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

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Dissertation Submitted to
Othman Yeop Abdullah Graduate School of Business,
Universiti Utara Malaysia, in Fulfillment of the Requirement for the
Degree of Master of Science (Management)

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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.

V

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.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the guidance and the help of many individuals extended their valuable support in completion of this study.

First and foremost, I owe my deepest gratitude to Dr. Subramaniam A/L Sri Ramalu, my academic advisor whose inspiration and encouragement I will never forget. Dr. Subramaniam has been providing me with great insight and motivation as I proceeded with my study for two semesters at the University Utara Malaysia. Without him I would not have hurdled all the obstacles to the completion of this research work.

It is a pleasure to thank those who helped me to conduct surveys for my research in Malaysia. And, finally, 124 anonymous participants who responded my survey questions deserve recognition for their input and their time.

Last but not least, I thank my family and, the one above all of us, the omnipresent God. I am grateful to my mother, Rano Toychiyeva, who has shown me her unfailing love and support for all my life, my sisters, Iroda Qosimova and Sadoqat Irgasheva and wife Mukhlisa Gulamova who have been patient during my long months of study, and my children, Osiyo, Mubina, Abduaziz who even at a young ages have been understanding and encouraged me as I struggled to overcome the obstacles in my life.

Especially, I give my respect and love to my father, Shamurat Gulyamov, who helped me on everything.

Finally, God responded to my prayers when I asked for strength to carry on life and study and God gave me hope to live for good. I give a glory to you Lord.

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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 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 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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