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# Research of Media industry's Expatriates' Cross-Culture Adjustment on the Job Involvement and Work Stress: The Impact of Relatedness

Pao-Cheng LIN<sup>1</sup>, Nancy ROBBINS<sup>2</sup>, Pei-Kuan LIN<sup>3</sup>

## Abstract

Along with the country largely attracting foreign businesses for the investment, foreign-owned enterprises have gradually stationed in. In consideration of the Media transfer, the establishment of business management systems, and the needs for market expansion for offshore sourcing, numerous expatriates are required for executing company tasks in subsidiary companies from the initial establishment & planning, factory construction, marketing, Media, and general affairs. Various differences in life and social culture would appear cross-culture adjustment problems for expatriates, and lots of factors would affect the work pressure. When expatriates gradually increase, the expense for expatriation is high for enterprises and individuals that the success in expatriation focuses on support for expatriates' career. In addition to subsidies, there should be the reference principles for selection, training, overseas life, overseas work, and repatriation. Besides, assistance in emergency could release expatriates' anxiety to enhance the work efficiency. This study therefore intends to discuss the effect of expatriates' cross-culture adjustment on working pressure and job involvement. The questionnaire survey is used for collecting data, and conclusions and specific suggestions are proposed for the reference of corporate expatriation as well as individual psychological adjustment of expatriates.

*Keywords:* expatriates, cross-culture adjustment, working pressure, job involvement,

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## **Introduction**

When developing countries largely attracted foreign businesses with more land and duty-free policies, many foreign-capital enterprises stationed in developing countries; especially, Media industry invested the most in developing countries. In the initial openness, small and medium enterprises appeared the most; and then, large enterprises gradually stationed. In consideration of Media transfer and the establishment of corporate management systems for offshore sourcing as well as the demands for market extension, numerous expatriates are required for executing company tasks in subsidiary companies from the initial establishment and planning, factory founding, marketing, Media, and general affairs. Such expatriates' personal traits and work performance are correlated with the success of subsidiary companies. After putting into production, a lot of manufacturing supervisors for expatriation management and Media transfer are required. For this reason, ones with Media suitability are first considered by an organization, while the problems of personal and family factors are relatively ignored. Such expatriates might not be familiar with a foreign place, and most organizations do not precede relevant cultural adjustment training before the expatriation that the selected expatriates, based on the coherence with the company, would accept the offer without knowing the career prospect. In this case, accepting assignment does not mean being willing to accept. Leaving for an overseas place without personal willingness would have an expatriate feel loss of future career and worry about the return to the parent company after the expatriation. The relevant measures of an organization for the expatriates' rotation and return to define the expatriates' career in the company would reduce the hesitation of expatriates. Cross-cultural adjustment problems caused by various differences in life and social culture would influence an expatriate's work stress. Along with increasing expatriates, expatriation expenses are rather high for an enterprise and individuals. An enterprise therefore should emphasize the success of expatriation and provide necessary support for the expatriate's career. In addition to real subsidies, a reference principle is necessary for selection, training, overseas life, overseas work, and return. Besides, assistance in emergency and the release of an expatriate's anxiety are essential. Aiming at the effect of expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment on work stress and job involvement, an empirical study is proceeded.

## Literature review

### *Cross-cultural adjustment*

Rui & Wang (2015) defined cross-cultural adjustment as culture shock generated in the process of an individual adjusting to different culture in a foreign country. Collie *et al.* (2015) regarded cross-cultural adjustment as individual psychological stress relief, when encountering cross-culture shock in different environments, to reduce conflict and stress at work or not at work and receive psychological comfort and ease (Stilianos *et al.*, 2017). Abdullah, Adebayo, & Talib (2015) revealed that, from a specific culture to another culture, an individual had to re-adjust to cultural differences and change the accustomed lifestyles and thinking principles; in the cross-cultural experience, an individual would acquire distinct perception changes and physical & mental changes. It was called cross-cultural adjustment. Krishnan & Kirubamoorthy (2017) regarded cross-cultural adjustment as the interaction among people with distinct culture. Such interaction behaviors were communicated through languages (Cojocar, Bragaru, & Ciuchi, 2012).

Referring to Chen *et al.* (2018), culture contains art, sports, cooking, music, dance, architecture, history, and family. The performance of culture is different in various countries that the success of expatriation enculturation includes four dimensions.

- (1) Self-adjustment: Self-adjustment mainly reinforces the spiritual comfort of an expatriate being respected and trusted. An expatriate with better adjustment could more easily deal with contradiction, emotional depression, and loneliness among people.
- (2) Other adjustment: It is an important factor in developing permanent and stable friendship with local people and being glad to communicate with local people for better enculturation.
- (3) Cognitive feeling: It refers to reducing uncertain interpersonal relationship, decreasing suspicions among people, and avoiding misunderstanding caused by different culture.
- (4) Cultural toughness: Different countries present distinct cultural characteristics. Expatriates of transnational enterprises in some countries show different dissatisfaction with performance, including job dissatisfaction, stress, medical insurance, entertainment, food, and working skills of colleagues.

### *Work stress*

Li & Zizzi (2017) mentioned that work stress was regarded as the unique reaction to the interaction between the attitudes toward the supervisors and the frequent and strong tolerance. Bijwaard & Wang (2016) explained work stress as bad physiological and psychological influence on a worker in an organization

(or an institution) when individual capability could not bear the correspondent expectation. Milbourne & Wilkinson (2015) defined work stress as the spiritual fatigue caused by being slowly exposed in heavy work stress; when the person felt exhausted and emptied, such physical and mental exhaustion at work would result in the lack of work enthusiasm, strong frustration, nervousness, and even insomnia, headache, anxiety, and depression (Song *et al.*, 2015). Gullo *et al.* (2015) divided stressors into interpersonal relationship stressor, task relationship stressor, organizational relationship stressor, and physical & mental relationship stressor.

Referring to Yu *et al.* (2018), four stress dimensions for expatriates are applied to this study: (1) *Interpersonal relationship*: Interpersonal relationship stressor refers to local people's characters, local people's work characters, bad relationship among work teams, and work-family conflict; (2) *Task relationship*: Task relationship stressor contains large workload, blurred tasks, and task conflict; (3) *Organizational relationship*: Organizational stressor refers to organizational pattern, management model, and organizational support; (4) *Physical relationship*: Physical & mental relationship stressor covers life, inconvenient transportation, and unfair treatment.

### *Job involvement*

Job involvement refers to individual psychological identity at work which is also an important indicator of work attitudes (Honebein & Honebein, 2015). Job is the focus of an individual that the involvement refers to the work attitudes and satisfaction with current work. Job involvement could be divided into two dimensions, namely the degree of an individual involving in specific work and the enthusiastic participation and individual psychological state to better identify current work after comparing with other work (Rujipak & Limprasert, 2016). Ciocca *et al.* (2015) regarded job involvement as a worker's willingness and acceptance of current work. Reddington, Peveryly, & Block (2015) pointed it out as the performance of work attitudes and divided job involvement into individual and group dimensions. Shen & Jiang (2015) stated that job involvement was individual self-dignity for the identity of the work content and work performance. For a group, job involvement was the organizational commitment.

Referring to Li (2018), the psychological conditions of job involvement are classified into

- (1) *Meaningfulness*: Meaningfulness is defined as being rewarded for the involved work role. It is generally considered that the most significant meaning of work is to receive feedback after paying efforts.
- (2) *Safety*: The meaning of safety is to present work ability without doubts of any negative effects on oneself. Each industry would cause certain effects on the society. For this reason, it is important to have the employees be comfortable of the job involvement.

(3) Availability: Availability is defined as an employee perceiving the actual, psychological, or emotional assistance at work.

#### *Correlations between cross-cultural adjustment and work stress*

Chen *et al.* (2018) pointed out the physical and spiritual stress during the expatriation and proposed that individual handling methods contained planning solutions and re-evaluating problem-solving tools (Stilianos *et al.*, 2017), emotional handling included stress release, avoiding the escape of fact, and seeking for social assistance. Jyoti & Kour (2015) indicated that an expatriate should be able to manage the effective skill for cross-cultural environment; such skills contained the maintenance of psychological health and well-being as well as self-confidence and effective stress management. In the beginning of expatriation, an individual would be anxious about the strange environment. When proper local guidance and necessary directions for work were offered before the expatriation, it would be a great help for an expatriate (Song *et al.*, 2015). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed in this study.

*H1: Cross-cultural adjustment presents significantly negative effects on work stress.*

#### *Correlations between work stress and job involvement*

Yao, Tsai, & Fang (2015) revealed that most work stressors of a firefighter, expect external organization (public opinions), were positive, reflecting that the formation of internal or individual work stress would appear positive effects on job involvement. Sorrells (2015) concluded the higher work stress, the lower job involvement to present negative correlations. Li & Zizzi (2017) found out contradictory tasks, blurred tasks, and heavy tasks as the major factors in work stress to result in spiritual fatigue, loss of oneself, and reduction of bearing. Work stress was correlated with heavy workload and task contradiction, and heavy workload would reduce job involvement (Honebein & Honebein, 2015). For this reason, the following hypothesis is proposed in this study.

*H2: Work stress shows remarkably negative effects on job involvement.*

#### *Correlations between cross-cultural adjustment and job involvement*

Yu *et al.* (2018) indicated that an individual should first solve the oversea life adjustment when working overseas, as an individual would be influenced the mood by not adjusting to life to further affect work emotion (Rujipak & Limprasert, 2016). In the research on oversea adjustment to the performance conforming to company expectation, the continuity to work oversea till the end of contract, the establishment of normal social relationship overseas, and the proper adjustment of stress, Li (2018) discovered that oversea adjustment would affect

job involvement. Sharma & Juyal (2017) also showed the research result that a foreign labor with higher adjustment to the country would present higher job involvement. Consequently, an employee with higher adjustment showed better performance at work (Shen & Jiang, 2015). The following hypothesis is therefore proposed in this study.

*H3: Cross-cultural adjustment reveals notably positive effects on job involvement.*

## **Sample and measuring indicator**

### *Research sample and object*

Aiming at Media industry, expatriates in Media industry in Taiwan are distributed 500 copies of questionnaire, and 377 valid copies are retrieved, with the retrieval rate 75%.

### *Reliability and validity test*

The questionnaire items in this study are referred to domestic and international researchers that the questionnaire presents certain content validity. Dimensions of cross-cultural adjustment, work stress, and job involvement are tested the overall structural causation, and the linear structural relations model analysis result reveals the overall model fit reaching the rational range that it shows favorable convergent validity and predictive validity. Item-to-total correlation coefficients are utilized in this study for testing the construct validity of the questionnaire, i.e. reliability analysis. The calculated item-to-total correlation coefficients are applied to judge the questionnaire content. The item-to-total correlation coefficients of the dimensions in this study are higher than 0.7, revealing certain degree of construct validity of the dimensions.

To further understand the reliability of the questionnaire, reliability analysis is preceded in this study. The formal questionnaire is developed according to the standard, and the measured Cronbach's  $\alpha$  appears in 0.70~0.90, apparently conforming to the reliability range.

## Results

### *LISREL model evaluation indicator*

LISREL (linear structural relation) model, combining factor analysis and path analysis in traditional statistics and added simultaneous equations in econometrics, could calculate multiple factors and multiple casual paths at the same time. The model fit could be evaluated with preliminary fit criteria, overall model fit, and fit of internal structure of model.

The data are organized as below, and the preliminary fit, internal fit, and overall fit of the model are explained as followings.

*Table 1* reveals that four dimensions of cross-cultural adjustment (self-adjustment, other adjustment, cognitive feeling, cultural toughness) appear significant explanations on cross-cultural adjustment ( $t > 1.96$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), four dimensions of work stress (interpersonal relationship, task relationship, organizational relationship, physical relationship) present remarkable explanations on work stress ( $t > 1.96$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and three dimensions of job involvement (meaningfulness, safety, availability) show notable explanations on job involvement ( $t > 1.96$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Apparently, the overall model in this study presents favorable preliminary fit.

*Table 1:* Overall linear structural model analysis result

evaluation item	parameter/evaluation standard		result	t
preliminary fit	cross-cultural adjustment	self-adjustment	0.702	9.45**
		other adjustment	0.713	10.12**
		cognitive feeling	0.723	10.36**
		cultural toughness	0.731	10.97**
	work stress	interpersonal relationship	0.784	14.15**
		task relationship	0.775	13.44**
		organizational relationship	0.766	12.69**
		physical relationship	0.754	12.33**
	job involvement	meaningfulness	0.806	16.27**
		safety	0.811	17.38**
		availability	0.791	15.82**

*Note:* \* stands for  $p < 0.05$ , \*\* for  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* for  $p < 0.001$ .

*Table 2* shows positive and significant correlations between cross-cultural adjustment and work stress ( $-0.873$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), work stress and job involvement ( $-0.862$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), as well as cross-cultural adjustment and job involvement ( $0.884$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) that H1, H2, and H3 are supported.



Table 2: Overall linear structural model analysis result

evaluation item	parameter/evaluation standard	result	t
internal fit	cross-cultural adjustment→work stress	-0.873	-24.86**
	work stress→job involvement	-0.862	-22.57**
	cross-cultural adjustment→job involvement	0.884	27.51**

Note: \* stands for  $p < 0.05$ , \*\* for  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* for  $p < 0.001$ .

In Table 3, the overall model fit standards  $\chi^2/Df=1.476$ , smaller than the standard 3, and  $RMR=0.004$ , showing that  $\chi^2/DF$  and  $RMR$  are proper. Furthermore, chi-square is sensitive to sample size that it is not suitable for directly judging the fit. The overall model fit standards  $GFI=0.968$  and  $AGFI=0.915$  are higher than the standard 0.9 (the closer  $GFI$  and  $AGFI$  to 1, the better model fit). This study therefore presents better fit indicators.

Table 3: Overall linear structural model analysis result

overall fit	$\chi^2/Df$	1.476
	GFI	0.968
	AGFI	0.915
	RMR	0.004

Note: \* stands for  $p < 0.05$ , \*\* for  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* for  $p < 0.001$ .

## Conclusion

The research results show that employees in Media industry being able to adjust to the custom in the expatriation country would present higher job involvement. It might because employees in Media industry being able to adjust to the life in the expatriation country could more easily find out the way to release work stress, e.g. shopping, or travel. It would help employees in Media industry reduce job stress and better involve in the job. Generally speaking, local people, expatriates, or local employees have their stress releasing methods after work. Having expatriates in Media industry perceive happy life could effectively reduce work stress to present good performance. Expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment is therefore correlated to work stress and job involvement. Expatriates in Media industry being able to easily control the work appear lower work stress and more easily show higher job involvement. In general, expatriates in Media industry adjusting to work contents reveal the less frustration and work stress that they could have higher achievement and higher job involvement.

### Recommendations

By organizing the research results and findings, the following practical suggestions are proposed in this study.

(1) Managers in Media corporate should consider the impact of expatriation period on employees; the longer expatriation period would result in higher stress. Expatriates show distinct stress that strong organizational support could have them adjust to local life and job and enhance job efficiency.

(2) Expatriates' work stress is closely related to the local adjustment. Although the climate cannot be changed, a Media corporate could satisfy expatriates' expectation of living environment as much as possible to have good interaction environment with local people.

(3) An expatriate not adjusting to the expatriation life would not present high job involvement. In this case, a Media corporate could concern about the expatriate's daily life, hold activities for the expatriate understanding the customs of the expatriation country and further accustom and integrate into the life to enhance the job involvement.

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