“THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF CROSS-CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPOUSE AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG THE SELF-INITIATED ACADEMIC EXPATRIATES IN MALAYSIA”.

by
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ABSTRACT

This study contributed to the field of the Human Resource Development by focusing on the following non-work factors. First, this topic focused on community of academics which has not been much studied in job satisfaction, specifically in Malaysia. Second, through this study we have found out that family factor of spousal cross-cultural adjustment abroad has an important relationship with job satisfaction.

This study enriched a vanguard topic of expatriate management literature by investigating the sociocultural adjustment experiences of a little-researched subpopulation of expatriates; those that self-initiate their own foreign work experiences. This study employed a quantitative web survey to generate data about the sociocultural adjustment experiences of academic expatriates teaching at colleges and universities in Malaysia. Three hypotheses were generated and tested regarding the relationship of the antecedent factors of previous overseas work experience and foreign language ability and the in-country factor of culture novelty with cultural adjustment, interaction adjustment, and work adjustment.

Hypotheses regarding foreign language ability were not supported. Hypotheses regarding previous overseas work experience were partially supported. Hypotheses regarding culture novelty were fully supported. Evidence was produced to warrant further examination of the factors of age, education level, and degree of satisfaction with previous overseas work experience, length of employment in current job. Finally, the results of this analysis provided original knowledge about the job satisfaction of self-initiating expatriates, contributed to the understanding of the validity of prior research conducted on traditional expatriates and prompted a reexamination of the dominant
theoretical model of expatriate job satisfaction upon which much of the expatriate job satisfaction research is based.

The key findings of the current study indicated that if spousal adjustment was achieved then it would lead to expatriate’s adjustment and job satisfaction eventually. In particular, spousal cross-cultural adjustment had the strongest effect on the general environment of expatriates, followed by host national interaction, and finally, work adjustment. This finding was noteworthy in that it confirmed the findings of previous research and showed that the role of family was stable in changing times.

**Key Words:** Spouse Cross-Cultural Adjustment, Expatriate Job Satisfaction, and Expatriate Cross-Cultural Adjustment.
DEDICATION

To my mother, wife and children whose patience and understanding have only been surpassed by their love and support throughout this process. It would have been impossible without you. And to my dad, who will never know the man he made me into or how often he is in my thoughts when it comes time to simply get down to work.
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Permission to Use........................................................................................................................................... ii
Disclaimer ............................................................................................................................................................. iii
Abstract.............................................................................................................................................................. iv
Dedication............................................................................................................................................................ vi
Acknowledgements........................................................................................................................................... vii
Table of Contents............................................................................................................................................ viii
List of Tables.................................................................................................................................................... xii
List of Figures.................................................................................................................................................... xiii

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION.......................................................................................................................... 1
1.1 Background of the Study............................................................................................................................. 1
1.2 Problem Statement .................................................................................................................................. 3
1.3 Purpose of Study....................................................................................................................................... 5
1.4 Research Objective ................................................................................................................................... 5
1.5 Research Questions................................................................................................................................... 6
1.6 Significance of the Study ........................................................................................................................... 6
1.7 Scope of Study......................................................................................................................................... 7
1.8 Definition of Key Terms ............................................................................................................................ 7
1.9 The Study’s and Remainder’s Organization............................................................................................... 8

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW.................................................................................................................. 9
2.1 Introduction............................................................................................................................................... 9
2.2 Expatriate Job Satisfaction........................................................................................................................ 9
2.3 Expatriate Cross-Cultural Adjustment....................................................................................................... 13
CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study Population
3.2 Sample
3.3 Sample Size
3.4 Unit of Analyses
3.5 Research Design
3.6 Instrument
3.6.1 Adjustment
3.6.2 Job Satisfaction
3.7 Data Collection
3.8 Data Analysis
3.8.1 Descriptive Analyses
3.8.2 Bivariate Analyses
3.8.3 Regression Analyses
3.9 Conclusion
CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Response rate

4.3 Demographic profile of the respondents

4.4 Reliability Analysis

4.5 Correlation Analysis

4.6 Testing the Hypotheses

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Research question 1: Does spouse cross-cultural adjustment related to expatriate job satisfaction?

5.1.2 Research question 2: Does spouse cross-cultural adjustment related to expatriate cross-cultural adjustment?

5.1.3 Research question 3: Does expatriate cross-cultural adjustment related to expatriate job satisfaction?

5.1.4 Research question 4: Does expatriate cross-cultural adjustment mediate relationship between spouse cross-cultural adjustment and expatriate job satisfaction?

5.2 Assumptions and Limitations

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 Recommendations for Organizations and Lecturers

5.3.2 Recommendations for Future Research

5.4 Conclusion

REFERENCES
APPENDIX A. Framework of International Adjustment ..............................................53

APPENDIX B. Questionnaire.......................................................................................54

APPENDIX C. SPSS Results..........................................................................................60
LIST OF TABLES

Table 4-1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents.........................................................26
Table 4-2: Reliability Analysis..........................................................................................29
Table 4-3: Correlations between the variables.................................................................30
Table 4.4: Regression analysis to examine the relationship between spouse adjustment and expatriate job satisfaction.................................................................31
Table 4.5: Regression analysis to examine the relationship between spouse adjustment and expatriate adjustment.................................................................31
Table 4.6: Regression analysis to examine the relationship between expatriate adjustment and expatriate job satisfaction.................................................................32
Table 4.7: Results of Mediation Effects of Expatriate Cross-Cultural Adjustment on the Relationship between Spouse Adjustment and Expatriate Job Satisfaction.................34
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2-1: Theoretical Framework.................................................................17
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Globalization has changed the way businesses are conducted. Many Multinational Corporations (MNCs) have expanded their business across nations, regions and continents. It is evident that the use of expatriates has become an important component of international human resource management practices among MNCs. As a result of this development, the number of expatriates working around the world also has increased, and the demand for people who can live and work successfully in foreign environments regardless of difficulties is growing rapidly (Caligiuri, 2000a). However, not all the expatriates can effectively navigate in the new cultural environment and successfully complete their assignment. Low rates of success in international assignments can result in monetary losses, damaged company reputation, and the potential loss of business. In order to overcome these issues, multinational organizations that employ expatriates are continuously trying to increase expatriate success and understand how best to predict which individuals will be able to function successfully in different countries.

With the aim to become a high-income nation by year 2020, Malaysia has recognized the need for knowledgeable human capital to become the catalyst to speed up the process. In the area where local expertise is limited, the country aggressively recruits foreign talents to settle down in the country (Harper, 2012). For this reason, the country has set up the Expatriate Division to devise plans and strategies to attract foreign talents in critical areas. The target groups are those highly
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