Research Paper on

"Factors Related to the Adjustment of Japanese Expatriate Managers in Pakistan",

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Abstract.

In this report, I examine the cross cultural challenges, and in-post support of Japanese expatriates posted to Pakistan. The issues surrounding expatriation are of increasing interest as more organizations shift their focus from domestic to international operations. A most important aspect of international operations involves effectively selecting and preparing expatriates for international assignments and the cultural challenges they face.

Keywords: *Cross-Cultureal Challenges, Expatriate Issues, Careers, Human Resource Management. Pakistan.*

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Due to the strategic developmental importance of such assignments, researchers and organizations alike are increasingly concerned with ensuring expatriate success. Research on expatriation to date has focused largely on expatriates posted to and from North American and European countries. Yet, the Asian region is also of great importance to international operations and is recording the highest rate of expatriate assignments. Pakistan is of particular strategic importance to many organizations (including Japan) that are relocating, and/or expanding their Asian operations.

A significant challenge underlying geographic expansion is the greater need for coordination and control toward the achievement of an efficient, integrated organization (Bartlett and Ghoshal, 1991). One avenue for multinational corporations (MNCs) to obtain and maintain this integration is through expatriation, or the assignment of home-country managers to overseas subsidiary locations (Boyacigiller, 1991). A potential advantage of expatriation is the organizational learning that is facilitated by the expatriate's experiences overseas (Boyacigiller, 1991), and thus expatriation is a tool by which organizations can gather and maintain a resident base of information about the complexities of international management. However, some organizations remain too detached from the local influences to glean this knowledge (Hendry and Perkins, 2001). The enormous investment involved in this type of strategy challenges the organization to select, retain and successfully repatriate the appropriate individual through sound human resource management policy (Bonache and Brewster, 2001). Therefore, factors contributing to the successful expatriate experience are of significant interest to MNCs.

An inevitable consequence of the increasing globalization of business is deployment of managers to affiliates and subsidiaries in all corners of the world (Brewster and Scullion, 1997). Finding the right people for these assignments and making them stay there for the duration of their assignments, however, are challenging tasks. This is because expatriates working in a foreign environment with very different political, cultural and economic conditions often face both job-related and personal problems (Birdseye and Hills, 1995). If ignored, these problems result in stress and dissatisfaction inside and outside of an expatriate's professional life and may lead to turnover. Indeed, failure rates among expatriates, measured as those who return prematurely, can reach staggering proportions and be quite costly not only to the companies which transfer the employee and his/her family abroad but also to the expatriates themselves.

Maximizing the performance of expatriate employees may be defined as sending an employee to a host country operation capable of achieving the best results for the expatriate, the organization and the host country in terms of adaptability and political, business, cultural and social sensitivity. Achieving such adaptability and sensitivity involves significant attention being given to careful selection of expatriates for the host culture in which they will be employed, coupled with ongoing support by their organizations. These needs are even greater in instances of large gaps between

home and host nation cultures (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede & Bond, 1988).

2-Brief Information of Pakistan and its Culture.

(A). Facts and Statistics

- Location: Southern Asia, bordering Afghanistan 2,430 km, China 523 km, India 2,912 km, Iran 909 km
- Capital: Islamabad
- Population: 159,196,336 (July 2004 est.)
- Ethnic Make-up: Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashtun (Pathan), Baloch, Muhajir (immigrants from India at the time of partition and their descendants)
- Religions: Muslim 97% (Sunni 77%, Shi'a 20%), Christian, Hindu, and other 3%
- Languages in Pakistan

Urdu is the only official language of Pakistan, although English is generally used instead of Urdu in this regard. English is the lingua franca of the Pakistani elite and most of the government ministries.

Urdu is closely related to Hindi but is written in an extended Arabic alphabet rather than in Devanagari. Urdu also has more loans from Arabic and Persian than Hindi has.

Many other languages are spoken in Pakistan, including Punjabi, Siraiki, Sindhi, Pashtu, Balochi, Hindko, Brahui, Burushaski, Balti, Khawar, Gujrati and other languages with smaller numbers of speakers.

(B). Pakistani Society & Culture

- Islam

· Islam is practiced by the majority of Pakistanis and governs their personal, political, economic and legal lives.
· Among certain obligations for Muslims are to pray five times a day—at dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset, and evening.
· During the holy month of Ramadan all Muslims must fast from dawn to dusk and are only permitted to work six hours per day. Fasting includes no eating, drinking, cigarette smoking, or gum chewing.

- The Family

· The extended family is the basis of the social structure and individual identity.
· It includes the nuclear family, immediate relatives, distant relatives, tribe members, friends, and neighbors.

· Loyalty to the family comes before other social relationships, even business.

· Nepotism is viewed positively, since it guarantees hiring people who can be trusted, which is crucial in a country where working with people one knows and trusts is of primary importance.

· The family is more private than in many other cultures.

· Female relatives are protected from outside influences. It is considered inappropriate to ask questions about a Pakistani's wife or other female relatives.

· Families are quite large by western standards, often having up to 6 children.

● Hierarchical Society

· Pakistan is a hierarchical society.

· People are respected because of their age and position.

· Older people are viewed as wise and are granted respect. In a social situation, they are served first and their drinks may be poured for them. Elders are introduced first, are provided with the choicest cuts of meat, and in general are treated much like royalty.

· Pakistanis expect the most senior person, by age or position, to make decisions that are in the best interest of the group.

· Titles are very important and denote respect. It is expected that you will use a person's title and their surname until invited to use their first name.

3-Cross-cultural adjustment problems faced by expatriates.

The cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates has been under extensive study for a long time for broader discussion, for example, (see Black J., 1991) and thus the theoretical basis is only briefly described here. The best known theoretical model of international adjustment has been developed by Black J. (1991). In this framework adjustment has been divided into three facets: adjustment to work, adjustment to interacting with host nationals, and adjustment to the general environment. Furthermore, it has been reported that adjustment problems related to work responsibilities commonly appear in connections such as manager-subordinate interaction, functioning of organizations, communication, and task environment (Brewster, C. & Larsen, H. 1992). Adjustment problems related to the general living environment typically include issues concerning housing, food, shopping, banking, entertainment, legal regulation and health care (McEvoy and Parker, 1995). These classifications will be applied in the present study. The model proposed by Black J. (1991) also specifies different antecedent variables of adjustment and classifies them into four major groups: individual, work, organization and non-work variables. However, such antecedents are not included in the present study and thus deserve no further discussion here.

Thus far research on expatriation has focused primarily on financial losses to organizations when expatriates return prematurely from foreign assignments or resign from organizations shortly

after returning to the home country (Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Black, et al., 1991; Brewster & Larsen, 1992). However, this limited definition of expatriate failure as initially identified in the literature (Black, Mendenhall & Oddou, 1991; Nicholson et al., 1990; Tung, 1982) takes insufficient account of the expatriates who remain in the foreign posting and continue with the organization but have nonetheless failed in adapting to the host country culture. It is this lack of cultural sensitivity, as a result of being poorly selected, and supported, which leads to failure to adapt on business and social levels. The problem of significance is not only the financial costs which organizations incur in the short-term if expatriates return prematurely or depart from their organization, but also their taking skills, expertise and experience to competitors (for an analysis of those at risk of premature departure, see Garonzik, Brockner & Siegel, 2000).

The growing body of literature recognizes the need to facilitate expatriate experiences, particularly through the enhanced cross cultural adjustment of the expatriate and his or her family (Black and Stephens, 1989). While cross-cultural issues are unique to the international setting, Naumann (1993) points out that other attitudinal dimensions (e.g. *job satisfaction and organizational commitment*) have been more prevalent in the domestic organizational behavior literature, particularly as predictors of turnover and hence organizational effectiveness. Therefore, identifying factors which enhance satisfaction could potentially reduce the number of expatriate failures, or premature returns, from overseas assignments. Naumann further notes that "there appears to be no reason that satisfaction's relationship to turnover should be weaker in the international context". A logical step, then, in extending our research in organizational behavior to the international arena would be to pay close attention to expatriate job satisfaction. Of particular interest are those factors which predict job satisfaction among expatriate managers. In other words, assignees must be motivated to stay abroad long enough to make the assignment worthwhile (Fontaine, 1997). Expatriate satisfaction may be attributed to a variety of factors, many of which have been found to affect other expatriate success outcomes, such as organizational commitment (Banai and Reisel, 1993) and expatriate and repatriate cross-cultural adjustment (Black, 1994). Determinants may include skills and abilities, behavioral patterns, family issues (Black and Gregersen, 1991), organizational training efforts (Black. J., 1992; Earley, 1987), financial inducements (Gregersen, 1992), mentoring programs (Feldman and Tompson, 1993), the host culture (Black and Stephens, 1989; Mendenhall, M. & Oddou, 1987), housing conditions (Black, 1994), and the stability of the political environment (Boyacigiller, 1991).

4-Focus of this Research.

This research examines the need for careful selection and in-post support of expatriates in Pakistan and argues that expatriates should be (a) those who possess realistic pre-departure expectations and cultural awareness and knowledge, and (b) those whom are provided with in-post support, including work-related skill development, mentoring and consultative groups. Moreover,

this research broadens the focus from a literature that is largely about Japanese, North American and European organizations. As yet, little research has yet been conducted examining the selection and/or support of expatriates in Japanese organizations operating in Asia.

Pakistan has been chosen as the country loom large in the current and future trading and expansion plans of many Japanese organizations. Yet, despite the obvious worth of this country to Japanese organizations very little attention has been given to recognizing the cultural and social knowledge required to do business effectively in this expanding market (Fish & Wood, 1994; IRIC, 1995). Such attention is obviously required given the large cultural "distance" between Pakistan and Japan. As Pakistan is a major target market for Japanese organizations, then the HR departments of these same organizations should be more carefully considering how they choose expatriates to enter such a promising market and ensure that the expatriates are not doing irreparable damage to future relations between the two nations. In order to examine the issues of selection and support, this article begins by reviewing the literature on expatriate selection and in-post support, especially in relation to Pakistan and Japan. The selection and in-post support policies and practices are explored by studying Japanese organizations operating in Pakistan. After outlining the methods for undertaking interviews with expatriate managers of these companies in Pakistan, I analyze the results and identify implications for practice and theory.

5-Expatriate Selection and In-Post Support

The need to meet the demands of accurate selection and support of expatriates to achieve high cross-cultural performance is affecting increasing numbers of organizations as the pace of internationalization suggests that in order to survive, most organizations must become internationally focused (Goldsmith, 1996; Piore & Sable, 1994). Literature has consistently highlighted the problems and conflict inherent where expatriates lack cross-cultural skills (Seligman, S. 1999) and in some cases this has been determined by perceptions local employees have of expatriates (Selmer, J. & Ling, E. 1999). Literature has highlighted the need for acculturation and adaptation (Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999), the need to make sense of, and understand other cultures (Osland & Bird, 2000; Osland, DeFranco & Osland, 1999) and the need to adapt managerial styles via intercultural adaptation (Osland, Snyder & Osland, 1998). The need to develop cross-cultural skills in expatriates is even greater where the gap between home and host nation cultures is very wide, or indeed as Kaye & Taylor (1997) note of Pakistan, where the culture shock experienced is marked.

(A). Selection

The question which organizations must address when recruiting for international subsidiaries is: What are the advantages of selecting an expatriate manager, known as a parent country national

(PCN) over a host country national (HCN)? PCNs generally have disadvantages in not knowing local labor markets, ignorance of the local education system, language and cultural problems and unfamiliarity with techniques and practices used in other countries (Scullion, 1992). They do, however, have the benefits of familiarity with corporate culture (Kobrin, 1998), the ability to be better developed through a series of expatriate postings, and are more likely than HCNs to be able to train local employees in understanding corporate systems and the introduction of technology (Phatak, 1989). It is also likely that PCNs have stronger informal linkages back to decision makers in the parent company. For these reasons, and despite the drawbacks, many organizations choose to send their home country employees to foreign subsidiaries rather than train local employees for these managerial positions even though this may be their long-term policy. In many organizations there is an increasing tendency to employ third country nationals (TCNs) as they are often highly skilled, multilingual and have significant experience in foreign assignments (Brook, 1988).

In the case of organizations choosing to send PCNs on foreign assignment, the literature identifies a number of factors that need to be taken into consideration to predict expatriate success. These factors include technical competence on the job; personality traits, environment variables, and family situation (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985; Tung, 1981). In addition, Phatak (1989) and Tung (1981) highlighted the importance of selecting expatriates who exhibit tolerance toward differences in race, creed, culture, customs and values, which can be viewed as expressing cultural empathy. High motivation is also identified as a factor predicting the success of the expatriate on foreign assignment (Heller, 1986). A final criterion is that of behavior, being defined as non-judgmental, showing tolerance for ambiguity and displays of respect. Scales have been developed to assess the fit between the person selected, the organization and the host country culture (Chatman, 1989).

Recent literature has come out of the Asia region which has highlighted the necessity to understand the importance of the cultural adaptability skills of the expatriates themselves. Such literature has examined the adjustment of expatriates and their cross-cultural skills (see Selmer, 1999a; Selmer, 1999b; Selmer 1999c; Selmer 1999d; Selmer & Ling, 1999), skills in no small part related to expatriates being selected on the basis of their existing knowledge of the host nation's language and cultural nuances.

The development over the last number of years of introducing competency frameworks into selection policies has added an additional dimension to the selection of expatriate managers. It is perhaps the development of competency lists that has generated the superhuman image of the international manager largely due to the lack of agreement about competencies that are considered important, or through a general lack of communicating externally those competencies that are utilized internally. Whitley, R. (1992) is in no doubt that there are generic management competency dimensions which he calls "universal" competencies, as does Dulewicz (1989) who calls them "supra" competencies. Tung's research indicated that a universal competence of "communicative ability" crossed all job types in the contingency approach. Recent research

substantiates the idea that there are a limited number of key variables. For example, a study conducted by Whitley, R. (1993) suggests that international managers require three "universal competencies" (leadership, communication and adaptability), and the recent exposition of the foreign assignment selection test (FAST) (Fuchsberg, 1994) outlines six dimensions of success (cultural flexibility, willingness to communicate, ability to develop social relations, perceptual abilities, conflict-resolution style, and leadership style).

In the international environment the difficulty of specifying competencies for each job, and for each geographical region of the globe, makes it impossible not to rely on core competencies in the selection of international managers. As with personality variables, the multitude of existing competencies are characterized by minor semantic differences of a much smaller number of core competencies that would deliver successful behavior in an international environment over and above those that would normally be included in organizationally specific selection decisions.

A further important aspect of correctly identifying an expatriate who has the potential to succeed in a foreign posting is carefully analyzing the expatriate's spouse and family. Tung (1982) identified four major areas of expatriate failure, two of which involved the attitudes of the expatriate's family to the assignment. These include: the spouse's inability to adjust; the employee's inability to adjust; the employee's personal or emotional immaturity; and other family problems.

It has been argued that selection should be based on personality suitability of candidates for expatriate postings (Jordan & Cartwright, 1998, 89) and indeed various studies have highlighted tests that can be undertaken to assess an employee's (and their family's) suitability for a foreign assignment such as psychological testing and interviewing or an overseas assignment inventory profile, cross-cultural adaptability profile (Kelley & Meyers, 1987)

Moreover, it is argued that the cross-cultural training for expatriates may only be beneficial in cases where expatriates themselves have been pre-disposed to undertaking a posting in the first instance (Caliguiri, 2000) or possess certain factors which make them willing (Borstof 1997). It is also argued that selection should involve understanding the importance of a psychological contract with the expatriate which clearly articulates needs and expectations (Lewis, 1997, 279). Further, career motivation of the expatriate is part of the equation (Fish & Wood, 1997). It is also evident from the literature that selection should include consideration of the previous experience in expatriation of potential candidates as well as cultural and language knowledge (Shaffer, Harrison & Gilley, 1999).

(B). Understanding Pakistan's Culture

Understanding relationships from the Pakistani perspective (and hence being effective as an expatriate operating in Pakistanis-based societies) has relied upon a knowledge of the synthesis of *culturalist and institutionalist* explanations "constituted by combinations of models from formal market and hierarchy perspectives and informal network perspectives". Studies of Pakistan have

also focused on family networks (traditional), friendship, and other particularistic ties (institutional) to gain an understanding of Pakistanis businesses.

(C). In-Post Support

Whilst literature has acknowledged that in addition to being carefully selected for their cross-cultural skills, expatriates require on-going assistance in the form of in-post support, little attention has been given to the form this support should take. Factors which are considered in the literature include, regular up-dates from the home country organization, information about performance expectations, medical and psychological assistance (Harris, 1989), and counseling (De Cieri, etc al., 1991). Moreover, the importance of proving on-going support to spouse and family has been cited (De Cieri et al., 1991; Fontaine, 1997). To this end, the importance of providing information on housing, health, schooling and on-going language and communication training has been acknowledged (Nicholson et al., 1990).

Another neglected area of in-post support that is highlighted in the literature is repatriation. Poor repatriation cannot only mean the loss of high quality expatriates from organizations (Halcrow, 1999), but can also result in employee reluctance to accept overseas positions (Allen & Alvarez, 1999, 29) or the tensions associated with such may hinder the effectiveness of their expatriate assignment. Despite Harris's assertion that the "third stage (following selection and training), on-site support is the least understood but perhaps the most important part of the process" (1986, 108), it remains a neglected aspect of the assistance provided to expatriates by their organizations.

In-post support needs to incorporate elements of on-site socialization of the expatriate manager (Katz & Seifer, 1996, 42), and ideally this should follow an extensive cross-cultural training process. It is argued that support systems should be established and coordinated between repatriated staff, senior expatriated staff and new expatriates and that this network should provide information on both cultural topics of the host nation as well as organizational information about domestic operations while the manager is overseas (Katz & Seifer, 1996, 42). Borstof et al. (1997) conclude that support should be a process from beginning to end of expatriation and include career planning support, selection support, adequate lead time, training support, mentor support, compensation support, family assistance support, and repatriation support. Clearly, given the importance of this issue, there are grounds for suggesting that lack of in-post support is a major problem area for Japanese expatriates in Pakistan and this, along with selection, is very much in need of the development of a best practice model for HR departments.

6-Methodology

The information on which this study is based was obtained through semi structured interviews conducted with expatriate managers in Karachi, Pakistan in summer, 2006. Qualitative interviews

were conducted with the expatriates with the aim of hearing in detail and complexity how they describe and contextualize why their companies selected them for this international assignment, and the in-post support offered by their organizations. Thus, the authors were able to ascertain not only *what* is happening, but also *why* organizations make the choices they do in relation to selection, and in-post support.

(A). Procedure

From databases of Japanese organizations operating in Pakistan maintained by the Foreign Chamber of commerce Karachi, Pakistan and the Japanese Consulate In Karachi, Pakistan, 14 organizations were selected for study. Organizations were selected provided they met two conditions: they had 500 or more employees and had operations in Pakistan for at least five years. These conditions were established for the following reasons. First, it was felt that, given their size and financial resources, large employers would be more likely to have developed some form of cross-cultural and expatriate training program. Second, it was reasoned that organizations which have had operations in Pakistan for at least five years would be more likely than more recent investors to have developed a host nation profile and be acquainted with the cultural demands of operating within this nation. Organizations were also chosen across industries to avoid the possibility of industry-specific practices obscuring the findings.

Of the 14 organizations that met the criteria, 12 organizations agreed to participate in the research. A semi-structured interview was designed to be of one hour duration. In practice, interviews were between forty minutes and two hours in duration. The interview notes were transcribed and, where necessary, returned to the interviewees for clarification and further comment. At the interviewees' request, interviews were not audio-recorded. At all stages throughout the process expatriates were assured that all information provided was given on a purely voluntary basis. Moreover, they were reminded that their names, their employees' names and the names of their organizations would not appear on any data collected and would be kept strictly confidential.

(B). Sample

The sample of 12 Japanese organizations and expatriates were drawn from a multi-industry background of organizations operating on a joint-venture or direct foreign investment basis with the proviso being that senior management of the organizations must be non-Pakistanis. The ethnic background of the participants was Japanese. The majority of respondents were male, although efforts were made by the researcher to seek interviews with fairly equal numbers of males and females by requesting to interview female managers. For bio data on the expatriates interviewed and surveyed, see Table 1. For confidentiality of participants, pseudonyms for organizations are

used throughout. The table highlights the gender of the respondents. The respondents' industry placing, years of experience in Pakistan and as an expatriate elsewhere are noted in the table. Their language proficiency (in addition to Japanese) as well as their culture training/education in Pakistan also noted. Of the respondents, the majority held the position of CEO or Senior Manager in the Pakistan operation. Of the 12 respondents, eight were married and the remainder single. The ages of the respondents ranged from 25 to 45 with the average age being 33. Expatriates were selected by the organizations contacted. As noted the majority of the interviewees held the most senior positions in the host nation operation and hence were the first point of contact in the organizations.

Table 1: Bio data for Expatriates

Respondent Code	Years in Pakistan	Years as expatriate elsewhere	Other Languages (other than Japanese)	Pakistanis culture Education/ familiarity with Pakistani language
1 Bac-X-JM	5	2	English/Chinese	Yes
2 Elec-X-JM	1	1	English/Chinese	No
3 Elec-X-JM	3		English	Yes
4 Man-X-JM	3	2	English	Yes
5 Educ-X-JM	5	3	English/Arabic	Yes
6 Cat-X-JF	2		English	No
7 Educ-X-JM	4		English	Yes
8 Trans-X-JM	5	2	English/Spanish	Yes
9 Man-X-JM	2		English	Yes
10Educ-X-JF	1	1	English	Yes
11Man-X-JM	1	1	English	No
12Man-X-JM	6		English	Yes

Respondent Codes:

Industry type: Bac=building and construction industry; Elec=electronic and components industry; Trans=transportation industry; Man=manufacturing industry;

Cat=clothing and textiles industry; Educ=education and training industry;:

Nationality: J=Japanese national

Gender: M=Male; F=Female

(C). Measurement

In the interviews expatriates were asked their beliefs about the reasons for their selection, the in-post support received, and other areas in which they believe there is a need for greater assistance. The questions were developed on the basis of areas of need identified in the literature and questions were specifically adapted to the cultural and business practices of Pakistan.

7-Results and Discussion

One of the key findings of this study is that organizations still give very little attention to in-post support. However, they are clearly making a much greater effort to choose expatriates who have language and cross-cultural knowledge skills, and have, in many cases, completed other foreign postings. This suggests that organizations are still not prepared to invest resources (both monetary and time) in preparing and/or supporting their expatriates, but at least they are acknowledging that the demands of operating in a foreign environment are quite different from that of the home environment. Hence, they are recognizing that there is a necessity to choose people who already possess some of the skills to make them more successful than managers who do not have these skills.

(A). Selection

As noted earlier, when filling expatriate positions, organizations do seem to be giving much more attention to the need to select employees who already have some knowledge of the country in which they will live and work. Moreover, it is consistent with the literature that argues that in addition to technical competence, expatriates should be chosen who exhibit personality traits which make them more suitable for expatriate posting, such as knowledge of the country in which they will live. Many of the expatriates interviewed in this cohort have had some cultural and social training in Pakistan. Certainly this is likely to suggest that they will exhibit greater tolerance to the values of this society and make them a better choice for posting to Pakistan than expatriates without prior experience of the nation. As one interviewee noted it is hard to make generalizations.

> *But, I have worked in Hong Kong then in the US. My company appreciated my industry experience, language skills and customer knowledge base. I knew something about the culture I was operating in and perhaps this makes me a more suitable applicant than someone who does not have this knowledge (of the culture). (1Bac-X-JM).*

Or as another interviewee emphatically claimed,

> *it was definitely because of my good understanding of Pakistani Language Urdu and culture*

and being capable of relating to clients. (9Man-X-JM).

Moreover, interviewees consistently argued that their previous experience, where they had some, was a key factor in their being selected for their current assignment in Pakistan, and was also stressed as an argument for these individuals being more motivated to succeed in this environment (Heller, 1986). As one interviewee remarked,

> *I worked in Taiwan. It showed I could adapt. Companies do not want to invest in people who will not stay. It needs to be more than just a career choice; lifestyle also needs to be considered. people need to be chosen who are prepared to give up aspects of lifestyles they have in the West to further their careers. (2Elec-X-JM).*

And as another argued,

> *The fact that I had lived and worked in Pakistan...I was available, I was single and I had the skills they required. (10Educ-X-JF).*

Despite the evidence that organizations are giving increasing attention to expatriate selection, one expatriate argued that he would like his own organization to have been more attentive to selecting someone with Pakistan (or Pakistanis culture) experience. As he argued

> *they (management) need to consider who to select. Quality local staff and quality expatriate staff who have worked with the Pakistanis before and understand such things as attitudes to time management and "rubber" time. Pakistanis are reactive, not proactive... They have different attitudes... This can be difficult for someone without Pakistani knowledge (culture) to understand (3Elec-X-JM).*

Further, as another expatriate highlighted,

> *correct selection is vital. We need to ask, "Do the people really want to be in Pakistan? Are they adding value...Foreign managers need to be carefully selected with a mind to their cultural adaptability". (8Trans-X-JM).*

(B). In-Post Support

Interviewees were questioned about whether they were provided with any in-post support, and if so, what it entailed. They were also asked whether they believed their organizations could have provided more in-post support and if so, how? Despite in-post support being perhaps the most important part of the adjustment process, less than half of the expatriates examined in this study report that they receive such support. six of the interviewees said they had received some in-post support which was, in all cases, the appointment of a mentor that usually occurs on an informal basis from within the subsidiary organization. This mentoring role operated on a social level. As

one expatriate noted,

> *the people here already had contacts...This is highly informal. I already had a lot of information, but certainly could have used more. (1Bac-X-JM).*

On a business level, as noted by another expatriate,

> *the mentor function is provided informally — it is someone to ask questions, provide advice, oversee the expatriates. This serves as a transition process — they provide a good introduction to Pakistan. (4Man-X-JM).*

Where support exists it tends to be limited to information about the home country organization and performance expectations as well as practical assistance in the form of information about medical and shopping facilities. No expatriate had been provided with family training in language and communication skills, which must be viewed as essential to a successful expatriate posting.

Almost all interviewees argued that some form of in-post support, if only on an informal basis, is warranted. Seventy percent of the expatriates agreed that in-post support is a necessity for individuals to adapt on a social level and to assist them in being culturally sensitive in social and business settings, and hence ensuring that expatriate failure is much less likely to occur. Interviewees were also questioned about whether they believe that their organizations could have provided them with more in the way of in-post support. To this, one expatriate responded,

> *perhaps there should be more access to formalized channels. There is a lot of informal support amongst expatriate wives, but that makes it difficult for an expatriate female worker as women are excluded. Business-wise it is a fairly close network — in some ways this is easier than being at home...But no, the [home] company has not really provided it. (4Man-X-JM).*

Moreover, one expatriate suggested that

> *I would have liked better communication from headquarters and support. I felt isolated initially because of time differences, lack of e-mail and the remote nature of the factory. (11Man-X-JM).*

Another expatriate summarized the views of many others in suggesting that,

> *there is real need for a support hotline in HQ — a Pakistan expert. A lonely planet guide for Pakistan might have helped...There is a very gross assumption that as an expatriate you should know how to do everything. (3Elec-X-JM).*

(C). Other Issues Mentioned by Expatriates

Expatriates were also given an opportunity to respond to an open-ended question of whether

there were any other issues associated with their expatriate experience, their selection and their support that they would like to discuss. They were also asked whether there were any other areas in which their organization could have provided support that would have made their expatriate experience more successful from their own perspective, that of the organization, and the host country. Expatriates responded that there were many social and business issues that were not addressed by organizations and that there was a desperate need for organizations to recognize the importance of cultural understanding to ensure expatriate success at individual, organizational and country levels. On a social level, the most common theme was that there was insufficient support for families and their adjustment needs. As one expatriate argued,

> *there needs to be advice provided on spouse and family adjustment. Wives have the frustration of living in a new environment and not being able to work and speak the language. It requires a very outgoing nature. So, there are problems for both married and single and these adjustment issues are simply still not being addressed by organizations in terms of support. (1Bac-X-EM).*

On a business level, expatriates argued that they are arriving in Pakistan insufficiently prepared about the culture in terms of issues like loss of face, corruption, and handling conflict. One expatriate suggested that her major difficulty was that,

> *there is too much discussion (in Pakistan) without resolution. Pakistan has very different business practices. Leadership in the home country do not understand what it is like in Pakistan. People fail because the company denies there are problems. I simply did not have this knowledge before being posted to Pakistan. (4Man-X-JM).*

In terms of their own difficulties encountered that they believed organizations need to more fully prepare them for, expatriates suggested that there needed to be much more training in cultural practices.

> *it is very difficult and different in a country like this. I was totally unprepared and for the first two years I did venture outside my hotel. (8Trans-X-JM).*

It was also suggested that organizations need to more fully prepare expatriates for how different Pakistan will be in terms of facilities and resources.

> *good guide books are crucial to provide advice on food, medicine, medical help, drinking water, finding food on the streets, acceptance of weather conditions, clubs and activities. (8Trans-X-JM).*

And knowing about living conditions.

> *the pollution complete change to the lifestyle I am enjoying in Pakistan. (6Cat-X-JF).*

From the perspective of the organization, expatriates also argued that they needed to be much more culturally prepared in order to avoid simple business faux pas that potentially can damage home and subsidiary company relations. As one expatriate claimed,

> *how to deal with Pakistanis business practices. If fully immersed in Pakistanis culture you would learn quickly but most expats do not immerse. You do need some to hold your hand initially.* (3Elec-X-JM).

Further, it was argued by expatriates that it was essential that organizations send them to Pakistan fully prepared for the demands of what environment as expatriate failure has implications not only for organization's business dealings in Pakistan, but also has the potential broader ramifications of damage to foreign relations. One expatriate suggested that the key to success is for expatriates to learn diplomacy (and ideally to have learned this prior to the posting!). As he said,

> *not to do so can cause irreparable damage to relations...if there are culturally insensitive practices—such as frustration and bribery. People need to have institutionalized knowledge of how to do business, what are social and cultural practices and what is economically, politically and socially acceptable. The hardest thing about being in Pakistan for me is the ethics. There is the establishment of relationships to have things done through bribery. There is a fundamental difference between the Pakistan and Japan. The scarcity of the Pakistan means you need bribery to survive...but you also need to have company knowledge and ethical standards.* (1Bac-X-JM).

8-Conclusions

Implications for Practice

Current research suggests that expatriate selection is very much ad hoc in nature. This research suggests that organizations are, however, giving more attention to selection than has been noted in the literature and good results in terms of cross-cultural communication skills are the by-product of this where it occurs. It is evident, though, that expatriate preparation and cross-cultural adaptability skills need to be improved in a number of important aspects. There is a clear need for expatriates to be fully briefed prior to being sent on overseas postings and that careful selection should be balanced with goal-setting, performance expectations, and awareness of socio-cultural limitations of operating from a business and social perspective in the host environment. It follows then that the more country specific is the experience of expatriate, the better. However, generalist knowledge of Pakistanis culture, particularly in reference to knowledge of customs and business practices, would also be desirable aspects to incorporate into selection processes.

Given that organizations continue to post PCNs overseas, the time spent on developing

effective selection processes and on-going support would be money and time well invested and could substantially reduce the problems associated with having expatriate managers who are emotionally and practically ill-equipped for the demands of the business and social environment in their host country operation. Whilst sending individuals and/or families on short visits to countries of expected posting involves considerable time and resources, the indirect benefits in terms of increased individual employee confidence and ability to adapt to, and respect, the local people and environment are probably substantial. Further, to extend such experience to the selection process would provide organizations with a committed group of individuals who are suited to being transferred back and forth across international operations.

Implications for Theory

As noted, despite the breadth, and in some cases depth, of research into the need for more attention being given to expatriate selection, the focus has overwhelmingly been on North American and European cases. To this end, research examining the adjustment of Japanese managers and for expatriates in Pakistan makes a valuable contribution to existing literature. Within the bodies of literature that have examined Pakistan and Asia, the focus has been largely on top-level managers, conflict resolution and sociological interaction and general adjustment. Little attention has hitherto been given to non-work adjustment and the implications it has for work adjustment. Where it has been considered, the focus has been largely North American and European. Apart from research conducted by the author and mentioned briefly in other literature, no research addressing the need for in-post support for expatriates and their families from the perspective of Japanese managers could be found. Importantly this research broadens the areas of existing literature. it does still provide valuable implications for practice which may be generalized across the expatriation experience. This research also supports the generalizations in existing literature that may be made about Pakistan concerning the need for preparedness (and perhaps a more significant need given its greater cultural distance than previously examined nations). Despite the convincing argument made in the literature for cultural preparedness and support of expatriates, organizations are still giving very little attention to providing, or developing support programs. Much of the onus is resting on the expatriates themselves to find their own areas of need and informally seek out assistance.

Implications for Future Research

This study makes two key contributions to existing literature and research. First, it examines selection of, and support of, expatriates for operations in Pakistan. This is a significant contribution given that the majority of existing literature focuses on North America and Europe (and where there is an south east Asia focus,). Second, the research establishes a model and guidelines for organizations to follow in selecting and supporting their expatriates for foreign postings to best ensure their cultural preparedness and ability to adapt and be sensitive to the local situation.

However, it is acknowledged that this research is limited by being based on a small sample and the future research that is based on a larger sample would be beneficial. A larger sample could include a wider range of cultural backgrounds for the expatriates examined. I also suggest that further research, including my own, could broaden this initial study to include a quantitative survey of expatriates as well as a quantitative survey of the expatriates' local employees. Moreover, literature and practice would also be better informed by future research focused on other aspects beyond the scope of this research which do affect the ability of expatriates to adapt and be culturally sensitive. A most important factor is the influence of spouses and families, which is covered elsewhere in the literature but has not been examined in the context of Pakistan.

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