

8-2012

A Qualitative Analysis of Challenges Facing Expatriate Worker Coming to the United States

Oghenebruphiyo Gloria Onosu
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Follow this and additional works at: <http://knowledge.library.iup.edu/etd>

Recommended Citation

Onosu, Oghenebruphiyo Gloria, "A Qualitative Analysis of Challenges Facing Expatriate Worker Coming to the United States" (2012). *Theses and Dissertations (All)*. 1110.
<http://knowledge.library.iup.edu/etd/1110>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Knowledge Repository @ IUP. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations (All) by an authorized administrator of Knowledge Repository @ IUP. For more information, please contact cclouser@iup.edu, sara.parme@iup.edu.

A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF CHALLENGES FACING
EXPATRIATE WORKER COMING TO THE UNITED STATES

A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirement for the Degree

Master of Arts

Oghenebruphiyo Gloria Onosu

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

August, 2012

Indiana University of Pennsylvania
School of Graduate Studies and Research
Department of Employment and Labor Relations

We hereby approve the thesis of

Oghenebruphiyo Gloria Onosu

Candidate for the degree of Master of Arts

Dr. David M. Piper
Professor of Employment and Labor Relations,
Advisor

Dr. Scott E. Decker
Assistant Professor of Employment and
Labor Relations

Dr. Michael T. Kornis
Assistant Professor of Employment and
Labor Relations

ACCEPTED

Timothy P. Mack, Ph.D.

Dean

School of Graduate Studies and Research

Title: A Qualitative Analysis of Challenges Facing Expatriate Worker Coming to the United States

Author: Oghenebruphiyo Gloria Onosu

Thesis Chair: Dr. David M. Piper

Thesis Committee Members: Dr. Scott E. Decker

Dr. Michael T. Korns

A qualitative analysis of challenges facing expatriate workers coming to the United States was a study that examined the relationship between work, interactive, and general adjustment in relation to job performance for foreigners on cross-cultural assignment to the United States. Participants in this study were purposefully selected and were made up of fifteen foreign expatriates currently on assignment for an average period of two years to the United States.

Data for this study was collected by conducting semi-structured face to face interviews with each of the participants. Based on the in-depth description of the experiences of the challenges faced by the foreign expatriates who participated in this study, six main themes emerged: support, Language ability, Adjustment process, cultural difference, knowledge of environment, and openness. These themes were discovered to influence the process of work adjustment, general adjustment and interactive adjustment of expatriate while on international assignment to the United States.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I would like to dedicate this thesis to the people who have been of significant help and support in completing my Master's program, and without whom, this project would not have been possible. I dedicate this study to my parents, brothers, and sisters. Furthermore, I want to extend this dedication to my friends who have become part of my family, Rodney & Gingie, Allshouse, Bob & Bonnie Bell, Clarence Felton and to God Almighty, who has so blessed me with such a beautiful family.

My profound gratitude goes to Dr. David Piper, my committee chair, for his patience, guidance, valuable advice, suggestions, and genuine interest in this project. His expertise gave me the support and push needed to finish his work. Also, I would like to express my thanks to Dr. Michael Korns for constantly taking the time to explain to me the processes of qualitative research, and for providing me with books that increased my understanding of this process. Likewise, I would like to thank Dr Scott Decker for his support and service; it was a privilege for me to have worked with such a dedicated committee. I thank you all so much. Additionally, my appreciation goes to Catherine Delcoco for providing me with encouragement during this period.

Additionally, I would like to thank Christopher Taylor for his time spent reviewing each chapter of this work, and giving me valuable suggestion on the organizational element of my work. Finally, I would like to thank the fifteen expatriates who voluntarily participated in this study; your significant contribution was vital to the completion of this project. It is my hope that this study will provide each one of you a better understanding of the adjustment process during your assignment in the United States.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
One	INTRODUCTION	1
	Background.....	1
	Personal Goal	5
	Statement and Significance of the Problem	6
	Purpose of Study	7
	Definition of Terms.....	8
	Research Questions	11
Two	THEORETICAL REVIEW	12
	Introduction	12
	Culture	13
	Expatriate Adjustment	14
	General Adjustment	17
	Work Adjustment	21
	Interactive Adjustment	25
	Personality Characteristic	28
	Expatriate Job Performance	30
Three	METHODOLOGY	32
	Research Design	33
	Data Collection	34
	Data Analysis	38
	Credibility and Dependability	39
Four	FINDINGS	40
	Brief Description of Subject	40

Chapter	Page
	Data Collection Process 41
	Data Analysis 42
	Findings 42
Five	DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION 61
	A Recap of the Study Purpose 61
	Themes and Patterns 61
	Support 62
	Language Ability 63
	Adjustment Process 64
	Cultural Difference 65
	Knowledge of Environment 66
	Openness 67
	Study Limitations 68
	The Need for Future Research 69
	Conclusion and Implication 69
	REFERENCES 72
	APPENDICES 83
	Appendix A - Informed Consent Form 83
	Appendix B - General Interview Guide 85

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 Expatriate Demographics.....	37

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background

The advancement in technology and transportation has created an enabling environment for business to expand beyond their national boundaries, leading to an increase in international subsidiaries, business partnerships, and multinational operations. This development has resulted in more opportunities for employees' to experience overseas work time during their career (Gregersen, Morrison, & Black, 1998). Even with the present global financial crisis faced around the world which has caused a rise in the cost of expatriate operations, organizations still continue to invest vast resource on cross cultural assignments because of the gains associated with this operation (Mervosh & McClenahan, 1997; Wood, 2010).

According to a 2011 survey carried out with 123 participants representing small, medium, and large organizations operating across the globe, 64% of the organizations who participated in this survey recorded an increase in the total number of their employees on international assignment for that year. Likewise, 63% of the participants projected that there will be a further increase to the number of international assignees by the end of 2012. Furthermore, the report stated that the United States, China, and the United Kingdom were the three top destinations for international assignment in 2011. (Brookfield Global Relocation Services, 2012).

Consequently, Hung-Wen and Ching-Hsiang (2006) stated that “expatriation represents the most expensive staffing strategy for the multinational corporation, but it remains a viable method for increasing the corporation understanding of international operations” (p.302). This beneficial role becomes affirm by the significant contribution play by the workforce that

continues to utilize the knowledge gain from cross-cultural experience in creating and implementing diverse strategies that meet the need of their international community, thus enhancing the competitiveness of their organizations in the present and the future global marketplace (Black, Gregersen, & Mendehall, 1992).

Despite the fact that observation shows that cross-cultural contact among people increasingly leads to the transfer of technology, information, arts, and culture across nations, cross-cultural exchanges cannot be without challenges which can hamper the objectives of their operations (Hannigan, 1990; Forman & Zacher, 2001). One of such challenges identified is poor performance during assignment. Study, suggested that the poor performance experienced, might be related to the lack of adjustment of the expatriate to the culture of the host nation (Takeuchi, 2010). Other challenges that have also been noted in the literature include; reduced motivation, loss of commitment to organizational objectives and to fellow expatriates, and a high expatriate turnover rate (Takeuchi, Yun, & Russell, 2002; Takeuchi, 2010).

In addition, the reported failure rate of cross-cultural assignment for 2011 was highest in China with a (19%) failure rate, followed by India (7%), Singapore (7%), and United States (5%) (Brookfield Global Relocation Services, 2012). Moreover, Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) studied national culture using the five dimensions: Power distance, individualism, masculinity or femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and long term orientation. He found the United States to be culturally different from most other countries on the five dimensional measurements. Thus, expatriates coming to the United States face the task of adapting to this new culture. For this reason, investigators have carried out studies to understand the process of adjustment for this group of expatriates. (Abe & Wiseman, 1983; Black, 1990; Ekta, 2011; Gai, Sumner, Bragger, &

Nooner, 2011; Hung-Wen & Ching-Hsiang, 2006; Suh & Lee, 2006; Takeuchi, Yun, & Russell, 2002; Yamazaki, & Kayes, 2007).

Although, numerous studies were undertaken in the area of expatriate adjustment; these studies focused on the adjustment process of American expatriates, assigned to other foreign nations (Black, 1988; Black & Stephen, 1989, Black & Gregersen, 1991; Caligiuri, 2000; Forman & Zacher, 2001; Searle & Ward, 1990; Takeuchi, 2010; Ward & Kenney, 1993; Wood, 2010). Only a few investigated the process of adjustment of foreign expatriates working in American. For this reason, this study, primarily seeks to understand the challenges face by foreign expatriates on cross-cultural assignment to the United States.

Expatriate adjustment process has continued to gain vast attention in expatriate literatures. This is mainly because of the important role this operation has on international business. The failures of an international assignment may result in an unpleasant business relationship with the host nations and low productivity for the employer. Also, not left out in this disastrous situation, is the employee, who may experience a decrease in job satisfaction, loss of self-confidence, poor performance on the job, and a tendency to withdraw from assignment. (Mervosh & McClenahen, 1997). In light of this, researchers have continued to undertake studies to help organizations understand the challenges associated with cross-culture operations (Black, 1988; Black & Gregersen, 1991; Black & Stephen, 1989, Caligiuri, 2000; Forman & Zacher, 2001; Ward & Kenney, 1993; Wood, 2010; Searle & Ward, 1990).

Many of these studies viewed the issue of expatriate adjustment from various perspectives. For example, researchers examined the influence of job and outsider related factors on expatriate adjustment, using the three facets of adjustment: work, interaction, and general adjustment (Black, 1988; Black & Stephens, 1989). The researchers discovered that work

adjustment relates to the measure of comfort an expatriate feels in his or her work environment; interaction adjustment relates to the measure of comfort an expatriate feels when communicating with host nationals; while general adjustment relates to the degree of comfort an expatriate feels in accepting the general culture of the host nation (Black, 1988; Black & Stephens, 1989). The study found all three facets of adjustment relates in some way to the success or failure of expatriate assignment. Black and Gregersen (1991) expanded the scope of the study of adjustment by relating the impact of job, personal, and general factors to the three facets of adjustment.

In the same vein, Aryee and Stone (1996) examined the experience of expatriates on cross-cultural assignment from a psychological perspective, studying work adjustment in relationship to expatriate well-being and job satisfaction. This study took into consideration the stress associated with work role transition for an expatriate. Caligiuri (2000) took a different approach in studying expatriate challenges. In her study, she examined the effect of personality traits: openness and sociability, on cross-cultural adjustment in relationship to interacting with host nationals. She also investigated the impact these traits exert on the expatriate's ability to adjust to the cultural difference in the host nation. However, this study use primarily American expatriates as the sample population and so cannot be used to generalize the effect on foreign expatriates in America which is the focus point of this present study.

A majority of the earlier studies done were mostly on the cross-cultural adjustment of Americans' assigned to other foreign countries. There has been little research investigating the effect of personality factor, family factor, and work factor on the general psychological well-being of foreign expatriates working in the United States. Although a few researchers have investigated the connection between job performance, and the determination of an assignee to

success or failure in his or her assignment, there is still an enormous gap to be filled with future research. Especially the grey areas which relate to foreign expatriates working within the United States, yet, to be investigated in present expatriate literature (Ekta, 2011; Gai, Sumner, Bragger, & Nooner, 2011; Hung-Wen & Ching-Hsiang, 2006; Suh & Lee, 2006; Takeuchi, Yun, & Russell, 2002; Yamazaki, & Kayes, 2007).

Personal Goal

The study of expatriate adjustment was of interest to me because of my personal experience as an international student, and the experiences of other expatriates I had close contact with and so had the privilege to share in their cross cultural experience. While working in the aviation sector in Nigeria, West Africa, I had the opportunity to interact closely with most of the expatriates from Europe assigned to this region; I realized that despite all the resources made available to these expatriates, they still faced various physiological and sociological challenges in the new environment. I began to ask questions, and then found out that the difficulties in adjustment experienced by these expatriates were primarily due to the transition in culture encountered.

In addition, I chose this topic because of my personal experience as an international student in the United States. I personally have experienced the riddles of adjusting to a new cultural environment, and based on this experience, I sought a more comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon of expatriate adjustment process. My personal experience will only serve as an objective reference for this research. However, since my personal experience is similar to the phenomenon been research, the possibility of having some bias, as well as a feeling of empathy which will positively reinforce the trust of the participants to share their story without reservations cannot be over ruled.

Statement and Significance of the Problem

The advancement in technology and transportation has continued to narrow the space between nations over the years; in turn communications and trade around the globe has become more integrated and intertwined. The global change has not come without its price. Hence, the continuous advancement in technology, transportation, and the ever changing market has constantly confronted organizations with new challenges. This has led to the realization that diversity and strategic planning have become a vital element for survival in a fast changing business environment. Moreover, with these changes, the market area has now been broadened so that organizations can provide goods and services across nations with ease. (Black, 1992; Huaug, Chi, & Lawler, 2005).

Accordingly, in an attempt to remain competitive in this rapidly growing marketplace, organizations are increasingly turning to cross-cultural exchanges to increase their knowledge of diversity in creating products that meet global demand. These cross-cultural exchanges do not come without challenges which can inhibit the organizations objectives (Forman & Zacher, 2001). Therefore, it is now more than ever necessary to understand the dynamics of cross cultural exchange, and the adjustment process needed to succeed. In this vein, this study seeks to contribute to the present body of research on expatriate adjustment, by studying the relationship between work, interactive, and general adjustment to job performance among other nationalities on cross-cultural assignment to the United States. This study also looked at the challenges facing expatriates in areas such as communication skills; ability to socialize with host the community, openness to change, cultural difference in their host community and the influence these skills has on performance during international assignment.

It is envisioned that this study will create a better understanding of these factors and be useful in developing an organizational culture where operation managers, supervisors, human resource managers, training managers, work teams, and expatriates workers, can promote a more diverse operation in their organizations. Promoting diversity is an essential ingredient necessary in gaining a competitive edge in a global marketplace (Black, Gregersen, & Mendehall, 1992). In addition, using qualitative examination, this study intends to deepen the understanding of previous quantitative studies carried out in these areas, and also to expand the scope of this study to areas such as expatriate adjustment process, and job performance, which have not been explored in past research.

Purpose of Study

This study was embarked upon to contribute to the existing literature on expatriate adjustment, by focusing on foreign expatriates living and working in the United States. The emphasis of this study will be on work adjustment, interactive adjustment, and general adjustment, and the relationship that exists between these three aspects of adjustment and job performance during cross-cultural assignment. Also, this study will explore the social and cultural challenge encountered by foreign nationals on cross-cultural assignment to the United States; especially in the areas relating to expatriates adjustment, cultural differences, communication styles, and job performance.

Most of the earlier studies in these areas focused primarily on American expatriates working and living in foreign countries. Only a few investigations looked into foreign expatriates working and living in the United States. Regardless of the increased number of expatriates deployed to the United States yearly on cross-cultural assignment to both multinational and smaller industries across the country, this study trend still has not changed. (Gai, Sumner,

Bragger, & Nooner, 2011). Thus, this study will build on previous investigations on the challenges faced by expatriate workers in areas such as adjustment, cultural differences, communication style, and job performance (Ekta, 2011; Gai, Sumner, Bragger, & Nooner, 2011; Hung-Wen & Ching-Hsiang, 2006; Suh & Lee, 2006; Takeuchi, Yun, & Russell, 2002; Yamazaki, & Kayes, 2007).

The purpose of this study will be to uncover the influence of work, interactive and general adjustment on performance of the expatriate. The study will use novelty, openness, and communication skill, as controlling variables to explore the effect of other factors on the adjustment process, and job performance of expatriates on cross-cultural operations within the United States.

Definition of Terms

The definitions, of the common terms associated with expatriate literatures used in this study can be found below:

Expatriate:

An expatriate is a person living and working temporarily in a foreign country for a given time (Andreason, 2003). Likewise, Cohen (1977) defined an expatriate as a temporary migrant with a mission in a host nation, for a specified time, with the ultimate goal of returning back to his or her home country at the end of the mission. Hence, during cross-cultural assignment, an expatriate faces the challenge of living and working in a new socio-cultural environment, which in most instances differs from their own cultural background. In order, for a foreign worker to succeed and perform effectively in his or her assignment, a certain level of alignment to his or her new socio-cultural environment has to be achieved (McGinley, 2008). Hence, in a bid to

survive this change, the expatriate will have to undergo the process of adjustment to the new environment.

Culture:

Culture can be defined as the collective experiences shared among a group of people, which in turns, fashions their beliefs and behaviors (Schein, 1992). Likewise, Inancu (2009) viewed culture as the collection of values, beliefs, aspirations, behaviors, and expectations, which are transferable over time from one generation to another. This acquired culture dominates the functionality of the community (Byrness, 1966; Oberg, 1960). Based on this definition of culture, studies found that the introduction to a new cultural environment can be traumatic; hence an expatriate needs some degree of adjustment to fit into this new society (Byrness, 1966; Oberg, 1960).

Adjustment:

Expatriate adjustment as defined by Mendenhall and Oddou, (1985) is the relative degree of fitness or psychological comfort, a person experiences with the host nation's culture. Likewise, Black and Stephens (1989) further differentiated adjustment into three facets: work adjustment, general adjustment, and interactive adjustment.

Work Adjustment:

Work adjustment can be defined as the psychological comfort an expatriate experiences in his or her new work environment, dealing with different work values, expectations, and work procedures, in the host nation (Takeuchi 2010).

General Adjustment:

General adjustment can be defined as the level of psychological comfort an expatriate feels when dealing with the host cultural environment, in areas such as the weather, the food, and

the and general living condition (Takeuchi, 2010)

Interactive Adjustment:

Interactive adjustment can be defined as the psychological comfort an expatriate experiences in relating to the difference in communication style in the host culture, and interpersonal communication with the host nationals (Takeuchi, 2010)

Cross-cultural adjustment:

Cross-cultural adjustment is the process by which an individual gets accustomed to his or her new cultural environment (Huaug, Chi, & Lawler, 2005). Thus, cross-cultural adjustment can be defined as the level of psychological adjustment a person experience that enables him or her relate easily to the new environment in which he or she gets introduced (Black, 1988; Church, 1982, Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985; Nicholson, 1984).

Job Performance:

Job performance has not been clearly defined from one perspective in literatures; various definitions exist (Caligiuri, 1997; Borman & Motowildo, 1993; Wood 2010). Most recently, Rich, Lepine and Crawford (2010) found expatriate job performances to consist of two aspects. (1) Task performance, which relates to the technical performance on the job. (2) Contextual performance, which deals with the ability to relate socially with host national beyond performing assigned task (Caligiuri, 1997; Borman & Motowildo, 1993; Wood 2010). An individual may experience psychological stress when introduced to a new environment (Oberg, 1960). Applying this theory to an expatriate undergoing emotional and physical transformation due to his or her inability to adjust to the new culture in the host country, the tendency that the psychological stress experience can lead to poor performance cannot be overlooked (Yu-Chi, 2011).

Communication:

Communication skill is a decisive factor to the expatriate interactive adjustment process. Therefore, effective communication can be defined as the ability to communicate in the language spoken in a fluent and proficient manner during interactions (Takeuchi, Yun & Russell, 2002). This definition of communication puts into play the importance of language skill in cultural adjustment and job performance.

Research Questions

This research utilized a constructivist paradigm, which allows for modifications as the research progressed. The primary research questions were modified to capture the perceived experiences of the individuals interviewed. A detailed explanation of the philosophical beliefs and reason for choosing this paradigm will be discussed in the methodology chapter. The expatriate perceived experiences in relationship to his/her work adjustment, interactive adjustment, general adjustment, and job performance in the United States were researched with the following questions;

- 1) What barrier influences a foreign expatriate's adjustment to American culture?
- 2) How do foreign expatriates perceive interactive adjustment influencing job performance?
- 3) How do foreign expatriates perceive work adjustment influencing job performance?
- 4) How do foreign expatriates perceive general adjustment influencing job performance?

CHAPTER TWO.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Introduction

A review of literature is essential to explore the influence of work adjustment, interactive adjustment, and general adjustment on job performance of expatriates living and working in the United States. This chapter will review prior literature on expatriate adjustment, which investigated work adjustment, interactive adjustment, and general adjustment, in relationship to job performance. In addition, previous literature on culture, language, and personality traits will be examined to determine the relationship that exists between these factors and the ability of an individual to adjust to an environment that is culturally different from their home country.

Hofstede (1984) discovered that when people are exposed to a foreign environment, they are placed under immense stress. In most instances, an expatriate on an international assignment to a foreign country tends to encounter this situation at some point during the assignment. Therefore, cross cultural adjustment for an expatriate on cross-cultural assignment means learning to deal with the challenges associated with working and living in a new social and cultural environment. In some circumstances, the new culture that the expatriate has been exposed to, might be totally different from his own culture. For this reason, McGinley (2008) stated that to achieve success and perform effectively in cross cultural assignment, the foreign worker needs to attain a certain level of alignment to his or her new social-cultural environment. Thus, it is evident that cross cultural adjustment for an expatriate entails a process of learning the culture of the host community, as well as accepting to live with the difference in the culture in comparison to one's own culture.

Culture

The study of culture has gained attention in expatriate literatures in recent years, especially the study of culture in relationship to cross cultural adjustment (Black, Gregersen, & Mendehall, 1992; Hofstede & Hofstede 2005; Schein, 1990). Studying the cultural difference across several nations, Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) defined culture as the “collective programming of the mind which distinguishes members of one group or category of people from another” (p.4). Schein (1990) in his study found that culture has two basic levels, which are the visible and invisible concepts of culture. The visible concept relates to the external factors that are easily observable; for example, building, clothing, behaviors, language, and art. While the invisible relates to things within the culture that can only be perceived over time; such as the common values, norms, faith, and expectations. Later investigation of the concept of culture revealed that culture comprises of three levels, which are: (1) The tangible aspect of culture known as the artefacts, which refers to the visible aspect of culture, (2) Values, which refers to the invisible aspect of culture, (3) The assumptions, which refers to the beliefs and perception aspect of culture (Schein, 2009).

Black, Gregersen, and Mendehall (1992) observed that values and assumptions are the most significant aspect of the three cultural levels that affect expatriates adjustment. Also, Huaug, Chi, and Lawler, (2005) in their investigation noted that the major challenge to expatriate adjustment is the ability to overcome the cultural barriers set by one’s values and assumptions. This theory is further supported by the postulation made by investigators that cultural barriers exist because of the difference in the cultural values held by people from the different parts of the world (Selmer, 2001; Tung, 1991). Hence, the ability to understand and integrate into a new

culture has been observed to be an important factor necessary for an expatriate adjustment (Oberg 1960). He also stated that the greater the cultural barrier that is perceived by the expatriate employee, the harder it becomes for the employee to accept the culture in his or her new environment. Researchers found that when an international worker fails to accept the cultural change within his or her new environment, a barrier is created that may affect the rate at which the expatriate adjust to the new culture (Oberg, 1960; Selmer, 2001; Tung, 1991).

Expatriate Adjustment

When an expatriate is assigned on an international job, the initial stage of his or her assignment is characterized by a period of learning and adjusting to changes in the new assignment (Black & Mendenhall, 1991). For example when an expatriate is assignment to a new location, he or she has to first learn to understand the business and social norms practiced in this location before she or he is able to operate effectively in this environment. Thus, expatriate adjustment can be define as the level of psychological comfort a person experiences that enables him to relate easily to the new environment to which she or he gets introduced (Black, 1988; Church, 1982; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985; Nicholson, 1984).

In support of this definition, earlier research by Oberg (1960) discovered that adjustment to a new cultural environment occurs in four different phases: honeymoon phase, crisis phase, recovery phase, and adjustment phase. Black and Mendehall (1991) later expatiated on this phenomenon. They described the phases of adjustment as first, the honeymoon phase, which occurs within a few weeks of arrival, when an individual undergoes, a period of excitement and gets fascinated with things in the new environment. Thus, the individual at this point does not feel the pressure of the changes around, but once the expatriate begins to deal with things in the new location she or he enters into the second phase of adjustment.

Black and Mendehall (1991) define the second phase as the disillusionment or shock stage. At this stage, the expatriate begins to deal with his or her new cultural environment on a day- to-day basis. Failure to meet the host nation's expectations at this stage causes stress, which leads the expatriate to experience a feeling of hostility and aggression toward the host nation. The third phase is the adjustment stage; the expatriate begins to acquire openness to his or her new environment, he or she begins to learn how to behave appropriately according to the cultural ethics of the host nation. Black and Mendehall states that the fourth phase is known as the mastery stage; at this phase the expatriate can now function effectively in his or her new cultural environment. This stage of adjustment is achieved when the expatriate reaches the point of acceptance of the new culture.

Similarly, Black (1988) found that adjustment occurs in three primary dimensions, which are; degree, mode, and facet. Black argued that the degree of adjustment can be viewed as subjective and objective. He stated that subjective deals with the degree of comfort a person feels in his or her new role or the degree of adjustment necessary to act the new role; while objective deals with the degree to which a person understands his or her new roles and performance task in this role. Black also found that the mode of adjustment deals with the manner in which a person adjusts to the new environment. Other studies conducted to further investigate the process of expatriate adjustment, found that it can either be socio-cultural or psychological. (Black, 1988; Black & Stephen, 1989; Black & Gregersen, 1991; Ward & Kenney, 1993; Wood, 2010; Searle & Ward, 1990).

Black and Gregersen (1991) stated that the concept of socio-cultural adjustment relates to a person's ability to fit into the new environment, while psychological adjustment relates to a

person's attitude and the degree of satisfaction derived from the new environment. They also found that these two concepts are different, but also related.

The concepts of socio-cultural and psychological adjustment have been shown to be highly interrelated in the study of expatriate adjustment (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward & Kenney, 1993; Ward & Chang, 1997). Psychological adjustment relates to factors such as personality traits, life changes, and social support, while socio-cultural adjustment relates to factors such as contact with host nations, length of stay in the new cultural environment, and cultural distance (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward & Kenney, 1993; Ward & Chang, 1997). A study of American expatriates working in China carried out by Selmer (1999) found that psychological adjustment factors are more difficult to achieve in comparison to socio-cultural adjustment factors. Selmer attributed this difficulty to the fact that an expatriate gets confronted with the issues of cultural values, norms, and assumption at the point when he or she begins to interact with the host nationals.

Black and Stephens (1989) further differentiated the concept of socio-cultural adjustment into three aspects: general adjustment; which relates to adjustment to general non-work environment, examples of which include transportation, food, housing, medical facilities, and weather. Work adjustment; which relates to adjustment to work environment, examples of which include work values, Job standards, tasks expectations, and performance expectations. Interactive adjustment; which relates to the adjustment to the social and communication style of the host nation, example include work related interaction, and social interaction with host nationals.

Black, Mendenhall, and Oddou's(1991) investigation supported the findings that cross cultural adjustment consist of three factors, and in addition found that these factors of adjustment are essential elements that can influence an expatriate adjustment to the host nation

during the period of international assignment. Various other studies also gave support to this theory that defines expatriate adjustment in three dimensional factors (Black & Gregersen, 1991; Shaffer, Harrison, & Gilley, 1999).

In a related study, Takeuchi, Yun, and Russell (2002) administered a survey questionnaire to two hundred and forty three Japanese expatriates working in the United States to investigate the interrelationship between the three dimensions of expatriate adjustment. Their findings indicated that general adjustment was positively related to work adjustment and interactive adjustment. Observing that when an expatriate experiences general adjustment, work adjustment tends to be facilitates when an expatriate experience general adjustment, which in turn aids interactive adjustment. In spite of these findings, Takeuchi et al., noted that the result of this investigation might be influenced in some way, since the variables were studied using the same respondent at the same point in time. They stated that this method of using the same respondent for all their survey might have raised the concern that the result of the findings may have been affected by response bias.

General Adjustment

General adjustment “involves a process through which expatriate becomes comfortable and establishes familiarity with the local surrounding in the host country” (Wang & Takeuchi, 2007, p.1439). In a survey conducted with 195 America managers working in Japan, Black (1988) found that prior international experience and pre-departure knowledge of the host community culture had a significant and positive relationship to their general adjustment. Black discovered that expatriates with prior knowledge of the host country culture tend to adjust easily to the general culture and daily life of the host nation. Adjustment reflects in the way the expatriate adjust to his/her new job, in terms of his/her job performance. Since participants in

this investigation were the high level managers and executives only, the result of this investigation may not be generalizable to expatriates in lower positions. Black's findings were consistent with the research findings of Takeuchi, Yun, and Russell (2002) which indicated that previous knowledge of foreign operations has a direct influence on expatriate general adjustment.

Similarly, Takeuchi, Tesluk, Yun, and Lepak (2005) found that past and current expatriate experiences have some influence on general adjustment. They found that past international experience only acts as a moderator to general adjustment, while current assignment shows a more significant relationship with expatriate general and work adjustment. Likewise, Takeuchi, Yun, and Russell (2002) in their research discovered that prior knowledge of the host culture obtained via previous international experience or training shows a positive relationship to the expatriate's ability to achieve a higher level of general adjustment.

In contrast, Black and Gregeren (1991) in their study of 250 American expatriates working within the four Asian countries in the Pacific Rim found that previous international work experience did not show any relationship with general adjustment. Black and Gregeren attributed this lack of relationship between prior experience and general adjustment to the fact that the cultural novelty between the American culture and Asian culture was very great. They discovered that unrelated cultural experience did not aid general adjustment. Black and Gregeren noticed that prior expatriate experience was not enough to facilitate general adjustment where there is an enormous difference between the expatriate culture and the host nation culture.

In the same vein, Selmer (2002) in his study of over 343 western expatriates on cross-cultural assignment to Hong Kong found that expatriate prior experience that is not culturally related to the new environment does not significantly facilitate general adjustment. Selmer stated

that when prior experience is culturally related to the present environment it may expedite some aspect of work adjustment, but not general adjustment. The implication of these findings is that cultural knowledge from an unrelated cultural environment cannot have much influence on general adjustment when an expatriate is transferred to an entirely new environment.

Accordingly, McGinley (2008) conducted an investigation to determine expatriate adjustment within a social context. Surveying four hundred and sixty expatriate workers in Russia, he found that expatriates displayed different level of adjustment to the various aspects of general adjustment; food, housing, health care, cost of living, and general living condition. His findings show that expatriates tend to have different level of adjustment for each of these aspects of general adjustment. McGinley stated that expatriates tend to show a moderate level of adjustment to general living condition, a higher level of adjustment to food and housing, but a lower level of adjustment to healthcare facilities, cost of living, recreational, and entertainment facilities.

Takeuchi, Yun, and Russell (2002) in studying Japanese expatriates working the United States investigated for the effect of the host language, willingness to communicate, and perceived cultural novelty, on the three facets of adjustment. The result, of the investigation indicates that, in the area of adjustment, host language was not significantly related to general adjustment. Also, willingness to communicate was not significantly related to general adjustment, and cultural novelty was positivity related to general adjustment. The discovery that cultural novelty positively related to general adjustment is in line with the prior finding that the more difference an expatriate perceived in the host nation culture, the more it becomes difficult for the expatriate to adjust to that environment (Hofstede, 1980; Takeuchi et al., 2002).

Also, Huaug, Chi, and Lawler, (2005) investigated the relationship between personality traits and the expatriates adjustment to the Taiwanese cultural environment for 83 US expatriates working in Taiwan. Huang et al. tested for the effect of the big five traits: extroversion, agreeableness, conscientious, neuroticism, and openness to experience on expatriate adjustment. Huaug et al. found that while extroversion and openness to experience are positively related to expatriate general adjustment, agreeableness, conscientious, and neuroticism did not show a negative connection to general adjustment, yet these factors did not have any direct impact on general adjustment. Despite these findings, the investigation was limited by the fact that the researchers only relied on self -reported data for their findings. Based on this limitation, they stated that verifying their results for biases and subjectivity will be a difficult task.

Similarly, Shaffer, Harrison, Gregersen, Black, and Ferzandi (2006) conducted three different investigations to determine the relationship of the big five personality traits to the three facets of adjustment and job performance; they found that extraversion and agreeableness are positively related to expatriate general adjustment. Their findings are in agreement with that of previous investigation which found a relationship between personality trait and general adjustment (Huaug, Chi, & Lawler, 2005).

Investigating for the proposition that proficiency in Chinese language may promote adjustment of business expatriates in China; Selmer (2006) found a positive significant correlation between time spent in an environment and language ability. In addition, he found that controlling for time expatriates spent in China, language proficiency is positively related to expatriate general adjustment; and this positivity may have mixed relationship with the expatriate job performance. One significant limitation of his findings was that the majority of the sample populations were chief executive officers and highly placed managerial employees. Hence to use

this result to generalize the connection between language proficiency and general adjustment for low level employees, who are the focus of this study, would not be a valid comparison.

Work Adjustment

Expatriate work adjustment is related to the level of psychological comfort an expatriate feels regarding the difference in the work values, expectations, and standards in a new work environment (Black, 1990; Black & Stephens, 1989). For an expatriate on international assignment moving from a work environment where the values and expectations are familiar, to one where the work values and expectations are not so familiar can result in a traumatic situation for the employee. Black, Gregersen, and Mendenhall (1992) argued that although work adjustment is considered the easiest of the three adjustment facets, where similarity of process exists. Yet, it is still not an easy process to achieve during cross cultural assignment.

Consequently, while studying the adjustment process for over 298 Japanese expatriates working in the United States with their spouses, Takeuchi, Yun, and Russell (2002) found that language proficiency and previous knowledge of foreign culture was positively related to work adjustment process of these Japanese expatriates. Also, it was discovered from this study that the general adjustment had a positive influence on work adjustment. Takeuchi et al., found that once an expatriate can achieve general adjustment, its trends to enhance the ability to adjust to his new work environment.

Similarly, Takeuchi, Tesluk, Yun, and Lepak (2005) studied a sample of Japanese expatriates working in the United States, in their research for the influence of current and prior international experiences on the three facets of expatriate adjustment process. This investigation found that prior international work experience has a significant moderating effect on the relationship between current assignment and work adjustment. In addition to this finding, they

found that cultural specific international experience has a moderating influence on general adjustment, which in turn has an indirect influence on work adjustment. Furthermore, they stated that the Japanese expatriates with similar previous international experience tends to adjust faster to the general living condition in the United States than those without any international experience. Takeuchi et al. suggested that the scale used to measure work adjustment though it was a standard one, does not fully incorporate the concept of space, a measurement that is of significant to this experiment. Thus, this deficiency might have had some influence on their result. On this basis, they suggested that, further investigation which will replicates, and expand this research should be embarked on, by future researchers. This they believe will help to correlate the result of their study, and determine the influence that prior international experience has on work adjustment.

Consistent with previous research, Shaffer, Harrison, and Gilley (1999) found that previous work experience moderates work adjustment. The outcome of previous international experience is more evident in the area of supervisor and co-work support for expatriates. Shaffer et al., found that expatriates experiencing international assignment for the first time, are more likely to require more supervisor and co-worker support, than expatriates with previous international work experience. Although further research was recommended, the result from this finding is consistent with that of the finding of earlier research on the relationship between previous international work experience and the three facets of adjustment. (Takeuchi, Tesluk, Yun, & Lepak, 2005)

Black and Gregersen (1991) studied the effect of previous international work experience on the adjustment of 220 expatriates on cross cultural assignment in the Pacific Rim. The study used survey questionnaires to measure the length of years the expatriates have worked on other

foreign assignment prior to their present assignment. The findings did not indicate any correlation between previous international work experience and expatriate adjustment in the current assignment. The cultural distance between the American culture and the Asian culture attributed largely to the lack of relationship observed (Hofstede 1980).

Also, the ability to communicate fluently in the host nation's language has been observed to be positively related to expatriate work adjustment (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985; Selmer, 2006; Takeuchi, Yun, & Russell 2002). They found that the fluent an expatriate becomes in the host community language, the easier it becomes for the expatriate to communicate and develop interpersonal relationship at work. Being fluent in the host language facilitates the ability to understand work instruction, this in turn, will then aid work adjustment. In other words, when an expatriate begins to speak and understand the host country language, this will increase the level of confidence he has in relating with host nationals, and thus translates to a better work adjustment process for the expatriate. This statement is consistent with Selmer (2006) findings that language ability shows a stronger relationship with interactive adjustment, which in turn may positively influence job performance and work adjustment.

Shaffer, Harrison, and Gilley (1999) in their study of expatriates from ten different U.S. corporations in various industries examined the effect of higher social support from supervisors and co-workers on expatriate work adjustment. Shaffer et al. analyzed survey data from over 450 participates; the result indicated that supervisor support was not positively related to work adjustment especially in the case of an expatriate without previous expatriate experience. On the contrary, it was found that co-worker support exerts a strong influence on all three aspects of expatriate adjustment. This finding explains the connection between peer support, work adjustment and job performance.

To the contrary, Black and Porter's (1991) investigation found that social support from supervisors and fellow co-workers who provide help and supportive relationship to expatriates serves as a stress buffer for these expatriates. The support given to these international employees may lead to job adjustment and job satisfaction for the expatriate during an international assignment. Also, this finding gives support to Shaffer et al.'s (1999) investigation, which found that, such social support given to new expatriates, will lead to a better understanding of the social norms, and acceptable work behavior in the host country. Furthermore, whenever an expatriate perceives support from co-workers, it aids the expatriate employee to relate more confidently with co-workers that are nationals of the host country, and thus facilitates work adjustment, and job performance in this new environment (Black & Porter, 1991).

Another important aspect of work adjustment studied was role novelty. Researchers defined role novelty as the degree to which the present assignment differs from the previous assignment in a new work environment (Andreason, 2003; Black & Porter, 1991). An expatriate on foreign assignment faces not only the challenge of a new cultural environment, but also the challenge of learning new skills and procedures at work (Andreason, 2003). For example, the expatriate will have to learn to deal with issues like the operating work rules in the new location, country's employment laws, economic policies, technical, and physical conditions that are quite different from that which operates in his own country.

In studying role novelty, Kittler, Rygl, Mackinnon, and Wiedeman (2011) proposed that role novelty will be negatively related to work adjustment. To test this hypothesis a sample of German expatriates on assignment to five European countries and Russia was investigated. Using control variables like age, duration of assignment, language skill, cultural distance, family and previous assignment, to determine the relationship between role novelty and work

adjustment. The result of this investigation did not give a negative correlation between work adjustment and role novelty as proposed by the hypothesis of this study. The investigator suggested that further investigation should be carried out in the future to correlate their findings. They stated that the result of their findings may have been affected by the fact that the average time spent in the country for their sample population was over three years. Noting that, having spent that long time in an assignment, most of the sample population will no longer see their assignment as new, or different from their previous assignment anymore.

Interactive Adjustment

Caliguiri (2000) found that the more the expatriate interacts with people from the host nation, the more they become adjusted to the culture of the host nation, especially when they are open to this change. Interactive adjustment can be defined as the ability of an expatriate to adjust to interacting with host national without any constraints.

(Andreason, 2008; Black & Gregersen, 1991; Black & Stephens, 1989). Similarly, Black (1990) defined interactive adjustment as the process of adapting to the different communication style in the host culture, as well as developing interpersonal communication with the nationals of the host nation. Black, Gregersen, and Mendenhall (1992) argued that of the three facets of adjustment, interactive adjustment is the most difficult to achieve, because, it is at the point of interacting with the natives that one begins to observe the difference in culture.

To this end, it been observed that some cultures are more difficult to adjust to than other; especially in an instance, where it is culturally distant from the other cultures (Black, Mendenhall and Oddou, 1991). Consequently, expatriates are likely to experience more challenges in the area of interactive adjustment in an environment that is culturally different from their own.

(Andreason 2008). Studying the dimensions of national culture, Hofstede and Hofstede (2005)

found the United States culture to be more individualistic and different from most European and Asian countries' culture. In this light, a recent survey carried out by Brookfield Global Relocation Services (2011) found that the United States was the fourth most difficult country for expatriates to achieve adjustment during international assignment (Brookfield Global Relocation Services 2012). For example, in the United States expatriates are not only faced with the challenge of adapting to weather condition; communication style, spoken and verbal language; but also differences in simple things like measurement metrics. A western European expatriate on cross-cultural assignment to the United States would have to learn how to convert weight, from kilograms to pounds to communicate and interact with host native working at the checkout counter in the grocery store. At the initial stage when an expatriate will have to make this adjustment, a simple process of measurement conversion may become a source of challenge for an expatriate who normally does his measurement in kilogram.

In addition, the European expatriate who typically is used to purchasing gas being sold in his or her country in litres at the gas station, comes to the United State to work, the expatriate may now have to learn to convert gas from litres to gallons to be able to purchase gas in his or her car for transportation. Hence, to interact and communicate effectively in their host community, the expatriate begins to observe and accept the language of communication within the community (Black, Gregersen, & Mendenhall, 1992). Similarly, Black (1988) discovered that one important factor which facilitates cross cultural adjustment during international assignment, is for the assignee to have a positive attitude toward the host nation.

A study found that the more novelty there is between an expatriate country and the host country the harder it becomes for the expatriate to experience interactive adjustment (Andreason, 2008). Shaffer, Harrison, and Gilley (1999) investigating the dimensions and determinants of

expatriate adjustment, proposed that, a lower, level of perceived difference between the host country and the home country, likely will, facilitates interactive adjustment process. The result of their investigation found this hypothesis to be true. They further observed that cultural novelty hindered interactive adjustment and general adjustment significantly. Additionally, an interesting finding from this investigation showed language fluency as a moderating factor for interactive adjustment.

Graf (2004) discover that the essential ingredient for intercultural skill is language. For instance, it becomes much easier to communicate with the host national when one understands and speaks the host language, hence, Shaffer et al., (1999) found that the ability to speak, as well as understand host language makes it easy to be aware of any contradictory demands from host nationals, and fellow employees at work. On the contrary, Caligiuri, Philips, Lazarova, Tarique, and Burgi (2001) in their investigation of 73 expatriates from different countries found that the fact that an expatriate speaks and understands the language of the host community does not necessarily mean the assignee understands the culture of the people, never the less, it can still exert a positive influence on adjustment. Caligiuri et al. found that assignees who do not speak the language of their host nation, perceive integration and adjustment to the host culture to be more difficult, than those who speak the language. They recommended that further research should be carried out with a diverse population to correlate their finding, since the initial sample population were predominately American expatriates.

Furthermore, Livermore (2010) discovered that in a cross-cultural environment interpreting events and behavior is difficult even in familiar cultural context. It becomes even difficult for someone coming to an unfamiliar environment. As a result, an expatriate, working in a host nation where the culture and language are similar to that of his or her home country,

communicating and interacting with host national would be less difficult to achieve, than that of an expatriate coming from a home country with a different language and culture from that of the host. In addition, Livermore found that cultural orientation and personality traits influence the interpretations an expatriate gives to events in a cross cultural setting. This also influences the manner in which expatriate relates with the host nationals. Livermore also found that the more open an individual is to learning the host nation's culture and language, the more likely the assignee will experience interactive adjustment. For instance, an individual who is open to change will be more likely to interact with employees from the host nation more than one who is not open minded, perceiving the difference in the host culture to his own culture as a barrier to interaction.

Personality Characteristic

Personality has been widely researched in literature as one of the factors influencing expatriate job performance and adjustment during international assignment (Caliguri, 2000; Raduan, Ramalu, Uli, & Kumar, 2010; Shaffer, Harrison, Gregersen, Black & Ferzandi, 2006). Personality characteristic relates to; the habitual pattern of behavior developed and utilized during goal attainment (Buss 1992; Costa & McCrae, 1992). Researchers have continually classified personality characteristics into five factors, which they label the big five factors (Buss 1992; Barrick & Mount, 1991; Caliguri, 2000; Costa & McCrae, 1992; Raduan, Ramalu, Uli, & Kumar, 2010; Shaffer, Harrison, Gregersen, Black & Ferzandi, 2006). The big five factors are: (1) extroversion (2) Agreeableness (3) Conscientious (4) emotional stability (5) Openness. In the literature on personality characteristics, numerous investigators proposed that the big five personality factors have various degrees of influence on expatriates adjustment and job performance (Shaffer, Harrison, Gregersen, Black & Ferzandi, 2006). For this reason, openness

to experience will be study in relationship to expatriate adjustment and job performance in the United States.

Mendenhall and Oddou (1985) found that openness and sociability are two characteristics necessary for relationship building and cross-cultural adjustment. Similarly, Caligiuri, (2000) discovered that openness and sociability tends to affect the manner in which a person behave in a given situation, such as cross-cultural interaction. Downess, Varner, and Musinski (2007) found that, expatriates who possess the personality characteristics openness, are better adjusted during international assignment, because they are equipped to detect and responded to subtle cultural differences in their new environment.

While investigating the big five personality characteristics as a predictor of an expatriate desire to terminate assignment and supervisor-rated performance, Caligiuri (2000) mailed out 250 survey questionnaires to American expatriates on international assignment. She analyzed the response from 143 American expatriates working in twenty five different countries, and found that openness to experience was a moderating factor to interactive adjustment. Following her findings, she suggested that there is a possibility that the different facets of openness, such as openness to people, or openness to experience are the key for an expatriate success when on cross-cultural assignment.

In a similar vein, Barrick and Mount (1991) found that openness is positively related to training. They argued that, an individual who rated high on all the dimension of openness tested (intelligent, curious, broad-minded, and culture) will show more positive attitude toward learning experiences in general. Based on these findings, expatriates who possess the personality characteristic of openness were more likely to have a positive attribute toward learning the host country's culture (Caligiuri, 2000). Likewise, Black and Mendenhall (1990) suggested that cross

cultural training equips an individual to learn content and skills which enables cross cultural interaction by minimizing misunderstanding and inappropriate behaviors. Subsequently, the personality trait, openness was found to be positively related to training (Barrick & Mount, 1991). It is assumed that the attribute “openness” would aid learning experience and performance during pre-departure training and the actual assignment.

Expatriate Job Performance

In order to gain a better perception of expatriate’s job performance as it relates to this study, one of the various views given by researchers of what an expatriate job performance entails have been adopted. Job performance can be defined as the collective value to an organization of the set of behaviors that an employee’s contributes either directly or indirectly to an organizational goal (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; Rich, Lepine & Craford, 2010). Although, this definition has been adopted for this study, it is essential to note that researchers have not been consistent in their definition of expatriate job performance, in literatures (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; Caligiuri, 1997; Motowidlo & Scotter, 1994; Rich, Lepine & Crawford 2010).

Some other researchers preferred to view expatriate performance in terms of the success of an operation. In their view, expatriate job performance is multidimensional, and should be defined in terms of cross cultural adjustment, expatriate job performance, expatriate commitment to company goals, and expatriate intent to complete assignment (Caligiuri, 1997; Gregersen, Hite, & Black, 1996; Kraimer, & Wayne, 2004; Wood, 2010).

Accordingly, Caligiuri and Day (2000) argued that performance should be viewed as a multidimensional concept. In support of this theory, Motowidlo and VanScotter (1994) discovered empirical evidence supporting the theory that performance should be viewed as a multidimensional concept. Furthermore, they distinguish performance into task performance and

contextual performance. Motowidlo et al., on the one hand, defined task performance as the effectiveness with which an expatriate performs the job to meet the organizational goal, whether performing service or technical job. On the other hand, they defined contextual performance as the basic activities necessary to maintain an interpersonal and psychological environment, which supports the operation of both the technical and core activities.

In a similar vein, Borman and Motowidlo (1993) stated that, contextual performance relates to the expatriate's success in performing his international assignment, beyond task specific duties. Relating job performance to expatriate adjustment, Takeuchi, Tesluk, Yun, and Lepak (2005) found that, work adjustment indicated a significant, positive, relationship with job performance. In addition, this study did not find a positive relationship between general adjustment and job performance. This finding was consistent with the earlier study done by Kraimer and Wayne (2004) which found, a positive relationship between work adjustment and job performance. Furthermore, their study found a significant, positive, relationship between interactive adjustment and contextual performance. Also, Borman and Motowidlo (1993) noted that the major difference between the task and contextual performance is the expertise with which expatriate carries out his task.

The various literatures reviewed, and their findings will guide the identification and analysis of the common themes which can be drawn from the interviews conducted with the fifteen foreign expatriates working and living in the United States. Using the themes and patterns found in this study, the connection between general adjustment, work adjustment, and interactive adjustment and the job performance for these foreign expatriates would be examined and explained.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter will give an insight into the methods used in selecting the sample population, the data collection process, the method used to analyze the data collected, and reason for adopting this method of research. In order to achieve the main purpose of this study, which is to analyze the perceived challenges face by foreign nationals on cross-cultural assignment to the United States, one needs to understand the thoughts, feelings, and also capture the language of the perceived experiences of the expatriates selected for this study. Miles and Huberman (1994) stated that qualitative research method is “a source of well grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes in identifiable local contexts” (p.1). Also, Martens (2005) found that qualitative methods are employed in research when an in-depth description of an experience is required. Furthermore, he stated that qualitative method of research is appropriate when a researcher seeks to add depth to a previous quantitative study. Thus, for this reason, qualitative research method has been adopted for this study.

Using semi-structured interviews, the following research questions, relating to the expatriates perceived experiences in relation, to their work adjustment, interactive adjustment, general adjustment, and job performance in the United States were explored.

1. What barrier influences a foreign expatriate’s adjustment to American culture?
2. How do foreign expatriates perceive interactive adjustment influencing job performance?
3. How do foreign expatriates perceive work adjustment influencing job performance?
4. How do foreign expatriates perceive general adjustment influencing job performance?

Qualitative research method will give a more descriptive insight into these questions since “with qualitative data one can preserve the chronological flow, see precisely which events

led to which consequences, and derive fruitful explanations” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.1). In addition, using qualitative methods will permit the lived experiences of these expatriates to be my guide in understanding what exactly things experienced meant to each of these expatriates (Keen, 1975).

Research Design

This research was based on a constructivist paradigm; Patton (2002) defined paradigm as the way people make meaning of the complexities in the real world. Hesse (1980) stated that constructivist paradigm is closely associated with qualitative research as well as a constructivist belief that facts are absolute only within theatrical framework, thus, allowing the researcher to modify the initial questions formulated as the research progresses. Patton (2002) discovered that “qualitative inquiry is not a single, monolithic approach to research and evaluation” (p79). In the same vein, Merriam (1998) described qualitative research as “an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible” (p.5). On this basis, this inquiry was carried out using one of the qualitative methods under this umbrella known as phenomenological approach. The phenomenological approach “seeks the individual’s perceptions and meaning of a phenomenon or experience” (Mertens, 2005, p.240). In accordance with this approach, Patton (2002) argued that for a researcher to gather information from individuals who have lived the experience that is of interest to the researcher, an in-depth interview must be undertaken.

Ratner (2002) found that an interview comprised of two basic steps. The initial step involves the formation of questions, which encourages the subject to discuss relevant issues. While the second step involve conducting the interview by engaging in a discussion with the subject. Ratner further stated that interviews can be conducted informal, unstructured, semi-

structured, and fully structured. For the purpose of this study, a semi-structured interview was conducted with fifteen expatriates working across various departments in the hospitality and oil sector industry within the United States. According to Ratner, semi-structured interview utilizes two types of questions; open ended questions which give the subject the opportunity to discuss any effect he or she desires, and the close ended questions which restricts the subject's response to given choices. The questions used to conduct these interviews were mostly open-ended, giving the subjects the opportunity to discuss issues relating to their cross-cultural experiences.

Participation in this interview was voluntary, and the participants were selected purposefully. In his view, Patton (2002) believed that purposeful sampling allows the researcher to pick information-rich cases, which helps the researcher to acquire an insight to the issue being studied. Orcher (2005) confirmed this theory by stating that, in purposive sampling, the participants are selected because they possess characteristics that make them especially good sources of information. Most of the participants interviewed were personal acquaintances who are foreign nationals currently on expatriate assignment to the United States. A number of the past research on expatriate adjustment was studied using quantitative methods; therefore, to add depth to these quantitative studies, participants in this study were selected purposefully to gain a more in-depth understanding of the challenges face, and the experiences gained during their cross- cultural assignment.

Data Collection

The data for this study were collected by interviewing fifteen current expatriates working and living within the United State, by conducting semi-structured face to face interviews with each of the participant at a location that was chosen by the participant. Each of these interviews lasted between one to two hours. Ten of the interviews were conducted at different restaurants

selected by the participants. Five of these interviews were conducted in the personal home of the participants. The interviews were done using mostly open ended questions, thereby allowing for in-depth discussion. Also, a few close ended questions were included in the interview. These interviews were recorded using a digital recorder and the researcher's written notes. Eight out of the fifteen participants gave the investigator permission to record the interview section, while the other seven participants declined the researcher request to record the interview section. In each of these seven cases, I was granted permission to record these interviews manually by taking notes. I labelled each of the interviews conducted with a code for easy identification.

A total of nine male expatriates and six female expatriates were interviewed from fourteen different countries; including Australia, Cameroon, China, France, Honduras, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Netherlands, Nigeria, South Korea, Singapore, and Vietnam. All the interviews were conducted in English. Although some of the participants were not from English speaking countries, they could speak and understand English well enough for the interview session to be conducted in English. The level of their English proficiency was fair enough because each participant has lived and worked in United States for over a year. Despite the fact that this group of participants spoke English, they still faced some challenges expressing themselves grammatically in standard English. All participants were asked the same questions, and the average duration of the each of these interviews conducted was approximately one hour and thirty minutes. However, using semi-structured interviews provided the researcher cues and hints to further probe the subjects to discuss the issues more elaborately.

As observed by Orcher (2005), a qualitative researcher studying the problems associated with the adjustment of foreign nationals living in the United States has the "advantage of not having to specify the potential adjustment problem in advance and is free to pursue a line of

questioning that can add depth to the understanding of this topic'' (p.42). This process is consistent with Ratner's (2002) discovery that semi-structures interview allow the use of open ended questions which give the subject the opportunity to discuss any effect he or she desires. During the interviews, I only used the questions formulated in advance as a guide to direct the flow of the discussion, but still kept the conversation informal to allow the participant the freedom to tell their story.

The subjects of this study ranged from customer service personal, engineers, translators, and chefs working within various departments in the hospitality business and the oil sector in the United States. Five out of the fifteen expatriates interviewed had prior international experience working in other countries prior to their current assignment. Two out of the five expatriates interviewed have previously been on a one year assignment to a different location in the United States other than their present assignment location. None of the remaining ten expatriates interviewed had prior international work experience. Although three of this group of expatriates had travelled to other countries on personal vacation, their current international assignment would be regarded as their first cross-cultural work assignment for the purpose of this study.

Prior to conducting the interview, I sent out the informed consent forms to each of the participants who indicated interest in participating in this study. Each of the participants interviewed signed the form and returned it back to me. Upon receipt of this form, I then contacted the subject to explain the purpose of the study, and also to arrange a time and venue for the interview to be conducted. This study was conducted using the fifteen expatriate who responded to the inform consent form sent. (Table 1) represent the demographic information of participants.

Table 1

Expatriate Demographics

Name	Country	Gender	Occupations/ Sector	Duration of Assignment	English Proficiency
Expatriate (A)	Australia,	Female	Customer Service Hospitality	Two years	Fluent
Expatriate (B)	Cameroon	Male	Engineer Oil sector	Five years	Not very fluent
Expatriate (C)	China	Female	Language Trans. Hospitality	Two Years	Not very Fluent
Expatriate (D)	France	Male	Engineer Oil Sector	Two Years	Not very Fluent
Expatriate (E)	France	Male	Language Trans. Hospitality	Three Year	Fluent
Expatriate (F)	Honduras	Male	Chef Hospitality	Four years	Fluent
Expatriate (G)	Japan	Male	Language Trans Hospitality	Four years	Not very Fluent
Expatriate (H)	Malaysia,	Female	Engineer Oil sector	Five years	Fluent
Expatriate (I)	Mexico	Male	Engineer Oil Sector	Two Years	Not very fluent
Expatriate (J)	New Zealand	Male	Trainer Hospitality	Two Years	Fluent
Expatriate (K)	Netherlands	Female	Engineer Oil Sector	Four Years	Fluent
Expatriate (L)	Nigeria	Male	Engineer Oil Sector	Five Years	Fluent
Expatriate (M)	South Korea	Male	Chef Hospitality	Three Years	Not very Fluent
Expatriate (N)	Singapore	Female	Customer Service Hospitality	Two years	Fluent
Expatriate (O)	Vietnam	Female	Customer Service Hospitality	Four years	Fluent

Note. Initially, seventeen participants were contacted to participant in this study via telephone request. All seventeen expatriate contacted agreed to participate in the study, but only fifteen of the expatriates signed and returned the inform consent form, which was sent out to them ahead of the interview. The demographic data for all fifteen expatriate who participated in these interviews are displayed in Table 1.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative study is the process of converting the data collected from interview, observation, document, and field note into findings (Mertens, 2005). Similarly, Patton (2002) stated that qualitative analysis “involves reducing the volume of raw information, sifting trivia from significance, identifying significant patterns, and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal” (p.432). Unlike quantitative research where data analysis takes place using statistical methods at the end of the data collection process, in qualitative research, preliminary data analysis begins at the stage of data collection (Orcher, 2005). Likewise, Mertens (2005) observed that qualitative data analysis is a continuous process, which begins from the point of data collection until the finding emerges. Based on these observations, after every interview the researcher listened to the recording and the researcher transcribed it to have a written document of the interview. The researcher then reviewed the transcription searching for cues and patterns. Descriptions of the interview contents will be given in Chapter Four.

Miles and Huberman (1994) observed that qualitative analysis utilizes words which can be structured in such a way to allow the researcher to contrast, compare, analyze and give patterns to the words. All tape recorded interviews were transcribed to a Word document. As soon as the transcription process was accomplished, the researcher read the transcript repeatedly while listening to the taped interview to ensure that the interviews were transcribed correctly. Miles and Huberman (1994) stated that “reading through these materials, the researcher may isolate certain themes and expressions that can be reviewed with the informants, but that should be maintained in their original forms throughout the study” (p.6). As the researcher listened repeatedly to the recorded interviewers, and read continuously the notes taken during and after

the interviewers, alongside with the transcript made of the recorded interview, certain patterns and themes began to emerge from each of the interview conducted with the participants. This process is consistent with Mertens (2005) observation, that qualitative data analysis “has sometimes been portrayed as a somewhat mysterious process in which the findings gradually emerge from the data through some type of mystical relationship between the researcher and the source of data” (p.420). This theme and pattern were noted and were useful in explaining the findings of this study.

Credibility and Dependability

In qualitative research, the credibility of the instrument is likened to the concept of validity in quantitative research, which is the extent to which the instrument measures the intended purpose (Orcher, 2005). Likewise, Merten (2005) stated that in qualitative research, “the credibility test question if there is connection between the participant actual perceived social construct, and the investigator’s representation of this viewpoint.”(p.225). One approach to checking credibility in qualitative research is member check. This involves the investigator verifying with the participants the materials obtained from the data analysis (Mertens, 2005). Data collected from each interview conducted were transcribed, and content sent via email to participants for their feedback on the extent to which the transcript reflected their viewpoint. Mertens (2005) observed that dependability check can be done to prove the quality and appropriateness of the inquiry process. All data collected for this study were from expatriates working and living within the United States, thereby ensuring the reliability of this information obtained.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

This chapter gives a brief description of the subjects that participated in this study, data collection process, data analysis process, and the findings. In line with the purpose of this study, which was to get an in-depth account of perceived experiences of expatriates working and living in the United States, in the areas of work adjustment, interactive adjustment, general adjustment, and job performance, the study sought answers through semi structured interview to the following four research questions;

- 1) What barrier influences a foreign expatriate's adjustment to American culture?
- 2) How do foreign expatriates perceive interactive adjustment influencing job performance?
- 3) How do foreign expatriates perceive work adjustment influencing job performance?
- 4) How do foreign expatriates perceive general adjustment influencing job performance?

Brief Description of Subjects

Taylor and Bogdan (1998) suggested that the qualitative researchers should endeavor to give an account of the procedures leading to their findings in their final draft. To accomplish this purpose, a brief description of the participants in this study is given below.

Participants in this study were selected purposefully. A total of fifteen foreign expatriates currently on international assignment to the United States were interviewed. The subjects are currently on assignment for an average period of two years, with jobs ranging from customer service, engineering, language translation, and chefs in various departments in the hospitality industry, and the oil sector. Five out of the fifteen expatriates interviewed had prior international experience working in other countries prior to their current assignment. Two out of the five expatriates interviewed have previously been on a one-year assignment to a different location in

the United States other than their present assigned, location. None of the remaining ten expatriates interviewed have had any prior international work experience. Although three of this group of expatriates had travelled to other countries on personal vacation, their current international assignment would be regarded as their first cross-cultural work assignment for the purpose of this study.

In addition, the expatriates interviewed consisted of nine males and six female, and their ages range from twenty three to fifty-three. They are from fourteen different countries: Australia, Cameroon, China, France, Honduras, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Netherlands, Nigeria, South Korea, Singapore, and Vietnam. The researcher conducted the interviews in English. Four participants out of the fifteen expatriates interviewed came on this assignment with their family, while others are single. For confidentiality purpose, the actual names of participants and the companies they represent will not be referenced to in this report. The participants will be referred to as the “expatriate” and their employers as the “company.” Furthermore, all the data collected during these interviews are secure, and lock in a file cabinet for the next three years, as require by regulation.

Data Collection Process

The data for this study were collected by conducting semi-structured face to face interviews using mostly open-ended questions as the interview guide. Each of these interviews lasted between one to two hours, and ten of the interviews were conducted at a restaurant selected by the participants, and the other five interviews were conducted at the personal homes of the participants. Additionally the researcher created the interview guide used for this study, out of an already existing instrument used in previous studies in measuring the following factors; purpose for accepting assignment, adjustment, cultural novelty, job adjustment, openness, and

performance (Black & Stephens, 1989; Caligiuri 2000; Wood, 2010). The questions were modified to open-ended format to fit the purpose of this investigation.

Data Analysis

Krauss (2005) found that “the construction of meaning is the task of the qualitative research and reflects the specific method used in qualitative data process” (p.763). Furthermore, he stated that an event that may have a common meaning to a group of people may have a unique meaning to an individual member of this group, and identifying this meaning becomes the unique job of the data analysis process.

Hence, to achieve this task in this study, the investigator personally transcribed all digital recorded interviews to Word document. The Word document created were verbatim transcription of the interview, so as to reflect the challenges face by the participants from the Non-English speaking countries, in expressing themselves grammatically in Standard English. In order to ensure the accuracy of the transcribed information, comparison of the transcript with the digital recorded interviews were done by listening to the recorded version again while reading over the transcript. Moreover, copies of these transcripts were email to the participants for their feedback on the extent to which the transcript reflected their experiences. Based on the repeated process of listening and reading and rereading of the transcribe manuscript, certain themes and patterns began to emerged. These themes will be useful in exploring the four basic question raised in this research.

Findings

Unlike quantitative research which has a standard format of reporting its result, qualitative research does not have a standard format of reporting its findings (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Taylor and Bogdan (1998) suggested that qualitative research accounts should

be enriched with direct description to enhance the understanding of the conclusions and interpretations derived by the researcher from the data collected. Similarly, Chenail (1995) believed that the “main focus of a qualitative research is the data itself, in all its richness, breadth, and depth” (p.2). He further stated that qualitative researchers should include this data in their final presentation. In line with these suggestions, this section will explore the research questions using the participants’ direct descriptions of their experiences while working and living in the United States.

The three most common reasons given by these expatriates for accepting the international assignment to the United States were career development, cultural education, and improvement of English language. It was observed that for those assignees interviewed who came from countries where English is not spoken, an international assignment to the United States was a perfect chance to improve their level of English language and a means to advance their career. Six of the assignees clearly stated that the ability to speak fluent English in addition to their first language will open up more job opportunities for them in their companies on their return home from this assignment. A female Chinese expatriate puts it this way, “this assignment was for me an opportunity to improve my English, I have always wanted to speak a second language other than Chinese because then I have more skills that will stand me out in my career” Expatriate C. One of the French expatriates interviewed viewed it this way;

It was mainly for career development and to improve my English and international relations. This I believe will be useful to me in achieving my goal of attaining management position in my company someday. In addition, I always wanted to experience life in America, this was because back home in my country we watch a lot of

America films, which portrays, the culture in very good light. For this reason, I wanted to learn more about American culture. Expatriate E

Also, the French speaking Cameroonian puts it this way, “the main reason for taking up this assignment was to advance my professional skills and also to improve on my English” Expatriate B.

As for expatriates who were fluent in speaking English their reasons for accepting the international assignment to the United States varied. Two of the expatriates in this category, said that this assignment was to help them understand and experience a different culture outside of their own culture. The Malaysian expatriate simply said that;

I wanted to experience life in another country, it was for me an opportunity to explore, have fun and learn about a new culture. It was not so much for career development because right now, I do not know how this experience will fit into my career when I return home... it is just the perfect opportunity to relax for two years and experience a different culture. Expatriate H.

Expatriate J from New Zealand said;

I wanted to experience working and living in the United States. It was also to try something new because I had been working on my last assignment for over six years without any change, and that was becoming monotonous for me. This was for me an opportunity to get away from New Zealand for a while and also to enjoy what I love doing, which is making friends with people from around the world.

For, the remaining seven expatriates in this group, the reasons given for taking up this particular cross-cultural posting was to advance their career development through international experience. Simply put by the expatriate from Netherland;

To be able to understand what diversity is all about in the work place, one must first learn to appreciate other culture, especially if one is in a position where one is supervising people from different background. I accepted this assignment because it will give me the opportunity to learn more about diversity in the workplace, especially since America is a diverse country. Expatriate K

Shay and Bacck (2002) found that the reasons given for accepting an international assignment influence the mode of expatriate adjustment as well as their self-report of their performance. Although the reason given for accepting an international assignment was not earlier mentioned as one of factors being study in relationship to expatriates adjustment in this study, the pattern of responses given by the expatriates fluent in English and those not fluent in English was worth noting.

This study investigated the perceived experiences of each of the participants in the areas of work adjustment, interactive adjustment, general adjustment, and job performance in their current assignment to the United States. The first question examined in studying this group of expatriates was;

- 1) What barriers influence a foreign expatriate's adjustment to American culture?

To answer this question, participants interviewed spoke about their adjustment to various aspects of American culture, responding to questions relating to adjustment, openness, cultural novelty, and job performance. The expatriates were ask to describe, from their own perspective, how adjusted they have become to the general living condition in America. Five out of the fifteen expatriates noted that the process of adjustment was not so difficult for them because they had an open mind to the change experienced. Seven other expatriates believed that their adjustment to the new culture experience is progressive, while three expatriates believe that it is difficult to

adjust to the general living condition because of the difference in system experience. Based, on the data analysis the themes noted from the participants responses are openness, support, and cultural difference. Expatriate H, puts it in her own words this way;

I feel that I have adjusted to the general living condition around here. I adapt to a new environment easily. I think I am well-adjusted because naturally, I am a very flexible person. I kept an open mind when I was coming for this assignment, despite the fact that I knew that there were cultural difference between my home country and America

Expatriate B noted that in his case, adjustment was not easy at the initial stage when he arrived, but over time things have become better. He put his experience this way;

At the beginning, it was not easy for me because when I arrive for this assignment my English vocabulary was still very limited. Although I took English class for six months before leaving my country, but for someone whose first language was not English it was hard to express myself. It was difficult to ask questions at work or outside of work whenever I did not understand things around. I had to depend so much on other expatriates from my country to take me out when I needed basic supplies. It was an extremely stressful start for me.

Expatriate A put her own experience in the area of general adjustment in this way;

I think I am fine so far so good, I mean if you are talking about public transportation and things like that, I don't like that, it is hard to get around here for me, personally, it has only gotten better now because I passed my driver's test and I can drive around now.

Expatriate L still experience challenges adjusting to the food because it is very different from the food from his country;

I do not like most of the food around. The way food is made here is very different from how it made in my country, even when similar food ingredients are used in cooking the food, it still does not taste the same. The foods in my country are made to be spicy, no sugar added, only salt is added for taste. I still cannot understand why most of the food around here is made with so much sugar and butter, and why most vegetable are serve raw. So I do not like eating out.

In addition to describing their adjustment process, participants were asked to identify the similarity and difference between their own culture and the American culture. The Chinese expatriate expresses it this way;

It is different. It is easier for me to get along with people from my country around here than Americans. Maybe it is because of the difference in culture, or maybe I just prefer being around people who speak my language... I still cannot understand people around here especially this thing about personal space. I was told that it is the culture here, but I believe it has more to do with personality than culture, because some people do not care when one stand close to them, others do. This is strange to me because in my culture it not considered improper to stand close to people. Expatriate C

Expatriate G, a male from Japan, noted that the culture is more individualistic here, which makes it totally different from the culture in his home country which is extremely supportive of collectivism;

This is one thing I have noticed around here; people do their own thing ...very personal not caring to work in groups. In my country, we operate mostly in groups, like communities, families, and friends. It so hard for me to do things by myself, this has been a difficult transition for me. Expatriate G

Expatriate H;

I can think of one example right away, as a sign of respect to people, the custom in Malaysia is that one will usually take off your shoes before coming into other people's house. In America, not many people do this, and for a long time this use to upset me because to me, it was a sign of disrespect for the household, but now I realize that cultures are different and one just have to learn to accept it that way

Expatriate J noted that though the culture in America is similar to the culture in his home country, he found out that there is still a bit of difference, which tends to affect the way he is being perceive at his job;

Generally it is quite similar, but there are personality differences between the New Zealanders' and Americans'. I think the biggest one is that in New Zealand people are far more relax about most things. Americans are a lot more serious when they do things; this makes it looks like I am too relax and not doing my job. When in reality I might just be doing it, as efficiently as they are, but they just look more serious than I do. This sometime cause misunderstanding, other than that, it is relatively similar Expatriate J

Expatriate A expressed her view in this way;

There are a lot of similarities between the two cultures, but I feel there is something different. In Australia, it is very chilled and relaxed; people are very friendly, but here people are a bit uptight, they are always on their toes. Then again, I think it is the culture around here. When people are not familiar with an individual, they tend to be a bit uptight and suspicious, but once they become familiar with one, all that changes

Expatriate D noted that;

It is different, and at the same time similar. The French do not work as hard as Americans

do. Culturally speaking the French people are laid back people, and weekends for us, are fun time, not the time to work. Here, I notice people tend to work a lot, maybe again this is because the cost of living is higher here.

When asked about the biggest challenges the expatriates face working in the United States, Participants identified two basic issues; cultural and managerial issues. One of the expatriates put it this way;

Knowing how to act appropriately in every situation for me as being a challenge, especially when in a group, because of the difference in culture, sometimes I do not know what is considered appropriate behavior in some situations that I find myself at work.

Expatriate B

Expatriate A put her experience this way;

One thing I have noticed here with the managers is that if they have a problem with one's job, instead of letting one know the issue directly, they dance around the issue. That I cannot stand, it is better that they let me know when I need improvement on my job, that way I will make an effort to improve on my performance.

Expatriate C;

My biggest challenge has been interaction, and how to get along with people because I feel I do not speak well since English is not my first language. When in a group, I will not talk, because I do not know whether they want to talk to me or not.

The second question examined relation the expatriate interactive adjustment and job performance.

- 2) How do foreign expatriates perceive interactive adjustment influencing job performance?

The participants were asked to discuss how easy it was for them to interact and socialize with the host nationals at work and outside of work and the effect, if any this has on their job. The responses to these questions show that it was easier for those expatriates who speak English and are open minded to cultural difference around them to interact with host nationals. The researcher asked the expatriates about their interactions with nationals, and how frequently this occurs with nationals. Expatriate H response to this question is this way, “very frequently, I make it a point to interact constantly because I realize this is the fastest way to learn the culture of the people”

Expatriate G, “I do not socialize with host nationals because I do not have friends who are locals. It has been hard for me to develop friendship with Americans, since I do not communicate very fluently in English....”

Expatriate A, “very frequently, most of my friends are Americans”.

Expatriate D, “I speak with everyone in America, the taxi driver, the man at the club house, at work; I think all the time I am interacting with Americans, it easy for me because I have an interest in learning the culture.”

Also, participants were asked to describe their interaction with the host nationals on a day to day basis. Openness and willingness to communicate and ability to speak English stood out as the main key to interacting with the host national from the response given;

I will say it is good. It is easy to speak with people around there once you are talking about the general issue like weather, food..... they always ask me where I am from because of my accent, whenever I tell people I am from France they always want to know more about Paris. Expatriate D

Expatriate E, put his experience this way;

Outside of work I do not have much interaction with Americans, but when I do it is fairly ok. Although my English level is above average, I still find it is difficult to make conversation with nationals when in a large group, like in meetings at work. It is much easier for me to speak with people on a one on one basis than in a group because discussing one to one people are more patient with you and make more effort to speak slowly so you can understand what is being said.

Expatriate H, put it this way;

I guess it depends on who one is talking to, but in general Americans are easier to communicate with when one talk about general things, like weather, food, and games. When, it comes to talking personal things, it not so easy for me to interact at that level. Americans are always polite to one, but not interested in your personal life, which is quite different from the way people interact with one another in my country. Understanding this principle has helped me, when dealing with friends I have made around.

Expatriate J found it easy to interact with Americans, though the culture here is different from that of his home country. He puts it this way;

Oh my God! Really! I find them very loud and very opinionated, but generally, quite welcoming and nice. It is just a little culture thing there. Americans are slightly different from New Zealanders, but it was quite easy for me to adjust to this difference, because people here just like my accent and wants to talk to me all the time.

In addition, I ask the participants in this study how easily they could communicate when speaking to nationals, and how this impacts their work performance, the Expatriates put it this way;

It depends. Some people have a clearer accent so it easy for me to understand them, in

that situation it easier to interact. Also, talking to a person one on one makes it easier to interact than when talking to people in a group. Expatriate O

Expatriate D express it this way;

I know my English is not perfect, but I always find the word to say what I want to say, so it is easy for me to communicate and speak with co-workers at work and other people I met outside work. I speak with the nurse, the doctor, the cashier, the cab driver; I speak with everyone I am opportune to meet.

Expatriate A puts it this way,

It is easy for me to communicate when speaking to nationals because I speak English. Although, sometimes words may mean a different thing to people from a certain area, whenever I do not understand what is being said, I just ask for clarification.

Expatriate (I) feels more comfortable communicating to host nationals that are of Hispanic origin because he speaks Spanish more fluently than English. He finds it, difficult to understand a conversation in English whenever Americans speak fast;

When, they speak too fast; sometimes I cannot understand what they are saying.

Sometimes at work I get lost in the middle of a conversation when co-workers use a word that is new to me. English is not my first language, so it is a bit difficult for me to understand it at times. This makes it, difficult for me to communicate sometimes, especially since my vocabulary is extremely limited I cannot fully express my feelings in English.

Similarly, Expatriate B expresses his experience;

I sometimes follow them, but other times when they speak fast, it is hard for me to follow what is being said. It also depends on their accent and what part of the country they are

originally from, in the same way when I speak; people tell me that I have a strong accent and it difficult for them to understand me. Coping with this communication gap sometimes causes a lot of stress, and challenges to me when performing my job.

Furthermore, the researcher asked the Expatriates how often they interact with host nationals outside of work. Most of the English speaking Expatriates found it easy to communicate and interact with the host nationals outside of work;

I always get caught out with Americans regularly. I am happy that is the case because, in Australia, the perception about Americans is different, a lot of Australians believe that Americans are unfriendly, but because I am open minded this perception did not in any way affected my interactions with people over here. Expatriate A

Another assignee put it this way;

Like I said earlier I do not have much interaction with the locals outside of work, but I can tell from the experience I have had with Americans, that it is easier to have first contact with Americans than the French. Another thing I always keep in mind, which sometimes limit my interaction with Americans is the fact, that behavior here is different from my country, so I have to be careful when I interact with people because I do not want to have cultural shock. Expatriate E

Similarly, Expatriate (F) puts it this way;

I do not go out with host nationals often, because sometimes it is hard for me to keep a conversation going. For example, I do not understand some of the sport like football and baseball commonly talked about around here, or the popular music or shows most of the people I work with enjoy talking about most times. I do not have knowledge of these things, so I just stay out of conversation, and social gathering outside work to avoid

embarrassment.

Expatriate H puts it this way;

Very often, I share my apartment with an American and I have come to know most of her friends. We normally hang out together when we are not working hard. At the same time I will say not often because apart from friends at work and my house mate and her friends, I have not had much interaction outside of this circle. I notice that it is easier to make friends with nationals through fellow Americans.

I asked the expatriates how often they take advantages of entertainment and recreational opportunities available in their communities;

I did at first when I just came here, because I did not know anybody. I thought it would be a good opportunity to meet people to start with, but now that I have a group network of friends we do not attend as many things in the community, we do things by ourselves. So I did it at the start, but I no longer take full advantage of them now. Expatriate J

Expatriate M;

Sometimes I go to play soccer with other expatriates, I say sometimes because I have not been to any community activities organised by Americans, I still have a problem understanding and communicating with them so I rather hang out with people from around Asia outside work.

The third question asked in this study relates to the expatriate perceived work adjustment and the influence on job performance.

3) How do foreign expatriates perceive work adjustment influencing job performance?

I asked participants in this study questions relating to their job assignment, responsibilities, and supervisory system. They gave their perception of the impact of these factors on their work

adjustment and job performance. Repeatedly, the expatriates expressed the need for more supervisory support and recognition, in boosting their performance and work adjustment. All the assignees said they had a clear understanding of their job responsibilities. Expatriate J puts it this way, “I sure do, I have been there for long enough, I know exactly what to do, and I know what is expected of me”

Expatriate B, “Now yes I do, initially things were not so clear to me but the more time goes by the more things became clearer. I now have a better understanding of the process here”

Expatriate H, “I guess so; things that have to do with work were clearly explained to us, our responsibilities, and expectations were well defined for us at the start of this assignment”

Expatriate C, “I do not really have a clear understanding of my job responsibilities because it keeps changing. It depends on the job rotation I am being assigned. I just take it as it comes”

Expatriate N;

At the beginning, I did not know what my responsibilities were, so I asked the supervisor and I figured it out. Now, that I have been here a while, I now know how things work. I am now the one helping other new people to figure out their path. For the first three months, I did not really know how things work, to be honest. There is no clear written thing on what to do, but one just needs to ask and they tell one what to do, there is no real drama.

Also, I asked the expatriates about how accustomed they have become to the supervisory systems and the responsibilities required for their job. Expatriate L said that;

It works, just like back home. One report to a leader or supervisor, but it's different here because the relationship between supervisor and the team is more casual here than in my

country were supervisors get treated with such reverence. At first it was difficult for me to relate to my supervisor casually, but now; I am getting more comfortable with the system.

Expatriate J;

I am still not accustomed to it. I find in this country it is all about the managers, and everyone wants to look good in their eyes even at the expense of a colleague, whereas, in New Zealand, it is one big family at work. So I find it, hard to cope with this system; where manager are bossy coming from a more friendly work environment. It has been hard for me to adjust to this system, and this is affecting my performance.

In addition, I asked the participants, if they get a clear explanation of what has to be done in performing their job. All fifteen expatriates interviewed acknowledged that they have a clear picture of the task assigned to them because in some cases they either get a daily briefing from their supervisor, or they got the brief at the start of their assignment. Sometimes the expectations are so clear; thus no added explanation is required to perform well on the task. Expatriate J, said that;

There are no clear written or verbal standard, but one knows what the guest need. So that will kind of give one the expectations. For example, one knows that the electric vehicles have to be clean, and ready for guest. It is kind of obvious that your job is to make people happy.

Expatriate N, put it this way, “yes every day, you get a daily brief of what should be accompanied for that day. This again I must say is a good thing because it helps one to keep the focus on what needs to be achieved”

Expatriate O, “yes, you get trained for the job, so one knows what your role will be on the job and the performance standard expected on the job”

Furthermore, I asked the expatriates to describe their own perceptions of how objective the performance standards and expectations in their job were. The expatriates interviewed had divided views on this issue. Five expatriates believe that their company's performance standards and expectations were objective and could be achieved once the expatriate set his/her mind to it. While the other ten expatriates believe that performance standards and expectations for their companies are not objective, because the companies does not provide the support needed to achieve such a standard. Expatriate H;

I have to say, that the company standards are achievable, but it is up to the people to decide if they want to work toward achieving the goal. Once people perceived that management is supportive and reward effort, they tend to be more committed to achieving their set goals. Personally, I feel I have been able to cope and perform above expectation because my supervisors and colleagues were supportive, and this helps to reinforce my confidence and ability to perform well on my job.

Expatriate J puts it in this way;

I do not think it is realistic. To be honest, if they want us to be what they expect, they will have to put us under a regime or manager that would be really nice to us and motivate the team instead of yelling at us whenever we are not meeting their expectation. I find a really good manager who gives one positive re-enforcement as an incentive to perform to expectation.

The fourth question examined the relationship between general adjustment and expatriate job performance.

4). How do foreign expatriates perceive general adjustment influencing job performance?

In answering this question, the participants interviewed spoke about their adjustment to various areas of the general living conditions in America, like the housing conditions, healthcare facilities, transportation, foods, and shopping centers. Twelve out of the fifteen participants interviewed find it difficult adjusting to the food in the host country, while the other two participants did not have any issue with the food.

Expatriate J;

To be honest I have actually gotten use to that as well. I am getting really fat. I am gaining weight, but I actually quite like it now. When I first came, I did not like it at all, but then, you get used to it after a while.

Expatriate H;

I love food. I am not picky, but I know that a lot of times United States food can be a little bit too greasy for us, compare to food that I eat in my home country, but then again I am not picky, I pretty much eat everything, and anything, that people feed me.

Expatriate C has not been able to adjust to the food;

This is one area that has been difficult for me to adjust, I do not like American food, because it too sweet, and even American Chinese food does not taste like Chinese food. I hardly eat out. I cook all my food and even packet my lunch to work.

I also asked the expatriates about the ease with which they navigate through the shopping centers when searching for things.

Expatriate J, said that “it is difficult, but then again, because I have made some American friends and they have cars, I can get around with them, but if I have had not made those friends it would have been difficult”

Expatriate N, puts it this way;

It is pretty easy for me, when I remember to follow the signs. I say when I remember to follow the signs because it is not something I get accustomed to doing, since in my country, and most other Asian countries where I have previously worked, signs at shops are not common. Though things are grouped into categories, it is not as spelled out as it is here in the United States.

Also, participants were asked to compare the transportation system in the host country to that of their own country, and the influence, if any, the transport system has on their ability to get to work. Expatriate B gave his experience using the transport system;

In my country, buses are run by private individuals. The bus does not run on any schedule, there is always a bus available. This was a big issue for me at the initial stage when I arrived; understanding how the bus schedule worked and how to do a bus transfer was difficult for me. This affected my performance at work because sometime I get to work feeling stressed. A couple of times I left my apartment early but still got to work late, because I took the wrong bus. In order to avoid this, I leave my apartment at least two hours ahead of the bus time, just to accommodate any mistakes with bus transfers. Even now that I have a driver's license and drive myself to work, I still face some challenges, but the GPS has been helpful, in giving me directions when I get lost.

Expatriate E put it this way;

In Paris, we have trains, and buses everywhere. The time interval between services is short. The buses and trains come frequently because the places are not so spaced out there. Here, one has to use a cab if one needs to get to one's destination on time. The buses do not come so often because the distances between one place to the other is so spaced out from each other. Moreover, the cabs fares are expensive; it tends to increase my cost. I

plan my trip with the schedule; it is easy that way for to get to work on time using public transportation.

In addition, expatriates were asked to describe their experiences using the healthcare facilities. Four of the fifteen expatriate interviewed have not had any experiences using healthcare facilities since arriving on their assignment, but they have a good knowledge of how their insurance policy works. The remaining eleven expatriates have experience the healthcare facilities and they each shared their experiences. Expatriate H, shared her experience;

I have not really had much experience using health facilities. Except for this one time during my training in Wisconsin, when I got super sick, and because I suffered allergy from using certain drug, they took me to the hospital. My insurance company took care of the bills. I have to say; the U.S. has one of the best healthcare facilities, compared to other countries were I have previously worked, but it was expensive. I was at the ER for two hours that day and my bill was over two thousand for just that treatment. Luckily my insurance company handle the bill, if not, it would have been an expensive adventure for me just to experience two hours in a U.S. hospital.

Expatriate B, “It is quite different from what I am used to back home. I will say the health system there is better and more expensive, even with the insurance, it is not still cheap”

Expatriate J, is one of the four expatriates who is yet to experience healthcare facilities in the country, in his on view, he believes the medical system is expensive, for this reason he tries to keep himself healthy. He puts it is way, “to be honest, I am so scared of the health facilities here because it is very expensive. I have kept myself healthy, and I would not even know how to use it” Expatriate J

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter will discuss the emerging themes and patterns from this study in line with findings from previous quantitative research reviewed earlier in the literature review section. It will also discuss the implication of the findings from this study to the growing community of expatriates working and living in the United States and international human relations management. In addition, the limitations encountered during this study will be discussed, as well.

A Recap of the Study Purpose

This study was carried out to contribute to the existing literature on expatriate adjustment, by focusing on foreign expatriates living and working in the United States. The emphasis of this study was on work adjustment, interactive adjustment, and general adjustment, and the relationship that exists between these three aspects of adjustment and job performance during cross-cultural assignment. Also, this study explored the social and cultural challenge encountered by foreign nationals on cross-cultural assignments to the United States; especially in the areas relating to expatriates adjustment, cultural differences, communication styles, and job performance.

Themes and Patterns

Based on the interviews conducted, the data collected, and the data analysis, six major themes emerged as factors that can influence expatriate adjustment in the United States. The six major themes are: support, language ability, adjustment process, cultural difference, knowledge of environment, and openness. Each of these themes will be discussed in relation to previous research, in these areas. In addition, the researcher will also discuss the impact of these themes in

relationship to work adjustment, interactive adjustment, general adjustment, and job performances of the participants in this study.

Support

In answering all four research questions posed; it was observed that the participants interviewed repeatedly emphasized the need for support from co-workers, fellow expatriates, supervisors, and managers to cope with the changes being experience both at work and the general workplace environment.

Once people perceived that management is supportive and reward effort, they tend to be more committed to achieving their set goals. Personally, I feel I have been able to cope and perform above expectation because my supervisors and colleagues have been supportive, and this helped to reinforce my confidence and ability to perform well on my job. Expatriate H

This observation is consistent with Black and Porter's(1991) investigation that found that social support from supervisors and fellow co-worker who provide help and supportive relationship to expatriates serves as stress a buffer for these expatriates. They stated that the support given to these international employees may lead to job adjustment and job satisfaction on international assignment. It was also observed that support from expatriates and host community also helps to facilitate expatriate general adjustment. Expatriate J, said that “ it is difficult, but then again, because I have made some American friends and they have cars, I can get around with them, but if I have had not made those friends it would have been difficult”

Expatriate C puts it in this way;

It is easy now to get around. This is because I go with other Chinese people that have been working around here for some time, but sometimes I still miss my way if I try to find places on my own.

Language Ability

Language ability is the basis for effective communication, which in turn facilitates all three aspects of adjustment. Language was one of the factors stressed by the expatriate in answering all four research questions. This observation is in line with earlier research carried out by Shaffer, Harrison, and Gilley (1999) which found that the ability to speak and understand the host language makes it easier to be aware of any contradictory demands from host nationals and fellow employees at work. Additionally, Graf (2004) discovered that an essential ingredient for intercultural skill is language, making it much easier to communicate with the host nationals when one understand and speak the host language. The expatriates experience shared support these findings. Expatriate B, shared his experience;

I sometimes follow them, but other times when they speak fast, it is hard for me to follow what is being said. It also depends on their accent and what part of the country they are originally from, in the same way when I speak; people tell me that I have a strong accent and it difficult for them to understand me. Coping with this communication gap sometime causes a lot of stress, and challenge to me when performing my job.

Expatriate A, had a different experience;

It is easy for me to communicate when speaking to nationals because I speak English.

Although, sometimes words may mean a different thing to people from a certain area, whenever I do not understand what is being said, I just ask for clarification.

Some of the expatriates whose first language is not English pointed out that the limited command of the English language has been a challenge in achieving interactive, general and work adjustment, and in turn has had an effect on their performance.

Adjustment Process

This is the initial stage when an expatriate learns to understand the new environment to which he or she becomes exposed. Expatriate adjustment occurs in three facets, work adjustment, interactive adjustment, and general adjustment (Black, Mendenhall, Oddou, 1991). In the case of the participants in this study, the three facets of adjustment occurred over time. Participants, who have spent a longer time in their assignment, felt more adjusted to the cultural change, than those who have been on their assignment for just a shorter time. This finding is consistent with a Black and Mendehall (1991) study that found that expatriate adjustment occurs in phases over time. For example, this can be seen when expatriate J talked about the process of his adjustment;

I think I have finally adjusted well. I have a group of friends now, my life is absolutely amazing. It took about seven months to adjust, and after that I was fine, and having a great time. My friends were a contributing factor to my adjustment having friends there made a lot of difference. If I were by myself, it would have been a lot different.

Another example is in the area of work. Expatriate K expresses his opinion;

I believe my performance had improved over time in comparison to when I started this assignment, maybe it because I have a better understanding of the processes now, than I had at the beginning. In two to three weeks, I will be getting another performance evaluation, and I am hoping it will be good, as well.

And interactive adjustment, Expatriate D shared his feeling;

I know my English is not perfect, but I always find the word to say what I want to say, so it is easy for me to communicate and speak with co-worker at work and other people I met outside work. I speak with the nurse, the doctor, the cashier, the cab driver; I speak with everyone I am opportune to meet.

Expatriate H;

I will say pretty well, although sometimes my accent gets in the way, but whenever that happens I try to explain better, but sometimes it is difficult to pass the message because I am not good at explaining things patiently.

Interestingly, in the area of general adjustment most of the participants interviewed indicated that they still experience difficulty adjusting to eating the food from the host nation. As one of the expatriates puts it;

I do not like it. It is unhealthy. I feel like everything is not natural, and since I have been here, I do not know whether you want to hear this, but I have always suffered from constant gas and diarrhoea, to be honest. Expatriate A

In contrast to McGinley (2008) findings that expatriate tends to show a higher level of adjustment to food and housing, twelve out of the fifteen participants in this study experienced lower levels of adjustment to the food in the host nation.

Cultural difference

Culture can be defined as the collective experiences shared among a group of people, which in turn fashions their beliefs and behaviors (Schein, 1992). Similarly, Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) defined culture as the “collective programming of the mind which distinguishes members of one group or category of people from another” (p.4). In an earlier study, Hofstede (1984) found that cultural distance exists between different countries and the more the distance in the new culture from expatriate own culture, the harder it is to adjust to the new culture. Consequently, expatriates are likely to experience more challenges in the area of interactive adjustment in an environment that is culturally different from their own. (Anderson 2008). Additionally, studies found that the more the novelty perceived between the expatriate country

and the host country the harder it becomes for the expatriate to experience interactive adjustment (Andreason, 2008; Shaffer, Harrison, & Gilley, 1999). Black (1988) found that a positive attitude, toward the host nation facilitates cross cultural adjustment during international assignments. These findings are exemplified in the experiences shared by participants in this study. Expatriate H puts her experience this way;

I feel that I have adjusted to the general living condition around here. I adapt to a new environment easily. I think I am well-adjusted because naturally, I am a very flexible person. I kept an open mind when I was coming for this assignment, despite the fact that I knew that there were cultural difference between my home country and America

Expatriate J, feels a bit different about his experience;

Generally it is quite similar, but there are personality differences between the New Zealanders' and Americans'. I think the biggest one is that in New Zealand people are far more relaxed about most things. Americans are a lot more serious when they do things; this makes it look like I am too relaxed and not doing my job. When in reality I might just be doing it, as efficiently as they are, but they just look more serious than I do. This sometimes causes misunderstanding, other than that, it is relatively similar.

Expatriate C, said;

It is different, It is easier for me to get along with people from my country around here than Americans, maybe it is because of the difference in culture or I just prefer being around people who speak my language.

Knowledge of Environment

Findings from this study show that having general knowledge of the host community can facilitate interaction and one's ability to socialize with the host national.

Expatriate D;

I will say it is good. It is easy to speak with people around there once you are talking about the general issue like weather, food..... they always ask me where I am from because of my accent, whenever I tell people I am from France they always want to know more about Paris.

Expatriate F;

I do not go out with host nationals often, because sometimes it is hard for me to keep a conversation going. For example, I do not understand some of the sport like football and baseball commonly talked about around here, or the popular music or shows most of the people I work with enjoy talking about most times. I do not have knowledge of these things, so I just stay out of conversation, and social gathering outside work to avoid embarrassment.

Openness

As previously stated in the literature review, there are five major personality characteristics. These are: extroversion, agreeableness, conscientious, emotional stability, openness, and these have been shown to influence expatriates adjustment and job performance (Shaffer, Harrison, Gregersen, Black & Ferzandi, 2006). Also, Mendenhall and Oddou (1985) found that openness and sociability are two characteristics necessary for relationship building during cross-cultural assignments. Caliguri, (2000) discovered that openness and sociability tend to affect the manner in which a person behaves in a given situation, such as cross-cultural interaction when on international assignment. Downess, Varner, and Musinski (2007) found that an expatriate who possess the personality characteristics openness, can adjust better during international assignment, than one who do not possess it. This is because one is better equipped

to detect and respond to subtle cultural differences in the new environment when one is open minded. These findings were consistent with the experiences of the participants in this study.

Expatriate H, shared her experience;

I told myself when I arrived here, that I had to make it a point of duty to make friends with locals and not just international people. For someone far away from home, the tendency is to first sort people from your ethnic background to help one understand the new environment. I have to say that my friends there are from pretty much all around the world not just one country or people.

Expatriate H;

I feel that I have adjusted to the general living condition around here. I adapt to a new environment easily. I think I am well-adjusted because naturally, I am a very flexible person. I kept an open mind when I was coming for this assignment, despite the fact that I knew that there were cultural difference between my home country and America

Study Limitations

This study was not without its limitations. One weakness is that the study sample was from two industry sources within a single location. Thus, this may raise questions about the generalizability of the findings when compared with the adjustment process in other locations within the United States. Another limitation of this study is that, the sample population were all non-managerial employees and most of the sample population were on their first cross-cultural assignment, thereby making it difficult to ascertain if prior cross-cultural experience exerts any influence on novelty and interactive adjustment for foreign expatriates working in the United States. Finally, this study used qualitative methods where smaller participants are more

appropriate. Therefore, these findings may not represent the larger population of the expatriates working and living in the United States.

The Need for Future Research

The findings of this study are of significant importance to the growing expatriate population, and organizations within the United States, whose success and competitiveness in the global market hinges on the success of their cross-cultural operation. For this reason, further research is necessary in the future to collaborate the finding, that knowledge of the host environment facilitates interactive adjustment, as found in this investigation. A study using a larger population from across a wider range of industries and locations within the United States is necessary to share more light into this phenomenon. Furthermore, a study with a more diverse sample population will provide a more generalized result that can be used to collaborate, the findings of this study.

Conclusion and Implication

Based on the in-depth description of the experience of the challenges face by the foreign expatriates who participated in this study, six main themes emerged: support, language ability, adjustment process, cultural difference, knowledge of environment, and openness. This study discovers that these themes influence the process of work adjustment, general adjustment and interactive adjustment of expatriate while on international assignment to the United States. There were certain implications of these findings that should be considered by the organizations in the preparation of expatriates for international assignment. While the expatriates acknowledged the advantages of living and working in the United States, there were also some factors that posed challenges to the objective of the cultural exchange. Therefore, to achieve the essences of the

operation, organizations should fully equip the expatriates with the basic skills require to succeed.

Emerging from this study are two primary themes, language and support, that seems important for the organization to consider while preparing expatriates for cross cultural assignment to the United States. Language stood out as one of the factors which influence interactive adjustment, and work adjustment. Most of the non- English speaking participants, who were not so fluent in speaking the host language, emphasized the challenges associated with their inability to speak the language fluently. Hence, the organizations should consider incorporating, language and phonetics training into their pre-departure training. Also, organizations should consider giving a longer period of preparation to expatriate before deploying them on international assignment. This will give the expatriate enough time to acquire information about the culture of the host community.

Another theme that emerged from this study which organizations involve in international operation should give much consideration to, is support. Participants in this study repeatedly, stressed the need for co-worker and management support as a key to their work adjustment, interactive adjustment, and job performance. Consequently, organizations should consider putting in place organizational systems, both at home and international offices which will provide a supportive environment to the expatriate on cross-cultural assignment. This study discovers that the support system will create an enabling environment for the expatriate to adjust to the new work environment and influence job performance, as well.

Finally, relating these discoveries to the purpose of this study, which was to contribute more knowledge to the existing literature on expatriate adjustment by focusing on the challenges faced by foreign expatriates living and working in the United States, it is hoped that these

findings will be useful to the growing body of foreign expatriate within the United States seeking a better understanding of the process of adjustment. In addition, it is the hope that this information will be vital to both foreign and home offices of companies, in managing their expatriate operation effectively to produce the desired goal, of creating a more competitive market through a richer knowledge of diversity, which in turn will reflect in their products and profitability.

References

- Abe, H., & Wiseman, R. (1983). A cross-cultural confirmation of the dimensions of intercultural effectiveness. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 7(1), 53-67.
- Andreason, A. W. (2003). Expatriate adjustment to foreign assignments. *International Journal of Commerce and Management*, 13(1), 42-60.
- Andreason, A. W. (2008). Expatriate adjustment of spouses and expatriate managers: An integrative research review. *International Journal of Management*, 25(2), 382-395.
- Aryee, S., & Stone, R. J. (1996). Work experiences, work adjustment and psychological well-being of expatriate employees in Hong Kong. *International Journal of Human Resources Management*, 7(1), 150-164.
- Barrick, M. R., & Mount, M. K. (1991). The big five personality dimensions and job performance: A meta-analysis. *Personnel Psychology*, 44(1), 1-26.
- Black, J. S. (1988). Work role transitions: A study of American expatriate managers in Japan. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 19(2), 277-294.
- Black, J. S. (1990). The relationship of personal characteristics with the adjustment of Japanese expatriate managers. *Management International Review*, 30(2), 119-134.
- Black, J. S. (1992). Coming home: The relationship of expatriate expectations with repatriation adjustment and job performance. *Human Relations*, 45(2), 177-193.
- Black, J. S., & Gregersen, H. B. (1991). Antecedents to cross-cultural adjustment for expatriates in Pacific Rim assignments. *Human Relations*, 44(5), 497-515.
- Black, J. S., Gregersen, H. B., & Mendenhall, M. E. (1992). *Global assignment: Successfully expatriating and repatriating*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Black, J. S., & Mendenhall, M. (1991). The u curve adjustment revisited: A review and theoretical framework. *Journal of international Business Studies*, 22(2), 225-247.
- Black, J. S., Mendenhall, M., & Oddou, G. (1991). Toward a comprehensive model of international adjustment: An integration of multiple theoretical perspectives. *Academy of Management Review*, 16, 219-317.
- Black, J. S., & Porter, L. W. (1991). Managerial behavior and job performance: A successful manager in Los Angeles may not be successful in Hong Kong. *International Journal of Business Studies*, 22(1), 99-114.
- Black, J. S., & Stephens, G. K. (1989). The influence of spouse of American expatriate adjustment and intent to stay in pacific rim overseas assignment. *Journal of Management*, 15(4), 529-545.
- Brookfield Relocation Services. (2012). Global relocation trends 2012 survey report. *Brookfield Global Relocation Services*, 5-24. Retrieved from <http://www.brookfieldgre.com>
- Borman, C. W., & Motowidlo, S. J. (1993). Expanding the criteria domain to include element of contextual performance. In N. Schmitt, & W. Borman (Eds.), *Personnel selections in organizations*. (pp. 71-98). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Buss, D. M. (1992). Manipulation in close relationship: Five personality factor in interactional context. *Journal of Personality*, 60(2), 477-499.
- Byrnes, F. C. (1966). Role shock: An occupational hazard of American technician assistants aboard. *The Annals*, 368, 95-108.
- Costa, P. T., & McCrae, R. R. (1992). *Revised NEO personality inventory (NEO-PI-R) and NEO five-factor inventory (NEO -FFI) professional manual*. Odessa, FL: Psychological assessment resources.

- Claus, L., Lungu, A. P., & Bhattacharjee, S. (2011). The effects of individual, organizational, and societal variables, on the job performance of expatriate managers. *International Journal of Management*, 28(1), 249-271.
- Caligiuri, P. (1997). Assessing expatriate success: Beyond just "being there". *New Approaches to Employee Management*, 4, 117-140.
- Caligiuri, P. M. (2000a). Selecting expatriates for personality characteristics: A moderating effect of personality on the relationship between host nation contact and cross-cultural adjustment. *Management International Review*, 40(1), 61-80.
- Caligiuri, P. (2000b). The big five personality characteristics as predictors of expatriate's desire to terminate the assignment and supervisor rated performance. *Personnel Psychology*, 53(1), 68-77.
- Caligiuri, P., & Day, D. V. (2000). Effects of self -monitoring on technical, contextual, and assignment –specific performance. *Group and Organizational Management*, 25(2), 154-174.
- Caligiuri, P., Philips, J., Lazarova, M., Tarique, I., & Burgi, P. (2001). The theory of met expectations applied to expatriate adjustment: The role of cross cultural training. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 12(3), 357-372.
- Chenail, R. J. (1995). Presenting qualitative data. *The qualitative Report* , 2(3), 1-8. Retrieved 06/16/12, from [http:// www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR2-3/presenting.html](http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR2-3/presenting.html)
- Church, A. (1982). Sojourner adjustment. *Psychological Bulletin*, 91(3), 540-577.
- Cohen, E. (1977). Expatriate communities. *Current Sociology*, 24(3), 15-25.
- Downess, M., Varner, I. I., & Musinski, L. (2007). Personality traits as a predictor of expatriate effectiveness: A synthesis and reconceptualization. *Review of Business*, 27(3), 16-23.

- Earley, P. C. (1987). Intercultural training for managers: A comparison of documentary and interpersonal method. *Academy of Management Journal*, 30(4), 685-698.
- Ekta, S. (2011). Global adjustment perspectives of Indian professionals. *Global Business Review*, 12(1), 87-97.
- Forman, S., & Zachar, P. (2001). Cross-cultural adjustment of international officers during professional military education in the United States. *Military Psychology*, 13(2), 117-128.
- Gai, S., Sumner, K., Bragger, J., & Nooner, K. (2011). Understanding experiences of Indian expatriates in the United States: Stress, satisfaction, social, support, and general health. *International Journal of Strategic Management*, 11(3), 158-166.
- Graf, A. (2004). Expatriate selection: An empirical study identifying significant skill profiles. *Thunderbird International Business Review*, 46(6), 667-685.
- Gregersen, H. B., & Black, J. S. (1992). Antecedents to commitment to a parent company and a foreign operation. *Academy Of Management Journal*, 35(1), 65-90.
- Gregersen, H. B., Hite, J., & Black, J. S. (1996). Expatriate performance appraisal in US multinational firms. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 27(4), 711-738.
- Gregersen, H. B., Morrison, A., & Black, J. S. (1998). Developing leaders for the global frontiers. *Sloan Management Review*, 40, 21-32.
- Hannigan, T. P. (1990). Traits, attitudes, and skills that are related to intercultural effectiveness and their implications for cross-cultural training: A review of the literature. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 14(1), 89-111.
- Hofstede, G. (1980). *Culture's consequences*. Beverley Hills, CA: Sage.
- Hofstede, G. (1984). *Culture's consequences: International difference in work related values*. California, CA: Sage.

- Hofstede, G., & Hofstede, G. J. (2005). *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Hung-Wen, L., & Ching-Hsiang, L. (2006). Determinants of the adjustment of expatriate managers to foreign countries: An empirical study. *International Journal of Management*, 23(2), 302-311.
- Huang, T. J., Chi, S., & Lawler, J. J. (2005). The relationship between expatriates' personality traits and their adjustment to international assignments. *International Journal of Human Resources Management*, 16(9), 1656-1670.
- Harrison, D., & Shaffer, M. (2005). Mapping the criterion space for expatriate's success: Task and relationship based performance effort and adaption. *International Journal of Human Resources Management*, 16(8), 1454-1474.
- Hesse, M. (1980). *Revolution and reconstruction in the philosophy of science*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Huberman, A. M., & Miles, M. B. (2002). *The qualitative researcher's companion*. California, CA: Sage.
- Iancu, D. (2009). Determinants of the organizational culture on professional satisfaction in higher education institution. *Bulletin Scientific*, 14(2), 68-73.
- Keen, E. A. (1975). *Primer in phenomenological psychology*. New York, NY: Holt, Reinhart and Winston.
- Kittler, M., Rygl, D., Mackinnon, A., & Wiedeman, K. (2011). Work role and work adjustment in emerging markets: a study of German expatriates in CEE countries and Russia, cross cultural management. *An international Journal*, 18(2), 165-184.

- Kraimer, M. L., Wayne, S. J., & Jaworski, R.A. (2001). Source of support and expatriate performance: The mediating role of expatriate adjustment. *Personnel Psychology, 54*(1), 71-99.
- Kraimer, M. L., & Wayne, S. J. (2004). An examination of perceived organizational support as a multidimensional construct in the context of expatriate assignment. *Journal of Management, 30* (2),209-237.
- Krauss, S. E. (2005). Research paradigms and meaning making: A primer. *The qualitative Report, 10*(4), 758-770. Retrieved 05/12/12, from [http:// www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR10-4/krauss.pdf](http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR10-4/krauss.pdf)
- Livemore, D. (2010). *Leading with cultural intelligence: The new secret to success*. New York, NY: Amacom.
- Mendenhall, M., & Oddou, G. (1985). The dimensions of expatriate acculturation: A review. *Academy of Management Review, 10*(1), 39-37.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study application in education: Revised and expanded from case study research in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- McGinley, J. (2008). Expatriate adjustment within a social context: Examination of a sample in Russia. *Journal of Social, Evolutionary, and cultural Psychology,2*(2), 56-68.
- Mertens, D. M. (2005). *Research and evaluation in education and psychology: Integrating diversity with quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods*. (2nd ed.). California, CA: Sage.
- McEvoy, G. M. (1995). *Expatriate adjustment: Causes and consequences'*, in J. Selmer (ed.) *expatriate management*. Westport, CA: Quorum.

- Mervosh, E. M., & McClenahan, J. S. (1997). The care and feeding of expats. *Industry Week*, 246(22), 68-72.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *An expanded source book: Qualitative data analysis*. (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Motowidlo, S. J., & Van Scotter, J. R. (1994). Evidence that task performance should be distinguished from contextual performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 79(4), 475-480.
- Nicholson, N. (1984). A theory of work role transitions. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 29, 172-179.
- Oberg, K. (1960). Culture shock: Adjustment to new cultural environments'. *Practical Anthologist*, 7, 177-182.
- Orcher, L. T. (2005). *Conducting research: Social and behavioral science methods*. Glendale, CA: Pyrczak.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods*. (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Raduan, C., Ramalu, S., Uli, J., & Kumar, N. (2010). Expatriate performance in overseas assignment: The role of the big five personality. *Asian Social Science*, 6(9), 104-113.
- Ratner, C. (2002). *Path in psychology: Cultural psychology theory and method*. New York, NY: Kluwer Academic/Plenum.
- Rich, B. L., Lepine, J. A., & Crawford, E. R. (2010). Job engagement: Antecedents and effects on job performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 53(3), 617-635.
- Schein, E. H. (1992). *Organizational culture and leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Schein, E. H. (2009). *The corporate culture survival guide (J-B warren Bennis series)*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Searle, W., & Ward, C. (1990). The prediction of psychological and socio-cultural adjustment during cross-cultural transitions. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 14, 449-464.
- Selmer, J. (1999a). Adjustment to Hong Kong: US v. European expatriate. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 9(3), 83-93.
- Selmer, J. (1999b). Career issues and international adjustment of business expatriate. *Career Development International*, 4(2), 77-87.
- Selmer, J. (2001). Psychological barriers to adjustment and how they affect coping strategies: Western business expatriates in China. *International Journal of Human Resources Management*, 12(2), 151-165.
- Selmer, J. (2002a). Coping strategies applied by western vs. overseas Chinese expatriate in China. *International of Human Resources Management*, 13(1), 19-34.
- Selmer, J. (2002b). Practice make perfect? International experience and expatriate adjustment. *Management International Review*, 42(1), 71-87.
- Selmer, J. (2002c). The Chinese connection? Adjustment of western vs overseas Chinese expatriate manager in China. *Journal of Business Research*, 55, 41-50.
- Selmer, J. (2006). Language ability and adjustment: Western expatriate in China. *Thunderbird International Business Review*, 48(3), 347-368.
- Selmer, J. (2007). Which is easier, adjusting to a similar or to a dissimilar culture? American business expatriates in Canada and Germany. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 7(2), 185-201.

- Shaffer, M. A., & Harrison, D. A. (1998). Expatriates' psychological withdrawal from international assignments: Work, non-work, and family influences. *Personnel Psychology, 51*(1), 87-118.
- Shaffer, M. A., Harrison, D. A., Gregersen, H., Black, J. S., & Ferzandi, L. A. (2006). You can take it with you: Individual differences and expatriate effectiveness. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 91*(1), 109-125.
- Shaffer, M. A., Harrison, D. A., & Gilley, K. M. (1999). Dimensions, determinants, and differences in the expatriate's adjustment process. *Journal of International Business Studies, 30*(3), 557-581.
- Shay, J. P., & Bacck, S. (2002). An empirical investigation of the relationship between reason for expatriate manager assignment, mode of expatriate adjustment and expatriate managerial effectiveness. *Academy of Management Proceedings & Membership Directory, 1*, 11-16. doi: 10.5465/APBPP.2002.7516875.
- Stening, B. W., & Hammer, M. R. (1992). Cultural baggage and the adaption of expatriate: American and Japanese Managers. *Management International Review (MIR), 32*(1), 77-89.
- Suh, S., & Lee, M. (2006). Group work for Korean expatriate women in the United States: An exploratory study. *Journal for Specialist in Group work, 31*(4), 353-369.
- Takeuchi, R. (2010). A critical review of expatriate adjustment research through a multiple stakeholder view: Progress, emerging trends, and prospects. *Journal of Management, 36*(4), 1040-1064.
- Takeuchi, R., Tesluk, P. E., Yun, S., & Lepak, D. P. (2005). An integrative view of international experience. *Academy of Management Journal, 48*(1), 85-100.

- Takeuchi, R., Wang, M., & Marinova, S. (2005). Antecedents and consequences of psychological workplace strain during expatriation: A cross-sectional and longitudinal investigation. *Personnel Psychology*, 58, 925-948.
- Takeuchi, R., Yun, S., & Russell, J. A. (2002). Antecedents and consequences of the perceived adjustment of Japanese expatriates in the USA. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 13(8), 1224-1244.
- Tung, R. L. (1991). Handshakes across the sea: Cross-cultural negotiating for business success. *Organizational Dynamic*, 19(3), 30-40.
- Ward, C., & Chang, W. C. (1997). "Cultural fit": A new perspective on personality and sojourner adjustment. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 21(4), 525-533.
- Ward, C., & Kennedy, A. (1993a). Psychological and socio-cultural adjustment during cross-cultural transitions. *An International Journal of Psychology*, 28(2), 129-148.
- Ward, C., & Kennedy, A. (1993b). Where's the culture in cross-cultural transition comparative studies of sojourner adjustment. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 24, 221-249.
- Ward, C., Leong, C. H., & Low, M. (2004). Personality and sojourner adjustment. *Journal of Cross-cultural Psychology*, 35(2), 137-151.
- Wang, M., & Takeuchi, R. (2007). The role of goal orientation during expatriation: A cross-sectional and longitudinal investigation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92(2), 1437-1445.
- Wood, E. D. (2010). *Post-arrival performance interventions that assist expatriates' adjustment and performance*. (Doctoral dissertation, Indiana State University) Retrieved from <http://scholar.indstate.edu./dissertation/>

Yamazaki, Y., & Kayes, D. C. (2007). Expatriate learning: Exploring how Japanese managers adapt in the United States. *International Journal of Human Resources Management*, 18(8), 1373-1395.

Yu-Chi, W. (2011). Job stress and job performance among employees in the Taiwanese finance sector: The role of emotional intelligence. *Social Behavior & Personality: An international Journal*, 39(1), 21-31.

Appendix A

Informed Consent Form

This is an invitation for you to participate in my research study, which looks at a qualitative analysis of challenges facing expatriate workers coming to the United States. You have been selected as a possible participant in this research because you are currently an expatriate living and working in the United States.

The purpose of this research is to provide a better understanding of the challenges faced by an expatriate in a new socio-cultural environment, the process of adjustment and the impact on their job performance. Your decision to participate in this study is strictly voluntarily and there will be no financial compensations given for participation. If you decide to participate in this study, you will be required to share experiences relating to your cross-cultural adjustment process in an interview section that will be approximately between one to two hours. You have the right to grant permission or decline permission for this interview to be recorded using recording device, where permission is declined, the investigator will request to take notes. You are free to choose to participate or withdraw participation at any time by informing the principal investigator. Upon request to withdraw, all information pertaining to you will be destroyed. If you choose to participate, all information and your identity will be held in strict confidence. The information obtained in the study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings but your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the statement below and return this form in the attached self-address stamp envelope included with this form.

Researcher: Oghenebruphiyo Gloria Onosu, Master student, Department of Employment

and Labor Relations, Keith Hall, Room 3-E, Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Thesis Chair: Dr David Piper, Chairperson and Assistant Professor, Department
Employment and Labor Relations, Keith Hall, Room 3C Indiana University of
Pennsylvania.

This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional
Review Board for the Protection of Human subjects (Phone: 724-357-7730)

I have read and understand the information on the form and I consent to volunteer to be a
subject in this study. I understand that my responses are completely confidential and that I have
the right to withdraw at any time. I have received an unsigned copy of this informed Consent
Form to keep in my possession.

Name	Signature	Date
------	-----------	------

Phone where you can be reached _____ Best days/time to reach you _____

I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the
potential benefit and possible risk associated with participating in this research study, have
answered any questions that have been raised, and have witnessed the above signature.

Name	Signature	Date
------	-----------	------

Appendix B

General Interview Guide

1. What Geographic location are you from?
2. How well do you speak English?
3. Prior to this assignment in the United States, have you had any other expatriate assignments? If yes can you give brief details of your experience?
4. How long have you been assigned to United States?
5. Did you receive any pre-departure training prior to your arrival?
6. Where there any particular reason for accepting this assignment? (Wood, 2010)

Adjustment Questions

1. In your view describe how well adjusted you are to the living conditions in general in the United States?
2. How adjusted are you to the housing conditions?
3. From your perception, how adjusted are you to the food in the country?
4. How easily do you navigate through shopping centers when searching for things?
5. How have you adjusted to the cost of living?
6. Do you take advantage of the entertainment and recreational opportunities available in your community?
7. How would you describe your experience using the health facilities?
8. Do you completely understand the health insurance policies?
9. How frequently do you socialize with host nationals?
10. How would you describe your interaction with host nationals on a day to day basis?
11. How often do you interact with host nationals outside of work?

12. How easily do you communicate, when speaking with host nationals?
13. Do you have a clear understanding of your job responsibilities?
14. From your perception, how objective are performance standards and expectations in your job?
15. How accustomed are you to the supervisory system and the responsibilities required of you in your job? (Black & Gregory, 1989)

Culture Novelty questions.

1. How similar or different is the everyday customs in America from what is followed in your country?
2. Is there a difference between general living conditions here, compared to your home country?
3. How similar or different is using the healthcare system here, to that in your country?
4. What are the differences in transportation systems compared to your host country, and has this influenced your ability to get to work?
5. What do you think about the general cost of living? Is it same as your country?
6. How different is the available quality and type of foods here, to that in your country?
7. What is the climate in your country like? Is there any similarity or difference in the climate here compared to your country?
8. How similar or different is the general housing condition here, to what is obtainable in your country? (Black & Gregory, 1991)

Job adjustment Questions

1. How do you feel about the authority you have been given in this assignment?
2. Do you have clear, planned goal and objectives for your job?

With your assignment, have you learned to manage your time properly?

1. Do you know exactly what your responsibilities are in this assignment?
2. Are you exactly aware of your job expectation?
3. In performing your job, do you get a clear explanation of what has to be done?
4. Does your organization provide a mentoring program? If yes, describe the impact of this programme to your adjustment on the Job? (Wood, 2010)

Openness to People

1. What are the ethnic backgrounds of the people you have become friends with doing this assignment?
2. What language do your friends' speak?
3. What is the age range of your friends'?
4. In general what are the careers of your friends'?
5. Do your friends' have similar interest and hobbies as yours?
6. Do you have friends' who interest and hobbies are different from yours?
7. What is the highest educational level of your friends'? (Caligiuri 2000)

Performance Questions

1. What are your opinions about your most recent performance evaluation in your current assignment?
2. In relation to your peers, on a percentage basis how would you rate your performance on the following dimensions?
 - a. Overall performance?
 - b. Ability to get along with other?
 - c. Completing task on time?

- d. Quality(as opposed to quantity of performance)
- e. Achievement of work goals? (Wood, 2010).
 - 1. What are the biggest challenges to working in this country?
 - 2. Can you identify any accommodation a host employer could make, that would allow you promote your ability to do your job better?