

CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW



Trends and Myths on Female Expatriates

As firms become more and more involved in global business activities, the growing need for the skilled global employees is emerging. Concurrently, the increase in business activities is the presence and managerial role of women in international business (Czinkota, Ronkainen, and Moffett, 1999).

The study conducted in mid-1980s pointed out the proportion of female expatriates in international business only about 3 percent (Adler, 1984). The more recent research has indicated the increase of this proportion to 13-17% (Miller, 2000; Evans, et al. 2002). A rising trend of female business expatriates is obviously exhibited.

The reasons for the past small number of female expatriates are discussed in many studies: culture prejudices, including the low acceptance of working women abroad; lack of support and access to male-dominated expatriate networks; inflexibility and resentment by male peers; particular difficulties linked to family and dual career issues; and the unwillingness of women to accept foreign assignment (adopted from Evans, et al. 2002, p.140). One of the noted studies is the paper Adler (1994) proposed. Adler identified three “myths” which had emerged from the academic literature and from managers themselves to explain the low participation of women in the international assignment. These are:

- ◆ Women do not want to be international managers.
- ◆ Women in dual-career marriages are poor candidates for overseas assignment.

- ◆ Foreigners are unwilling to accept women as managers.

Harris (2002) survey indicated a key finding of why the women are not selected for international management assignment. The selection system for international assignment is the predominant use of closed, informal selection process. Thus, the assumptions about women's lack of qualifications, willingness and family obligation might easily result in the bias selection.

The Current Situation on Female Expatriates

The recent inquiry provides the outline of the contemporary women in international assignment. Shiao (1998) concluded the findings of her female research subjects. The Taiwan female expatriates in her inquiry showed these characteristics:

1. female expatriates were younger than male,
2. female expatriates had high intention for expatriation,
3. female expatriates are mostly assigned to China, America, and European country,
4. the department they were assigned were finance, accounting, and human resource,
5. female expatriates were less married than male.

The similar finding emerged in Chen's (2003) study. He selected the expatriates, female and male, among nine countries in Asian. The results reported the female expatriates were younger than male, less married, and had shorter tenure than their male colleagues. Chen made a conclusion that the differences revealed the difficulties indeed exists when a woman were assigned to abroad.

Jan Selmer and Alicia conducted a survey on female and male business expatriates in Hong Kong. The inquiry made a comparison of their personal characteristics. The results showed that

1. female expatriates were younger than male,
2. women on foreign assignment were less frequently married than male colleagues,
3. female expatriates occupied lower hierarchical positions,
4. no gender differences in corporate tenure and expatriate experiences

Reviewing these studies, the very similar characteristics could be found: they are younger, and less married than male assignees.

The Related Research on Female Expatriates in Taiwan

Few of related research are conducted on adjustment of female expatriates in Taiwan. At the present, there are two quantitative research (see Shiao, 1998; Kuo, 2001) and none of qualitative studies on this theme (Lin, 2002; Tien, 2003; this research).

Although Shiao(1998) studied the female expatriates issue in quantitative method, some interview were also conducted in her research. Female assignees had mentioned the adjustment problem:

- ◆ Adjustment to general life: There is no big problem in diet and housing. However, lack of information and emotional support has more impact on the expatriates. The further important thing is the difference of thinking, value and culture also a key issue on adjustment to new environment, even in China.
- ◆ Adjustment to work: The expatriates are usually responsible for more complicated work and thus the greater pressure they have. To have better interaction with the host nationals, the skill of communication and relation is required.
- ◆ Family support: most of their families hold the positive attitude toward the assignment.

- ◆ Women issue: the problem of security is the main consideration when the corporate select the candidates. The motivation on international assignment is learning and expanding their experience. As long as the individual has enough ability, willingness, as well as family support, women could be assigned to the abroad.
- ◆ Corporate policy: Foreign company provides better welfare than Taiwan firms.

Shiao's inquiry provides us the initial understanding of adjustment issue on Taiwan female expatriates. Kuo (2001) put the emphasis on the female international assignment intention. The finding in this inquiry is indicated both gender stereotyping and female assignees' personal consideration are the important factors associated with female expatriates intention toward international assignment.

Cross-Cultural Adjustment

Definition of Cross-Cultural Adjustment

The term of "adaptation" originated in biology. It referred to the biological structures and process that facilitated the survival of species. It was the fundamental concept in Darwin's theory of evolution. The psychologist borrowed this concept and made some correction. It was renamed as "adjustment" to emphasize the individual's struggle to get along or survive in his or her social and physical environment. Two kinds of processes were included: fitting oneself into given circumstances and changing the circumstances to fit one's needs (Lazarus, 1976).

Black and Stephens (1989) defined cross-cultural adjustment as the degree of psychological comfort with living and working in the host country. As the individual entered the foreign country, they would encounter the unfamiliar culture and

behaviors. They do not know how to behave appropriately and feel uncomfortable and frustrated. This is so called “culture shock” (Oberg, 1960). The process of adjusting oneself to new culture is defined as cross-cultural adjustment (Han, et al., 2002).

In conclude, cross-adjustment is viewed as a process during which the individual adjusts oneself based on the feedback of interaction with the new culture. The level of adjustment can be measured by the degree of psychological comfort.

General Theory on Cross-Cultural Adjustment

U-Curve Adjustment Theory

Black and Mendenhall (1991) systematically reviewed the literature on UCT. At the very first time, Lysgaard (1955) conducted a survey and found the students who stayed for six to eighteen months showed the lower degree of adjustment than those who stayed less than six months and more than eighteen months. Until 1960, Morris selected the foreign students in America as research subject, and later, he reported that a U-curve pattern of adjustment. It described the pattern that the level of these foreign students’ adjustment was decreasing as they arrived America, however, with time passed by, the higher adjustment was showed (Black & Mendenhall, 1991). This kind of adjustment pattern was named U-curve theory by the later researchers Lin, 2002 .

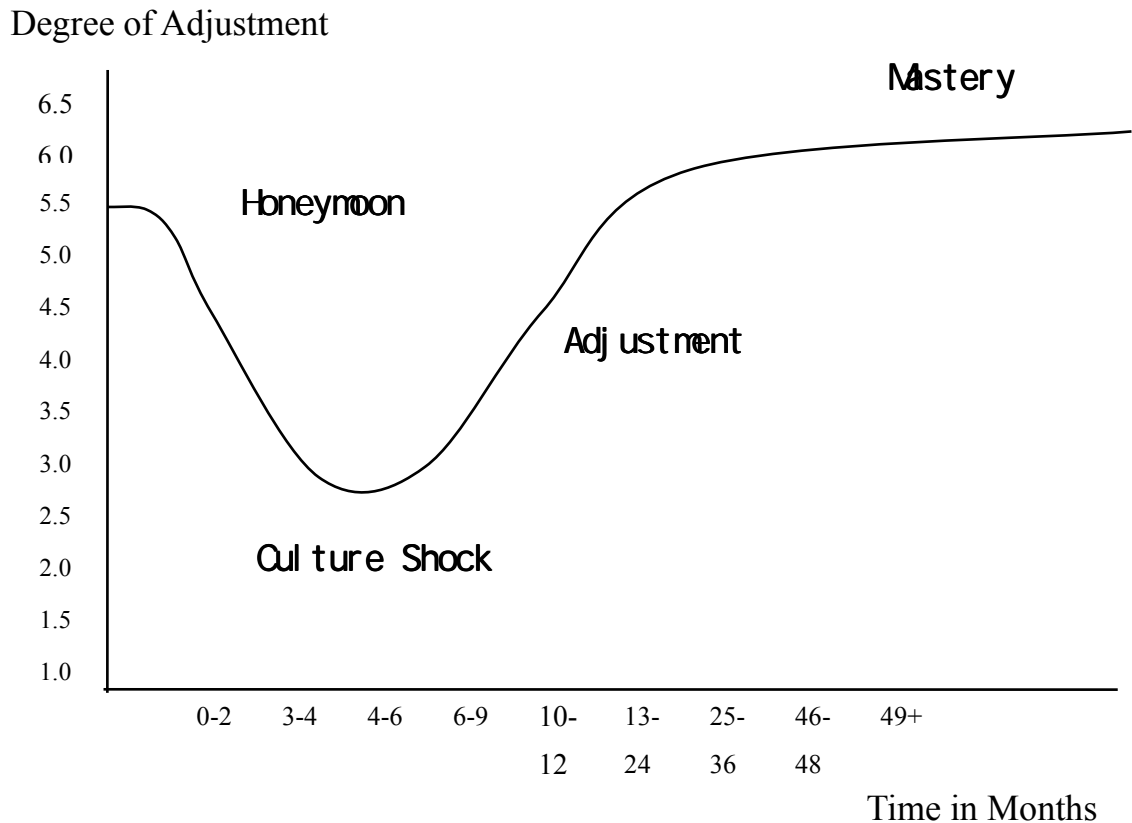


Figure 2.1. The U-curve of cross-cultural adjustment
 Source: J.S. Black & M.Mendenhall, “The U-Curve Adjustment Hypothesis Revisited: A Review and Theoretical Framework.” *Journal of International Business Studies*, Second Quarter, 1991, pp.225-247.

There are four phases in the U-curve theory (UCT) that an expatriate will experience in the host country. The curve is showed on the figure one above.

The Honeymoon Phase

This is the very first period. The individuals encountering a new culture tend to feel interesting and exciting to those different elements in the new culture. Once they show certain inappropriate behaviors, they would easily get more understanding from the local people in this phase. Therefore, the individuals are in a good condition during the honeymoon stage of adjustment.

The Culture shock Phase

When the degree of culture novelty decreased, the individuals discover that many values and behaviors acceptable in the home country are inappropriate in the new country. There is high ratio of feedback to the individuals that they are exhibiting inappropriate behaviors (Black & Mendenhall, 1991). However, the individuals haven't learned the reasonable behaviors yet. The lack of appropriate behaviors to substitute may make the individuals feel frustration, anxiety, anger, etc. This is the lowest phase in the adjustment process.

The Adjustment Phase

The individuals have more and more time to learn the norms and culture in the host country and thereby increase their ability to exhibit appropriate behaviors. At this time, individuals also build the good connections with local people. As they interact with the new culture well, it represents that they adjust to the new culture well.

The Mastery Phase

The individuals have stayed in the host country for a long time. They can exhibit the appropriate behaviors and realize the norms and rules here. The individuals could exert their abilities effectively in the new culture.

Black and Mendenhall(1991) summarized the studies on U-curve adjustment as below:

Table 2.1. *Summary of studies on U-curve adjustment*

Authors	Year	N	Sample	Method	Findings
Becker	1968	77	Students	CS/Q	+/-/ns
Chang	1973	209	Students	CS/Q	+/-
Davis	1963	286	Students	CS/Q	+/ns
Davis	1971	222	Students	CS/RR/Q	+/ns
Deutsch & Won	1963	94	Trainees	CS/Q	+/ns
Golden	1973	77	Students	L/I	+/-
Greenblat	1971	140	Students	CS/Q	+/ns
Heath	1970	110	Students	CS/RR/Q	+/ns
Hull	1978	955	Students	CS/Q	+/-
Klineberg & Hull	1979	68	Students	L/I	-
Klineberg & Hull	1979	2536	Students	CS/Q	-/+
Lysgaard	1955	200	Students	CS/RR/I	+/ns
Morris	1960	318	Students	CS/Q	+/ns
Ruben & Kealey	1979	14	Technical Advisors	CS/RR/I	+/ns
Selby & Woods	1966	44	Students	CS/RR/Q	-/ns
Sewell & Davidsen	1961	40	Students	CS/RR/I	+/ns
Surdam & Collins	1984	143	Students	CS/Q	+
Torbiorn	1982	641	Managers	CS/Q	+/ns

Method Legend: CS= Cross sectional, RR= Retrospective recall, L= Longitudinal, Q= Questionnaires, I=Interview.

Findings Legend: +/-/ns= Nonsignificant mixed support for UCT; +/ns= Supports UCT but nonsignificant; -/ns= Doesn't support UCT but nonsignificant; +/- = Mixed support, primarily positive, statistically significant; -/+ = Mixed support, primarily negative, statistically significant; - = Doesn't support UCT, statistically significant; + = supports UCT, statistically significant.

Note. J.S. Black & M.Mendenhall, "The U-Curve Adjustment Hypothesis Revisited: A Review and Theoretical Framework." *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Second Quarter*, 1991, pp.225-247.

Some criticisms exist while discussing the utilization of U-curve theory. Black and Mendenhall stated that twelve studies offered no statistical tests of the data or

reported statistically nonsignificant findings. The second, in these studies only two of them were longitudinal in nature; despite the UCT is a description of adjustment over time. The third point, of the six studies that utilized retrospective recall, three gave either no indication of much time had elapsed between the time of the study and the adjustment subjects were asked to recall, or did not consistently utilize samples in which the temporal interval between the time of the study and the level of adjustment the subjects were recalling was the same from subject to subject. Thus, the lack of consistent methodological rigor in many of the studies makes generalizing their results problematic (Chan, 2000; Black & Mendenhall, 1991). Additionally, studies operationalized adjustment in different ways. These differences might result in some of the differences in finding and make comparing findings problematic.

Social Learning Theory

The U-curve theory has been the most common one used in describing the process of adjustment. Black and Mendenhall (1991) utilized Social Learning Theory (SLT) to provide a theoretical explanation of why in general cross-cultural adjustment would exhibit a U-curve pattern. The process of individuals adjusting to new culture can be thought of as being involved in a learning process. The Social Learning Theory integrates cognitive and behavioral theories to provide the reasonable perspective in examining UCT. Albert Bandura, one of SLT's major authors, asserts that in addition to individuals learning based on the consequences of their action, individuals can also learn and behave based on their observations of other people's behavior and associated consequences and by imitating the modeled behavior.

Black and Mendenhall proposed the explanation in four phases.

SLT and the Honeymoon Phase

Because the individuals has just arrived in the host country, the time which they stayed is too limit to aware that their inappropriate behaviors. However, the new comers pay their attention to those similar and dissimilar elements between home country and host country. In the other hand, the inappropriate behaviors are likely to lead to negative consequences. The negative feedback and consequences result in culture shock ultimately.

SLT and the Culture Shock Phase

The individuals have aware their inappropriate behaviors after receiving more and more negative feedback. The greater the dissimilarity, the longer and more severe will be the culture shock stage. Because of the individuals haven't learned the new behavior, they do not know how to perform appropriately in the new culture.

SLT and the Adjustment Phase

Through observing the model's behavior, the individuals learn to remember those actions and then convert to actually doing in their working environment or daily life. They could receive positive or negative feedback from other people when they demonstrate their learning consequence.

SLT and the Mastery Phase

Individuals will be motivated to exhibit the modeled behavior if positive feedback or rewards are provided. Behaviors that are reinforced will be given more attention, learned better, and performed more often (Robbins, 2003).

Social learning theory provides a framework for understanding why various skills are important for adjustment. Furthermore, how the individuals facilitate the

adjustment process.

The Related Research on Factors affecting Expatriate Adjustment

Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991) reviewed the findings of empirical researches on the cross-culture adjustment and concluded the five dimensions are discussed in these inquiries.

1. Predeparture training
2. Previous overseas experience
3. Organizational selection mechanisms
4. Individual skills: Self-efficiency, Relation skills and Perception Skills.
5. Nonwork factors: Family adjustment and Culture novelty.

The first three categories are predeparture variables and the other two are postarrival variables identified.

In the domestic adjustment literature, Lin (2002) has summarized the related inquiry in Taiwan focusing on the factors that expatriate adjustment. He reviewed these literatures and modified in a serious procedure to conclude the main dimensions when discussed the Taiwan expatriates' international adjustment. Four main dimensions identified are adjustment to the work, life, culture and personal psychology. It shows as table 2.

Table 2.2. *Dimensions of expatriates' adjustment*

Author	Main dimension	Sub dimension
Gu (1993)	General life	◆ Living
		Traffic
		Weather
		Shopping
		Recreation
		General life
		◆ Interaction with host nationals
		Host employee
		Host nationals
		Work
◆ Supervise to host employees		
◆ Job Enthusiasm		
◆ Expectation of future development		
Culture	◆ New environmental constraints	
	◆ Customs	
	◆ Work attitude	
Ke (1994)	Work	◆ Communication with supervisor
		◆ Communication with collages
		◆ Interaction with employees or managers in host corporate
		◆ The government policy and administration in China
		◆ Managing and motivating local employee
		◆ Job duty

	General life (including family adjustment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Diet ◆ Clothing ◆ Living condition ◆ Traffic ◆ Information ◆ Recreation ◆ Medical care ◆ Weather ◆ Family adjustment on medical care in host country ◆ Family adjustment on education in host country ◆ Family adjustment on customs in host country
Chen (1996)	General life Work Family	
Lu (1997)	General life	The same with Gu (1993).
	Work	The same with Gu (1993).
Ho (1998)	Overseas adjustment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Culture ◆ Life ◆ Work
Hwang (2000)	Overseas adjustment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ General life ◆ Work
Cheng (2000)	Expatriation adjustment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Work ◆ Interaction relationship ◆ General life ◆ Family ◆ Social support
Lee (2000)	Overseas adjustment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Work adjustment ◆ Society adjustment

Liao (2000)	Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Communication with supervisor ◆ Communication with collages ◆ Interaction with local manager and employee ◆ The government policy and administration in China ◆ Managing and motivating local employee ◆ Job responsibility
	Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The host value ◆ Customs ◆ Attitude on working
	General life	The same with Ke(1994).
Sung (2001)	Life adjustment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Personal adjustment ◆ Society adjustment
Ling (2002)	Overseas adjustment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Work ◆ General life (family adjustment included) ◆ Culture ◆ Individual psychological adjustment

Note. From “A study of adjustment factors and indicators for the expatriates of Taiwan business,” by Ling, M. H., 1995.

Table 2.3. *The related research on international adjustment in Taiwan*

Author	Title
Gu (1993)	A Study on overseas adjustment of expatriate manager in Information Industry
Ke (1994)	The adaptation study for Taiwanese expatriates in China
Chen (1996)	The Correlative relationship of expatriate Characteristics and adjustment oversea
Lu (1997)	A Study on the Job Satisfaction of Expatriate Managers from Taiwan Corporation in China
Ho (1998)	The Adjustment of Taiwanese expatriates working at Taiwanese Subsidiary Companies in Mainland China
Hwang (2000)	Training and Overseas Adaptation of Taiwan Expatriates to Mainland China: A Survey of Taiwanese Golf Firm in Mainland China
Cheng (2000)	A Study on competency gap, training, and adjustment of business expatriate
Lee (2000)	Effects of Individual's and Family's Characteristics on the Expatriate's Overseas Adjustment
Liao (2000)	Employee Assistance Programs and Overseas Adaptation
Sung (2001)	The Study on the Factors Affecting the Life Adjustment and the Marital Satisfaction of Taiwanese Investors in Mainland China
Ling (2002)	A Study of Adjustment Factors and Indicators for the Expatriates of Taiwan Business

Note. From "A study of adjustment factors and indicators for the expatriates of Taiwan business," by Ling, M. H., 1995.

The scholars (Chen, C. I., Cheng, Y. L., Wang, J. C., & Li, W. C., 2001) had conducted the in-depth interview with the Taiwan assignees in China. The results of

this study show the ten factors associated with the expatriation adjustment. The ten factors includes:

1. The management ability.
2. The interest and respect to the different culture.
3. The understanding of political, economical, and social situation in the host country.
4. The ability of socializing.
5. Recreation.
6. The ability of self-care. The assignees could arrange their daily life when they stay in Mainland China along.
7. The ability of adapting the changed environment.
8. Take expatriation as an opportunity in career development.
9. Identifying with the great China. The expatriates hold the positive view on the future development in great China.
10. Family support and burden.

Comparing with the related inquiry in foreign country, eight of ten are common and important factors in expatriation adjustment. The factors, Recreation and Identifying with the great China, are the specific finding in this research. Because of the language and culture in the assignment location, China, is common and similar with Taiwan, the expatriates usually encounter less problems on these aspects. This is different with the situation in western corporate. The western employees are usually assigned to the subsidiaries that have different language or culture. These differences make the assignees can't exert their talent well.

There is another inquiry discussing the life adjustment from the aspect of the expatriates' personal characteristics. Chen (2003) selected the expatriates who are

assigned to nine countries in Asian as the research subjects. The six personal characteristics are mentioned: tenure, predeparture experience, job content, age, gender, and education. And the findings provide the general understanding on adjustment.

1. The longer the period they stayed, the better the expatriates adjusted to the host culture.
2. The expatriation that the assignees experience or not do not influence the level of adjustment.
3. The assignees who have different job content would not have different level of adjustment.
4. The assignees who are in the middle-age adjust better than young people and the elder.
5. Male expatriates perform well comparing with female in adjusting to host value, customs and etc.
6. The assignees who has higher education degree show the worse adjustment on overseas living condition.

To summarize the discussion above, these factors are divided into three important dimensions on cross-cultural adjustment:

1. General life.
2. Work associated.
3. Culture difference.

The constructs in each dimension are listed in the table 4.

Table 2.4. *Dimensions of female expatriates' adjustment in this study*

Main dimension	Sub dimension
General life	◆ Living condition
	Diet
	Traffic
	Weather
	Shopping
	Recreation
Work related	◆ Medical care
	◆ Adaptability of family
	◆ Interaction with host nationals
	◆ Tenure
	◆ Interest in assignment work
	◆ Job content and duty
Culture	◆ Interaction with employees or managers in host corporate
	◆ Confidence for the company's future development
	◆ The government policy and administration in China
	◆ New management style
	◆ New environmental constraints
	◆ Host culture
	◆ Host customs
	◆ Host employees' work attitude