

# **A STUDY ON FACTORS AFFECTING ADAPTATION OF FEMALE EXPATRIATES ON GLOBAL ASSIGNMENTS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

In the successful completion of the global assignments by female expatriates cross cultural adaptation plays an important role. Cross cultural adjusted female expatriates are open to the host culture and show more integrative approach to the new culture. This paper studies the factors affecting the cross cultural adaptation of female expatriates. The factors studied were personal attributes, support from family, support from organization and attitude of host employees towards female emigrants (as cited by Caliguiri and Lazarov 1999, p.163). This paper addresses the conflicts and challenges faced by women expatriates in global settings and how socio-psychological support affects their adaptation process. The data was collected and analyzed from thirty female expatriates by sending questionnaire through Google forms. Practical suggestions for how to boost the possibility of success for women on global assignment are also given.

**Key words:** Female expatriates, Cross cultural adjustment, Integrative approach, Host nation, Global assignments.

## **1. Introduction**

Fast growing pace of global economy by means of inviting foreign subsidiaries international based commercial organization and demand for well qualified employees for employment in foreign assignments has been equally felt at international organization. In this the share of International women managers is scarcely represented. Experts have concluded that the share of women managers in US accounts for forty percent.

Human resource managers have the obligation to recruit candidate of their like. Male dominance is often witnessed in recruitment process over women intake. Women have thus to take fair chance to increase their gender percentage for international posts for which HR managers have to initiate steps. It has also been noticed that if women would bring out certain attitudinal changes, their participation in the international assignment might improve. They should swing towards professional life instead of stabilizing in private life irrespective of their being away from their kith and kin.

Men are more firm in achieving tasks rather than women who belittle themselves by their apprehension on completion of tasks assigned to them. Women should keep confidence in retaining their self respect rather than accepting defeat.

According to Nancy Adler why the woman managers are not considered for foreign assignments mostly based on three myths. One of them being that they are unwilling to go abroad, secondly, they are not considered for such posts by companies and thirdly, they face bias in foreign countries. The reason for not considering for foreign assignments might be due to family related problems such as partner's unwillingness, pursue of children's education etc. It has been said by Calliguri and Tung (1999) that women expatriates are greatly influenced in Scandinavia and France where they are accepted in every field of work. They are successful however, due to their possessing feminine characteristic. In holding a job assignments a women is not perceived a person herself but a representative of a company. Private friendship is scarcely available. Further, cultural variation in the host country such as religion, tradition and local regulations makes the women's state critical. In order to abide by the role scripts being followed in the host country the woman have to bring in certain lifestyle modifications to be more compatible to facilitate their movement in the society. Women often find stressful while moving in a country where women have restricted movement under law. Then the rules are abounding by specific culture.

HR professionals must deactivate belief that the women are prone to dangers in host country. Women in higher ranking position find it difficult to establish quick relation with locals. Women living abroad are often confronted with host country through role expectations. The expatriate woman is bound to enjoy professional merit and they have to cope with number of difficulties in their life like men. While they are sent on foreign assignments

specifically women face gender based problems. Alder 1994, specifies that especially women in the foreign assignment enjoys wide spread courtesy and other characteristics unlike the same available at home.

While reviewing the global phenomena it is opined that women are less represented in the international market as executives compared to men for no reason. Further, women adjudged as the successful lot while the Hr professionals in German and Australia think differently. Women provide leadership qualities in their job assignments. The various challenges women face out of the purview of professional environment can be overcome by proper guidance and training during their international assignment period.

However, professional keep abreast of the on goings in the international organization to secure latest information available in the market. Once women takes care of all these aspects they will stand one among the pool of managers ready to conduct international business at home and abroad with success.

## **2. Objectives**

1. To study the factors affecting cross cultural adaptation of female expatriates.
2. To study the impact of expatriate's personal attributes on assignment performance.
3. To study the impact of expatriate's family support on assignment performance.
4. To study the impact of expatriate's organization support on assignment performance.
5. To study the impact of attitude of host nation towards female expatriates.

## **3. Literature Review**

### **Cross cultural Adjustment**

Chin (2019) in his article has said that adjusting to the host country depends on strong cross-cultural employees competence and high performance at the job. Krisnan (2017) has highlighted that challenges faced by expatriates in completing the assignments were selection of candidates, host country adjustment, poor job performance and spouse problems which would not only play an important role in cultural intelligence and cross cultural adjustment for pursuit in international assignments but also the key role of these two aspects of culture in influencing expatriates intentions. Roadsai et al. (2017) in their article explores cross-cultural adjustment and job performance through individual and organizational factors. It was found that training had positive impact towards Thai expatriates cross-cultural adjustment.

### **Personal attributes, support from family, support from organization and attitude of Host Nation towards female emigrants**

Eze et al. (2018) in their article has assessed the effect of factors such as personal characteristics, communication, cultural difference, short term assignments and climatic change on performance of expatriates assignment. Experience and Age are the personal characteristics that impacted most on job performance at work in work place and on the other hand open communication, long term assignments were preferred. Bastida (2018) highlights gender problems, premature return, adjustment, performance, commitment and job satisfaction on expatriate effectiveness using different groups of measures. Salamin (2014) in their article has found that the research was developed around orientation of home-host country and progresses from organization to individual level studies. Caligiuri (1999) in their article has highlighted four factors such as personality, family support, company support and host national's attitude that affected women on international assignments.

## **4. Methodology**

The data was collected from thirty women expatriates working in various countries such as USA, UK, Ireland and Australia. The data was collected both by primary and secondary data. Primary data includes survey method. The survey was done through Questionnaires sent through Google documents. Mobile Interviews were also conducted. Reliability and validity test was conducted to study the consistency of the items in the scale. A pilot study for 10 respondents was conducted to check the reliability of the items. Cronbach's alpha value for the items was 0.7 which is acceptable for all the thirteen items. This shows that there was internal consistency in questionnaire items and they measure same value. The sampling technique used was convenient sampling. The data was analyzed by using SPSS software. The questionnaire consisted of five point likert scale and dichotomous questionnaire. The data was entered into excel from which it is transported to SPSS software. The data was analyzed by using the measures of mean, median, mode and standard deviation. The tests adopted were both correlation and multiple regression analysis. Correlation measures the linear relationship between two variables and multiple regression analysis identifies the relationship between dependent variable (cross cultural adaptation) and four independent variables (critical factors).

**5. Results and discussion of findings**

**Table 5.1 Demographic details of respondents**

Demographic factors	Number	Percent
<b>Age</b>		
25-35	5	16.7
35-45	19	63.3
45-55	6	20.0
Total	30	100.0
<b>Education</b>		
Graduate	18	60.0
Post graduate	12	40.0
Total	30	100.0
<b>Experience</b>		
less than 1 year	6	20.0
1-5 years	19	63.3
5-10 years	5	16.7
Total	30	100.0
<b>Position</b>		
High	2	6.7
Moderate	22	73.3
Low	6	20.0
Total	30	100.0
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	24	80.0
Unmarried	6	20.0
Total	30	100.0

(Source: Primary data from questionnaire)

Data was analyzed by using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software. Mean, Standard deviation and correlation analysis was performed to establish the relationship between the various constructs. The result of this analysis is shown in Table 5.2. It is interpreted that 63.3 percentage of respondents belonged to 35-45 years of age, and between 25-35 years respondents constituted 16.7 percent while 45-55 years respondents comprised 20 percent. 60 percentage of respondents were graduates and 40 percentage respondents were postgraduates. 63.3 percent respondents had 1-5 years experience and 16.7 percent respondents had 5-10 years while 20 percent respondents have less than one year experience. It is interpreted that 73.3 percent of respondents were moderately positioned in their jobs. Eighty percent respondents were married while twenty percent respondents were unmarried.

**Table 5.2**

**Correlation among regression variables**

constructs	observation	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
CCA	30	12.07	1.818	1	0.271	0.292	0.587**	0.342
H	30	2.17	0.747	0.271	1	0.035	0.18	0.168
F	30	2.90	0.662	0.292	0.035	1	0.316	0.261
C	30	7.00	1.485	0.587**	0.187	0.316	1	0.109
P	30	1.73	0.640	0.342	0.168	0.261	0.109	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

(Source: Primary data from questionnaire)

Table 5.2 depicts the standard deviation, means and correlations for each of five variables included in this study. CCA indicates cross cultural adaptation, H indicates Host Nations attitude towards expatriates, F indicates family support, C indicates Company support and P indicates Personal attributes. A positive significant relationship was found between company support and cross cultural adaptation ( $r=0.587, p<0.05$ ). The presence of personal attributes ( $r=0.342, p>0.05$ ), family support ( $r=0.292, p>0.05$ ) and Host nations attitude ( $r=0.271, p>0.05$ ) was not significantly related to cross cultural adjustment. The correlations show positive significant relationships at various significant levels amongst the constructs.

**Multiple Regression Analysis**

A multiple regression analysis was conducted. Cross-cultural adjustment was entered as dependent variable. Personal attributes, family support, company support and host nation’s attitude were entered as independent variables.

**Table 5.3 Model Summary**

Model R statistics	R square	Adjusted R square	Std.Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
0.665a	0.443	0.353	1.462	2.137

**a) Predictors: (Constant), p4, Comp, H1r, Family b) Dependent Variable: Cross cultural adaptation**

(Source: Primary data from questionnaire)

The changes in dependent variables due to changes in independent variables are outlined in R square. From the above table 5.3 the adjusted r square is 0.353 which shows that 44% variation in cross cultural adaptation is due to changes in the stated critical factors and the remaining 66% are those factors which affect cultural adaptation but are not represented in the model.

**Table 5.4 ANOVA**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	42.426	4	10.607	4.962	0.004 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	53.440	25	2.138		
Total	95.867	29			

(Source: Primary data from questionnaire)

The p value for the F test is 0.004 which is highly significant. Thus we can assume that there is a significant difference between the factors influencing the cross cultural adaptation. The null hypothesis is rejected.

**Table 5.5 Test of Individual Regression Coefficient**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	0.197	1.703		3.041	0.005		
Company	0.627	0.197	0.513	3.185	0.004	0.861	1.161
Family	0.197	0.450	0.072	0.437	0.666	0.831	1.203
Host Nation	0.333	0.378	0.137	0.880	0.387	0.924	1.083
Personal	0.695	0.447	0.244	1.554	0.133	0.900	1.111

(Source: Primary data from questionnaire)

From the above table 5.5 we can interpret that only the factor company support is significant predictor, that is influencing cross cultural adaptation Which indirectly influences expatriates assignment performance (beta coefficient is 0.513). Multicollinearity is also checked in this table where the values of Tolerance are > 0.1 for all the predictors and values of VIF are < 10 for all variables.

**Discussion**

The main aim of introducing this paper is to examine the factors influencing the cross cultural adjustment of female expatriates and the discussion of findings in the context of present study and available literature.

**Personality characteristics**

Hypothesis 1 does not put forth any support relevant to the relationship existing between personality developments and cross cultural adjustments. It does not have any impact on matters relating to global assignments awarded to women. The method adapted for measurement of personality is not adequate which should go by the use of interviews for assessment of personality characteristics.

**Family support**

Hypothesis 2 is found supportive in the case of married women who have attributed greater cross cultural adjustment over their counterpart unmarried women., The former is often supported by their family and spouses in times of need. While drawing conclusion, the married woman are found better rated over unmarried woman with regards to the discharge of their assigned jobs.

**Company support**

The importance of Company Support is felt as a predictor of cross cultural adjustment as per hypothesis 3. In US discrimination among employees based on sex is unlawful and women expatriates are given better opportunities to

take position while their counterpart male expatriates are in short supply. It is said that the companies should insist on efforts for providing facilities to women against cross cultural adjustments in overseas assignments. The companies also should keep as a policy matter to provide cross cultural training and relocation assistance to women expatriates. The company's support is significantly related to cross cultural adaptation in this study.

#### **Perceptions of Host Nations attitudes**

Hypothesis 4 does not put forth any support relevant to the relationship existing between Host Nations attitude and cross cultural adaptation. Host Nations attitude is not significantly related to cross cultural adjustment in this study. The result of study indicates positive perception of host nation's attitude towards cross cultural adjustment against women as global assignees.

#### **Limitations and Future Research**

The sample size taken was less and the data collected may be subjected to questionnaire bias. The data was collected from Indian women expatriates. Future research could be done by using other factors which influence women expatriates' performance on global assignments. Male expatriates could also be included for comparison.

#### **6. Conclusion and Implications of Findings**

The global organizations have to face practical implication as long as they support women who in turn work under the support from their family and spouses. Women undergo cross cultural training which is beneficial for them. The study also proves that high level women leaves better impact on global assignments rather than low level expatriates. The high level expatriates has a better access towards coworkers and company rather than low level expatriates as they are yet to be supported by their spouses.

The aim of multinationals to include women expatriates as candidates for global assignments is to extract their full potency in overseas job obligation. The research has thus concluded that the success of women expatriates lies in the support gained by them from their family and company while they are in global assignments. Thus, it is made clear that the success of any company shall have backing of female expatriates duly supported by their family members for the success execution of their international assignments.

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