

**A STUDY ON INDIVIDUAL COMPETENCIES OF FOREIGN
GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES IN TAIWAN**

by

Rodrigo Enrique Campbell Alvarez

A Thesis Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Major: International Human Resource Development

Advisor: Wei-Wen Chang, Ph.D.

National Taiwan Normal University

Taipei, Taiwan

June, 2012

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to Taiwan ICDF for granting me the opportunity of continuing my studies in Taiwan, and thus providing me with the chance of pursuing higher education as part of the International Human Resource Develop family at National Taiwan Normal University. The challenges of these two years have made me grow exponentially, and have successfully prepared me for pursuing my professional aspirations.

As part of this family and in regards to my academic success, I would firstly like to give my most warm appreciation to my thesis advisor, Dr. Wei-Wen Chang, who has supported and guided me from day one in order to shape the efforts of my studies, and whom without the completion of this thesis would have been impossible. Her patience, motivation, enthusiasm and immense knowledge made this thesis a reality. I could not have imagined having a better advisor and mentor for my Master study. Also I would like to thank my thesis committee members, Dr. Steven Lai, director of our department and Dr. Pai-Po Lee, for being always willing to give a helping hand, and for providing clear directions for further revisions to improve the quality of this research.

I owe my most sincere gratitude to H.E. Ambassador William Tapia, for granting me the opportunity to undertake an internship in the Nicaraguan embassy, as well as to all the members of this embassy for giving me their support: Humberto, Col. Marin, Fatima, Elisa, Jaime and also Lucia from Guatemala, for helping me make the interviews possible, as well as the ten foreign government representatives that took part in this study.

I wish to thank everybody with whom I have shared experiences in my student life, all the faculty members of IHRD, program managers, classmates and friends in NTNU. Finally, I would like to thank and dedicate this thesis to my family, for planting with love the seed of my life and for always supporting me in accomplishing my dreams, even overseas. You have all touched my heart,

Thank you.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify the individual competencies required for foreign government representatives serving in Taiwan and explore how these individuals have developed such competencies. A qualitative approach was adopted to reach this purpose. Participatory observation in one foreign mission office in Taiwan, document review and semi structured interviews with ten foreign government representatives serving in Taiwan were utilized for data collection. The research suggest that the competency development stage of foreign government representatives is guided by a social learning process and later enhanced by intentional self-development changes. Work experience and on-the-job learning methods guided by these two processes represent the way in which foreign government representatives have acquire the competencies necessary to be posted in Taiwan.

Moreover, to have a more integral competency assessment, this study utilized the American Society for Training & Development (ASTD) competency model as a guideline to further categorize those individual competencies, identifying three competency levels. The first foundational level competences identified included: relational ability, communication skills, linguistic ability, intercultural competence, analytical skills, business acumen, knowledge management, administrative skills, adaptability/flexibility, emotional intelligence, stress management, openness to experience and extroversion. The second focus level areas of expertise were composed of: protocol, public service orientation, public relations, market development, attracting investment, international politics and law, and history and cultural affairs. Finally the top level execution roles determined were: political analyst, commercial counselor, public diplomacy agent, consular advocate and management officer. The findings of this study provide information for government ministries and officials in charge of selecting foreign mission holders and for those international educators responsible for training and developing the future generation of diplomats and foreign government representatives.

Keywords: Competency, foreign government representatives, diplomacy, international relations

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	I
Table of Contents.....	III
List of Tables	V
List of Figures.....	VII
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background of the Study	1
Statement of the Problem.....	3
Significance of the Study	4
Research Purposes	5
Research Questions.....	5
Definition of Terms.....	6
CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW	7
Competency	7
Competency Model.....	8
Competency Development.....	15
Diplomacy.....	17
CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODS	21
Research Approach	21
Research Framework	22
Research Procedure.....	23
Sampling Process	25
Data Collection	27
Data Analysis	33
Quality of Research.....	35

CHAPTER IV FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS.....	37
Context of the Foreign Government Representative Field	37
Competency Development.....	52
Competencies of Foreign Government Representatives.....	63
Foundational Level Competencies.....	65
Focus Level Areas of Expertise	81
Execution Level Roles	90
Discussion.....	91
CHAPTER V CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS	95
Research Implications.....	97
Research Limitations	98
Suggestions for Future Research	99
REFERENCES.....	101
APPENDIX A: OBSERVATION JOURNAL	105
APPENDIX B: EXAMPLE OF TRANSCRIPT	117
APPENDIX C: CODING LIST	125
APPENDIX D: PEER AND EXPERT REVIEW OF INTERVIEW	
QUESTIONS	135

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1 Background Information of Participants.....	26
Table 3.2 Interview Questions	31
Table 4.1 Job Content of Foreign Government Representatives in Taiwan	38
Table 4.2 Work Environment of Foreign Government Representatives in Taiwan	44
Table 4.3 Challenges of Serving in Taiwan.....	47
Table 4.4 Competency Development Process	53
Table 4.5 Competencies of Foreign Government Representatives.....	64

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1 The Iceberg Model of Competency	9
Figure 2.2 Competency Pyramid	10
Figure 2.3 The ASTD Competency Model	11
Figure 3.1 Research Framework	23
Figure 3.2 Research Procedure	24
Figure 3.3 Observation Setting	28
Figure 4.1 Structure of Embassies	41
Figure 4.2 Structure of Commercial Offices.....	41
Figure 5.1 Adaptation of the ASTD Competency Model to the Foreign Government Representative Field.....	96

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

The objective of chapter one was to present a description of the study, it includes: background of the study, statement of the problem, research purposes, research questions, significance of the study and finally definition of terms.

Background of the Study

The 21th century has been marked by one major phenomenon, globalization. In today's world order, multiple globalization processes, deeper economic integration, and the importance of trade liberalization in different regions of the globe determine the new ways in which nations interact. Diplomacy, which stands for "the application of intelligence and tact to the conduct of official relations between the governments of independent states, or more briefly, the conduct of business between states by peaceful means" (Gore-Booth, 1979, p. 3), and which is characterized by building confidence and cooperation between states to reach and sustain positive and constructive relations (Saner, Yiu & Sondergaard, 2000), is a fundamental part of this interaction. In our time, the importance of diplomacy is evident since the major events of this field have been responsible for shaping and changing the global world in which we live. Equally important it's the human element, or the agents of diplomacy – diplomats and foreign government representatives, which are nowadays major actors in the global political and economic scene. These individuals not just carry with them national pride, reflecting the image of their nations with every step they take, but are also responsible for acting as sociopolitical links and communication facilitators between different cultures (Bozeman, 1994).

As institutions change and new resources become available over time, the demands that circumstances make on the practice of diplomats are constantly varying. This explains why foreign government representatives have been described by some as financial experts, agents of advertising and business travelers, who continue to possess a basic political function (Dickie, 1992). This multifaceted nature of the job has made the roles of these individuals more difficult to exclusively define. With this in mind, how can we be sure what are the right set of personal tools diplomats and international policy makers need to confront the wide array of twenty first century issues?

Considering that the landscape of international relations is constantly changing, over the years diplomacy has evolved greatly to mean different things to different people. Today it appears as if the theory of diplomacy doesn't seem to look eye to eye with the diplomatic practice. A reason for this is that we are currently witnessing substantively significant changes in the practice of diplomacy, changes that are being led primarily by commercial interests. This is especially true for East Asian nations, since various governments in the region have adopted commercial diplomacy as part of their foreign policy priority (Lee & Hudson, 2004).

Another factor that has influenced the practice of this profession, is that diplomacy has been broadened to include a before uncommon government-to-people connection, known as public diplomacy. This term refers to "the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies" (Siracusa, 2010, p. 4). This new shift in the diplomatic practice has turned the job of foreign government representatives into a field of high human contact. Along with its continuous changes, diplomacy is today one of the keys to resolving the greatest challenges of the twenty first century, including nuclear proliferation, international terrorism and global warming, meaning that the need for foreign government representatives to possess the necessary characteristics that enables them to perform better in their jobs and missions is noticeably important. In the field of Human Resources, these individual characteristics or traits are described as competencies. They include both dynamic traits and stable individual traits. The former traits can be obtained by training, such as professional knowledge and skills, while the latter are more difficult to develop, such as individual interests, motives and personality (Leiba-O'Sullivan, 1999).

This conceptualization fits with the assumption that foreign government representatives have to possess both technical and personal abilities, while demonstrating those qualities that have passed the test of time - accuracy, calm, patience, good temper, modesty, loyalty, intelligence, discernment, prudence, hospitality, charm, courage and tact (Gore-Booth, 1979). Given the constant changes in the fields of diplomacy and international relations, especially in recent years (Saner et al., 2000), recognizing and labeling such individual competencies and how to develop them, is a topic that remains open for discussion.

Statement of the Problem

As most of the developed governments have adopted to include a more cross-sectional representation of their societies in their foreign services personnel and as we are going through accelerated financial and technological transformations because of the globalization process (Saner et al., 2000), the demand for clearer individual competencies seems necessary for the better training and upgrading of foreign service officials. Even though one of the first studies on competency identification was in fact carried out for the U.S. State Department Foreign Service Information Officers (Spencer & Spencer, 1993), the reality is that in modern times the field of diplomacy, and in particular its agents, has been an overlooked and almost abandoned area within the body of contemporary academic research, especially true for the Asian continent, and its practice has not accustomed well to the changing global environment (Copeland, 2009). Serving in countries like Taiwan, China, Korea or Japan requires specialized country knowledge and cultural awareness which often cannot be learned simply following previously proposed guidelines develop to meet the needs of western societies (Saner et al., 2000).

With little known about the needs of these agents of diplomacy, particularly in this region of the world, how can foreign affairs ministries in their respective countries appoint individuals with the right set of competencies necessary to be one step ahead in a changing world and deal with the challenges of today's international relations in the region? In other words, appoint individuals with the right set of competencies necessary to make them even more effective in their job. Furthermore, with such a diversity of academic and cultural backgrounds, uncertainty of career trajectories, variety of country contexts in which to serve, and a range of constituent groups to interact with (Laboulaye & Laloy, 1983), how have these individuals acquire the right set of personal tools to deal with such an inherently complex role? Some view foreign government representatives as managers, as they share similar qualities and skills (Saner et al., 2000). Nowadays, foreign government representatives like managers have to effectively adapt to changing environment and situations, coordinate and comply with imposed goals, deal with multilateral relations, and know how to face stress and uncertainty (Dragoni, Tesluk, Russell & Oh, 2009). Still, going through the literature we find that "there is no well-developed and empirically supported theory on management development, defined as the process by which individuals pursuing managerial roles learn the interrelated sets of skills and abilities necessary

for effectiveness” (Dragoni et al., 2009, p. 731), making this an area in need of further exploration.

Significance of the Study

A first significance of this study is the fact that as our generation is being witness of the downfall of old western economic models and the rise of the new Asian powers (Fishman, 2005), the importance and influence of the region to other nations in the world is evident. Due to this shift of power, good and healthy relations with the East are essential for the sustainability of our global economy.

Secondly, for a nation like Taiwan, which for decades has been in a constant fight for its diplomatic recognition, the role of its diplomatic allies and commercial partners – foreign missions, is vital. Since the birth of the Republic of China, the vast majority of nations have over time opted for recognizing the People’s Republic of China as the sole representative of all China, including Taiwan. Presently Taiwan is still not a member of the United Nations, and it’s officially recognized by only 23 nations in the world (Taiwan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2009). This has forced Taiwan to adopt a policy of flexible diplomacy which has led to the fostering of strong commercial relations with countries that derecognize Taipei (Li, 2005). Although in the past there has been little exchange between Taiwan and other regions in the world, in recent years that has been changing fast. Global economies are achieving Free Trade Agreements with Taiwan, China and other nations in the region. As a consequence, representative offices are the bridge connecting these worlds together, and its agents – ambassadors, counselors, attaches, and directors of commercial offices, act as gatekeepers. Thus the critical importance of studying and taking into account the competencies needed from the foreign officials in charge of running these institutions.

Thirdly, most studies on expatriates workers and their competencies had been focused on private sector business people, not so much on the public sector foreign government officials (Copeland, 2009; Jordan & Cartwright, 1998). Hence the findings of this study are of interest to government officials in charge of selecting foreign mission holders, as well as for diplomatic schools and international educators responsible for training and developing the future generation of foreign government representatives.

Research Purposes

In these rapidly changing times, the society of states still remains the essential building block of global order, and diplomacy is and always will be an important element of statecraft. It is clear that without skilful diplomacy, any kind of political success of a state will remain unfulfilled (Siracusa, 2010). Therefore, the main purpose of this research was to explore the foreign government representative's competency development process, as well as to identify the necessary competencies required for these individuals in order to serve successfully in Taiwan.

The peculiar characteristics and history of the development of diplomacy on the island nation of Taiwan, makes this case particularly interesting in terms of the modern diplomacy practice and theory. Taiwan's struggle and perseverance to survive in the international community has served as an example for the rest of the region, and the world. The research aimed at understanding the job content and work environment of foreign government representatives in Taiwan, as well as to explore the major challenges foreign government representatives face while serving in Taiwan. At the same time the study explored how foreign government representatives in Taiwan have acquired and developed their competencies, that is it attempted to understand their competency development process. Finally, the main purpose of the research was to identify the individual competencies required for foreign government representatives holding their positions in Taiwan in order to become more efficient and effective in their job.

Research Questions

In accordance with the research purposes, the questions that guided this research were the following:

1. What are the job content, work environment and major challenges faced by foreign government representatives in Taiwan?
2. What are the individual competencies required for foreign government representatives to hold their positions in Taiwan?
3. How did foreign government representatives in Taiwan acquire such competencies?

Definition of Terms

Foreign Government Representatives

People appointed by a state to engage in diplomatic or non-diplomatic commercial relations with another state, including: ambassadors, consuls, envoys, chargé d'affaires, counselors, attaches and directors. Their main function revolves around the representation and protection of the interests and nationals of the sending state, as well as the promotion of information, commerce and friendly relations (Kissinger, 1994).

Individual Competency

An underlying characteristic of an individual that is causally related to criterion-referenced effective and/or superior performance in a job or situation (Spencer & Spencer, 1993). Different from organizational competencies - which refer to those elements at the organizational level that characterize collective action, individual competencies refer to the characteristics of an individual, which are an individual's skills and work manners used to attain a certain work goal (Green, 1999).

CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW

The main issue of this study was to examine the individual competencies foreign government representatives must possess in order to be more effective and efficient when holding their positions in Taiwan, as well as their competency development process. Therefore, this chapter surveyed the related literature on the concept of competency, diplomacy, foreign government representatives and Taiwan's foreign relations, in order to get a better understanding of each theme in depth.

Competency

In the literature, a competency is a concept that has been utilized in different ways. The main distinction to make is between organizational competencies and individual competencies. Organizational competencies refer to those elements at the organizational level which characterize collective action (Olson & Bolton, 2002), in order for the organization to gain competitive advantage (Nadler & Tushman, 1999). In the area of Human Resources, individual competencies generally have to do with the characteristics of an individual, which are the individual skills and work manners used to attain a certain work goal (Green, 1999). This study will focus only on those individual competencies.

Definition of Individual Competency

Throughout most of the literature individual competencies have been described as being composed of knowledge, skills and attitudes or KSAs (Ashton, Davies, Felstead, & Green, 1999), an individual possess. This interpretation, while simple, does not cover the whole scope of what a competency really is. A more complete definition for competency is that it is "an underlying characteristic of an individual that is causally related to criterion-reference effective and/or superior performance in a job or situation" (Spencer & Spencer, 1993, p. 9). Explaining this concept further, by being an underlying characteristic, a competency is something which is a deep and enduring part of an individual's personality and can predict behavior in different situations; by having causal relations, a competency causes and foresees behavior; and by having a criterion-referenced, a competency can predicts high or low performance, measuring it on a specific standard (Spencer & Spencer, 1993).

Sandberg (1994) defined competency as the required skills, abilities and personal characteristics for a good management figure, which include not only observable behaviors but also intangible qualities of a person. Hartle (1995) distinguished individual competencies as an attribute an individual has which has been proven to enhance that individual's job performance. Competency was also defined as a cluster of related knowledge attitudes and skills that affect a major part of one's job, which correlate with job performance, can be measured against well accepted standards, and can be improved by training and development (Parry, 1996). For the purpose of this research, competency refers to knowledge, skills, attributes and other characteristics required for high performance on a job.

Competency Model

While some researches referred to the term competence model to describe the output of analyses that differentiate high performance from average and lower performers (Mirabile, 1997), this study defines competency model as a particular collection of characteristics that establish the qualifications for a specific job position (Cooper, 2000). These characteristics include knowledge, skills, aspects of self-image, social motives, traits, thought patterns, mindsets, and the ways of feeling, acting and thinking an individual possesses (Dubois & Rothwell, 2004), and are commonly used as a human resource tool for selection, training, development and appraisal of personnel.

Spencer and Spencer (1993) proposed five types of competency characteristics:

1. **Motives:** the things a person consistently thinks about or wants that cause action. They are responsible for driving, directing and selecting behavior.
2. **Traits:** physical characteristics and consistent responses to situations and information.
3. **Self-Concept:** a person's attitudes, values or self image.
4. **Knowledge:** information a person has in specific content areas.
5. **Skill:** the ability to perform a certain physical or mental task.

Based on these five characteristics Spencer and Specer (1993), as shown in Figure 2.1, elaborated the iceberg model, classifying individual competencies into hidden and visible competencies. Visible competencies consisting of knowledge and skills, and are located at the top of the iceberg model. These competencies are more easy to recognize and to develop. Hidden

competencies are located at the base of the model and include self-concept, traits and motives. These hidden competencies go deep into the core of an individual's personality, hence they are more difficult to assess and be taught. Therefore, the most cost-effective way to attain the visible competencies is through training, while selecting is the most cost-effective way to acquire certain hidden competencies.

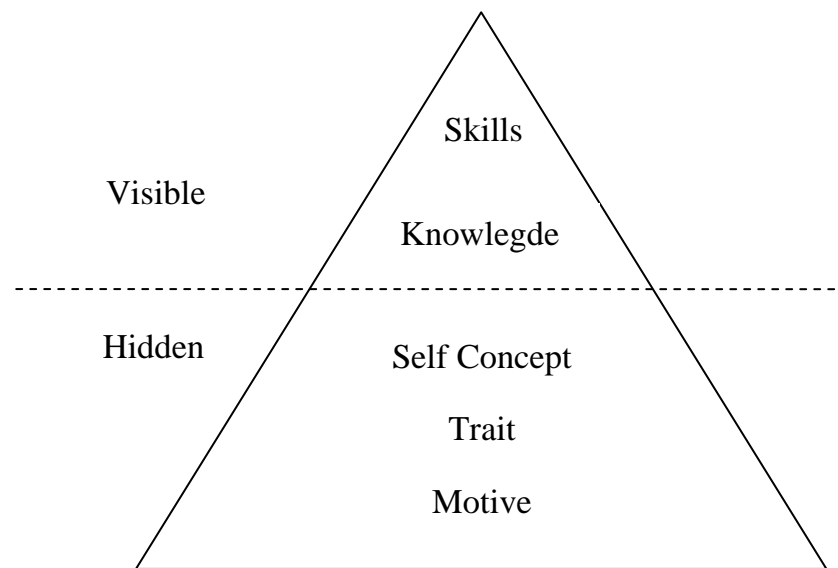


Figure 2.1. The iceberg model of competency. Adapted from “Competency at work: Models for superior performance,” by L.M Spencer & S.M. Spencer, 1993. Copyright 1993 by John Wiley & Sons Inc.

In this model, Spencer and Spencer (1993) proposed that the intent of an individual is what guides his or her actions, meaning that motives, traits and self concept are the drivers for skill, action and behavior which ultimately relate to job performance.

According to Lucia and Lepsinger (1999), a competency model must include both acquired and innate abilities of an individual. This is illustrated in Figure 2.2 in the form of a pyramid which is constructed on the foundation of personal talents, on top of which skills and knowledge acquirable through learning or experience can be incorporated. Again in this model we can see how those innate and fundamental competencies at the bottom of the pyramid model can serve as a launch pad to acquire and enhance an individual's skills and abilities, as well as ultimately also determining behavior.

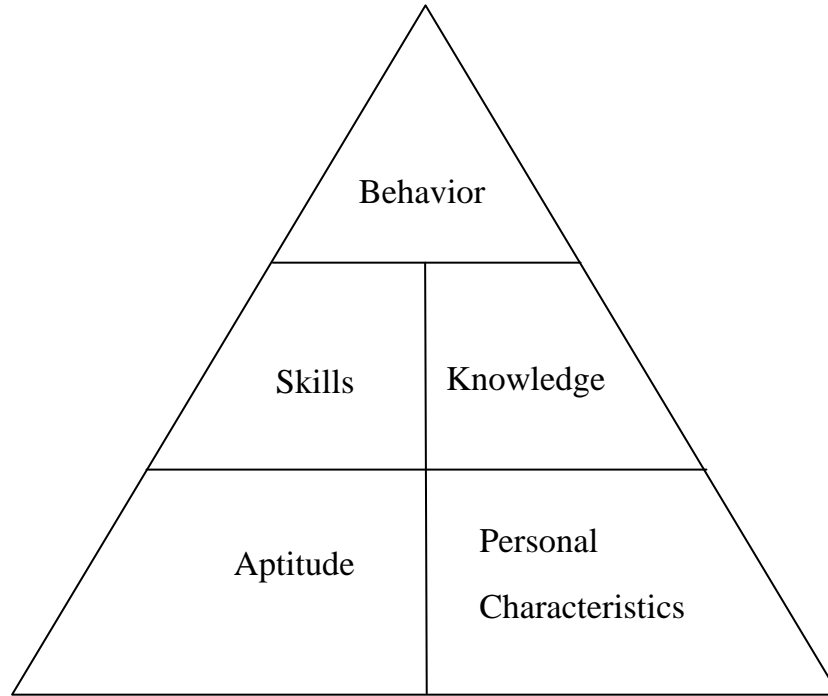


Figure 2.2. Competency pyramid. Adapted from “The art and science of competency models :Pinpointing critical success factors in organizations,” by A. Lucia & R. Lepsinger, 1999. Copyright 1999 by Jossey-Bass.

The two models formerly mentioned, the iceberg model and the competency pyramid, relate to the concept of stable and dynamic individual competencies. Leiba-O'Sullivan (1999) suggested that competencies can be further categorized as dynamic or stable traits. Dynamic competencies like knowledge and skills are those competencies that can be acquired by training. Stable competencies which include abilities, individual interest, personality and other characteristics, are fixed and have the potential to develop further knowledge and skills. In other words, stable competencies are necessary in order to attain dynamic competencies.

Downes, Varner and Musinski (2007) pointed out that “the ability to pick up those skills that are acquirable, such as language proficiency, computer savvy or negotiating techniques, is dictated by the ascribed characteristics that remain relatively stable throughout a person's lifetime” (p. 5), furthermore they highlight that stable competencies are difficult or almost impossible to acquire.

The ASTD competency model

In addition to the previously covered competency models, Davis, Naughton and Rothwell (2004) developed the American Society for Training & Development (ASTD) competency model, originally constructed for the learning and development field, which proposed a collection of skills, knowledge, abilities, and behaviors required for individuals, based on three different levels of consecutive building blocks which are better depicted below:

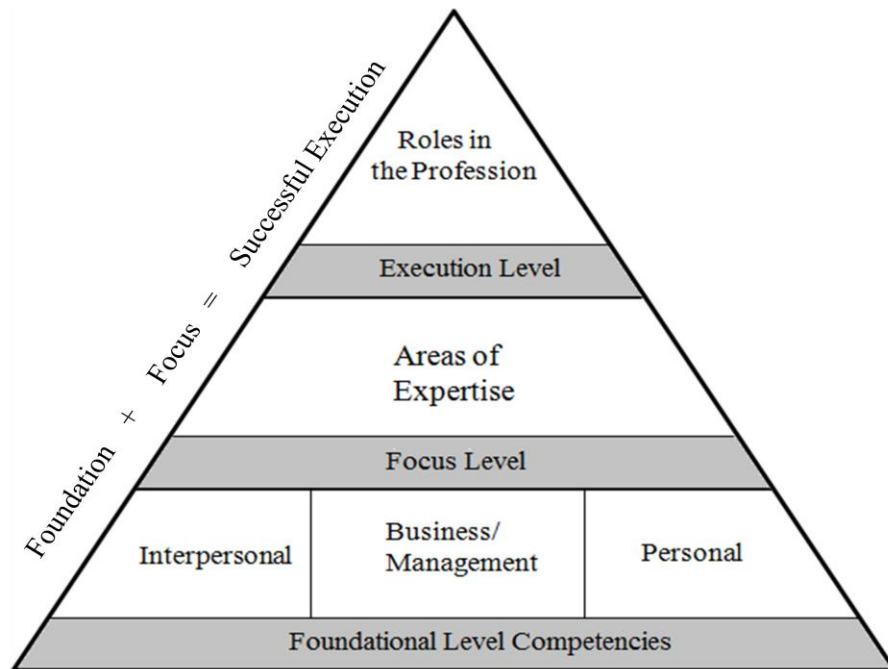


Figure 2.3. The American Society for Training & Development competency model. Adapted from “New roles and new competencies for the profession,” by P. Davis, J. Naughton & W. Rothwell, 2004, *T & D*, 58(4), p.29. Copyright 2004 by American Society for Training & Development, Inc.

To explain each level more in detail, foundational level competencies are those supporting level competencies at the base of the model which correlate to high performance in an area, and are desirable for all professionals in a field. Furthermore, the model divides the foundational competencies into three types: (1) interpersonal refers to how well an individual can relate, work

with, manage, and influence people; (2) business/management refers to how well an individual can resolve situations, evaluate decisions, and execute action plans; (3) personal refers to how well an individual can adjust to change and make choices to improve his or her professional career. Next follows the focus level, or areas of expertise (AOE), which include a set of technical, professional and specialized abilities an individual needs to perform effectively in different positions. Moreover, these AOE's are specialized areas that are constructed from, and depend on the focused application of the previously mentioned foundational competencies. The top execution level are roles, which are groupings of selected competencies. It's important to make the distinction that roles are not the same as job titles, and can best be defined as the general area of responsibility within a profession that requires a specific set of foundational competencies and specific set of focus level areas of expertise to execute effectively (Davis, Naughton & Rothwell, 2004).

This model provided a significant and handy instrument for guiding individual competency development, helping determine the elements needed for individuals to smoothly cruise their career, as well as a common language to examine what are the individual needs of a particular area or field, by determining the competencies practitioners should possess to thrive in a field, thus presenting a more consolidated picture of individual competency needs (Werner & DeSimone, 2009). Therefore, to determine the competencies needed for foreign government representatives, this study aimed at incorporating elements of this model and adapting it to the foreign government representative profession, in order to present a complete and integrated competency model for this field.

Developing a competency model

As mentioned by Lawler (1994), the foundation for constructing a competency model is job analysis, which incorporates job descriptions and job specifications. The former is used in most organization as a basis for selection, training, career development and compensation, stating the task, responsibility and obligation needed for a job. The later illustrates and addresses the knowledge and skills in relation to the task and responsibility of a job. As a whole, job analysis is a process for collecting important competency data, which included detailed criteria for superior

job performance, and it's focused on task, responsibilities, duties, accountabilities, knowledge and skill requirements (Brannick & Levine, 2002).

According to Dubois (1993), nowadays most organizations use different techniques for successfully developing competency models, which fall under one of the following five types:

1. **Job Competence Assessment Method:** this method utilizes a rigorous, empirical research procedure to identify job competencies which differentiate average from superior job performance. Average and superior workers are interviewed about the aspects of their job performance. Following the competency identification, they and other job elements are used to build the job competency model.
2. **Modified Job Competence Assessment Method:** This method adopts the job competence assessment research procedure, however rather than interviewing average and superior performers, these individuals are asked to write and record their own critical behavior indicators.
3. **Generic Model Overlay Method:** This method selects or attains a prepared competency model and then overlays or superimposes it on a job within a given organization.
4. **Customized Generic Model:** This method identifies all the likely generic competencies that fully characterize the attribute of average and superior performers of a job within an organization. These competencies are then researched and interpreted within the job and the organizational context, to select the specific competencies that determine a successful employee. Other attributes for the desired competency model are also researched.
5. **Flexible Job Competence Model Overlay Method:** This method utilizes many different comprehensive information sources, both external and internal, to be included in the research base. It determines and uses future assumptions about the job and the organization. The use of this methods results in the availability of behavioral indicators for each job competency.

In addition, after defining a performance effectiveness criteria and identifying a criterion sample, Spencer and Spencer (1993) identified several methods of data collecting in order to develop accurate competency models which are listed below:

1. Behavioral events interviews: This interview method is derived from the critical incident technique. In these interviews average and superior performers share real life situations in which they have handled the most difficult and important aspects of their job, thus revealing the competencies needed for their profession.
2. Expert panels: A group of experts – supervisors, high performers or human resource professionals, is in charge of brainstorming the personal attributes employees' must possess to perform the job at a superior level. Later, such attributes are prioritized according to their relation with job success.
3. Surveys: Experts and other members of an organization give rates to competency items according to the significance to effective job performance and how often it is used. This can also be done utilizing the Delphi technique, which is a tool for collecting opinions of a group of expert, in order to achieve consensus in areas lacking empirical evidence; in this technique, one experts provide opinions to revise the list of competencies, following, another expert revises items based on the version of the previous expert revision (Polit & Beck, 2004).
4. Computer based expert systems: This system asks questions to experts, which are keyed into a large knowledge base of competencies that have been identified in previous research. Finally, it processes and provides a description of the competencies needed for exemplary job performance.
5. Job task/function analyses: Either employees or observers list every task, function or action an employee performs in a period of time. This method can collect data through questionnaires, time logs, individual or panel interview or observation.
6. Direct observation: Jobholders are observed directly performing job task, while their behaviors are being coded for competencies.

This research used a combination and adaptation of the methods of behavioral event job interviews, job task/function analyses and direct observation for data collection proposed by Spencer and Spencer (1993). Furthermore, the technique used in this study fall in the category of Job Competence Assessment Method, by using interviews as a main tool for data collection. As

part of the research questions, this study also addressed the individual competency development stage of foreign government representatives. Thus, the next section gave an overview of the literature regarding this topic.

Competency Development

Throughout the literature, research supports that competencies can in fact be developed in mature adults (Boyatzis, 2006). It's also likely that certain competencies are more easily acquirable than others and that not all are develop at the same time (Rhee, 2007). According to Rhee (2007) "an ideal development environment is where a learner is exposed to a balanced mixture of situations where both learning and performance take place" (p.158)

Aside from training, evidence suggested that individuals learn fundamental competencies also through real life on the job experiences (McCall, Lombardo, & Morrison, 1988). Day (2007) pointed out how many organizations today use job assignments to develop individuals which have been determined to have the capacity of undertaking leadership roles. Some suggested that certain assignments present individuals with the challenges needed to cultivate learning on the job (McCauley, Ruderman, Ohlott & Morrow, 1994). Such developmental assignments require individuals to think and act in new ways, facilitating the acquirement of underdeveloped skills (Ohlott, 2004). These assignments can also enhance competencies through motivational and emotional mechanisms, revealing the discrepancies between their present abilities and those needed for success; in doing so individuals will be even more motivated to develop their knowledge and skills (Dragoni et al., 2009).

Social Learning Theory

It would be incomplete to talk about competency development without going through the overall learning process. Learning can be seen of as a process by which an individual's experience results in an alteration of behavior (Merriam & Caffarella 1998). Some learning experts argument that it's the elements in the environment that are responsible for shaping ones behavior by giving stimuli to which individuals react (Fulham & Taylor, 2005). Following this

orientation to learning Hartley (1998) highlighted how skills can't be develop without constant interaction with the environment and without practice.

Social or situational learning theory proposed that people learn from observing other people, this process happens when individuals interact in different social settings, therefore learning is viewed as a process of social participation, not as the acquisition of knowledge by individuals (Merriam & Caffarella 1998). In the social learning perspective the development of skills and other abilities requires beginners in an area to have high interaction in the field's socio-cultural practices, allowing newcomer and veterans to socialize (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This orientation suggests that the act of learning is part of a day to day routine, making a stretch relation between knowledge and activity (Merriam & Caffarella 1998). This learning theory seem more relevant to the situation faced by foreign government representatives, since as they are public figures their work rely highly on well develop social skills, and must learn to change and adapt according to their environments.

Intentional Change Theory

Intentional Change Theory provides a discontinuous non-linear process for how an individuals' self-direction and discovery can lead to successive improvements in behavior and competency development; this happens as self-awareness rise and an individual develops a personal vision or ideal self; then they evaluate their actual behavior or real self, and positive physiological forces driven by the ideal self creates motivation to grow (Boyatzis, 2006). This emphasizes the idea that setting learning goals is important to the development of competencies. According to Leonard (2008) goal setting is constructive for developing complex, social, emotional and cognitive intelligence competencies, as well as simple skill development and behavior change, since by setting goals "we move our efforts and decisions toward it more efficiently and effectively, giving our functioning purpose and focus" (p. 109). Still an individual's ability to learn may vary. Those individuals with a high level of learning orientation view challenges as opportunities to enhance their skills and highly value these opportunities (Klein & Zeigert, 2004).

Furthermore, as this study focuses on foreign government representatives, which by nature are expatriate workers, the next section of the literature will provide an over-look on those competencies required by individual chosen to carry out international assignments.

Diplomacy

The field of diplomacy can be broadly defined as the management of the day-by-day interactions between countries (Henderson, 1995). As noticed by Lee & Hudson (2004), it involves “a process of communication, negotiation and sharing information between sovereign states... is also a foreign policy instrument that belongs (almost exclusively) to states in an international system of anarchy” (p. 353); they point out as well how the increase of states in the international system and the development of global and regional organizations have incremented today’s diplomatic activities.

There is of course a long history of diplomatic activity going back thousands of years. According to Siracusa (2010) one of the earliest diplomatic records dated back to 2,500 BC found in present day northern Iran, this was a letter between two distant kingdoms which was carried out by an emissary. As Kissinger (1994) explained, sovereigns sent envoys to other sovereigns to prevent war, cease hostilities, conclude treaties, continue peaceful terms and further trade.

The modern era of diplomacy established the independence of states and the notion of religious freedom (Anderson, 1993). Siracusa (2010) pinpointed how “as divine-right kings gave way to constitutional monarchies and republics, embassies and legislations became more institutionalized over Europe” (p.2). Several contributions to the diplomatic practice have been made throughout history, like it was the case in the age of the city-states of Italy, also in France during the 1789 French Revolution, and in the beginnings of the expansions and industrialization of the British empire (Saner et al., 2000). By the end of the 19th century European-style diplomacy had been adopted throughout the world. Other significant contributions to the diplomatic field were proposed by the U.S. in the years following World War Two, time during which different areas of academia and social science began to study in more detail the aptitudes and behaviors of international negotiators (Saner et al., 2000).

Roles of Foreign Government Representatives

The ancient Greek word for a diplomat was the word for an old man, and in later times was used by the French to refer to the work of a negotiator (Siracusa, 2010). Nowadays the roles of foreign representatives have been harder to exclusively define. Nicolson (1938) described the sometimes conflicting loyalties foreign representatives have to comply with, he stated:

The professional diplomatist is governed by several different and at times conflicting loyalties. He owes loyalty to his own sovereign, government, minister and foreign office; he owes loyalty to his own staff, he owes a form of loyalty to the diplomatic body in the capital where he resides; and he owes another form of loyalty to the government to which he is accredited and to the minister with whom he negotiates (p. 126).

Lindstrom (2002) argued that globalization, through the development of communication and technology and the development of trade, has acted as one of the main drivers changing the human resource needs of foreign missions. Consequently these developments has made modern diplomats to constantly be involved in processes of rapid communications, less secrecy and increased informal public engagement, and have also been responsible for extending their commercial responsibilities (Lee & Hudson, 2004).

Pamela Harriman, former American ambassador to France explained how instant communication and centralization of policy had made the roles of the job change into one of public relations and establishing prominent presence (Zaharna & Villalobos, 2000). Rana (2000), retired Indian ambassador shared how over the length of his professional career, more than half of the time the job was concerned to economic work.

Copeland (2009) stated that the mission for foreign representatives is to obtain the more number of benefits possible for the public interest of a country; for this he introduced the need to use soft power, which is lead by negotiation and persuasion talent rather than compulsion. Furthermore he identified some elements of diplomacy - public engagement, networking, relationships building and policy advocacy, and noticed that the job of a diplomat often involves having access to critical information and connecting directly with populations. Some other tasks of foreign government representatives include “giving policy inputs to shape foreign policy,

organizing and managing international conferences; conducting bilateral, multilateral and plurilateral negotiations; collecting and analyzing information from a variety of government and non-government sources and follow etiquette and norms appropriate to local culture”(Saner et al., 2000, p.11). Finally Copeland (2009) also indicated how a developing function of diplomats is to act as modernization managers and to personally get in touch with the drivers of globalization.

CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODS

The research design and research methods of the study were addressed in this chapter. To begin with, the research approach was introduced, followed by the research framework, research procedure, population and sample, data collection, data analysis and lastly issues of reliability and validity.

Research Approach

This study adopted a qualitative approach because it utilized foreign government representatives' own perceived needs and experience in their work environment and professional careers, in order to identify the competencies needed to become more efficient and effective in this profession. As Corbin and Strauss (2008) suggest, considering that the study was under the assumption that not all these competencies were clearly understood and some had not yet been identified, making a further in depth exploration necessary, a qualitative approach was appropriate.

Furthermore, a qualitative method was chosen over quantitative method because it gave the research the opportunity to obtain a deeper and more detailed description of foreign government representative's personal characteristics, while at the same time being able to explore specific and unusual cases (Johnson & Christensen, 2000). Thus the study utilized three qualitative methods for gathering the data, (1) document review, (2) participatory observation and (3) personal interviews.

Additionally, as this study discussed foreign government representatives in Taiwan, this research was an exploratory study focusing on Taiwan. Through analyzing the situation of foreign government representatives in Taiwan, the purpose of this study was to explore and identify the individual competency needs and competency development process for these individuals, and to a degree, to rest of practitioners of this profession in the rest of the East Asia sphere. Still the generalization of the findings of this study to other countries in the region should be managed with caution and take into consideration the specific social, political and cultural context of each nation.

Research Framework

The research framework of this study was constructed based on the previously covered relevant literature. The research problem within the theoretical framework is identified, as is the purposes and questions of the study. The problem refers to the fact that in modern times foreign government representatives has been overlooked and unnoticed within the body of contemporary academic research, and their specific and individual competency needs have remained unaddressed.

This study was designed to examine the learning process of foreign government representatives, as well as the dynamics of their work environment and job responsibilities, in an effort to identify the individual competency needs of these individuals, as well as how these competencies had been developed and acquired, in order to present an integrated competency study for this profession.

One of the assumptions of the study was that formal academic education is the foundation from which the competency development process takes place. Another assumption was that the competency development stage was driven by two different possible learning processes. The first of these was social learning theory, which proposes a process for learning in which individuals learn from observing others; this is done in a social setting. The second of these processes is intentional change theory, in which an individual's self-direction and discovery lead to competency development.

In addition, competencies were further categorized under the assumption that individual competencies can be organized in three different levels: (1) foundational level competencies; (2) areas of expertise (AOEs), or focus level; and (3) roles, or execution level. This three tier categorization is derived from the ASTD Competency model, which was previously explained in detail in chapter 2. At the same time, the previous assumptions are embedded in the overall context of the foreign government representative field. As a result, the research framework is better illustrated bellow:

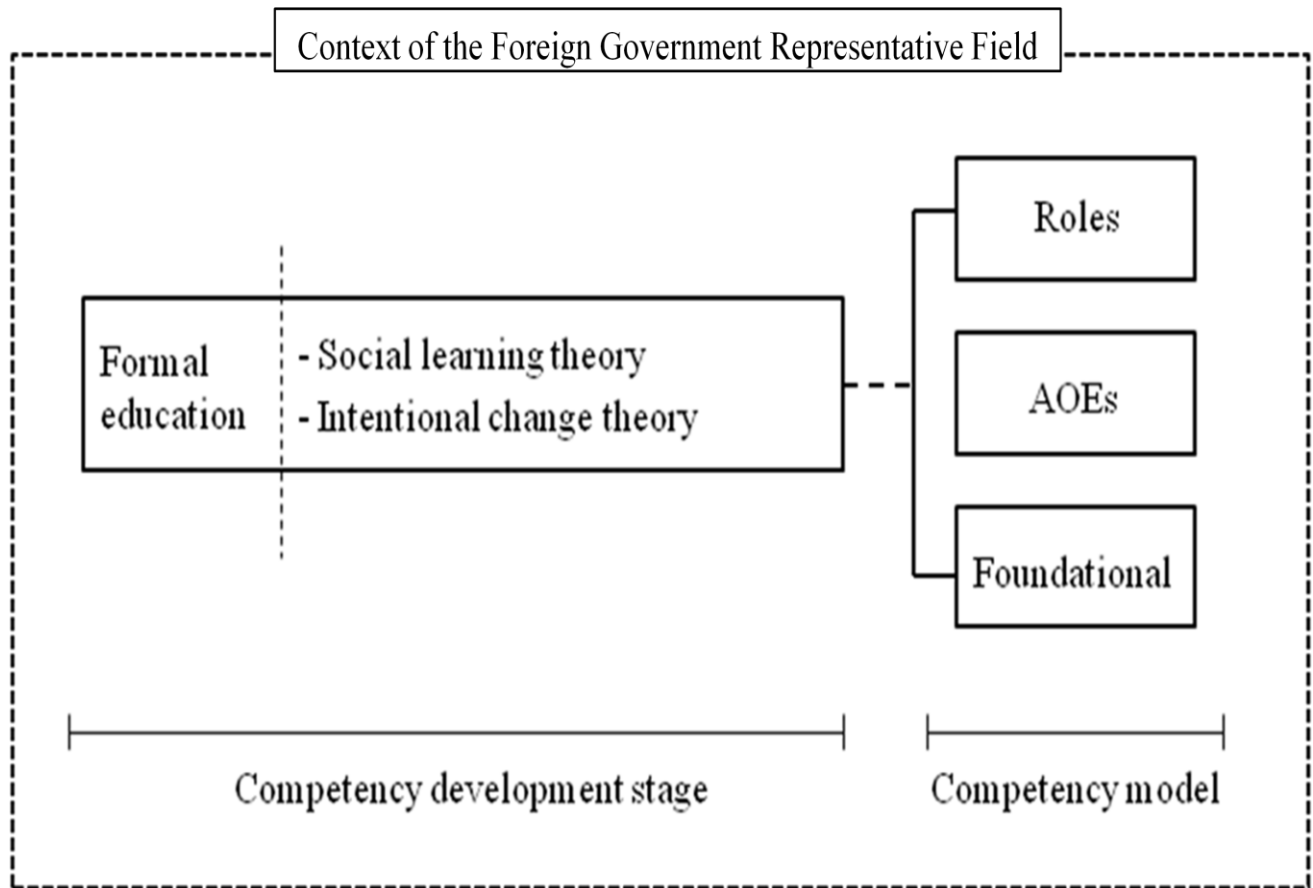


Figure 3.1. Research framework

Research Procedure

In this section the different steps and stages of the research are explained. The first step was to identify the research topic; this was done through discussion with thesis advisor until the final topic, direction and purpose of the research were confirmed. Following, based on the purpose of the study, literature review on competencies and foreign government representatives was conducted. From the literature and with guidance of thesis advisor the research framework and the appropriate methodology to reach the research purpose were determined. Next, the researcher began the participatory observation stage; this stage enabled the researcher to familiarize itself with the subjects and the environment.

Following, the interview questions were design using a combination of competency, diplomacy and expatriate workers literature, as well as additional information obtained in the observation stage as a guideline; after completion the interview questions went through the peer review and expert review processes. Later on, since the observation stage was an ongoing process, the researcher had access to undertake document review, conduct a pretest interview and modify the interview questions.

Consequently, succeeding this process, the final interviews were undertaken. After being collected, the data began to be synthesized, analyzed and interpreted. Finally, the research results, findings, conclusions and implications were written down in a comprehensible manner. Figure 3.2 illustrates the complete research procedure:

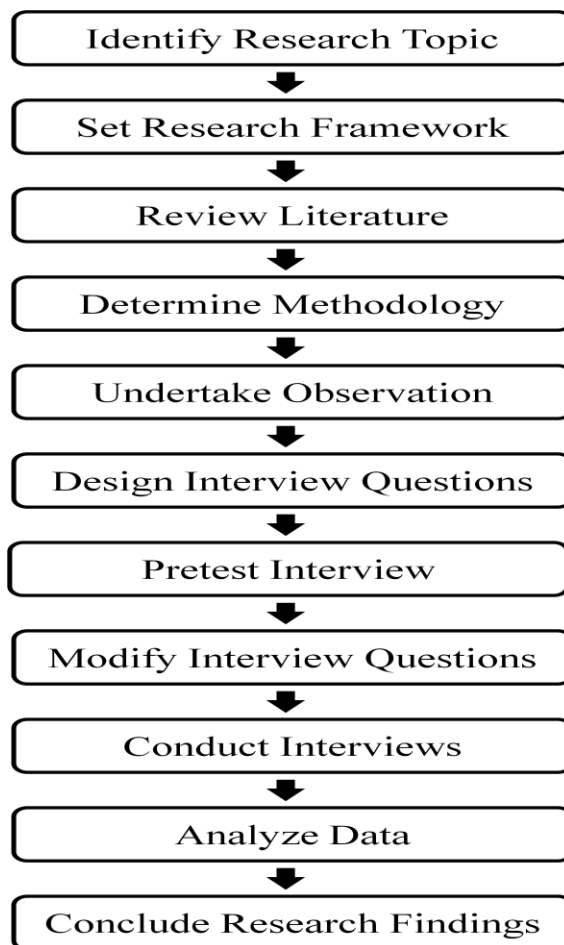


Fig 3.2. Research procedure

Sampling Process

The units of analysis for the study were the individuals working in foreign mission offices in Taiwan. Foreign mission offices included official embassies and commercial, trade and cultural offices, hence both official diplomats and non-diplomat representatives were selected for the sample. Finally, the sample was composed by ten foreign government representatives covering different ranks within their organizations. Out of the ten participants, six were individuals working in official embassies and four were individuals working in commercial or cultural offices.

This study carried out a non-probability way to select the sample. Judgmental sampling was appropriate since it allowed the researcher to choose a particular case illustrating the features of the research interest (Silverman, 2005); given the nature of the research, judgmental sampling was suitable for two main reasons:

1. The units of analysis had to possess a specific nationality, and share a special status, experience and expertise.
2. The goal of the sample was not to be a generalization of the population (Mertens, 2005), instead the study focused on the particular competency needs of foreign government representatives in Taiwan.

In addition, a snow-ball sampling was used to select the sample; As Mertens (2005) explained, when using snowball sampling, the researcher begins with key informants of a community who recommend other people based on their knowledge. Through the cooperation and referral of two foreign mission offices the researcher gained access to the rest of the sample. Three criteria were used for the selection of the participants:

1. The participants must had a foreign nationality; this excluded any Taiwanese employees assigned to work in foreign mission offices.
2. The participants must carry out diplomatic, commercial or cultural duties; this excluded any support personnel employed in foreign mission offices.
3. The participants must have been holding their positions in Taiwan for at least one year.

Research Participants

For the sample to be more representative of foreign mission holders in Taiwan, the research participants were from ten different foreign mission offices, covering different regions of the world in order to have a more global representation. The sample included one representative of each of the following ten countries: Burkina Faso, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Paraguay and Nicaragua from official embassies; Brazil, France, Mexico and Peru from commercial offices. With the intention of preserving their anonymity, the name, specific nationality, rank or position of the participants was not revealed in this study. Background information including age, gender and work experience about each interviewee is presented in the following table, with their respective one-letter pseudonyms which were used throughout the study:

Table 3.1.

Background Information of Participants

Name	Gender	Age	Work experience in Taiwan
Subject A	F	25-30	2 years
Subject B	F	35-40	3 years
Subject C	M	55-60	4 years
Subject D	M	40-45	3.5 years
Subject E	M	40-45	3 years
Subject F	M	35-40	2 year
Subject G	M	55-60	3 years
Subject H	M	40-45	2.5 years
Subject I	M	35-40	2 years
Subject J	F	55-60	1.5 years

Data Collection

As Corbin and Strauss (2008) suggested, “one of the virtues of qualitative research is that there are many sources of data” (p.27). This study used three methods for data collection: participant observation, document review and personal interviews, which are explained in more detail below.

Participatory Observation

First, a fieldwork stage of participatory observation was conducted. Participatory observation refers to a period of intense interaction between the researcher and the research participants (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975). This stage of observation was possible since the researcher was granted an internship in one foreign mission office, which allowed the researcher to get familiarized with the job content and work environment, while developing closer relations with the research participants. This period of acclimatization helped the researcher to not be seen so much as an intruder and to find ways to gain access to information in a more unobtrusive manner.

During this stage data from personal experiences, observation and casual conversations were systematically collected through an observation journal and field notes. Bogdan and Taylor (1975) explained that field notes must also include a record of the researchers’ feeling and interpretations; this should be distinguished from the rest of the data and should be given the name of observer’s comments or reflective field notes.

The participatory observation stage was conducted for over a month and a half, from February 21th 2012, to April 12th 2012, period during which the researcher served as a non-paid intern two times a week, every Tuesday and Thursday, in the Nicaraguan embassy accredited in the Republic of China (Taiwan), located in the Shilin District of Taipei city, exactly situated in the third floor of the Diplomatic Quarter building. The following figure illustrates the physical setting and environment in which the participatory observation stage took place.

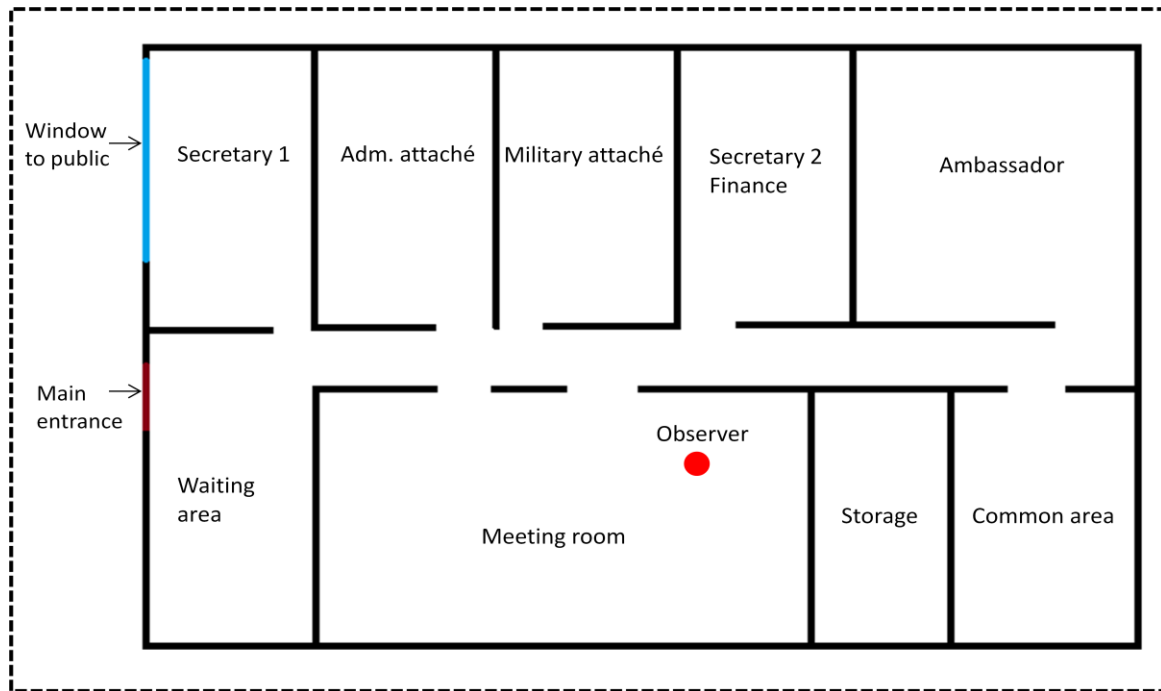


Figure 3.3. Observation setting

As an intern, the actual role of the researcher was of personal assistant of the ambassador, which was the highest authority and the head of the foreign mission. The activities assigned to the researcher were diverse and challenging; because of this the researcher was in constant interaction and communication with the administrative attaché and the ambassador. After each day, data was recorded in the observation journal, which is included in Appendix A at the end of this document.

Document Review

At the same time, while being on the inside of a foreign mission office, the researcher was able to have access to information in the form of reports and official documents. Thus, the second method of data collection, document review took place. Official government documents, statements from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the foreign mission's country, as well as from Taiwan, statements from the Diplomatic Corps of Taiwan, and other reports that helped answer parts of the research questions were taken into consideration. Because of the sensitivity of some of these documents, the researcher omitted revealing their content in this study, extracting and analyzing only the relevant parts which were related to the research purpose.

Personal Interviews

Since the observation period was possible through an internship, this fact made the observation stage an ongoing process, which gave the researcher the chance to design the interview questions, proceed through expert review, conduct a pretest interview and modify the interview questions in preparation for the final stage. The final stage was to conduct semi-structured in depth interviews with open-ended questions. Johnson and Christensen (2000) mentioned how conducting interviews allows the researcher to get to know the world of another person, in this case the participants, and gain a deeper understanding of a person's perspectives. Also, adopting this method provided the researcher with the opportunity to prepare the questions ahead of time; this guideline helped ensure that all the relevant topics for the study were covered in the interview. On the other hand, semi-structured interviews gave the participants the freedom to express their views in their own terms and gave the researcher the chance to further investigate on an area, this was appropriate due to the exploratory nature of the study.

As previously mentioned the interview questions were developed through the combination of competency, diplomacy and expatriate workers literature, as well as information obtained in the observation stage, as a guideline. Furthermore to carry out the interviews the researcher used an adaptation of Spencer and Spencer (1993) behavioral event interview, which in its self is an adaptation of the critical incident technique. By doing so the interviewees talked about relevant areas of the job based on their previous experience. Chell (1998) described the critical incident technique as “a qualitative interview procedure which facilitates the investigation of significant occurrences (events, incidents, processes, or issues) identified by the respondent, the way they are managed, and the outcomes in terms of perceived effects”(p. 6). Bitner, Booms, and Tetreault (1990) explained that an incident is defined as critical if it makes a significant contribution, either positively or negatively to an activity; thus a critical incident should describe a situation that was important in determining the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the outcome. It was appropriate to use this technique since it had been previously used as a method of identifying job requirements and determining competencies for a vast number of professionals in various disciplines (Gremmler, 2006). In more detail, and following the guidelines suggested by Spencer and Spencer (1993) the structure of the interview design was composed by the following elements:

1. Career path: in this section the interviewee's could share their education background, training and previous work experiences.
2. Job responsibilities: in this section the interviewee's could share their job roles, tasks, duties, objectives and responsibilities.
3. Behavioral events: in this section the interviewee's could share examples and real on the job experiences and important situations, which resulted in either a positive or a negative outcome in their performance.
4. Characteristics needed to do the job: in this section the interviewee's could share their own views on what it takes to do their job successfully.

Following these guidelines as well as the literature, the researcher designed a ten opened-ended questions interview, which was complemented by another five possible follow up questions. After completion, the questions went first through peer review, since the questions were corrected by fellow researchers, with living experience in Taiwan and backgrounds in human resource development and business management, as well as by thesis advisor.

The next step was for the interview questions to go through expert review, which was feasible since the research was in constant interaction with foreign government representatives due to the internship, making it possible for one expert on the topic to help adjust the interview question; the background of the expert reviewer was in international relations and diplomacy, with more than four years working as part of the diplomatic corps of Taiwan. Later, as mentioned in the research procedure a pilot interview was conducted. The researcher interviewed a lower ranking official working at the foreign mission in which the internship was being done, keeping in mind that the highest ranking official of this office was going to be selected as a final research participant.

After this pilot interview and following the recommendations of the interviewee, parts of the interview were modified. These modifications had more to do with the elimination of redundant questions, which lead to responses that did not enriched the data being collected, thus just prolonging the interview time. Other modifications had to do with changing the order in which the question were asked, so that the interview would run more smoothly. After the

previous designing, reviewing, adjusting and modification process the interview questions were ready to be used in the final stage of the data collection phase, which consisted in conducting ten semi-structured in depth interviews. The final interview was composed of eight questions and five possible follow-up questions:

Table 3.2.
Interview Questions

Question	Type	Purpose
Could you please share your education background and training experience(if any)	Career path	Competency development stage
What has been the most significant experience that has marked and helped form your character as a foreign representative?	Behavioral event	Competency development stage
How did you prepare yourself professionally to come to Taiwan?	Behavioral event	Competency development stage
Could you describe your job objectives? How is a typical day at work?	Job responsibilities	Job analysis
Could you talk about how has your learning experience evolved since your first days on the job?	Behavioral events	Competency development stage
What was the most difficult task for you to learn? How did you overcome it?	Behavioral event	Competency development stage
What are the challenges of working in a Chinese environment?	Job responsibilities	Determine perceived challenges

(continued)

Table 3.2. (continued)

Question	Type	Purpose
In your opinion what the skills and/or attributes someone must have to become a good foreign government representative?	Characteristics needed to do the job	Identify competencies
Potential follow up questions		
Could you give an example of how do you build relationship with the Taiwanese community?	Behavioral event	Identify competencies
How do you describe the importance of foreign language skills for your position?	Characteristics needed to do the job	Identify competencies
Could you give an example of how do you work with people from different cultural backgrounds?	Behavioral events	Identify competencies
How often do you adapt you communication style?	Characteristics needed to do the job	Identify competencies
To what extent do you need to know about trade issues?	Job responsibilities	Identify competencies

To explain table 3.2 in more detail, the type of question referred to the behavioral event interview guidelines (Spencer & Spencer, 1993). The purpose of the question had to do with what part of the research questions was it aimed at answering. Finally, the follow up questions were an anticipation of the possible responses of the last question: **“In your opinion what are the skills and/or attributes someone must have to become a good foreign representative?”** and were based on diplomacy and expatriate workers literature. Additionally, background information of each participant was gathered before the interview, this information was previously presented in Table 3.1.

Because of the sensitivity of their profession, the researcher sent the questions to the participants prior to the interview, to assure the questions were not compromising for their job. The interviews were scheduled two weeks after the initial observation stage began, from the 6th

to the 22nd of March of 2012. Originally the study aimed to extend the number of participants to twelve, but because of time constraints and unwillingness on behalf of some participants, it was reduced to ten. Besides this fact, the interviews were carried without any other major inconvenience. Since the interviews had a duration of 30-50 minutes, and contained open-ended questions, the researcher asked and was granted permission for using a tape-recorder, in order to enhance the accuracy of the data collection.

Background of the Researcher

In addition, the data did not only consist of the observations or the interviewee's testimony, but also the researchers' assumptions and bias which shaped the way in which such data was to be interpreted. As Mertens (2005) points out, unlike quantitative study, in a qualitative study the researcher is the instrument for collecting the data, since "the researcher decides which question to ask and in what order, what to observe, what to write down" (p. 247). Therefore the background of the researcher had to be taken into account. On a personal level, the researcher of this study was brought up in a multiethnic environment, strongly influenced by politics and governmental issues, thus the interest of exploring the public sector foreign service; the researcher also had a business educational background, mostly on international trade and commerce; finally, as the researcher was granted the opportunity to work as an intern in his country's foreign mission office in Taiwan, the researcher owed loyalty and a degree of responsibility to this entity.

Data Analysis

The ten interviews were tape-recorded and were later on transcribed verbatim – meaning that every utterance from the audio was transcribed. It is necessary to mention that in seven out of the ten interviews the researcher and participants shared the same mother tongue – Spanish. As a consequence, the interviews were carried out in Spanish, in order for the participants to express themselves more naturally. Therefore, after transcribing them, these interviews were later translated from Spanish to English.

Bogdan and Taylor (1975) argued that the best way to conduct data analysis in qualitative study was to do it simultaneously with data collection. In this fashion, when all the data was finally collected, it would have also gone through a preliminary review process. Therefore the researcher reviewed all field notes and transcripts in order to get a general sense of the data. Next, the researcher started to identify segments in the data which were responsive to the research questions; a code was given to those segments that could identify competencies in the participants work environment, as well as those that could determine the competency development stage. These codes were later categorized into themes.

More in detail the data analysis was conducted in three steps: data reduction, data display and data verification (Huberman & Miles, 1998). The data reduction stage was the process of selecting, simplifying, and transforming the data of field notes and transcriptions by means of elaborating summaries, coding, looking for themes and categorizing such data. To be more specific, in this step, the observation journal, interview transcript and other documents were coded. The segments of the data that were related or could respond to one of the research questions were transformed into concepts; each of these concepts were given a code according to the source of the data. In this fashion codes from the observation stage were coded with the initial letter "O", followed by a number which represent the observation day. Codes from the interview process were coded with the initial letter "I", plus the subject's assigned letter. Similar codes were merged and were later categorized. The observation journal, example of an interview transcript, as well as the coding list are provided in Appendix A, B and C in order to illustrate the coding process.

In the following data display stage, the data was organized in a way that permitted conclusion drawing, this was done through figures, taking into account the literature and the research framework; additionally, at this stage higher order categories emerged. Finally the data verification stage involved revising the data as many times as necessary in order to verify these emergent conclusions.

Quality of the Research

This final section addressed validity and reliability issues. As mentioned above, in a qualitative study the researcher is the instrument. Therefore during the entire research process, the researcher remained as most objective as possible, focusing on the research purpose and questions, this way reducing the researcher's bias and enhancing the quality of the research.

In order to increase reliability, the interview questions were discussed with thesis advisor and went through a peer review, as well as an expert review process. Furthermore, the initial observation stage gave the research the opportunity to prepare for the interviews. At this stage, exploring the job content and work environment, alongside conducting a pretest interview allowed the researcher to make the necessary adjustment and modifications to the interview questions. All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. Following all transcripts were sent back to the interviewees for their approval.

To ensure validity the researcher used the triangulation technique, which “involves checking information that has been collected from different sources or methods of consistency of evidence across sources of data” (Mertens, 2005, p. 255). This was done first by choosing three methods for data collection - participatory observation, document review and semi-structured interviews. In addition, the sample chosen was composed of foreign government representatives covering different ranks with their organizations; it included individuals working in both official embassies and commercial or cultural offices; and finally the research participants selected worked in foreign missions from different regions of the world.

CHAPTER IV FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In accordance with the research purposes, questions and framework, this chapter has been divided in three main sections. The first section attempts to give an introduction and understand the overall context of the foreign government representative field in Taiwan. Thus, this first part explores the job content, work environment and the different challenges these individuals face in the day-to-days of their profession. The second section covers the competency development stage, exploring the learning process foreign government representatives have gone through, in order to acquire the personal tools necessary for their profession. Finally, the last section identifies the individual competencies required for foreign government representatives to work successfully in Taiwan, and presents the competencies required for this profession. Each section was subdivided in themes and categories.

Context of the Foreign Government Representative Field

Based on the purposes and questions of the study, this section consists of three major dimensions: (1) job content, (2) work environment and (3) challenges of serving in Taiwan, in order to give a more holistic view of the foreign government representative profession. These dimensions are explained in more detail bellow.

Job Content

The job content of foreign government representatives was analyzed referring to the idea that job analysis – which encompasses job descriptions and job specifications, is the foundation to construct a competency model (Brannick & Levine, 2002). To begin with, is necessary to understand that the specific job content of foreign government representatives is highly dependent on the rank, position and the type of representation mission an official has. To clarify, one of the main assumptions of this study was that both, official embassies with diplomatic representation, and non-diplomatic commercial or cultural offices, although different in some aspects, are considered to be foreign missions. This view is also shared by a member of the Diplomatic Corps of Taiwan:

In the past embassies and ambassadors were revered as more important than commercial offices and their directors, because of the diplomatic support offered to the nation of Taiwan. Now as commercial interests are growing rapidly, trade offices have reached the same level of importance (Observation, 2012.2.21).

This being the case, foreign service officers – while immersed in the Taiwanese context, perform a multitude of duties in both kind of entities, representing the interests of their country in Taiwan, protecting the interests of its citizens and interacting with officials from the Taiwanese government. Table 4.1 illustrates some of the general (1) job responsibilities, (2) job functions and (3) job tasks that comprise the job content of foreign government representative in Taiwan. Furthermore, following this three components are briefly explained.

Table 4.1.

Job Content of Foreign Government Representatives in Taiwan

Job component	Content
Job responsibilities	Serve and assist conational's Share and explain national values and policies Support home businesses and economic partnerships in Taiwan Analyze and give solutions to political events Run daily management operations
Job functions	Manager/officer level Issuing visas Protecting conational residents and travelers Attending specific divisions and areas (trade, culture, information) Office administration Supporting the head of mission

(continued)

Table 4.1. (continued)

Job component		Content
Job functions	Head of mission level	Leading foreign missions Reporting to their government on diplomatic and economic matters Receiving delegations of their state Representing their states in meetings and negotiations Attending the most serious cases in the protection of conationals
Job tasks	Analyzing data Writing reports Meeting local authorities and business sector Communication with their governments	

Job responsibilities

As Brannick and Levine (2002) point out, job responsibilities or duties can be considered to be the work assigned for a particular job, which if not done properly would seriously impact the objectives and goals of the job. The key to enjoying a successful career is to always have present one's job responsibilities in order to make efforts to perform them better. According to subject B foreign government representatives are "the front-line officials representing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at all countries in were missions are appointed" (I-B-2012.03.15). The responsibilities of these front-line professional differ, as they focus on different career tracks. Given that this research included foreign government representatives covering different career paths, different job responsibilities emerged. This being said, Subject G gave an almost complete account of the different duties they must accomplish in their missions:

My first duty is to put the name of my country very high, so that my compatriots will feel proud of their country, also to promote the products that we export, then make the Taiwanese community understand the human, spiritual and cultural values our country has, so that they know what kind of people we are, and enforce government policies establish by my country and Taiwan, to demonstrate that our relation is deep and sincere (I-G-2012.03.07).

In addition to this testimony and integrating different duties described by other research participants, the main job responsibilities of foreign government representatives in Taiwan are listed below:

1. Serve, assist and meet the needs of their fellow countrymen in Taiwan. (Subjects A, B, C, D, G, I, J)
2. Share and explain their countries cultural values and governmental policies. (Subjects B, C, G, I)
3. Support their country's businesses, as well as economic partnerships in Taiwan. (Subjects A, D, E, F, G, H, I)
4. Analyze, report, and give solutions to relevant political events in the region. (Subjects A, C, G, H, J)
5. Run the daily management operations of their missions. (Subjects A, D, F, H, I, J)

The job responsibilities and duties previously mentioned may slightly differ from foreign mission to foreign mission, but they can be considered to be generally guided by similar outlines, as well as some common goals and objectives.

Job functions

Marder-Clark (2006) mentions that job functions can also describe an individual's role in an organization; in some cases, a job's functions can even suggest a job's title. Furthermore, job functions can either be essential or marginal. The former are functions that require specialized expertise, while the latter are incidental functions within a position. Foreign government representatives from different countries, serve in embassies and commercial or cultural offices in Taiwan, and as their job responsibilities, their functions relate to their rank. Subject B explains this issue in more detail:

According to our rank we must be able to do handle certain things. I have to dominate the issues of consular affairs, and also the culture of my country, considering that I'm also the cultural attaché. If I was a commercial attaché then I would have to be involved with trade issues (I-B-2012.3.15).

To illustrate better the concept of this rank-function relation, figures 4.1 and 4.2 depict the ranks and structure of both official embassies and commercial or cultural offices:

Ambassador	Head of mission
Charge d' affaires	
Minister	Managers
Minister-Counselor	
Counselor	
First Secretary	Officers
Second Secretary	
Third Secretary	
Attaché	

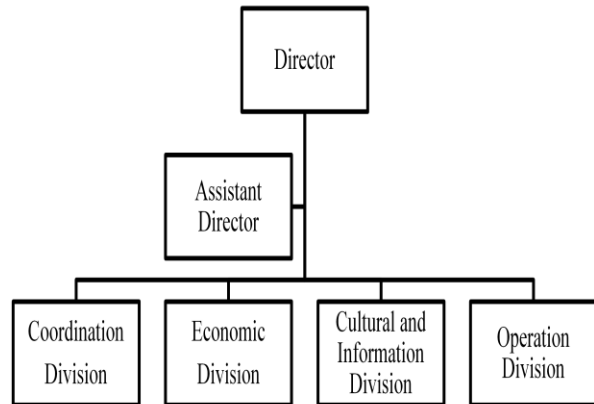


Figure 4.1. Structure of embassies

Figure 4.2. Structure of commercial offices

The main distinction between these two kind of foreign missions, is that the structure of official embassies is imposed by the international system, and its regulations and laws (Kissinger, 1994), making them by nature vertically hierarchical. On the other hand, non-diplomatic missions are somewhat more flat and flexible in their operations and structure, but they still maintain a chain of command. In both kinds of entities the main functional distinctions are between the head of the mission and the rest of the members, which posses managerial or officer roles.

Manager and officer level.

As subject C describes in foreign missions “the difference between middle rank officials and lower rank officials is not so obvious, since at times officials can often carry out similar roles and responsibilities within a mission” (I-C-2012.03.08). In the case of Taiwan, these manager/officers functions are even more intertwined, since some of these positions may not

exist, given that the majority of foreign missions are small in size. An example of this is the case of the consular function, as Subject F explains:

Many countries don't have a separate. Actually no be honest with you, in real life scenarios, it is not uncommon for individuals to carry out any kind of consular functions in a foreign mission anywhere in the world, and at the same time oversee other areas like tourism promotion and commerce (I-F-2012.03.13).

Therefore, at a manager/officer level the general functions of foreign government representatives in Taiwan have to do with: (1) issuing visas, (2) protecting the citizens of their country who are living or traveling in Taiwan, (3) attending to their specific division or area – trade, culture, information etc., (4) administrating the management of the office (5) and supporting their heads of mission.

Head of mission level.

The top level or heads of mission, are generally experienced foreign government representatives or people with influential political ties, which receive presidential appointments to serve as an ambassador or director in Taiwan. As mentioned by another member of the Diplomatic Corps of Taiwan, “the heads of mission in embassies receive the title of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary” (Observation, 2012.02.21), which means these individual are the highest authority of the government of their country in Taiwan, therefore what they express is what the president of the sending state is directly expressing.

The functions of this top level representatives have to do with: (1) leading their foreign mission in Taiwan, (2) reporting to their governments on diplomatic and economic matters, (3) receiving delegations of their state and accompany foreign officials, (4) representing their states in meetings, negotiations and other events, and (5) attending to the most serious cases in the protection of the citizens of their country.

Job tasks

Lawler (1994), defined job tasks as the smallest identifiable and fundamental piece of an assignment, which serves as one unit of work, and as a means of differentiating between the different elements of a job. Even though as subject J suggests, because of the nature of their job

“typical days don’t exist in the life of a foreign government representative”(I-J-2012.03.20), it’s accurate to say that these individuals spend a lot of their working hours assembling and reviewing information, as well as reading, analyzing and writing reports, which can be considered the foundation needed to prepare for other tasks. As Subject D shares:

First I need to get informed of what’s happening. The next thing is to read the news here, the newspapers, part of this is also reading any messages and reports, which sometimes can take many hours, depending on the load of issues. So in collecting inputs I almost spent the whole morning (I-D-2012.03.22).

Another considerable amount of their working hours is spent interacting with different groups of the Taiwanese society. As subject E mentions “a typical week includes a formal meeting with government counterparts in Taiwan, with at least one or two companies interested in doing business with my country in tourism, investment or trade” (I-E-2012.03.21).

Therefore the main daily tasks of a foreign government representative include (1) analyzing data, (2) writing reports, (3) meeting with local authorities and businessmen and (4) communicating with their governments. These tasks are the fundamental basis for implementing policies and programs.

Consequently, after analyzing their responsibilities, functions and tasks, it can be concluded that the main purpose of foreign government representatives in Taiwan is to facilitate relations between both nations, in order to advance their country’s policy interests in the Republic of China, while informing their governments about political and economic activities in the host country, and at the same time assisting fellow conational’s living and traveling in Taiwan, as well as acting on behalf of their government during difficult times.

Work Environment

The following component when analyzing the overall context of the foreign government representative profession is the work environment. As Rhee (2007) points out, the work environment can encompass the location where a specific job is done, and when referring to a place for working it involves the nature of the job, pace of working, employee relationships as

well as behaviors, the physical setting as well as the immediate surroundings of where workplace is located.

Foreign government representatives are posted at embassies, consulates and commercial offices around the world. While the length of the post can vary according to vacancies, over their professional career these individuals have to jump from one environment to another, as subject E mentioned “normally we work in a country for two to four years before being transferred to another one (I-E-2012.03.21).

When analyzing the environmental conditions in Taiwan two major themes could be identified: (1) the internal environment and (2) the external environment. Table 4.2 summarizes the characteristics of these two different types of work environments, which are later explained in more detail.

Table 4.2.

Work Environment of Foreign Government Representatives in Taiwan

Environment	Description
Internal	Positive physical settings Multicultural staff Support from local personnel
External	Interaction in bigger communities Governed by protocol Sense of cooperation and teamwork

Internal environment

The internal environment refers to what goes on indoors and inside a particular foreign mission office, as well as their specific working conditions and the relations between coworkers within a same mission. To begin, in Taiwan the majority of foreign representations are located in two main buildings; official embassies are almost all situated in the Diplomatic Quarter building, bellow Taiwan’s International Cooperation Development Fund (Observation-2012.02.21); a considerable amount of commercial and cultural offices are located in the Taiwan World Trade Center building. Even though is clear that there exist some exceptions, this concentration of

representation offices, means that these entities are to some degree homogeneous when it comes to their physical setting. This physical setting can be classified as being a positive work environment, because of their space and comfort (Observation-2012.02.21).

Logically, another aspect of the internal environment is that by nature there is a bicultural relation between coworkers, since foreign mission offices all employ local staff. As subject B mentioned:

In here we practically have a Paraguayan system, but the local girls are well adapted, one of the girls had been living a long time in Argentina, another in Spain, so they know the Western system, still we respect when they have their meal times, to them that is very special (I-B-2012.03.15).

Unlike other places in the world, where condition can be difficult, in Taiwan, foreign government representatives have an advantage in the sense that the local staff has the responsibility of facilitating any kind of work material and helping in any kind of task they might be unable to complete – for example translating documents from Chinese to their local language (Observation-2012.04.2012), which let representatives focus in more substantial matters.

External environment

The work environment also includes the social context in which individuals have to interact with other people, in order to plan, manage and coordinate issues relevant to their job (Rhee, 2007). In this sense, this corresponds to what goes on outside the office. Following this line, as previously mentioned, foreign government representatives spend much of their time and effort attending activities and meeting with different constituent groups. At the same time, these representation offices form part of bigger communities in which they also interact.

Official embassies are all part of the Diplomatic Corps of Taiwan. This organization is the collective body of foreign diplomats accredited in the Republic of China. In Taiwan, the Diplomatic Corps has a clear structure. It is composed by a dean, which is the longest serving head of mission; a secretary, which is in charge of organizing and scheduling meetings; and a treasurer, which handles and keeps record of financial funds (Observation-2012.03.15).

Commercial or cultural offices are generally members of different chambers of commerce, which are a form of business network, whose goal is to further the interests of trade. In these organizations a board of directors is elected to set policies for the chamber, and hire an executive director (European Chamber of Commerce Taipei, 2012). In these kinds of organizations the multicultural factor is again present, since there is constant interaction between representatives from different corners of the world. Subject B explains how at this level the environment is ruled by respect since “usually the meetings are very protocolary and there exist already an internationally imposed system”(I-B-2012.03.15).

Other constituent groups with which to relate are the different government bodies and funds that cooperate with foreign mission to develop and coordinate diverse initiatives and projects. Besides the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Taiwan, an example of these institutions can be the Central American Trade Office and the Taiwan External Trade Development Council (Observation, 2012.03.28), which are instruments for fostering economic ties. As Taiwanese governmental institutions, the formal protocolary element is also present, Subject C explained: “as we are guest of Taiwan, the authorities here treat us with great respect and are always willing to cooperate, there is a sense of teamwork”(I-C-2012.03.08).

On the other hand, the environments surrounding other groups of interest such as local business and the Taiwanese community in general, are more diverse and therefore more difficult to predict. Consequently, the overall work environment of foreign government representatives both inside and outside of their organization can be generalized as positive, while at the same time being highly influenced and driven by a multicultural component.

Challenges of Serving in Taiwan

When analyzing the challenges faced by foreign government representatives in Taiwan two major themes emerged from the data: (1) professional challenges and (2) personal challenges. Table 4.3 illustrates these challenges more clearly. Furthermore, both themes are better explained in more detail bellow.

Table 4.3.

Challenges of Serving in Taiwan

Type	Challenges
Professional	Individual public relations demands Human resource and modernization demands The Taiwan context
Personal	Taiwan's culture and language Geographic location and climate conditions

Professional challenges

As the main purpose of this research is to identify the competency needs for the foreign government representative profession in Taiwan, it was necessary to first give an account about the challenges these representatives have to overcome in their jobs and workplace. These professional challenges were divided into three categories: (1) individual public relations demands, (2) human resource and modernization demands (3) the Taiwan context. Each category is better explained below.

Individual public relations demands.

The changes in diplomacy and international relations over the years have brought changes in the roles of foreign government representatives. Most participants mentioned that today the job demands for them to be more accessible and in contact with the people, as subject A mentioned “nowadays diplomats have to play a more relaxed, friendly, flexible role” (I-A-2012.03.15). Subject B emphasized how a part of becoming more open is the need for foreign representatives to approach the public:

Now diplomats have to go to the masses, not just be sitting in the office and go to banquets. You have to get closer with the people, work harder on the field, not so much from behind the desk, now the pressure to move around is higher (I-B-2012.03.15).

This demand of having to work harder in the field is a result of the increasing international competition foreign representatives face in Taiwan, which has required them to adopt a more aggressive style in the way they do their job and interact with the public, Subject I explains:

There's a sort of race to attract the host country to do more than reach agreements, to invest, make exchanges, strengthen tourism and trade. Our governments know the investment potential of Taiwan, so we fight to take advantage of this opportunity (I-I-2012.03.19).

Hence, on an individual level a major challenges foreign government representatives face in Taiwan is the necessity to be more engaged in public relations and have the willingness to connect directly with the society and its constituent groups.

Human resource and modernization demands.

Foreign mission offices in Taiwan have a particular organizational environment, which comes along with its own set of challenges. For Subject B a challenge was the lack of human resources the office counts with, she said: "We need to support our ambassador's work, and considering that we have relatively few officials, compared to other missions in the world, we need to always be prepared to do a bit of everything"(I-B-2012.03.07). The few human resources the office counts with consist also of local people, which are mainly appointed to carry out non-representative support functions, creating the previously mentioned multicultural work environment, all the research participants pointed this as a major challenge, subject A explains:

Taiwanese people are very efficient and very proper. One has faster and more concrete responses, more prompt, a Taiwanese is totally different from what a Latino is, that has force me to accelerate the way I work, I had to learn how to sharpen the way I do my job (I-A-2012.03.15) .

In this case, it could be argued that from subject's A perspective, the multicultural work environment can be seen as a positive challenge, by forcing her to improve the way she works. On the other hand, another perspective about this multicultural work environment is that of subject H:

In my country we work in a way. I can easily go to another specialist and ask for any kind of information from another country, he will send it to my email. Here if you ask for something, they tell you to ask the boss, or they can tell you they are not in charge of that. When I was a specialist back home, the ambassadors called me to ask me for anything they needed, and I gladly contacted them with the appropriate person (I-H-2012.03.15).

Hence, from this point of view it can be seen how cultural differences mark the way people work together and can at times create obstacles. Subject H continued his testimony with an example:

Here it has been very difficult, yesterday when I call the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to ask for the order of seniority of the ambassadors in Taiwan it was a headache. Starting with the secretaries that work there, is their way of doing things. If the boss doesn't tell them, they don't do it, and that's not how it should be. In my country if you need something you go to the Minister's secretary, you ask what you need and she gives it to you (I-H-2012.03.15).

Aside of human resource issues, a big factor that has influenced the organizational environment has been modernization. As Subject F says in the work place there has been an enormous improvement in communications and information flow:

Now there's no excuse that I didn't get your mail, that I was out of the office, in case you have a smart phone. The technology in the region has led to a higher level of facilitation of information, which demands for us to respond immediately (I-F-2012.03.13).

Hence the effects of modernization and technology have forced foreign representatives to find ways to systematically keep up to date with the rapid constant changes in the global political and economic scene, in order to keep their governments informed.

The Taiwan context.

Apart from the internal organizational environment, the fact that these offices are located in the Republic of China (Taiwan) cause a different type of professional challenges which have to do with getting the job done from Taiwan. These difficulties such as Taiwan's diplomatic reality, the effects of globalization, the cultural distance between Taiwan and other nations, along with Taiwan's geopolitical location are issues that foreign representatives are unable to control and that have an impact in their job. As subject H mentioned, the diplomatic status of Taiwan is always a concern:

Our ambassador could be ambassador to Korea, Thailand and Malaysia, what is called a concurrent ambassador because they don't live in any of those places, but what happens? Some countries do not accept this, because he is accredited and resides in Taiwan (I-H-2012.03.07).

Another important external factor is the obvious effects of living in a globalized world, which has incremented the consolidation of free trade agreements in the region. This has made the roles of foreign missions revolve more around trade and commercial interest. Subject E explains how as the objective of foreign missions is shifting and focusing more on working harder to foment economic relations, another major challenge arises, since on this side of the world there is not that much known about his country:

It's hard to get people to know your country when you are in an environment so different where actually little is known. It's very different from my colleagues who work in other Latin American countries. They go directly with proposals and projects. For my colleagues working in Asia where our region has no such presence, that's our first challenge (I-E-2012.03.21).

For subject J the time difference due to the geographical position of Taiwan and her country, creates another difficult situation, since part of the work takes place really late at night, she said: "after closing the embassy and attending any event, if I have a problem, if I have any queries, I must wait until 1 or 2 am to call the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of my country" (I-J-2012.03.20).

Therefore, when it comes to professional challenges there are three main factors foreign government representatives have to overcome, which are the increasing need of public engagement, dealing with a multicultural organizational environment, modernized and influenced by globalization; and having to do this in the Taiwan context.

Personal challenges

As many other expatriate workers, every day foreign government representatives have to live in a country that is not their own. Hence, personal challenges refer to the difficulties these individuals have to deal with in their day to day life. It was divided in two categories: challenges

that rise from the (1) Taiwan's culture and language; and those that arise from the (2) geographic location and climate conditions.

Taiwan's culture and language.

The first challenge all participants mentioned of living in Taiwan, are the cultural differences between the Taiwanese society and their own. For subject A getting used to living in Taiwan was a very difficult experience, she explains:

I've been living many years in Taiwan, I even did my studies here and still it took me a while to get used to the culture, it's so different from ours, is hard to learn how to live as a Taiwanese, to get used to the food, to understand the way they think, their customs, it was a cultural shock (I-A-2012.03.15).

For subject J part of these cultural differences had to do with gender issues. While gender issues are a general problem in many other societies, she mentioned that in Asian countries in certain occasions it can be more pronounced, she said: "people who do not know who I am do not believe that because I am a woman, I'm an ambassador, that's all, here there are many misconceptions"(I-J-2012.03.20). Other research participants reported how the Taiwanese society has not embraced English as an intermediary language, unlike other regions of the world, creating a big language barrier, subject C shared:

I'm learning Chinese because of a personal and private matter. Actually when I am out of office I confrontation situations where I need to somehow make myself understood, only with English I'm very limited here in Taiwan, it not so universal (I-C-2012.03.08).

Consequently in order to adapt more quickly and fit better with the Taiwanese society, foreign government representatives must first attempt to understand the Taiwanese culture and get familiarize with the local language.

Geographic location and climate conditions.

The geographical position and natural characteristics of Taiwan also creates challenges in a foreign representative's day to day life. A main issue is the huge distance between Taiwan and their countries, Subject B explains:

We are on the other side of the world, farther than here you can't go, unless you open an embassy in the moon or in Mars, Taiwan is the farthest place where I can serve, so it's harder to go back, since we have to pay for our tickets in these cases (I-B-2012.03.15).

As subject I shared, this extreme long distancing, and the lack of opportunities to visit his country, makes him miss close friends and family even more:

The difference of working back home is that you have your friends and family nearby. In the first frustration, first stone on the road, at least have your friends near, then comes Friday night, you get together with your close ones and forget about the stone (I-I-2012.03.19).

A different challenge subject C points out is the particular climate conditions of Taiwan, he said: "I found the weather very uncomfortable, winter is very cold, summer is very hot, it rains so much, I've gotten sick several times, that's one little thing I've had to overcome" (I-C-2012.03.08). Thus, as foreigners living in such a different country, the difficulties that affect representatives in their personal lives have to do with the particular culture of Taiwan's society and living in such a far away land, with such a different natural environment.

After covering and analyzing the overall context, in order to give an introduction of the foreign government representative profession in Taiwan, the next section dives into the competency development process these individuals have gone throughout their professional careers.

Competency Development

The second section dives into the learning process foreign government representatives have gone through, which has lead them to development and acquire the individual competencies necessary for carrying out their job effectively. Based on the research frame work, this section was divided in three main dimensions: (1) formal education, (2) the social learning process, and (3) self intentional growth. Table 4.4 summarizes the different competency development processes foreign government representatives have gone through. Following, each dimension is explained in more detail.

Table 4.4.

Competency Development Process

Learning processes		Description
Formal education	Educational background	International relations Diplomacy International trade Economics History and culture Language studies
Social learning	Foreign service training Experiences with colleagues Experiences from being abroad	Observation Mentoring Adapt to the culture Social interactions with locals
Intentional change	Developmental assignments Goal setting	

Formal Education

As previously stated in the research framework, this study was under the assumption that an individual’s educational background and training experience are the steppingstones which pave the way for competency development. Following is a detailed account of this two career formative components.

Educational background

When exploring competency development, the first thing to take into to consideration are the different areas of study and specialization in which these individuals have obtained their university level degrees. As subject J points out, in her country “we do not have a diplomatic career as such, what we have is a career in international relations”(I-J-2012.03.08). Subject H explains the main difference between these two areas:

International relations is the relationships between certain countries, how it's managed, how they interact, what to expect of their policies it involves maintaining good communication with a country. Diplomacy is more protocolary, it's about how to talk, what to say (I-H-2012.03.07).

Out of the ten research participants, four had studied International Relations, career in which as subject A mentions "of course we see history, international institutions etc, but it surprised me how many paths I could take, is a very wide career"(I-A-2012.03.15). This means that opting to work in a government's foreign service is not the only path individuals undertaking this career have, and it also means that being a graduate in this field is not a must requirement to become a diplomat. Subject G, a graduate in Chinese History and Language from National Taiwan University, as well as in Oriental Studies and Diplomacy Studies in Japan, points out how "you can take diplomacy after you graduate from university, regardless of what your previous major was" (I-G-2012.03.07).

On the other hand, as subject D mentioned "recently foreign ministries have been modernized and have a greater presence in their staff of individual in careers related to economics and business" (I-D-2012.03.22). Subject E who studied business administration and has a Masters in finance explained why having such a preparation is essential in Taiwan:

In Taiwan as most countries have no diplomatic relations, the diplomat is then the commercial counselor, so an important component of the profile of the person who will represent is that it must be a merchant, must be oriented to commerce (I-E-2012.03.21).

Therefore, apart from the traditional careers such as international relations and political science, followed by diplomacy studies, nowadays foreign government representatives have academic backgrounds in field such as international trade, business management and economics. Another educational advantage will be to undertake studies in history, culture and language of a specific region of the world in which an individual intends to serve.

Foreign service training

As Ketter (2006) explained, training includes a process of providing individuals the knowledge and skills necessary to do a particular job. In this case, some research participants

shared the preparation given by their institutions previous to going abroad. Subject B mentioned that “before coming to Taiwan the ministry gives us a course on how to do everything, we get a briefing of the different entities, management of passports and public record” (I-B-2012.03.15). Subject E explains how the training prior to going abroad is specialized for their position:

There are two types of foreign service, administrative staff, which is the people who will support you to work but can never reach a level of consul, and the diplomatic career staff, ambassador and consuls. The Ministry gives us training for two months, the first group is focused on management, while the second on foreign policy and international lobbying (I-E-2012.03.21).

This training received previously to embarking in their respective missions is crucial for performing their functions and tasks more effectively, as Subject H shared:

We do receive training when we are named abroad. We go to many institutions, customs, port, international organizations, so we come with many folders and papers that will serve us as points of reference, because logically everything is being constantly updated (I-H-2012.03.07).

All participants mentioned some kind of previous preparation or workshop given by their ministries prior to coming to Taiwan. This training varied from specific information about Taiwan, to particular job task according to their position and rank. Consequently these two components, educational background, reinforced by foreign service training, are complementary to each other and serve as the knowledge base from where competency development can take place. However, even with this foundation there still exists a gap between what it’s studied and learned in university or training sessions and the actual job, as subject I shared:

When I started it was totally the opposite of what I studied in college, things were much more difficult, more demanding. One thing is theory and another is practice, you feel overwhelmed when they ask you for things and obviously you want to make a good impression (I-I-2012.03.19).

Therefore, based on the research framework and the research participants own experience, the following dimensions of this section will explore the different learning processes foreign

government representatives in Taiwan have gone through and which have led to competency development. As previously mentioned in the literature, evidence suggests that individuals learn critical competencies through their life and work experiences (McCall, Lombardo, & Morrison, 1988), concept which coincides with the testimonies of all research participants. Following, this study makes two main distinctions of these experiences.

Social Learning

Social learning is a perspective that states that people learn within a social context and is facilitated through such concepts as modeling and observational learning. It proposes a process for learning in which individuals learn from observing others, which is done in social settings (Merriam & Caffarella, 1998). Such is the process described by subject A, “at the beginning we go to all events and participate in a passive way, we observe how negotiations are done, it helps us prepare”(I-A-2012.03.15). This process is shared by the majority of research participants. Subject B points out how she has learned how to behave in certain situations through observation, she says:

Nobody comes learned. I consider it very important to learn from other people, because you have to watch what they do, what you can use, what you can't use, what you can imitate, what you shouldn't imitate, that to me is the training of your career (I-B-2012.03.15).

Subject H mentioned how it's not enough to only know how to do a specific task efficiently, but how is also fundamental to know how to behave socially, area in which fieldwork experiences are what help individuals become a better person:

You can be very good from your desktop, but that is of no use if when you're walking in the street or at a reception you're chewing gum, or you talk too loud. For example if in a meeting someone said: Excuse my name is Rodrigo I work at the Nicaraguan embassy, my point is this. So if he said it more elegantly and people paid attention, you can learn too (I-H-2012.03.07).

Furthermore, the data identified two levels of observation, socialization and interaction that influence and can trigger the development of competencies: (1) experiences with colleagues and (2) experience from being abroad.

Experiences with colleagues

According to Werner and Desimone (2009) on-the-job experiences are opportunities for individuals to gain knowledge, enhance or acquire skills within the context of day to day activities – including mentoring and coaching. Subject G empathizes on the big role played by his supervisor in the past and the importance of good mentoring, which is a relationship between a junior and a senior member of an organization that contributes to a positive career development (Werner & DeSimon, 2009) , he shares:

The most significant learning experience was my time with the ambassador of Nicaragua in Japan, a long time ago, who had the patience of teaching me. That is why I feel I have a big debt, and I'm paying it by helping our administrative attaché, giving him all my support so that he can become a good representative of our country in the future (I-G-2012.03.07).

During his testimony subject H shared an interesting experience of learning in a social setting, which at the same time involved being faced with a very difficult situation:

I remember once for a reception of Israel, which is especially careful in their safety to prevent any attacks. I was taking notes and summarizing the event, from a corner behind a palm tree, so that the other guests wouldn't see that I was writing, and a cop from the Israeli intelligence comes up to me and says "come with us young man, what are you doing there all suspicious". They called a national policeman and I had to show them my ID from the ministry of foreign affairs and explain that it was my job to report the event (I-H-2012.03.07).

In the second part of his testimony, subject H points out how he overcame this situation. With help and guidance of his superior he learned from this mistake, and by doing so, learned how to behave in the future:

I called my boss and everything was fixed. However when the policemen left my boss told me "do not be so mysterious man, if you're working, then you're working, you do not have to be hiding ". It's all fieldwork, you have to learn from the setting, going to meetings, see how they speak, what they say and know how to behave (I-H-2012.03.07).

Subject J also relates, in her case it was the Taiwanese staff who offered this support, as she mentioned “the locals have over twenty years working here, they take us by the hand, show us how to handle contacts and paperwork”. Therefore, one of the main ways to develop competencies for these individuals has been through interaction, observing and modeling their peer. According to social learning theory one of the factors that impacts an individual’s development are these learning experiences, which includes instrumental or direct learning and associative or observational learning, which together can affect the competency development process (Krumboltz, 1996). The present study also considers previous experiences abroad as learning experiences.

Experiences of being abroad

As expatriate workers, foreign government representatives must learn from the social environments of other countries. Most of the research participants mentioned how an excellent opportunity for competency development was the experience of going abroad for the first time, as Subject E mentions, “the first time I was out of my country changed my life, my perspective, I learned to open to new ideas from other people”(I-E-2012.03.21). This change in the way of looking at the world is even more dramatic and advantageous if an individual has a previous experience abroad in the country in which he or she will serve, as subject G shared:

I came here when I was 17, then when I was 26 to serve in my first mission, then I returned in 1986, so I know this country well, and I think that this way I got to know very well the idiosyncrasies, culture, and behavior of the country (I-G-2012.03.07).

Subject A also describes a similar experience of learning from the local Taiwanese community by previously living in the country, which today successfully facilitates in different ways her work:

I studied five years in Taiwan, in those years I got to know more the culture, the society, what was the mentality. I learned how to live here, which now makes everything much easier; by living with them, I learned how to deal with the Taiwanese people and how government institutions worked (I-A-2012.03.15).

As subject F explains the social interactions which occur from being in a foreign country, shape the behavior of foreign government representatives, since they have to socialize in order to learn from the country's context as well as to adjust more rapidly and effectively:

I came from Germany where people are much colder. I had to learn that the people here are warmer. Here there are a lot of dinners, they invite and name you in events. So I began to have that empathy with people, to socialize, it's very Asian. Here is more important for people to know who you are, they give priority to the personal relation, so we learn from that (I-F-2012.03.13).

As Black and Mendenhall (1990) pointed out although predeparture cross-cultural skills training are important for adjusting to a new environment, many organizations generally do not provide it for their expatriates workers. The foreign service training previously mentioned is oriented more to introducing institutions and policies and not cross-cultural issues. Therefore, most of a foreign government representative's learning of culturally accepted ways of conduct happen after their arrival in Taiwan, having as trainers the members of Taiwanese community which they more frequently interact with in a daily basis.

Consequently, part of the learning process of foreign government representatives is closely related with the constant observation and ongoing interaction with other colleagues in order to learn the socio-cultural practices of the international system, as well as a bigger socialization effort to understand the context of the country in which they are serving.

Intentional change

Human resource development professionals understand that increasing someone's knowledge is not the same as getting them to make lasting changes in their behavior, and requires a different learning process (Klein & Zeigert, 2004). As subject I points out "it is one thing to know what to do, other when to do it and most importantly to want to do it, if you have all three, you will develop yourself well" (I-I-2012.03.19).

As Boyatzis (2006) explained Intentional Change Theory presents a process in which a person's self-direction and discovery leads to competency development, and it attempts to describe the essential components and processes of personal, acceptable transformations in a

person's actions, mentality, emotions and understandings. Subject E believes that foreign government representatives must have a complete preparation, both mentally and physically since "if you are feeling good, people will see you good, treat you good, and therefore see the country as good too" (I-E-2012.03.21). This can be related with the concept of the ideal-self discussed in Intentional Change Theory. Subject A explained how even though it was hard, she visualized and changed her behavior, she said:

It was hard to be patient and tolerant with people. Despite that, I came to the conclusion that my work as a diplomat is to meet and interact with people, my job is not in the office, my job is to receive people. I had situations where I had to take care of people, so I forced myself to be patient, there's nothing else I can do (I-A-2012.0315).

In this case there is a previous will of the individual to move from the real-self to the ideal-self, this progression helps enhance under developed skills and abilities. Subject B gives another example of an intentional change in behavior which lead to her competency development, she says:

I used to be more introverted and suffered in this job. There are times when nobody knows you and you have to talk, give your point of view and socialize, so I started to understand the importance of being more outgoing and open (I-B-2012.03.15).

However, as Taylor (2006) mentioned it is the focus on practice and goals that sets intentional change apart, and development should be seen as what individuals actually do, not what they are supposed to know. Therefore, from the data two mechanisms of self intentional change emerged; part of these individual's self-improvement process included devoting time to practicing under develop skills trough (1) developmental assignments, as well as setting the right (2) goals to be met.

Developmental assignments

As mentioned in the literature, developmental assignments provide individuals the opportunity of learning new knowledge, behaviors and practice new skills by exposing discrepancies between present abilities and those needed for success, forcing the real self to

reach its ideal state (Dragoni et al., 2009). Subject C explains why he feels all development opportunities are necessary for their careers:

Even if you start filing, answering the phone, sending letters, it's all very helpful. In my opinion is fundamental to start from zero. Not only for your resume, because people will see that you went hiking; from administrative or cultural attaché, then you became third secretary, second, first, minister counselor, counselor, ambassador. All that helps you build your professional credibility (I-C-2012.03.08).

A side from this professional credibility issue, developmental assignments demands individuals to get out of their comfort zone. As subject B mentioned, an important learning experience was being left in charge of her mission, she says:

The ambassador had to leave the country and I was left alone. I had to do everything, from the administrative to the representation, I had to do things for the first time, talk to high ranking officials. I was nervous but also very excited; deep inside I always knew I could do it (I-B-2012.03.15).

These developmental assignments act as a fundamental way for learning and competency development especially for those junior foreign government representatives starting their professional careers, as subject A shared:

In Asian culture when you're young you're underestimated, it's hard to be taken seriously, to be taken into account. Luckily our ambassador involves us a lot, send us on his behalf to events, we are constantly being challenged (I-A-2012.03-15).

Besides these frequent developmental challenges and learning experiences, another important factor of a foreign government representative's self improvement process have to do with their personal goals and objectives, as well as those of their missions, which can act as competency development drivers.

Goal setting

Another important component of any intentional change are an individual's goals, since when a person set goals, all their decisions, endeavors and energy are channeled more efficiently in order to achieve it, providing their efforts more focus (Leonard, 2008). Subject G shared how some time ago "when I was 17 someone asked what was the dream of my life, I said to one day become ambassador of Nicaragua in Taiwan, since then I worked hard for that and here I am" (I-G-2012.03.08).

This relation between self improvement and goal setting appears to be a very logical one, as an individual again tries to reach its ideal self. Subject G continues to explain how his current position has enabled him to carry out his goals:

I have the idea that being an ambassador is not just to show off. To me the name of ambassador doesn't mean anything, is nothing but a way for me to represent my country with more freedom, because if I can't do things for my country just as individual because no one would pay attention to me, perhaps as ambassador the individual I carry inside can do them. So the position hasn't made me, I have made the position (I-G-2012.03.07).

Beyond personal goals, the goals and objectives of the mission a foreign representative is serving can also be a way for triggering the development of new skills and behaviors. As subject F explained:

I was more than convinced that here I would have no problem, because I had experience. For me there was no difference between what I did in the past and what is done here, but I was wrong. For example, now our goal is to attract investment, because we realized that for us Taiwan is not a place to sell products. Even though it was not my original strategy, it's what has to be done. So my guide is our purpose and strategy, I'm learning on the way (I-F-2012.03.13).

Hence, after achieving a university level education and undertaking the appropriate foreign service training, the learning process of foreign government representatives in Taiwan is in the early stages guided by social learning, thought observation and interactions with the community;

this process is later driven by a sense of self direction and self improvement, influenced by the opportunities to carry out developmental assignments as well as self imposed or dictated goals. In accordance with the research framework, the following section identified the individual competencies for foreign government representatives in Taiwan, using as a support the previous analyzed context of this profession.

Competencies of Foreign Government Representatives

This final section attempted to identify the individual competency needs of foreign government representatives in Taiwan. As explained by the research framework, this section follows the proposed ASTD competency model, in order to adapt it to the foreign government representative field. This model encompassed a cluster of skills, knowledge, abilities, behaviors and other characteristics required for individuals, based on three layers of consecutive building blocks (Davis, Naughton & Rothwell, 2004).

Therefore, based on the data analysis and the ASTD competency model, this segment was divided in three main dimensions: (1) foundational level competencies, (2) focus level areas of expertise and (3) execution level roles.

The foundational level was further divides into three sections: the first interpersonal competencies section included relational ability, communication skills, linguistic ability and intercultural competence; the second business/management section included analytical skills, business acumen, knowledge management and administrative skills; the third personal section included adaptability/flexibility, emotional intelligence, stress and also two personality traits. Following focus level competencies included: protocol, public service orientation, public relations, market development, attracting investment, international politics and law and history and culture affairs. The final roles level included: commercial counselor, consular advocate, political analyst, public diplomacy agent and management officer. Following, table 4.5 better summarizes the findings of this section. Each of the three dimension levels proposed in the research framework are explained in more detail bellow.

Table 4.5.

Competencies of Foreign Government Representatives

Level	Competencies	
Foundational	Interpersonal	Relational ability
		Communication skills
		Linguistic ability
		Intercultural competence
	Business/Management	Analytical skills
		Business acumen
		Knowledge management
		Administrative skills
		Adaptability/Flexibility
	Personal	Emotional intelligence
		Stress management
		Openness
		Extroversion
Areas of expertise	Protocol	
	Public service orientation	
	Public relations	
	Market development	
	Attracting investment	
	International politics and law	
Roles	History and culture affairs	
	Political analyst	
	Commercial counselor	
	Consular advocate	
	Public diplomacy agent	
	Management officer	

Foundational Level Competencies

As Werner and DeSimone (2009) point out, foundational competencies are supporting level competencies which can be seen as a requirement for all practitioners in a field and are closely related to high performance. Furthermore, while analyzing the data, three types of baseline abilities emerged which corresponded with the ASTD categorization of foundational level competencies: (1) interpersonal, (2) business/ management and (3) personal.

Interpersonal competencies

The interpersonal category refers to those skills which enable individual's to relate, work with, understand, communicate, manage, and influence others (Davis, Naughton & Rothwell, 2004). These abilities also allow individuals to build stronger, more beneficial relationships and resolve conflicts in a positive manner. This category of foundational competencies is essential, since the data suggested that foreign government representatives should have strong interpersonal skills, due to the fact that much of their time revolves around negotiations between the interests of the officer's home country and the government of the host country (Observation-2012.03.20; Observation-2012.03.28). Thus, foreign government representatives can expect to be involved in achieving agreements required to establish working economic relationships between two countries. In addition, these individuals also facilitate and provide important information to tourists and individual interested in potential business opportunities in order to increase interest in visiting or doing business in their home country (Subjects A, B, E, G). Moreover, four distinct interpersonal skills were identified: (1) relational ability, (2) communication skills, (3) linguistic ability and (4) intercultural competence.

Relational ability.

Relational ability determines and individual's capacity to interact with the host country nationals and has previously been positioned by some as a fundamental international competence (Jordan & Cartwright, 1998). Foreign representatives are obliged to interact with the host society in order to foster and establish channels of cooperation. As subject D explained he often needs to relate with local officials as well as local businessmen, he shared:

After showing the potential, what is common here are the lunches and dinners, on that level, to meet for lunch to share information relevant to our work, you move very well, if compared with other societies. I can say that I have many Taiwanese friends and without any problems I can call them to eat and share ideas (I-D-2012.03.22).

This particular skill is very important for foreign government representatives because many of these individuals tend to already be very skilled and capable in knowing how to successfully socialize in their own home country, therefore being unable to do so in a new environment could actually affect their confidence and self-image. As subject I explained “our main goal is to strengthen relations, not just with the government, but with the people, so they get to know us first, and then our country” (I-I-2012.03.17). In his testimony Subject G gave an example of how these friendship ties with the Taiwanese society are build, and pointed out the necessity of constantly maintaining them, since ties can be broken if not given the appropriate continuity:

Years ago the community of Luzho in appreciation that we had chosen the city for our embassy named a park Nicaragua. With time it was neglected. I was posted to Taiwan in the year 2008. One day we were driving by in the car, we passed along the street and the driver said, "ambassador, that is the park Nicaragua”, I honestly could not could not believe how it could had been abandoned in that way. Immediately we requested an appointment with the mayor. We found out that the community board was about to change the name because they had voted that the relationship with the community had disappeared (I-G-2012.03.07).

On the second part of his example, Subject G explained how being able to relate with the local people, through cultural exchanges, made possible to reverse the situation and maintain a linkage with the community, he said:

We apologized, meetings were held to show our appreciation for this great honor and we had to show our willingness to strengthen relations with that community. Cultural artifacts were donated, there was a big event, and we reopened the park. Is through these exchanges that we establish relationships with the community. Besides I visit universities, I give seminars, always trying to increase awareness of Nicaragua, to reach different parts of Taiwan, only like this they will get to know us. We have finally removed the false association we had with the Niagara Falls (I-G-2012.03.07).

This example shows the importance of building relations with the community at different levels, which also helps to keep the public opinion well informed. In addition, the absence of this skill can have as a consequence a limitation of social interaction with the local community, which can make learning the language and other cultural values more difficult.

Communication skills.

Communication skills refer to the ability to send messages and ideas which have as an objective the attainment of goals while maintaining social acceptability (Lindstrom, 2002). The act of communicating involves written and spoken communication. The written component forms part of the day to day life of foreign government representatives, since aside from having to prepare reports, any kind of official communication is done by writing and with extreme formality (Observation-2012.02.21). Therefore the importance of being able to express themselves clearly and use language with precision in order to build and transmit a logical argument.

Equally important is the spoken communication, which according to subject F can be more challenging since “the language is diverse and the public is also very mixed” (I-F-2012.03.13). Due to the varied type of social groups they communicate with, foreign representatives must have the ability to change the way they express themselves to fit their context, subject H gives this scenario:

You will give a lecture at a university in the morning and in the evening you will meet with the chancellor. With the chancellor you must be very formal. If you arrive with this way of communicating with the students, they will immediately close their minds, get bored, get up and go. To talk with students you need to be open to jokes and present your point in a more casual way (I-H-2012.03.07).

Another aspect of spoken communication that is embedded in subject H’s scenario is the ability to effectively communicate in public. As distinguished citizens of their home country, foreign government representatives are frequently invited to give speeches, inauguration remarks in events and the like (Observation-2012.04.13). This art of discourse aims to improve the capacity of foreign government representatives to inform, persuade and motivate different type of audiences in public events. Subject B mentions how she needs to have the ability to

communicate negative things in a positive way, she explains that “diplomats have to know how to not always say no, in an elegant way, so that the person who you’re telling no to leaves happy”(I-B-2012.03.15).

Hence by being competent communicators these individuals know how to produce a smooth, productive, pleasant and at times amusing conversation. The data revealed that foreign government representatives have to know how to use language to express themselves, get ideas across and connect with the addressed audience.

Linguistic ability.

Another competence that has been regarded as an automatically essential skill for expatriate success is linguistic ability (Jordan & Cartwright, 1998). Even though in some cases knowing a foreign language is not a requirement to join the foreign service, it does enhance the opportunity of being posted to a particular country. Such was the experience of subject G:

I went to receive the ambassador and he asked me if I spoke Japanese, because I am a graduate of the Taiwan University in History of China and languages. "Yes I replied", besides Japanese I spoke English and Chinese too, and he said "you fit me like a glove, do you want to work with me in Japan" and that's how I entered diplomacy at the age of 21 (I-G-2012.03.07).

Subject J mentioned the importance of linguistic ability, since “the more language we know makes the communication easier, it’s essential because our job depends on relating with people from other parts of the world” (I-J-2012.03.20). The average number of languages spoken by all participants was of three, including besides their native tongue English, which does appear to be the universal language for communicating as all the official statements of foreign offices are translated to this language (Observation-2012.02.21). Apart from English, Subject E explains the advantages of being able to understand and communicate in the local language, in this case Mandarin Chinese:

You must manage English. If you don’t know Chinese mmm that’s ok, but if you don’t know English you’re lost. Still it is always useful to know the language of the country, because you

get cultural acceptance. They identify with you, it lowers the seriousness and you get to a level of confidence that opens many doors (I-E-2012.03.21).

When a foreign government representative has enough dominance over the local language to be able to correctly express, interpret and has the capacity to interact in meetings held completely in that language, he or she has the means to establish a more intimate and very special kind of relationship with the host community (Observation-2012.03.22). As Torrington (1994) point out, the significance of this ability is often underestimated in regions where English is spoken, firstly since it is a harder competence to develop and also because it appears to always be the excuse that nowadays the international language for doing business worldwide is English, failing to recognize that linguistic proficiency does not simply help in communicating with partners or dealing with peer and coworkers, but is in fact essential if an individual is to attain a more deep understanding of a foreign culture. Therefore, linguistic ability can help an individual respond and adapt better to cultural differences.

Intercultural competence.

Since one of the major challenges faced by foreign representatives in their work environment as well as in their day to day lives had to do with the cultural difference between Taiwan and their home country, it's logical for them to know how to socially interact and work with individuals with different cultural backgrounds. Intercultural competence is the ability of successful communication with people of other cultures, meaning that a person who possesses this competence can successfully understand and identify, in socializing with individuals with different cultures, their specific mentality, values, ways of thinking and acting (Rathje, 2007). Subject H mentioned how this is essential for foreign representatives since culture is something that impacts the work between people, he gives an example:

One of the girls in the embassy is very straightforward. We are not used to someone so direct. But is good, in the future, one learns not to stretch things. They are very direct, culturally they are this way, they'll say "you owe me so much" in front of people, for us it's rude, for them is not, that's just the way they are and is a way of learning (I-H-2012.03.07).

Another factor to take into consideration is that as expatriate workers, foreign government representatives have to make a choice about whether they are willing to change and adapt their

cultural boundaries in order to merge more easily with to the foreign culture or whether they keep and don't let go their culture and moral values system by surrounding themselves by people with similar cultural background. The testimony by subject D illustrates this concept better:

For me personally is a bit more complex because my wife is not Peruvian, she is German, so we already have a biculturalism in the family, even before coming here there was a mix in regards to our way of living. And being in a totally different context we naturally confront hard situations. In my work there is more identification with Latinos colleagues, also in the case of my family our life and our environment have much to do with the relationship we have with Latino and European families (I-D-2012.03.22).

Individuals that decide to surround themselves with people from familiar cultures, by not exposing themselves to the local community, and not taking the initiative to attempt to learn from their new surroundings are more likely to have adaptation issues and are also more prone to culture shocks, subject D continues:

Our contact in private terms to the outside, to the host society is somewhat limited. Of course we have access to services and products offered to us here, but in terms of establishing direct contacts between families in a more intimate way is much less (I-D-2012.03.22).

Those individuals that choose the opposite and interact more frequently with locals can meet less problems regarding adaptation, while at the same time increasing their understanding of the local culture, which can serve as a stepping stone to eventually become part of the host community.

In addition, an important part of the foreign service worker's day may actually take place after hours. Attending social functions, ranging from parties to official ceremonies is a requirement of the job (Observation-2012.04.13). By meeting influential people in Taiwan and establishing strong relations with its community, foreign government representatives can strengthen not only his ties to the country but also secure their own job. Therefore the important of the previously covered interpersonal skills is fundamental, especially for socialization purposes, since these individuals act as ambassadors from their native country to Taiwan and are expected to be always unofficially on-duty.

Business/Management competencies

The business/management category as referred to in the ASTD competency model, has to do with those skills that enable an individual to resolve different situations, take appropriate decisions and implement plans of action quickly (Davis, Naughton & Rothwell, 2004). Once again four closely related but different skills emerged from the data: (1) analytical skills, (2) business acumen, (3) knowledge management and (4) administrative skills. These competencies are better explained below.

Analytical skills.

The term analytical skill is related with the ability to visualize, articulate, and solve both complex and uncomplicated problems and take sensible decisions that are based on available information (Spencer & Spence, 1993). As subject H suggests this includes demonstrating the ability to apply logical thinking to gathering and analyzing information, he shared:

We aren't spies, but we have to be looking for information that can serve our country. I was talking with Guatemala for a birthday, and in confidence she told me that a Taiwanese factory was relocating from Honduras to Guatemala. So I tried to understand the situation to think about ways to reverse this from happening (I-H-2012.03.07).

In search of their countries interest, foreign government representatives have to be able to design and test solutions to problems as well as formulating plans. As subject G points out "you view each situation dispassionately, without taking sides, making constructive criticism and informing your country the best you can to improve relations" (I-G-2012.03.07).

A foreign service officer needs to be an expert on his country and the goals and actions within the country that he is based in. Part of this involves elaborating reports and critical reviews which also involve including personal insights about political or economic situations, so that other government officials can read and consult (Obsevation-2012.03.22). This type of activity also helps a foreign government representative to remain up to date on current events, while also being active even in times when there are no urgent matters.

Business acumen.

Business acumen refers to the ability an individual has to quickly understand and manage economic data, and recognizes financial opportunities which can have as a result positive business ventures (Prince, 2008). Most participants agreed that one of the major recent changes in diplomacy has been the need of foreign representatives to demonstrate more business literacy and commercial awareness, as Subject F mentioned:

I'm always looking for economic data, because really this is a commercial nation. Trade plays a huge role in relationships and Asia is like an economic mound, these people are growing. We handle economic data and we need to have in mind potential commercial opportunities (I-F-2012.03.13).

Part of this business acumen and literacy includes the knowledge and understanding of the financial, accounting, marketing and operational functions of their mission. As Subject J mentioned this is another component of their job, she said "running the office is very important, my job is not only to attend to social activities, I also have to manage the budget of the embassy. I was a businesswoman before which has helped me" (I-J-2012.03.20).

Foreign government representatives not only use this ability to determine business opportunities for their countries, or for internal aspects of their mission, but also to carefully manage the diverse financial and cooperation funds they have access to (Observation-212.03.15). Thus by developing stronger business acumen these individuals have the means for a more thoughtful analysis and clearer logic underlying business decisions that can improve and develop the economic conditions of their home country.

Knowledge management.

Debowski (2006) defined knowledge management as "the process of identifying, capturing, organizing, and disseminating an origination's intellectual assets which are important for its long term performance" (p. 16), also pointing out that this process was carried out by knowledge workers. This seems to be another key skill for foreign government representatives, since their

responsibility is not only to search for information relevant to their countries interest, but also to inform diverse constituent groups about polices and other issues.

This ability has to do with understanding what information is important, and how to find unknown information, as subject B mentioned “when we go to social events, actually we are working, listening carefully, as if we had a satellite dish, always alert” (I-B-2012.03.15). This goes side by side with creating information channels which can lead to knowing who might have additional information and resources to help them, subject I also shared “I always keep all business cards, keep any contact, it’s all helpful in the future” (I-I-2012.03.19). As previously mentioned one of the challenges modern foreign service workers face is an increasing demand to work in the field, which also involves capturing vital information for their mission. An example of this capacity to consolidate important information is the aid-memoire, which keeps records of meetings and events (Observation-2012.02.21), as subject A confirms: “when there are meetings I write up a memory aid to send it back to Guatemala, and that is also archived to bring continuity to any meeting we have” (I-A-2012-03.15).

This instrument is also used for the later knowledge dissemination component. Foreign government representatives have to first share information with their superiors and other colleagues, not just in Taiwan, but most importantly in their home countries. In fact these individuals serve as a two-way communication channel, being responsible for disseminating the information send by their governments to local constituents groups and other interested parties. Given the importance of having accurate and up to date information, the processes these individuals use to gather, classify, store and share knowledge, effectively support work activities as well as the decision making process.

Administrative skills.

Administrative skills comprise a wide range of essential organizational and technical skills, including planning, organizing, staffing, scheduling, as well as computer software skills (Appleby, 1994). Subjects D, I, E, F mentioned that some sort of organizational skills are a must to make a career in this profession, since given the scarcity of human resources, foreign government representatives should be good in time management and should have the ability to

multitask. Even though these individuals receive support from the local Taiwanese staff, subject H expressed that: “part of my job is the maintenance of office records, filing, doing and maintaining office paperwork” (I-H-2012.03.07).

In addition, as part of receiving delegations from their countries, foreign government representatives must be able to plan travel itineraries, arranging accommodation for meetings or conventions (Subjects A, H, J). Another must in administrative skills is technological literacy, especially since the development in communication and information flow demonstrates the need for foreign representatives to know how to manage and use information technology (Ezziane, 2007). Subject D explained:

If you don't have a mastery of new technologies you are very limited even with an assistant. E-mail today is like knowing how to write. We have redesigned our website, we have a virtual market, we have a facebook network, we are using new tools of communication. For information management, from the management of Excel, to preparing presentations, not only to make a PowerPoint but know how to load, compress them are things we do daily. (I-D-2012.03.22)

As in today's world foreign government representatives do a considerable amount of their work on a computer, they should very capable when it comes to their use and have knowledge of specific software which helps them to file official records as well as internet skills. One of the roles of these administrative skills is to make sure that the office operations run smoothly.

Therefore, after analyzing the previous business/management skills, the impacts these have on the decision making process seems more obvious, since one of the major responsibilities that a foreign government representative has is to be well informed of current events, especially with regards to how they affect the country they represents. Most of this information will come to the head of mission in the form of reports that are prepared by specialized foreign officials. These reports are related to the several tasks involved in the foreign government representative's field, such as the issuance of passports, legal contracts between the businesses of the home country and the host country, and correspondence related to specific diplomatic matters taking place at the time. Even so, a foreign government representatives must also do research and carefully analyze delicate situations on their own. In the diplomacy filed, the importance of being accurately

informed is vital, because much of the time is spent discussing international political affairs with other government officials, which demands dominating what is going on in the world.

Personal competencies

The last component regarding the foundational competencies level are personal competencies, which refer to how well an individual can deal with change and make personal choices to improve their professional career (Davis, Naughton & Rothwell, 2004), and that also compose the personal characteristics that make foreign government representatives suitable for this position. While analyzing this category four different personal attributes emerged from the data: (1) adaptability/flexibility, (2) emotional intelligence, (3) stress management and (4) the final personality traits theme, which was further subdivided. All these attributes are better explained below.

Adaptability/flexibility.

This competency has to do with the ability an individual has to adapt to new situations, the capacity to create appropriate solutions and the ability to take on different roles within the organization (Lindstrom, 2002). Since the diplomacy field demands constant environment changes as subject C suggested “the diplomat must have the capacity to adapt very well developed” (I-C-2012.03.08), and because of the inherent multifaceted nature of the job, adaptability/flexibility seems to be another essential competency for foreign government representative, specially because of the high levels of uncertainty fueled by external political or economic factors which influence their day to day job priorities. As subject B explained:

At any moment there can be a meeting, an event, and if the ambassador is not in the country or is occupied with other affairs, I’m the one that has to go and be the face of the embassy, I have to go and (pause) fit in, I have to be able to react fast, even in difficult situations, it’s what we call the famous fire extinguisher (I-B-2012.03.15).

On the other hand subject D yet again brings up the recurrent human resource limitation issue their organizations have, which has required them to become more flexible in their roles and functions to enhance the attention given to the public, he shared:

Being the only Peruvian representation in Taiwan the office has become a kind of ragbag. Considering the possibilities of the office, human resources, the budget and the functional limitations that we have, we must be prepared to assume different responsibilities to improve the service given to conational's or other parties (I-D-2012.03.22).

In addition, a different and important scope of this competency is the overall adaptability to the host country conditions and culture. As subject G manifested "you know I work at night, from 10pm to 3am, but at 9 am I'm here"(I-G-2012.03.07), which means that the working conditions for some foreign representatives includes adapting to time difference issues, as he continued:

Working late has been part of my success, because there are things you need to answer immediately and because of the differences in time I have to stay late, if not I lose the day. It's part of my personal policy, some say I'm crazy, but in the contrary I feel younger (I-G-2012.03.07).

Jordan and Cartwright (1998) suggested that successful multi-cultural performance in international assignments is accomplished by individuals that are able to adapt successfully to which ever host culture they are assigned. Subject H explained how the effort to embrace the culture facilitates the adaptation process of living in Taiwan, which can lead to a higher job performance:

You can't live thinking of your country's food. I'm not saying that I'm not even going to know how to speak Spanish. A good diplomat must keep in mind where he comes from, and absorb what suits you, submerge in the culture, so that you can identify yourself as a part of Taiwan (I-H-2012.03.07).

Hence the importance of adaptability/flexibility as a personal quality is evident since it mitigates the efforts of foreign government representatives of dealing with the unexpected, as well as working outside their traditional cultural settings and under different type of unexpected circumstances.

Emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence is the ability to effectively understand, control and be aware of our emotions (Caruso, Mayer & Salovey, 2000), and has to do with self and emotional control. As public figures, representing their states and nations, this ability seems to be a must for the foreign government representative profession. In the words of subject J: “I have to represent my country with dignity, that’s the main goal, so we have to take great care about how we handle ourselves, we can’t be impulsive” (I-J-2012.03.20). To be able to be prudent and cautious appears go side by side with this attribute, which in fact, all participants reported as important, given the enormous responsibility of representing their country and government, subject B explained:

One stops being oneself, and becomes the country, so in the day to day the diplomat has to be very cautious, considering that with our presence the country is being presented, we must be discrete, patient, have mmm temperance. A good diplomat already has that chip, we take care of these details at all times (I-B-2012.03.15).

Spencer and Spencer (1993) refer to this self-control quality as the capacity to keep emotions under control, while restraining from negative actions, when individuals are put in situations of hostility. As subject G pointed out “sometimes people you think are good friends in a meeting can tell you something that will bother you, and then you should know how to answer and not doing it offensively” (I-G-2012.03.07). While interacting with government officials, other colleagues or the public in general foreign government representatives must know how to control any discomfort or feelings of anger and intolerance (Observation-2012.03.27). Subject G continued to approach this issue even deeper:

You can’t be swayed by passion or personal feelings. So this career is like a movie, like you’re acting. Many say diplomacy is the profession of hypocrisy, I would not put it that way, but it’s a profession in where you can’t express your feelings. You have to learn how to manipulate your talent, your emotions and your behavior (I-G-2012.03.07).

This capacity to manage personal feelings and to an extent show levels of empathy towards others is a factor that can highly ensure how these individuals are to be seen by the host community and colleagues. It can also indirectly increase an individual’s likeability, helping to present a positive image of themselves, and thus of their country.

Stress management.

Within the expatriate literature there have been many studies indicating that higher levels of stress affect individuals working abroad, which has led to the addition of another ability, which has to do with the capacity and individuals has to handle stress (Coyle and Shortland, 1992). This attribute has also been named as perseverance, stress tolerance and resilience, and it has to do with the capacity a person has to manage time pressures, opposing ideas, group pressures, task difficulty, as well as the stresses of culture shock and the other inconveniences of everyday expatriate life (Jordan & Cartwright, 1998). As subject E mentioned, this ability is especially important in the acclimatization stage:

In the beginning I had to stay until very late in the office, it was a very tense time for me, I guess it's normal to feel (pause) even a little nervous when one is starting, because you are unfamiliar not just to the job, but to Taiwan too (I-E-2012.03.21).

The majority of research participants (subjects A, B, D, H, I, F, J) mentioned not only some kind of culture shock effect, but also expressed feelings of stress and intolerance to the environment. Subject I shared how “after a while you do get to feel that everything is too much, is not that I dislike Taiwan, but I felt very intolerant to the food, the crowds, the smells, and even in the office” (I-I-2012.03.19). Demands for high performance can also be a cause of stress, especially for those foreign missions that have as a main objective the increment in commercial relations, as subject F explained:

I'm never really relaxed. The evaluation of this office, of my contribution to economic growth can be seen in less than half a minute, just by looking at the percentage of exports and foreign direct investment with Taiwan, and compare it with the previous year, in these times of precarious global economy it's not easy work (I-F-2012.3.13).

The constant visits of supervisor and members of their country's government is a factor that can also rise the levels of stress, as subject B mentioned “when delegations come, that's when the pressure is on, it can be the president, the chancellor, ministers, their programs are very exigent and we have to be present at all times” (I-B-2012.03.15). Hence, foreign government representatives must be able to manage not just the stress caused by demanding job deadlines and assignments, but also the inconveniences caused by working and living in a foreign country.

Personality traits.

Personality traits can be seen predetermined set of personal characteristics possessed by humans, that impact their way of thinking, feelings, desires and actions in different situations (Fairweather, 2012). As an individual characteristic, personality also has an important role for a foreign government representative's success. While being more difficult to determine, this study analyzed the data against the big five personality traits (Poropat, 2009), to attempt to identify the more clear and obvious type of personality suitable for this profession. Two main personally types emerged from the data: (1) openness to experience and (2) extroversion.

Openness to experience.

Openness to experience has recently been established as one of the big five personality traits. This personality trait involves individuals with active imagination, with high attention emotions, an inclination for diversity, and intellectual interests (Poropat, 2009). As is the case for foreign government representatives, individuals who are highly open to experience tend to be seen as more politically open and tolerant of heterogeneity, which as a consequence results in being more open to different cultures and ways of living. As subject E shared "I consider myself adventurous more than anything, you have to like adventure for this job" (I-E-2012.02.21). This was the case for a majority of the participants, as subject C briefly mentioned "I don't close myself to new experiences and other cultures" (I-C-2012.03.08). This kind of personality enhances the interest of individuals to internationalize, being drawn to new and different experiences from an early age. Subject B related to this idea, she said "even though it's the first time I go out in the foreign service, since I was a kid I've been traveling in my mind, and with a little help from the TV" (I-B-2012.03.15).

Hence, in order to appreciate cultural differences this sense of open-mindedness and the predisposition to accept differences between people is required. In addition, several studies have found affirmative relations between openness to experience and general knowledge, concluding that individuals with high openness may be more driven to engage in intellectual pursuits in order to upgrade their knowledge base (Fairweather, 2012), this wide knowledge base was mentioned by participants as one of the key attributes for a foreign government representative, as subject A pointed out:

Actually we must have general dominion of different issues, general knowledge, very similar to a scholar or a professor. In my country we say that the diplomat knows about many topics, like an ocean, but only an inch deep (I-A-2012.03.15).

At the same time, some of the previously identified qualities such as adaptability, intercultural competence and emotional intelligence, which are critical for a foreign government representative's success, can be associated with this trait. Therefore, openness to experience seems to be a constantly recurring personality component that is linked to successful performance in an international environment.

Extroversion.

Extroversion can be distinguished from other personality traits because it is driven by positive feelings as well as a disposition of searching for stimulation and is marked by high engagement with the outside world (Poropat, 2009), which means being comfortable around other people. This trait also seems to match the foreign government representative profession, since while in groups these individuals should like to talk and draw attention to themselves (Observation-2012.03.27). Like extroverts, foreign government representatives are expected to take pleasure in activities that involve large social gatherings, such as parties, community activities, public demonstrations, and business or political groups (Observation-2012.04.13).

Even so, some suggest that it would be wrong to simply conclude that high levels extroversion by itself assist in developing the kind of relational or people skills necessary for expatriate success, other factors being the level of interaction required with the local community and the degree of similarity between cultures (Jordan & Cartwright, 1998). Nonetheless, subject I explained the Taiwan context, he said: "you have to make yourself know, here nobody is looking for you, no one will call you, you have to make the effort to get their attention, put yourself out there" (I-I-2012.03.19). Likewise, subject E gave an example that demonstrated high extroversion:

Every year we organize a tequila promotions event, so we invite different buyers, businessmen to come and sample the Mexican drink. Last year I had to entertain the guest, we had music, so I danced with them, I went from table to table to serve them shots, so that

in the end they would have a good time, to make them remember that moment (I-E-2012.03.21).

Despite the fact that the previously covered personality trait segment highlighted openness to experience and extroversion as important traits, generalization and stereotyping should be avoided, since human beings are by nature complex and unique, and these personality traits can vary from situation to situation. What is necessary to remember is that foreign government representatives do need to possess numerous foundational competencies in order to work well with others, communicate effectively, be culturally adaptable, have a degree of open-mindedness, enjoy challenges, as well as to maintain objectivity and analytical capacity. This conceptualization brings back the idea of stable and dynamic traits (Leiba-O'Sullivan, 1999), meaning that the foundational level competence cluster, aside from being desirable for all foreign service official, can also act as a launch pad for further specialization. Therefore, following this logic, the next section will introduce those focus level areas of expertise for the foreign government representative field.

Focus Level Areas of Expertise

According to the ASTD competency model, professionals in a field make use of the previously mentioned foundational competencies to develop particular areas of expertise (Werner & DeSimone, 2009). These areas of expertise or focus level competencies comprise the technical and specialized knowledge and skills an individual needs to perform effectively throughout different positions (Davis, Naughton & Rothwell, 2004). After analyzing the data seven focus level competencies emerged: (1) protocol, (2) public service orientation, (3) market development, (4) attracting investment, (5) public relations (6) international politics and law, and (7) history and culture affairs.

Protocol

In the field of diplomacy protocol is a set of rules which governs how an event must be executed, and serve as a predetermined guideline of conduct, by specifying the appropriate and accepted behavior in official functions (Forni, 2003). As subject C mentioned “protocol involves showing appropriate respect to the people we interact with, presidents, government official and other diplomats” (I-C-2012.03.08). The recurrent theme that marks the importance of protocol is

that foreign service officers are not representing only an individual person, but their entire nation, which is the reason why they must know the internationally accepted manner of behaviors, especially in group meetings and official events (Observation-2012.03.27). Subject B explained the reach of protocol:

We have to know where we have to sit down, if we have to bow at any moment, also always know what will be the dress code, depending on the type of event, what title to call our colleagues, always being very polite, we use “your excellency” or “your eminency” quite often (I-B-2012.03.15).

Some participants expressed that the rules of protocol always change depending on the differences of the regions where foreign government representatives serve, as subject J shared “in Asia as the way we work becomes less formal, protocol too has become less formal, now everybody tries to be more pragmatic” (I-J-2012.03.20). In addition, subject H gave an example of a situation where protocol has to be followed:

I think the hardest thing, to which you are not used to from daily life compared to the rest of professions is the protocol. All you say you have to say in a very subtle way. One time I remember I attended a meeting at the foreign ministry, and found it very funny that they had procedures to follow, and they said exactly the same thing during the whole meeting, just with different words (I-H-2012.03.07).

Protocolary skills also govern the communication of foreign missions between themselves and other government bodies, especially as official written communication is very formal and standardized. An example of this is sending acknowledgment receipts, which is done merely to express courtesy (Observation-2012.03.20). Therefore, a foreign government representative must learn these rules, in order to always show the appropriate level of respect and reverence to their colleagues, as well as to the officials of the host country in which they have been accredited, to ensure the continuity of positive and long-lasting relations.

Public service orientation

This focus level competency has to do with the predisposition foreign government representatives must possess to react to motives grounded generally in the public sector and the interest to serve unconditionally a community of people (Rainey & Steinbauer, 1999). After analyzing the data it was clear that one of the main responsibilities of foreign government representatives was to attend and protect the interest of the home country nationals which are living in the host country (Subjects A, B, C, D, G, H, J). Therefore, the service that foreign government representatives provide to conational's are part of the services their governments must provide to its citizens regardless of status or income, as subject H confirmed, "here in the embassy our main job is to serve the Honduran community in Taiwan, small or big, each individual person is important" (I-H-2012.03.07).

In the case of Taiwan there is an interesting particularly of the service given to conationals. Because of the diverse cooperation programs Taiwan has establish, which include scholarship and technical human development programs, not just for its diplomatic allies, but also other countries (Rodriguez, 2008), a big percentage of conationals are actually scholarship students. According to subject B "this is a pretty big responsibility, shared by all members of the embassy, because these are kids that practically come from under the wing of their parents" (I-B-2012.03.15). As public service officials foreign government representatives must be strongly dedicated to help others, have sentiment of civic responsibility, must be willing to protect, advocate and work for the public good, particular that of their countrymen. As Subject G shared it's also their responsibility to serve their conational in times of crisis:

I'm always here to serve the students. There is no Nicaraguan that we have not served. We spent nights in hospitals, when they have accidents we are there, because you have to be human. There are no distinctions of political parties or anything, the important thing is to serve, that's why we get paid (I-G-2012.03.07).

Besides serving their countrymen, foreign service officials must also serve any host country national interested in attaining information about any kind of issues, such as legal or travel information, regarding their home country (Observation-2012.02.21). Given the high sentiments of patriotism and humanism it can be argued that serving the society and public interest matters

more to foreign government representatives than to private employees. Furthermore, this dedication to the public can be considered as a quality that can motivate these individuals to enter the foreign service and encourage their commitment to stay.

Public relations

According to Hall (2007) public relations can be seen as the capacity to manage the flow of communication and relationships between an organization and its public, and its objective is generally to convince the public and other parties to have a particular bias and feelings about an organization, its mission and accomplishments. Subject J suggested this area as one of the priority abilities for foreign service officials, she said: “we must be very careful of what we say and have good public relations, that’s primordial, good public and social relations” (I-J-2012.03.20). As previously mentioned one of the major challenges faced nowadays by foreign government representatives is connecting and being more open to the public, as subject F explained: “now if you are not making your presence felt, is like your are not here, that is our objective, we are all competing for the spotlight” (I-F-2012.03.13).

National governments institutions sometimes refer to the public relations function as public information or public affairs, this term emerged from past regulations model of public information associated with restrictions and laws that limited public relations activities within the government institutions of some countries (Phillips, 2006). As the spokesmen of their countries, foreign government representatives must know how to handle the overall host society views of their country, especially in today’s globalized environment. As subject E pointed out: “now the media is so fast, for example if in Mexico a drug smuggler is killed, things that before didn’t travel so fast, now we have to be prepared very quickly to respond” (I-E-2012.03.21). A key component of public relations is being able to manage the media and use it to their advantage, as subject A said: “it’s also very important to be very careful when it comes to the media because they might have wrong interpretations of what you are saying” (I-A-2012.03.15). All these public relation efforts are done in order to present a good and positive image of the country and of the achievements of their mission. Subject B explained the importance of public opinion:

Public opinion is now very strong. If two president sit down they can achieve impossible things, but if public opinion doesn't totally agree, it can get to disarticulate the situation, then it's important that the public opinion is well informed and on the other hand know how to handle this external factor that can cut a lot of projects (I-B-2012.03.15).

Therefore, public relations skills provide foreign government representatives the capacity to get the exposure their mission and countries need, while at the same time maintaining the Taiwanese community well informed. Common public relations activities these individuals must be ready to carry out include speaking in different ceremonies, events, conferences, as well as working with the media.

Market development

As mentioned in the previous section, one of the main responsibilities of foreign government representatives is to promote the commercialization of products of their home countries in the host market. As commercial interest grows and international trade barriers decrease, foreign service official must have the capacity to facilitate the entry of their home country's businesses into foreign markets. Market development includes different type of strategies which attempt at targeting non-buying clients in presently targeted groups and also capturing new buyers in different groups (Joshi, 2005). While the kind of mission might influence the emphasis in this area, being logical that commercial office officials would engage more in these types of activities than accredited diplomats, the real factor that determines this kind of focus is the actual vocation of the country. As subject F mentioned:

For example Chile is a country that in a global level formed its diplomatic corps for trade promotion, is a country that in the late 80's decided to turn around its economy, now the profile of the foreign ministry and ambassadors are basically commercial directors, is people dedicated to the promotion of products (I-F-2012.03.13).

This increasing significance in the commercial side of international relations is a result of living in a everyday more globalized world, in which countries are now constantly competing to gain a bigger share of their diplomatic and commercial partners markets. Subject D explained this issue better:

I have the pressure of Brazil, we have almost the same products, where I am Brazil is, Argentina also, it's a competition virtually like enterprises. The country that sells better wins, the one with the best logo. We are now focusing in branding, what people want to see is a single brand that identifies the country (I-D-2012.03.22).

Hence it seems clear that foreign government representatives should now have a more marketing profile, which includes thoroughly knowing the Taiwan market and creating space for the products of their home countries. Subject I highlighted how before "marketing was for companies to sell products, but now we are on the same boat" (I-I-2012.03.19). Following subject E gave a clear example of this market developing ability:

Mexico activities were conducted in September, but I talked with people in the malls, to do a massive promotional campaign of products for 2012, and here when you say Mexico they think of May 5, the American celebration, but as many Taiwanese have been in the U.S., this year they asked me to do something on May 5. I said "May 5 is not celebrated in Mexico" but if they associate it with Mexico, we have to make a party on May 5, the important thing is for them to remember Mexico, to locate products (I-E-2012.03.21).

In the second part of this example Subject E mentioned how is necessary to be able to adapt marketing strategies to the local community in order to increase the probability of promoting and selling products:

So if they want May 5 or 20, that's fine, as long as they want it. If we did it in September when they don't associate it with Mexico, and I think they also have another local holiday it would not work, so I think it is best to adapt and here is when marketing enters (I-E-2012.03.21) .

Therefore, rapidly emerging forces of globalization have led nations to markets beyond the borders of their home countries, which has forced foreign government representatives to support the interest and commercialization of goods using modern marketing strategies to remain competitive.

Attracting investment

While closely related with the just mentioned market development abilities, the attraction of investment demand of foreign government representatives a different kind of strategy and mind set. One of the main goals of foreign mission is to attract foreign direct investment (Subject D, E, F, G, I), which happens when companies set up or acquire firms in foreign markets (Parboteeah & Cullen, 2011). Moran (2006) mentioned how many governments promote and facilitate inward foreign direct investment as it can be a major source of capital, employment, skills and technology, and as part of these efforts, countries have established investment promotion organizations in different countries. In international markets, foreign government representatives can lend key support to these organizations because of their since they are close to potential investors and they also have a better understanding of the economic and political conditions in the countries where they are posted. As most foreign representations in Taiwan are smaller (Observation-2012.02.21), often the foreign service official also represent their countries investment promotions agencies. Subject I pointed out how “our officials work really hard to increase opportunities, I like to say that now what we do is business” (I-I-2012.03.19).

In addition, foreign government representatives are also involved in creating and handling the relationships with local companies. Another aspect subject D mentioned was that they also played a role in policy advocacy, as he said: “we also have to challenge the views of Taiwanese investors about the investment climate in our country to make it even more attractive” (I-D-2012.03.22). The high amount of capital Taiwan has to offer to its partners has motivated foreign representatives to establish well plan strategies to compete for investment opportunities, subject F explained the process:

We look for growth opportunity, then we try to select potential group of serious investors, people who are really interested in our country, in this sense the Taiwanese entrepreneurs are very practical, we review with them our country’s profile, we give clear accounts about the industry, the possibilities and in we can present data on their return on investment (I-F-2012.03.13).

With foreign government representatives constantly undertaking promotion efforts in the host country, the chances of attracting foreign direct in any given particular market clearly increases.

Therefore, is essential for foreign government representatives to have a broad private sector network in the country.

International politics and law

As international political figures, foreign government representatives must also possess expert knowledge in the international politics and international law areas, which go side by side with one another. The first refers to the issues that regulate the relations among states and other aspects of the international system, including the government bodies, bilateral and multilateral relations, international entities, regional organizations, and transnational corporations (Kissinger, 1994). As subject C noted “we have to know how the international political system works, if not we wouldn’t be able to preserve peace” (I-C-2012.03.08).

Foreign government representatives must dominate the concepts, models and theories that are embedded in the international system and which maintain the balance of power among competing states, as well as the significance of their home countries. For subject J this is fundamental: “it logical to have a notion of how the world work, what’s the global position of our country, what role it plays and what role it doesn’t play” (I-J-2012.03.20).

Along with understanding the international political system comes having a good seen of international law. This area refers to the established laws which have been already seen as approved by international courts and which are necessary in interactions in the international society of states (Viotti & Kauppi, 2008). Different international legal fields must be well dominated by foreign government representatives in order to protect and defend the rights of their home country, conational and business interests alike, as well as to successfully see through the execution of agreement and treaties. As subject H pointed out this understanding of international policy and international law is essential:

We know very well the international law, knowing what is the international standard that governs certain matters, so they don’t catch us by surprise, you have to be very skilled and know how to play and have full knowledge of international law before acting (I-H-2012.03.07).

Therefore in terms of a global society, international politics and international law are required areas of expertise for foreign government representatives, since as these two fields, their personal aim is to help guide and shape the diplomatic and political interaction between the governments of different countries.

History and culture affairs

The final focus level area of expertise that was identified had to do with the knowledge over history and culture, which can also be seen as the wide general knowledge base foreign government representatives are expected to possess. This could be one of the reasons why traditionally high ranking diplomats and other foreign representatives were expected to be of certain age, as subject C mentioned “previously the diplomat was more respected, it was a senior, an aristocrat, one had the idea of a person with a great knowledge” (I-C-2012.03.08). Even though nowadays age does not seem to be such an important factor in the field (Saner et al., 2000), the sense that a diplomat is an intellectual still remains. It appears that individuals with better understanding of history and culture can better serve as bridges for a faster interchange between two different countries, and can foster the exchange of ideas, information, values, traditions, beliefs, and other aspects of culture, with the intention of fostering mutual cultural acceptance. As subject J explained:

To understand people you have to at least know their history, of course we firsts have to know all about our country, this is what ambassador are, people that tell the story of their nations. But we also must understand the country we are stepping, the political history is also very important to understand future relations and to predict what might happened, I like to say, the past is always present (I-J-2012.02.20).

By having this knowledge foreign government representatives are capable of enhancing the effort of their governments for reciprocal interaction and cooperation between them, thanks to their previous understanding of the general context in where they are dealing, as well as their better identification with the local community, its culture and background. According to all participants, part of being a good foreign representative includes managing a wide variety of topics, Subject B said:

Diplomats have to know a little bit of everything, you must know about culture, be able to explain our cultural values, you need to know history, so this is because the diplomat has to be able to answer questions and needs to know how to maintain a conversation with his counterpart (I-B-2012.03.15).

Therefore this history and culture knowledge is an element that can initiate or facilitate exchanges between different countries and different cultures, being true instrument of worldwide understanding and eliminating cultural misconceptions and stereotypes. Finally, after covering the different areas of expertise in which foreign government representatives can focus and bringing back those previously determined foundational competencies, following the ASTD model and the research framework, the final section identified the execution level roles these individuals carry out within their respective organizations.

Execution Level Roles

In accordance with the ASTD model the roles are located in the top tier execution level, and they are composed by groupings of selected competencies. Again is necessary to make clear that roles are not synonymous of job titles, and can best be defined as the broad area of responsibility and functions within a profession that requires a specific set of foundational competencies and focus level areas of expertise to execute successfully (Davis, Naughton & Rothwell, 2004). Hence, after analyzing the data and identifying first the foundational competencies as well as the focus level areas of expertise of foreign government representatives in Taiwan, five main roles were found: (1) political analyst, (2) commercial counselor, (3) public diplomacy agent (4) consular advocate and (5) management officer.

Moreover, even though in this research the previously identified roles have been presented separately for explanation purposes, in the case of Taiwan it seems clear that some foreign government representatives can actually carry out more than one, and at times combine several of these roles to reach their mission objectives. Most importantly foreign government representatives must foster foundational and focus level competencies in order to carry out these roles efficiently, since to successfully undertake such responsibilities and functions foreign government representatives should have very high people or socialization skills, have an open mentality and learn to handle and deal with diverse and challenging situations as soon as they

begging their practice in the field. To summarize, in general this study suggests that foreign government representatives must have interest to serve the public, interest and ability to relate with the host community, possess linguistic skills, good communication skills, interest in current and international affairs, neutrality and organizational skills.

Discussions

Looking at the findings firstly it's clear that the leaning process which has lead foreign government representatives to acquire and develop their competencies revolves around a social approach to learning and has as fundamental building blocks previous life and work experience. It's necessary to point out that for some of the participants this process begun long before embarking in their profession. As foreign serviced officials, an important triggering event for this competency development process mentioned in all interviews was a previous experience abroad, which can also act as a motivation factor for starting a career in diplomacy. As mentioned by Foster (2000) when beginning their missions abroad, expatriates workers go through what is called a learning curve. Thus individuals who have already lived in a different country don't have to dedicate time to adapting, since they already know the culture, way of living and in some cases the language. The study coincides with the idea that government representatives today can have multiple academic backgrounds (Laboulaye & Laloy, 1983), still the most prevalent areas are international relations, international trade and economics. This relates to the objectives of each nation, since competency development is further specialized by foreign service ministries depending on the vocation of the country. However, even though the majority of participants did receive some kind of pre-departure training, it was more tasks oriented, with almost no cross-cultural component to facilitate the process of adjustment after their arrival in the host country.

As Blanchard and Thacker (2010) suggested, social learning theory proposes that individuals can learn by observing the behavior of others and interacting in social environments. This seems to be the case in the beginning of the career for a young foreign government representative, since this process of learning how to act out their role is done through observing more seasoned colleagues and socializing with the host community. Intentional change theory (Boyatzis, 2006) suggests that this effort is later driven by a sense of self direction and self improvement, influenced by the opportunities to carry out developmental assignments as well as self imposed or organizational goals.

According to Lindstrom (2002), globalization has had an impact in the development of adopting a more commercial approach to diplomacy. For some participant the lack of familiarity from the Taiwanese society towards their culture and markets increases the need to foster their relational abilities to elevate awareness of their countries, commercially and culturally. While language skills are known to be a must for any kind of foreign mission as Jordan and Cartwright (1998) pointed out, even though English has been considered the lingua franca of international affairs, in the Taiwan context Mandarin language skills serve as a tool for enhancing the ability to relate with the host society. Zaharna and Villalobos (2000) mentioned the increasing need for public relations in diplomacy; for all participants acting as the interface platform between their own government and the host government meant becoming public figures, this major responsibility comes with the great satisfaction of representing their countries. Demonstrating emotional intelligence is very important when complying with protocol; communication skills are necessary to modulate the way of expressing themselves according to the context; both qualities appear to be necessary to know how to operate appropriately in the eye of the public.

From the interviews experience, according to their position and rank the degree of professional knowledge required of them varied from topics such as international law, culture, economic and trade issues. While having to collaborate with each other, by nature foreign representatives must be able to manage a wide range of topics. This broad intellectual capacity complemented by the ability to react, makes it possible for them to respond in any kind of situation. While adapting to work and live in a different culture is an inevitable part of embarking in missions such as Taiwan, some interviews expressed how from the moment they decided to start a career in diplomacy and international relations they already had the inclination of wanting to explore the world and be opened minded. This supports the views of Dickie (1992) on diplomacy, considering that a good foreign representative appears to be a traveler interested in learning from other cultures, dealing with a different cultural environment is something that they expect and are willing to accept. It's important to notice the influence and similarities between the competences previously identified for foreign government representatives and those general expatriate competencies mentioned in the literature, especially at the foundational level, in which interpersonal, business/management and personal competencies could be seen as a requirement from any individuals attempting to carry out assignments on an international level,

being forced to adapt, relate, communicate and inform host communities in foreign environments.

Some interviewees had already acquired part of these competencies before coming to Taiwan; others were forced to develop them after their arrival. This study reveals how the competencies previously identified complement each other, comprising the set of personal tools needed for foreign government representatives to meet the purposes of their missions and at the same time overcome the challenges of serving in Taiwan. Even so, as diplomacy will continue to evolve, the roles of foreign government representatives will evolve as well, along with their competencies.

CHAPTER V CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The final chapter of this study includes a summary of the research results, implications, research limitations and suggestions for further research. This study was conducted to respond to the three research purposes mentioned in chapter one. The following section describes the main results achieved for each purpose.

Firstly the study aimed at understanding the job content and work environment of foreign government representatives, as well as to explore the major challenges they face while serving in Taiwan, giving an introduction to the overall context of the foreign government representative field in Taiwan. The findings of this study identified five main job responsibilities of foreign government representatives: serve, assist and meet the needs of their fellow countrymen in Taiwan; share and explain their countries values and policies; support their country's businesses, as well as economic partnerships in Taiwan; analyze, report, and give solutions to relevant political events; and run the daily management operations of their offices. These responsibilities are achieved through a set of job functions and tasks, carried out in a highly multicultural work environment. The personal and professional challenges faced by practitioners in the field revolve around the effects of globalization, an increase in public relations demands, human resource and cross-cultural issues.

Secondly the research also had as a purpose to explore how foreign government representatives in Taiwan have acquired and developed their individual competencies. The study suggests that the competency development stage of foreign government representatives is guided by a social learning process and later enhanced by intentional self-development changes. Work experience and on-the-job learning methods guided by these two processes represent the way in which foreign government representatives in Taiwan have acquired their competencies through learning experiences from interactions with other colleagues, learning experiences while living abroad and socializing with the local community; as well as challenging assignments and also being guided by previously set goals, in this way developing the skills necessary to hold their positions and perform efficiently and effectively in Taiwan.

Finally the findings of the study identified the individual competencies required for foreign government representatives in Taiwan in order to be more efficient and effective in their job.

Following the ASTD competency model, this study identified three levels of competency categorization. Foundational level competencies can be seen as a basic requirement for any expatriate candidate. The focus level areas of expertise are those specialized skills of individuals working in the foreign service field. The top execution level determine the different roles played by foreign government representative within their organizations. Following, figure 5.1 better illustrates this adaptation of the ASTD competency model to fit the foreign government representative profession:

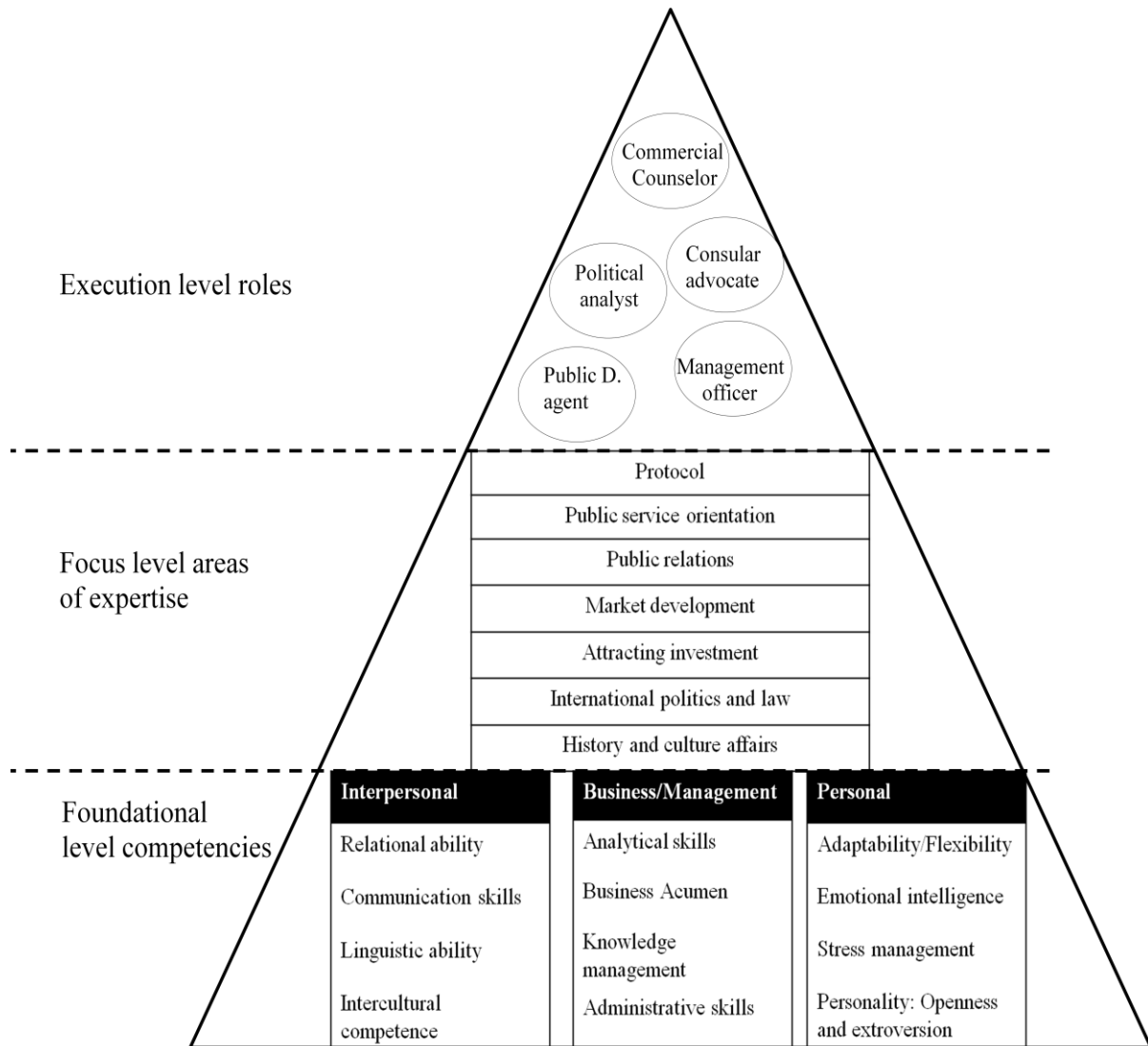


Figure 5.1. Adaptation of the ASTD competency model to the foreign government representative field

Research Implications

The findings of this study have implications for Ministries of Foreign Affairs in their respective countries and for foreign government representatives serving in Taiwan.

1. For Ministries of Foreign Affairs

Foreign ministries officials in charge of appointing their representatives should add to their selection criteria individuals with high level of interpersonal or people skills, which mean individuals with high abilities in social interactions and global mindset, as well as with a more economic profile.

Also official in charge of this selection process must consider giving priority to capable individuals who had lived and have an understanding of the country in which they will be assigned to serve. Seen in the context of individual competencies for international assignment, the foundational competencies identified represent a minimum that should be included as essential part of the selection criteria.

In addition, Foreign Service ministries officials in charge of training future diplomats can base their training programs around the previously mentioned competency model to actively meet the expectations for new and continuing professionals in the field. At the same time such programs should include as part of the development process having an experience abroad and should offer language and cross-cultural training in order to increase awareness of Taiwan, to facilitate the adaptation of foreign government representatives and reduce the risk of becoming vulnerable to culture shock.

2. For foreign government representatives serving in Taiwan

Seasoned and high ranking foreign government representatives serving in foreign missions in Taiwan, should transmit their knowledge and abilities to the younger generations through skillful mentoring. This activity not just gives a hand in the adaptation process of newcomer officials to the Taiwan work environment, but also helps to assist the process of mutual collaboration, and

can even serve to confront the demands for continued learning and upgrading caused by rapid technological and economic developments.

At the same time, heads of mission should provide their subordinates the opportunities to grow professionally through the delegation of developmental assignments, which not only expand a foreign government representative's responsibilities but also serve as a tool for practicing and acquiring new skills, while giving constant feedback after such assignments. In addition, in order to better develop themselves, these individuals must be clear about the individual roles they must carry within their respective missions.

Research Limitations

As it is expected, this study was not free from limitations. Firstly, because of the scarcity of official representatives working on foreign missions, the sample size was limited; furthermore, the study initially aimed at including more participants, however because of time restraints and the inability of some participants it had to be confined to ten. Most importantly, eighty percent of the final sample was originated from the Latin American continent, creating an over representation of this region.

Secondly, given the sensibility of some of the information managed by these government officials, as well as the sometimes limited access to these types of institutions, the researcher could not fully explore and take into account all the aspects of their work in order to have a more complete view of competency demands for this profession. Even so, to increment the amount of information regarding this topic, this study used three different methods in order to increase the sources of data.

Thirdly, this study didn't not take into account the differences between official accredited diplomatic missions – such as embassies, and the non-diplomatic missions – such as commercial, trade or cultural offices, including both type of entities in the foreign mission category, even though the nature of the job carried out in these organization do have some dissimilarities.

Finally, the research focused specifically on Taiwan and its implications could to some degree be extended to the greater East Asia region. However, this study did not aim to build a

universal competency model for foreign government representatives. Therefore, a generalization of the results in this study to other regions should be carried out with caution.

Suggestions for Future Research

For future research on this topic, firstly it would be recommended to increase the sample size and attempt to have a more balance representation of world regions. With a large enough sample and after designing an appropriate competency assessment questionnaire, a quantitative approach could offer a different perspective on competency needs and levels of superior performance for this field.

In addition, it can also be useful to conduct a separate research for the two different type of foreign missions included in this study, as well as a more in detail research of each distinct role. This would have as a consequence a better applicability of the findings, and more specific tasks oriented results, and can help understand how foreign mission relate and cooperate with one another, as well as how the roles carried out within them are integrated to fulfill their proposed objectives.

Finally, for a more socio-politically driven study, it could be also important to explore the personal perceptions of foreign government representatives in Taiwan, regarding Taiwan's relation with China, the diplomatic competition between these two states, cross-strait relations, as well as the future of Taiwan's position in the East Asia region and the rest of the world, in relation to their roles as members of the international system. In doing so such study could explore more in depth the significance and engagement this field has in this part of the world.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, M. S. (1993). *The rise of modern diplomacy 1450–1919*. London: Longman.
- Appleby, R. (1994). *Modern business administration*. London: Pearson Education limited
- Ashton, D., Davies, B., Felstead, A., & Green, F. (1999). *Work skills in Britain*. Oxford: ESRC Centre on Skills, Knowledge and Organizational Performance.
- Berridge, G. R. (2009). *Diplomacy: Theory & practice* (4th ed.). Palgrave: Macmillan.
- Bitner, M., Booms, B. & Tetreault, M. (1990). The service encounter: Diagnosing favorable and unfavorable incidents. *Journal of Marketing*, 54 (1), 71-84.
- Black, J. S. & Mendenhall, M. E. (1990). Cross-cultural training effectiveness: A review and theoretical framework. *Academy of Management Review*, 15(1), 113-136.
- Blanchard, P.N. & Thacker, J. W.B. (2010). *Effective training: Systems, strategies, and practices* (4th ed.). New Jersey: Pearson Education.
- Bogdan, R. & Taylor, S.J. (1975). *Introduction to qualitative research methods*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Boyatzis, R. (2006). Intentional change theory from a complexity perspective. *Journal of Management Development*, 25(7), 607-623.
- Bozeman, A. (1994). *Politics and Culture in international history: From the ancient near east to the opening of the modern age* (2nd ed.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Brannick, M. T. & Levine, E. L. (2002). *Job analysis: methods, research, and applications for human resource management in the new millenni*. CA: Sage.
- Caruso, D., Mayer, J.D. & Salovey, P. (2000). Emotional intelligence meets traditional standards for intelligence. *Intelligence*, 27 (4), 267-298.
- Chell, E. (1998). *Critical incident technique in qualitative methods and analysis in organizational research: A practical guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cooper, K. C. (2000). *Effective competency modeling and reporting: A step-by-step guide for Improving individual & organizational performance*. NY: American Management Association.
- Copeland, D. (2009). Transformational public diplomacy: Rethinking advocacy for the globalization age. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 5(2), 97-102.
- Corbin, J. & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Coyle, W. & Shortland, S. (1992). *International relocation: An international perspective*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Davis, P., Naughton, J. & Rothwell, W. (2004). New roles and new competencies for the profession. *T & D*, 58(4), 26-36.
- Day, D. (2007). *Developing leadership talent: A guide for succession planning and development*. Alexandria, VA: Society for Human Resource Development.
- Debowski, S. (2006). *Knowledge management*. Sydney: John Wiley & Sons Australia, Ltd.
- Dickie, J. (1992). *Inside the foreign office*. London: Chapman.
- Downes, M., Varner I. & Musinski L. (2007). Personality traits as predictors of expatriate effectiveness: A synthesis and reconceptualization. *Review of Business*. Retrieved from http://www.entrepreneur.com/tradejournals/article/165359565_1.html
- Dragoni, L., Tesluk, P., Russel, J. & Oh, I. (2009). Understanding managerial development:

- Integrating developmental assignments, learning orientation, and access to developmental opportunities in predicting managerial competencies. *Academy of Management Journal*, 52(4), 731-743.
- Dubois, D. (1993). *Competency based performance improvement: A study for organizational change*. MA: HRD Press Inc.
- Dubois, D. & Rothwell, W. (2004). *Competency-based human resource management*. Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black Publishing.
- European Chamber of Commerce Taipei. (2012). *ECCT constitution*. Retrieved from <http://www.ecct.com.tw/aboutus.aspx?cseq=1&seq=5>
- Ezziane, Z. (2007). Information technology literacy: Implications on teaching and learning. *Educational Technology & Society*, 10 (3), 175-191.
- Fairweather, J. (2012). Personality, nations, and innovation: Relationships between personality traits and national innovation scores. *The Journal of Comparative Social Science*, 46(1), 3-30.
- Fishman, T. C. (2005). *China inc.: How the rise of the next superpower challenges America and the world*. New York: Scribner.
- Forni, P.M. (2003). *Choosing civility: The 25 rules of considerate conduct*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin Edition.
- Foster, N. (2000). Expatriates and the impact of cross-cultural training. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 10 (3), 63-78.
- Fulham, A. & Taylor, J. (2005). *Learning at work: Excellent practice from best theory*. New York: Palgrave Mcmillan.
- Gore-Booth, L. (1979). *Satow's guide to diplomatic practice*. London: Longman.
- Gremler, D. (2004). The critical incident technique in service research. *Journal of Service Research*, 7(1), 65-89.
- Green, P. (1999). *Building robust competencies: Linking human resource systems to organizational strategies*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Hall, P. (2007). *The new pr*. New York.: Larstan Publishing.
- Harris, P.R. & Moran, R.T. (1996). *Managing cultural differences* (4th ed.). Houston, TX: Gulf Publishing Company.
- Hartle, F. (1995). *How to re-engineer your performance management process*. London: Kogan Page.
- Hartley, J. (1998). *Learning and studying: A research perspective*. London: Routledge.
- Henderson, N. (1995). *Mandarin : Diaries of an ambassador 1969 – 1982*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- Joshi, R.M. (2005). *International marketing*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Jordan, J. & Cartwright, S. (1998). Selecting expatriate managers: Key traits and competencies. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 19(2), 89-96.
- Ketter, P. (2006). Investing in learning : Looking for performance. *T & D*, 60(12), 30-33.
- Kissinger, H. (1994). *Diplomacy*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Klein, K. J. & Zeigert, J. C. (2004). *Leader development and change over time: A conceptual integration and exploration of research challenges*. Mahwah, NJ: LEA.
- Krumboltz, J.D. (1996). *A learning theory in career counseling*. Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black Publishing.
- Laboulaye, F. & Laloy, J. (1983). *Qualifications of an ambassador*. Washington D.C.: Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown University.

- Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press.
- Lawler, E. E. (1994). A skill based approach to human resource management. *European Management Journal*, 10(4), 383 - 391.
- Lee, D. & Hudson, D. (2004). The old and new significance of political economy in diplomacy. *Review of International Studies*, 30(3), 343-360.
- Leiba-O'Sullivan, S. (1999). The distinction between stable and dynamic cross-cultural competencies: Implications for expatriate trainability. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 30 (1) 709-725.
- Leonard, D. (2008). The impact of learning goals on emotional, social and cognitive intelligence competency development. *Journal of Management*, 27(1), 109-128.
- Li, H. (2005). Rivalry between Taiwan and the PRC in Latin America. *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, 10(2), 77-102.
- Lindstrom, G. (2002). *Diplomats and diplomacy for the 21st century* (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from www.rand.org/pubs/rgs_dissertations/RGSD169.html.
- Lord, R. G. & Hall, R. J. (2005). Identity, deep structure and the development of leadership skill. *Leadership Quarterly*, 16(1), 591–615.
- Lucia, A.D., & Lepsinger, R. (1999). *The art and science of competency models :Pinpointing critical success factors in organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mader-Clark, M. (2006). *The job description handbook*. New York: Nolo
- McCall, M. W., Lombardo, M. M. & Morrison, A. M. (1988). *The lessons of experience: How successful executives develop on the job*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- McCauley, C., Ruderman, M., Ohlott, P. & Morrow, J. (1994). Assessing the developmental components of managerial jobs. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 79(1), 544–560.
- Merriam, S. & Caffarella, R. (1998). *Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mertens, D. M. (2005). *Research in education and psychology* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1998). *Data management and analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ROC (2011). *Foreign embassies and missions in Taiwan*. Retrieved from <http://www.mofa.gov.tw/webapp/lp.asp?ctnode=1867&ctunit=34&basedsd=32&mp=6>.
- Mirabile, R. J. (1997). Everything you wanted to know about competency modeling. *Training & Development*, 51 (8), 73-77.
- Moran, T. H. (2006). *Harnessing foreign direct investment for development: Policies for developed and developing countries*. Washington: Center for Global Development.
- Nadler, D. A. & Tushman, M. (1999). The organization of the future: Strategic imperatives and core competencies for the 21st century, *Organisational Dynamics*, 27(1), 45-58.
- Nicolson, H. (1938). *Diplomacy* (1st ed.). Cambridge: Oxford University Press.
- Ohlott, P. J. (2004). *Job assignments*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Olson, J. & Bolton, P. (2002). *Chapter 7. Competencies*. Retrieved from <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate-doe/benchmark/ch07.pdf>.
- Parboteeah, K.P. & Cullen, J.B. (2011). *Strategic international management*. Canada: South Western.

- Parry, S.B. (1996). The quest for competencies. *Training*, 33 (7), 48-54.
- Phillips, D. (2006). Towards relationship management: Public relations at the core of organizational development. *Journal of Communication Management*, 12(2), 34-48.
- Prince, T. (2008). Business acumen: A critical concern of modern leadership development. *Human Resource Management International Digest*, 16 (6), 6-9.
- Polit, D. & Beck, C. (2004) *Nursing research: Principles and methods* (7th ed.). Philadelphia: Philadelphia: Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins.
- Poropat, A. E. (2009). A meta-analysis of the five-factor model of personality and academic performance. *Psychological Bulletin*, 135 (2), 322-338.
- Rainey H.G. & Steinbauer, P. (1999). Galloping elephants: Developing elements of a theory of Effective government organizations. *Journal of Public Administration Research & Theory*, 9(1), 56-71.
- Rana, K.(2000). *Inside diplomacy*. New Delhi: Manas Publications.
- Rathje, S. (2007). Intercultural competence: The status and future of a controversial concept. *Journal for Language and Intercultural Communication*, 7(4), 254–266
- Rhee, K. (2007). The beat and rhythm of competency development over two years. *Department of Management and Marketing*, 27(1), 146-160.
- Rodriguez, M. (2008). La batalla diplomática de Beijing y Taipei en America Latina y el Caribe. [The diplomatic battle between Beijing and Taipei in Latin America and the Caribbean]. *Revista CIDOB d'Afers Internacionals*, 81, 209-231.
- Sandberg, J. (1994). *Human competency at work: An interpretative approach*. Gotherburg: BAS
- Saner, R., Yiu, L. & Sondergaard, M. (2000). Business diplomacy management: A core competency for global companies. *Academy of Management Executive*, 14(1), 80-92.
- Silverman, D. (2005). *Doing qualitative research* (2nd ed.). London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Siracusa, J. (2010). *Diplomacy: A very short introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press Inc.
- Spencer, L. & Spencer, S. (1993). *Competency at work: Models for superior performance*. New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc.
- Stake, R.E. (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousan Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Taylor, S. N. (2006). Why the real self is fundamental to intentional change. *Journal of Management Development*, 25(7), 643- 656.
- Torrington, D. (1994). *International human resource management*. London: Prentice-Hall.
- Tye, M.G. & Chen, P.Y (2005). Selection of expatriates: Decision-making models used by HR professionals. *Human Resource Planning*, 28 (4), 15-20.
- Viotti, P.R. & Kauppi, M.V. (2008). *International relations and world politics* (4th ed.). New York: [Scribner](#).
- Werner, J. M. & DeSimone, R. L. (2009). *Human resource development* (5th ed.). Manson, OH: South-western Cengage Learning.
- Zaharna, R.S., & Villalobos, J.C. (2000). A public relations tour of embassy row: The latin diplomatic experience. *Public Relations Quarterly*, 45(4), 33-37.

APPENDIX A: OBSERVATION JOURNAL

Tuesday Feb. 21 - Day 1

Internship Orientation

The embassy of Nicaragua is located in Diplomatic Corps building of Taiwan. This building also houses many other embassies, as well as the Taiwan's International Cooperation development Fund (Taiwan ICDF).

Embassy staff:

- Ambassador (Nicaragua)
- Administrative and consular Attaché (Nicaragua)
- Military Attaché (Nicaragua)
- Finance (Taiwan)
- Secretary (Taiwan)

Activities

- Translate a statement of the Nicaraguan Minister of Foreign Affairs from Spanish to English.

Testimonies

- Conversation with administrative and consular attaché:
 - Both the ambassador and consul are appointed directly by the president.
 - Normally in other countries the consular office is separated from the embassy, but this is not the case for Taiwan.
 - A big part of the consuls functions have to do with serving conational's in need of passport and travel assistance.
 - Another part is to deal with people both local and conational's and look after personal problems.
 - The most serious cases are overlooked by the ambassador. (Example: Nicaraguan students with serious issues).
 - Even though the consulate should be a separate entity it's necessary to give constant support to the ambassador.
 - Everything must be written down to avoid any kind of confusions.
 - The heads of mission in embassies receive the title of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.

- In the past embassies and ambassadors were revered as more important than commercial offices and their directors, because of the diplomatic support offered to the nation of Taiwan. Now as commercial interests are growing rapidly, trade offices have reached the same level of importance.
- Social receptions are the perfect opportunity to make new contacts and get together with other contacts. The more contacts the more changes there is to establish relations, whether of aid, cooperation or trade.
- Another function of the administrative and consular attaché in reception and meetings is to write up the “memory aid” which includes writing down the participants, topic raised, points agreed on, opinions etc., in order to keep record.

Field notes

Content part	Reflective part
The ambassador is the maximum authority	The ambassador is treated and approached with great respect by all the embassy staff. One can feel his strong presence when he enters the room. Everything must have his final approval.
Any kind of official communication is done by writing.	Any kind letter or statement issued by the embassy is done with extremely formality; therefore the use of computers is indispensable. Word and Google translate are real time savers

Thursday Feb. 23 – Day 2

Activities

- Elaborate a farewell letter to the ambassador of the Salomon Islands who will be discharge from his post.
- Make the necessary arrangements to prepare a dinner organized by the Nicaraguan embassy in name of Taiwan’s Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Testimonies

- Brief conversation with ambassador:
 - The embassy is constantly promoting the entry of Nicaragua products to the Taiwan market.
 - The ambassador personally receives and looks after delegations of Nicaraguan businessmen that arrive in Taiwan to explore the possibilities of trade.

- Promotes the country as an investment opportunity and touristic destination. A way of doing this is to attend fairs and trade exhibitions all over Taiwan.

Field notes

Content part	Reflective part
Taiwanese staff is proficient in Spanish	Taiwanese staff can all speak perfect Spanish and one can sense their willingness to support the Nicaraguan representatives. They open more and seem more relaxed when ambassador talks in Mandarin with them.

Thursday March 1 - Day 3

Activities

- Write up news report covering the events of Feb. 28 (228) and reactions of the Taiwanese society.
- Make arrangements for the upcoming visit of the Head Chief of the Nicaraguan Armed Forces to Taiwan.

Testimonies

- Brief conversation with military attaché:
 - It's the responsibility of the ambassador, and the rest of the embassy staff to fully attend and care to the needs of any official members of the government of Nicaragua. This is why is very important to really know the country were you are and to have good relations with the locals, so that you can be able to respond to anything that enjoys might ask, without having to be rely fully on the Taiwanese staff in the office.

Field notes

Content part	Reflective part
There is constant information sharing between representatives	Both consular and military attaché debrief the ambassador about situations that arise in their respective areas. Possible solutions to problems and courses of action are discussed. This is done in some occasions several times a day.

Tuesday March 6 – Day 4

Activities

- Review two press releases send by the Nicaraguan Ministry of Foreign Affairs covering the visit of two Central American presidents (Honduras and Guatemala) to Nicaragua.
- Write up a political news report covering at least four events that have occurred in the present week in Taiwan.

Testimonies

- Brief conversation with administrative attaché:
 - It is fundamental for the official in charge on the mission to dominate mandarin. In this case the ambassador does speak Chinese and this makes him a very popular figure which can attract the attention of the locals, thus having an advantage.

Field notes

Content part	Reflective part
There are irregular working hours	<p>The working hours of the embassy staff varies according to their rank and responsibility. The ambassador, which is the boss, doesn't have a fix time of arrival or time to leave. His role is that of representing the embassy outside, going to meetings, receptions, events, dinners, which are scheduled weekly. The rest of the Nicaraguan staff will sometimes be sent in representation in the cases the ambassador is compromised with other affairs, but this is less frequent. The local staff must to be in the office at all times (9:00 am – 5:00 pm)</p> <p>It's important to notice that because of the hour difference with Nicaragua, the Nicaraguan staff have to sometimes work at late hours at night, in order to communicate with government institutions back in their country</p>

Thursday March 8 – Day 5

Activities

- Attend Nicaraguan student inquiring about Taiwan scholarship issues.

Testimonies

- Brief conversation with administrative attaché:
 - Sometimes is necessary to keep a balance between being open and easily accessible to the public and demonstrating that you must be respected. Because of this I don't normally add students on facebook, because I don't want them to think that the embassy is tracking them.

Field notes

Content part	Reflective part
One of the embassies mission is to serve conational's	The objective of the office besides strengthening relations is also to help and serve others. The mission does services to conational and must know, understand and find solution to the problems that conational's might have in Taiwan. From students, to business people, the mission must do its best to provide the best service to the public.

Tuesday March 13 – Day 6

Activities

- Organize meeting with Nicaragua scholarship students.
- Sending emails with invitations and also making phone call to confirm their assistance.

Testimonies

- Brief conversation with ambassador:
 - It's very important for the embassy to have good convening power, this means the capacity to reach, inform, organize and coordinate the Nicaraguan community in Taiwan.
 - This is also necessary in case of any natural or political emergency, whether in Taiwan or in our own country.

Field notes

Content part	Reflective part
The embassy is increasing the accessibility to the public	The embassy's policy is to eliminate the old ways and views of foreign representations. Before ambassadors were before very hard to approach. Instead the ambassador tries to create a sense of family between the Nicaraguan students; he seems to be like a grandfather to all students, by being open and easy to approach and always willing to help. Everybody, old and young, student or government officials are treated with the same degree of importance in the embassy.

Thursday March 15 – Day 7

Activities

- Work along with administrative attaché to elaborate an up to date report of the funds of the Diplomatic Corps of Taiwan.

Testimonies

- Conversation with administrative attaché:
 - Each member mission of the Diplomatic Corps of Taiwan has to pay an annual fee of NT 10,000. This is a new policy implemented to create a fund for financing different events, such as receptions, welcoming and farewell dinners and other activities. It's very important to keep track of each mission's balance, since in the past the handling of this fund was not done in such an organized matter.
 - In the Diplomatic Corps there is a structure. It has a Dean, which is the head of mission with the most time serving in Taiwan. Then there is a Secretary, which is in charge of organizing any meetings and events. Finally there is a treasurer, which handles and keeps track of the funds. Currently our ambassador has the treasurer responsibility. All these positions are honorary.

Field notes

Content part	Reflective part
Communication between representatives from different mission's is very respectful	The universal language remains to be English. The vocabulary is very courteous, points are expressed neatly, whether on the phone or in person. There is always a greater respect to representatives with higher ranks.
It's necessary to know how to handle money and accounts	In order to keep track of the funds of the office and the funds of the diplomatic corps, it's important to have some knowledge about business, or be skilled in accounting to keep good records of receipts and bills to pay. The person assigned for recording the funds of the diplomatic corps didn't have a background in business, math or economy, thus it turned out to be something challenging for him and gave unsatisfactory results.

Tuesday March 20 – Day 8

Activities

- Receive visit from Taiwan’s Central American Trade Office (CATO), regarding the issues of beef imports to Taiwan and other regional initiatives.
- Elaborate aide-memoire about the meeting with CATO summarizing the highlights and agreements of the meeting.
- Elaborate an acknowledgement receipt of a letter send by the embassy of Honduras.

Testimonies

- Brief conversation with administrative attaché:
 - An acknowledgement receipt letter is only to notify that something has been received. It is not necessary but is something more diplomatic and merely protocolary and courteous.

Field notes

Content part	Reflective part
Meeting are carried in a positive discussion matter	Even when the beef issues might affect the imports of Nicaraguan beef to Taiwan and therefore to an extent affect the economy of the country, the ambassador never over reacts, and tries to maintain a friendly environment, always looking to find a constructive solution to the problem. The meeting is held in Spanish so that everybody present can understand.
Fast assimilation of information	Assistants or attaches have to have the ability to keep track of the points and agreements made, so that in the future there is no confusion about the conclusions of the meeting

Thursday March 22 – Day 9

Activities

- Write a report about the beef import issue in Taiwan, analyzing how it’s affecting Nicaraguan beef exports and give possible solutions to the problem.
- Visit to Mu Chang International Warehousing in Zhong Li (中壢市), one of the top Nicaraguan beef importers in Taiwan, to discuss beef issue, find out the Taiwanese importers perspectives on the topic, look at possible solutions and foster the economic relation and trade.
- Elaborate aide-memoire summarizing the visit and meeting, and recording the compromises of both sides.

Testimonies

- Conversation with ambassador:

- Our country, and thus our mission office, has to compete with other countries and mission offices to attract Taiwanese trade and investments.
- In this career is very important to be humble, be open to always learn from past experiences. It's very important to try to understand other people, since as envoys of our country we didn't come to be understood, but to try to understand the local people so that by doing so there can be better friendship ties.

Field notes

Content part	Reflective part
The visit and meeting was hold completely in Chinese.	Even though some of the workers in the company knew English, all was done in Chinese. There was a very friendly environment; the relation between the ambassador and the importers was of a lot of trust, openness and of very good old friends.
It is very important to know about trade issues.	The ambassador was calming the importers worries about Nicaraguan beef, trying to negotiate the necessary steps to take in order to end the problem

Tuesday March 27 – Day 10

Activities

- Prepare and host meeting for the Diplomatic Corps of Taiwan
- Attend extraordinary meeting of the Diplomatic Corps of Taiwan regarding the “Guidelines of the Diplomatic Corps”
- Elaborate aide-memoire summarizing the meeting and agreements made.

Testimonies

- **Brief conversation with ambassador:**
 - It's in this kind of gatherings and social events that some negotiations and initiatives are tried to be develop. After having something unofficially approved, it is much easier to have it done.
 - It's also always very important that no matter how much you disagree with something, never disrespect, insult or have a negative argument with any other member of the Diplomatic Corps. At the end of the day we are all guest the republic of Taiwan.

Field notes

Content part	Reflective part
Socialization and people skills are key in receptions	<p>It seems that introverted people would suffer in this kind of environment. There is constant interaction with others. Good conversation capabilities are a must, along with an open and friendly personality.</p> <p>Also one needs to be informed of the latest news, what's happening in the world, globally, in Taiwan and in one's own country.</p>
Is fundamental to control ones emotions	<p>Even in a contradiction, the members of the meeting never disrespect each other, still being able to make their points clear. They choose the correct words to support their arguments, controlling their discomfort or the natural human emotion of anger or intolerance.</p> <p>After all is said and done, there are no hard feelings, since the points of discussion are not aimed at individuals, but at the topic being discussed.</p>
Everything is done in a high protocolary way	<p>From where the member will be seated, to how the chairman of the meeting refers to each other member, also how do other members ask permission to intervene. The lexicon is very protocolary, respectful and eloquent.</p>

Tuesday April 2 – Day 11

Activities

- Write a report about the meeting of the president of the republic of China and the honorary president of the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) in Beijing.

Testimonies

- **Conversation with ambassador:**
 - It's fundamental to constantly communicate with our own country, to keep them informed of what's happening here. To keep them up to date, and also ask for any information we might need. Is important to let them know what can be done in our own country so that the relations and trade can increment.

Field notes

Content part	Reflective part
Foreign representatives need to know how to constantly search for information	<p>It's important to always know the latest news, and know what's happening in the world. For this is also necessary to know how to search and look for information of interest, up to date, relevant and most importantly accurate.</p> <p>The internet is fundamental but it can be misleading since what is online is not always the reality. It's important to know how to summarize, analyze, synthesize information and know how to interpret it, to find the best way to react to it.</p> <p>Representatives in the office are have to know about cross-strait relations, the relation with China, internal politics of Taiwan, the Taiwan market, Taiwan imports, opportunities for investment in their own countries, their countries exports, their countries commercialization and promotion of products, as well as regional and internal politics of their countries.</p>

Tuesday April 10 – Day 12

Activities

- Write up report about the implications of latest Nicaraguan Chamber of Commerce meeting.

Testimonies

- **Brief conversation with ambassador**
 - The embassy must also know how to control the image of the country. We need to know how to control the media, since not everything that is said about our country is true, and not everything is false. We need to be objective and responsible about the action of our conational's, and inform what it really going on, so that the Taiwanese society might have a good impression of our country, making our job easier.

Field notes

Content part	Reflective part
There is a good multicultural work environment in the office	<p>Taiwanese staff helps the Nicaraguan staff translating documents.</p> <p>Even thought the ambassador is the maximum authority, his</p>

	<p>has a friendly personality, he makes jokes, involving all the other members, this way the worker are relax, other staff members also joke and it feels more like a family.</p> <p>At lunch time, the Taiwanese are given their space for lunch, and a quick nap. The Nicaraguan's talk more between them, going to eat together or sometimes stay working with no lunch break. The two cultures are respected, and work start back at the assigned time.</p>
--	---

Friday April 13 – Day 13

Activities

- **Attend activity in Santo Domingo Fort in Danshui: Tribute to Juan Cobo (The first person to translate Chinese to Spanish)**

Testimonies

- **Brief conversation with Chargé d'affaires of the Guatemalan representation:**
 - In these kind of events is important that you make yourself known to others. You have to present yourself; no one is going to know who you are, or talk to you, especially if you are new in Taiwan. So you have to make efforts to talk and present yourself to as much people you can. First most importantly to the event organizers, then to the authorities in Taiwan, members of other representations, people in general and so on.

Field notes

Content part	Reflective part
Ambassador gave a speech at the beginning of the ceremony	The speech was given in front of a wide audience, with some high personalities. To address them formally the ambassador used a previously prepared speech, but instead of reading it, after a small introduction he gave a very natural speech, making the moment less serious and more friendly and emotional. His attitude was more of a humble person, not that of a person with authority. He did not seem nervous, and delivered the message he wanted to transmit to the audience very effectively. He managed to make the audience laugh and also connect with the purpose of the event. He also thanked the event organizers, and was cheered intensely at the end.

<p>There was intense social interaction at reception</p>	<p>After the ceremony, there was a reception with some refreshments. During this time, there was intense social interaction between all the guests. Everybody seemed friendly, talkative, open to introduce themselves, take many pictures together and interact with each other.</p>
--	---

APPENDIX B: EXAMPLE OF TRANSCRIPT

Subject A 2:30 pm, 15 th of March of 2012	
Transcript	Coding/Concept
<p>1. Could you please share your background and training education experience (if any)?</p> <p><u>I specialize in the area of foreign policy, in the career of international relations in which of course we see history, international institutions etc, but it surprised me how many paths I could take, is a very wide career. I focused on Southeast Asian politics, all my classes revolved around learning how to run Taiwan's foreign policy towards, and also learn the relationship between each state and get a better idea of how the world and its relations works. And this is what I implement in my work because every day I have to focus on the policy of my country and how to apply it in the country where I am, so I went directly to my get experience by working. I had training back in Guatemala, which taught me the different divisions in which the Foreign Ministry is structured, got to learn how every direction operates. I also got introduced to the financial institutions, the political arena, and the organizations which focus on emigrant countries. So my prior training in Guatemala before starting to work abroad was that, it lasted 20 days, before getting sent to my mission.</u></p>	<p>I-A-01-01 Foreign policy studies</p> <p>I-A-01-02 Learning on the job</p> <p>I-A-01-03 Training in home country</p>
<p>2. What has been the most significant experience that has marked and helped form your character as a foreign representative?</p> <p><u>First of all the work environment help me a lot, and also the head of your mission is very important, because that is your boss. It depends a lot if the person you're working is a career diplomat, if it happens to be an ambassador that comes out of the Ministry of foreign affairs, that you job easier, because you learn a lot. This person can more easily puts you in contact with cases of reality. So then I think what I consider the most important was been lucky enough of having a good mentor, who taught me to how to conduct meetings at official levels, with people from</u></p>	<p>I-A-02-01 Learn from senior officers</p> <p>I-A-02-02 Good mentoring</p> <p>I-A-03-01 Previous experience in</p>

<p>government , observe how they perform a treaty. <u>So having someone to teach you, constantly, you learn a lot. My boss knows a lot, he is an academic, very theoretical and this way I learn. So it's great to have a good boss to help you, from who you can learn, learn how they talk, how they manage themselves with people.</u> Is also important if you have a good team, it makes everything easier.</p>	<p>Taiwan I-A-03-02 Learn from living in host country</p>
<p>3. How did you prepared yourself to come to Taiwan? <u>Before coming to Taiwan I win a scholarship to study my undergraduate career in Taiwan, I studied five years in Taiwan.</u> in those years I got to know more the culture, the society, what was the mentality. <u>I learned how to live here, which now makes everything much easier; by living with them, I learned how to deal with the Taiwanese people and how government institutions worked, and you also learn their mentality, which makes your job easier. You learned their way of thinking, their way of working. So then the studying in Taiwan made my preparation for the job easier.</u></p>	<p>I-A-04-01 Consular services I-A-04-02 Attend scholarship students I-A-04-3 Administrative tasks</p>
<p>4. Could you describe your job objectives? Could you describe a typical day at work? <u>Well, uh I'm in charge of consular and administrative affairs of the embassy.</u> In general, I deal with political affairs with the Ambassador, I mean political news from Taiwan and Guatemala. I am also in charge of consular affairs, which has to do with giving visas, authenticating documents, business documents. <u>I am also responsible of taking care of the scholarship students, which are about 140 in total, is a big group of young men and women, but in the end the ambassador is the one who makes the final decision on scholarship recipients.</u></p>	<p>I-A-04-04 Event planning I-A-04-05 Collect relevant news information</p>
<p><u>Then in the administration, is my responsibility also to ensure the accounts of the embassy, handle the budget for activities and events, the general budget of the embassy, is not like in the private sector, here we have to count and report every penny and make payments for all utilities, for the local staff.</u> Overall to summarize my objectives are the political reports, scholarship students and other conational's and the administrative part.</p>	<p>I-A-04-06 Attend meetings and official events I-A-04-07 Report information to home country</p>

<p>So my day to day job is to welcome people who need like to renew passports of come to ask about information of my country. <u>There are days when we are very loaded with things, when there are activities, such as the cultural activity that we just did, I was in charge of making the program, making the translations, translating the invitation cards etc. In the evenings I perform daily summaries of international news, about domestic news of Taiwan, about relations with China, trade relations here and in the other countries, seeking news that has to do with Guatemala, that is daily, a news report before four in the afternoon.</u></p>	<p>I-A-04-08 Serve as information channel</p>
<p><u>I also support the ambassador in the government activities and invitations from the foreign ministry, from other representations or from any company, this happens sometimes many times a week. That is very important to show the support to the ambassador when we are out of the office, and attend to the majority of activities we are invited. When there are meetings I write up a memory aid to send it back to Guatemala, and that is also archived to bring continuity to any meeting we have. A side in the background, I get emails from people about consular consultations, visa issues, transportation of consumer products, I also receive and send e-mails to the scholarship students. And a typical day is to receive and inform people in Taiwan who are interested in trade issues, in tours, trade and culture of Guatemala, to establish commercial relations with investment or my country.</u> That's all day, that's a normal day for me.</p>	<p>I-A-05-01 Challenging assignments</p> <p>I-A-05-02 Real life situations</p> <p>I-A-05-03 Passive participation</p> <p>I-A-05-04 Learn from observation</p>
<p>5. Could you talk about how has your learning experience evolved since your first days on the job?</p> <p>In Asian culture when you're young you're underestimated, it's hard to be taken seriously, to be taken into account. <u>Luckily our last ambassador involved us a lot, send us on his behalf to events, we are constantly being challenged.</u> Mmmm, from not knowing anything, because I had no experience working in the foreign service before this opportunity, <u>what help me was to get more in touch with the reality, that is from the beginning putting yourself in real cases.</u> You will hear, see, especially at the beginning is to observe, then that helps prepare you when you stay alone and in charge of your mission, like I am now. <u>So at the beginning we go to all events and participate in a passive</u></p>	<p>I-A-06-01 Self-determination of objectives</p> <p>I-A-07-01 Language barrier</p> <p>I-A-07-02 Communication difficulties</p> <p>I-A-07-03 Cultural differences</p>

<p><u>way. In the beginning is important that we observe how negotiations are done, how meetings are held, its helps us prepare, it's very important to observe and then participate.</u></p>	<p>I-A-08-01 Flexibility</p>
<p>6. What was the most difficult task for you to learn? How did you overcome it?</p>	<p>I-A-08-02 Confidence</p>
<p><u>It was hard to be patient and tolerant with people. Despite that, I came to the conclusion that my work as a diplomat is to meet and interact with people, my job is not in the office, my job is to receive people. I had situations where I had to take care of people, so I forced myself to be patient, there's nothing else I can do.</u> I has been difficult but I have no other choice, my job consist of being in constant contact with people, so I've overcome it by having to socialize and be nice, polite and helpful, specially with delegation that come from my country, because they come from very far away, Guatemala is very far from Taiwan, so I understand they are tired and that Taiwan can be difficult if you have never been here before. Sometimes people just want a nice western meal, so I help with what they need.</p>	<p>I-A-08-03 Language proficiency I-A-08-04 Wide knowledge base I-A-08-05 Communication skills</p>
<p>7. What are the Challenges of working in a Chinese environment?</p>	<p>I-A-09-01 Relationship building I-A-09-02 Understand the Taiwanese community</p>
<p><u>I think it's the language barrier is very big, to me that is one of the most immediate challenges. At its something that truly makes the job here different than in any other part of the world, because one cannot fully express what is that you want to communicate to them.</u> And this is part of the cultural differences, <u>Taiwanese people are very different, and one has to learn from their way of life to know how express things better and communicate more effectively as well.</u></p>	<p>I-A-09-03 Cultural exchanges</p>
<p>8. In your opinion what the skills and/or attributes someone must have to become a good foreign representative?</p>	<p>I-A-09-04 Learn the culture I-A-09-05</p>
<p><u>Well nowadays diplomats have to play a more relaxed, friendly, flexible role. So I believe that modern a diplomats must be a people person, very sure of herself,</u> a nervous or anxious person can present a bad image of the country, so that is way is necessary to be sure of one self, to have presence. Apart from this of course someone that <u>knows how to speak different languages,</u> having mastered their subject, whether it is political</p>	<p>Communicating in Chinese</p>

<p>or other subject. <u>Actually we must have general dominion of different issues, general knowledge, very similar to a scholar or a professor. In my country we say that the diplomat knows about many topics, like an ocean, but only an inch deep. Also it's important to be confident, know how to talk, know how to make other understand you, be good with words. Ehh and that's it for me, knowledge languages and mastery of a wide knowledge of both what he does, his or hers area and other extra things about international issues.</u></p>	<p>I-A-10-01 Multilingual ability</p> <p>I-A-10-02 Multicultural interaction</p>
<p>9. Could you give an example of how do you build relationships with the Taiwanese community? <u>It's very important for my career to build long lasting relations with the community, because you learn a lot of day to day living of the Taiwanese people, the daily lives of local people. So then it is essential to have that approach with the Taiwanese to realize how they think, what's what they like, what do they want, how they are like. We do this by promoting event, trade shows, commercial, cultural. Next month we will bring three master painters from my country and show their paintings in the national museum of history here in Taipei, the exhibition will be accessible to the public for one month. This kind of events are very important, is a way of showing the Taiwanese community what we are about, what the people of my country are about. This art and cultural exhibitions really demonstrate the status of friendship between Guatemala and Taiwan, it reassures the Taiwan government and unites our peoples even more, even though they are very far geographically, they are not far in our hearts.</u></p>	<p>I-A-11-01 Different working styles</p> <p>I-A-11-02 Aware of colleagues culture</p> <p>I-A-11-03 Respect of peer's culture</p> <p>I-A-11-04 Culture shock</p>
<p><u>Something else of importance is for the host country nationals to feel safe, so if you show interest in their culture, by learning their language they really open up. They are more approachable, they see you as part of them, they are more comfortable. So I learned the language during my university studies, and even though some people might speak English, and even the locals working in the embassy are familiar with Spanish, I always make the effort to talk to them in Chinese. The only time I don't are those times when I really can't express myself because of my limitation in the Chinese language, or in the case of official events, were saying something wrong might have consequences.</u></p>	<p>I-A-11-05 Interest for other cultures</p> <p>I-A-12-01 Adapt vocabulary to situation</p>

<p><u>but apart from that I'm always practicing my Chinese and that's very good, I'm always learning new words, new terms, is a very interesting language.</u></p>	<p>I-A-12-02 Handle the media</p>
<p>10. How do you describe the importance of foreign language skills for your position?</p>	<p>I-A-12-03</p>
<p><u>Well just so you have an idea I speak English, Spanish, Chinese and I'm learning French now. I think it's very important to know different languages, is a key factor for these positions, since we basically are constantly interacting with people from all over the world and the more languages we know, the easier the communication with these people will be. So then it is essential since our work depends on interact with people from other parts of the world.</u></p>	<p>Social skills</p>
<p>11. Could you give an example of how do you work with people from different cultural backgrounds?</p>	
<p><u>Well here Taiwanese people are very efficient and very proper. One has faster and more concrete responses, more prompt, a Taiwanese is totally different from what a Latino is, that has force me to accelerate the way I work, I had to learn how to sharpen the way I do my job. It is difficult but we complement each other. I will say the main example for this is respecting the other person, because we see each other every day, so we get to know each other, and this way we get to know each other culture.</u></p>	
<p><u>So I believe in mutual respect, the secretaries that work here might have a different culture, but I respect that, and they respect mine.</u> Again we competent each other, the local staff here help me deal with the Taiwanese people I have to deal with because of my job, and I help them deal with the Guatemalan delegations that visit Taiwan. In the end we learn from each other and we understand each other culture better, just by simply working together every day.</p>	
<p><u>So you learn to deal with these cultural differences, in the office and out of the office. I've been living many years in Taiwan, I even did my studies here and still it took me a while to get used to the culture, it's so different from ours, is hard to learn how to live as a Taiwanese, to get used to the food, to understand the way they think, their customs, it was a cultural shock. I believe</u></p>	

it's essential the interest you have, it depends heavily on how interested you are in the country that you are working in. So if you're interested in culture, learning how to deal with it won't be a problem.

12. How often do you adapt you communication style?

Well basically always, in every situation. I mean not in every situation I have to be extremely careful, but if every situation is different. So we are a bit apprehensive, always being very cautious with the vocabulary we use so there are no misconceptions. It also very important to be very careful when it comes to the media because they might have wrong interpretations of what you are saying, and I'm representing a country, I do not represent a person or a private company, one representing your country, then the language you will always use is very neutral, we try to never go into too much detail about a topic.

Extra:

I think is also part of the personality, you have to have the people skills to be in this type of work, because there are situations where nobody knows who you are and yet you have to talk, you have to give your opinion. So the diplomat has to be outgoing, have people skills, be knowledgeable in different topics to have what to talk about. All this you acquire it with experience.

APPENDIX C: CODING LIST

Coding	Concept	Coding	Concept
O-01-01	Translation	O-08-01	Policy negotiation meeting
O-01-02	Consular knowledge	O-08-02	Retention capacity
O-01-03	Serve conational	O-08-03	Protocolary actions
O-01-04	Establish relation	O-08-04	Positive influence
O-01-05	Make and maintain contacts	O-08-05	Information assimilation capacity
O-01-06	Teamwork	O-09-01	Analyzing information
O-01-07	Writing communication skills	O-09-05	Understand others
O-01-08	Commercial interest	O-09-06	Chinese proficiency
O-01-09	Formal communication	O-09-07	Establish trust relations
O-02-01	Empathy	O-09-08	Knowledge of trade
O-02-02	Organize events	O-09-09	Negotiation capacity
O-02-03	Commercialization of products	O-10-01	Organize events
O-02-04	Receive delegations	O-10-02	Attend meetings
O-02-05	Attract investment and tourism	O-10-03	Informal negotiation
O-02-06	Bilingual environment	O-10-04	Avoid confrontation
O-02-07	Chinese proficiency	O-10-05	Sociability
O-03-01	Information seeking	O-10-06	Open and friendly personality
O-03-02	Prepare for delegations	O-10-07	Interpersonal relations
O-03-03	Know country and culture	O-10-08	Keep up to date with events
O-03-04	Information sharing	O-10-09	Control emotions
O-04-01	Information seeking	O-10-10	Protocolary actions
O-04-02	Chinese proficiency	O-10-11	Protocolary lexicon
O-04-03	Time difference	O-10-12	Oral communication
O-04-04	Irregular working hours	O-11-01	Analyze political events
O-05-01	Serve conational	O-11-02	Send information
O-05-02	Accessible to public	O-11-03	Information seeking
O-06-01	Organize conational community	O-11-04	Keep up to date with events
O-06-02	Convening power	O-11-05	Data collection
O-06-03	Inform the public	O-11-06	Knowledge of Cross straight relations and China
O-06-04	Accessible to public	O-11-07	Knowledge of international and local politics
O-06-05	Create sense of community	O-11-08	Search investment opportunities
O-07-01	Handle financial funds	O-12-01	Control image of country
O-07-02	Structure of Diplomatic Corps	O-12-02	Control media
O-07-03	Polite communication	O-12-03	Inform media and community
O-07-04	English proficiency	O-12-04	Multicultural environment
O-07-05	Accounting skills	O-12-05	Team play

Coding	Concept	Coding	Concept
O-13-01	Attend social event	I-A-09-02	Understand the Taiwanese community
O-13-02	Outgoing personality	I-A-09-03	Cultural exchanges
O-13-03	Deliver speech	I-A-09-04	Learn the culture
O-13-04	Social interaction	I-A-09-05	Communicate in Chinese
O-13-05	Conversationalist	I-A-10-01	Multilingual ability
I-A-01-01	Foreign policy studies	I-A-10-02	Multicultural interaction
I-A-01-02	Learning on the job	I-A-11-01	Different working styles
I-A-01-03	Training in home country	I-A-11-02	Aware of colleagues culture
I-A-02-01	Learn from senior officers	I-A-11-03	Respect of peer's culture
I-A-02-02	Good mentoring	I-A-11-04	Culture shock
I-A-03-01	Previous experience in Taiwan	I-A-11-05	Interest for other cultures
I-A-03-02	Learn from living in host country	I-A-12-01	Adapt to vocabulary to situation
I-A-04-01	Consular services	I-A-12-02	Handle the media
I-A-04-02	Attend scholarship students	I-A-12-03	Social skills
I-A-04-03	Administrative tasks	I-B-01-01	Political science studies
I-A-04-04	Event planning	I-B-01-02	Latin American foreign policy studies
I-A-04-05	Collect relevant news information	I-B-01-03	Introductory course about Taiwan
I-A-04-06	Attend meetings and official events	I-B-02-01	Long work experiencing in the Ministry of Foreign affairs
I-A-04-07	Report information to home country	I-B-02-02	Able to handle important figures
I-A-04-08	Serve as information channel	I-B-02-03	Learn the lexicon
I-A-05-01	Challenging assignments	I-B-02-03	Having full responsibility of mission
I-A-05-02	Real life situations	I-B-02-04	Difficult assignment
I-A-05-03	Passive participation	I-B-03-01	Rotating different areas
I-A-05-04	Learn from observation	I-B-03-02	Consular orientation
I-A-06-01	Self-determination of objectives	I-B-03-03	Prepare for the task at hand
I-A-07-01	Language barrier	I-B-03-03	Gather information about Taiwan
I-A-07-02	Communication difficulties	I-B-04-01	Promote business ventures
I-A-07-03	Cultural differences	I-B-04-02	Aware of wellbeing of conational's
I-A-08-01	Flexibility	I-B-04-03	Willing to collaborate
I-A-08-02	Language proficiency	I-B-04-04	Handle legal documents
I-A-08-03	Confidence	I-B-04-05	Support head of mission
I-A-08-04	Wide knowledge base	I-B-04-05	Organize cultural events
I-A-08-05	Communication skills	I-B-04-06	Ranking system
I-A-09-01	Relationship building	I-B-05-01	Learning by imitating peers

Coding	Concept	Coding	Concept
I-B-05-02	Longing to change	I-C-05-01	Understanding the goals of the mission
I-B-05-03	Learn from local staff	I-C-05-02	Self evaluation
I-B-06-01	Distancing from the home country	I-C-05-03	Good team work
I-B-06-02	Learn to adapt to the culture	I-C-06-01	Official level interactions
I-B-06-03	Follow personal goals	I-C-07-01	Difficult weather conditions
I-B-07-01	Few officials	I-C-07-02	Language barrier
I-B-07-02	Adapt to the culture	I-C-07-04	Leaving family behind
I-B-07-03	Pressure to work in the field	I-C-08-01	Amiable
I-B-07-04	Pressure from supervisors	I-C-08-02	Global perspective
I-B-08-01	Information gathering	I-C-08-03	Aware of changes in the international community
I-B-08-02	Temperance	I-C-08-04	Handle stress
I-B-08-03	Intellectual knowledge	I-C-08-05	Open to other cultures
I-B-08-04	Capacity to react to difficulties	I-C-10-01	Bilingual ability
I-B-09-01	Manage public opinion	I-C-10-02	Capacity to adapt
I-B-09-02	Capacity to create friendship ties	I-C-10-03	International political system
I-B-11-01	Protocolary behavior	I-C-11-01	Respect from local authorities
I-B-11-02	Positive communication	I-C-11-02	Understand national values
I-B-11-03	Respect other cultures	I-D-01-01	Business and economic studies
I-C-01-01	History and literature studies	I-D-01-02	Modernization of foreign ministries
I-C-02-01	Working as an interpreter	I-D-01-03	Commercial section in Ministry of Foreign affairs
I-C-02-02	Translating official documents	I-D-02-01	Previously working abroad
I-C-02-03	Learn the accepted character of a diplomat	I-D-02-02	Adapt to new situations
I-C-03-01	Short mandarin course	I-D-02-03	Making foreign friends
I-C-03-02	Visit to the Taiwanese community in the home country	I-D-02-04	Forming multicultural family
I-C-03-03	Collect future contacts	I-D-03-01	Experience in finance sector
I-C-04-01	Present good image of home country	I-D-03-02	Economic cooperation
I-C-04-02	Establish cooperation links	I-D-03-03	Analyzing Asian market
I-C-04-03	Assigned responsibilities to subordinates	I-D-04-01	Get informed
I-C-04-04	Lead foreign mission	I-D-04-02	Commercial exchange
I-C-04-05	Manager and officer roles are intertwined	I-D-04-03	Personal relations
I-C-04-05	Know country strength and weaknesses	I-D-04-04	Foster economic relations

Coding	Concept	Coding	Concept
I-D-04-05	Public services to conational	I-D-13-02	Incentivize commerce
I-D-04-06	Gather and review economic news	I-D-13-03	Facilitate information
I-D-04-07	Meet local authorities	I-D-13-04	Explore market opportunities
I-D-05-01	Networking	I-E-01-01	Business administration studies
I-D-05-02	Contact with local community	I-E-01-02	Finance studies
I-D-05-03	Understand the institutional settings	I-E-01-03	Experience in the banking sector
I-D-06-01	Promote the country	I-E-01-04	Training by career path
I-D-06-02	Present image of country	I-E-02-01	First experience abroad
I-D-06-03	Attract counterpart	I-E-02-02	Change of perspective
I-D-07-01	Restriction of products	I-E-02-03	Understand country's global positioning
I-D-07-02	Scarcity of personnel	I-E-02-04	Previous experience abroad
I-D-07-03	Hour differences	I-E-02-05	Learning curve
I-D-07-04	Trade restrictions	I-E-02-06	Previous country knowledge
I-D-07-05	Unfamiliarity with Taiwan market	I-E-03-01	Seeking adventure
I-D-07-06	Assume different responsibilities	I-E-03-02	Country rotation
I-D-07-07	Face global economies	I-E-03-03	Experience in Chinese environment
I-D-07-08	High economic interest	I-E-04-01	Being aware of opportunities for investment
I-D-07-09	More aggressive competition for capital	I-E-04-02	Promote business ventures
I-D-08-01	Commercial profile	I-E-04-03	Encourage commercial initiatives
I-D-08-02	Knowledge of international law and trade	I-E-04-04	Handle funds and budget
I-D-08-03	Search for business opportunities	I-E-04-05	Elaborate business reports
I-D-08-04	Team leader	I-E-04-06	Analyze economic material
I-D-09-01	Computer literacy	I-E-05-01	Integral preparation
I-D-09-02	Organizational skills	I-E-05-02	Adaptation capability
I-D-09-03	Share information informally	I-E-05-03	Comprehend the culture
I-D-10-01	Chinese enhances relationship building	I-E-05-04	Empathy with locals
I-D-10-02	Access to more constituent groups	I-E-05-06	Work in the field
I-D-10-03	English universal language	I-E-05-07	Gain attention of the public
I-D-13-01	Branding	I-E-06-01	Change country's image

Coding	Concept	Coding	Concept
I-E-06-02	Understand global reality	I-F-05-01	Having personal ambitions
I-E-07-01	Local language abilities	I-F-05-02	Following organizational goals
I-E-07-02	Job pressures	I-F-05-03	Socialization with local community
I-E-07-03	Different working styles	I-F-06-01	Faster work pace
I-E-07-04	Cultural distance	I-F-06-02	Strict programs
I-E-08-01	Business orientation	I-F-06-03	Adapt to regional demands
I-E-08-02	Knowledge of Marketing	I-F-06-04	Support from colleagues
I-E-08-03	Public relations	I-F-06-05	Team work
I-E-09-01	Security to Taiwanese investors	I-F-07-01	Evaluation pressures
I-E-09-02	Long lasting relations	I-F-07-02	Diverse lexicon
I-E-09-03	Fulfillment of contracts	I-F-07-03	Distancing from the country
I-E-13-01	Understanding the Taiwan market	I-F-07-04	Functional limitations of mission
I-E-13-02	Reach consensus	I-F-07-05	Faster communication flow
I-F-01-01	Business management studies	I-F-08-01	Analytical capabilities
I-F-01-02	International Trade studies	I-F-08-02	Energy level
I-F-01-03	Experience in private sector	I-F-08-03	Sociability
I-F-01-04	Foreign service workshop	I-F-08-04	Conversational capacity
I-F-02-01	Change of sector	I-F-08-05	Good communicator
I-F-02-02	Involved in national level projects	I-F-09-01	Outgoing character
I-F-02-03	Encourage country's economic growth	I-F-09-02	Marketing strategy
I-F-02-04	Being accountable	I-F-09-03	Get to know counterpart
I-F-03-01	Diversification of responsibilities	I-F-09-04	Contact continuity
I-F-03-02	Introductory visit to Taiwan	I-F-12-01	Self confidence
I-F-03-03	Mental preparation	I-F-12-02	Deliver information about country to varied constituents groups
I-F-04-01	Commercialization of products	I-F-12-02	Presentation skills
I-F-04-02	Foster commercial exchange	I-F-12-03	Establishing rapport with audience
I-F-04-03	Investment strategy	I-G-01-01	Keep developing
I-F-04-04	Economic data gathering	I-G-01-02	Study abroad
I-F-04-05	Influence public opinion	I-G-01-03	Chinese History and Language studies
I-F-04-06	Handle office administration	I-G-01-04	Language Skills
I-F-04-07	Payment of local staff	I-G-01-05	Oriental Studies

Coding	Concept	Coding	Concept
I-G-01-06	Diplomacy Studies	I-G-09-02	Building relations with the community
I-G-01-07	Experiences with senior ambassador	I-G-09-03	Effort to maintain relations
I-G-01-08	Endurance and patience	I-G-09-04	Cultural exchanges
I-G-01-09	Respect authority levels	I-G-12-01	Prepare for discussion
I-G-01-10	Career goal	I-G-12-02	Politeness
I-G-02-01	Experiences with senior ambassador	I-G-12-03	Modulate vocabulary
I-G-02-02	Transferring knowledge to younger generation	I-G-12-04	Control emotions
I-G-02-03	Patriotism	I-G-12-05	Hard experiences
I-G-03-01	Work experience	I-G-12-06	Serve conational's
I-G-03-02	Interact with local personalities	I-G-12-07	Control character
I-G-04-01	Showcase the country	I-H-01-01	International relations studies
I-G-04-02	Showcase national cultural values	I-H-01-02	International trade studies
I-G-04-03	Enforce policies	I-H-01-03	English proficiency
I-G-04-04	Relate with business sector	I-H-01-04	Work experience though internship
I-G-04-05	Promote trade	I-H-01-05	Political analyst
I-G-04-06	Time differences	I-H-01-06	Career development
I-G-04-07	Humble character	I-H-01-07	Experience abroad
I-G-05-01	Dominate local language	I-H-01-08	Information seeking
I-G-05-02	Understand idiosyncrasy	I-H-01-09	Manage personal reactions
I-G-05-03	Previous experience abroad	I-H-01-10	Observing during internship
I-G-05-04	Understand other cultures	I-H-01-11	Observe colleagues in the field
I-G-05-05	Constructive criticism	I-H-01-12	Training before leaving home country
I-G-05-06	Patience	I-H-02-01	On the job learning
I-G-06-01	Respect authority levels	I-H-02-02	Self determination of needs
I-G-06-02	Career development	I-H-02-03	Analyze social events
I-G-07-01	Living experience in Taiwan	I-H-02-04	Data collection
I-G-07-02	Promote the country	I-H-02-05	Learn from social experience
I-G-07-03	Organizing events	I-H-03-01	Learn from in the field observations
I-G-07-04	Delivering speech	I-H-03-02	Learn from colleagues
I-G-07-05	Showcase achievements	I-H-03-03	Good temper
I-G-08-01	Respectful	I-H-04-01	Elaborate political information reports
I-G-08-02	Patriotism	I-H-04-02	Travel documents
I-G-09-01	Accessible to public	I-H-04-03	Office operation

Coding	Concept	Coding	Concept
I-H-04-04	Event planning	I-I-04-02	Encourage mutual understanding
I-H-04-05	Manage correspondence	I-I-04-03	Event planning
I-H-04-06	Elaborate news report	I-I-04-04	Protect business efforts
I-H-05-01	Correcting mistakes	I-I-04-05	Give support to conational
I-H-05-02	Self determination to do difficult tasks	I-I-04-06	Facilitate travel
I-H-05-03	Self-taught learning	I-I-05-01	Self-realization
I-H-05-04	Having the right motivation	I-I-05-02	Reaching set goals
I-H-06-01	Cultural shock	I-I-05-03	Solving problem on one's own
I-H-06-02	Different working styles	I-I-05-04	Crisis management
I-H-06-03	Cultural differences	I-I-05-05	Deal with difficult situations
I-H-07-01	Cultural differences	I-I-05-06	Opportunities to be challenged
I-H-07-02	Language barrier	I-I-06-01	Knowledge management
I-H-07-03	Diplomatic status of Taiwan	I-I-06-02	Report to home country
I-H-07-04	Improve working style	I-I-06-03	Learned thought failed attempts
I-H-08-01	Open minded	I-I-06-04	Establish communication network
I-H-08-02	Embrace the local culture	I-I-07-01	Effects of globalization
I-H-08-03	Be cautious	I-I-07-02	High competitively
I-H-11-01	Adapt to the environment	I-I-07-03	Longing for loved ones
I-H-11-02	Be able to accept other cultures	I-I-08-01	Public service orientation
I-H-11-03	Submerge in culture	I-I-08-02	Flexibility
I-H-12-01	Know formal communication	I-I-08-03	Management skills
I-H-12-02	Know diplomatic lingo	I-I-08-04	Social skills
I-H-12-02	Get attention of audience	I-J-01-01	International law studies
I-H-12-02	Adapt communication	I-J-01-02	International relations
I-I-01-01	Policies of international development studies	I-J-01-03	Briefing of Taiwan's institutions
I-I-01-02	Seminars on Trade and development	I-J-01-04	Foreign service workshop
I-I-01-03	Internship on international funds	I-J-01-05	Keep contact with colleagues in home country
I-I-02-01	Leaving familiar region	I-J-02-01	Cooperation between states
I-I-02-02	Global mindset	I-J-02-02	Cultural understanding
I-I-02-03	Understand different logistics	I-J-02-03	Accept other points of view
I-I-02-04	Different mentality	I-J-02-04	Varied functions
I-I-03-01	Knowledge gap	I-J-03-01	Opened minded
I-I-03-02	Previous experience in the different countries	I-J-03-02	Willingness to adapt
I-I-03-03	Get used to the mission's objective	I-J-03-03	Ready for the unexpected
I-I-04-01	Attract investment	I-J-04-01	Office management

Coding	Concept	Coding	Concept
I-J-04-02	Attend delegations	I-J-06-05	Teamwork
I-J-04-03	Report back to home government about relationship developments	I-J-06-06	Following organizational goals
I-J-04-04	Manage political changes	I-J-07-01	Cultural differences
I-J-04-05	Lobbying for support	I-J-07-02	Gender misconceptions
I-J-04-06	Establishing annual goals	I-J-07-03	Time difference
I-J-04-07	Evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of policies	I-J-07-04	Administrate the office
I-J-04-08	Analyze external factors	I-J-07-05	Dealing with press
I-J-04-09	Provide protection to conational's	I-J-08-01	Tolerance
I-J-04-10	Being aware of world events	I-J-08-02	Public relations skills
I-J-04-11	Consolidating information from meetings and events	I-J-08-03	Intellectual knowledge
I-J-04-12	Clarifying issues	I-J-08-04	Being prepared for difficult scenarios
I-J-05-01	Learn from local staff	I-J-09-01	Relational networking
I-J-05-02	Transfer experiences to younger generations	I-J-09-02	Multilingual skills
I-J-06-01	Protocolary behavior	I-J-09-03	Presenting proper gifts
I-J-06-02	Country's global position	I-J-09-04	Exchanging opinions informally
I-J-06-03	Formal communication	I-J-11-01	Communicating with the entire staff of the mission
I-J-06-04	Learn from observing senior colleagues	I-J-11-02	Code of respect at work

Learning processes	Description	Codes
1 Formal education	1-1 Educational background	I-A-01-01, I-B-01-01, I-C-01-01, I-D-01-01, I-E-01-01, I-F-01-01, I-F-01-02, I-G-01-03, I-G-01-05, I-H-01-01, I-I-01-01, I-J-01-01
	1-2 Foreign service training	I-A-01-03, I-B-01-03, I-C-03-01, I-F-01-04, I-H-01-12, I-I-01-02, I-J-01-03
2 Social learning	2-1 Experiences with colleagues	I-A-02-02, I-A-05-03, I-B-02-01, I-B-05-01, I-F-06-04, I-G-01-07, I-H-01-04, I-H-01-10, I-J-05-01
	2-2 Experiences from being abroad	I-A-03-0, I-B-02-04, I-D-02-01, I-E-02-01, I-E-03-03, I-F-03-02, I-G-01-02, I-H-01-07, I-I-03-02
Learning processes	Description	Codes

3 Intentional change	3-1 Developmental assignments	I-A-05-01, I-C-04-03, I-H-05-02, I-I-05-06, I-J-06-06
	3-2 Goal setting	I-A-06-01, I-B-05-02, I-C-05-02, I-F-05-01, I-G-01-10, I-H-05-04, I-I-03-03, I-J-04-06

Level	Competency		Codes	
1-Foundational	1-1 Interpersonal	1-1-1 Relational ability	O-01-04, O-09-07, I-B-09-02, I-D-04-03, I-G-09-02	
		1-1-2 Communication skills	O-01-07, O-10-12, O-13-03, I-A-12-01, I-F-07-02, I-F-08-04, I-G-07-04	
		1-1-3 Linguistic ability	O-01-01, O-02-07, O-07-04, I-A-07-01, I-C-02-01, I-D-10-01, I-H-01-03	
		1-1-4 Intercultural	O-02-06, O-09-05, O-12-04, I-E-05-03, I-G-05-02, I-H-06-03, I-J-02-02	
	1-2 Business/Management	1-2-1 Analytical skills	O-08-05, O-09-01, I-D-03-03, I-F-08-01, I-G-05-05, I-H-02-03	
		1-2-2 Business acumen	O-07-01, O-09-08, I-D-08-01, I-E-04-02, I-E-08-01, I-I-04-04	
		1-2-3 Knowledge management	O-03-01, O-03-04, O-08-02, I-B-08-01, I-D-04-01, I-H-02-04	
		1-2-4 Administrative skills	O-02-02, O-07-05, I-D-09-03, I-F-04-07, I-F-12-02, I-H-04-04	
	1-3 Personal	1-3-1 Adaptability/Flexibility	O-04-03, I-A-08-01, I-B-06-02, I-D-02-02, I-E-03-02, I-H-11-01, I-I-08-02	
		1-3-2 Emotional intelligence	O-10-04, O-10-09, I-C-08-01, I-G-08-01, I-G-12-04, I-H-01-09	
	Level	Competency		Codes
	1-Foundational		1-3-3 Stress management	I-B-03-03, I-B-07-03, I-C-08-04, I-D-07-07,

			I-E-07-02, I-F-07-01, I-I-05-04
		1-3-4 Openness	O-10-06, I-C-08-05, I-D-02-03, I-E-03-01, I-H-08-01, I-I-02-02
		1-3-5 Extroversion	O-02-01, O-10-05, O-13-02, I-E-05-04, I-F-09-01, I-E-05-06
2-Focus	2-1 Protocol		O-07-03, O-10-11, I-B-02-03, I-C-06-01, I-G-01-09, I-G-12-02, I-H-12-02, I-J-06-01, I-J-09-03
	2-2 Public service orientation		I-A-04-02, I-B-04-02, I-D-04-05, I-G-12-06, I-I-04-05
	2-3 Public relations		O-06-03, O-12-01, I-A-12-02, I-E-05-07, I-F-04-05, I-J-07-05
	2-4 Market development		I-D-06-01, I-D-07-05, I-D-13-01, I-E-04-03, I-F-04-02, I-F-09-02, I-G-04-05
	2-5 Attracting investment		O-02-05, O-11-08, I-D-03-02, I-E-04-01, I-E-09-01, I-F-02-03, I-F-04-03
	2-6 International politics and law		O-08-01, O-11-07, I-C-08-03, I-C-10-03, I-D-05-03, I-E-02-03
	2-7 History and culture affairs		O-03-03, I-A-08-04, I-B-04-05, I-B-08-03, I-C-11-02, I-J-08-03
3-Execution	3-1 Political analyst		O-11-01, O-11-04, I-G-09-03, I-H-01-05, I-J-04-03, I-J-04-07
	3-2 Commercial counselor		O-09-09, I-B-04-01, I-D-04-04, I-D-04-06, I-E-04-06, I-G-04-04
	3-3 Public diplomacy agent		O-05-02, I-A-04-08, I-B-04-03, I-C-04-01, I-D-13-03, I-G-04-01, I-G-0901
	3-4 Consular advocate		I-A-04-01, I-B-03-02, I-B-04-04, I-H-04-02, I-I-04-06, I-J-04-09
	3-5 Management officer		I-E-04-04, I-F-04-06, I-H-04-03, I-I-02-03, I-J-04-01, I-J-07-04

Note: Similar codes identified across the different sources of data were merged during the coding categorization process.

APPENDIX D: PEER AND EXPERT REVIEW OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Original Interview Questions

1. Could you describe your job? Could you describe a typical day at work?
2. What are the challenges of working in Taiwan?
3. What is the hardest part of your job?
4. What are the skills someone has to have to become a good foreign government representative?
5. How do you build relationships with the Taiwanese community?
6. How many languages do you speak? What is the importance of foreign language for your position?
7. How do you work with people from different cultures?
8. To what extent do you need to know about trade?
9. How do you adapt your communication style?
10. Could you share your education background and training?
11. To what extent do you need to know how to negotiate to fulfill your mission's objective?
12. Could you share an experience that has marked you and helped form your character as a foreign government representative?
13. How did you prepare to come to Taiwan?
14. Could you talk about how you have learned to do your job since your first days until now?
15. What was the most difficult thing for you to learn? How did you overcome it?

Peer Review

After the peer review process undertaken by two fellow researchers with background in human resource development the original interview questions were revised. The first adjustment had to do with the order in which the interview questions were asked and the creation of the potential follow-up questions section, which aimed at reducing the risk of asking leading questions. Original questions number 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 were revised and rewritten. In addition, question number 3 was eliminated. Following are the interview questions after peer review:

1. Could you please share your education background and training experience (if any)?
2. Could you share an experience that has marked you and helped form your character as a foreign government representative?
3. How did you prepare to come to Taiwan?
4. Could you describe your job? How is a typical day at work?
5. Could you talk about how you have learned to do your job since your first days until now?
6. What was the most difficult thing for you to learn? How did you overcome it?
7. What are the challenges of working in a Chinese environment?
8. In your opinion what are the skills someone has to have to become a good foreign representative?
9. Could you give an example of how you build relationships with the Taiwanese community?
10. How would you describe the importance of foreign language skills for your position?
11. Could you give an example of how you work with people from different cultural backgrounds?
12. How often do you adapt your communication style?
13. To what extent do you need to know how to negotiate to fulfill your mission's objective?
14. To what extent do you need to know about trade issues?

Expert Review

An expert review was possible thanks to assistance of a member of the Diplomatic Corps of Taiwan. After a careful revision questions number 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 were rewritten in order to reduce their ambiguity and help interviews to be clear of the purpose of the question to give more specific responses. In addition an expert recommendation was also to eliminate question number 13. Following are the final interview question after the peer and expert review process:

1. Could you please share your education background and training experience (if any)?
2. What has been the most significant experience that has marked and helped form your character as a foreign representative?
3. How did you prepare yourself professionally to come to Taiwan?
4. Could you describe your job objectives? How is a typical day at work?
5. Could you talk about how your learning experience evolved since your first days on the job?
6. What was the most difficult task for you to learn? How did you overcome it?
7. What are the challenges of working in a Chinese environment?

8. In your opinion what the skills and/or attributes someone must have to become a good foreign representative?
9. Could you give an example of how do you build relationship with the Taiwanese community?
10. How do you describe the importance of foreign language skills for your position?
11. Could you give an example of how do you work with people from different cultural backgrounds?
12. How often do you adapt you communication style?
13. To what extent do you need to know about trade issues?