

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter outlines the exploratory research methodology used in this study. We describe how data was collected and the general profile of the respondents. Then, we discuss how the design was made to justify the propositions. Finally, we present a table of the propositions and how they will be justified.

3.1 Method

The research design is exploratory as to provide insight into the understanding of cross-cultural training for expatriates and its effect on successful adaptation abroad. Mainly we focused on making a literature revision on intercultural studies and cross-cultural training. Based on this information, four propositions were presented. Then, secondary data in the form of empirical research was used along with primary data to justify the propositions. The primary data served as complementary only. There are two reasons why the exploratory research was used instead of the conclusive approach. First, there is enough empirical foundation to support the propositions of this thesis. Thus, the use of primary data as main source would have been unnecessary and shortsighted. Second, the time constraint factor was an obstacle to obtain the information needed as primary source. As a result, we believe that secondary data as main data source best serves the purposes of this study.

3.2 Data Collection

The secondary data was obtained in specialized journals such as the International Journal of Human Resource Management, International Studies of Management and Organization, Journal of Counseling and Development, Academy of Management Learning and Education, etc. Access to this published

material was possible through the use of research databases. Regarding the primary source, data was collected through email responses and one interview. Four expatriates were contacted via email. They received information about the research study and were invited to participate in it. The Director of Human Resource of a French-based company was contacted via email, but he was not able to collaborate. An employee working for the Human Resource Department of healthcare company Johnson and Johnson was contacted via telephone. The survey sent to expatriates contained more unstructured questions than structured ones because the purpose was to obtain as much insight from their experience abroad as possible. On the other hand, the survey sent to the company was more characterized by the use of structured questions. The response was obtained a week after the email was sent. The only interview was with a training expert and former coordinator of the Organizational Development Career Department. The interview was characterized mainly by unstructured questions because the main focus was to obtain general opinions and knowledge from experiences. Most of the interview was taped and transcribed afterwards. The interview lasted about one hour. As for the telephone interview, the questions were mostly unstructured and it lasted about 20 minutes. There was a time constraint which hampered the successful development of the interview. The unstructured approach of question formulation was preferred in general to avoid a slant in the response information.

3.3 Respondents

Initially a Mexican employee and his family undertaking an international assignment in Japan were contacted. Then, they were asked if they knew of other expatriates in Japan who were willing to partake in this research. The small sample provided an interesting mix of expatriates whose cultures differed significantly from the host culture. Thus, their experiences were relevant to the study of cross-cultural adaptation. For the most part, it was difficult to find company contacts in the area of Resource

Management that would be willing to participate because of privacy policies. Another major constraint was the fact that most of the Multinational Corporations in Mexico do not have an International Human Resource Department, meaning that their activities and operations are mainly local. They mentioned that those activities were managed by the headquarters and that movement either from international or local employees happened very seldom. In this case, even if they were willing to participate, the information would not be relevant to the study. The planning analyst of the Human Resource department of Johnson and Johnson Mexico was contacted. In this case, the questions were more focused toward the concept of diversity in the organization because of the fact they did not have an international human resource department.

3.4 Research Design

The information gathered from secondary and primary sources was classified according to the propositions. The primary information was used to gain information on the general profile and circumstances of the expatriate. The expert interview served to provide useful insight of cross-cultural training based on experience. And finally, the empirical research results provide the most solid foundation to justify the propositions. The data accumulation from different perspectives regarding each proposition creates an enriching source for analysis.

3.5 Analysis

The classification of the information is shown in table 3.1. The information under each category was first analyzed independently. Then, correlations were made from different data sources in order to find solid arguments to justify the propositions. If the available information under each proposition provides solid arguments that justify the proposition, then it is considered as valid. The validation of the four propositions will then justify the main proposition which suggests that there is a need for the International Human Resource Department of Multinational Corporations to implement a social cross-cultural training for expatriates as they are sent for international assignments. The results obtained under each proposition are presented in Chapter 4 followed by a discussion of the results in Chapter 5.

Table 3.1: Propositions

Main Proposition: There is a need for the International Human Resource Department of Multinational Corporations to implement a social cross-cultural training for expatriates as they are sent for international assignments.				
Propositions	Company Interview	Expatriate Survey	Interviews	Secondary Data
Proposition 1: A social cross-cultural training approach meets the need to institutionalize the concept of diversity within the workforce of the organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ JNJ Mexico Interview with Planning Analyst of Human Resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Method of cross-cultural training used.▪ How many local contacts did you have after five months?▪ Did you relate with other expatriates from your same country? How often?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ JNJ Headquarters Diversity Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Australian Expatriates' China Preparation Hutchings, 2005
Proposition 2: A social cross-cultural training approach enables expatriates to develop emotional and cultural intelligence			<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Trainer Expert Experience▪ Question: How do you relate social language learning with the concept of emotional and cultural intelligence?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Empirical foundation on experiential approach to cross-cultural learning Yamazaki and Kayes, 2004

Proposition 3: The implementation of a social cross-cultural training creates a competitive advantage over the traditional approach to cross-cultural training		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Description of culture shock experiences ▪ Description of pre-departure and in-country CCT ▪ Did the training you receive help you cope with conflict? In what way? ▪ Did you have a cultural mentor? ▪ What was your level of local language when you first arrived? ▪ Who were your initial contacts in the country? ▪ What were your first impressions of the culture? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trainer Expert Experience ▪ Comparison of trainees in language skill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social Learning Approach by the Brewster Method
Proposition 4: A social cross-cultural training approach has the potential to equip the expatriate for successful performance at least to the extent of the person's success in his own home country		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Indicate level of language proficiency including local language ▪ How do you evaluate your performance? ▪ How does the company evaluate your performance? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trainer Expert Experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social Learning Approach by the Brewster Method

Source: Author's own construction