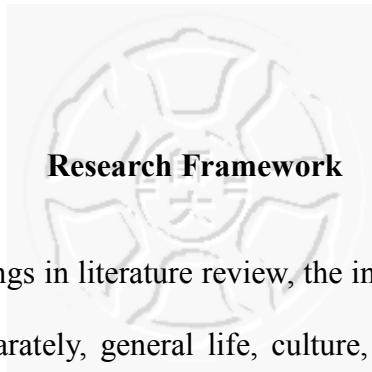


CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY



According to the findings in literature review, the inquiry was conducted in three dimensions, which are separately, general life, culture, and work perspectives. The researcher will examine how the Taiwanese female expatriates adjust in the new culture and figure out the adjustment strategy they adopted.

The framework of this research is presented as below.

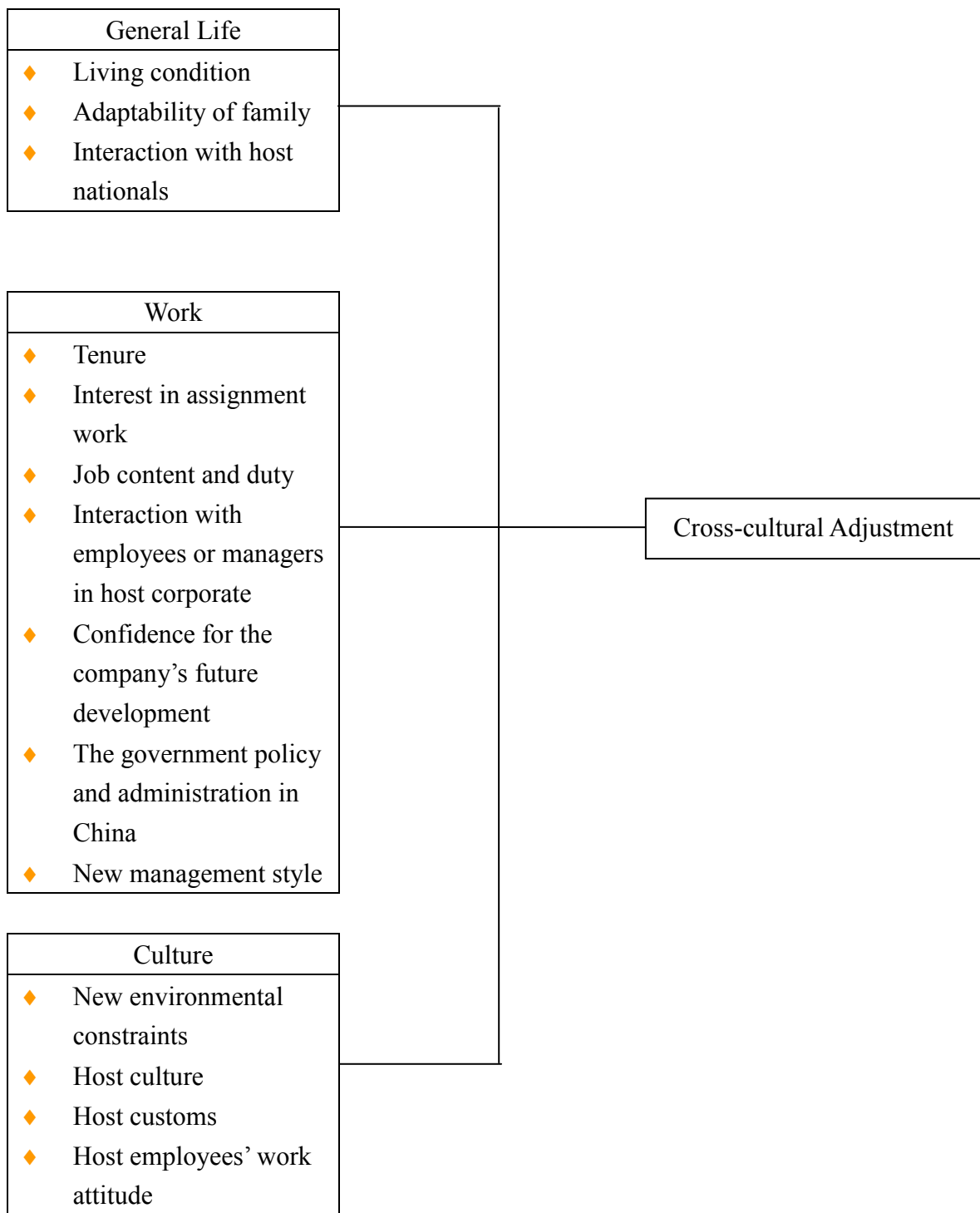


Figure 3.1. Research framework

Research Design

This study belongs to an exploratory research. The purposes of the inquiry are to realize the real situation of Taiwan female expatriates in China and to figure out the difficulties they encountered in terms of general life, culture, and work dimensions. The further important objective is to explore how these female expatriates adjust to the new culture.

Qualitative research

Adjustment is the process of psychological transformation. Through the quantitative research, the research might obtain the information given and closed. The results might be insufficient to realize the complicated thinking in one's mind. Qualitative research applies the researcher to explore the research questions in a deeper and more open way and to get the more dedicated information.

Case study

Case study is one of the qualitative research methods. It uses the various strategies to collect the complete data. The selection of the case could be the single case or multiple cases. The researcher can develop an in-depth analysis through case study method. Yin (2002) mentioned that if the research questions are referred to "how" or "why" the events happened, the case study is the preferred strategy.

In-depth interview

Purposes of the present study are depicting the contemporary adjustment situation and exploring how these female expatriates adjust in China. Based on the research purposes, the in-depth interview method is adopted in this inquiry. It allows

the researcher to access the perspective of the person being interviewed through the context of thought, feeling, and action (Arksey and Knight, 1999). The interviewer referred to a guide, which included the main topic and open questions in order to the deep and explicit understanding.

Cross-sectional design

In reviewing the related research on U-curve theory, Black & Mendenhall (1991) had argued that the ability of subjects to recall their level of adjustment during those past different periods is somewhat questionable. The similar problem may arise when the subject recall the methods, which they used to adjust different culture in the past. They may forget or miss those critical incidents and the things they felt depressed. To avoid the errors from recalling, the present research takes cross-sectional design as the strategy of research method. In cross-sectional research, the researcher delimit the time of data collection in a single point or a specific time period. One of the advantages is that it is economical in time, but can collect more data from groups who are at different stages of development in a relatively short period of time. The most important advantage of adopting cross-sectional research in this study is that the interviewees could interpret their experience and feeling in much more recent time rather than recall the past incidents and feelings. The information obtained can be much more close to the real situation.

Research Subject

The Taiwanese female employees who are assigned to the subsidiary in China are the population in this research.

The strategy of selecting participants in this research is snowball sampling. The referrals from the earlier participants are used to gather the required number of participants.

The basic introduction of interviewees is described as follows.

For this study, 9 female expatriates in China were interviewed. The researcher went to Shanghai, and Kunshan city in China for the interview. In addition, the researcher also contacted the subjects when they came back Taiwan. Five interviews are implemented in China, three of them proceeded in Taiwan, and one is through internet conversation. Their background data were described in table 3.1.

Table 3.1. *The background of interviewees*

CORP.	NO.	ASSIGNED LOCATION	POSITION
A	A01	Dongguan	Business Manager
B	B01	Shanghai	Finance Deputy Manager
C	C01	Kunshan	General Affairs Sec. Supervisor
C	C02	Kunshan	Financial Dept. Manager
D	D01	Kunshan	Finance Dept. Senior Specialist
E	E01	Kunshan	Administration Dept. Manager
B	B02	Ningbo	Supervisory Sec. Assistant Manager
D	D02	Shenzhen	Sales General Dept. Supervisor
B	B03	Tsingtao	Financial Dept. Representative

The distribution of geographic region includes two southern cities, Dongguan and Shenzhen, and four northern cities.

It can be seen that the positions which these female expatriates held are all

administration oriented. According to interviewees stated that, generally, most of Taiwanese employees who assigned to China were responsible for heavier duties than they were in Taiwan.

Another common phenomenon is the department they stayed. Over half of them are in financial related department. Two of female expatriates are in charge of business. And the other is responsible for skill related, and then transfer to administration.

Table 3.2. *An overview of interviewees' working history*

NO.	WORKING EXPERIENCE IN TAIWAN (Months)	ASSIGNED PERIOD (Months)	EXPATRIATION EXPERIENCE	TOTAL MONTHS IN CHINA (Months)
A01	0	36	◇ Business trip to Guangdong	36
B01	48	6		6
C01	24	3	◇ 2003.6. Business trip to Kunshan for 6 months.	9
C02	6	27		27
D01	0	6	◇ 2001, Shanghai, working experience for 2 years. ◇ 2003, Tsingtao, working experience for 7 months.	36

Table 3.2. (Continued)

NO.	WORKING EXPERIENCE IN TAIWAN (Months)	ASSIGNED PERIOD (Months)	EXPATRIATION EXPERIENCE	TOTAL MONTHS IN CHINA (Months)
E01	0	30	✧ Kunshan, working experience over 6 months.	36
B02	60	6	✧ Hong Kong, working experience for 1 year and 1 month	6
D02	0	24	✧ 2 year experience of operating a business in China.	48
B03	72	18		18

Two different kinds of accepting assignment could be seen from the table above. Traditionally, the employees worked in the company for a period, then, based on their expatriation policy, the supervisor selected the appropriate candidates. Nowadays, many employees are recruited for the purpose of expatriation. In this case, they would have few or even no time in Taiwan headquarter. Furthermore, among these interviewees, many of them have long period of working experience in China. Three of interviewees in this study had stayed in China before. It caused the situation that these expatriates have short working period in China subsidiary, in the other hand, they had very rich experience in living and working there. In this case, their past experience could not be neglected.

Similarly, several interviewees talked about the aid of prior business trip experience. Interviewee A01 worked in her industry since 1982. When she was in Taiwan, she has had many business trips to be in China, especially Guangdong province. As we discussed about her adjustment on work in the expatriation, she emphasized that she learned how to cope with many situation and problems there from her previous experience. She pointed out the positive aids of prior experience.

The same situation is happened on interviewee C01. Before the formal expatriation, interview C01 had a travel on business for 6 months, which is exactly in the plant she stayed now. During the interview, she mentioned the great help of that trip many times. In general life, she was strange to environment and even didn't know where to eat at the first time; however, 6 months later, she knew the general life portrait there, and she could live easily in assigned area. In interacting with local employees, she also felt the better relationship between her and local employees as she went to China secondly.

According to the description above, the aids of past experience are mentioned by interviewees. In order to contain more completed adjustment factors and represent the whole process of these Taiwanese female expatriates encountered cross-culture, the prior experience is counted in their total period in China. However, it is worth to note that interviewee A01 had many and discontinued trip experience, and it is too fragmental to calculate. In this case, her period of business trip is not calculated. The total months in China is accumulated in the right column of Table 3.2.

In order to show the distribution of these female assignments, figure 3.1 is developed base on the total period they stayed in China. Each blue point represents an

interviewee, and it is dotted according to their total months in China.

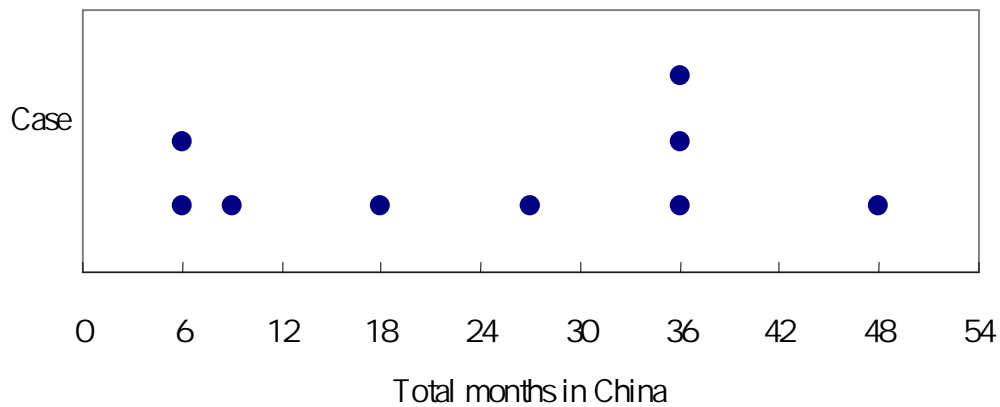


Figure 3.2. The distribution of cases (by the time period in China)

Development of Instrument

The interview guide is developed according to the findings in the literature review. The three main adjustment issues: work related, general life, and culture difference are the base of the interview guide. Two questionnaires and one research consequence used in the related studies are modified in order to develop an appropriate interview guide in this qualitative research. The three studies are referred to Shiao (1998), Ke & Sung (2002), and Lin (2002). And the guidelines of interview guide are as following:

Background

- ◇ Assigned time period, tenure, assigned position, prior assigned experience, and working experience in Taiwan.

- ❖ Reasons and motivations for accepting assignment.

General life adjustments

- ❖ The adjustment situation and difficulties on environment, diet, housing, safety, hygiene, medical care, transportation, weather, recreation, and education
- ❖ The frequency and situation of interacting with local people, and the communication
- ❖ The relocated families' adjustment and problems

Cultural adjustments

- ❖ The difference of host culture and customs between Taiwan and China.

Work related adjustments

- ❖ The difference of job content and environment in China
- ❖ The viewpoints that host employees hold toward female expatriates. Local employees' working attitudes.
- ❖ The self-evaluation on assignment and willingness of continuing assignment
- ❖ The assistances and trainings that company provided.

Others

- ❖ In general, how much time you spend to adjust your general life in China? Could you score your adjustment level in China now and when arrived, using 10 as the best?
- ❖ In general, how much time you spend to adjust your work in China? Could you score your adjustment level in China now and when arrived, using 10 as the best?
- ❖ In general, how much time you spend to adjust the culture in China? Could you

score your adjustment level in China now and when arrived, using 10 as the best?

- ❖ Could you talk about other female expatriates' adjustment situation in China that you observed?
- ❖ What problems these female expatriates compliant?
- ❖ What suggestions you would like to provide for other female expatriates who are going to be assigned?

Table 3.3. *The related research used in the instrument development*

Author	Main Dimension	Sub dimension	Reference			
Shiao (1997)	Work	◆ Interaction with host employees	Gu, (1993)			
		◆ Interaction with colleges				
		◆ Work pressure				
		◆ Work habit				
	Life	◆ Living condition				
		◆ Weather				
		◆ Culture				
		◆ Language				
		◆ Recreation				
		◆ Spouses separation				
		◆ Connection to Taiwan				
		◆ Information				
		Ke & Sung (2002)		Life	◆ Personal factors	Chen (1996)
					◆ Social acceptability	Gu (1993) Lu (1976)
Lin (2002)	Work	◆ Work content & duty	Torbiorn (1982)			
		◆ Management	Black &			
		◆ Tenure	Mendenhall(1988,			
		◆ Interest in assignment work	1990) Tung (1988)			
	General life	◆ Confidence for the company's future development	Gu (1993) Ke (1994) Chen (1997) Tsai (1988)			
		◆ Appreciation of new environment	Chen (1995) Hwang (2000)			
		◆ Interaction with host nationals	Lee (2000) Lee (2000)			
		◆ Adaptability of family	Liao (2000) Cheng (2000)			

Culture	◆	Host culture	Huang (1999)
Individual	◆	Host customs	Wang (1998)
	◆	Host employees' work attitude	Ho (1998)
psychological adjustment	◆	Adjustment ability	
	◆	Adjustment wiliness	

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection

The present inquiry is a multiple cases study. The inquiry selects in-depth interview as the main research method.

The semi-structured interview is conducted in the interview. In conducting semi-structured interview, the interviewer has a specific agenda to follow and selects beforehand the relevant topic and themes to pursue. The interviewer is flexible to follow up the interview guide, free to probe responses, and ask for clarification or further elaboration. For the interviewees, they can pose the answers in terms of what they see as important and meanwhile, the scope is provided for them to choose what to say about the particular theme (Hilary & Peter, 1999).

Three methods of collecting data are used. First, the researcher had gone to Shanghai, and Kunshan cites in China to interview the Taiwanese female expatriates there. Through visiting their companies and living environment, the researcher obtained the realistic data and deeper understanding. Besides that, some interviews were also conducted in Taiwan which used female expatriates' vacation in Taiwan. One interview was conducted through internet phone between Taipei and Ningbo.

Each interview was audiotaped and transcribed. The transcriptions, the text

database, were analyzed for the purpose of the inquiry questions.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted through following steps, data reduction, data display, verification and discussion.

In data reduction stage, several works were implemented. Based on the transcriptions and gathered information, the researcher extracted important information, coded data, clustered, and formed the themes. The data would provide as the further analysis.

According to the organized data in reduction phase, the summary, description, and diagrams were developed in order to display well-structured research findings.

The research findings were discussed and verified with theories in this stage. The worth notice problems and issues, which drawn from data coding, were proposed.

Validity

The following strategies were used to obtain the validity in this inquiry.

The interview guide was developed according to the findings in literature review, thus obtained a theoretical based. And the tentative interview guide was discussed with professor and peers who have adequate knowledge in the HR field. Their comments and suggestions were the source of modification.

According to the transcription, the data reduction and coding were conducted. The member-check, which implemented by the researcher and peers, was used to obtain a negotiated outcome and consistent conclusion. At the same time, the transcriptions were sent back to the interviewees in order to confirm the true meaning was presented.