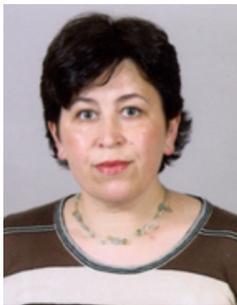




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Д-р Стела Балтова преподава в Международно висше бизнес училище – Ботевград. Научните ѝ интереси са в областта на бизнес услугите, предприемачеството, международния бизнес и туризма. Има дългогодишен опит в международния и консултантски бизнес. Участва в изпълнението на редица национални и международни проекти. Специализирала е във Франция, Швейцария, Дания, Япония, Швеция. Член е на *Strategic Management Society*.

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BUSINESS SERVICES AND CROSS-CULTURAL TRAININGS

INTRODUCTION

We are living in a challenging time. The world is in motion. The business is shaping. The companies want to globalize. Starting a business abroad or opening an office, *there is a need to find an office space and business services*. Moreover, organizations in the modern economy have realized that if they want to deal with local and international competition, they must invest not only in human and material resources, but also in *intangible resources, such as abilities, skills, organizational processes, intellectual property, and finally, the information and knowledge possessed by the organization*¹. Prior research has shown that multinational firms often assign expatriates overseas to exercise control and to coordinate foreign affiliates' activities with the headquarters and with sister affiliates.^{2,3}

¹ Zieba, M., (2013) *Knowledge Intensive Business Services (KIBS) and their role in knowledge-based economy*, Working Paper Series A (Economics, Management, Statistics), 7, retrieved September 13, 2013, http://www.zie.pg.gda.pl/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=d0e2cbec-9785-4a56-bf7704137246777e&groupId=10236

² Belderbos, R., Tong, T., Wu, S.(2013) *Multinationality and downside risk: the roles of option portfolio and organization*. Strategic Management Journal, Published online EarlyView in Wiley Online Library (wileyonlinelibrary.com) DOI: 10.1002/smj.2087.

A recent new theory and hypotheses on how a firm's top management team learns from acquisition experience, why, in consequence, the composition of the team is crucial, and how this affects acquisition frequency and success, pointed out the **significant role of the expatriates in the process**⁴. Recently performed qualitative study results show that third culture individuals are more apt to possess multiple cultural identities or a multicultural identity than a confused cultural identity, as previous research had indicated. Additionally, results suggest that while they lack a clear sense of belonging, they are competent intercultural communicators and perceive their experiences as mainly beneficial.⁵ A firm's human resource management system is one important type of organizational control system to help the firm coordinate activities among dispersed affiliates in order to benefit from operating flexibility^{6,7} and the use of expatriates is an important means to achieve this objective.

These and other assets are complex and difficult for other organizations to copy, allowing the creation of a long-term competitive advantage. Companies offering knowledge-intensive business services (KIBS) like training and consultancy create and take care to preserve their intangible resources, and through their services they also help other companies create such resources. KIBS firms supplying **training** are themselves primarily information and knowledge resources for their users. They may generate original knowledge, or fuse, „package” or translate knowledge resources from other sources⁸.

The Business Services nowadays have a new role in economic growth in the business economy and have large impact on the firm's behavior. Increased globalization and the economic, political and social arenas have led to a greater frequency of, and depth in, cross-cultural interactions, i.e. contacts between two or more people from different cultural backgrounds. However, work-related cross cultural interactions are not always successful⁹. For example, studies have found that between 16 and 40 percent of all expatriate managers, who are given foreign assignments, end these assignments enough early because of their poor performance or their inability to adjust to the foreign environment^{10,11}. Those managers who work internationally are usually expensive and crucial in their organization, taking into account their salaries and allowances (accommodation, travelling, schooling, cost of living adjustments). The costs are not only financial, but can also be psychological, often with far reaching negative effects on the image and reputation of the

³ Baltova, S. (2009). *Globalization of the Business*, Open University & UM-NBU.

⁴ Nadolska, A., Barkema, H.G., (2013) *Good Learners: How Top management Teams affect the success and frequency of acquisition*, Strategic Management Journal, Published online EarlyView in Wiley Online Library (wileyonlinelibrary.com) DOI: 10.1002/smj.2172

⁵ Moore, A.M., Barker, G.G., (2012) *Confused or multicultural: Third culture individuals' cultural identity*, International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 36, 553-562.

⁶ Kogut, B. (1985). *Designing global strategies: profiting from operational flexibility*. Sloan Management Review 27, 1, 27-38.

⁷ Kogut, B., Kulatilaka N. (1994). *Operating flexibility, global manufacturing, and the option value of a multinational network*. Management Science 40, 1,123-139.

⁸ European Competitiveness Report, (2000), European Commission.

⁹ Black, J.S., Mendenhall, M. (1990). Cross-cultural training effectiveness: A Review and Theoretical Framework for Future Research. *The Academy of Management Review*, 15, 113-136.

¹⁰ Black, J.S. (1988). Work role transitions: A study of American expatriate managers in Japan. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 19,,277-294.

¹¹ Tung, R. (1981). Selection and training of personnel for overseas assignments. *Columbia Journal of World Business*, 16, 1, 68-78.

business as well as in the individuals involved¹². Furthermore, a notable share of expatriate managers who stay on are considered ineffective by their parent organizations, causing large direct and indirect costs¹³.

Tung (1982) studied the reasons for premature expatriate termination and found that spouses and expatriates inability to adjust to living in the host country were *the two most frequently cited reasons for failing assignments*¹⁴. It is implicated that high levels of adjustment are indicative of successful expatriate adaptation, defined as the „psychological comfort with respect to work, the culture and interacting with host nationals“³. Later, three most common criteria to evaluate expatriate success have been proposed: (1) completion of the foreign assignment (2), cross-cultural adjustment, and (3) performance on the job assignment¹⁵.

Cross-cultural training is not a new phenomenon. It has long been promoted as a *means to facilitate effective cross-cultural interactions*^{16, 17}. The cultural differences within the community of international business require international managers to be flexible and adapt managerial practices to different nationalities and cultures. Some researchers contest the effectiveness of cross cultural training^{18, 19}, but many others agree on the positive effects of cross-cultural training on intercultural adjustment. Many methods for performing the cross-cultural training could be find either prior to or upon and after arrival of the expatriate in the host country. Different methods can also be combined to build a sequential training setup, designed to prepare the expatriate in the different stages of expatriation.

The inability of expatriate managers to adjust to the host culture’s social and business environment is costly in terms of management performance, productivity in the overseas operation, client relation, and operations efficiency²⁰. There are also invisible costs due to a manager’s failure overseas: the loss of self-esteem and self-confidence in the expatriate’s managerial ability and the loss of prestige among peers (ibid).

The impact of cross-cultural training on successful expatriation and the not sufficient attention on the issue in the multinational companies (MNC) is supported in a large number of studies^{13, 21, 22}. McFarlin and Sweeney²³ recently estimated that 40% of multinational com-

¹² Hurn, B.J. (2007). Pre-departure training for international business managers. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 39, 1, 9-17.

¹³ Black, J.S., Gregersen, H.B., Mendenhall, M. (1992). *Global Assignments: Successfully Expatriating and Repatriating International Managers*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA.

¹⁴ Tung, R. (1982). Selection and training procedures of US, European and Japanese multinationals. *California Management Review*, 25, 1, 57-71

¹⁵ Caligiuri, P.M., (1997). Assessing Expatriate Success: Beyond just „being there“. *New Approaches to Employee Management*, 4, 117-140.

¹⁶ Mendenhall, M., & Oddou, G. (1986). Acculturation profiles of expatriate managers: implications for cross-cultural training programs, *Columbia Journal of World Business*, 21, 4, 73-9.

¹⁷ Tung, R. (1981). Selection and training of personnel for overseas assignments. *Columbia Journal of World Business*, 16, No.1, pp. 68-78.

¹⁸ Kealey, D.J. & Protheroe, D.R. (1996). *The effectiveness of cross-cultural training for expatriates: An assessment of the literature on the issue*. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 20, 2, 141-165

¹⁹ Brislin, R.W., & Yoshi, da, T. (1994). *Intercultural communication training: An introduction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

²⁰ Mendenhall, M., & Oddou, G. (1985). *The dimensions of Expatriate Acculturation: A Review*. *The Academy of Management Review*, 10, 1, 39-47.

²¹ Littrell, L.N., Salas, E., Hess, K.P., Paley, M., & Riedel, S. (2006). *Expatriate preparation: A critical analysis of 25 years of cross-cultural training research*. *Human Resource Development Review*, 5, 3, 355-388.

panies provide no pre-departure cross-cultural training for their expatriates, and this figure is as high as 90% in small to medium-sized enterprises. Earlier, Tung (1981) had observed that only 32% of US companies, while 57% of Japanese multinational companies surveyed provided some form of cross-cultural training to their expatriates.

Various reasons have been cited by business organizations for the low use of cross-cultural training, mostly that training is not thought to be effective (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985; Tung, 1981). Littrel et al.²⁴ (2006), based on a large 25 years literature review suggests that most past cross-cultural training research has been theoretical in nature, and few studies have been conducted empirically that examined *the impact of cross-cultural training on expatriate performance*. A number of theoretical frameworks of cross-cultural training have been proposed but none of them has been empirically tested. The effects of different types of cross-cultural training on the different facets of expatriate adjustment have been studied by few authors on a sufficiently large sample²⁵. According Shen et al.²⁶ this research inefficiency might be the reason why corporate leaders have been largely cynical about the effectiveness of cross-cultural training as supposed²⁷. These discussions underscore the need for further empirical studies on cross-cultural training and its relationship with expatriate performance. The present research is based on the model of the expatriate adjustment process proposed by Black, Mendenhall & Oddou²⁸. The model distinguishes three facets of expatriate adjustment:

1. *Work adjustment* – comfort associated with the assignment job;
2. *Relational adjustment* – comfort associated with interacting with host country nationals;
3. *General adjustment* – comfort associated with non-work factors and the life conditions in the foreign country.

The purpose of the research is to investigate the degree to which cross-cultural training is actually offered by the companies to their expatriates as well as the expatriates' perception on its effectiveness.

The objective of this research is to answer the following questions:

RQ1: *Which type of cross-cultural training have expats working in Bulgaria participated in?*

RQ2: *What are the effects of the different types of cross-cultural training on work adjustment, interaction adjustment and general adjustment of the expatriates?*

RQ3: *What is the opinion of the expatriates on the effectiveness of cross-cultural*

²² Shen, J. (2005). *International training and management development: Theory and reality*. Journal of Management Development, 24, 7, 656-664.

²³ McFarlin, D.B., & Sweeney, P.D. (2006). *International management: Strategic opportunities and cultural challenges*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

²⁴ Littrell, L.N., Salas, E., Hess, K.P., Paley, M., & Riedel, S. (2006). *Expatriate preparation: A critical analysis of 25 years of cross-cultural training research*. Human Resource Development Review, 5, 3, 355-388.

²⁵ Waxin, M., & Panaccio, A. (2005). *Cross-cultural training to facilitate expatriate adjustment: it works!* Personnel Review, 34, N1, 51-67.

²⁶ Shen, J. & Lang, B. (2009). *Cross-cultural training and its impact on expatriate performance in Australian MNEs*. Human Resource Development International, 12, 4, 371-386.

²⁷ Dowling, P.J., Festing, M., & Engle, S. (2008). *International Human Resources Management*. 5th ed. London: Thomson Learning.

²⁸ Black, J.S., Mendenhall, M. & Oddou, G. (1991). *Toward a comprehensive model of international adjustment*. Academy of Management Review, 16, No.2, 291-317.

training with regard to their work interaction and general adjustment to the new country?

The definitions stated below are taken from the sources used to develop the theoretical framework of this research.

Expatriate: a national of one country, who is sent out by the parent company as a manager to perform international assignment, working and living in another country²⁹ (Hill, 2005, p.618).

Multinational Company (MNC): a corporation that has its management headquarters in one country, known as the „home country”, and operates in several other countries, known as „host countries” (ILO – International Labor Organization).

Culture: the complex whole that includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and other capabilities acquired by a person as a member of a society (Hill, 2005, p.487).

Cultural shock: an occupational disease of people that have suddenly been transplanted abroad (Oberg, 1960).

Cross cultural training: formal efforts to prepare people for more effective interpersonal relations and for job success when they interact extensively with individuals from cultures other than their own (Brislin and Yoshida, 1994)

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND RELATED RESEARCH

1. WHY WE SHOULD BE INTERESTED IN CULTURE AND ITS IMPACT ON EXPATRIATES?

The concept of culture is often used loosely by executives and consultants without any real attempt to define what it really means in practice³⁰. Culture is not only intangible and illusive, but it can also be observed at multiple levels in an organization. It is not easy to give a single definition that best describes the term culture. However one of the most established definitions was given by Hofstede³¹, who defined culture as „the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group or category of people from another”. Furthermore Hofstede³² explains that the collective perception and assessment of the actions in the environment is not inherited. Culture is learned and can only be built through interaction with other members of the same cultural background. Further definitions are developed by Hoecklin³³, Oberg³⁴, De Long and Fahey^{28,35}.

According to Oberg (1960), an individual is not born with culture but only with the capacity to learn it and use it. The culture of any people is the product of history and

²⁹ Hill, W.L. (2005). *International Business: Competing in the Global Marketplace* (International ed.) New York: McGraw-Hill.

³⁰ De Long, E., Fahey, L. (2000). *Diagnosing cultural barriers to knowledge management*. Academy of Management Executive, 14, 4, 113-127.

³¹ Hofstede, G. (1984). *Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values*. Beverly Hills, USA: Sage Publications.

³² Hofstede, G. (1997). *Culture and organizations: Software of the mind*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

³³ Hoecklin, L. (1995). *Managing cultural differences: Strategies for competitive advantage*. Wokingham: Addison Wesley Publishers Company.

³⁴ Oberg, K. (1960) *Culture Shock: Adjustment to new cultural environments*. Practical Anthropology, Vol.7, pp. 177-182.

³⁵ Hall, T.E. (1976), *Beyond Culture*. Anchor Books/ A Division of Random House Inc., New York.

is built up over time largely through processes which are beyond the individuals' awareness. De Long and Fahey (2000) defined culture as a system of values, norms and practices. These are shared among the people and, when taken together, **constitute a design of living**. Values are ideas about what a group believes to be good, right and desirable. Norms are derived from values and can therefore be described as social rules and guidelines in order to accomplish appropriate behavior in social situations. This makes them more observable as well as easier to identify and change. Accordingly, practices are the most visible symbols and manifestations of culture. They are a way of understanding recurring behaviors and include repeated types of interaction with identifiable and social rules. Their research with more than 50 companies pursuing knowledge management projects revealed the increasingly understanding of the organizational culture as a major barrier to leveraging intellectual assets.

Table 1. Culture definitions review

Author	The concept
Hofstede (1984)	The collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group or category of people from another.
Hoecklin (1995)	Culture and the concept behind are constructed by the society and the members living in it. It offers an agreement of how people should behave and interact with each other.
Oberg (1960)	An individual is not born with culture but only with the capacity to learn it and use it.
Hofstede (1997)	that the collective perception and assessment of the actions in the environment is not inherited. Culture is learned and can only be built through interaction with other members of the same cultural background
De Long and Fahey (2000)	Culture as a system of values, norms and practices, shared among the people and, when taken together, constitute a design of living.
Edward Hall (1976)	If the culture of a society was an iceberg, then there are some aspects visible, above the water, but there is a larger portion hidden beneath the surface.

Source: The cited references.

Hall (1976) developed the very interesting iceberg analogy of culture: if the culture of a society was an iceberg, then there are some aspects visible, above the water, but there is a larger portion hidden beneath the surface. Cultural items 'above the waterline' include language, food, festivals, clothing and dress, architecture and art. Those 'below the waterline' are much more numerous and include facial and body language, male/female relationships, business ethics, values, morality, work motivation, learning styles, conception of justice, patterns of handling emotions. Hence, anyone embarking on an international assignment should be knowledgeable of the fact that only time and interaction with the members of the host country can uncover the values and beliefs that underlie the behavior of that society.

Culture has a highly pervasive influence on the behavior of individuals. The im-

portance of culture lies in the fact that it provides the body of knowledge and techniques that enable us to act, both physically and socially, in the world and provides us with world views that enable us to make sense of ourselves and the people around us. We do not usually think consciously about our culture, unless we perceive it to be threatened by some external force or we are put in a situation where we are in a cultural minority.

What we think and how we act is a result of what we have been taught in our culture. Hence, *a manager who has been highly successful in one culture may find it difficult, if not impossible, to function in another cultural setting*, unless he or she is aware of the significance of cultural differences. Another important element of culture is that it takes years and years to learn and internalize. Yet, when it comes to international assignments, expatriates are expected to engage in business relationships with people from other cultures and learn their culturally prescribed ways of doing business in a matter of weeks, if not days.

It is not a new phenomenon **the cultural shock**. Still Oberg^{33,36} coined the term „culture shock” to describe the problems faced by sojourners – people who go from one culture to another. He defined culture shock as „an occupational disease of people that have suddenly been transplanted abroad” (1960, p.177), and suggested that it is „precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse” (1960, p.177). He used this term to describe the consequences, that is the personal problems that people face, both psychological and psychosomatic, in moving to other cultures.

Culture shock is definitely not viewed as a disease any more, and was never seriously considered one by researchers. However, it has become perhaps the most accepted construct to describe the emotional stress experienced by sojourners while they are living abroad (Bhawuk et al. 2000). In effect, culture shock provided **the first conceptual tool to study the process of cross-cultural adjustment**, as well as to consider providing cross-cultural training to sojourners.

Later Triandis³⁷ presented a theoretical framework for understanding how culture shock is experienced. According to his theory, there are many factors that lead the sojourner to experience culture shock while interacting with people in the host culture. If there is a history of *conflict between the two cultures*, if cultural distance between the two cultures is large, if neither the host nor the sojourner know about each other’s cultures, and if the second language competence of the sojourner or the host is weak, then they perceive each other to be different, and their interactions lead to *culture shock*. No history of conflict, small cultural difference, knowledge about the host culture and at least very strong second language competence of the sojourner increase the possibilities for him or her not to experience culture shock.

We should then link the *cross cultural adjustment* to the expatriate’s behavior. We found the expression that the cross cultural adjustment is the degree to which expatriates are psychologically comfortable and familiar with different aspects of foreign environment (Black,1988). Takeuchi³⁸ gave the understanding for being as the degree of ease or difficulty expatriates have with various issues related to life and work abroad. Scholars have argued that individuals generally have a desire to reduce the uncertainty inherent in

³⁶ Oberg, K. (1954). *Culture Shock*. The Bobbs-Merrill Reprint Series, Np.A-329.

³⁷ Triandis, H.C. (1994). *Culture and social behavior*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

³⁸ Takeuchi, R., Marinova, S.V., Lepak, D.P., & Liu, W. (2005). *A model of expatriate withdrawal-related outcomes: Decisions making from the dualistic adjustment perspective*. *Human Resources Management Review*, 15, 119-138.

the new environment, especially concerning new behaviors that might be required or expected and old behaviors that would be considered unacceptable or inappropriate³⁹. As a process, cross-cultural adjustment involves uncertainty reduction and change, through which *expatriates start to feel more comfortable* with the new culture and *begin to harmonize with it*.

The adjustment patterns of expatriate managers in foreign assignments are revealed in **four dimensions** related to successful expatriate acculturation⁴⁰:

- the ‘self-oriented’ dimension
- the ‘others-oriented’ dimension
- the perceptual dimension
- the cultural-toughness dimension.

Mendenhall links the „*self-oriented’ dimension* with the strengthening of the expatriate manager’s self-esteem, confidence and mental hygiene while the „*others-oriented’ dimension* deals with factors that increase the expatriate manager’s ability to interact with the locals in the host nation and his willingness to communicate. The „*perceptual dimension*” deals with the ability of the expatriate manager to understand why foreigners behave the way they do in adjusting to the unfamiliar cultural environment. The „*cultural-toughness’ dimension*” considers reasons why some cultures seem more difficult to adapt than others.

As already mentioned in the purpose of this research study, one of the most influential models of the expatriate adjustment process was proposed by Black, Mendenhall & Oddou(1991). The model distinguishes three facets of expatriate adjustment:

- *Work adjustment* – comfort associated with the assignment job;
- *Relational adjustment* – comfort associated with interacting with host country nationals;
- *General adjustment* – comfort associated with non-work factors and the life conditions in the foreign country. It has been extensively tested and generally received support.
- We found a very flexible and close to our understandings⁴¹ the Aycan⁴² conceptual model of the expatriate’s adjustment. Three forms of adjustment are distinguished:
- *Psychological* is defined in terms of maintaining mental and physical well-being;
- *Sociocultural* involves becoming effective in the new society, handling non-work problems and maintaining successful interpersonal relationships with members of the host society;
- *Work adjustment* refers to competent performance, the successful accomplishment of work goals and organizational commitment to the local unit.

Aycan defines sixteen „propositions” regarding the three types of adjustment and

³⁹ Ashford, S.J., Taylor, M.S. (1990). *Understanding individual adaptation: An integrative approach*. Research in Personnel and Human Resource Management, 8, 1-41.

⁴⁰ Mendenhall, M., Oddou, G. (1985). *The dimensions of Expatriate Acculturation: A Review*. The Academy of Management Review, 10, 1, 39-47.

⁴¹ Baltov, M. (2009). *International Aspects of the Human Resources Management and Development*, Open University and UM-NBU.

⁴² Aycan Z. (1997). Expatriate adjustment as a multifaceted phenomenon: Individual and organizational level predictors. The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 8, 434-456.

she further classifies them into a 2x2 framework based on the stage of the expatriate cycle and the characteristics of the expatriates and their organizations.

The adjustment process can be divided into several steps or phases very often described as a *U-shaped curve*, when the expatriate first enjoys the situation of being in an „exotic” culture, and then realize the degree of adjustment that is necessary, before a slow adaptation takes place^{43,44}.

Oberg (1960) described the first of four phases as *a period of fascination*, where little contact is taken with locals and only in a polite and gracious way. This face is often called the „*honeymoon phase*” and only lasts until the individual starts to experience the day-to-day life (Oberg, 1960; Black et al.⁴⁵). It is sometimes referred to as the „*tourist phase*” (Selmer, 1999). Many circumstances affect the duration of this phase but it may last from only a couple of days or weeks to six months. Oberg (1960) found that this happy, fascinating and problem-free period then makes a steep turn downwards towards a „*culture shock*”, where the individual realizes the difficulties in adjustment. The reasons to why the culture shock happens are many, but they can be concluded in a combination of the following factors: stress as a result of feeling obliged to make many adjustments; a sense of loss in regard to friends, status or possessions; rejection by (or against) people of the host country; confusion in self-identity, roles and expectations; surprise, anxiety and even disgust over cultural differences; and feeling incapable of coping with the new environment (Selmer, 1999; Oberg, 1960). The culture shock phase is part of a normal process that a majority of all expatriates experience, even experienced expatriates who have been on many international assignments before. Some people never leave the culture shock phase and stay hostile towards the host nationals throughout the time of the assignment. Other people who never learn to cope with the situation return home earlier or choose to socialize with other expatriates until it is time to go home.

For the expatriates who decide to stay, a long period of adaptation can be expected, usually referred to as the „*adjustment phase*” (Black, Mendenhall, 1991), the „*recovery stage*” (Selmer, 1999) or the „*conformist phase*” (Selmer et al., 1998), which constitutes the third phase. A good way to cope with the situation is to learn the local language, or at least some of it. Oberg (1960) noticed that the *knowledge of the local language* does in most cases help the individual to understand the „*cultural codes*” – norms in behavior and social patterns that can be typical for a certain culture. Even though the adjustment process has started, a lot of feelings and experiences from the culture shock still remain, which makes it difficult to draw a clear line between the two phases.

The fourth phase, the „*mastery stage*”, or „*completion phase*” is characterized by small incremental increases in the individual’s ability to function effectively in the new environment (Black & Mendenhall, 1991). The individual’s cultural skills may develop further, but are at this stage sufficient to function without a feeling of anxiety or discomfort (Oberg, 1960). Therefore, Oberg (1960) reasons that there are in fact **two types of complete adjustment**, one that is more complete than the other. Instead of

⁴³ Selmer, J.”(1999). *Culture shock in China? Adjustment pattern of western expatriate business managers*. International Business Review, 8, 5-6, 515-534.

⁴⁴ Selmer, J., Torbiörn, I., & de Leon, C.T. (1998). *Sequential cross-cultural training for expatriate business managers: pre-departure and post-arrival*. International Journal of Human Resource Management, Vol.9, No. 5, pp.832-840.

⁴⁵ Black, J.S., & Gregersen, H.B. (1991). Rim assignments Antecedents to Cross-cultural Adjustment for Expatriates in Pacific Rim Assignments. Human Relations, Vol.44, No.5, pp.497-515.

just accepting the local food, drinks, habits and customs, the expatriate actually may start to enjoy them. When the assignment is finished, the expatriate may miss the culture and the people so much that it will be a difficult time to readjust to the home country (ibid).

The U-curve has been criticized for not taking into account the repatriation process, and therefore a W-shaped curve of the whole process has been presented, extending the U-curve until after the expatriate has returned to his or her home country (Selmer, 1999). Black et. Al (1991) suggested J-shaped where the basic difference from the U-curve is that the honeymoon phase is shorter or even non-existent. Perhaps, the greatest criticism that can be leveled at the U-curve theory is that the theory is more a description of phases of adjustment than a theoretical framework of how and why individuals move from one stage to the next (Black et al., 1991).

Currently the concept of the U-curve is still the most commonly used model to explain the adjustment process.

A new research of Zhang⁴⁶ drawing on a diversified literature pertinent to expatriation, cultural intelligence and the effects of cultural distance, argues that there will be a significant difference in business expatriates on reciprocal transfers in terms of the extent of their socio- and psycho-cultural adjustment, and that cultural distance will moderate the relationship between cultural intelligence and expatriate adjustment, such that the relationship between cultural intelligence and adjustment is stronger when the direction of cultural flow is from a less authoritarian cultural context to a more authoritarian cultural environment.

2. CROSS-CULTURAL TRAINING (CCT)

Programs designed for preparing people for living in another culture were initially referred to as „*cross-cultural or intercultural orientation programs*”. Actually the first book on the topic⁴⁷ was titled *Cross-Cultural Orientation Programs*; early researches seemed to focus their attention on how a sojourner needed to be oriented to the differences in social interactions between the two cultures. However, practitioners and researchers soon realized that we need to do more than orient people to prepare them to live abroad; we further need to introduce and practice culturally appropriate behaviors. As a result the term *cross-cultural or intercultural training* was introduced.

Brislin and Yoshida (1994) define cross-cultural training as formal efforts to prepare people for more effective interpersonal relations and for job success when they interact extensively with individuals from cultures other than their own. The programs are well planned; budgeted, staffed by experts *who are knowledgeable* about a wide range of issues people face when they live in other cultures (Bhawuk et al., 2000).

The aims of orientation programs may be summarized as follows⁴⁸:

1. Develop an understanding of personal and family values so that expatriates can anticipate and cope with the inevitably unsettling emotions which accompany culture shock;

⁴⁶ Zhang, Y. (2013). Expatriate Development for Cross-Cultural Adjustment Effects of Cultural Distance and Cultural Intelligence, *Human Resource Development Review*, 12, 2, 177-199.

⁴⁷ Brislin, R.W., Petersen, P. (1986), *Cross-cultural Orientation Programs*, The Gartner Press, New York, NY.

⁴⁸ Sieveking, N., Anchor, K., Marston, R. (1981). *Selecting and preparing expatriate employees*, *Personnel Journal*, 60, 3, 197-202.

2. Develop an appreciation of the important way in which the host culture will differ from the expatriate's own culture so that the employee can guide his or her behavior accordingly;

3. Show the expatriate how he or she can be rewarded in ways in addition to income and travel, such as novelty and challenge;

4. To help the expatriates anticipate and begin to plan for hardships, delays, frustrations, material inconveniences and the consequences of close living and working with others.

The purpose of cross-cultural training is to teach members of one culture to interact effectively with members of another culture and to predispose them to a rapid adjustment to their new positions (Brislin et al., 1986; Mendenhall et al., 1991).

Tung (1982) has classified cross-cultural training programs into six categories depending on „the rigor with which the program seeks to impart knowledge and understanding of a foreign country”:

1. Factual information about geography, climate, housing and schools;

2. Cultural orientation, providing information about the cultural institutions and value systems of the new country;

3. Cultural assimilation training, consisting of brief episodes describing intercultural encounters;

4. Language training;

5. Sensitivity training to develop attitudinal flexibility;

6. Field experience, where candidates can undergo some of the emotional stress of living and working with people from different cultures.

She suggests that the training method should be chosen according to *the type of assignment* and should be contingent to two determinant factors: *the degree of similarity between the culture of origin and the host culture* (which is synonym of cultural distance) and the degree of interpersonal interaction between the manager and the host country's inhabitants.

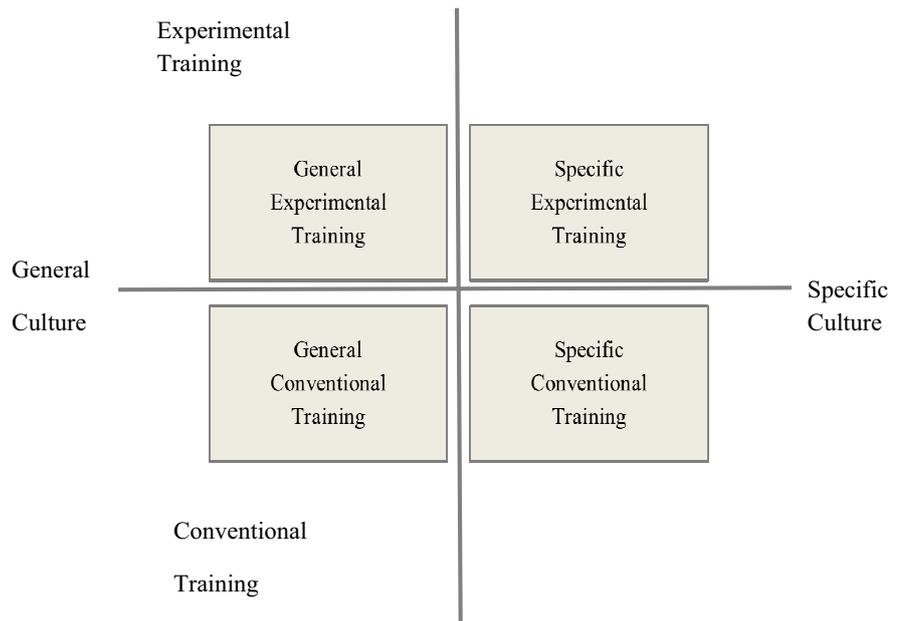
Further, Gertsen's⁴⁹ developed a typology for classifying cross-cultural training approaches: *a/ conventional* training, where the information is transmitted through a unidirectional communication and *b/ experimental* training, where the trainer gets the trainees to participate by simulating real life situations. Then she distinguishes two possible training orientations: either the training focuses on the notion of culture in general and aims at sensitizing participants with the concept of culture; or the training is directed to the discovery of specific culture and aims at making participants more competent in that particular culture. Finally the combination of the two dimensions reveals four types of training, as represented in figure 2.

Mostly CCT is associated with: 1. With the feelings of greater welfare and higher self-confidence; 2. With the development of a suitable behaviour in the context of another culture and 3. With the improvement of the relations with the individuals of the host country. Waxin and Panaccio⁵⁰ confirm the positive effect of the cultural training on three facets of the intercultural adaptation of the international executives (adaptation to the

⁴⁹ Gertsen, M.C. (1990). *Intercultural competence and expatriates*. International Journal of Human Resources Management, 1, 3,341-362.

⁵⁰ Waxin, M., & Panaccio, A. (2005). *Cross-cultural training to facilitate expatriate adjustment: it works!* Personnel Review, 34, 1, 51-67.

work, adaptation to the interaction and the general adaptation). Recently⁵¹ many authors stressed on the impact of the Cross-cultural I trainings on the development and the learning of the intercultural competences.



Source: as presented in *Intercultural Competence and Expatriates*, Oslo Business School, Oslo (1990).

Figure 2. Gertsen's typology of cross-cultural training methods.

2.1. CROSS-CULTURAL TRAINING METHODS

Through review of extensive academic resources, we identified the specificity of different training methods mostly used to teach expatriates cross-cultural skills and thus to facilitate their interactions with a foreign culture.

Attribution training

Attribution training has its basis in the notion that 'much misunderstanding stems from differing perceptions, or attributions, of the same event' (Brislin et al., 1986). In attribution training people learn that by attempting to view a situation through the eyes of the host culture, less misunderstanding will occur. The aim is for isomorphic attributions to occur i.e. that both cultural participants will offer the same reason for another's behavior. Attribution training is closely connected, but not limited, to a teaching method called „cultural assimilator”, which was a contribution of psychologists from the University of Illinois (Bhawuk & Brislin, 2000). It is a cross-cultural training tool that consists of a number of real-life scenarios (also called critical incidents) describing puzzling cross-cultural interactions and explanations for avoiding the resulting misunderstandings. Each

⁵¹ Elmadssia, T.H. (2012). *Impact of intercultural training on the development of intercultural competences*, European Journal of Business and Social Sciences, 1, 2, 35 – 47.

culture assimilator consists of a number of critical incidents that have three parts: an incident or a short story, four or five alternative behavioral choices or attributions and explanations or feedback about why an alternative is to be preferred or not. Extensive research regarding the use of culture assimilators as a culture-training technique has indicated that the culture assimilator is an effective training tool on the cognitive level, and it also has some positive impact on behavioral and affective criteria (ibid).

Didactic training

This type of training provides factual information regarding working and living conditions, as well as cultural aspects of the host country. It represents the traditional way of learning used in schools and universities, where information is transferred using one-way communication, and it can have either a culture general or more often a culture specific content (Gertsen's typology, 1990). It is most often provided in the form of briefings, which can be given in a classical lecture form or with less structured methods, such as casual conversations with experts or returned expatriates. Such informal briefings are generally regarded as informative and valuable by the expatriates. They see the chance of discussing the country with current or returned expatriates as being among the best preparation for transfer⁵² (Selmer, 1995). It can also be provided with informational booklets, pamphlets and recommended internet sites presenting facts on the host country. Depending on the time and training resources available it should cover geography, history, economics, politics, foreign relations as well as infrastructure, communications and the working environment. In addition, day-to-day living conditions, accommodation, health and hygiene, schools, employment opportunities for partners and support systems should be included. Finally, insight should be provided into local customs, taboos, religious practices, social conventions and, where appropriate, possible conflict between local, traditional and western values.

Didactic training is the most common, simple, flexible and inexpensive form of cross cultural training and more than two thirds of all multinational corporations offer didactic training in the form of informal briefings to their expatriates before deployment abroad⁵³. Fact-oriented didactic training is based on the notion that knowledge will facilitate intercultural relationships. It is however a training method of low rigor, that is of low degree of the trainee's cognitive involvement. The more rigorous the cross-cultural training the more able is the trainee to practice the appropriate learned behavior (Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Tung 1981). Because of this, didactic training should not be considered as the only way of preparing expatriates for a foreign assignment but should be combined with more experiential methods (Gertsen, 1990).

Experiential training

Experiential training aims at preparing the expatriate in a more direct way, building beyond the mere intellectual experience. It can be either culture-general or aimed towards the specific culture of the host country (Gertsen, 1990) and is based on the concept of learning by doing. It is conveyed by using a number of methods, such as practical exercises, workshops, simulations (role playing and T-groups). The most popular type of experiential tool is the simulation game, in which trainees interact with other people fol-

⁵² Selmer, J. (1995). *Expatriate Management: New ideas for International Business*, Greenwood Publishing Group.

⁵³ Brewster, C. (1995). *Effective Expatriate Training*, in Selmer, J. (ed), *Expatriate management: New ideas for international business*. West Port: Quorum, pp.57-70.

lowing a set of guidelines provided by the trainer (Bhawuk & Brislin, 2000). According to the authors, it is useful to start a training program with a simulation, but its usefulness by itself is suspect in the absence of research evidence. In his work Lewis⁵⁴ advocates for organizations to use simulations. It gives the participants the opportunity to use their knowledge in an active and practical way; a simulation can teach participant new knowledge, but can also warrant that they have converted this knowledge into life experience.

Another form of experiential training is the social skills training, which is supposed to be one of the most effective strategies in helping to minimize the effects of culture shock⁵⁵. It is based on the assumption that people living in foreign cultures do not possess the necessary social skills for effective participation in that culture. Social skills training then, sets out to identify the skills needing honing, establish situations where such skills might be practiced and observed and then provide feedback. It might include role-play, role-modeling and videotaping.

Very few people want extended work abroad just for the experience. However, more global companies than ever now expect their talent pool to have international experience as a prerequisite for promotions into the highest levels of the company. That why the *cross-cultural communication and negotiation skills* have to be considered as a very important set of skills, which need to be developed. Training should explore the barriers to effective cross-cultural communication and examine key aspects of cultural diversity in the areas of visible behavior. Apart from verbal communication, such training should include *non-verbal communication, often called „body-language“*. Greetings, use of personal space, gestures etc. are areas where one has to be on guard in another culture, as mistakes are easy to make and may cause embarrassment and offence (Hurn, 2007). As far as the international negotiation skills are concerned, aspects such as setting agenda, running meetings, the role of the chairperson, reaching agreement and the best use of interpreters and translators should be covered. Negotiating training allows participants to practice and experiment with the communication style necessary for the new environment.

A more genuine concept of the experiential training is the look –see visit to the host country, prior to the expatriation (Caliguiri et al., 2001). These trips can provide a first real experience of the country for the expatriate and sometimes for his or her family. They give the opportunity to meet people in the new country and get a first view of the new environment and the workplace. These visits can be of value only if carefully organized, particularly if accompanied by the non-working partner. However, the view of the new appointment should be realistic and not specially „sanitized“ for the occasion, otherwise false expectations are raised (Hurn, 2007). Bennett et al.⁵⁶ argue that pre-departure programs have the most effect if they are held after a look-see trip to the host country, since expatriates get many of their basic questions answered and can build a sense of the host location before entering the training program.

Language training

Scholarly discussions on languages and cultural values have evolved separately in international management literature. Building on the three communication zones theory,

⁵⁴ Lewis, M.M. (2005). *The drama of international business: why cross-cultural training simulations work*. Journal of European industrial training, 29, 7, 593-598.

⁵⁵ Bochner, S. (1986). *Coping with unfamiliar cultures: adjustment or culture learning?* Australian Journal of Psychology, 38, 3, 347-358.

⁵⁶ Bennett, R., Aston, A., & Colquhoun, T. (2000). *Cross-cultural training: A critical step in ensuring the success of international assignments*. Human Resources Management, 39, 2&3, 239-250.

which describes intercultural communication through three different language proficiency zones, Peltokorpi⁵⁷ explores the influence of expatriates' host country language and cultural competencies on intercultural communication in foreign subsidiaries. In contrast to international management literature in which cultural values and languages have been treated independently, interviews in 58 Nordic subsidiaries in Japan show that *expatriates' host country language and cultural competencies are accompanied by different challenges and opportunities*.

Basically language training involves teaching the expatriate the native language and/or the business language of the host country. While fluency can take months or even years to attain, there are still benefits of using this training method (Tung, 1981), since lack of language skills can significantly slow down the adjustment process. Even if fluency is not attained, the ability to enter informal discussions, use common courtesies and show cultural empathy can help to facilitate adaptation to the host country. Language skills are perceived as the dimension with the strongest effect on expatriate adjustment⁵⁸. According to Forster⁵⁹, „a visible effort to learn the courtesies and small talk can send out positive signals to host-country nationals. It is also a very useful method of getting under the ‘surface’ of the host country’s culture”. In his study respondents did not regard pre-departure language training as very important, but criticism from respondents partly included the short duration of most of the courses. In most cases language training is provided too late and for too short time.

Cross-Cultural Awareness Training

Through Cultural Awareness training the expatriate receive awareness of the concept of culture and cultural differences. The way is by teaching awareness about the home culture through self-awareness building and ranking charts. The goals could be achieved only upon culture approaches, such as simulation games and perceptual exercises⁶⁰. Other methods include role-plays and self-assessments, which can be a good way of building self-awareness, through understanding the cultural basis of one’s own behavior. Participants learn that their own behavior is largely rooted in their own culture and they begin to acquire an understanding of how much their view of reality is conditioned by learned and, in many cases, unconscious preconceptions and prejudices. Such aspects as stereotypes, dealing with ambiguity and culture shock and developing appropriate coping strategies are included. „The more we understand each other’s culture, the more important it will be to arrive at a shared way of working together, rather than imposing our ways or adapting to theirs”⁶¹.

When it comes **to cross-cultural training the notion for competences** acquired is surging highly. Cultural competence training can help avoid costly failures of commu-

⁵⁷ Peltokorpi, V. (2010) *Intercultural communication in foreign subsidiaries: The influence of expatriates' language and cultural competences*, Scandinavian Journal of Management, 26, 2, 176-188.

⁵⁸ Puck, J.F., Kittler, M.G., Wright, C. (2008) *Does it really work? Re-assessing the impact of pre-departure cross-cultural training on expatriate adjustment*. The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 19, 12, 2182-2197.

⁵⁹ Forster, N. (2000) *Expatriates and the impact of cross-cultural training*, Human Resource Management Journal, 10, 3, 63-78.

⁶⁰ Grove, C., & Torbiörn, I. (1985). *A new conceptualization of intercultural adjustment and the goals of training*, International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 9, 205-233.

⁶¹ Schneider, S.C., Barsoux, J.L. (2003). *Managing across Cultures*, Pearson Education Ltd, Harlow.

nication. Basically, this training addresses three issues: 1) awareness of the effect of culture on one's own communication; 2) knowledge of and appreciation for the differences between cultures and the sources of those differences; and 3) learning to pick up the subtle clues that can signal a problem in communication.

The works of Thomas⁶² demonstrate that the cross-cultural skills include generally *three types* of knowledge: "the Knowledge", "the Know-how" and "the Knowledge to be". Further, Mialy⁶³ explores the issue and estimates that the resources incorporated by these skills are as follows:

- *The physiological resources*: the capacity to manage situations of stress or conflicts, the taste for danger, the degree of motivation;
- *The capacities or the qualities*: we speak about dominant features of the personality such as the flexibility, the open-mindedness, the tolerance and the empathy;
- *The Know how*: It is the knowledge acquired after a process of experiential learning. We mention the linguistic, the communicative, the behavioral and the relational capacities.

Pre-departure, post-arrival and sequential training

According to timing as a variable, we can distinguish between *pre-departure and post-arrival training*. The early ideas about cross-cultural training suggested that it should be carried out before the departure, since it helps the expatriate to form realistic expectations prior to arrival⁶⁴. The most common training methods that are used prior to the expatriation are the *look-see visits, informal briefings, lectures and lectures, language training, simulations and role-plays*. According to the literature review, the benefits of receiving cross cultural training prior to relocation could be cited as⁶⁵:

- Prepares the individual/family mentally for the move;
- Removes some of the 'unknown';
- Increases self-awareness and cross cultural understanding;
- Provides the opportunity for questions / anxieties to be addressed in a supportive environment;
- Motivates and excites;
- Reduces stress and provides coping strategies;
- Eases the settling-in process;
- Reduces the chances of relocation failure.

Despite the above mentioned list of potential benefits, Mendenhall and Oddou (1985) list a variety of reasons given by Human Resources directors ***for not investing in pre-departure training***:

- A feeling that such training programs are generally ineffective.

⁶² Thomas, M. (2000). *Acquérir une compétence interculturelle, des processus d'apprentissages interculturels au quotidien*. Mémoire de DESS en Psychologie des Actions Interculturelles, Université de Nancy 2, 92.

⁶³ Rakotomena Mialy, H. (2005). *Les ressources individuelles pour la compétence interculturelle individuelle*. Revue internationale sur le travail et la société. 3, 2, 668-691.

⁶⁴ Caligiuri, P.M., Philips, J., Lazarova, M., Tarique, I., and 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), 357-72.

⁶⁵ Global relocation trends 2003/2004 survey report <http://www.nftc.org/default/hr/GRTS%202003-4.pdf>

- Past dissatisfaction with the training program on the part of expatriate trainees.
- The time between selection and departure is short, and there is not enough time to expose expatriate to in-depth acculturation training.
- The view that because the expatriate's assignment is temporary, it does not warrant training expenditures.

The purpose of pre-departure training is to ensure that the expatriates and their families are prepared for the new culture and the new environment, and also to be certain that the expatriate have the needed skills and knowledge⁶⁶. Actually, the pre-departure training should be seen as an extension of the selection process. During this phase there is a chance for those expatriates that feel insecure about continuing on with the assignment to withdraw, and thus save the organization the costs of failure. Table 3 presents the orientation and process of pre-departure cross-cultural training. The process is divided in motivation, skill/knowledge and the internal and external approaches to the new environment.

Table 3. Pre-departure orientation

Pre-departure training					
Motivation	Skill/knowledge	Environment			
Extension of selection process: Determine the motivation of the candidate/spouse/family to live overseas after exposure to training	Training or candidate to meet needs assessment entry-level skill/knowledge criteria: Procedural Systems Subject matter: Basic skills including language entry level Technical Abstract Establish career path goals	External		Internal	
		Country-general	Culture-specific		Use fact-oriented training to present home and foreign organizations' strategic formulation and implementation elements: Policies and procedures
		Use fact-oriented approach to present:	Cultural orientations	Culture-shock preparation	
			Use a combination of: Fact-oriented Attribution Cultural awareness Behavioral approaches	Teach: Dynamics Coping techniques	

Source: Adapted from Baker et al., 1996.

Several researchers have, however, suggested the training to be more efficient when parts of it are held *after arrival in the new culture*. While cross-cultural training is normally provided prior to departure, post-arrival training is also important and many ex-

⁶⁶ Baker, N., Geroy, G.D., Wright, P.C. (1996). *Managing Expatriates: A System Approach*. Management Decision, 34, 10, 32-42.

patriates actually prefer the latter⁶⁷. Certain types of training are significantly more effective if they are carried out after the arrival of the expatriate⁶⁸. Preferably such training should focus on structures and relationships in the culture of the host country, world view, mentality, values living patterns and social structure.

At that time, it can be assumed that the expatriate has a large amount of unstructured detailed information that can be patterned and better understood by the structure offered by the training program (Selmer, 2001). To a large extent, post-arrival training is closely related to „on-site” mentoring of expatriates. According to the empirical study of Feldman and Bolino (1999), from a sample of 179 expatriates in 19 countries it was found that the amount of „on-site” mentoring received was positively associated with expatriate socialization, which in turn was positively related to job attitudes, intention to finish the foreign assignment and expatriate’s understanding of global business issues.

Forster (2000) points to the fact that international assignments are processes and not one-off events. Thus it makes absolute sense to build on a learning curve initiated prior to the move and continue with both experimental and didactic cross-cultural training methods after moving abroad. Accordingly, a new model – sequential training- has been developed to combine the benefits of both pre-departure and post-arrival training (Littrell et al., 2006). This model is not a method in itself but constitutes a combination of different training methods applied at different times during the training process. It is based on the notion that the capacity of learning varies over time and, for maximum effectiveness, the training should be given when the trainees are most motivated to learn. Sequential training starts before departure, then progresses in steps through the post-arrival adjustment phases and can extend all the way to repatriation issues (Selmer et al., 1998).

Both *attribution and cultural awareness training* are best used *before the departure*. The main issue with regard to these training methods is that attribution training is usually culture-specific and is, therefore, not applicable in a general training program; cultural awareness training, on the other hand, is culture-general and can, therefore, be an effective part of a pre-departure training program, directed to a group of expatriates that are going to very different regions. The same applies for the culture-general assimilators, which prepare expatriates for differences across cultures in work attitudes and values, use of time and personal space, roles of men and women, importance of group harmony and personal achievement, local rituals and superstitions, the role of class and status in societies and personal and social values (Bhawuk & Brislin, 2000).

Foster (2000) stressed on the necessity to have a certain level of *language skills necessary upon arrival* in the new country, so that common courtesies and basic greetings are mastered. *Common practices* from the MNC include a six-week language course as part of the pre-departure training. If time is strictly limited, emphasis prior to departure should be restricted to teaching survival elements, i.e. some useful every-day phrases, greeting, introductions, etc. If a high degree of fluency is desired, formal, often intensive language training must begin well before the departure date and, if necessary, continue on arrival. The amount of language skills needed during the assignment is not defined in the literature, but Puck et al. (2008) state that the person’s previous language skills and ability to learn should be taken into account during the selection process. The better the lan-

⁶⁷ Selmer, J. (2001). *The preference for pre-departure or post-arrival cross-cultural training: An exploratory approach*. Journal of Managerial Psychology, 16, 1,50-6.

⁶⁸ Selmer, J., Torbiörn, I., & de Leon, C.T. (1998). Sequential cross-cultural training for expatriate business managers: pre-departure and post-arrival. International Journal of Human Resource Management, 9, 5, 832-840.

guage skills are the easier will the adjustment process be, since language has a very strong effect on expatriate adjustment. Linking the sequential training method with the U-curve of the adjustment process, we could mention that the „culture shock” phase is the stage when the expatriate is most susceptible to cross-cultural training. Both didactic and experiential methods could be used, as well as explanations of observed behaviors. The latter method is an effective way to develop appropriate behavior and to learn more about the host country. Forster’s (2000) and other researches have also shown that effective induction programs and access to sympathetic and helpful mentors can greatly assist employees in this difficult adjustment phase and in their adaptation to the new job roles.

When it comes to the CCT, we found *as mostly urgent to be taken into account* the recent findings of Koveshnikov et. L.⁶⁹. The studies examine the role of *emotional intelligence (EI) in cross-cultural adjustment (CCA)* of expatriates on international assignments. Based on a sample of 269 French expatriates operating in 133 countries, their findings indicate a significant and positive relationship between EI and expatriates’ general living, interactional and work-related CCA. Additionally, it shows that cultural similarity only facilitates general living adjustment and not interactional or work adjustments. Moreover, the analysis proves an interaction effect between gender and the ability to appraise and express emotions: the influence of the latter on all three dimensions of CCA tends to be *slightly stronger for male than female expatriates*.

Osman-Gani et al.⁷⁰ upon responses of 169 managers from four different national backgrounds, all currently on overseas assignments in Asia, argues that *the relationship between CCT effectiveness and adjustment is mediated by an increase in self-efficacy*.

The personality traits are regarded from many scholars as among the most important factors affecting expatriate cross-cultural adjustment. An exploratory study performed through Multicultural Personality Questionnaire on the general-, interaction-, and work-related facets of cross-cultural adjustment among 181 expatriates in Japan found the existence of *positive relationships between the personality traits of open mindedness and interaction adjustment, emotional stability and cultural empathy and general adjustment, and social Initiative and work adjustment*⁷¹.

2.2. EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPORTANCE OF CROSS-CULTURAL TRAINING

The importance of cross-cultural training for successful expatriation in the multinational companies is an issue researched by a number of scholars (Tung, 1982; Littrell et al., 2006), Shen et. al. (2009)⁷². In the 1990’s, the focus has been on evaluating cross-cultural training programs using methods like meta-analysis, building theoretically meaningful models and training materials, and developing criterion measures that can be used

⁶⁹ Koveshnikov, A., Wechtler, H., Dejoux, C., (2013) *Cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates: The role of emotional intelligence and gender*, Journal of World Business, available online on www.sciencedirect.com

⁷⁰ Osman-Gani, A.M., Rockstuhl, T., (2009) *Cross-cultural training, expatriate self-efficacy, and adjustments to overseas assignments: An empirical investigation of managers in Asia*, International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 33, 4, 277-290.

⁷¹ Peltokorpi, V., Froese, F. (2012) *The impact of expatriate personality traits on cross-cultural adjustment: A study with expatriates in Japan*, International Business Review, 21, 4, 734-746.

⁷² Shen, J., Lang, B. (2009) *Cross-cultural training and its impact on expatriate performance in Australian MNEs* Human Resource Development International 12, 4, 371–386.

in the evaluation of various training programs⁷³. Black and Mendenhall (1990) presented a comprehensive review of 29 empirical studies where cross-cultural training effectiveness was evaluated according to the variables 'cross-cultural skill development', 'adjustment' and 'performance'. According to the findings of the review, all studies found a positive relationship between cross-cultural training and cross-cultural skill development through „development of greater feelings of well-being and confidence”, „self-reported measures of relationship skills” and „development of appropriate perceptions relative to members of another culture”. The authors concluded that, 'the available empirical literature gives moderate support to the proposition that cross-cultural training has a positive impact on cross-cultural effectiveness'.

On the other hand, another study found that the relationship between cultural training and relocation outcomes to be 'generally non-significant' (Brislin and Yoshida, 1994:119). They suggest that, 'cross-cultural training programs should be viewed as one of several contributions designed to assist people who cross cultural boundaries and not a „cure-all” that guarantees cultural adjustment.

In their research, Kealey and Protheroe (1996) acknowledge the importance of an expatriate's ability to communicate and be receptive to different cultures. What they could not find from the review of previously done studies was if cross-cultural training actually provided expatriates with these skills. According to their research, previous studies did not have longitudinal design, which purpose is to prove that cross-cultural training is effective over time.

Recently Selmer⁷⁴ examined empirically the views and experience of cross-cultural training (CCT) of experienced Western business expatriates (“China Hands”) assigned to China. Through mail questionnaire that targeted business expatriates assigned by Western firms to China, a net-targeted sample of 651 respondents produced 165 usable questionnaires, following the extraction of questionnaires from respondents who were no longer in China or who were not engaged in business. Findings of his study further highlight *the need for more CCT for business expatriates destined for China*. A clear majority of respondents *preferred pre-departure training a few weeks before departing for China and only a few of them claimed that CCT would not have been useful at any time*. Most of the China Hands thought that CCT improved core managerial activities and therefore could have helped them to become better managers in China.

METHODOLOGY

Based on quantitative method, through online survey software and questionnaire tool „survey monkey”, was sent to the participants. The sample consists of 21 expatriates working in multinational companies in Bulgaria for at least six months. We chose this method of primary data collection, because it is costless, fast, very commonly used and convenient both for the sender, as well as the recipient. The thorough literature review provided most reliable secondary data on the field. The survey conducted through a structured questionnaire involved simple statistical analysis of tabulating responses to various questions on cross cultural training in percentages so descriptive statistics were applied. A preliminary version of the questionnaire was designed and a pilot testing choosing to be present while the respondents were

⁷³ Bhawuk, P.S. and Brislin R.W.(2000). *Cross-cultural training: A Review*. Applied Psychology: An International Review, 49, 1, 162-191.

⁷⁴ Selmer, J. (2010) Expatriate cross-cultural training for China: views and experience of „China Hands”, Management Research Review, 33, 1, 41 – 53.

completing the questionnaire, in order to:

- Ensure that the questionnaire „flows” and that the questions are clearly understood and presented in a logical sequence; also to identify ambiguous questions;
- Assess the time needed to complete the questionnaire;
- Ascertain whether the interest of the respondents was maintained.

After going through a few amendments, which the pilot test indicated as necessary for the quality and effectiveness of the questionnaire, we discussed the final version and proceeded with sending it to the participants of the study. One major problem with surveys conducted through a questionnaire sent out by email is the low response rate. Response rate is the single most important indicator of how much confidence you can place in the results. To avoid a low response rate, we used an informative cover letter, reminders on no respondents and tried to have a well-designed, short questionnaire that keeps the interest of the participant.

In our research we used the *nonprobability sampling*, and more specifically, the „convenience” sampling, where the subjects of the study are selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher. The sample consists of expatriate managers that work in MNCs in Sofia for at least 6 months. The questionnaire was sent out to 24 expatriates that have been working in MNCs in Bulgaria for at least 6 months. Of the delivered questionnaires 29 were returned and thus the response rate was very good (72.4%).

The most obvious criticism against the convenient sampling is sampling bias and that the sample is not representative of the whole population. Sampling bias refers to a constant difference between the results of the sample and the theoretical results from the entire population. Another significant criticism is the limitation in generalization; since the sample is not representative of the population, the results of the study cannot speak for the entire population. This results to a low external validity of the research. Despite the criticism against this type of sampling, it is very commonly used because it is fast, inexpensive, and easy and the subjects are readily available. Moreover the choice would significantly increase the response rate, one of the most important factors of the quality of a survey.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of the study was to find out to what extent MNCs operating in Bulgaria use *cross-cultural training* to prepare their expatriates for their assignments abroad, as well the types of cross-cultural training that the expatriates have participated in. Moreover, the research investigates how the expatriates evaluate the effectiveness of these methods and the importance of cross-cultural training with regard to their adjustment to the new working and living environment.

Participants in cross-cultural training

Table 2. Sample characteristics

Sample characteristics	% from total
Gender	
Male	100
Age	
30-39	28.6

Sample characteristics	% from total
40-49	61.9
50-59	9.5
Number of assignments abroad	
1	28.6
2-3	57.1
4-6	9.5
7-9	4.8
Years of working abroad	
1-2	4.8
3-4	23.8
5-6	23.8
6-7	19
more than 10	28.6
Years of working in Bulgaria	
1-2	38.1
3-4	42.8
5-6	4.8
7-9	4.8
More than 9	9.5
Current position	
Vice president	5
CEO	20
Top Management	70
Middle Management	5

The respondents were 100% males and almost 62% of them between 40-49 years old. The vast majority of them (95%) occupy top managerial position, with 4 of them being Chief Executive Officers (CEOs). 57% of them are on their second or third assignment and the majority of them (81%) have been in Bulgaria from 1 to 4 years. Only one respondent has been only one year abroad, whereas the vast majority of the respondents are experienced expatriates that have been abroad for more than 3 years, with 6 of them (28,6%) working abroad for more than 10 years. Their countries of origin include 11 different countries, e.g. United Kingdom of England, the Netherlands, Sweden, Russia, Greece, Republic of Korea, Italy, USA, Israel, Germany and Belgium. The profile of the respondents is more analytically presented on the Table 2.

The second part of the questionnaire included 4 questions that checked the participation of the expatriates in any type of cross-cultural training programs either for their current assignment in Bulgaria or for their previous assignments. The results are presented in the following tables using the calculation of percentage to summarize the data from the questionnaires.

Perception on the effectiveness of cross-cultural training

The third part of the questionnaire consisted of 6 questions and can be further split in two sub-sections:

a. questions 13,14 & 15 checked the perception of the expatriates on the effectiveness of the different cross-cultural methods, that they have participated in, on three

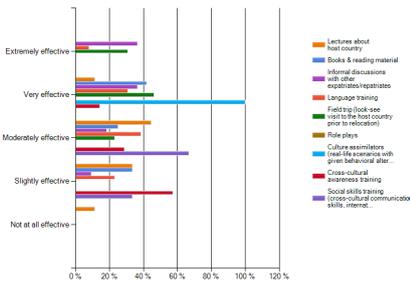
dimensions, as presented by Black, Mendenhall & Oddou (1991):

- work adjustment, which involves adapting to the new job tasks, work roles and new work environment and delivering the job objectives
- general adjustment, which involves the overall adaption to the new living conditions and day-to-day life (housing, health care, transportation, cost of living etc.)
- relational adjustment, which involved the comfort achieved in interacting with local people in both work and non-work situations.

b. questions 16 & 17 checked the general opinion of the expatriates on the importance of the different types of cross-cultural training on the same three dimensions. The results are presented in the following charts.

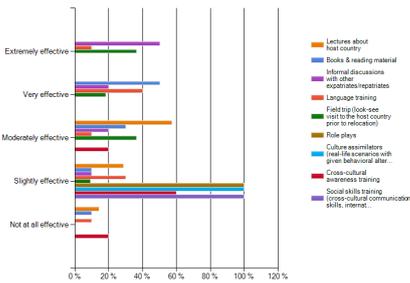
Q:13

How effective was the cross-cultural training you received for your work adjustment?(if you have not received any type of training, please write "no training" in the last box "other")



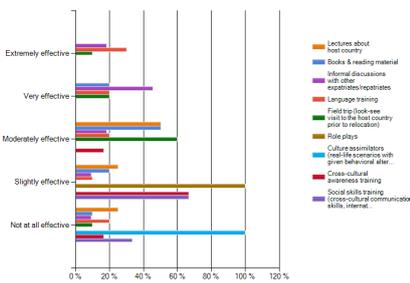
Q:14

How effective was the cross-cultural training you received for your general adjustment?(if you have not received any type of training, please write "no training" in the last box "other")



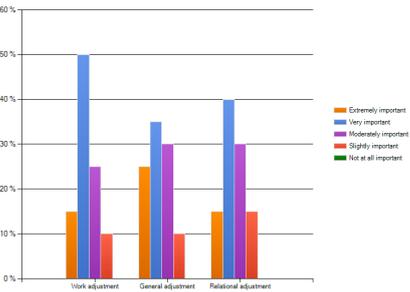
Q:15

How effective was the cross-cultural training you received for your relational adjustment?(if you have not received any type of training, please write "no training" in the last box "other")



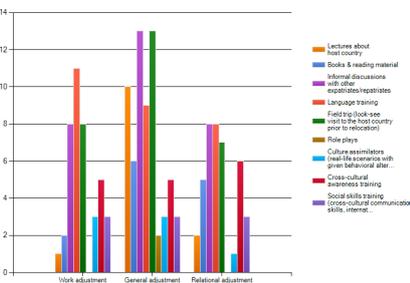
Q:16

According to your opinion, how important is the provision of cross-cultural training for the expatriate's adjustment in the host country?



Q:17

According to your opinion, which of the following cross-cultural methods mostly contribute to the expatriate's adjustment in the host country? (choose up to 2 for each type of adjustment)



Participation in cross-cultural training programs

The first objective of the current research was to find out *the extent to which companies actually offer any type of cross-cultural training to their expatriates*. Bearing in mind that most of the respondents are experienced expatriates that have worked for quite a few years abroad, the question allowed the respondents to answer if they have received any kind of cross-cultural training organized/sponsored by their company for their assignment in Bulgaria as well as for previous assignments. 8 out of the 21 respondents (43%) have not received any cross-cultural training at all, while another 6 respondents have received cross-cultural training for previous assignments but not for their assignment in Bulgaria. In total, 66.6% respondents have not received any type of cross-cultural training for their current posting in Bulgaria. This finding is in accordance with the findings of other surveys *as presented in the problem discussion chapter*, and supports the fact that multinational companies have paid insufficient attention to cross-cultural training.

When cross-cultural training is actually offered, it is slightly more often delivered by an external specialized company rather than the company itself. As far as the duration of the cross-cultural training is concerned, a strong majority of the delivered trainings lasted less than week, with the exception of books and reading material, informal discussion with other expatriates/repatriates and language training. Some of the trainings cannot last longer because of their nature and high costs, such as the field trip to the host country. According to theory though, training programs with a short duration should be considered of low rigor, which means less opportunities for the participant to actually practice the appropriate learned behavior (Black, Gregersen & Mendenhall, 1992)

The most popular method of cross-cultural training is the field trips, which are offered to 15 out of 19 respondents (78.8%). The finding shows that although it is considered to be quite an expensive form of cross-cultural training, companies decide to offer it to their expatriates due to its effectiveness in their preparation. In 80% of the cases it is organized prior to arrival; according to theory, look-see visits should be delivered prior to arrival, providing firsthand experience of the country. Allowing the expatriate and his/her family to get a taste of their new life can help ease the transition and relieve a lot of concerns before the big move; it is a unique opportunity to assess the fit between the prospective expatriates and the host country and allows for an informed and responsible decision.

The second most popular method of cross-cultural training is the language training, which was offered to 14 out of the 19 respondents. In almost all cases (92.9%) it is offered after the arrival of the expatriate to the host country and it lasts for a considerable time, which can be adequately explained by the nature of this type of cross-cultural training.

The next two most popular training methods are *the provision of books & reading material and the informal discussions with other expatriates / repatriates*. Both training methods were offered to 13 out of 19 respondents (68.3%). The high percentage of these two types of didactic cross-cultural training should not come as a surprise; according to the literature review, they are simple, flexible and inexpensive. Books and reading materials have been offered mainly prior to arrival to the host country, in order to provide the expatriate with all the necessary practical information, as proposed in theory.

Cross-cultural awareness training has been offered to 7 out of 19 respondents, almost evenly either before or after the relocation.

Lectures about the host country and cross-cultural awareness training have also

been offered to 7 out of 19 respondents, mainly as part of the pre-departure training. Social skills training has been offered to 3 out of 19 respondents, while the least used cross-cultural training methods are role play and culture assimilators, each offered only to one respondent prior to arrival to the host country.

Perception on the effectiveness of the delivered cross-cultural training programs

The second objective of the current research was to investigate the perception of the expatriates on the effectiveness of the different types of cross-cultural training with regard to three dimensions of their adjustment: work, general and relational adjustment.

Field trips proved to be not only the most popular but also one of the most effective types of cross-cultural training, especially for the work and general adjustment with high percentages both in the „extremely effective” and „very effective” scales. 60% of the respondents that received this type of cross-cultural training find it „moderately effective” for their relational adjustment and a 10% „not at all effective”. These results can be adequately explained by the fact that look-see visits are short, fact-finding visits with a focus on providing a good grounding in the basics of the life in the host country. The high percentage of its effectiveness for the work adjustment could be explained by the fact that when the expatriate is on time informed about the peculiarities of the new destination and when he is in a position to identify key considerations and concerns of this new life at an early stage, then he is in a better position to fully focus on the requirements of his new job.

The second most effective type of cross-cultural training, again especially for the work and general adjustment, is *the informal discussions with other expatriates/repatriates*. This finding comes in hand with the literature review on the subject, according to which these informal briefings are considered to be very informative and valuable to the expatriates.

Language training is also perceived as one of the effective types of cross-cultural training. A better consensus on its effectiveness can be seen with regard to the work adjustment, with a total percentage of 77% of the respondents choosing the scales from „moderately effective” to „extremely effective”. The picture is not so clear regarding the general and relational adjustment, where a percentage of 30-40% consider language training „slightly” or even „not at all effective”. The findings of the research do not correspond to Puck et al.’s (2008) opinion that language skills have the strongest effect on expatriate adjustment. This could be partially explained by the fact that the effectiveness of a language course is very strongly depended on its quality. The difficulty of the host country language and a low level of similarity to the native language of the expatriate can also be two restricting factors to the degree to which language training can actually be useful to the expatriate’s adjustment. Shen, J. et al (2009) in their case studies reveal a general lack of language training, attributed to English being spoken in many host countries. They found as another reason for not providing language training is the perceived ineffectiveness of short training. There are common statements like, ‘Few weeks or few months language training normally does not help. The best way to learn a foreign language is to work in the country’, and ‘I am sure that our expatriates are willing to attempt to communicate in the host country’s language, if only at a basic level, out of courtesy’.

Books and reading material have also received a considerably high ranking regarding their effectiveness. Their highest score is with regard to the general adjustment, while they are considered to be less effective for the work adjustment. *Lectures about the host country* have not been evaluated as „extremely effective” by any of the respondents; on the contrary, they are perceived as „moderately effective” to „not at all effective” by

almost all of the respondents. The highest negative evaluation was towards their effectiveness for the relational adjustment. *These results are not a surprise*, when we consider the weak points of this type of cross-cultural training: it assumes passive rather active learning; more importantly, during a lecture, people are encouraged to be rational and unemotional, whereas in real life expatriates have to confront situations that are charged with emotion, and they need to develop the „emotional muscle”, which is needed in intercultural interactions (Bhawuk & Brislin,2000)

Low effectiveness has also been attributed to cross-cultural awareness training, social skills training, role plays and culture assimilators. As far as the last two methods are concerned, we cannot draw any significant conclusions from this finding, since they have been offered to and evaluated by only one respondent. An interesting finding though will be discussed in the next section.

Opinion on the importance of the different types of cross-cultural training

This research indicates that expatriates are very positive about the value of the cross-cultural training with regard to all the three dimensions of their adjustment process, work, general and relational. Actually, the results show that cross-cultural training in all its forms is considered by the expatriates to facilitate all three facets of expatriate's adjustment almost to the same degree.

Look-see visit to the host country prior to relocation and informal discussions with other expatriates/repatriates are considered to be *the two methods of cross-cultural training that mostly contribute to the expatriate's adjustment*. The positive finding of the research is that these two methods are the ones most commonly offered by the companies. It should be noted though that this positive correlation might be explained by the fact that the expatriates actually chose those methods, because they have a firsthand experience of their effectiveness. On the other hand, while only one of the respondents has participated in culture assimilators, in total 6 out of the 19 respondents chose it as one of the most important method of cross-cultural training; this brings an extra value to the absolute percentage numbers.

Interestingly, *cross-cultural awareness training received contradictory evaluations*: it has been mostly considered of low effectiveness by the respondents that have received this type of training, but 9 out of 19 respondents chose it as one of the methods that mostly contribute to their adjustment. After cross-tabbing the results, it proved that 5 out of the 9 respondents were the ones that have evaluated it as slightly effective. The reason behind these results could be that the respondents criticize the quality of the cross-cultural awareness training offered (poor design, unrealistic expectations, inclusion of irrelevant material), but still believe in its effectiveness and importance.

Despite the fact that language training offered to the expatriates received rather ambiguous results, it is still considered to be one of the most important types of cross-cultural training. This is understandable, as language undoubtedly has a symbolic relationship with culture and a reasonable degree of fluency in the local language helps social intercourse, aids understanding of cultural nuances and, above all, signals a willingness to make the effort to better understand the foreign culture. We found a **very flexible and close to our empirical finding the Aycan (1997) conceptual model** of the expatriate's adjustment.

Although lectures about the host country are a low-rigor method, and as such, is considered to be of low effectiveness in theory (Tung,), in this research 10 out of 19 expatriates chose it as one of the methods that mostly contribute to their general adjustment, ranking it third in importance after field trips and informal discussion with other expatriates/repatriates.

Interestingly, books and reading material have a lower ranking. This could be explained by their low-rigor; reading about the host country is a personal issue that does not necessarily implicate any interaction between the expatriate and the company. Having the right books and resources at hand is, of course, of undisputable help to the prospective expatriate, and save him valuable time. Culture assimilators and social skills training received similar, comparatively low percentages.

CONCLUSIONS

The results indicated that a high percentage of the companies with expatriates employees send their managers abroad without any form of training to prepare them to operate effectively in the new environment. This is despite the fact that profound culture shock and the difficulty to come in terms with the new overseas environment and eventually learn to adapt accordingly, have been identified as major contributors to the causes of failed international assignments. Although there is evidence that cross-cultural training is successful in supporting expatriates in their adjustment process, still such training is not provided by the companies as often as might be expected. There is no doubt that cross-border transfers will remain an important part of international HR strategies in the foreseeable future. The results of the research indicated that cross-cultural training is perceived as very to extremely important by the majority of the expatriates, as a means to meet the physical and cultural demands of adapting to a new environment. The development of the field of cross-cultural training over the past years shows an encouraging sign of evolution of more theoretically meaningful training methods and tools (Bhawuk et al., 2000). A variety of cross-cultural training options is available to the companies and their implementation strongly depends, among other factors, on the availability of resources and time. Another important factor though is *the perception of the effectiveness of these methods by their actual participants*. This research tried to add some valuable insight to this domain.

The research findings have several implications for the companies. Choosing to offer those types of cross-cultural training that the expatriates themselves evaluate as effective, a company makes a valuable investment on one of its most important assets. An appropriately designed cross-cultural training program can increase the expatriate's learning and improve his/her adjustment to the new cultural community (Shen, J. & Lang, B., 2009). Companies should carefully organize look-see visits, since expatriates highly appreciate the opportunity to visit the host country prior to their arrival, in order to acquire knowledge about the living and working environment and gain valuable time to deal with practical arrangements. Informal briefings with other expatriates/ repatriates appeared to be very positively evaluated by the prospective expatriates; this is one of the cheapest methods of cross-cultural training, but deserves special attention with regard to the selection of suitable briefers due to the many challenges related to expatriation.

Research on work stress over the last decades has consistently demonstrated that feelings of control are an important safeguard against potentially stressful life events like international assignments. People who are able to plan effectively for their international assignments, who are kept informed about them, who have realistic expectations about these are much more likely to successfully adjust to them. The findings of this research confirm the above, since the cross-cultural training methods with the higher scores, such as look-see visits, lectures about the host country and informal discussions with other expatriates/repatriates serve exactly these purposes.

Respondents also emphasized the importance of language training. Before gener-

alizing the implications of this finding, it is important to point out the following: the necessity of this training is strongly related to whether the expatriate can be expected to be able to manage with some major language, such as English, French or German and whether real adjustment at the job place and outside is possible without reasonable skills in the local language.

Expatriates need to be able to combat culture shock and those with solid intercultural skills will invariably cope better than others. Expatriates seem to recognize the importance of training methods that are not so commonly used, such as culture assimilators, cross-cultural awareness training and social skills training. Companies should consider including those types of training; a recommendation could be to choose newer, more sophisticated training tools that use more than one medium, such as multi-media or computer-based culture assimilators, computer-based negotiation tasks, or training videos that have moved the field away from the paper medium to other media.

In summary, the findings of the research confirms the view expressed by most of the researchers, that cross-cultural training has a positive effect on adaptation to the international assignments(Black et al., 1990; Forster,2000; Selmer, 2010). The views of experienced managers will be of use to a wide variety of management practitioners and in further study undergone by the authors of this paper referring to the Scandinavian expats to Bulgaria and South East European countries.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The findings and conclusions presented in the previous chapter laid out a foundation for implications useful for application of this study. The results of the research could be applicable in the field of expatriation. The results indicate that cross-cultural training should be a part of the expatriate's preparation for his/her assignment abroad as well as during his/her life overseas. Bringing up the idea of cross-cultural training among the participants of the survey and including a list of different methods, could help the expatriates realize that they might actually need help to prepare for a successful adjustment to their new working and living environment, and that there are ways available to help them.

The implications of the results for the companies assigning expatriates abroad are straightforward. Since there seems to be a significant interest among the studied expatriates in cross-cultural training the following recommendations sourced by the present study could be provided:

- Multinational companies should emphasize the importance of extensive cross-cultural training considering it being a crucial factor for successful adjustment of the expatriates;
- Cross- cultural training programs should definitely include pre-departure visits to the host country, informal briefings with other expatriates/repatriates, language training and lectures about the host country.

Even if the study cannot be seen as sufficient for generalizing about the effectiveness of cross-cultural training, it still points a finger in the right direction and can surely be treated as a first step, or the introduction to a larger quantitative or even qualitative research. An area that could be further investigated is the underlying reason for the limited offer of cross-cultural training by the companies.

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SUPPLEMENTS

Table 3. Question 9 (% out of 21 responses)

Have you participated in any kind of cross-cultural training organized/sponsored by your company? (multiple answers are possible)		
	For the assignment In Bulgaria	For previous assignments
Pre-departure	23.8	33.3
Post arrival	14.3	14.3
None	66.6	42.8

Table 5. Question 10 (% out of 21 responses)

Who delivered the cross-cultural training (multiple answers are possible)	
My company	33.3
External specialized company	42.9
None	28.6

Table 6. Question 11 (% out of 19 responses)

Which type of cross-cultural training have you participated in? (multiple answers are possible)				
	Prior to arrival	After arrival	Both	Total
Lectures about host country	26.3	5.2	5.2	36.7
Books & reading material	36.8	10.5	21	68.3
Informal discussion with other expatriates/repatriates	21	10.5	36.8	68.3
Language training	0	68.4	5.2	73.6
Field trips (look-see visit to the host country prior to relocation)	63.1	10.5	5.2	78.8
Role play	5.2	0	0	5.2
Culture assimilators (real life scenarios with given behavioral alternatives and feedback on the choice)	5.2	0	0	5.2
Cross-cultural awareness training	21	15.7	0	36.7
Social skills training(cross-cultural communication skills, international negotiation skills)	5.2	10.5	0	15.7

Table 7. Question 11 (% per response)

How long did the training last?					
	Less than a week	1-4 weeks	1-2 months	more	Response count
Lectures about host country	100	0	0	0	7
Books & reading material	50	40	10	0	10
Informal discussion with other expatriates/repatriates	41.7	33.3	8.3	16.7	12
Language training	8.3	8.3	41.7	41.7	12
Field trips (look-see visit to the host country prior to relocation)	100	0	0	0	14
Role play	100	0	0	0	1
Culture assimilators (real life scenarios with given behavioral alternatives and feedback on the choice)	100	0	0	0	1
Cross-cultural awareness training	100	0	0	0	7
Social skills training(cross-cultural communication skills, international negotiation skills)	66.7	33.3	0	0	3

БИЗНЕС УСЛУГИ И МЕЖДУКУЛТУРНО ОБУЧЕНИЕ

Резюме

Студията изследва межкултурното обучение като средство за улесняване на ефективните межкултурни взаимодействия и межкултурното приспособяване в глобализирания свят на бизнеса. Целта е да се идентифицират възприетията на специалисти, работещи временно или постоянно извън страната на тяхното постоянно пребиваване, към ефективността на различни видове межкултурно обучение, осигурено за тяхната адаптация към новата среда за работа и живот. Първата част на изследването е посветена на задълбочено литературно изследвания на съвременните теории за межкултурно приспособяване, както и на различните техники за приспособяване на работещите временно или постоянно извън родното място лица, по време на международната им мисия. Проучването предлага мнение-то на опитни практики в управлението относно ефективността на тяхното межкултурно обучение, проведено с цел да се адаптират към българската бизнес среда. Резултатите от изследването ще бъдат от полза както за представителите на бизнеса от Западна Европа в България, така и за онези, които обмислят преместване в България. Видовете методи на межкултурно обучение, предлагани днес от мултинационални компании на техните служители, които изпращат на работа в други страни, както и мнението на последните за ефективността и значението на тези методи са изследвани също. Резултатите показват, че голяма част от фирмите, изпращат своите мениджъри на работа извън страната на постоянно пребиваване без да проведат някаква форма на обучение, позволяваща им да се справят с новата среда и да бъдат ефективни. В същото време, изследването показва, че служителите на работа в чужбина оценяват много позитивно ползата от межкултурното обучение по отношение и на трите измерения на процеса на тяхното приспособяване към работата, като цяло и в конкретика със средата.

Неформални дискусии с други служители на работа в чужбина, както и посещение на място в страната-домакин преди преместването се считат за двата метода на межкултурно обучение, които допринасят в най-голяма степен за приспособяването им. Въз основа на получените резултати се препоръчва на компаниите да предоставят на служителите си, които изпращат на задгранична работа, межкултурно обучение като част от подготовката им за назначаване в чужбина, както и за престоя им по време на работната мисия. Проучването разкрива важни практически последици за организациите, свързани с идентифицирането и развитието на подходящи практики в областта на бизнес услугите, осигуряващи успеха на работещите зад граница техни служители.

Ключови думи: интензивни на знание бизнес услуги, межкултурни обучения, работещи извън страната на постоянно пребиваване

BUSINESS SERVICES AND CROSS-CULTURAL TRAININGS

Abstract

This study examines the cross-cultural training as a means of facilitating effective cross-cultural interactions and cross-cultural adjustment in the globalized business world. The purpose is to identify the expatriates' perceptions on the effectiveness of different kind of cross cultural training provided for their adaptation to the new working and living

environment. The first part of the study is dealing with profound literature research of the current theories on cross-cultural adjustment and different training techniques on adjustment of the expatriates during their international assignment. The paper offers the view of experienced management practitioners concerning the effectiveness of their cross-cultural training to adapt to the Bulgarian business environment. The findings will be of value to both Western business people in Bulgaria as well as business people considering an expatriate posting to Bulgaria.

The types of cross-cultural training methods offered nowadays by multinational companies to their expatriates and what is the opinion of the expatriates on the effectiveness and importance of these methods is studied. Results showed that a large portion of the companies with expatriates employees send their managers abroad without any form of training to cope with the new environment and to be effective. At the same time, the findings suggest that the expatriates are very positive about the value of the cross-cultural training with regard to all the three dimensions of their adjustment process, work, general and relational. Informal discussions with other expatriates/repatriates and look-see visit to the host country prior to relocation are considered to be the two methods of cross-cultural training that mostly contribute to the expatriate's adjustment. Based on the obtained results, it is recommended that companies provide expatriates with cross-cultural training as part of the expatriates' preparation for their assignment abroad as well as during their life overseas.

The study reveals important practical implications for organizations concerning the identification and development of convenient business services practices for successful expatriates.

Key words: knowledge-intensive business services, cross-cultural training, expatriates