	29.2
Yes	46	70.8	70.8
Total	65	100.0	100.0
<b>Regular communication with home</b>			
No	32	49.2	49.2
Yes	33	50.8	100.0
Total	65	100.0	100.0

Assistance	Frequencies	%	Valid %
<b>Local person to help</b>			
No	35	53.8	53.8
Yes	30	46.2	46.2
Total	65	100.0	100.0
<b>Orientation meeting</b>			
No	36	55.4	56.3
Yes	28	43.1	43.8
Total	64	98.5	100.0
<b>Foreign language course</b>			
No	62	95.4	95.4
Yes	3	4.6	4.6
Total	65	100.0	100.0

Despite the lack of pre departure assistance given to the participants about half reported that they were satisfied with this level of assistance. The responses were as outlined in Table 9.

Table 9

Satisfaction with assistance

Response	frequency	%	Valid %
Very satisfied	4	6.2	6.2
Moderately satisfied	28	43.1	43.1
Moderate dissatisfied	17	26.2	26.2
Very dissatisfied	16	24.6	24.6
Total	65	100.0	100.0

### 5.6 Research question six: What is the relationship between relocation assistance and total adjustment scores?

To test the association between the different forms of assistance given and overall adjustment, multiple t-tests were performed. However multiple comparisons may result in significance being achieved by chance alone. To address this problem the Bonferroni procedure was used. This procedure involved dividing the overall significance level of 0.05 by the number of t tests performed. The adjusted significance level was 0.0036.

Using the above procedure there was only one item for which a significant association between assistance and total adjustment was observed. This was in the area of training to work effectively in the new environment. Those who reported having received training to work effectively in the new environment were significantly better adjusted than those who did not ( $p = 0.0002$ ). There was a trend towards better adjustment for those who had training in values and culture but this was not significant at the adjusted level ( $p = 0.02$ ).



Table 10

Assistance and Total Adjustment

Assistance item	Mean	SD	t	df	p
<b>Pre departure Trip</b>					
No	37.97	9.62	1.9	50	0.057
Yes	32.53	7.74			
<b>Pre departure Notice</b>					
No	37.25	9.54	1.19	50	0.230
Yes	33.58	8.60			
<b>Talk to people at new location</b>					
No	38.37	10.18	1.01	50	0.317
Yes	35.52	9.01			
<b>Orientation meeting</b>					
No	38.07	10.57	1.40	48.3	0.167
Yes	34.47	7.69			

Assistance item	Mean	SD	t	df	p
<b>Local person to help</b>					
No	37.46	9.72	0.95	50	0.345
Yes	34.95	8.90			
<b>Regular communication with home</b>					
No	36.40	9.44	-0.003	50	0.998
Yes	36.40	9.50			
<b>Reading list</b>					
No	37.50	9.78	1.162	50	0.251
Yes	34.33	8.45			
<b>Cross cultural training</b>					
No	36.91	9.58	1.085	50	0.283
Yes	32.50	7.06			

Assistance item	Mean	SD	t	df	p
<b>Effects of culture shock</b>					
No	36.68	9.63	0.794	49	0.431
Yes	32.75	7.22			
<b>Self reliance training</b>					
No	36.83	9.48	1.355	50	0.181
Yes	29.33	2.88			
<b>Training to work effectively</b>					
No	37.34	9.53			
Yes	29.16	2.92	4.434	23.44	0.0002
<b>Value and culture training</b>					
No	37.95	9.17	2.40	50	0.020
Yes	30.63	8.13			

Assistance item	Mean	SD	t	df	p
<b>Foreign language course</b>					
No	36.34	9.46	-0.243	50	0.809
Yes	38.0	9.89			
<b>Family assistance</b>					
No	36.50	9.44	0.578	50	0.566
Yes	31.00				

## 6.0 DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to identify the factors affecting adjustment to working on short term international secondment and to make recommendations for assistance that could be given to make the total experience less stressful, more economically viable for employers and less mentally and physically detrimental to the employees and their families.

Previous research has established that there is an increasing trend towards market globalisation , and that this is a continuing phenomenon which shows no signs of abating (Caligiuri et al, 1998; Coyle & Shortland,1992; Frazee,1998). To feed this development, organizations are committing their employees and their families to a peripatetic lifestyle. To be internationally relocated requires employees working in a multicultural environment where they may be technically proficient but lack the necessary cultural nuance which can help in communication (Moon, 1996). Kim (1977) identifies causal factors in communication patterns of foreign immigrants in the processes of cultural adjustment as: language competencies, acculturation and motivation, sex, age, time spent in the host country. The level of education is also seen as a relevant variable.

Existing research is very much centred on the role played by expatriate worker's wives and families in the process of adjusting to working abroad, especially those with dual careers and school age children (Harvey,1996). This study looked at the problem from a different angle; this was primarily from the point of view of the workers themselves and concentrated on those who worked on short term secondment.

The conceptual framework for this study was designed using the potential factors which were associated with maladjustment on international relocation. These were highlighted in the literature review and provided the basis of the questionnaire. This chapter will

discuss the results under the headings of the six research questions. The limitations of the study and the recommendations for further research will be discussed. Also the implications for future practice in the light of cross cultural training programmes will be outlined.

### **6.1 Research question one: What are the socio demographic characteristics of the sample?**

This question relates to the characteristics of the participants but excludes the demographic factors which are described at length in research question four. The majority of participants were from English speaking countries and there was little difference between their country of birth and their citizenship. The amount of time on secondment for the majority of participants was less than one year and there was no association between length of stay and adjustment. In most culture shock theories there is a relationship between time and adjustment, the longer the stay in a foreign location the more likely that adjustment will take place. On the other hand, short stays, as described in this study, may mean that adjustment is not necessary as in the case of tourists. In Oberg's (1960) culture shock theory he describes an initial "honeymoon period" where everything that is new is exciting, after which the reality of the situation finally sinks in. This process is also described in the "U" shaped curve theory. These models have a significant problem in that they are too generalised in their theory and no specific time frame is given for the adjustment process to take place.

A problem inherent in the aforementioned theories is the lack of consideration given to the individual nature of the past experiences, influences and personal characteristics of the expatriates (Crow, 1974) as these all reflect on the adjustment process. There are many variables associated with culture shock which elicit many different outcomes. Demographic and psychological variables both have to be taken into account (Furnham

& Bochner, 1990). Most people have different cultural values, which have been ingrained in them from childhood by tradition through successive generations. Individuals are therefore seen as culturally conditioned beings (Seeyle & Seeyle-James, 1995). When a person realises this, differences can then be acknowledged, appreciated and accepted. Unproductive emotions such as animosity and criticism can then be replaced by harmony and mutual respect.

The results for the item concerned with the educational background of this sample agreed with previous research findings that many overseas workers are tertiary educated (Windham International, 1997). This suggests that international relocation is actually a relocation of skills rather than simply of manpower.

## **6.2 Research Question two: How well adjusted to international relocation is the study sample?**

Adjustment is not a new phenomenon to the human race and man is constantly adjusting his behaviour according to the standards set in his surrounding environment (Burchinal & Bauder, 1965, Church, 1983; Coelho et al, 1974). This learning process is an evolution dependent on a melange of nurture and nature, thus a failure to adjust to international relocation can be seen as detrimental to the worker's health and well-being.

Expatriates are effectively aliens in another culture and they may be unable or unwilling to learn the social skills needed to perform in that culture. Cross-cultural problems occur because such people have trouble in negotiating everyday encounters (Oberg, 1960). For expatriates in a foreign country emotions generated by feeling helpless are compounded because they are normal and well-educated people who have had no problems with social interaction in their own country where they were in fact, well adjusted. The feelings which they are now experiencing are alien to them and serve to add to their

frustrations. The problem is further exacerbated when an expatriate lacks a social support system such as family or friends.

Before adjustment can be measured an understanding of how humans adjust is important. Adjusting is a natural process (Mechanic, 1974) and human behaviour is not a random process (Hofstede, 1980), however, new behaviour does not come instinctively (Brown, 1982). In measuring how well the participants in this study adjusted to international relocation a discrepancy was seen to exist. The results of the total adjustment scores showed a tendency for the group as a whole to be poorly adjusted overall. On the other hand when adjustment was measured by satisfaction there was a tendency for the participants to admit to being satisfied with their current situation. Three possible explanations for this finding are suggested; firstly, the assumption that satisfaction is associated with adjustment, may be flawed. Secondly, the instrument used to measure adjustment may need further testing for validity. Thirdly, bearing in mind Oberg's culture shock theory, the relatively short length of time that the participants had been in their new environment means that they have not completed the process of adjustment.

### **6.3 Research question three: What factors affect the adjustment of employees on international relocation?**

The instrument used in this study incorporated many of the characteristics, outlined in the literature review, which were cited as prerequisites for successful expatriates. These were motivation, attitudes and perception, past experiences, personality, family and employment (Lovingood, 1995; Shaffer & Shoben, 1959; Mumma, 1993; Staats, 1975). In this study, participants who were motivated, by moving abroad, for a happier working life were the best adjusted as opposed to people who were motivated for promotion who were the most poorly adjusted.



The relationship between motivation and adjustment was not significant for the participants in this study. This finding is contrary to other findings. A reason for this discrepancy could be attributed to the short duration of the assignments and also to the different way in which motivation was actually measured in this study as compared with those studies previously undertaken. White (1974) saw intrinsic motivation as a key factor for successful adjustment in overseas relocation. Torbion (1982) by measuring the interest that his participants had in their country of relocation found that an interest in the host country was the most successful motivator, and went on to say that the factor of motivation is an important starting point for successful adjustment. Without intrinsic motivation to adapt, adjustment cannot take place (Torbion, 1982).

The attitudes and perceptions of the participants were factors which were measured by the instrument to demonstrate the feelings that the participants had towards their own cultural background and other cultures. There was no significant association between culture and adjustment in this study.

Bearing in mind that culture can be seen as ethnocentric behaviour based on societal values, traditions and personal perceptions, it would be logical to assume that there should be an association between cultural factors and adjustment. In modern society cultural diversity can be a minefield for the uninformed and unenlightened and can lead to inappropriate actions and behaviour, ignorance and ultimately fear. In a work environment chaos can ensue if the rules of the predominant culture are not understood and adhered to. If the potential damaging results of culture shock are not appreciated, physical and psychological problems could spell disaster for some employees on international relocation.

A possible explanation as to the lack of association between cultural factors and adjustment could be found in the small sample size or a problem in the instrument which lacked the sensitivity to detect the expected relationships.

Culture can and is defined in a myriad of ways. Hofstede (1980) describes culture as “Culture is to human society collectively what personality is to an individual ” To some researchers the world is becoming homogeneous and pluralistic (Cooper & Denner, 1998; Furnham & Bochner, 1991). This viewpoint fails to take into account the components of culture such as value, attitude and behaviour (Adler, 1986). The culture shock theory (Oberg,1960), the U-and W curve model (Lysgaard,1955; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963) and the stage-wise theory (Adler, 1986) all look at ways of living and working in different cultures. They are all useful in describing the process of adjustment but omit to link the adjustment to the individual’s characteristics, motivation, perceptions and past experiences.

Consistent with the literature is the fact that the number of different countries that the participants lived in previous to their present secondment did not make adjustment any easier for them (Oberg,1960; Adler,1984). Consequently, it can be seen that the learning process of adjustment involves working with different cultural nuances and not against them (Mesquite & Frijida, 1992). It also indicates the complexity of cultures in their behaviour and emotions (Korzan, 1997).

Consistent with the findings of Torbion (1982) tolerance and familiarity with other cultures were not significantly associated with the adjustment of this particular group of people. However, these characteristics have been found to be of importance in other literature (Lovingood, 1995; Brown, 1984; Brislin, Craig, & Yong, 1986; Caudron, 1991; Frazee, 1998). One possible explanation for these conflicting findings may be

found in the population samples used. Torbion's (1982) population sample consisted of business people, while the other researchers used a more diverse group of people and included students, and spouses.

The factor of personality was measured by asking questions related to how the participants rated their capability to cope with change, their amenability towards other cultures and how sociable they were. These questions were adapted from questionnaires used by both Brown (1982) and Lovingood (1995) There was no significant association between any of these factors and adjustment in this study. In contrast, Lovingood (1995) and Brown (1982) both found there to be a relationship between adjustment and a person's capability to cope with change and their amenability towards other cultures.

There was found to be a relationship between family problems experienced by the participants and their adjustment. This study reflected the current issues of the role played by the families of the expatriate worker. These were expressed in the literature review (Adaskin,1987; Caligiuri, Hyland & Joshi,1998; Crouter,1984; Fukuda & Chu, 1994; Harvey,1996; Hill,1949; Lynd,1965, Minuchin,1984.;McCollum,1990, Piotrkowski,1979; Schaeffer & Bayley, 1963). The group who reported no family problems were the most satisfied with their secondment, whereas those who were the least satisfied with their secondment were the least adjusted. In the area of dealing with absent family and overall adjustment, the results indicated that those with no problems with this item were better adjusted than those who had minor and moderate problems.

The vicarious effect that families have on workers can be demonstrated by the theoretical model of family adjustment and expatriate performance (Caligiuri, Hyland & Joshi, 1998). This model describes the spill over from home to work and vice versa.

Other researchers such as Harvey (1996) and Briody (1991) segregate the family

members and look at their specific problems. While these are of course important this approach is too simplistic and does not tell the whole story.

Harvey and Lusch (1982) and Hay (1972, 1974) reinforce the relationship between adjustment and family problems, notably that these particular problems affect the efficiency and effectiveness of the expatriate worker. Brown's (1982) study contained a sample of which fifty percent were spouses of relocated employees. She suggests that family characteristics should be taken into consideration by multinational organizations in the pre departure period as this increases the success of overseas assignments. From the evidence it is important for multinationals to focus on the family unit.

The association between satisfaction with the relocation and the pace of working life was also found to be significant. This is contrary to the viewpoint put forward in the literature review which describes workers as having no problems in adjusting to the pace of working in their new place of work. Previous research has concentrated on the effect that relocation has on the trailing wife and children of the relocated worker and little attention was given to the worker themselves. The reason for this was that the workers were seen as having made little change to their routine. This makes the assumption that the workers' employment would be relatively similar regardless of which country they were in, whereas in the case of the family a whole new social network and living experience had to be learnt.

This is simplistic and fails to see there is a micro culture within a culture, the enigmatic organisational culture which exists but is seldom defined. Organisational culture is also ethnocentric in its makeup and like many different forms of culture, organizational culture has a behaviour which has to be recognised and learnt by all new employees to ensure working success.

As expected, there was a significant association between satisfaction and employment in the new environment. Moreover, a significant positive association the respondents' satisfaction and their feelings in the first four weeks of their stay. This may be seen as being consistent with Oberg's (1960) culture shock theory which would describe these participants as being in the "honeymoon" stage or the initial stage of the adaptation process. Furthermore, the majority of participants at the time of answering the questionnaire had been on secondment for less than six months.

With hindsight it would have been useful to have the participants fill out a questionnaire at the beginning of their relocation and then another questionnaire at the end of their relocation and then compare their responses. This would give a more satisfactory result. Consequently, any future research on this topic should take the form of a longitudinal study which would give a better overall picture of how the participants were actually coping over time.

#### **6.4 Research question four: To what extent do demographic factors affect adjustment to international relocation?**

The demographic results showed that the participants were equally divided between the sexes. Windham International (1997) predict that more and more women will become part of the expatriate workforce in the year 2000 and beyond. This is not surprising as it will keep pace with the rise of women in the workforce as a whole. The mean adjustment scores indicated that female were slightly better adjusted than males, but there was no significant association between gender and adjustment. This is in contrast to Torbion's study (1982) where he found that businessmen adapted more easily than business women. A reason for this discrepancy may be that women in the workplace have gained more confidence in themselves and their abilities over the eighteen year gap between the studies.

The majority of participants were on unaccompanied status. This could be in part due to the relatively short duration of the assignments, which would make relocating a family uneconomical for the company and inappropriate to family members who have other commitments. This may account for the high proportion of problems that the group in this current study had with families.

Although, there does appear to be a trend in the number of expatriates on single status, this having increased by three percent from 10 percent to 13 percent in 1996 (Windham International, 1997), no research has been identified which would explain this increase. This study showed that those who were travelling with a partner were better adjusted than those people who were travelling alone, although there was no significant association between marital status and adjustment.

There was a trend for participants in this study to be concentrated in the 31-50 age group, consistent with Lovingood's (1995) study of expatriates in the U.S.A. In her study the best adjusted participants were those in the 61 years or older age bracket. A suggestion for this may be found in more mature workers having less dependent family and being more self sufficient and self assured.

#### **6.5 Research question five: What types of relocation assistance were given to respondents prior to international relocation?**

The findings of this study confirmed the findings in the literature review (Rao, 1995; Argyle, 1981; Brewster, 1997; Caudron, 1991) that the majority of expatriate workers and their families received little in the form of pre departure assistance in areas relating to cultural adjustment in or outside the workplace. The reasons for this were not analysed in this study, but it can be supposed from the evidence contained in the literature that the cost, in the form of financial resources and time, form a barrier to implementing this type of pre departure assistance.

Consequently, the financial incentives that are given to expatriates by their companies may not be sufficient to compensate for the adjustment changes imposed on these workers. It is important not to underestimate the trauma that can be caused by losing a sense of perspective on every day occurrences (Marris, 1980).

The simple and informal forms of assistance were the ones which were most commonly reported amongst the participants. Examples include having access to a reading list about their new environment and being able to talk to a person who had previously worked in that country. It is possible that these may have been individual initiatives rather than corporate ideas. Many respondents reported that assistance was forthcoming in the new place of work in the form of help from fellow colleagues.

Culturally based training, which can be given prior to an international secondment, benefits the expatriate workers, their families and their employer in reducing wastage of personal and financial resources on unsuccessful secondment which invariably leads to early repatriation (Garonzik, 1993; Lovingood, 1995; Brown, 1982; Caudron, 1991; Coyle & Shortland, 1992; Frazee, 1998; Leonard, 1994; Rao, 1995; Tung, 1982; Black & Mendenhall, 1990). Nevertheless, this study confirms the views in the literature that cross cultural training is not given to the extent which would eliminate or at least minimise problems for workers and their families.

The most widely used cultural training is based on Oberg's (1960) culture shock model. This can be classified as a pseudo-medical model, which implies that a person is unable to function effectively in a new environment and becomes confused and disoriented. There is a breakdown of physical and mental well-being and the person is unable to cope. Furnham and Bochner (1990) criticise this model as labelling people who are unable to cope with cross-cultural experience as failures, weaklings and stigmatises these individuals. The reality is that the inability to cope for some people, not all, does

exist and leads to medical symptoms if the difficulties go unrecognised. Problems created by cross-cultural maladaptation are not in themselves a medical problem but can rapidly develop in that direction if left untreated. The evidence documented in the literature review, which has been common knowledge for many years, is that pre departure training is necessary for successful cultural adjustment (Black and Mendenhall, 1990; Briody, 1991; Brislin et al, 1986; Caudron, 1991). Nonetheless, multinational companies choose to ignore the benefits that can be gained, both for themselves and their employees, in financial and productivity terms.

Training can give an individual a perspective on the reality of their impending situation, thus giving them an idea of what their expectations and their capabilities should be (Frazee, 1997; Weiss & Grippo, 1992). Training programmes themselves are a benefit to expatriate workers, so too is the interest and concern that can be shown through these workshops by a company to its employees (Rao, 1995; Garonzik, 1993). Feelings of isolation and loneliness intensify if there is little commitment on the part of the company to give both moral and practical support (Storti, 1990). The end result from any cross cultural training should be the control and manipulation of inappropriate social skills to produce a positive outcome to prevent isolation and rejection caused by social inadequacies.

#### **6.6 Research question six: What is the relationship between relocation assistance and total adjustment scores?**

The participants in this study tended, overall, to be poorly adjusted. It is not clear whether this was due to the low level of assistance that they received pre departure, or to the short duration of their stay. The only aspect of pre departure training which had a significant relationship with adjustment was in the area of culture and values. This finding does not necessarily mean that adjustment is possible with limited pre departure



training rather, that the lack of association between assistance and adjustment may again reflect problems with the instrument or even the small sample size. It should also be noted that the mean adjustment score for the sample indicated that the participants tended to be somewhat poorly adjusted as a group. If this study is used in conjunction with the Oberg's (1960) model of culture shock it may be justifiable to assume that the participants were still in their "honeymoon" phase and had not completed the whole process of adjustment. Hence they had not run the whole gamut of emotions that are involved in the adjustment process. Furthermore, as has previously been mentioned, the factor of individual susceptibility to making any adjustment must not be underestimated.

Adjustment is about changes in the way people live their lives, whether this is a domestic adjustment (Munton, 1988) or an international adjustment, it is simply a question of degree. Both Holmes and Rahe (1967) and the University College London/CBI Employee relocation council (1991) describe the stresses that can occur with changes to life patterns. Knowing the problem is part way to finding a solution. Bearing in mind Singapore' past colonial history and current financial viability, it has adopted many Western attitudes, therefore cultural adjustment in comparison to the western culture experienced by most of the participants in their home setting would not be that different. This is concurrent with the thinking that the closer the similarities between a person's own culture and the culture that they will experience the easier adjustment will be (Furnham & Bochner, 1990).

## **7.0 LIMITATIONS**

There were limitations to the study that future research in this area would have to address. The sample size was small and the results of this study may only be of relevance to the participants in the chosen organization. Nor can the findings be generalized to other populations or geographical locations. However the conceptual framework could be transferred to any organization and location. To measure the full extent of the relationship between the conceptual framework and the instrument it would have been useful to incorporate a qualitative methodology to guide the development of the instrument. This would have focussed on the participants' opinions, thoughts and feelings, and included input from the expatriate workers' families and their employer. This was not possible due to the distances and limited financial resources involved in this study. Given that the length of stay of the majority of the participants in this study was short term, results for long term relocation would not be comparable.

## 8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE PRACTICE

The results of this study have shown some of the adjustment problems which can occur for an expatriate worker on short term relocation. The inability to interpret simple events and to respond appropriately often leads to disorientation, frustration and lack of self-identity (Brown, 1982). This heightens the need to know the degree of social inadequacy that a person has. A problem is only a problem if the individual is experiencing difficulty in a social situation.

This study puts forward a modified motor skills theory as a theoretical frame work that could be used to identify and manipulate culturally inappropriate behaviour through training (Argyle & Kendon, 1967). This is not going to be the case for everyone who undergoes such training, but certain elements of inappropriate behaviour can be recognised and rectified to produce a positive outcome. Behaviour, of course, cannot be taken out of context. Certain social behaviour is specific to particular social situations. The inability to use appropriate social acts, verbal or non-verbal, in their appropriate setting leads to failure in that setting. Behaviour is a function of person, of situations and of person–situation interaction. It varies between cultures, subcultures and intra culturally, for example, through age, social class, and sex (Trower, Bryant & Argyle, 1978).

Research agrees that development of social skills starts at a very early age and that most of the basic “ingredients” of social skills are probably already present in very young children of pre-school age (Trower, Bryant & Argyle, 1978). Clarke and Clarke (1972) do point out that it is unwise to assume that early childhood experiences will predetermine the course of later development. Trower, Bryant and Argyle, (1978) state that where and how we learn our social skills is still a matter of debate. Most disciplines

do explain that social skills are acquired through various forms of learning, such as imitation, reinforcement and instruction and through exposure to a wide range of environmental opportunities and to skilled models such as parents, siblings, relatives, peers and others. “It follows that failure to acquire them would occur through a dearth of either skilled models or social opportunities, though in practice it is not possible to separate these two influences” (Trower, Bryant & Argyle, 1978).

To prevent problems occurring during international relocation, assistance could be given in the form of pre departure training programmes. Training programmes would differ according to the background characteristics of the individuals and their personal experiences. Furthermore it must not be forgotten that the individual’s country of primary residence is paramount in moulding his/her own experiences and attitudes.

Bennett (1977) describes training as helping individuals increase their effectiveness in their new culture. Bennett, (1977) also defines intercultural training as any procedure intended to increase an individual’s ability to cope with and work in a foreign environment. Harrison and Hopkin, (1967) suggest that intercultural training should include:

1. *communication*—to understand and communicate via verbal and non-verbal communication channels
2. *decision-making*—to develop the ability to make decisions based on inadequate or conflicting information and to be able to trust feelings or attitudes as well as facts when making decisions.
3. *commitment*—to relate to people of other cultures and to develop interpersonal relationships.

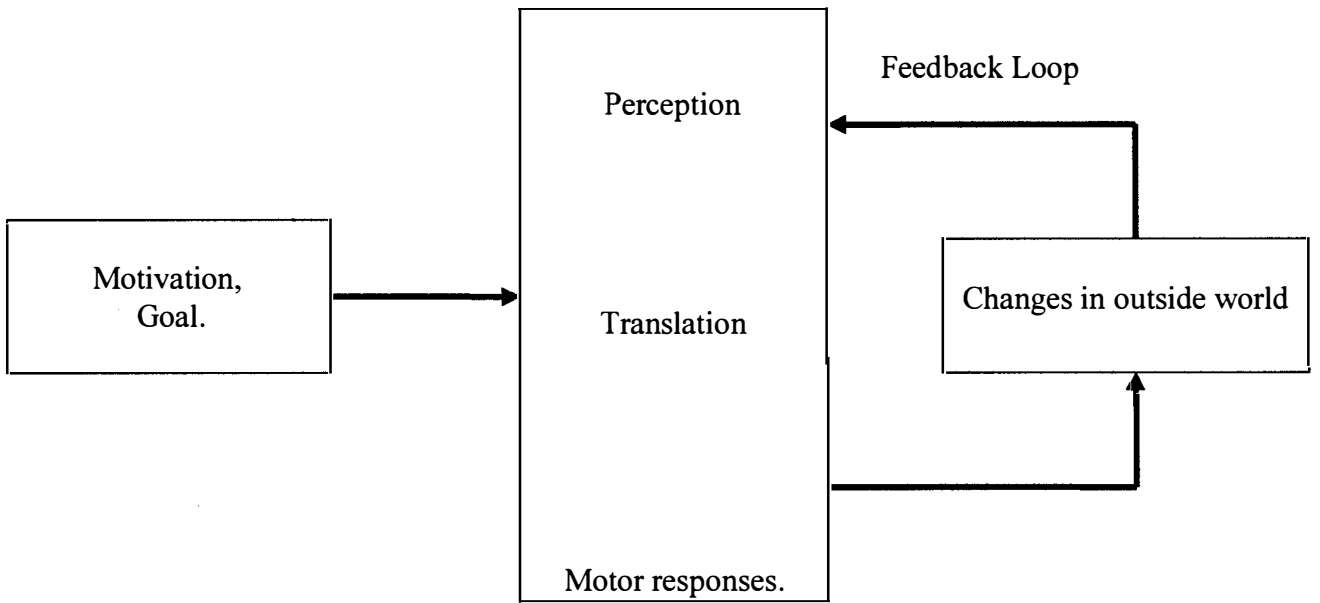
4. *ideals*—to value causes or objectives that are found in the here and now and embodied in the people in the immediate environment.

5. *problem-solving*—to solve a problem by seeing that decisions that effectively apply people's energies to overcoming some barriers are made and carried out.

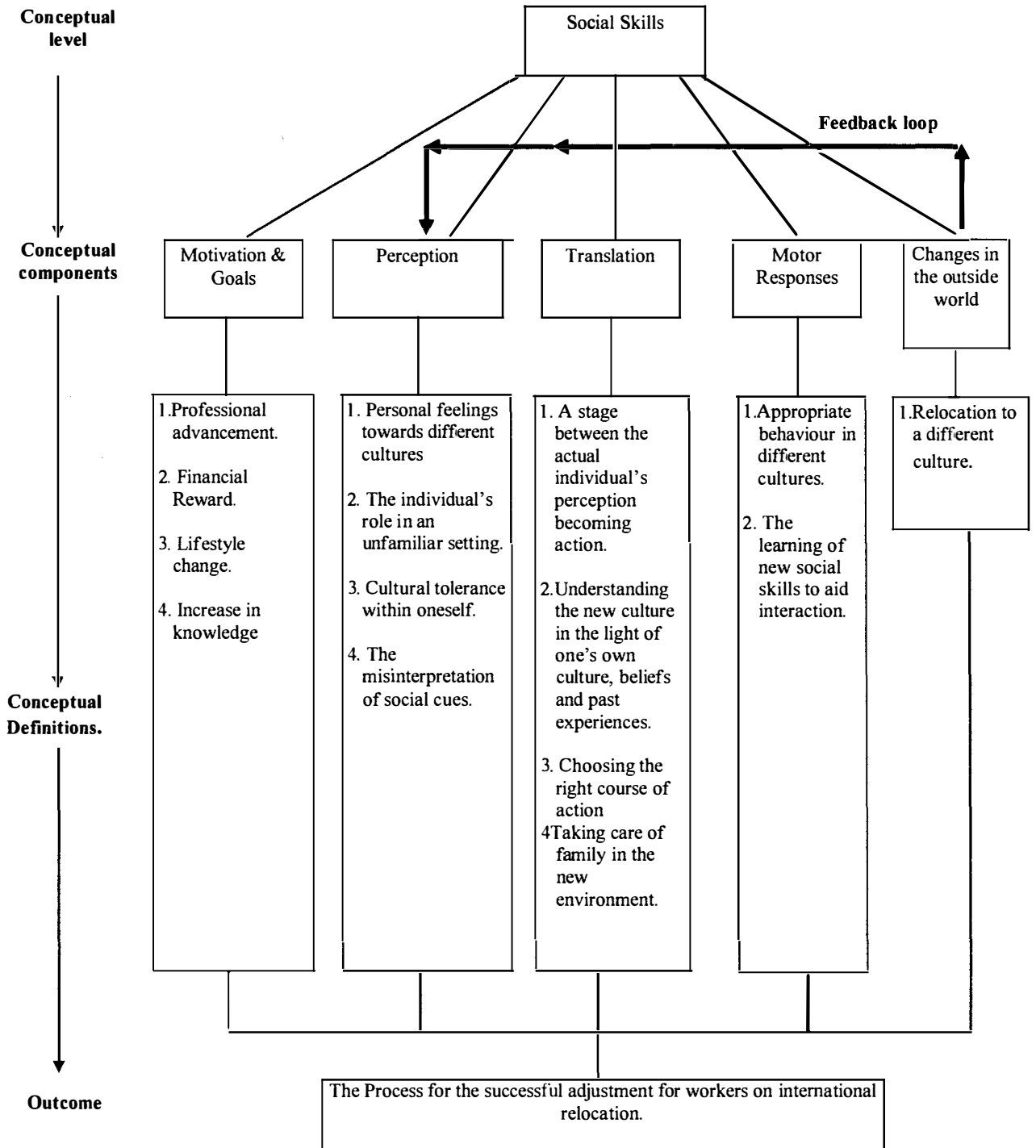
There are a variety of reasons given by companies for not investing in pre-departure training: Firstly, there is a feeling that such training programmes are generally ineffective. Secondly, expatriate trainees often express dissatisfaction with the training programmes. Thirdly, the time between selection and departure is usually short and there is not enough time to expose expatriates to in-depth acculturation training. Fourthly, there is a view that because the expatriate's assignment is temporary, it does not warrant training expenditures (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985, p. 40).

A useful approach to guide the development, implementation and evaluation of pre departure training is a modified version of Argyle and Kendon's (1967) motor skills model (Figure 7). The original concept was designed to assess and treat psychiatric patients who had difficulty in developing and maintaining their social relationships. In Figure 7 it can be seen that the actual motivation for an action, taken by an individual, is important as a starting point for the whole concept. Actions are constantly being evaluated and adjusted accordingly to the achievement of an individual's particular goal. Evaluation is achieved by the feedback loop which connects the individual's perception of the changes in the outside world with his or her own internal motivation for defining personal goals and translating them into appropriate courses of action.

The common thread between the original and modified models is the disorder associated with creating social relationships. The primary cause of the dysfunction is irrelevant.



**FIGURE 8** Motor skills model. (Argyle & Kendon, 1967)



**FIGURE 9** The modified motor skills theory model. Adapted from (Argyle & Kendon, 1967).

## **8.1 Practical application of the modified motor skills theory model.**

Figure 9 illustrates the modified model which has been included in the study as a possible future theoretical framework for cross cultural training for overseas workers and their families. It describes the transition from conceptual to outcome level in the process of adjustment for expatriates. The conceptual components are directly derived from the motor skills theory. From this, the conceptual definitions were created from the literature review and the study's conceptual framework.

It is envisaged that the modified model will have practical implications for future training. This would be achieved by creating a modular training course. This would consist of five modules each module relating to each element of the conceptual components. The first module would relate to the worker's motivation for working abroad and delve into their expectations and the goals that they would like to achieve on their future relocation. This gives the trainer an opportunity to encourage realistic expectations and assess the motivation of each candidate. The impetus for the move abroad, as the literature points out, can determine the success or failure of the secondment. Therefore, future stress for the worker and their family can be averted if the trainer can, at this stage, determine the candidates who are the least suited for the relocation.

The module dealing with perception looks at the feelings that the individuals could have in the foreign settings. There are soul searching questions to be answered here and many people may actually be faced with answering questions which they previously have never had to deal with eg racial questions, identity questions and probing one's inner self. To be able to gain the maximum from this module an individual has to be consciously aware of their deepest thoughts and feelings in relation to how they view their world and the people in it. The trainer's task here is to ascertain which candidate



would be unsuitable for an international transfer. On many occasions workers are relocated for their technical skills with no prior thought given to their abilities to communicate with people of differing cultures.

The translation stage relates to the trainer converting a cognitive process into practical behaviour which enables the worker to understand their current environment. From delving into their own beliefs and culture they are able to make sense of the beliefs and culture of other people. This does not necessarily mean that other cultures and beliefs have to be adopted, but they can be appreciated and accepted for being part of another nation's heritage and another people's way of life. The individual can then modify their own behaviour in the light of this new information to become more in tune with their host country. This aids communication from thoughts to action in an alien environment.

The fourth and fifth elements of motor response and changes in the outside world can be integrated. This would consist of describing the practicalities of the new environment, the actual process of living in the foreign environment such as the use of appropriate behaviour in a different cultural setting. Learning new ways of communication and dealing with problems and people. This is especially the case when the person is unfamiliar with the social situation, for example cross-cultural communication. The ability to see the other person's point of view is important in social behaviour, but unfortunately this only comes with experience. In monitoring one's own behaviour it is important to gauge the reaction of the other person or persons in the social situation. It is from this aspect of the model that a successful social performance can be realised. When misperception occurs a breakdown in social intercourse follows rapidly and a range of problems will inevitably result. Role play is an important tool which can be used to great advantage in this module.

Evaluation is critical to the success of the training programme. The adjustment process is not static but constantly evolving in a dynamic way. Changes have to be made sense of before they can be accepted and dealt with, hence the loop returns to the perception element for re emphasis.

The desired outcome of the training programme is twofold, it can instruct behavioural change and it can detect unsuitable candidates and families for overseas relocation. One stumbling block to the implementation of the training programme is the length of time which it takes to initiate behavioural modification. In short term relocation workers are expected to be given minimal notice, hence there would be no time to instigate a programme before departure.

A solution to this problem may be found in the way international companies approach their corporate training in general. Cross cultural training could be successfully integrated with general training and this could lay the foundations and create awareness for the need of employees to be culturally aware and see the need for behavioural modification techniques to aid successful communication abroad.

### **8.1.1 Summary of the modified model.**

The globalised workplace has increased the expectancy that employees will be peripatetic. In practical terms this means that workers and their families are expected to live and work in countries where the environment is alien to them and their previous experiences are of little value to them. Accordingly, the need for appropriate cross-cultural training programmes is a relevant issue in preventing problems which are associated with cultural adjustment in an unknown environment.

The modified model is a tool which can be used to identify and solve cross-cultural problems brought about by living and working in a foreign environment. The five

elements of the model combine cognitive processes and their ensuing actions to refine existing behaviour or change inappropriate behaviour. The model is not and should not be, used as a panacea for all social behavioural problems. The model can teach people the skills that they lack, but it cannot change their personality (Furnham & Bochner, 1990). Neither can it be used to force a person to comply to behavioural changes if they do not want too.

## **9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

This study highlighted the lack of assistance given by companies in cross-cultural training before workers go on international secondment and the following recommendations for future research are made with the aim of increasing assistance to expatriate workers. The most efficient and valuable form of assistance is cultural training. Hence more follow up research is needed to pinpoint exactly the correct content, teaching methods and time frame suitable for expatriate workers to achieve cultural adjustment before working abroad. Consequently, the adapted model would be a useful guide to achieving this.

Cross cultural training should include a section dedicated to discussing a continuing career structure for expatriate workers and this should be discussed before departure, so that the workers and their families are aware that life after repatriation does exist and that they will be able to continue working in their home base using the skills and talents that they have accumulated while working abroad.

However, the adapted model described in this study has yet to be evaluated as a framework on which to base pre-departure orientation training to facilitate appropriate use of behaviour in cross-cultural situations. It is also envisaged that training in this area would include the whole family unit, thus making international secondment a more holistic experience to enable each member of the family to be empathetic and sympathetic to the adjustment problems of each family member.

As important as further research into cross cultural training, is the research on the new trend of increasing single status secondments and the effect that this would have on the

expatriate workers' mental, physical and psychological well-being and that of their families.

Employees should be taken into account when the recruiting and selection process begins. Their expectations, their competencies and their personal characteristics should be assessed and matched against the employment position in the foreign country prior to departure. Repatriation should be discussed prior to departure thus lessening feelings of inadequacy and loss of control when the employee arrives back at home base after their secondment.

The adapted model can provide an avenue in which destructive emotions can be changed to a more positive approach in cross-cultural encounters. The social psychology of cross-cultural communication includes, verbal and non verbal communication, etiquette, rules and conventions, social/work relationships and ethnic intolerance (Furnham & Bochner, 1990). When applied in pre departure training, the adapted model can have important implications in cultural adjustment for expatriates in preventing cultural misunderstandings and inappropriate behaviour. It also highlights the need for a valid and reliable instrument to measure adjustment to relocation and evaluate the effects of pre departure training. This could be achieved by a qualitative research guided by, but not constrained by, the adapted model.

## 10.0 CONCLUSIONS

Unexpectedly, the group of participants used in this study, on the whole, appeared to be satisfied with the level of assistance that they received pre departure. Even though this was minimal, the most significant result from the study was that workers themselves do experience adjustment problems at work and as a group the participants in the study tended to be somewhat poorly adjusted. There should be no distinction made between workers and their families and future training assistance should reflect this.

Mendenhall and Oddou (1985) show that there is a clear need for effective selection and training policies and programmes for expatriates, while Black and Mendenhall (1990) see cross-cultural training as effective in developing important cross-cultural skills, in facilitating cross-cultural adjustment and in enhancing job performance.

The results of this study showed that, to ensure an overall adjustment for expatriate workers it is important to give them an opportunity to be aware of the obstacles and hazards that lie before them thus creating an opportunity to practice behaviour modification techniques in a learning environment where mistakes will not be financially costly or result in a battered self esteem. Because adjustment is as individual as personality, subsequent training needs and assistance have to be tailor made for each individual. Accordingly, a good starting point for pre departure is the selection of the most appropriate candidate not only for the job but also for the location. Thus a proactive method should see international companies have a sound and frequently evaluated and updated relocation policy to enable them to gauge the changes which can occur and meet these new demands before problems have an opportunity to spiral out of control.

Relocation assistance should not primarily be about selecting the right removal company and the right house, it is essentially about helping people to adapt their behaviour to enable them to successfully experience and appreciate new ways of working and living.

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## APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

### Section 1

**Possible adjustment problems to living and working on short-term international relocation to a foreign country.**

#### Instructions

**In each of the following statements, please indicate whether the problem posed is one that you faced in adjusting to your living and working conditions in your present country of secondment. This section is concerned with the adjustments made during your stay and should take approximately 5 minutes to complete.**

**Please circle your response to each item below using the following scale. Circle only one choice for each answer statement.**

**1 = No problem for me**

**2 = Minor problem for me**

**3 = Moderate problem for me**

**4 = Major problem for me**

**A. Travelling to a new location** 1 2 3 4

**B. Adjusting to the new environment** 1 2 3 4

**C. Locating utilities, e.g. lodgings, schools, shops,  
government departments, sport and recreational facilities** 1 2 3 4

**D. Experiencing physical danger** 1 2 3 4

<b>E. Experiencing physiological problems</b>	<b>1 2 3 4</b>
<b>F. Meeting medical needs, e.g. finding a doctor, buying medicine</b>	<b>1 2 3 4</b>
<b>G. Making friends</b>	<b>1 2 3 4</b>
<b>H Finding your way around the area of work</b>	<b>1 2 3 4</b>
<b>I Obtaining the necessities of life, e.g. clothes, food</b>	<b>1 2 3 4</b>
<b>J Finding a place to practise your religion</b>	<b>1 2 3 4</b>
<b>K. Learning about the local culture and customs</b>	<b>1 2 3 4</b>
<b>L Adjusting to the local culture</b>	<b>1 2 3 4</b>
<b>M Dealing with the adjustment problems of your family, e.g. children's schooling, partner who can not find work</b>	<b>1 2 3 4</b>
<b>N. Learning how to deal with your personal safety</b>	<b>1 2 3 4</b>
<b>O. Dealing with loneliness and isolation</b>	<b>1 2 3 4</b>
<b>P. Solving family problems which occur at home in your absence</b>	<b>1 2 3 4</b>
<b>Q. If acting in a supervisory role, relating to workers from different cultural backgrounds</b>	<b>1 2 3 4</b>
<b>R. Dealing with the pace of conducting business</b>	<b>1 2 3 4</b>
<b>S. Feeling at home with your working environment</b>	<b>1 2 3 4</b>

**Thank you for your time in completing this section.**

## QUESTIONNAIRE

### Section 2

**Possible assistance given in adjusting to living and working in your present international location before departure.**

**Instructions:**

**This questionnaire should take approximately 5 minutes to complete. The following list specifies various types of assistance which could be given to people before working on international relocation. Please circle either YES or NO for each of the statements that follow:**

**1. Did you have a trip (paid for by your present company) to your present location before embarking on the job?**

**YES or NO**

**2. Did you have at least three months' notice of departure before your move?**

**YES or NO**

**3. Did you have the opportunity before your move to talk to people who had been to your present location?**

**YES or NO**

**4. Did you have an orientation meeting with your future employer (either by phone or in person) prior to your secondment?**

**YES or NO**

**5. Was a local person assigned to you to provide you with help (in your present location) on arrival?**

**YES or NO**

**6. Do you have regular communications with your employer in your country of origin?**

**YES or NO**

**7. Were you given a recommended reading list about your present location?**

**YES or NO**

**8. Were you given training in cross-cultural communication skills?**

**YES or NO**

**9. Did you have training in recognising the effects of culture shock?**

**YES or NO**

**10. Did you have training in becoming self-reliant in your present location?**

**YES or NO**

**11. Did you receive instruction on how to work effectively in your present location?**

**YES or NO**

**12. Did you receive a foreign language course?**

**YES or NO**

**13. Did you receive instructions on the values and cultures common to the inhabitants of your present location?** /

**YES or NO**

**14. Did you and your family receive any assistance or counselling related to family separation prior to commencing your secondment?**

**YES or NO**

**15. Are you satisfied with the assistance you received in helping you adjust to working and living in a foreign country on short- or long-term secondment?**

- A. Very satisfied**
- B. Moderately satisfied**
- C. Moderately dissatisfied**
- D. Very dissatisfied**

**Thank you for your time in completing this section.**



## QUESTIONNAIRE

### Section 3

#### Background information

#### Instructions:

Please circle only one response as appropriate to the questions in this section. There are twenty-three questions to be answered; please complete them all. This should take 5 minutes to complete.

*If you should have any questions or queries regarding this questionnaire or the study as a whole please do not hesitate to contact me by phone (08) 9339 6898 or e- mail at [cffsp@ibm.net](mailto:cffsp@ibm.net).*

*Please leave a message and I shall return your call or e- mail.*

1. What is your age?
  - a. 30 years or younger
  - b. 31–40
  - c. 41–50
  - d. 51–60
  - e. 61 or older

**2. What is your sex?**

**a. male**

**b. female**

**3. What is your current country of citizenship? \_\_\_\_\_**

**4. What is your citizenship by birth? \_\_\_\_\_**

**5. Which of the following best describes your position in the company?**

**a. full-time employee**

**b. part-time employee**

**c. visiting scientist, fellow or researcher**

**d. consultant**

**e. contractor**

**f. other \_\_\_\_\_**

**6. Please list your technical and professional qualifications?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. What is your current marital status?**

**a. single**

**b. travelling with a partner**

**8. If you have left your partner in your country of origin, how difficult do you feel it has been for your partner to adjust to your working on international secondment?**

**a. not difficult**

**b. difficult**

**c. very difficult**

**9. How would you describe your feelings about life in the first 4 weeks of your secondment?**

**a. very satisfied**

**b. somewhat satisfied**

**c. neutral**

**d. somewhat dissatisfied**

**e. very dissatisfied**

**10. Which of the following statements best describes your familiarity with your current location PRIOR to your first arrival?**

- a. I was unfamiliar with the country**
- b. I had read about it**
- c. I had talked with people who had worked there**
- d. I had visited the country on holiday**
- e. Other \_\_\_\_\_**

**11. For how many months have you worked on short-term secondment in your present location?**

- a. more than one month**
- b. less than six months**
- c. more than one year**
- d. less than three years**

**12. Over the past 15 years, how many different countries have you lived in as a result of job relocation?**

- a. 0**
- b. 1**
- c. 2**
- d. 3**
- e. 4**
- f. more than 4**

**13. Which of the following statements BEST describes why you made the decision to work in your current location?**

- a. job promotion**
- b. financial reward**
- c. assigned by employer**
- d. opportunity to achieve professional goal**
- e. the excitement of living and working in difficult conditions**
- f. the opportunity for a happier working life**
- g. to escape domestic problems**
- h. other \_\_\_\_\_**

**14. Which of the following statements BEST describes your current situation?**

**a. I have many opportunities to make contact with other foreign nationals either at work or socially**

**b. I have few opportunities to make contact with other foreign nationals either at work or socially**

**c. I have no opportunity or almost no opportunity to make contact with other foreign nationals at work or socially**

**d. other \_\_\_\_\_**

**15. Overall I am satisfied with my current secondment?**

**a. strongly agree**

**b. agree**

**c. disagree**

**d. undecided**

**16. Are you familiar with any cultures other than your own?**

**a. very familiar**

**b. familiar**

**c. not very familiar**

**e. other**

**17. How would you describe your tolerance to cultures other than your own?**

**a. very tolerant**

**b. tolerant**

**c. intolerant**

**d. other \_\_\_\_\_**

**18. To what extent do you consider yourself to be amenable to changes in your life?**

**a. very amenable**

**b. amenable**

**c. not amenable**

**d. other \_\_\_\_\_**

**19. To what extent do you feel you are capable of learning new social skills?**

**a. very capable**

**b. capable**

**c. incapable**

**d. other \_\_\_\_\_**

**20. To what extent do you have an interest in your own cultural background?**

**a. very strong interest**

**b. strong interest**

**c. no interest**

**d. other**

**21. Is English your native language?**

**a. yes**

**b. no**

**22. What is your current country of secondment? \_\_\_\_\_**

**23. How would you describe your own personality?**

**a. outgoing**

**b. sociable**

**c. reserved**

**d. other \_\_\_\_\_**

**Thank you for your time in completing this section.**

*Thank you for completing all the sections of the questionnaire. This is the end of your commitment to the study. If you would like to receive a résumé of the study results, please write your name and address in the space provided below and I will contact you at the end of the year with the findings.*



## APPENDIX B: PILOT QUESTIONNAIRE

Section 1.

**Possible Adjustment problems to living and working on short term international relocation to a foreign country.**

### **Instructions.**

**In each of the following statements, please indicate whether the problem posed is one that you faced in adjusting to your living and working conditions in your present country of secondment. This section is concerned with the adjustments made during your stay. This section should take approximately 5 minutes to complete.**

**Please circle your response to each item below using the following scale. Circle only one choice for each answer statement.**

**1 = No problem for me.**

**2 = Minor problem for me**

**3 = Moderate problem for me**

**4 = Major problem for me**

**A. Travelling to a new location.....1 2 3 4.**

**B. Adjusting to the physical environment.....1 2 3 4.**

**C. Locating utilities ie lodgings, schools, shops, government departments, sport and recreational.....1 2 3 4.**

**D. Experiencing physical danger.....1 2 3 4.**

**E. Experiencing physiological problems.....1 2 3 4.**

- F. Meeting medical needs ie finding a doctor, buying medicine.....1 2 3 4.**
- G. Making friends.....1 2 3 4.**
- H Finding the way around the area of work.....1 2 3 4.**
- I Obtaining the necessities of life. ie. clothes, food.....1 2 3 4.**
- J Finding a place to practice your religion.....1 2 3 4.**
- K. Learning about the local culture and customs.....1 2 3 4.**
- L Adjusting to the local culture.....1 2 3 4.**
- M. Dealing with the adjustment problems of your family i e children’s schooling,  
partner who can not find work.....1 2 3 4.**
- N. Learning how to deal with your personal safety.....1 2 3 4.**
- O. Dealing with loneliness. and isolation.....1 2 3 4.**
- P. Solving personal problems which occur at home in your absence.....1 2 3 4.**
- Q. If acting in a supervisory role, relating to workers from different cultural  
backgrounds.....1 2 3 4.**
- R. Dealing with the pace of conducting business.....1 2 3 4.**
- S. Feeling at home with your working environment.....1 2 3 4.**

**Thank-you for your time in completing this section.**

## **Pilot Questionnaire**

Section 2.

**Possible Assistance given in adjusting to living and working in your present international location before departure.**

**Instructions.**

**This questionnaire should take approximately 5 minutes to complete. The following provides a list which specifies various types of assistance which could be given to people before working on international relocation. Please circle either YES or NO to the statements that follow:**

**1. Did you have a trip ( paid for by your present company) to your present location before actually embarking on the job?**

**YES or NO.**

**2. Did you have at least three months notice of departure before your move?**

**YES or NO.**

**3. Did you have the opportunity before your actual move to talk to people who had actually been to your present location?**

**YES or NO.**

**4. Did you have an orientation meeting with your future employer ( either by phone or in person) prior to your secondment?**

**YES or NO.**

**5. Were you designated a local person to provide you with help (in your present location) on arrival?**

**YES or NO.**

**6. Do you have regular communications with your employer in your country of origin?**

**YES or NO.**

**7. Were you given a recommended reading list about your present location?**

**YES or NO.**

**8. Were you given training in cross cultural communication skills?**

**YES or NO.**

**9. Did you have training in recognising the effects of culture shock?**

**YES or NO.**

**10. Did you have training in becoming self reliant in your present location?**

**YES or NO.**

**11. Did you receive instruction on how to work effectively in your present location?**

**YES or NO.**

**12. Did you receive a foreign language course?**

**YES or NO.**

**13. Did you receive instructions on the values and cultures common to the inhabitants of your present location?**

**YES or NO.**

**14. Did you and your family receive any assistance or counselling related to family separation prior to commencing your secondment?**

**YES or NO.**

**15. Are you satisfied with the assistance you received in helping you adjust to working and living in a foreign country on short / long term secondment?**

- A. Very satisfied.**
- B. Moderately satisfied.**
- C. Moderately dissatisfied.**
- D. Very dissatisfied.**

**Thank-you for your time in completing this section.**

## PILOT QUESTIONNAIRE

Section 3.

**Background information.**

**Instructions.**

**Please circle only one response to each item in this section. There are twenty questions to be answered, please complete them all. This should take 5 minutes to complete**

*If you should have any questions or queries regarding this questionnaire or the study as a whole please do not hesitate to contact me by phone (08) 9339 6898  
(Please leave a message and I shall return your call) or E mail [cffsp@ibm.net](mailto:cffsp@ibm.net)*

**1. What is your age?**

- a. 30 yrs or younger.
- b. 31-40.
- c. 41-50.
- d. 51-60.
- e. 61 or older.

**2. What is your sex?**

- a. Male.
- b. Female.

**3. What is your current country of citizenship?.....**

**4. What is your citizenship by birth?.....**

**5. Which of the following best describes your position in the company?**

- a. Full time employee.**
- b. Part time employee.**
- c. Visiting scientist / Fellow / Researcher?**
- d. Consultant?**
- e. Contractor?**
- f. Other.....**

**6. Please list your technical and professional qualifications?**

**7. What is your current marital status?**

- a. Single.**
- b. Travelling with a partner.**

**8. If you have left your partner in your country of origin, how difficult do you feel it has been for your partner to adjust to your working on international secondment?**

- a. Not difficult.**
- b. Difficult.**
- c. Very difficult.**

**9. How would you describe your feelings about life in the first 4 week of your secondment?**

- a. Very satisfied.**
- b. Somewhat satisfied.**
- c. Neutral**
- d. Somewhat dissatisfied.**
- e. Very dissatisfied.**

**10. Which of the following statements best describes your familiarity with your current location PRIOR to your first arrival?**

- a. I was unfamiliar with the country**
- b. I had read about it.**
- c. I had talked with people who had worked there.**
- d. I had visited the country on holiday.**
- e. Other.....**

**11. For how many months have you worked on short term or long term secondment in your present location?**

- a. More than one month.**
- b. Less than six months.**
- c. More than one year.**
- d. Less than three years.**
- e. More than four years.**

**12. Over the past fifteen years, how many different countries have you lived in as a result of job relocation?**

- a. 0**
- b. 1.**
- c. 2.**
- d. 3.**
- e. 4.**
- f. More than 4.**



**13. Which of the following statements BEST describes why you made the decision to work in your current location?**

- a. Job promotion.**
- b. Financial reward.**
- c. Assigned by employer.**
- d. Opportunity to achieve professional goal.**
- e. The excitement of living a and working in difficult conditions.**
- f. The opportunity for a happier working life.**
- g. To escape domestic problems.**
- h. Other.....**

**14. Which statement BEST describes your current situation?**

- a. I have many opportunities to make contact with other foreign nationals either at work or socially.**
- b. I have few opportunities to make contact with other foreign nationals either at work or socially.**
- c. I have no opportunity or almost no opportunity to make contact with other foreign nationals at work or socially**
- d. Other.....**

**15. Overall I am satisfied with my current secondment?**

- a. Strongly agree.**
- b. Agree.**
- c. Disagree.**
- d. Undecided.**

**16. Are you familiar with any other cultures other than your own?**

- a. Very familiar**
- b. Familiar.**
- c. not very familiar.**
- e. Other.....**

**17. To what extent would you describe your tolerance to other cultures other than your own?**

- a. Very tolerant.**
- b. Tolerant.**
- c. Intolerant.**
- d. Other.....**

**18. To what extent do you consider yourself to be amenable to changes in your life?**

- a. Very amenable.**
- b. Amenable.**
- c. Not amenable.**
- d. Other.....**

**19. To what extent do you feel you are capable of learning new social skills?**

- a. Very capable.**
- b. capable.**
- c. Incapable.**
- d. other.....**

**20. To what extent do you have an interest in your own cultural background?**

- a. Very strong interest.**
- b. Strong interest.**
- c. No Interest.**

d. Other.....

21. Is English your native language? Yes or NO.

22. What is your current country of secondment?.....

23. How would you best describe your own personality?

a. Outgoing.

b. sociable.

c. reserved.

d. other.....

**Thank-you for your time in completing this section.**

*Thank-you for completing all the sections of the questionnaire. This is the end of your commitment to the study. If you would like to receive a resume of the study results please write your name and address in the space provided below and I will contact you at the end of the year with the findings.*

.....

.....

*Once again, thank-you for your help.*

## APPENDIX C: PILOT QUESTIONNAIRE EVALUATION FORM

**Please fill out this evaluation form when you have completed the questionnaire.**

**Your comments and feelings about the questionnaire will be greatly appreciated.**

**1. How long did it take you to complete the questionnaire?**

.....minutes

**2. Were any of the directions difficult to understand? Yes or No.**

*(Please indicate on the original questionnaire the directions that were difficult to understand.)*

**3. Were any questions difficult to understand? Yes or No.**

*(Please indicate the questions that were difficult to understand on the original questionnaire.)*

**4. In Section 1, are there any questions which you think are irrelevant? If so, please list them below.**

**5. In Section 1, are there any relevant questions which you think have not been asked? If so, please list them below.**

**6. In Section 2, are there any questions which you think are irrelevant?**

**Please list them below.**

**7. In Section 2, are there any relevant questions which you think have not been asked?**

**Please list them below.**

**8. In Section 3, are there any questions which you think are irrelevant? Please list them below.**

**9. In Section 3, are there any relevant questions which you feel have not been asked?**

**Please list them below.**

**10. If you have any additional comments to make regarding the questionnaire please write them below:**

**Thank you for your time and effort. Your assistance is much appreciated.**

## **APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM AND INTRODUCTORY LETTER**

**Edith Cowan University**

**Faculty of Communication, Health and Science**

***Project Title:***

***“A study of the adjustment problems experienced by workers on international short-term secondment in a foreign country.”***

***Researcher:***

***Carla F. Sharp-Paul:***

***telephone number (Perth, Western Australia): (08) 9339 6898***

***e-mail: cffsp@ibm.net***

***The Project***

The focus of this research will be to identify the adjustment problems experienced by workers seconded to a foreign country. Problems which can be identified can then be analysed and solutions suggested to make the working and living conditions less stressful.

### **Background**

The concept of relocation, be it national or international, is not a new one. Indeed, certain forms of employment have always included the possibility of overseas travel, for example, the armed forces and the Foreign Office. Travel has always been a drawcard, linked perhaps with escape and excitement.

Over the last twenty years or so, international relocation has increasingly become a common practice in the business community. The importance of the global marketplace has ensured that a company must be strategically positioned in world markets to take advantage of previously untapped areas of business; therefore its workforce must also have a global view. What does this mean to the individual?

### **Data collection**

All data collection is being carried out by means of a questionnaire that consists of three sections. Please return it within 7 days of receiving it, in the envelope provided. The authors of the returned questionnaires will remain anonymous. If a participant is interested in the outcome of the study, he/she can provide a name and address in the appropriate section of the questionnaire and the results will be forwarded towards the end of the year.

### **Confidentiality**

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT I,

.....

hereby agree to participate as a volunteer in the above mentioned project.

By signing this document, I give my permission to the researcher to use the material I have provided in the questionnaire for analysis with other similarly collected data to

answer the question posed by the research project. In the event of the thesis (in part or whole) being published, I understand that no individual or company will be named.

I have been made aware of the fact that I am free to refuse to answer any question or questions during the course of the project and that I can withdraw my participation at any time.

By signing this document, I acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to ask questions concerning the project and my role in it. These have been answered to my satisfaction.

***Participant..... Date...../...../.....***

***Witness..... Date...../...../.....***



## LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Occupational Health and Safety Department

Faculty of Communication, Health and Science

Edith Cowan University

100 Joondalup Drive

JOONDALUP WA 6027

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would be grateful for your time and involvement in my research. My study is to identify problems in adjusting to working and living on short-term international relocation in a foreign country. It is true to say that without your knowledge and contribution there would be no data for the study. From the data I hope to identify adjustment problems and use them to put forward solutions to make the experience less stressful and more productive. The enclosed consent form explains what I am trying to achieve. Please return the questionnaire in the envelope provided within seven days of receiving it.

The information contained in the consent form will allay any fears that you may have about the confidentiality of the data/material that you submit. If you have any questions or queries please do not hesitate to contact me by phone on (08) 9339 6898 or by e-mail to *cffsp@ibm.net*

I am very grateful for the time you will take in providing the data for the study and I hope that the study will prove to be beneficial in helping people who are in this type of work and those who may be contemplating it in the future.

Many, many thanks for your help.

Yours faithfully,

Carla F. Sharp-Paul, MA, RGN/RSCN, OHNC