

## CHAPTER V DISCUSSIONS

According to the findings in this research, several issues are proposed in order to obtain deeper understanding in Taiwanese female expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment in China. First, special issues of women adjustment are proposed. And then, the section discusses female adjustment from specific dimensions. Their willingness in continuing assignments and developing in China is discussed in the last section.

### **Special issues of women adjustment**

There are observations and advices which proposed by interviewee concerning about special adjustment issues of female expatriates in China.

#### *Observations of other female expatriates' adjustment situation*

It is frequently mentioned by interviewees that female expatriates, those who came to China, with individualism-oriented personality could adjust better. One of interviewee thought that need of relationship is an important factor on adjustment for female expatriates. In this case, one who was individual could live better in China.

Secondly, many interviewees also indicated that women indeed have more difficulties when they adjusted to the environment in China. Their consideration was mainly because the environment in China was rather inappropriate for female than for male, such as the problem of public security and also the specific recreational culture for male.

Despite these problems, interviewees in this study also believed most of female expatriates around her were well adjusted to their assignment life and environment.

### *Observations of other female expatriates' adjustment problems*

Basically, the problems or complaints, which other female expatriates proposed, are very similar with one another. Boring life and poor living quality, limited interpersonal relationship, and some working problems also bothered other Taiwanese female expatriates. Some married women expatriates would worry about their children's education planning. In this issue, interviewees were not aware of special difference.

### *Advises for women who are going to be expatriates in China*

The suggestion could be divided into three aspects, psychological, behavioral, and other preparation.

In psychological aspect, they encouraged those women should treat assignment as a chance of trial, and did not need to consider too many trifles. These female expatriates believed it would be good for women to have chance going out and broadening their life. At the same time, many female expatriates also reminded who are interested in expatriation not hold over expectation to the assigned area, just go to assigned area and experience by self.

As to personal behavior, the security problem is an important consider. To avoid possible dangers, women should watch their own behavior carefully, including not staying outside in the late night, conservative dressing, be accompany with others and so on. On the job, women could be more easy-going, and build a friendly relationship with locals. This could help women live in China much more easily and safer as well. At last, no matter female and male, who are going to plan the expatriation career should develop their own ability and professions. In such efforts, they could cope with jobs and duties in China subsidiary.

The final suggestion is to bring expatriates' mate or families to China as possible. Many family tragedies happened on Taiwanese expatriates comes from the separation. These female expatriates sincerely suggested this point. And it also helps female to proceed her assignment longer.

### **The adjustment dimensions of female expatriates**

This section would try to analyze female expatriates' adjustment in five different dimensions. The purpose is to figure out if the female expatriates showed the common adjustment problems and strategies in these dimensions. Five dimensions are discussed: self-evaluation, time period, assigned area, prior assigned experience and the impact of marital status.

#### *Self-evaluation \_ the comparison with U-curve theory*

A self-evaluation was done by female assignees during the interview. The researcher asked them to score the degree of adjustment at present and when they arrived. There are two main purposes of self-evaluation scored. The first one is to realize how these female assignees aware of their own adjustment. Second, it provides a source to verify U-curve theory.

The score is used to evaluate how these female assignees feel about their adjustment condition. It is worth to notice that these scores are not used to compare with one another. Thus, it could avoid the possible wrong judgments, for example, the different scored standard of each assignee could bring the wrong analysis when the researcher tried to compare the scores of different women.

From the changing of scores, it offers the researcher information in exploring the

important adjustment issues. At the same time, the verification with U-curve theory is conducted according to the self-evaluation score and their own interpretation. The detailed information represented as followings.

Case A01

Table 5.1. *Self-evaluation in adjustment level \_ Case A01*

Case: A01			
Time: 36 months			
Adjust. Level	Life	Work	Culture
When arrived	7	7	7
At present	8	8	8

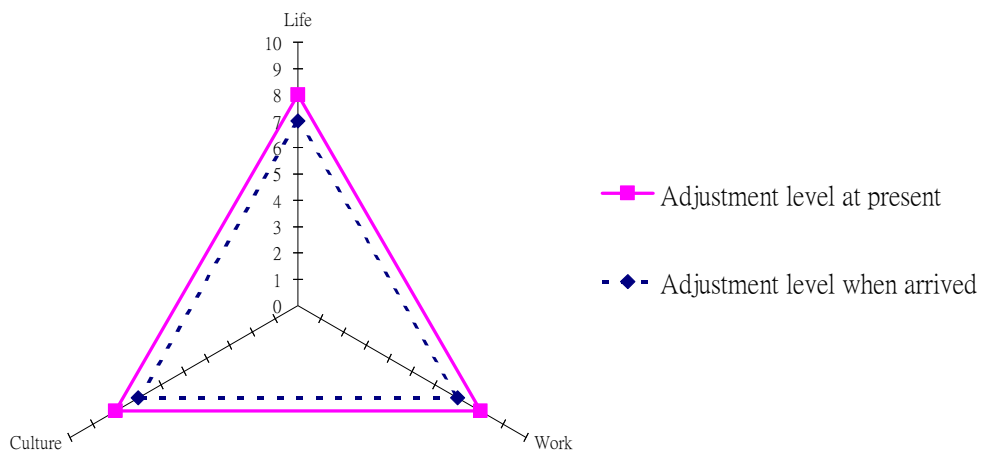


Figure 5.1. *Self-evaluation in adjustment level \_ Case A01*

This interviewee showed an average advance in three dimensions and also did

not reveal specific difficulty in which one perspective. In addition, with the time period increasing, the degree of adjustment slightly increased. It could be known that interviewee should have a stable and mature attitude toward cross-culture in this time.

Case B01

Table 5.2. *Self-evaluation in adjustment level \_ Case B01*

Case: B01

Time: 6 months

Adjust. Level	Life	Work	Culture
When arrived	5	5	5
At present	4	7	6

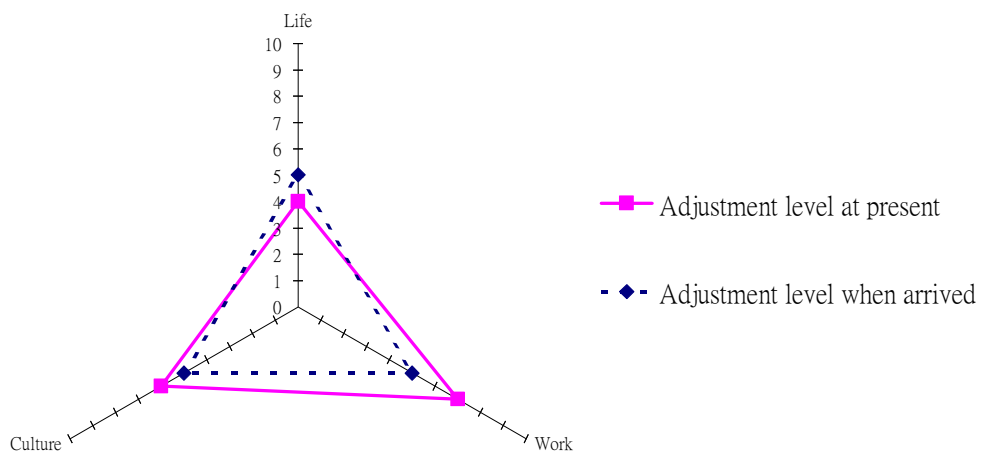


Figure 5.2. *Self-evaluation in adjustment level \_ Case B01*

From the figure above, it could be found that assignee B01 has a decreasing adjustment toward general life, and an increasing trend in other two dimensions, especially in the work.

When interviewee B01 recalled her adjustment level in her assignment period, she claimed that she could feel a decreasing trend in life. At first few months, she was interested to new things in Shanghai; however, now she was not as excited and happy as that time. This experience is exactly coincident with the U-curve theory (Black & Mendenhall, 1991), which there is a honeymoon period in the beginning stage. It could be estimated that this interviewee was experiencing from the honey moon period to culture shock period.

This is an example in coincide with U-curve adjustment theory.

Case C01

Table 5.3. *Self-evaluation in adjustment level \_ Case C01*

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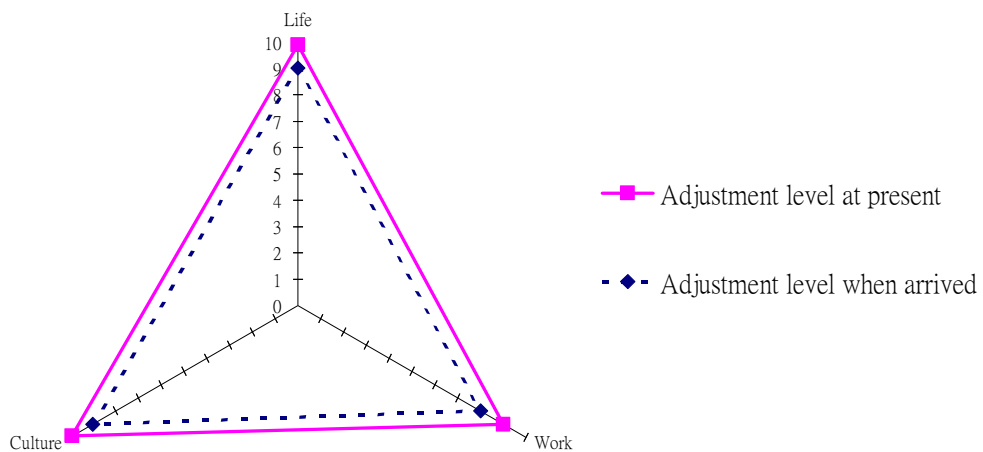
Case: C01

Time: 9 months

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Adjust. Level	Life	Work	Culture
When arrived	9	8	9
At present	9.9	9	9.9

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*Figure 5.3. Self-evaluation in adjustment level \_ Case C01*

Assignee C01 had business trip experience in this assigned company before. Such prior experience helped her cross-cultural adjustment a lot, and thus, she evaluated high scores in each dimension. But there was a slight lower score in work aspect; it could be interpreted as what she bothered at present.

## Case C02

Table 5.4. *Self-evaluation in adjustment level \_ Case C02*

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Case: C02

Time: 27 months

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Adjust. Level	Life	Work	Culture
When arrived	6	8	6
At present	8	8	8

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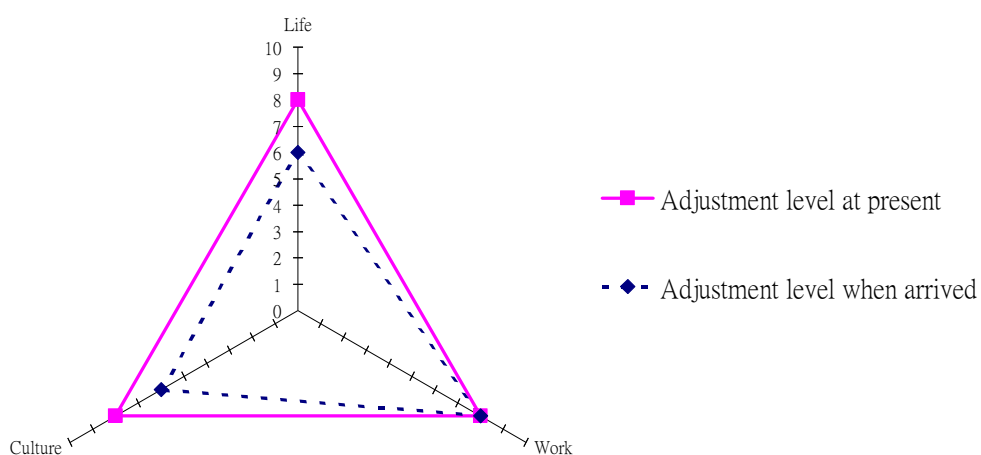


Figure 5.4. *Self-evaluation in adjustment level \_ Case C02*

It is also showed a stable advance in each dimension, except work. During the interview, it could be found that this interviewee had strong confidence on her working ability. In this case, she did not think assignment work has special difficulty. The unfamiliar culture and life in China were what she needed to adjust. However, her increasing degree of adjustment in culture and life could be seen in the above figure.



## Case D01

Table 5.5. Self-evaluation in adjustment level \_ Case D01

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Case: D01

Time: 36 months

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Adjust. Level	Life	Work	Culture
When arrived	6	3.5	5
At present	8	8	7

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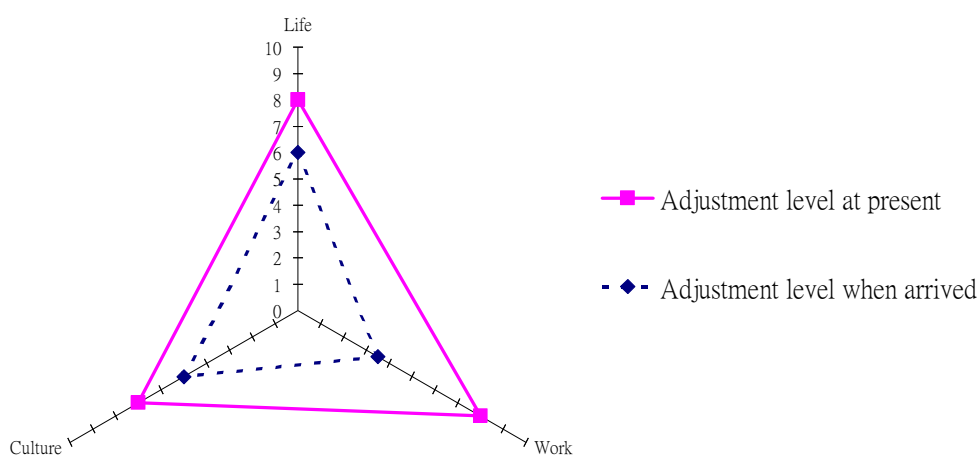


Figure 5.5. Self-evaluation in adjustment level \_ Case D01

An obvious advance of adjustment revealed in interviewee D01, especially in work aspect. The great increasing trend showed in work was explained by interviewee. She faced a trouble at work when she just entered her first assignment in Shanghai; at that time, she even wanted to go back to Taiwan because of that difficulty within one month. Eventually, she overcame and then proceeded her job in China.

## Case E01

Table 5.6. *Self-evaluation in adjustment level \_ Case E01*

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Case: E01

Time: 36 months

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Adjust. Level	Life	Work	Culture
When arrived	9	9	8
At present	7	6.5	8

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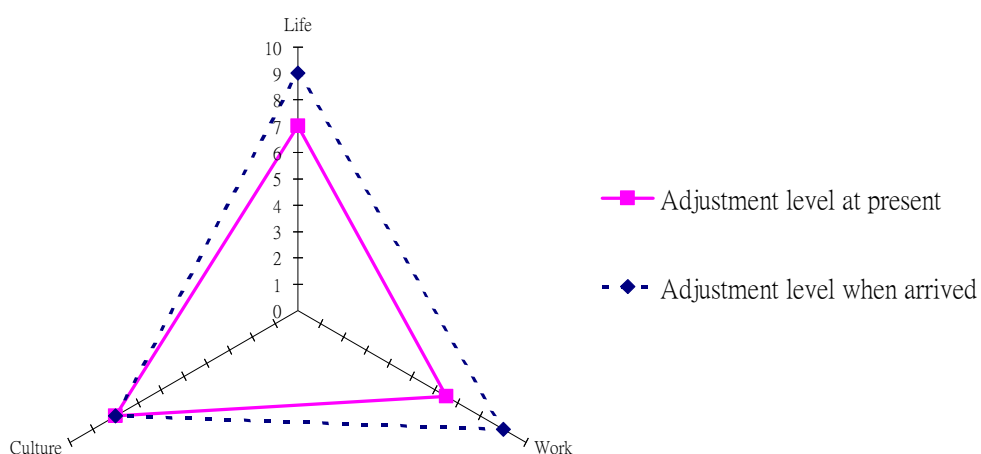


Figure 5.6. *Self-evaluation in adjustment level \_ Case E01*

It is interesting to find that a decreased score evaluated by this interviewee, although her assigned period is longer than most of other interviewees. In U-curve theory, it claimed that expatriates in this period should be in adjustment phase or

mastery phase, which both in an increasing or high degree of cross-cultural adjustment.

This assignee interpreted her self-evaluation. She did not think too much when she entered this job and environment at the beginning, so she was not aware of many difficulties in adjustment. However, with longer time period in assignment, she started to feel the impact of moving to a different environment. For example, the cold weather usually made her uncomfortable and even affected her health. As to her work, it is mainly because, recently, she was added new job content and responsibility, and she was still trying to be familiar with this situation.

In this case, several issues could be identified. First, it is not necessary an increasing degree of cross-cultural adjustment with time increased. And second, special incidents would affect expatriates' degree of adjustment.

## Case B02

Table 5.7. Self-evaluation in adjustment level \_ Case B02

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Case: B02

Time: 6 months

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Adjust. Level	Life	Work	Culture
When arrived	6	5	5
At present	8	7	5

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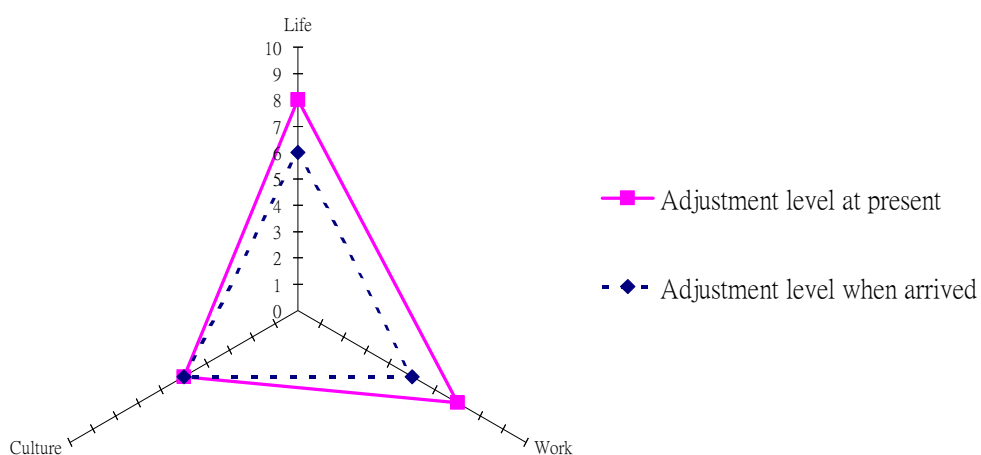


Figure 5.7. Self-evaluation in adjustment level \_ Case B02

It is also an increasing trend of adjustment, except culture. Interviewee B02 thought that the culture difference did not affect her life and neither did she care about this question. And during the interview, she also mentioned that she was continuing to learn management skill on her job. It could be identified through her lower scores at work.

## Case D02

Table 5.8. *Self-evaluation in adjustment level \_ Case D02*

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Case: D02

Time: 48 months

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Adjust. Level	Life	Work	Culture
When arrived	1.5	3.5	1.5
At present	6.5	8.5	1.5

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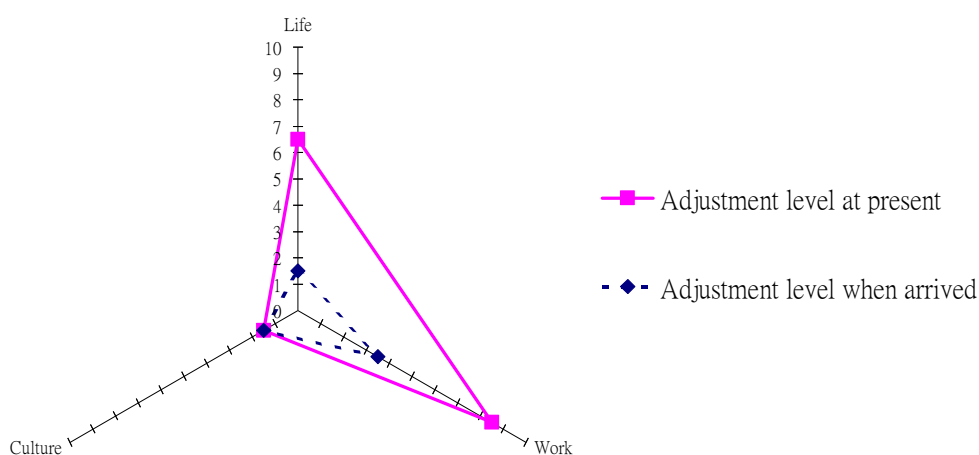


Figure 5.8. *Self-evaluation in adjustment level \_ Case D02*

Interviewee D02 had the longest time in China, however, there were extreme low scores evaluated by her. She claimed that her prior experience in China before entered this assignment was not helpful for her adjustment. The reason could be understood. Because she had an extremely bad working and living environment at that time, and in such condition the adjustment was strongly related to external facilities. As long as the

facilities are improved, the degree of adjustment increased.

As to adjustment in culture, this interviewee chose to neglect the difference so she did not try to adjust. Hence, her degree of adjustment was maintained in low level. And it was estimated that interviewees' willingness in accepting local culture was also low.

It could be found that this adjustment situation was strongly affected by external factors and willingness as well.

### Case B03

Table 5.9. *Self-evaluation in adjustment level \_ Case B03*

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Case: B03

Time: 18 months

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Adjust. Level	Life	Work	Culture
When arrived	5	8	5
At present	8	8.5	5

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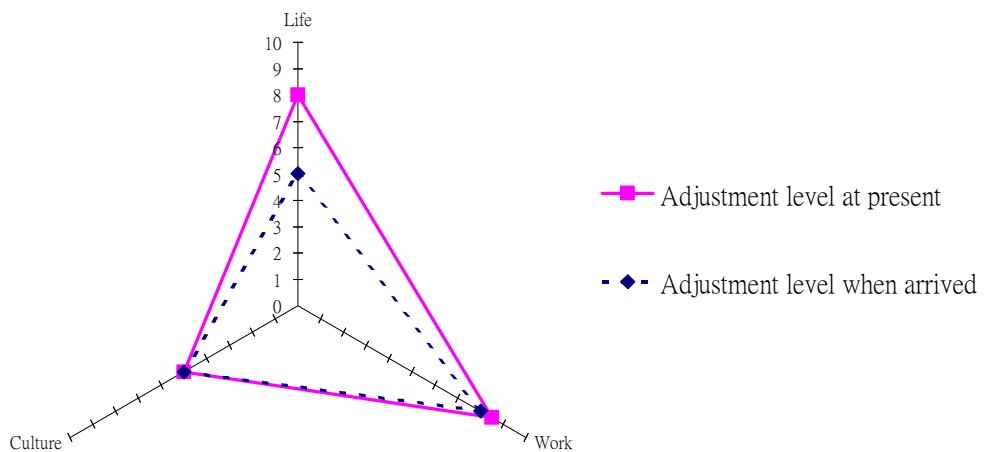


Figure 5.9. Self-evaluation in adjustment level \_ Case B03

Interviewee B03 volunteered to apply this assignment. According to her interpretation and evaluated scores, there was no obvious different adjustment level or situation with other assignees. Except the same scores in culture, she had a lower degree in general life than the aspect of work when she arrived. But also an increasing trend could be seen with time extended.

## Comparison

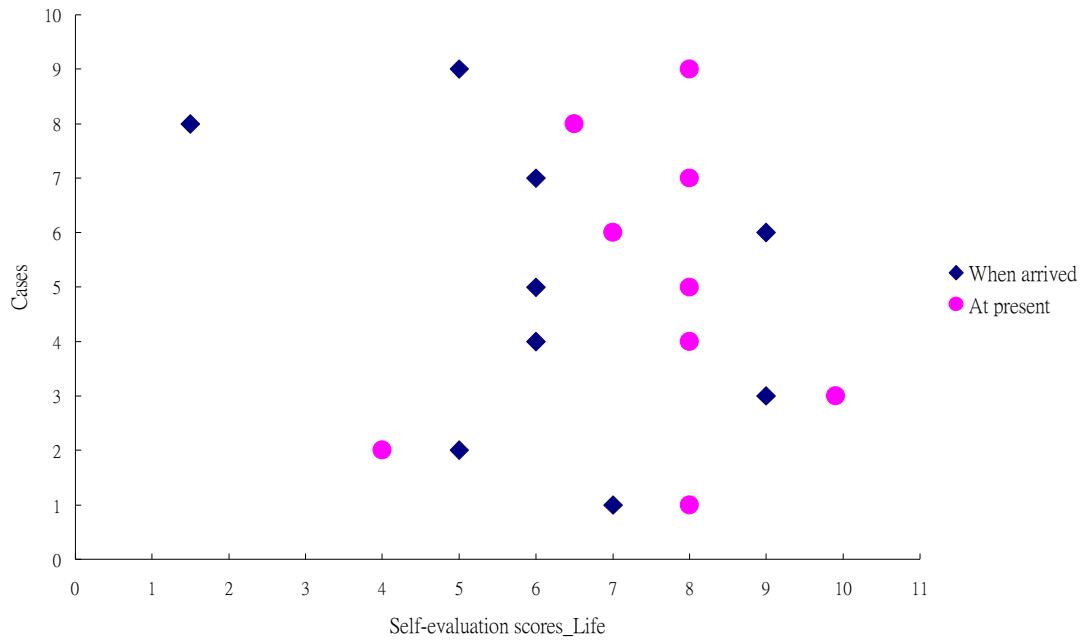


Figure 5.10. The comparison of self-evaluation scores\_Life

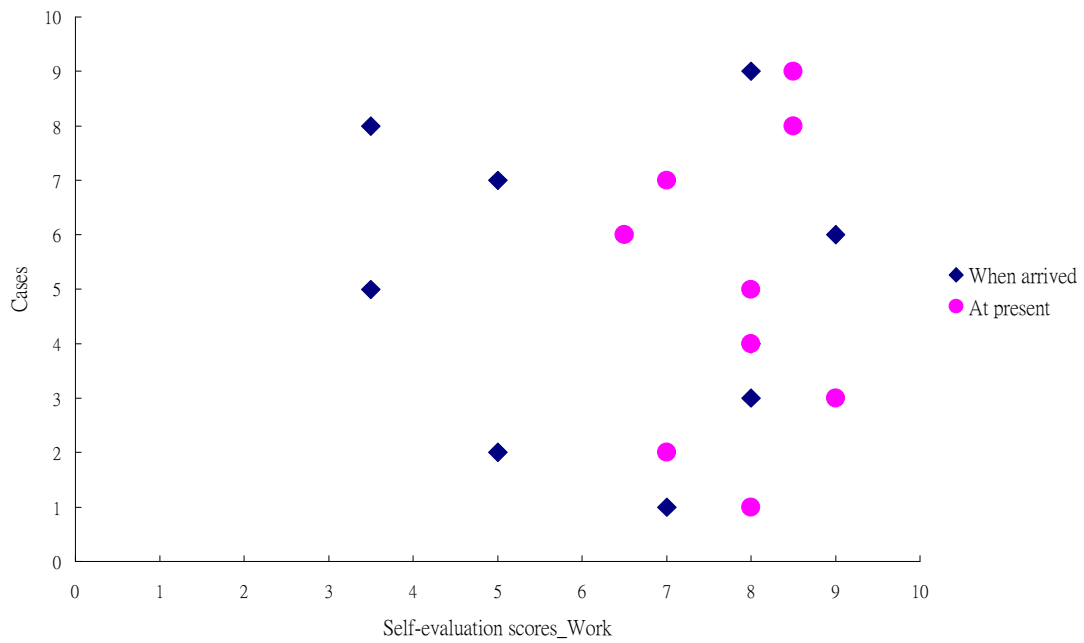


Figure 5.11. The comparison of self-evaluation scores\_Work



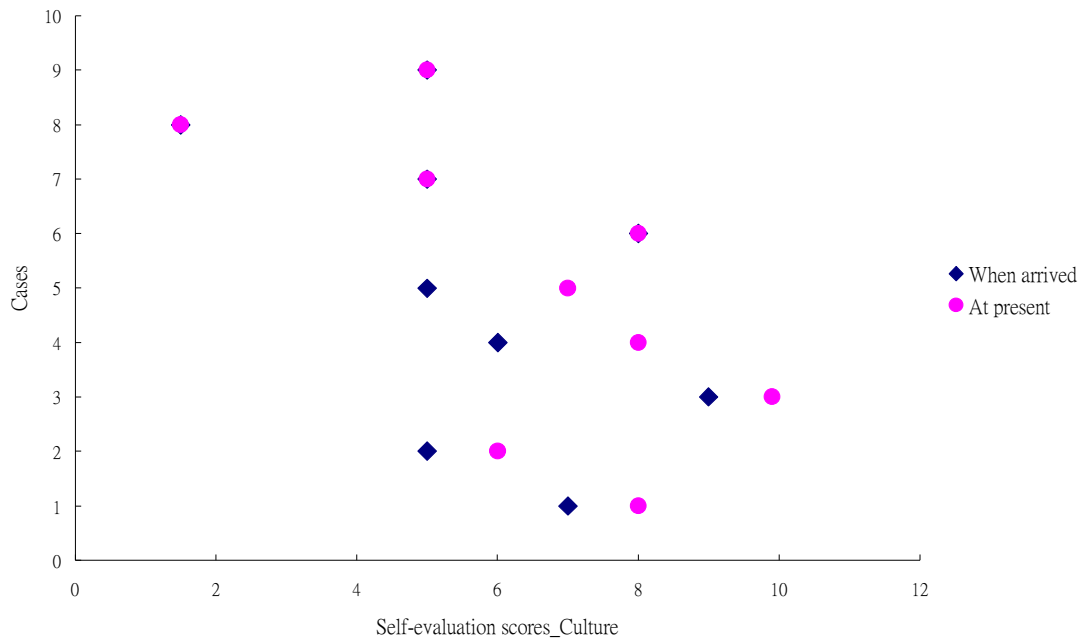


Figure 5.12. The comparison of self-evaluation scores\_Culture

Through reviewing and comparing interviewee's self-evaluation scores, it could be identified that, there is basically an increase score with time extended, especially in life and work aspects. Among three dimensions, life, work, and culture, work related adjustment had much higher scores. As to culture aspect, many of them maintained the same scores; it also showed lower scores than the other two aspects. Besides, when compared to u-curve theory, the scores did not show an obvious match with stages which mentioned in theory.

### *Time period*

Table 5.10. *Total months of interviewees in China*

NO.	A01	B01	C01	C02	D01	E01	B02	D02	B03
TOTAL MONTHS IN CHINA (Months)	36	6	9	27	36	36	6	48	18

Because of the aid in prior experience in China, the total time period of female expatriates in this study is calculated according to their months in the present assignment and also their past business trip and working experience in China. The total months is represented above in Table 5.10. And the distribution based on their time period was showed in previous Figure 3.1, which is in page 33.

According to the total periods which they stayed in China, the interviewees could be divided into three groups in this study: 0 to less than 12 months, 12 months above to less than 36 months, and 36 months above. The numbers of sample are 3, 2, and 4 interviewees.

#### Time period A\_ 0 ~ 12 months

In the group of 0 to less than 12 months, two interviewees, B01 and B02, had 6 months period and the other one, C01, had 9 months experience. Their main maladjustment in general life, three interviewees all stated that is the separation with families and friends in Taiwan.

From the perspective of work, it could be aware that they showed a lower

confidence than other two groups. New job contents and management skills were what they still learning and adjusting. And interviewee C01 who was responsible for general life care and associated facilities in the company was frustrated that it was hard to make each of her customers, say internal employees, satisfied. Thus, it could be seen that they still made effort to be familiar with job in assigned subsidiary in this time.

And in appreciation on local culture, there was not a very coincident situation among three assignees. Interviewee C01 showed a better degree of adjustment than the other two.

Based on the discussion above, it could be identified that assignees in this period revealed more uncertainty and lower confidence on their job. Facing the separation with families and friends in Taiwan, they also did not adjust very well yet.

#### Time period B\_ 12 ~ 36 months

In the group of 12 months above to less than 36 months, there are two interviewees, B03 and C02. Interviewee B03 has stayed for 18 months in Tsingtao, and interviewee C02 is 27 months in Kunshan.

They had been lived in assigned region for a period, the environment and living information there had been well known by both interviewees. Since the uncertainty and unfamiliar feeling had moved, a matured life model and clear objectives in their assignment had been built. Both two assignees indicated a clear planning in their assignment and life. Interviewee B03 would complete this tenure and her next step would go back Taiwan and have a baby. As to interviewee C02, she pointed out the reason of her continuing present tenure, which was her objective, traveling the whole China, was not accomplished yet. Both of them did not willing to stay in China in a long period. Except the personal consideration, such as marriage and life planning, it

may refer to a reason that female expatriates in this time do not adjust well enough to accept living in China. They could accept the current situation and live comfortable; however, to stay for a long time was doubtful. Such a thought revealed that female expatriates were passive accepting their environment and life in assignment, not a totally embrace.

A situation can be seen in this period. Female expatriates have learned the necessary living information and are familiar with living environment. Their life model in assignment has been developed. But until now, they still hold a passive attitude toward cross-culture.

#### Time period C\_ 36 months above

In the group of 36 months above, there are four interviewees. Interviewees A01, D01 and E01 have stayed for 36 months in China, and D02 is 48 months.

All of these four assignees ever considered the possibility of settle down in China. Among them, two assignees, E01 and D02, whose husband is also in China, have much more realistic planning and activity in preparation. Interviewee D02 had bought cars in China and planed to have a house there. Her decision of living and developing in China is obviously confirmed. In the other hand, when interviewee E01 talked about her consideration in staying, she mentioned that she was attracted by the green and spacious environment in China. And the other reason is the higher living quality which lower pricing level brought. But what bothers her is only the separation with families.

Interviewee A01 decided to give up the plan of settling down in China. It is mainly because she still can not totally trust host nationals. In such situation, she could not have a relaxing and comfortable life in China. As to interviewee D01, she had many experiences of working in China before. The main reason of choosing to

stay is her hesitation, which is lacking abilities and opportunities in reentering Taiwan job market. And after so many years in China, she gradually loves its beautiful and spacious environment. In this case, she would consider settling down.

After reviewing the interviewees' consideration, it is obviously showed that, with the increasing time period in China, assignees have more deeper and intensive understanding toward the environment. For those who considered settling down, they revealed the sincere appreciation on host environment.

*Assigned Location*

Table 5.11. *The assigned location of interviewees in China*

NO.	A01	B01	C01	C02	D01	E01	B02	D02	B03
ASSIGNED LOCATION	Dongguan	Shanghai	Kunshan	Kunshan	Kunshan	Kunshan	Ningbo	Shenzhen	Tsingtao

The assigned area which Taiwanese female expatriates stayed is showed as Table 5.11. Basically, the area could be divided into two regions, the southern and northern region in China. The southern region includes Dongguan and Shenzhen city in Guangdong province, and the northern region means Shanghai, Kunshan, Ningbo and Tsingtao.

The different adjustment problems revealed because of region could be found mainly in general life. The most important and worth to notice is the public safety. Female expatriates who assigned to southern cities showed the strong worry about the public security condition there. They also represented that they would minimize going outside. However, those who assigned to northern cities claimed their confidence of

local public security; even several of them thought the security condition is better than Taiwan. They also behaved themselves, but showed more relief in life than who are in southern city.

The other point is the adjustment on weather. The latitude of Guangdong province is similar to Taiwan; therefore the weather condition is similar to Taiwan. Female expatriates there would not have adjustment problem on weather. However, as to those who lived in northern cities, winter is a difficulty for them. Some of them were even affected in health and mood.

*Prior experience in assignment*

Table 5.12. *Prior experience in assignment*

NO.	EXPATRIATION EXPERIENCE
A01	✧ Frequent business trips to Guangdong
B01	✧ No prior experience
C01	✧ 2003, Kunshan, business trip for 6 months
C02	✧ No prior experience
D01	✧ 2001, Shanghai, working experience for 2 years ✧ 2003, Tsingtao, working experience for 7 months
E01	✧ 2002, Kunshan, working experience over 6 months
B02	✧ 2004, Hong Kong, working experience for 1 year and 1 month
D02	✧ 2 year experience of operating a business in China
B03	✧ No prior experience

Six of interviewees had prior experiences in China, no matter business traveling, past job or operating businesses by self. Basically, they agreed the positive aid of past experience in present assignment, no matter in adjusting to life, work or culture. These results are different from Chen (2003) proposed in his thesis. His finding pointed out that prior expatriation experiences would affect working adjustment but not life environment. But one interviewee posed the similar opinion with Chen (2003). According to interviewee D02, she had maladjustment when she entered the present job in the beginning. And she thought her past two years experience in China could not connect to help her adjustment.

An explanation is the similarity of life environment and culture in the great China, expatriates could use past experience much easier than those who was assigned to other Asian countries. However, a specific situation happened on interviewee D02, according to her description, her living condition and environment at that time is too terrible to live. In this case, that problem was hard to solve by connecting past experience.

#### *Marital status*

Table 5.13. *Marital Status of interviewees*

NO.	A01	B01	C01	C02	D01	E01	B02	D02	B03
Married	X					X		X	X

There are more unmarried interviewees than married interviewees in this investigation. The impact of marital status could be observed through the willingness

of staying in China for long time. Marital status is one factor of female expatriates' consideration in future planning. Female expatriates tends to make decisions depends on where her family are or will be. For example, both husbands of interviewee E01 and D02 are also in China, female expatriates are more willing to settle down in China. And unmarried interviewees would prefer to get married in Taiwan.

The other one phenomenon is also proposed by some unmarried interviewees. Some female expatriates would not insist to have a marriage. They put their emphasis on their job and didn't mind the marriage problem.

### **Willingness of future development**

#### *The willingness of continuing present assignment job*

Four of nine interviewees will not continue their present expatriation. The main considerations to decide whether or not stayed in this expatriated position could be divided into three factors: the limited interpersonal relationship, job related factors, and personal life planning.

The limited international relationship usually makes female expatriates feel lonely in China. Without being accompanied by families, friends or mate in life, many female expatriates complained that it is the most different aspect from what they were in Taiwan. Thus, female assignees have to find out where to place their affections. One interviewee claimed that except work, she put her energy on traveling and aimed to go around whole China. Thus, at present she is willing to extend her tenure because she does not achieve this goal yet. More interviewees chose to put their emphasis on job and adjust to accept the separation. And other interviewees, who missed their friends or life in Taiwan, would hope to complete this assignment tenure and then



come back.

The second is work related considerations which include job characteristics, performance appraisal, and the interest in job. According to an interviewee, she thought the financial associated job, especially concerning the future planning, should be operated close to headquarter in nature. In addition, she also mentioned the impact of performance appraisal. Most of the time, expatriates stayed in China subsidiary, but their efforts and performances were evaluated mainly by Taipei headquarters. Sometimes their job performances were hardly to appraise completely. These two reasons mentioned above would be the factors which induce her to go back. At last, still one interviewee stated that she would stay in present job mainly because she really liked this job content, as well as her opinions and problems could be valued in the company.

The last one considering point is the personal life planning of themselves. One interviewee claimed that her next plan is having a baby. In this case, she was clearly aware of her assignment period is one tenure.

#### *The willingness of developing in China for long periods*

Based on the discussion in the above topic, the willingness of continuing present assignment job, the further question is weather these female expatriates want to stayed in China or not? Besides four assignees who did not plan to continue the expatriation, one interviewee also claimed that she will not develop in China in a long period. Except traveling, no more factors induce her stayed here.

There are two critical reasons proposed by interviewees who would consider the longer development, the consideration on future job development and on marriage. In the aspect of future job development, most of interviewees showed their strong confidence on China economic market in the future. Thus, in order to gain a better

career life and development they would choose to stay here. Also, in considering future job development, a different thinking is the ability of reentering to Taiwan market. One interviewee chose to remain in China because she left Taiwan for several years, and she doubted herself ability in Taiwan career market. However, the other two assignees answer the opposite opinion in this problem. They both claimed their experiences in China are their advantage and competency when one day they go back to Taiwan.

The marriage consideration is also important factor for these female assignees. Two interviewees were married and their husbands worked in China as well. In this case, they chose to remain here with their husbands. As to unmarried assignees, several of them believed they would not stay in China as long as they get married in the future.

A factor is worth to notice despite it is proposed by only one interviewee in considering stayed in China. She mentioned the difference on material and price between two sides. If settled down in China, basically she can live and chose higher living quality than she in Taiwan, which is mainly because of higher expatriated payment and lower prices in China. The gap in consuming level is usually a critical reason for expatriates or Taiwan businessmen staying there.