

CHAPTER IV RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter has two sections; they were developed based on the research findings. The reasons of these female expatriates accepting expatriation are presented in first section. And then, it is an overview in adjustment problems and strategies of Taiwanese female expatriates' encountered in China.

Reasons for accepting assignment

Chances

The chances of assignment are varied. Three kinds of source are identified. The first situation is to recruit expatriates from the selection phase. Four of interviewees are recruited for the purpose of assigning to China, therefore, they did not work in Taiwan headquarter before. The most common way is selecting from the qualified original employees. At last, only one interviewee mentioned that she volunteered to hold an assigned position. Because she is married, married women must apply the assignment actively in her company.

Reasons

Most of these female expatriates claimed that they wanted to give themselves a chance to try. As they talked further, it usually showed four main causes, which are expectation on career development, payment and welfare, appreciation on China, and family factor.

Expectation on career development

Some interviewees who have worked for long years in Taiwan career market had a routine working life; they would be eager for a new environment. They showed their great willingness to learn new things and also seek a chance to exert their ability. These interviewees had strong confidence on China's economical development. They believed that China is the most important stage of world economics in the future. The earlier they come, the more advantages they can obtain.

Payment and welfare

Better payment and welfare also attract women to accept assignment. The expatriation could help them save money quicker. However, one of the interviewees provided an opposite opinion. She thought the benefit of assignment has been fewer and fewer, so the attraction in this aspect would be decreased. In this case, the expatriation welfare was not her reason of accepting assignment.

Appreciation on China

Taiwanese are usually impressed in the history and culture of great China. It was proposed that these expatriates went to China not only for job, but also for the chance to access these noted scenes.

Family factor

Two of the interviewees were affected by their mate when they made the decisions. One's husband had been running business in China for a long period; she chose to follow him after they got married. The other assignee said her husband was going to be assigned to America, so she considered to propose the request of assignment in that time.

An overview of Taiwanese female expatriates' lives in China

Based on the interview data, this section represents Taiwanese female expatriates' adjustment problems, and adjustment strategies in general life, culture difference, and work related aspects. The problems on each aspect are described first, and then their adjustment strategies discussed behind.

Problems on general life

The problems on general life are discussed in five aspects: living condition, interaction with host nations, interaction with Taiwanese colleagues, adaptability of family, as well as marriage and family planning.

Living Condition

A general issue is mentioned by most female assignees. It is the different flavor between two sides. Most of Taiwanese female expatriates did not get used to their flavor at very first beginning.

The housing type of these expatriates could be divided into two. One is to rent apartments for expatriates, and the other one is to provide dormitories in company. Basically, the quality of housing is acceptable. It was proposed by some expatriates who rent an apartment that their apartments' quality in assigned area even better than theirs in Taiwan. Even though, one interviewee compliant the terrible condition of housing. It was the critical adjustment problem when she entered this job. In that time, she lived in company's dorm which was dirty, small and dilapidated. She was very regretted the assignment and spend almost three months to adjust her life. Eventually, their company admitted this problem, rent apartments for expatriates and then her life

quality was turning better and better.

Almost every female assignee who lived in northern of China couldn't get used to the cold weather no matter how long the time period they stayed. Besides this, some interviewees claimed their health condition and mood were strongly affected by the cold weather. It is obvious that a decreasing trend of health and mood showed with the decreasing degree of temperature. But both two interviewees who were in Guangdong were not worry about this question.

In the different region, the convenience of transportation is different. In Shanghai and other big cities, the traffic network had been constructed very well, and thus, it provided the residents convenient traffic usage. However, in other rather small city, such as Kunshan, the traffic was not as convenient as big city's.

It was pointed out that taxi was the frequent tool for most of interviewees. The safety of taking a taxi was also discussed. Nearly all female expatriates held the positive confidence on taking a taxi; however, assignees who lived in Guangdong province were obviously resist to take a taxi than those who in other cities. The reason strongly related to the bad public security condition in Guangdong.

The doubt of public security in China was concerned by many people in Taiwan. Through the interview in this research, it revealed a distinct gap between north and south China. The south China mainly means cities in Guangdong province which includes Shenzhen and Dongguan. The current security situation is still so terrible that forces expatriates behave themselves very carefully. As to female assignees in north China showed confidence to local security, even many of them thought the level of public security is better than Taiwan.

The hygiene issue includes four aspects: public environment, food and drink, sanitary facilities, and host nations. The unclean environment and insufficient sanitary facilities still existed in many China cities. In addition, the hygiene of food and drink

also bothered these assignees. Expect the doubtful of cooking clean, dirty environment in the restaurant was also a big problem. It was also pointed out what unacceptable in daily life was the bad hygiene habits of local nations, such as spitting at will.

Basically, all interviewees represented they lacked of confidence to local hospitals. The reasons pointed to the hygiene of hospital and the doctors. Unfamiliar medical method, which mean the widely usage of an intravenous drip, was also proposed. Seldom had they gone to the local hospital and few of them had experience went to hospital as well. Specific issues including higher fees, insufficient medical resource, and children's medical care were mentioned.

Female expatriates' recreation in China is limited. Shopping and watching DVD or television were the most common activities. Traveling was also mentioned by most female assignees. Moreover, an assignee took traveling all around China as one of her major objectives in this assignment. Other activities, like joining the club in Taiwan merchant association, or dining with Taiwan friends, could help them expand their interpersonal relationship in assigned area.

Among four married women, three of them did not have a child yet. When talked about the educational planning in future, they all revealed their worry. The problems included high tuition, the soundness of associated facilities, and so on.

The assistance provided by company is mainly on life care. The basic life care included housing, meal, traffic, and vacations to Taiwan. The frequency of going back Taiwan is five times a year in average. Some companies had added the care of assignees' mate in their policy.

While these care had satisfied by most female expatriates, there are some needed assistances. Some female expatriates mentioned that their company should put more attention on the specific women needs, such as providing diverse recreation channel

for women. And compare to Taiwan, lacking of on-job training was a recognized issue for these expatriates.

Interaction with host nations

Mostly, female assignees interacted with local employees in the working time. Few of them have local friends. The chance they contacted with host nations was basically shopping time. The main reason that they make friends with host nationals is they don't have many chances. Some have local friends were because of job cooperation. The other one reason is that these female assignees do not have motivation and willingness to develop relationship with host nations.

Assignees seldom went out with their local employees. Their concern is the gap of economical status. The gap induces different consuming habits, and naturally, it is hard for both of two sides to socialize with each other in an equal level.

Sometimes local employees provided the information that helped assignees in daily life. As to communication, the local accent was a problem at the beginning, however, assignees could get used to it months later.

Interaction with Taiwanese colleagues

Generally speaking, expatriates spend the most of time with their Taiwanese colleagues. However, several female expatriates still mentioned that they do not connect with their Taiwan colleagues very frequently in daily life. They got used to arrange their life independently. At the same time, they were also rare to contact Taiwanese assignments in other companies privately.

As to the interaction between female and male expatriates, it was also seen as infrequent in general. Because of the different recreation activities after work, certain activities of male assignments' were inappropriate for female. Thus, it limited the

interaction between them.

Besides care and accompany with one another in daily life, assistances from Taiwan colleagues were thought as the important factor when expatriates adjusted to environment at the beginning. A model could be seen among them, that is, usually expatriates who came to assigned region earlier would guide new assignees and provide life information and experience. And then, these new expatriates became familiar and adjusted well to life, they would transfer their experience to next new assignees. This model usually helped new assignees adjusted to environment quicker.

Adaptability of family

Families usually give the medium degree of support for these female expatriates when they heard their assignment. It means families would worry their assignment, but respect their decision at the same time. Mostly, they considered about their personal security in China. And the other specific problem for women is their marriage. Parents thought that the assignment would be a block in daughters' marriage plan. However, as time of expatriation increase, families would show the increasing support on assignments.

Leaving families to going to China usually made interviewees feel lonely. Almost every assignee in the interview represented they often call family in Taiwan. Regards from families were what supported them in the assignment.

Marriage and future planning

Among nine interviewees, three of them were married women, two had boy friends, and four were single when they decided to go to China. The large proportion of single women is showed. And several of non-married women mentioned that marriage was not the key factor when they decided to arrange expatriation or not. The

reasons were different in each case. Most of them said they put the emphasis on work, and didn't think too much. The younger interviewees said this is not a problem. Because they are young, as tenure is expired, they will come back to Taiwan. In that time, they are still not too old to get married.

Half of interviewees had ever thought of locating in China. Four main reasons are considered.

1. Financial factor. Aside from favorable payment and extra subsidy, lower pricing level also helped expatriates save money easier. In this case, they could have a more comfortable life in China.
2. Work development. China is a big market which is treasured by the worldwide companies. Most interviewees also mentioned that the most important economical market in the future is in China. They believed that working in China could have better development on their job.
3. Appreciation on local environment. Strong confidence was also revealed in the construction ability of China government. According to the interviewees, high speed and efficiency on constructing let them could expect the higher quality of public environment in the future. The more spacious living environment than Taiwan is also the key concern.
4. Increasing amount of Taiwanese immigrants. It is pointed out that limited interpersonal relationship usually makes expatriates feel lonely in the assignment. However, the question seems to be solved as more and more Taiwanese emigrant to China. The social circle could expand. Even more, these immigrants are relatives and friends of expatriates, this situation encourages them to settle down in China.

Adjustments on general life

How female expatriates treated with these difficulties and problems mentioned above are discussed.

Usually, the different flavor or unflavored taste is not the big problem for female assignees. They stated such food related problem could be adjusted in a good level. Through asking cookers to modify their cooking way, choosing Taiwanese's restaurants, or lessening the frequency of going restaurants, some of them could accept local flavor gradually.

Many female expatriates who live in north and east China did not get used to the cold weather. In the winter, they would reduce the frequency of going outside and usually used heater to make them more comfortable.

Although female expatriates have confidence in local safety, they also behaved themselves at the same time. When they took a taxi, in order to avoid the possible danger or conflict, they would adopt the ways including: use Taiwanese language, avoid sensitive political/financial topic and also not being alone. But it is worth to note that both assignees who worked in Guangdong used their company cars in substitute or take taxi with another colleagues or friends. Because the condition of public security in south China is too bad to acting alone. In addition, sometime female expatriates would take company bus or vehicle in order to solve the inconvenient transportation.

Most of female expatriates still could not adjust well in the condition of hygiene. In this case, they claimed that they were forced to accept and bear such situation. As to the cleanness in food and restaurant, nearly all of these female assignees did not choose to eat in local vendor. They went to Taiwanese or bigger, acceptable restaurants.

The medical care is still a big problem for female expatriates in China. It was proposed by most of female expatriates that their habits were to bring patent medicine from Taiwan in advance. As long as they need, they would use these medicines and avoid going to local hospital as possible as they could.

Several interviewees stated that their life is simple in general. They didn't go out very often just as they were in Taiwan. In this case, they didn't need varieties of entertainments in China. And their life in China was also simple.

The question of education system in assigned area is not an instant problem for female expatriates, but it should be considered in the future. One assignee chose to go back to Taiwan, and then had children. The other two interviewees showed the confidence of future construction in China. They believed that they didn't need to do specific planning in children's education now. When one day they have a child, the associated educational facilities will be set up.

When the interviewees talked about their planning of marriage in the future, two statements can be summarized. One statement was that they do not intend to arrange the marriage on purpose. The other one stated that if they want to get married, they would finish the expatriation and then come back to Taiwan.

Problems on culture difference

Two dimensions are used to describe the problems on female expatriates' encountering culture difference. They are host culture, and host employees' work attitude.

Host culture

It is generally thought that the culture difference is not obvious. The problem is the variance in thinking and value. Although the variance did not cause great disturbance in life, it could be felt in some trivial matters. Besides this point, the fact that people don't follow the rules of being a well-behaved citizen suggests low level of human discipline in the area.

Host Employees' Working Attitude

China employees' work attitudes were generally criticized by expatriates. Poor energetic spirit and low responsibility on work were the main flaws. According to the interviewee, local employees were hardly to implement a task individually. She thought local employees did not get used to the rules of business operation in capitalism; most of them still held the old working habits and thinking of their past society. Thus, their willingness of hard working was usually thought insufficient. What bothers managers more was that host employees usually hide and deny responsibility when errors happened.

In addition, several interviewees agree that host employees took the position level seriously. The supervisor with higher rank would be treated with more respects. It also caused that local employees have higher degree of obedience than Taiwan employees.

Another specific employees' characteristic observed was individualism. Some assignees were ever aware of that in their daily work.

Adjustment on culture difference

Facing the culture difference, some interviewees provided the explanation that discrepancy came from host nations specific culture and education background. They held an empathetic attitude toward such situation. Also others adopted passive position. They gave up adjusting and neglecting such uncomfortable feeling.

Based on different employees' working attitudes, interviewees in this study emphasized that they have to adjust their management style in China. One strategy used by many assignees was to find a responsible local supervisor. Let this local supervisor be in charge of other employees. Not only assignees could save time and energy in supervising, but also communication would be easier between locals.

With different employees' attitude, the managers' attitude was also forced to change. Two assignees both stated that they have to hold more patience and spend more time on communication with locals.

Problems at work

Most of the interviewees evaluated themselves well on their current job performance. Three of interviewees, who all have assigned less than one year, stated that they are still not proficient on their assignment work. They could perform better in the future. In this section, the current situation and problems these female expatriates met are discussed based on four aspects: expatriate training and assistance, job content and duty, government policy and administration, as well as the interaction with local employees.

Expatriate training and assistance provided by corporations

The job training and life assistance prepared by corporation before expatriates went to assigned area is thought as poor in the past related research. Through the interview in this study, it is known that most of their companies do not have formal expatriates training. Some of them are told the assigned relevance through their supervisors while still in previous job.

Some companies provide an introduction class for expatriates, especially those who have not had expatriation experience before. It contains two parts, the brief introduction of assigned area and related expatriation regulations and policies in the company. The class usually proceeds for one to two hours and implements by human resource department.

Job content and duty

Generally speaking, Taiwanese female expatriates are in charge of a management position in China companies. Most of them did not have practical operation in administration when they were in Taiwan. A wider business scope is also a change in assignment. For those unfamiliar works, they needed more time to learn and sometimes felt frustrated.

Despite the added and unfamiliar job, they still could cope with their job well in average. While other difficulties in assignment are still proposed, one of them is that their distance is too far away from Taipei headquarter and their supervisors. Thus, their job performance sometimes could not be correctly and completely evaluated. Also, the inconsistent requests from two different bosses, Taipei and China, usually disturbed these expatriates.

The government policy and administration in China

Government policies in China are thought varied. But the varied policies do not affect the implementation of expatriates' job obviously. The problems are usually solved by a specific unit in company.

There are not serious impacts of local policies or laws on general life in China. One interviewee proposed two related problems which are taxation and traffic between both sides of Taiwan Strait. She represented a heavier burden on being levied in both two sides. And direct flights across the strait could largely benefit for all expatriates and Taiwan businessmen.

Interaction with employees or managers in host company

Talking about the attitudes that local employees treated Taiwanese female expatriates, every expatriates emphasized that they are indifferent with male expatriates. Their employees respected the level of position than gender difference. In general, local employees held great reverence for their supervisor, Taiwanese female expatriates. Besides, some of their employees thought female expatriates who went to China alone are respectful and showed more curiosity.

Many female expatriates felt that their interaction with local employees were different with the way they were in Taiwan. There seemed to be a distance between each other. The main reason is the consideration of the necessary distance between supervisor and employees. Thus, expatriates have to avoid some sensitive issues when talking to locals. And they also thought it is hard to develop closer relationship with locals. However, still two female expatriates believed they get along with local employees not different with Taiwan colleagues.

According to the situation mentioned above, female expatriates also seldom contact locals in private. The chance that they had contact with locals is, mostly the

activities held by company, like company trip.

Adjustments at work

Facing these job related problems, Taiwanese female expatriates basically have a positive and active attitude to adjust these problems.

As mentioned above, a brief introduction was implemented for expatriates. Most of the interviewees agreed with its' effectiveness, but one of interviewees believed that real understanding was experienced when one indeed at arrives assigned area. Is it a big problem without pre-departure job training? One interviewee stated that she would seek related experience in her past business trip. This helped her to find out the critical points of how to work in China. Other interviewees did not show strong needs on pre-departure job training. Some of them had rich experience in working in China, so they felt that is not necessary. But still others are freshmen of expatriation. These female used the way, learning by doing. At this time, on-job training is thought as important for them.

However, the lack of on-job training is usually viewed as a deficiency in China subsidiary. In order to make up this gap, expatriates turned to make efforts by themselves. One direct method is self-study. Through reading management books and discussing with Taiwanese colleagues, female expatriates tried to advance their ability in China. Also an interviewee participated a group, which gathered the managers in several Taiwanese corporations of that area, and shared the information with members.

Aside from what mentioned above, the assistance and support from the supervisor are also a way to deal with difficulties. Not only female expatriates could

obtain opinions to solve problems from their supervisor, but supports from their supervisor are usually seen as confidence in their jobs.

Through these methods, female expatriates learned to work in assigned area. At the same time, they viewed these difficulties as a kind of learning, which trained their competencies. As to the varied government policies, interviewees took it as an unchangeable factor. Most of them chose to follow the regulations. What needs to effort for expatriates is to establish a friendly relationship with local government, which would make their business operations smoothly.