

**HOW CAN COMPANIES ENSURE SUCCESSFUL EXPATRIATE
ASSIGNMENTS?**

**EXAMINING IMPORTANT ANTECEDENTS OF ASSIGNED
EXPATRIATES' CROSS-CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT
IN THE LIGHT OF NEW TRENDS IN GLOBAL MOBILITY**

A study observing the particular impact of cross-cultural training besides local language skills, relocation willingness and previous international experience

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Abstract

This study aims to observe the impact of certain determinants on assigned expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment in the light of new trends in global mobility.

Accurate adjustment serves as a solid foundation for a successful international assignment, therefore it is a crucial issue given an increase in the expatriate workforce globally. Cross-cultural adjustment is an extremely complex and multi-faceted phenomenon that is influenced by various factors out of which the impact of local language skills, willingness to relocate, previous international experience and with a special focus, cross-cultural training were examined in the course of the study.

11 hypotheses were set based on the extensive literature on expatriate adjustment. Observations were made through a study incorporating 155 assigned expatriates worldwide.

Results indicate that the knowledge of the local language eases interaction adjustment of expatriates. Out of the observed determinants cross-cultural training and relocation willingness have the most significant positive influence on cross-cultural adjustment, in total. Previous international experience was found to have a negative effect on expatriate adjustment.

Possible explanations and implications of the findings are presented. Based on the results, it is suggested for companies to value local language skills and include employee's relocation motivation as a relevant criterion when selecting future expatriates. Furthermore, recommendation is given to provide a relevant cross-cultural training thus predicting a successful adjustment.

Keywords: international mobility, international assignments, assigned expatriates, cross-cultural adjustment

Thesis' classification according to the categories defined by the Journal of Economics Literature (JEL Classification Systems):

- F66: Economic impacts of globalization: Labor
- J61: Geographic labor mobility, immigrant workers
- M51: Firm employment decisions, promotions
- M53: Training

Resumo

O objetivo deste estudo é observar o impacto de determinados fatores na adaptação intercultural de expatriados, à luz das novas tendências de mobilidade global.

Uma adaptação total torna-se uma base sólida para um projeto internacional bem-sucedido, pelo que é um tema fundamental, dado o aumento global da força de trabalho expatriada. A adaptação intercultural é um fenómeno extremamente complexo e multifacetado, que é influenciado por diversos fatores, de entre os quais o conhecimento da língua local, a disposição para se ser realocado, experiências internacionais anteriores, e a formação intercultural, que foi examinada com um enfoque especial ao longo deste estudo.

Foram definidas 11 hipóteses, com base na literatura extensiva acerca da adaptação de expatriados. Foram retiradas conclusões através de um estudo que incorporou 155 expatriados de todo o mundo.

Os resultados indicam que o conhecimento da língua local facilita a interação dos expatriados. De entre os fatores observados, a formação intercultural e a disposição para se ser realocado são, no total, os que têm influência mais significativa na adaptação intercultural. As experiências internacionais anteriores demonstraram não ter efeito positivo direto na adaptação de expatriados.

São apresentadas possíveis explicações e implicações dos resultados obtidos. Com base nestes, é sugerido às empresas que valorizem o conhecimento da língua local e que incluam as motivações de realocação dos colaboradores como um critério relevante na seleção de futuros expatriados. Ainda, é recomendado às empresas que providenciem formação intercultural, prevendo assim uma adaptação bem-sucedida.

Palavras-chave: mobilidade internacional, projetos internacionais, expatriados, adaptação intercultural

Classificação do tese de acordo com as categorias definidas pelo Jorunal of Economics Literature (JEL Classification Systems):

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Definitions, abbreviations

Expatriate: Expatriates are employees who are sent by their parent company to work on an international assignment while living in a foreign location (Hill, 2005). The term expatriation in the course of this study is exclusively limited for in-company transfers and excludes self-initiated expatriates, who relocated voluntarily, independently from an organization and got hired with a local contract (Biemann and Andersen, 2010).

HCN: Host-country national, citizen of the country of foreign operation (Tung, 1982)

MNC: Multinational company; a corporation owning business operations in more than one country (Hill, 2005).

CCT: Cross-cultural training. Cross-cultural training can be described as any intervention with the aim to equip expatriates with the knowledge and skills that are necessary to operate effectively in a foreign culture (Caligiuri *et al.*, 2001).

Executive summary

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the impact of the underlying determinants of cross-cultural adjustment on global mobility assignments and compare these findings with the corresponding data available in the literature of expatriate research. Furthermore, the goal of the study was to provide empirical evidence for companies about certain factors that predict future success on expatriate assignment so that they can optimize their practices concerning global mobility.

Corporations invest a lot of money into their assigned employees; expatriates cost almost 70% more than domestic associates on the same level. As such, they expect that their investments are returned through a successful assignment. Although some of the recent surveys report a more favorable assignment failure rate, the average rate is still considerably high, around 50% (Right Management, 2013). The number two factor behind the most failed assignments is the inability of the expatriate to adjust to the new environment (Tung, 1981). As such, flawless cross-cultural adjustment plays a crucial role in expatriate success.

Cross-cultural adjustment is an important contributor of expatriate success as it positively influences expatriates' performance and job satisfaction on the overseas posting; additionally it increases the probability that the assignee will stay for the whole duration of the assignment (Takeuchi *et al.*, 2002; Bhaskar-Shrinivas *et al.*, 2005).

Although, the array of academic papers dealing with the topic of corporate expatriation is extremely wide, trends in global mobility are changing rapidly which could imply that some findings regarding expatriate assignments do not hold their validity in the present any longer. Therefore, investigating again the influence of the already observed antecedents of cross-cultural adjustment is justified.

The theoretical framework of international adjustment created by Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991) served as the model of reference for this thesis. International assignment in the course of this study was conceptualized as a multi-dimensional phenomenon consisting of three facets; general, interaction and work adjustment suggested by Black and Stephens (1989).

Based on the review of the existing literature, eleven hypotheses were settled. It was expected that knowledge of the local language, previous international experience and the

expatriate's willingness to relocate internationally would be positively related to the three dimensions of adjustment. Furthermore, with a special focus, the impact of cross-cultural training was examined. It was suggested that cross-cultural training of expatriates positively and significantly influences general, interaction and work adjustment. Additionally, assumptions were made concerning the combined effect of pre-departure and post-arrival training and the positive impact of preparation time on satisfaction with preparation and adjustment.

Data was gathered through an online questionnaire filled in by 155 assigned expatriates who have been sent to a foreign subsidiary by their home organization. Self-initiated international workers were not interviewed for this study. There is a dominance of European locations both on the side of countries of origin and host locations. Correlation coefficients were consulted, a set of multiple regression analyses was performed, and a series of analyses of variance were applied in order to test the hypotheses.

Local language skills were found to have a positive relationship with all three facets of cross-cultural adjustment. Not surprisingly, language knowledge is the most beneficial for interaction adjustment. As language skills can facilitate an easier adjustment, it is recommended for companies to integrate language ability as a criterion in their expatriate selection process.

One's willingness to relocate internationally was the second strongest predictor of expatriate acculturation based on the results. As the impact of this factor has not yet been widely researched; this is one of the most valuable findings of this study. Building on this conclusion companies can increase the probability of a successful assignment by choosing employees for the relocation that are motivated to work in a foreign location.

Contrary to the expectations, previous international experience had a negative impact on general, interaction and work adjustment, respectively. One of the possible explanations for this outcome can be that acquired knowledge and lessons learnt from a prior international posting are not directly transferrable to another assignment. Although there are other examples for the negative influence of prior international records on adjustment in expatriate research (Nicholson and Imaizumi, 1993), companies should not see it as a disadvantage when selecting their assignees.

Merely 38% of the participating expatriates received cross-cultural training from their parent organization. This ratio corresponds with the data in most of the related studies. Cross-cultural training significantly facilitates interaction adjustment, but it did not exert a significant positive influence on general and work adjustment. Nevertheless, considering the fact that interaction adjustment is strongly associated with general and work adjustment, it can be concluded that in general, cross-cultural training brings benefits to expatriates for their cultural adaptation. Companies therefore should provide their future expatriates with relevant cross-cultural training which is adjusted to the personal characteristics of the individual and the specific conditions of the international assignment.

Expatriates, who were given more time to prepare for their assignment, were more satisfied with their preparation support than their peers with a limited preparation time; but they did not display higher levels of cross-cultural adjustment. Even though preparation time was only weakly related to adjustment, it is still suggested to announce the decision of expatriation as soon as possible thus enabling time for all the logistic tasks and an appropriate training.

Participating in both a pre-departure and a post-arrival training did not further increase expatriates' adjustment. Sequential trainings are beneficial, if the learning material is adjusted to the actual psychological state of the participant in the given stage, which might have not been the case in this sample (Selmer, 1998).

Cross-cultural adjustment is an extremely complex phenomenon influenced by a lot of intrinsic and external factors. Some variables that benefit intercultural adaptation in one scenario can have a negative influence on it in another situation. Despite of the continuously changing trends in global mobility, most of the influencing factors of expatriate adaptation are still present as observed in prior studies of expatriate literature.

1. Exposition of the context of the issue

In today's world where globalization is as extreme as ever, and international competition in the world of business sets enormous challenges to global companies, it is essential to strive for solutions even more to be successful in the international arena. In order to launch products and provide services that are competitive on the international market, organizations need to train their personnel in order to equip them with the competencies necessary for being successful in business activities in an international environment. Internationalization in the world of business has been intensified by the creation of international subsidiaries, synergies, merge and acquisitions, as well as transnational strategic partnerships resulting in an increasing workforce living and working in a foreign country (Bonache and Brewster, 2001).

Having competent global leaders was indicated as the most important factor in reaching global success based on a survey on U.S. Fortune 500 corporations. As expatriation has been proven to be one of the most effective tools in building global leaders within the organization, it is one of the key contributors to international success (Gregersen, *et al.*, 1998). The use of expatriates has a positive impact on organizational success in multinational companies with numerous subsidiaries worldwide (Sekiguchi *et al.*, 2001).

Companies invest a lot of money and effort in international assignments expecting a significant return over the long term. The direct costs related to the expatriation of an employee in the first year of the relocation are 2,5-3 times higher than the base salary of a local employee. Expatriates cost their companies around 68% more than domestic employees (Doherty and Dickmann, 2012). Therefore, the outcome they least want is a failed global assignment generating reasonable loss instead of the desired profit. The rate of failed global assignments is still high, different studies reported rates varying from 20 to 80 percent (Morris and Robie, 2001).

According to Tung (1981) the second most common reason of expatriate failure is the inability of the assigned employee to adjust to the new environment. As such, in order to minimize losses, organizations need to make sure that the factors enabling an optimum cross-cultural adjustment are in place when sending their employees overseas.

Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991) included personal, organizational and environmental determinants in a theoretical framework that have been empirically proven by numerous researchers to enhance cross-cultural adjustment.

This thesis is investigating the impact of selected facilitating factors from this framework such as knowledge of the local language, one's willingness to relocate internationally and previous international experience with a focus on cross-cultural training. Except for relocating willingness, these determinants were found to facilitate expatriate adjustment in various studies in the literature of expatriate research. Nevertheless, rapidly changing trends in global mobility might have caused modifications in the effect of these determinants. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to validate empirically that cross-cultural training, local language skills, one's willingness to relocate internationally and prior international record have a positive influence on expatriates' general, interaction and work adjustment.

2. Literature review

2.1 Reasons of expatriation

According to Edström and Galbraith (1977) three different drivers can be identified behind the global relocation of managers; first of all the lack of local managers with necessary managerial or technical skills, second; the willingness to enhance the organizational development through international networking, and lastly; developing managers with international experience. There are further issues that can be eliminated through international assignments. In case there is a large cultural difference between the parent and host nation, the host country's political circumstances are uncertain, the operations are complex and the two countries depend on each other mutually; placing parent nationals to crucial managing roles has been empirically proven to increase the effectiveness of communication and the level of control (Boyacigiller, 1990). Based on the description of the strategic objectives of multinational companies by Bartlett and Goshal (1992), Bonache and Brewster (2001) are distinguishing three types of expatriate assignments: assignments as control, assignments as coordination and assignments as knowledge transfer. Assignments with the goal to enhance the headquarters' control improve MNC's global responsiveness (Bonache and Brewster, 2001). Assignments with the aim of coordination are applied in MNC's with highly interdependent units requiring a high level of cooperation where expatriate managers act as interfaces among subsidiaries or between the headquarters and a subsidiary. These relocations fortify the global integration within the MNC's (Bonache and Brewster, 2001). Furthermore, expatriation can be utilized as a channel enabling knowledge transfer between the organizational units which creates a competitive advantage for the MNC's against the local enterprises and transforms an operating corporation into a learning organization (Bonache and Brewster, 2001).

2.2 Trends in global mobility

Global mobility had arisen after World War II through the establishment of international intergovernmental organizations. During the 20th century, till around 1990, expatriates were typically executive employees who were assigned to take over the responsibility for foreign operations of large multinational companies from the US and Europe. The average duration of their assignments' was 2-5 years and therefore they had been rewarded with a high remuneration.

There has been a shift in global mobility trends on a continuous basis since 1990. The dominance of Western employees assigned to Eastern locations has decreased in the global expatriate pool due to the intense business growth of emerging markets such as India or China. As a result, talents from these countries are relocated to Western locations, as well. Global mobility within organizations worldwide is on a continuous rise (Scullion, Brewster 2001). In the surveyed pool of 900 companies by PWC the number of expatriates increased by 25% between 1998 and 2009; moreover 43% of the 143 large organizations participating in the global mobility survey of Brookfield have demonstrated a rise in their expatriate population in 2015 respective to 2014 (PWC, 2012; Brookfield, 2015). Over the past decade, the proportion of female assignees among all expatriates worldwide has been doubled (PWC, 2012); the current percentage of female expatriates is around 19-20%. (PWC, 2012; Brookfield, 2015). A contrasting trend can be detected in terms of the representation of executive employees in the global assignee pool. Their percentage shrunk from 50% to 10% from 1998 to 2009 and this phenomenon remains valid as the number of international assignments with a career development goal and the aim to fill a gap in technical skills continues to rise (Brookfield, 2015).

Although, numerous MNC's have tried to cut costs related to international mobility by replacing long-term expatriation assignments with local staff, short-term relocations, extended business travels, international commuting, rotational assignments or diverse IT-solutions, such as teleconferencing; the employment of long-term expatriates continues to increase. (Harris and Brewster, 1999; PWC, 2012; Brookfield, 2015). As companies will continue to rely on the success of long-term international assignments, they need to seek solutions that predict future expatriate success.

2.3 Expatriate failure

In order to discuss expatriate failure, the term of expatriate success needs to be defined. Most of the scholars consider an assignment successful in case the assignees remain for the full planned duration. Therefore, they have described expatriate failure merely as the premature end to the assignment (Harzing and Christensen, 2004). The most common reason for premature return is the inability of the expatriate's spouse to adjust to the new environment followed by the inability of the expatriate itself to adjust (Tung, 1981).

Nevertheless, this definition of expatriate failure does not take into account further scenarios that harm the success of the assignment. Even though the assignee remains on his or her duty till the end, failure occurs if established goals of the overseas sojourn are not achieved due to underperformance. Moreover, an earlier return can be a success if the assignments' objectives were reached earlier than planned (Harzing and Christensen, 2004). The post-assignment period, the repatriation process also poses risks for failure. Examples of this are when returned employees can't utilize their newly acquired skills or leave the organization (Hung-Wen, 2007). Thus, Harzing and Christensen (2004) suggested referring to expatriate failure as "the inability of expatriate or repatriate to perform according to the expectations of the organization."

Expatriate failures can affect individuals' health, self-esteem, commitment and career growth opportunities negatively. On the organizational level failure is harmful for the company's market shares, performance of foreign operations and the relationship with the customers, partners and authorities in the host country (Sapinnen, 1993). Failure rates in the expatriate literature vary from 20% (Black and Mendenhall, 1990; cited in Robie *et al.*, 2005) and 85% (Walton, 1990; cited in Robie *et al.*, 2005). Tung (1982) reported that 10-40% of the global assignments of the majority of the US-American companies had failed, whereas this ratio was less than 5% in case of most of the observed European and Japanese multinational companies. A survey interviewing 202 CEOs of American multinational companies found that only 58 % of all the global assignments are considered as successful. The latest survey of KPMG (2015) about global assignment policies and practices reports a more favorable failure rate of lower than 5 % in 81% of the participating corporations.

MNC's invest a lot of money and effort in international assignments expecting a significant return over the long term. Therefore, the outcome they least want is a failed global assignment generating reasonable loss instead of the desired profit. As such, attributing extra attention to the most common phenomenon triggering expatriate failure can be a key in attaining successful assignment outcomes.

Consequently, in this dissertation adjustment- as the second most cited reason for failure- will be discussed as it serves as a solid foundation for performance-related aspects of international assignments.

2.4 Adjustment and expatriate success, adjustment outcomes

In terms of the assignment success the adjustment of the expatriate to the new environment is of pivotal importance. Numerous empirical studies have proven that the lack of adjustment generates high costs for organizations (Bhaskar-Shrinivas *et al.*, 2005). Cross-cultural adjustment has a positive influence on job performance, both in the task-related and the relational aspect (Bhaskar-Shrinivas *et al.*, 2005). Better adjusted expatriates tend to be more positive about their host culture thus experiencing less stress which in turn results in higher performance. The same meta-analysis has provided empirical evidence about the positive relationship of adjustment with job satisfaction of expatriates in their overseas role. Furthermore, cross-cultural adjustment influences the expatriates' intention to leave the assignment prematurely in a negative way (Takeuchi *et al.*, 2002).

2.5 Definition of adjustment

In cross-cultural research adjustment is defined by many scholars as the degree of psychological comfort with numerous aspects of a new environment (Oberg, 1960; Black, 1988). Selmer (1999) describes adjustment in a socio-cultural aspect being manifested as an individual's success in interpersonal encounters with host country nationals.

Black and Stephens (1989) have described adjustment as a multi-dimensional phenomenon which consists of three facets: general, interaction and work adjustment. Their model is the most widely used framework of adjustment in expatriate research.

The level of general adjustment is the extent to which newcomers are adapted to some basic features in the new environment influencing their psychical and psychological well-being such as living conditions, gastronomy and free time activity options. Interaction adjustment reflects the perceived success of expatriates in socializing and interacting with HCNs. Work adjustment shows the degree to which the assignee is comfortable with handling the different components of his or her new position such as job responsibilities, performance standards and supervisory accountabilities.

According to Torbiorn (1982) adjusting to a new culture means to progressively become familiar, comfortable and knowledgeable with the adequate behavior, values and underlying assumptions in a different culture. Adjustment is therefore not a static, one-time event but a process that takes time as expatriates strive to master their new responsibilities within the foreign settings (Torbiorn 1982; Black *et al.*, 1991).

2.6 Process of adjustment

The adjustment process consists of more stages in the course of time where people who have moved abroad are experiencing different feelings. Based on the widely used adjustment model of Oberg (1960) there are four different stages in the adjustment process. The first period is called the “honeymoon stage” lasting generally from few days or weeks up to 6 months in which people are thrilled and fascinated by the new environment. It is followed by the phase of “culture shock” when newcomers experience a crisis-like status by starting to face reality and experience differences in terms of habits, values and the spoken language which in turn generates negative feelings of frustration, rejection and anxiety. People who can overcome this culture shock then usually enter into the third stage of recovery by getting more familiar with the new culture. The desired fourth state is the adjustment when people accept and sometimes even enjoy the features of the new culture experiencing strain only rarely.

Many researchers have found that initial higher adjustment levels tend to decrease in the course of the first 3-6 months of the adjustment supporting Oberg's model (Bhaskar-Shrinivas *et al.*, 2005). Therefore, organizations have to make sure that their expatriates manage to fight the phase of the culture shock in order to reach an adjustment level enabling an optimum performance on the international assignment. There are several factors on the individual, organizational and the environmental level that can contribute to these desired outcomes.

3 Conceptual framework of the study

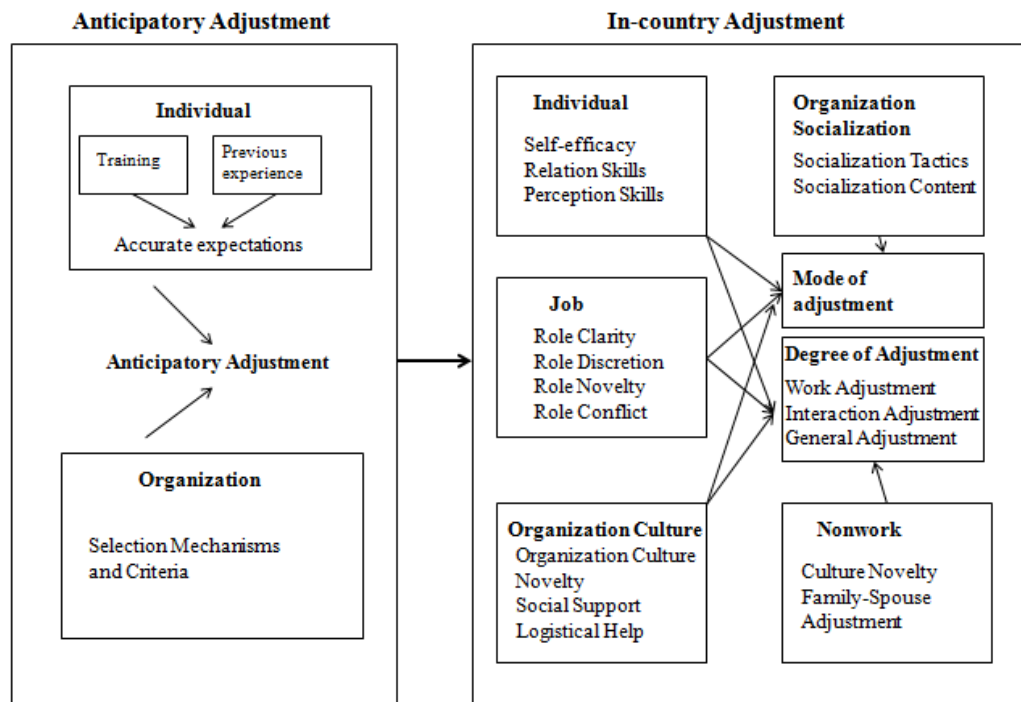
3.1 Assignment cycle

The traditional international assignment cycle consists of five stages; starting with recruitment and selection, the process of hiring, leading to the step of preparation, followed by the phase of the actual expatriation ending with the repatriation (Harzing and Christensen, 2004).

Organizations have implemented diverse human resources practices regarding these elements of the cycle to manage their expatriates. In the recruitment and selection process the desired profile for the assignment is designed based on which external or internal candidates are evaluated and then chosen. In the next step of hiring the contract is settled which lays down the terms and conditions for the global assignment in terms of remuneration, taxation, pension, family and logistic support. After the contractual terms have been defined, the companies ideally prepare their future expatriates before their departure by providing them with information, advice and training. On the actual assignment the international workers need to adjust to the new environment and job position. Companies in this phase should monitor and evaluate the assignee's performance, providing developmental activities and mentoring. The circle ends with repatriation when the outcomes of the assignment are in an ideal case evaluated and the expatriate is reintegrated in the home organization; or the employee leaves the organization.

Although, adjustment actually takes place during the third stage of the classical expatriation cycle while being on the actual overseas sojourn, the following framework of international adjustment developed by Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991) shows that each steps of the circle carry factors and practices influencing the level and mode of adjustment.

Figure 2.1. Theoretical framework of international adjustment by Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991)



Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991) created a theoretical framework for international adjustment, integrating numerous factors from the pre-departure and post-arrival stage that were empirically proven to contribute to the mode and degree of adjustment as an outcome in previous studies (Figure 2.1.).

The scholars proposed that later adjustment can be enhanced anticipatorily on the individual level by supporting the employees in generating realistic expectations that reduce feelings of uncertainty upon arrival. Based on the model, the individual's previous own international experiences and cross-cultural trainings can contribute to the shaping of realistic expectations.

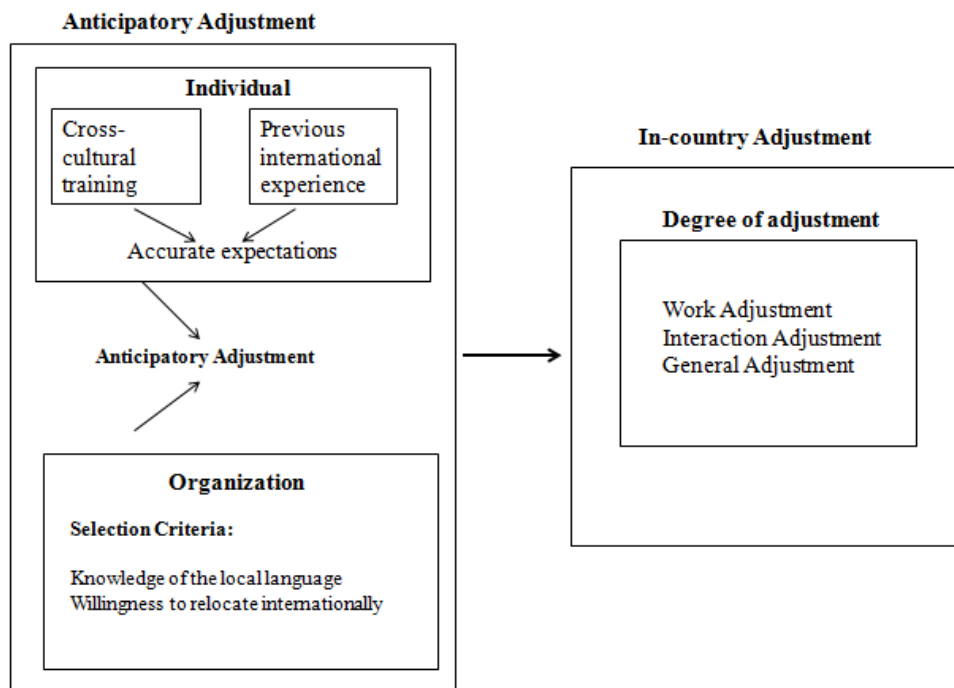
At an organizational level, adjustment can be catalyzed by selecting expatriates based on criteria that are relevant for performing well on an overseas assignment.

On the other hand, the model includes individual, job-related, organizational and non-work factors that are the antecedents of in-country adjustment. According to this framework, the more of these enabling variables are in place, the higher is the probability for an accurate adjustment. Organizations can increase this chance significantly by assigning employees who possess certain personal traits predicting successful adjustment; making sure that the roles are

well-defined and understood; as well as providing logistical help together with social support. The effect of these organizational efforts can be fortified by a successful adjustment of the expatriates' spouse and guaranteeing a smaller difference between the home and host country's culture.

In the course of this study, out of the incorporated antecedents, cross-cultural training, previous international experience and selection criteria, such as knowledge of the local language and willingness to relocate will be discussed (Figure 2.2.).

Figure 2.2. Theoretical framework of the study based on the framework of international adjustment by Black, Mendenhall, Oddou (1991)



3.2 Anticipatory adjustment

3.2.1 Selection criteria

Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991) listed selection as an important organizational factor in anticipatory adjustment suggesting that organizations can increase the probability of future success on the overseas posting by applying certain criteria that are proven to aid an optimum adjustment.

Researchers gave the recommendation to practitioners to include the knowledge of the host country's language and the possession of certain personality as criteria in their selection mechanisms in order to optimize future expatriate success, although it does not happen in the majority of the cases in practice (Bonache and Brewster, 2001). Nonetheless, according to the survey of Brookfield (2015), one of the most often used selection criteria by companies is someone's willingness to relocate; therefore it has been included in this current research.

In this research out of the numerous variables that can serve as relevant criteria in expatriate selection language knowledge and willingness of relocation will be discussed.

3.2.1.1. Language knowledge- Hypothesis 1

The knowledge of the local language in a foreign country helps newcomers to build relationships with HCNs and to better understand the features of an unknown culture. Furthermore, language skills enable foreigners to access necessary information for their every-day-life and work. As a result, language skills can help expatriates to adjust better to the new environment (Mendenhall and Oddou, 1985).

In their extensive meta-analysis, Bhaskar-Shrinivas and his colleagues (2005) found that the knowledge of the local language eases general and interaction adjustment. Moreover; according to the results of a study examining the impact of language training on cross-cultural adjustment, language skills are positively associated with all three facets of adjustment, most significantly with work adjustment (Wang and Tran, 2012).

Therefore it is expected that:

Hypothesis 1: The knowledge of the local language will exert a positive influence on a, general b, interaction c, work adjustment.

3.2.1.2. Willingness to relocate-Hypothesis 2

Overtaking an international assignment influences many arenas of one's life therefore it is not a desired option for every employee.

There are several factors that influence whether employees are willing to accept, or reject an offer for an overseas posting. Financial aspects, career development opportunities, adventurousness have been proven to significantly strengthen one's willingness to relocate. On the contrary; concerns about children, elderly parents, the partner's career and the

isolation from the professional and personal networks as well as attaching high importance to the destination country influence expatriate candidates' willingness to move in an unfavorable way (Konopaske *et al.*, 2009).

Scholars have suggested that employees who want to pursue an international posting driven by their own motivation and not by the request of their company will be more likely to develop positive attitudes towards the assignment which in turn results in higher levels of adjustment (Erbacher, 2006). As such, they will be more likely to have a successful overseas assignment.

Therefore the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 2: *The willingness of the employee to overtake an international assignment will be positively related to a, general b, interaction c, work adjustment.*

3.2.2 Previous international experience

According to the model, assignees that already possess previous international experiences are expected to have more adequate ideas about living in a foreign country which in turn will make their adjustment easier. People who have already lived and worked abroad previously have gathered certain knowledge that is necessary to interpret cultural encounters accordingly and overcome problems in the new environment, therefore they are more likely to adapt to the novel circumstances in a foreign country.

Several scholars have found evidence for the facilitating effect of prior international experience on general, interaction or work adjustment, respectively (Black, 1988; Selmer, 2002; Hechanova *et al.*, 2003; Bhaskar-Shrinivas *et al.*, 2005).

Based on this finding the following hypothesis can be set:

Hypothesis 3: *Previous international experience will be positively related to a, general b, interaction c, work adjustment.*

3.2.3 Cross-cultural training for expatriates, Hypothesis 4-6

Cross-cultural training is one of the tools of organizational support that can be used in the course of the preparation process in the form of pre-departure training and as a support during the assignment by providing it as a post-arrival training on-site (Selmer *et al.*, 1998). CCT can be described as any intervention with the aim to equip expatriates with the knowledge and

skills that are necessary to operate effectively in a foreign culture (Caligiuri *et al.*, 2001). CCT aims to develop expatriates' intercultural competence thus enabling them to effectively interact with people from different cultures, to adjust to new environments and to deliver a high job performance in the overseas workplace (Gertsen 1990; Ehnert and Brewster 2008). Performing business activities in international settings requires a set of specific culture-related skills that can be trained and developed through CCT (Mendenhall and Oddou, 1985).

Based on Tung's contingency theory framework (1981) the method for CCT should be selected upon the degree of interaction required in the host culture and the distance between the expatriate's home culture and the host culture. For this comparison, Hofstede's cultural indexes are used in the vast majority of the cases. According to a later integrative framework developed by Harris and Brewster (1999) the appropriate training method depends on numerous job variables, such as the nature of the international operation, the host-country location, the assignment's objective, the nature of the job and the level of organizational support from one side, and on individual variables like the expatriate's profile and partner considerations on the other side. Furthermore the opportunities for preparation, namely the amount of time available for preparation before departing to the host environment will also influence the type of the training provided (Ehnert and Brewster, 2008).

The overseas on-the-job performance of the expatriate can be improved and the risk of expatriate failure can be reduced by the execution of fully precise training practices (Tung, 1982). Highly relevant cross-cultural trainings tailored to the reality of the assignment create accurate expectations, which in turn positively affect adjustment (Black and Mendenhall, 1990; Caligiuri *et al.*, 2001). The assumption that CCT is positively related to adjustment has gained validation by at least three thorough meta-analyses (Black and Mendenhall, 1990; Deshpande and Viswesvaran, 1992; Morris and Robie, 2001). The studies examined in the meta-analysis of Black and Mendenhall (1990) have revealed that CCT contributed to expatriates' well-being and self-confidence during their foreign sojourn. Furthermore, they offer evidence for the positive relationship between cross-cultural training and relational skills, as well as with the development of culturally appropriate perceptions. As depicted in the theoretical model, these individual factors, in turn predict cross-cultural adjustment. CCT makes the impact of culture shock milder on newcomers thus reducing the time in reaching proficiency in the unfamiliar culture. In summary, research has indicated that through CCT the very high costs and risks related to expatriate postings can be minimized (Black and Mendenhall, 1990).

In accordance with these predispositions the following hypothesis will be tested in this study:

Hypothesis 4: *Cross-cultural training will have a significantly positive impact on general adjustment.*

Hypothesis 5: *Cross-cultural training will have a significantly positive impact on interaction adjustment.*

Hypothesis 6: *Cross-cultural training will have a significantly positive impact on work adjustment.*

3.2.4 Moderating factors of cross-cultural training

There are numerous factors that can further enhance the positive impact of CCT based on empirical findings. Of these, the influence of available preparation time and the timing of the cross-cultural training will be discussed.

3.2.4.1 Available preparation time, Hypotheses 7-8

Caligiuri and her colleagues (2001) found that highly rigorous trainings have led to a more successful cross-cultural adjustment. As stated above, the available time between the decision to expatriate and the departure to the host country can determine the length, methods and content of the training provided (Ehnert and Brewster, 2008).

Therefore it is expected that, the longer the preparation time, the higher the possibility to offer CCT with a higher relevance which in turn exerts a positive influence on later adaptation to the host environment. Furthermore, Suutari and Brewster (1998) found that the length of preparation period is directly proportional to the expatriates' satisfaction with their preparation.

As such, it is expected that:

Hypothesis 7: *Expatriates who had longer time between the decision to expatriate and the departure to the host country will display higher level of satisfaction with their preparation than their counterparts who had shorter preparation time on their disposal.*

Hypothesis 8: *Expatriates who had longer time between the decision to expatriate and the departure to the host country will display higher levels of a, general b, interaction c, work adjustment than their counterparts who had shorter preparation time on their disposal.*

3.2.4.2 Pre-departure vs post-arrival training, Hypotheses 9-11

CCTs can be provided before the expatriate's departure and/or upon his or her arrival to the host country. According to Selmer and his colleagues (1998) cross-cultural trainings should be tailored to the circumstances of the different adjustment stages. Based on this argumentation they proposed that ideally trainings should be sequential; thus start before the expatriate leaves to the foreign country where it is then being continued. Pre-departure trainings aim to raise participants' awareness of cultural differences, to develop skills necessary in a foreign environment and to learn culturally appropriate behaviors. Post-arrival trainings on the other hand intend to help with issues occurring in the process of socio-cultural adjustment (Wang and Tran, 2012). The information transmitted during this training can be immediately applied and associated with real experiences; therefore learning occurs in a more natural way.

Consequently, the following hypotheses are formulated:

Hypothesis 9: *Expatriates who received both a pre-departure and post-arrival training will be*

a, more satisfied with the preparation support they received from their employer and b, feel more prepared for their assignment than their peers who attended only one training session.

Hypothesis 10: *Expatriates who received both a pre-departure and post-arrival training will be more satisfied with the usefulness of the training than their peers who attended only one training session.*

Hypothesis 11: *Expatriates who received both a pre-departure and post-arrival training will demonstrate higher level of adjustment in all three dimensions than their peers who attended only one training session.*

3.3 In-country adjustment

3.3.1 Culture novelty

Culture novelty appears among the facilitators on the in-country side of the adjustment model by Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991). Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991) refer to cultural difference as "culture novelty" in their cited framework of cross-cultural adjustment. The indicator of cultural difference in expatriate research is most often based on

Hofstede's research (1991) about the dimensions of national culture (cited in Waxin and Panaccio, 2005). Many researchers suggest that the higher the difference between the culture of the assignee's country of origin and the host country; the harder it will be for the expatriate to adjust to the new environment (Parker and McEvoy, 1993; Gregersen and Stroh, 1997; Waxin, 2000; cited in Waxin and Panaccio, 2005).

Investigating the actual influence of cultural difference was not the aim of the current thesis, its correlation with adjustment was only examined in order to exclude the biasing effect of country of origin.

3.4 Summary figure of the reference framework

In summary, this study examines whether certain anticipators of cultural adaptation suggested by the literature review such as cross-cultural training, local language skills, previous international experience and willingness to relocate internationally in fact facilitate general, interaction and work adjustment of participating expatriates (Figure 3.1.).
Hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: The knowledge of the local language will exert a positive influence on a, general b, interaction c, work adjustment.

Hypothesis 2: The willingness of the employee to overtake an international assignment will be positively related to a, general b, interaction c, work adjustment.

Hypothesis 3: Previous international experience will be positively related to a, general b, interaction c, work adjustment.

Hypothesis 4: Cross-cultural training will have a significantly positive impact on general adjustment.

Hypothesis 5: Cross-cultural training will have a significantly positive impact on interaction adjustment.

Hypothesis 6: Cross-cultural training will have a significantly positive impact on work adjustment.

Hypothesis 7: Expatriates who had longer time between the decision to expatriate and the departure to the host country will display higher level of satisfaction with their preparation than their counterparts who had shorter preparation time on their disposal.

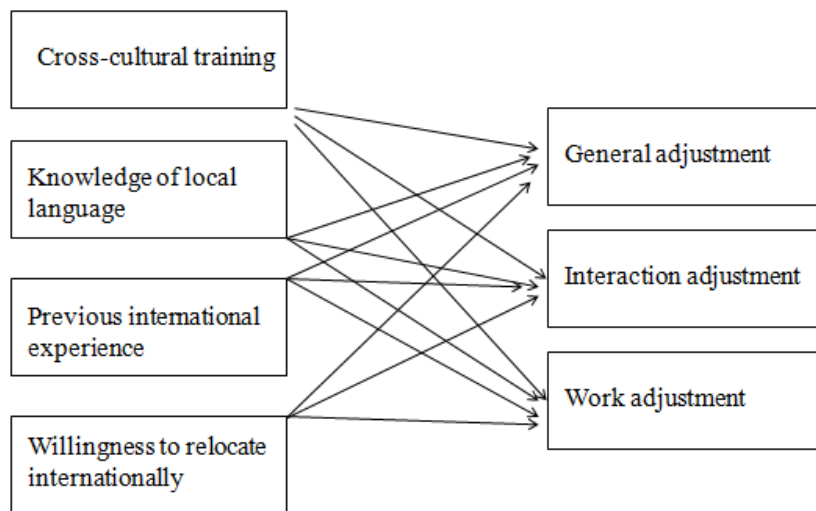
Hypothesis 8: Expatriates who had longer time between the decision to expatriate and the departure to the host country will display higher levels of a, general b, interaction c, work adjustment than their counterparts who had shorter preparation time on their disposal.

Hypothesis 9: Expatriates who received both a pre-departure and post-arrival training will be a, more satisfied with the preparation support they received from their employer and b, feel more prepared for their assignment than their peers who attended only one training session.

Hypothesis 10: Expatriates who received both a pre-departure and post-arrival training will be more satisfied with the usefulness of the training than their peers who attended only one training session.

Hypothesis 11: Expatriates who received both a pre-departure and post-arrival training will demonstrate higher level of adjustment in all three dimensions than their peers who attended only one training session.

Figure 3.1. Summary model incorporating hypotheses of the study



3. Methodology

3.1 Data collection

For the research primary data have been collected via an online questionnaire that was published on an online survey platform called Esurveycrator. Target participants of the survey were assigned expatriates who have been sent on an overseas assignment by their organization. The sample did not include self-initiated expatriates, who relocated voluntarily, independently from an organization and got hired with a local contract (Biemann and Andersen, 2010). No other limitations were imposed regarding country of origin, host country, gender, age or position. As it was necessary to include people with a very specific profile, I needed to actively search for them. Thus, the applied sample method in this study was non-probable as sample units were picked based on personal judgment (Adams *et al.*, 2007).

I have sent the questionnaire first to assigned expatriates from my personal and professional network. They were then asked to forward the survey to assigned expatriates they know. Therefore, “snowball sampling” was applied, where initial participants of a survey nominate potential respondents from their social networks who fulfill the eligibility requirements and are willing to participate in the study (Goodman, 1961; cited in Adams *et al.*, 2007).

Above that, online expatriate community site, “Internations” was used to find eligible participants. On this platform I could find people that have been working for the same organization in at least 2 different countries. As it was important for me to only receive answers from assigned expatriates, I have contacted people one by one who fit my criteria. As Internations is not a professional but a social website with the aim to help their users living abroad to meet people in a new city, I have got into contact with the filtered members via LinkedIn. Although this method of filtration has significantly lengthened the time of data collection, by this I ensured to receive only relevant data that in turn increased the quality of my study.

354 assigned expatriates have been contacted through LinkedIn in total out of which 52 filled in my questionnaire. The corresponding response rate is therefore 31,7%. Furthermore, I have contacted 33 Global Mobility Specialists of different MNCs in total asking them to cascade my survey among the expatriates in their organization. At the end 5 of

them sent the survey to their expatriates. Additionally, I have reached out to 10 associates from companies providing relocation services with the request of forwarding my survey to the assigned expatriates they work with.

Moreover; I have published my survey with a clear explanation about the required participant profile on Internations in the expatriate forums of bigger cities worldwide, as well as in five expatriate groups on LinkedIn.

3.2 Statistical analysis

The analysis of the collected data was performed using the IBM SPSS Statistics 22 software.

For the affirmation of the first three hypotheses results of the Point-Biserial correlation and Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated which measure the strength of relationship between two variables (Field, 2005).

In order to test Hypotheses 4-6; namely to find out whether CCT has a positive relationship with the three facets of cross-cultural adjustment; the multiple regression model with hierarchical methods was applied. A multiple regression model can depict the relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent, explanatory variables (Peck *et al.*, 2008). In this case, the general, interaction and work adjustment act as dependent variables in separate multiple regression analyses, whereas cross-cultural training is the independent variable. In order to demonstrate the quantitative effect of the independent variable, control variables are introduced that are expected to be related with the dependent variable based on empirical evidence described in the literature review. Therefore in the data analyses it is controlled for previous international experience, language knowledge, willingness to relocate, time spent on the assignment.

For the validation of Hypothesis 7-11 analyses of variance (ANOVA) and its non-parametric version, Kruskal-Wallis tests have been performed. This method enables the comparison of the means of three or more samples (Peck *et al.*, 2008); in this case the average degree of expatriates' satisfaction with training and their adjustment who participated in a pre-departure or in a post-arrival training.

3.3 Instrument

For this research, a web-based 69-item questionnaire was applied. In the first part of the survey basic information was gathered regarding -among others- the country of origin, host country, language knowledge, previous expatriate experience, time spent on the current assignment, type of job/company, as well as questions concerning the motivation towards the international relocation. The second block refers to the CCT; whereas the last unit is dedicated to the items measuring the level of adjustment of the participating assigned expatriates.

3.4 Measures

3.4.1 Adjustment

The questions concerning cross-cultural adjustment have been designed based on the 14-item adjustment scale by Black and Stephens (1989) which is the most widely used instrument by scholars in the field of expatriate adjustment (Hippler, 2006). The original questionnaire has been amended with the findings of the research of Hippler (2006) who interviewed expatriates about the domains of their lives that had been affected by relocating to a foreign country. The aim of combining a solid instrument with valid empirical findings was to strengthen the reliability of the applied questionnaire. The adjustment questionnaire block thus includes 29 items that are grouped in three categories based on the three distinctive dimensions of adjustment: general, interaction and work adjustment. 14 of the 29 elements relate to the general culture, environment and everyday life of the foreign country. The next 10 items measure the level of interaction adjustment of participants. The remaining questions refer to work-related aspects. Level of adjustment was measured on a 5-point Likert-scale where 1 represents the stage “not adjusted at all”, while 5 stands for “completely adjusted”.

3.4.2 Knowledge of the local language

The ability to communicate in the local language was measured by a simple self-assessing question.

3.4.3 Willingness to relocate internationally

In order to measure their motivation to relocate, participants were asked whether they believe their assignment will be beneficiary for their future career; whether they consider themselves competent for the new foreign job posting and have felt familiar with the host culture before departure.

3.4.4 Previous international experience

Previous international experience was measured by a simple question enquiring whether participants had overtaken an international assignment prior to their current one. Those expatriates who possess such an experience were asked to indicate the country where they had worked before and the length of their prior international sojourn. Furthermore, an extra question was applied to check whether expatriates had previously worked directly together with locals of the country where they got appointed to.

3.4.5 Time spent on assignment

Respondents had to indicate for how many months they had been on their assignment at the time of filling in the survey.

3.4.6 Cross-cultural training

The questionnaire contains 21 questions in total regarding CCT. The first six of these are general questions concerning the type, medium length, content and timing of the training program. The remaining 15 questions have been designed based on the 16-item cross-cultural training measure applied in the study of Wang and Tran (2012) examining expatriates in Vietnam in order to measure the usefulness of the provided training.

In the limitation section of their study, Wang and Tran (2012) furthermore suggested the inclusion of expatriates' satisfaction with the training as a determinant of cross-cultural adjustment in future research. Therefore the survey applied for this study contained questions examining participants' satisfaction with the preparation program. Above that, participants were asked whether the training they have received from their organization helped them to deal with numerous foreign phenomena deriving from the new environment and to adjust to the new circumstances in different domains.

Items were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale. Answers varied from the lowest value 1 (not at all/strongly disagree) to the highest value 5 (to a very high extent/strongly agree).

4. Results

4.1 Principal Component Analysis and Internal Consistency

In order to test the construct validity of the different blocks of the questionnaire several Principal Component Analyses were performed. Principal components analysis is used to reduce the complexity of a set of data with a minimum information loss (Field, 2005).

This method therefore was applied to select a reduced number of questions that best represent the phenomenon the questionnaire intends to detect.

4.1.1 Adjustment

Although the 29-item adjustment questionnaire employed in this survey is based on the 14-item scale used by Black and Stephens (1989), it has extensively been altered based on Hippler's (2006) study. Therefore it was not expected that the distinction of the three factors - general, interaction, work adjustment - will be obvious after running the principal components analysis.

As the three facets of adjustment recommended by Black and Stephens (1989) did not emerge from the principal components analysis including all the 29 items, three separate PCA-analyses have been run for the three logical segments of the adjustment questionnaire.

4.1.1.1 General adjustment

A separate PCA with a Varimax rotation applying the Kaiser's-criterion was performed with the first 14 elements of the adjustment questionnaire that are associated with the general facet (Field, 2005).

After running several tests, two components were kept while the sampling adequacy remained good ($KMO=0,79$) with the total variance explained by these two factors still reaching 68,2% (Table 4.1.1.). The first retrieved component contains adjustment to food/gastronomic culture, shopping facilities and entertainment. Thus, a new variable, "Free time activities in the host country" was created. The elements of the second component are personal safety, nature and hygiene which can be converted into a new variable labeled as "External environment". In order to check the reliability of the selected subset of questions, the Cronbach's alpha value was calculated for both retrieved components (Field, 2005). The value of the reliability statistics is 0,76 for "External environment" and for "Free time activities", as well, indicating a statistically acceptable degree of reliability (Field, 2005).

General adjustment as a variable has been applied in the course of the further analysis as a mean of these two components.

4.1.1.2 Interaction adjustment

After performing numerous tests for the questions concerning interaction adjustment, one single component consisting of four elements was kept. Adequacy of the sample is good (KMO=0,81) and the loss of information is eliminated as total variance remains 67% with this single component. The degree of interaction adjustment is therefore measured upon the adjustment of the respondents to the mentality of HCNs, to their role as a foreigner, cooperation with HCNs and communication with the locals. A reliability test of these four elements of interaction adjustment resulted in a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0,84 that indicates a good internal consistency (Table 4.1.1.). Thus, these items together can measure interaction adjustment to a high degree.

4.1.1.3 Work adjustment

When performing the PCA with the four items referring to work adjustment, two components are retrieved. The second component only contains one single item; as such the PCA suggests the exclusion of the adjustment to supervisory responsibilities. It is reasonable as not all the respondents are in a supervisory role. The single remaining component accounts for the 74,3% of the variance in work adjustment with a good reliability level (Cronbach's Alpha= 0,83) and a good sampling adequacy (KMO= 0,71) (Table 4.1.1.). Consequently, work adjustment is measured upon the adjustment to new task contents, autonomy and job related contacts.

Table 4.1.1. Construct measurement summary: principal component analysis and reliability for the items of general, interaction, work adjustment and willingness to relocate

Construct measurement summary: principal component analysis and reliability				
Items	Standardized loading Factor 1	Standardized loading Factor 2	Cronbach's alpha	Variance explained
General adjustment				68,2%
<i>Free time activities</i>			.75	
food, gastronomic culture	.78			
shopping	.83			
entertainment	.79			
External environment			.76	
personal safety		.77		
nature		.76		
hygiene		.85		
Interaction adjustment			.84	67,5%
mentality of HCNs	.84			
role as a foreigner	.84			
cooperation with HCNs	.81			
communication with HCNs	.80			
Work adjustment			.83	74,3%
new task contents	.86			
autonomy	.89			
job-related contacts	.83			
Willingness to relocate			.82	73,7%
satisfaction with relocation decision	.88			
positive influence on future career	.87			
feeling competent	.82			

4.1.2 Willingness to relocate

After performing a PCA with questions regarding willingness to relocate, one component composed of three items was extracted; satisfaction with relocation decision, positive influence on career and feeling competent. These items account for 73,7% of the total variance of the variable “Willingness to relocate” with a good sampling adequacy (KMO=0,71) and reliability (Cronbach’s Alpha=0,82) as presented in Table 4.1.1.

4.1.3 Cross-cultural training

Another set of PCA-analyses was performed to test the validity of the instrument measuring CCT. As expected, two components were extracted at the end of the analysis with

a very high KMO-index (0,90) indicating excellent sampling adequacy. The retrieved two components account for 70% of the variance of cross-cultural training in the sample (Table 4.1.2.).

One of the components could be conceptualized as “Perceptions about the cross-cultural training” as it contains the items measuring satisfaction with the training, the perceived usefulness, transferability and adequacy of the program. The other retrieved component can be labeled as “Situation-specific usefulness of the cross-cultural training” as its items measure whether the acquired knowledge at the training helps in the situations mentioned in these questions. The values of Cronbach’s alpha (0,91 and 0,93) are demonstrating an excellent reliability of the two scale (Field, 2005).

Table 4.1.2. Construct measurement summary: principal component analysis and reliability for cross-cultural training items

Construct measurement summary: principal component analysis and reliability		
Items	Standardized loading Factor 1	Standardized loading Factor 2
Perceptions about the cross-cultural training		
The content of the training fits the actual assignment.	.79	
The training I have received is useful for my assignment.	.77	
The training I have received from my organization helps me to successfully execute my job in the host organization.	.74	
The training is positively influencing my job performance on the assignment	.73	
I am satisfied with the extent to what my employee supported my preparation.	.73	
After completing the training I felt prepared for the assignment.	.69	
Situation-specific usefulness of the cross-cultural training		
The training I have received from my organization helped me to deal with the cultural shock.		.87
The training I have received from my organization helped me to feel more comfortable living and working in the host country		.84
The training I have received from my organization facilitates an easier interaction with host country nationals outside of work.		.82
The training I have received from my organization helps me to apply the appropriate behaviours required in the host culture.		.76
The training I have received from my organization helped me to reduce the initial frustrations after my arrival in the host country.		.70
The training I have received from my organization equipped me with all the essential information and knowledge necessary to adjust to the new environment.		.68
Cronbach's alpha	.91	.93
70% of variance explained		

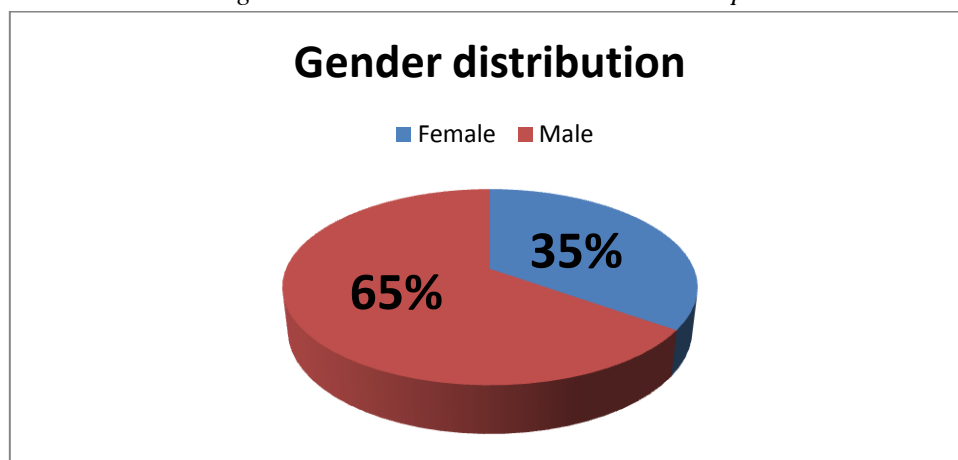
4.2 Sample characteristics, descriptive statistics

194 participants filled in the questionnaire; the total number of valid answers is 155.

4.2.1 Gender

In the observed sample, out of the 155 respondents 101 are male, accounting for 65,2% of the total population. The representation of female expatriates in this study with a percentage of 34,8 % is higher than the average proportion of 19-20% of assigned women associates in the global expatriate population (Brookefield,2015).

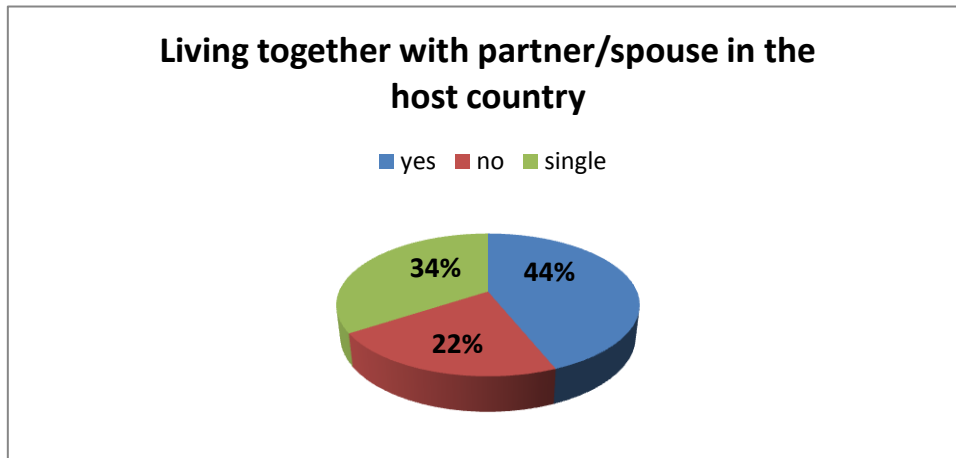
Figure 4.2.1. Gender distribution in the sample



4.2.2 Family status and situation

44% of the participating expatriates live with their partner or spouse in the host country. The proportion of assignees in the sample that are married or have a relationship but moved alone to the foreign country is 22%. The majority of the assigned employees in the sample do not have children (72%). Most of the expatriates with children live together with them in the host country; while only in 23% of the cases the children do not live with their parents in the host country.

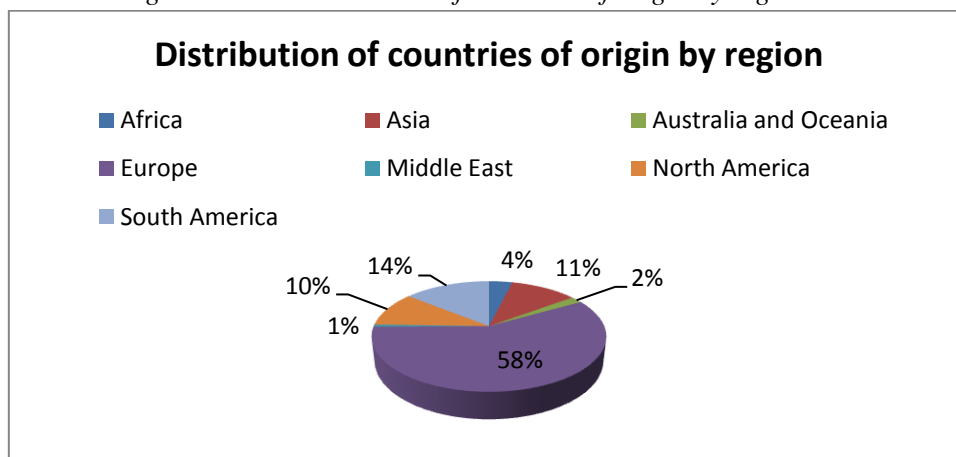
Figure 4.2.2. Distribution of expatriates' relationship situations



4.2.3 Country of origin

In this study, expatriates of 42 different nationalities have participated. More than half of the participants is European (58%). 14% of the respondents come from South America, while the proportion of expatriates of Asian origin is 11% in the sample population. The nationality with the highest representation was Hungarian (13,5%), followed by German (9,7%) and Brazilian (7,7%). 6,5% of the respondents are from the United States, 5,2% of them come from the United Kingdom.

Figure 4.2.3.: Distribution of countries of origin by region

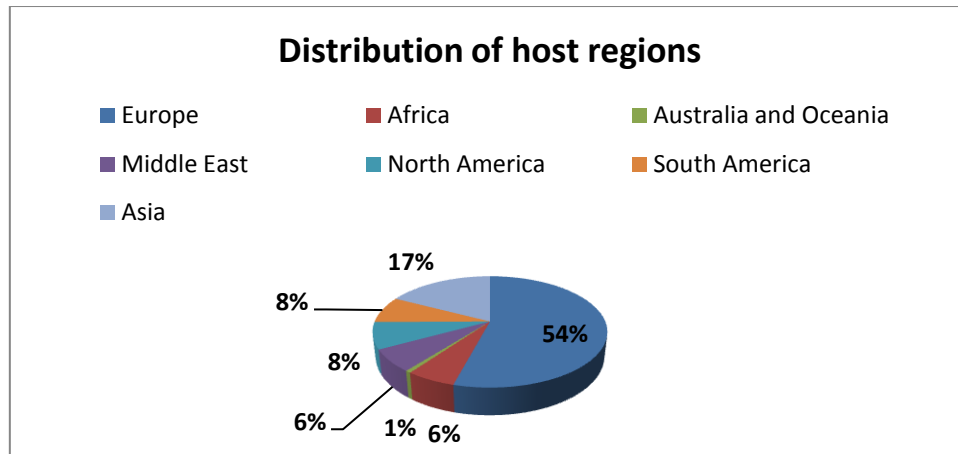


4.2.4 Host country

Respondents are relocated in 45 various countries. The majority of the participating expatriates are located in European countries. 14,8% of the sample population works in Germany, 10,3% is assigned to Hungary. The United Kingdom is the third most popular

European destination in the sample with 6,5% of representation among the host countries. 17% of the respondents are on an assignment in an Asian country, the majority of them are living in China and Singapore. The United States are hosting 7,7 % of the assignees. 7,7% of the respondents have been sent to South America. The Middle East and Africa are hosting 6-6% of the surveyed expatriate population.

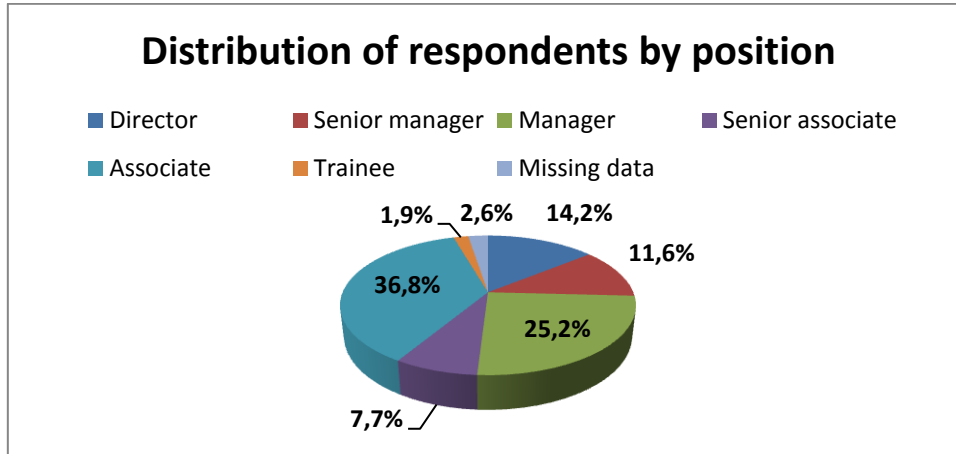
Figure 4.2.4. Distribution of host countries by region



4.2.5 Position in the organizational hierarchy

The majority of the participating assignees have a managerial role in their parent organization (51%). 28% of these expatriates are directors, whereas 23% of them fill in a senior manager position. 49% of the female expatriates in the sample are holding a managerial role. Expatriates from the associate level make up the 37% of the sample, whereas 7,7% of the participants works as a senior associate. Although their representation in the sample is very low, only 2%, it is worth to mention the three Trainees who gave their input for this study. More and more multinational companies offer a rotational trainee program for graduates with the aim of developing future leaders. Many of these programs include a 3 to 6-month overseas assignment in order to equip potential future leaders with intercultural leadership competence and a broader overview of the company's global operation.

Figure 4.2.5. Distribution of respondents by their position in the organization

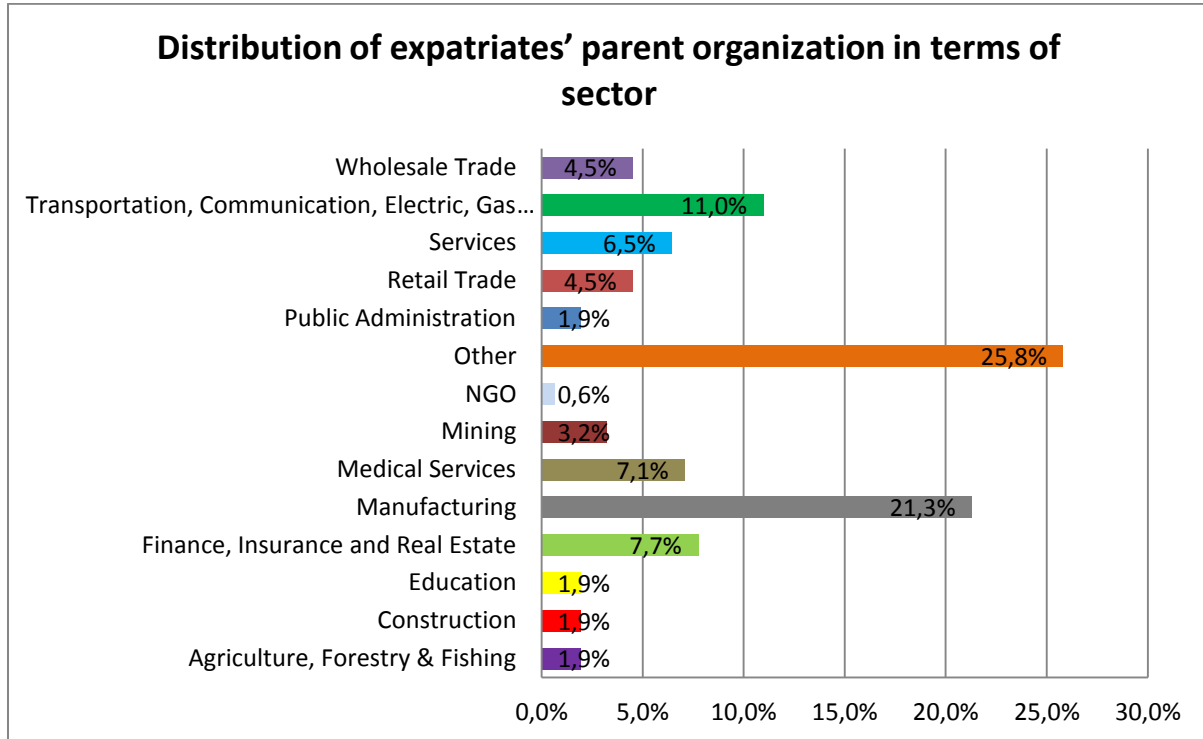


4.2.6 Characteristics of the parent company

The landscape of the sectors expatriates' organizations operate in is very diverse for this sample. Manufacturing is the sector with the highest number of representatives with 21,3%. Companies with manufacturing activities are traditionally active in terms of expatriation as they are seeking opportunities to relocate their production activities to countries with lower operating costs. 11% of the participants are working in Transportation, Communication, Electric, Gas and Sanitary Services.

Most of the parent organizations the participants, 82% are working for large multinational/global/transnational companies.

Figure 4.2.7. Distribution of expatriates' parent organization in terms of sector



4.2.7 Seniority

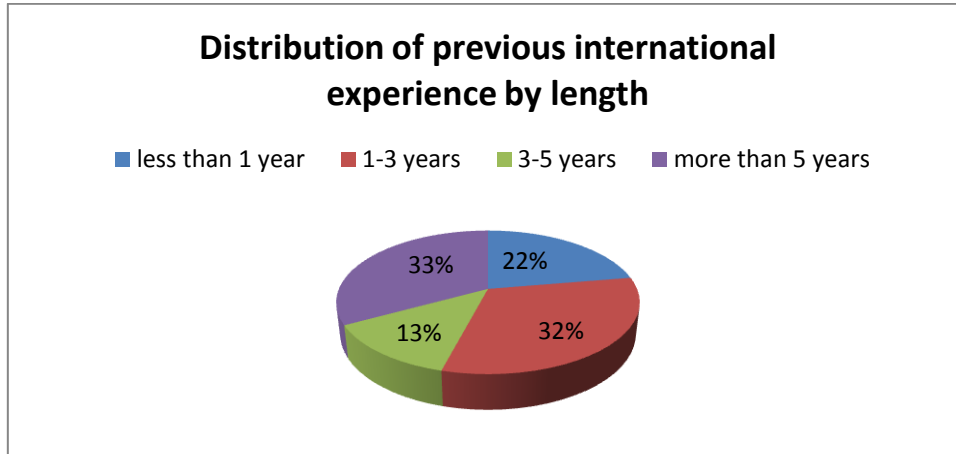
The participants have been working for their current employer for 6,5 years on average. The expatriate with the lowest seniority level in the sample has been employed by the firm for 3 months, whereas the longest service years are 39 years.

4.2.8 Previous international experience

More than half of the respondents -55% - have previously been on an overseas assignment. Even though 45% of the participants have not yet worked in a foreign country, the majority of them (66 %) have had the opportunity to work together with people from the country where they are currently located in.

Among the participants with prior international experience the most expatriates (33%) possess an international career record of 5 years or more, closely followed by those who have been sent abroad for 1 to 3 years earlier (32%). Half of them gathered this experience in a European country.

Figure 4.2.8. Distribution of previous international experience of participants by length



4.2.9 Knowledge of local language

The majority of the assigned expatriates (53%) were not able to communicate in the host country's language before their arrival.

4.2.10 Duration

On an average, the surveyed expatriates have been on their current assignment for 19 months and the planned total duration of their posting are 2 years and 8 months. The most frequent period already spent on the assignment is 1 year.

To summarize the characteristics of the sample the typical respondent's profile is hereby provided. The typical respondent in the sample is male; he is living together in the host country with his spouse or partner and does not have children. The average respondent is of European origin relocated to a European country, has been working for 6,5 years for a large multinational company possessing previous international working experience. He has been on his assignment for 1 year and 7 months and did not speak the local language before arriving to the host country.

4.2.11 Cross-cultural training

The majority of the expatriates who participated in this survey did not receive cross-cultural preparation training for their overseas posting from their organization. Only 38% of the companies provided the assignees with intercultural training in the sample.

49% of the trainings provided were conventional; in form of lectures, briefings, written materials, videos for example. In the course of conventional trainings information is

transmitted in a traditional, one-way communication method (Gertsen, 1990). The rest of the expatriates attended trainings that combined both conventional and experimental methods. Experimental trainings use interaction between the trainer and participants, and try to imitate real life situations (Gertsen, 1990) and use techniques like case studies, cultural assimilators, role plays, culture contact simulation games.

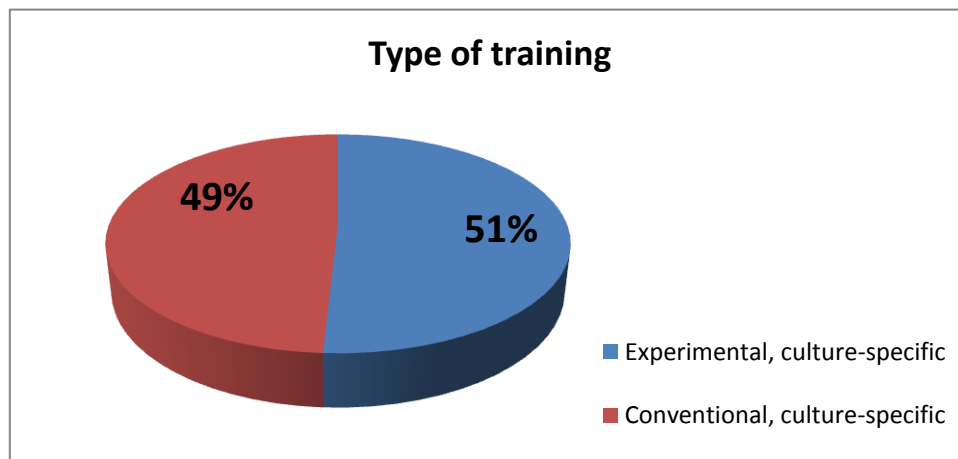
All the participants were provided with culture-specific information in the course of their training sessions. As such, none of the participants received merely a conventional, culture-general training which is perceived as the least rigorous training type by Gertsen (1990).

22% of the expatriates attended an extensive training not only aiming to raise country-specific cultural awareness, but including information about social and business practices, presenting the characteristics of working style of HCNs, networking, management and negotiation style in the host country, as well as providing tips concerning the communication with HCNs. Nevertheless, 5 % of the participants were only provided with general information about the history, geography, politics and economics of the country. Additionally, the agenda of 68% of the training programs included a section aiming at enhancing general cultural awareness of the attendees, as well.

17% of the expatriates had the opportunity for a look-see visit complementing a traditional classroom section. Individual cross-cultural coaching was provided to 20% of the expatriates in the study. 20% of the assignees had the opportunity to participate in workshops or coaching with HCNs, which is a relatively recent method in the area of intercultural trainings.

47% of the trainings only applied one or two training activities, 33% of the expatriates got involved in 3-4 different activities during their cross-cultural training, whereas only 20% of the participants attended a more multi-faceted training program combining at least 5 different activities.

Figure 4.2.11. Distribution of the received training based on its type



The average duration of the cross-cultural training participants received is 44 hours. Offline training is the most popular training medium in the sample, 92% of the respondents attended a face-to face session. 43% of these participants could access extra training material through e-learning platforms. 8% of the trainings provided by the companies in the sample were merely web-based.

4.3 Results of statistical analyses

4.3.1 Cultural difference

As the participating expatriates in the study are from various countries relocated to different host locations, the magnitude of cultural and geographic distance between the country of origin and the host country is not constant. As such, cultural difference and geographic distance were introduced as variables to eliminate their biasing effect on adjustment.

In this study, the influence of cultural difference on general, interaction and work adjustment is not statistically significant. Cultural difference is very weakly, but positively related to general ($r = .03$) and interaction adjustment ($r = .06$), and negatively related to work adjustment ($r = -.05$). Geographic distance has a weak negative, but insignificant impact on general ($r = -.04$), interaction ($r = -.07$) and work ($r = -.03$) adjustment. Cultural distance and geographic distance are significantly positively correlated ($r = .34$, $p < 0.01$) (Table 4.3.1.).

Based on these insignificant and weak correlation coefficients, the biasing effect of the country of origin on expatriates' adjustment can be excluded.

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. General adjustment	3,98	.80	1.00											
2. Interaction adjustment	3,70	.84	.65**	1.00										
3. Work adjustment	4,01	.85	.60**	.60**	1.00									
4. Adjustment total	3,90	.73	.86**	.87**	.85**	1.00								
5. Cultural distance	151,99	46,40	.03	.06	-.05	.01	1.00							
6. Geographic distance	5310,50	4000,14	-.04	-.07	-.03	-.05	.34**	1.00						
7. Cross-cultural training	3,46	.73	.35*	.42**	.15	.35**	-.07	-.06	1.00					
8. Previous international experience	0,55	.50	-.16*	-.17*	-.06	-.15	.19*	.21*	-.30	1.00				
Previous work experience with HCNs	0,39	.49	-.04	-.04	.09	.00	.04	.16	-.02	.08	1.00			
10. Language knowledge	0,47	.50	.13	.18*	.05	.14	.03	.07	.07	-.08	-.06	1.00		
11. Willingness to relocate	4,12	.62	.20*	.23**	.20*	.24**	.00	-.00	.48**	-.08	-.07	.18*	1.00	
12. Time spent on assignment	19,12	22,95	.00	-.00	.13	.05	-.04	-.06	-.15	-.06	-.12	.02	.10	1.00

* p<.05
** p<.01

Table 4.3.1. Means, standard deviations and correlations for all variables

4.3.2 Knowledge of the local language vs. cross-cultural adjustment-Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 predicted that the knowledge of the local language would have a positive impact on general, interaction and work adjustment. Therefore, it is assumed that there is a positive correlation between local language ability and each of the dimensions of cross-cultural adjustment. In order to test the assumption, the Point-Biserial correlation coefficient was calculated.

The Point-Biserial correlation coefficient of language knowledge and the adjustment variables are positive. Nonetheless, the strongest and statistically only significant relationship exists between language knowledge and interaction adjustment ($r = .18$, $p < 0,05$). The positive influence of language knowledge on general adjustment is lower in magnitude and not statistically significant, ($r = .13$) and it has a weakest positive, non-significant correlation to work adjustment ($r = .05$) (Table 4.3.1.).

Accordingly, Hypothesis 1 is supported, as the knowledge of the local language is positively related all the three facets of acculturation. Nonetheless, a statistically significant correlation only exists between language skills and interaction adjustment.

These findings were confirmed by the results of an Independent-samples t-test comparing the means of two different groups, namely expatriates with and without the knowledge of the host country's language (Field, 2005). Results reflect that expatriates, who already spoke the local language before arriving to the host country, are significantly more adapted to interacting with HCNs than their peers without language knowledge ($t = -2,32$, $p = .02$).

Differences are not significant in case of general ($t = -1,63$, $p = .10$) and work adjustment ($t = -0,65$, $p = .52$) (Table 4.3.2.)

Table 4.3.2: Independent-samples t-test for the effect of local language skills on the three facets of cross-cultural adjustment

Independent-samples t-test	N	Mean	t-value	Significance (p)
Knowledge of local language/general adjustment			-1,63	.10
yes	73	4,10		
no	82	3,89		
Knowledge of local language/interaction adjustment			-2,32	.02
yes	73	3,86		
no	82	3,55		
Knowledge of local language/work adjustment			-0,65	.52
yes	73	4,06		
no	82	3,97		

4.3.3 Willingness to relocate vs. cross-cultural adjustment - Hypothesis 2

According to the assumption stated in Hypothesis 2, one's willingness to pursue an overseas assignment will exert a positive influence on his or her cross-cultural adjustment. The corresponding Pearson's correlation coefficients of the variable "Willingness to relocate" validate this presumption, as these are positive and statistically significant for general, interaction and work adjustment, as well. The strongest positive relationship is detected between willingness to relocate and interaction adjustment ($r = .23$, $p < 0,01$), but the willingness to take on an international assignment positively, significantly influences latter general and work adjustment, as well ($r = .20$, $r = .20$, $p < 0,05$) (Table 4.3.1.). Hence, Hypothesis 2 is fully supported.

4.3.4 Previous international experience – Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 stated that previous international experience will be positively related to general, interaction and work adjustment.

In contrast to the assumption, the Point-Biserial correlation coefficients indicate a negative correlation between previous international experience and the three facets of adjustment. The negative relationship of prior expatriate experience to general ($r = -.16$, $p < 0,05$) and interaction adjustment ($r = -.17$, $p < 0,05$) is statistically significant, while previous international experience is negatively but not significantly related to work adjustment ($r = -.06$) (Table 4.3.1.).

Based on these negative correlations, Hypothesis 3 is not supported, as previous international experience has a negative impact on the three adjustment facets as opposed to the expectation towards a positive influence.

Previous experience in working together with HCNs is also negatively associated with general and interaction adjustment (both $r = -.04$), and it has a very low but insignificant positive relationship with work adjustment ($r = .09$) (Table 4.3.1.).

In order to increase the validity power of this finding, a set of variance analyses were performed. These analyses were adopted to examine whether expatriates who had previously been on an overseas assignment will report higher levels of general, interaction and work adjustment than their peers with no prior experience.

No significant difference was detected concerning interaction ($F= 1,53$, $p= .19$) and work adjustment ($F=1,14$, $p= .34$) among expatriates with differing previous international experience (Table 4.3.3.).

Nonetheless, interestingly; concerning general adjustment differences among expatriates with differing previous international experience are statistically significant ($F=2,67$, $p= .03$). The participants without no prior assignment experience reported the highest level of general adjustment (Mean=4,13), whereas expatriates who have prior overseas record of 3-5 years had the lowest score on the scale of general adjustment.

Table 4.3.3. Analysis of variance for the effect of previous international experience on the three facets of cross-cultural adjustment

Analysis of variance	N	Mean	F-test	Significance (p)
Previous international experience/general adjustment			2,67	.03
no	70	4,13		
less than 1 year	19	4,04		
1-3 years	27	3,56		
3-5 years	11	4,10		
more than 5 years	28	3,99		
Previous international experience/interaction adjustment			1,53	.19
no	70	3,85		
less than 1 year	19	3,6		
1-3 years	27	3,44		
3-5 years	11	3,82		
more than 5 years	28	3,56		
Previous international experience/work adjustment			1,14	.34
no	70	4,07		
less than 1 year	19	4,09		
1-3 years	27	3,70		
3-5 years	11	4,00		
more than 5 years	28	4,12		

4.3.5 Time spent on assignment

Unexpectedly, the current duration of the assignment has no impact on general and interaction adjustment ($r = .00$, $r = -.00$). Time spent on the overseas posting is positively associated to work adjustment ($r = .13$), although this relationship is not statistically significant (Table 4.3.1.).

4.3.6 Cross cultural training

In order to test Hypotheses 4-6, the Pearson's correlation coefficients for CCT and cross-cultural adjustment were calculated and a series of multiple regressions with hierarchical methods was conducted. These assumptions suggest that cross-cultural training exerts a positive influence on general, interaction and work adjustment, as well. In the multiple regression models several control variables were applied that were suggested by the literature review. In hypotheses 1-3 assumptions for the relationship of these variables with the three adjustment dimensions were formulated which were then tested by calculating each of the Pearson's correlation coefficients presented in Table 4.3.1.

Thus, in the three regressions, it was controlled for previous international experience, previous work experience with HCNs, language knowledge, willingness to relocate and time spent on assignment.

The independent variable in the model is the element, the impact of which on the dependent variable is being examined, as such in this study CCT (Field, 2005). Dependent variables in the three separate regression models are general, interaction and work adjustment. In order to be able to measure the additional contribution of cross-cultural training in explaining general, interaction and work adjustment the hierarchical method was applied. Thus, the above listed control variables entered the regression model first, followed by the independent variable.

4.3.6.1. General adjustment

The first regression was conducted to validate the assumption according to which CCT eases expatriates' adaptation to the general aspects of the new culture.

Before running the analysis, the Pearson's correlation value of CCT and general adjustment was estimated. Based on this coefficient, CCT is positively and significantly associated with general adjustment ($r = .35$, $p < 0,05$) (Table 4.3.1.). This finding serves as a solid predisposition for extracting a valid regression model.

To test the influence of CCT on general adjustment, the multiple regression equation was conducted. In the first model the dependent variable; general adjustment was regressed on the control variables; previous international experience, language knowledge, willingness to relocate and time spent on assignment. Previous international experience has a negative, non-significant impact on general adjustment. Among the remaining control variables, willingness to relocate is the only one that has a significant and positive impact on general adjustment.

These factors in Model 1 explained 15% of the variance in general adjustment. The total variance explained only increased by 5 % when the independent variable, CCT entered the model ($R^2 = .20$). Although the predictive power of the model improved by adding cross-cultural training as a variable ($F=2,59$, $p = .04$), the positive influence of cross-cultural training on general adjustment is not significant ($Beta = .24$, $p = .09$) (Table 4.3.4.).

Although, based on the correlation matrix (Table 4.3.1.), CCT is positively and statistically significantly related to the general facet of cross-cultural adjustment, training only contributed to a 5 % increase in the total variance of general adjustment in the presented regression model and its positive influence was not significant. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 receives only partial support.

Table 4.3.4. Regression analysis predicting general adjustment

Control and independent variables	General adjustment	
	Model 1	Model 2
	Beta	Beta
Previous international experience	-.04	-.04
Language knowledge	.13	.12
Willingness to relocate	.33*	.21
Time spent on assignment	.15	.18
Cross-cultural training		.24
R ²	.15	.20
R ² change		.05
F	2,45	2,59
p-value	.06	.04

*p < 0,05

4.3.6.2. Interaction adjustment

CCT has the strongest, significantly positive relationship with interaction adjustment according to the correlation matrix ($r = .42$, $p < 0,01$) (Table 4.3.1.). This revealed positive impact of training on interaction adjustment is confirmed by the multiple regression analysis, as well.

Based on the results of Model 1, prior international transfers negatively influence the current adaptation of expatriates to the interaction with HCNs, although this negative relationship is not significant. The other control variables have a positive impact on interaction adjustment, although only willingness to relocate has a strong and significant positive influence (Beta = .27, $p < 0,05$) (Table 4.3.5.).

When CCT entered the regression, the model improved significantly ($F = 3,73$, $p = .00$). CCT explains another 12% of the variance, together with the control variables they account for 26% of the total variance in interaction adjustment. The positive impact of training on the interaction dimension of intercultural adjustment is positive and statistically significant (Beta = .40, $p < 0,01$). As in the series of the multiple linear regressions the

positive impact of CCT was only significant for interaction adjustment, it can be concluded that training played the most important role for the interaction dimension of acculturation (Table 4.3.5.).

Therefore, Hypothesis 5 is fully supported; CCT positively and significantly influences interaction adjustment.

Table 4.3.5. Regression analysis predicting interaction adjustment

Control and independent variables	Interaction adjustment	
	Model 1	Model 2
	Beta	Beta
Previous international experience	-.04	-.04
Language knowledge	.20	.17
Willingness to relocate	.27*	.08
Time spent on assignment	.15	.21
Cross-cultural training		.40**
R ²	.14	.26
R ² change		.12
F	2,25	3,73
p-value	.07	.00

*p < 0,05

**p < 0,01

4.3.6.3. Work adjustment

The Pearson's correlation coefficient of CCT referring to work adjustment ($r = .15$) displays a positive but non-significant relationship between the two variables (Table 4.3.1.).

The second multiple regression analysis was performed to validate the hypothesis stating that work adjustment is positively influenced by CCT. The motivation to relocate internationally ($\text{Beta}_1 = .35, p < 0,05, \text{Beta}_2 = .33, p < 0,05$) and the expatriate time in the host country ($\text{Beta}_1 = .33, p < 0,05, \text{Beta}_2 = .33, p < 0,05$) have a positive and significant impact on work adjustment based on both Model 1 and Model 2 (Table 4.3.6.). The regression analysis reports a positive, non-significant relationship between prior international experience and work adjustment which is in contrast with the negative association of the two respective variables depicted in the correlation matrix (Table 4.3.1.). The control variables jointly account for a significant portion of the variance ($R^2 = .24$) in work adjustment.

With CCT entering the regression, the predicting ability of the model decreases ($F = 3,34$, $p = .01$), and training does not contribute to a further increase in the variance in work adjustment. The positive impact of CCT on work adjustment is only weak and not significant based on the multiple regression analysis performed (Table 4.3.6.). Accordingly, based on these findings Hypothesis 6 is not validated.

Table 4.3.6. Regression analysis predicting work adjustment

Control and independent variables	Work adjustment	
	Model 1 Beta	Model 2 Beta
Previous international experience	.17	.17
Language knowledge	.10	.10
Willingness to relocate	.35*	.33*
Time spent on assignment	.33*	.33*
Cross-cultural training		.04
R ²	.24	.24
R ² change		.00
F	4,23	3,34
p-value	.00	.01

* $p < 0,05$

After examining the impact of CCT on the three dimensions of intercultural adjustment, the hypotheses regarding the influence of the preparation time and the training's timing are tested.

4.3.7 Preparation time

More than half of the respondents (57%) have had one to three months between the decision to expatriate and the departure. 30 % of the expatriates in the sample were given less than a month to prepare before embarking on the overseas posting. More than 3 months were available to prepare for their assignment for 13% of the participants.

Figure 4.3.7. Distribution of expatriates' time to prepare for the assignment

In the literature of expatriate research examples can be found where expatriates were given less and more time to prepare on an average than in the current sample. Mayrhofer and Scullion (2002) reported that assigned employees of European multinational companies only had a very limited time, an average of 12 days to prepare for their relocation. Suutari and Brewster (1998) could demonstrate a more favorable preparation scenario upon the example of Finnish expatriates where an average of three and a half months was on their disposal to prepare.

In order to validate Hypothesis 7, namely, that the length of preparation period has a direct positive impact on expatriates' satisfaction with their preparation, an analysis of variance (One-Way ANOVA analysis) has been adopted.

Results indicate that expatriates in the sample who had less than 1 month of preparation time are significantly less satisfied with the preparation support they have received from their employer than their counterparts who had a longer period till departure.

Nonetheless, expatriates who had the longest preparation time –more than three months- on their disposal, are somewhat less satisfied with their employer's preparation support than their peers who had 1-3 months to get ready for the assignment ($F = 5,76$, $p = .00$) (Figure 4.3.8., Table 4.3.9.).

Furthermore, One-way ANOVA results indicated that the lower the preparation period, the lower the satisfaction of the expatriates with the available time to prepare for their assignment ($F = 14,30$, $p = .00$). Thus, expatriates who had less than a month to prepare perceived the available preparation time significantly less adequate than their peers who had a longer preparation period (Table 4.3.9.).

Consequently, Hypothesis 7 is partially supported as only a preparation period shorter than 1 month had a negative influence on expatriates' satisfaction with their preparation, available time over 3 months did not exert an additional positive influence.

Figure 4.3.8: Satisfaction with preparation support from employer of expatriates with different available preparation time

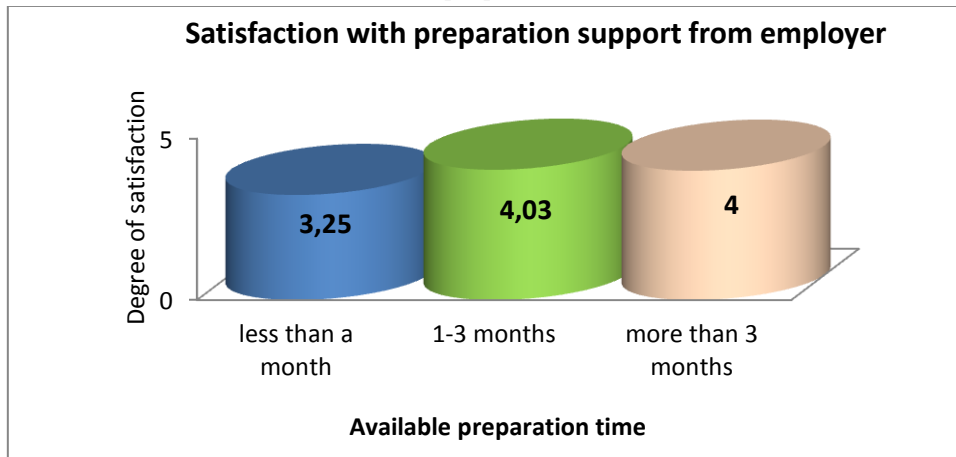


Table 4.3.9. Summary table of the performed analyses of variance for the influence of preparation time on expatriates' satisfaction with their preparation

Analysis of variance	N	Mean	F-test	Significance (p)
Preparation time/satisfaction with available preparation time			14,30	.00
Less than a month	20	2,80		
1-3 months	30	3,82		
More than 3 months	6	4,17		
Preparation time/preparation support from employer			5,76	.00
Less than a month	20	3,25		
1-3 months	30	4,03		
More than 3 months	6	4,00		

In order to examine the influence of available preparation time on expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment, a series of analysis of variance was performed.

One-Way ANOVA analyses showed that the means of general and work adjustment ($F = 1, p = .37$) of expatriates who had less than 1 month, 1-3 months and more than 3 months to prepare, respectively, did not significantly differ from each other (Table 4.3.10). The Kruskal-Wallis test's results indicated the same finding for interaction adjustment ($\chi^2 = 1,42, p = .49$) (Table 4.3.11.)

As such, contrary to the expectations, preparation time does not influence the participants' general, interaction and work adjustment in this sample.

Therefore, Hypothesis 8 is rejected, so it can be concluded that expatriates who had longer time to prepare for their overseas sojourn did not adapt easier to the general, interaction and work settings of the new environment than the expatriates with a limited preparation time.

Table 4.3.10. Summary table of the performed analyses of variance for the influence of preparation time on general and work adjustment

Analysis of variance	N	Mean	F-test	Significance (p)
Preparation time/general adjustment			0,49	.61
less than a month	47	3,98		
1-3 months	88	3,95		
more than 3 months	20	4,15		
Preparation time/work adjustment			1,00	.37
less than a month	47	4,10		
1-3 months	88	3,93		
more than 3 months	20	4,18		

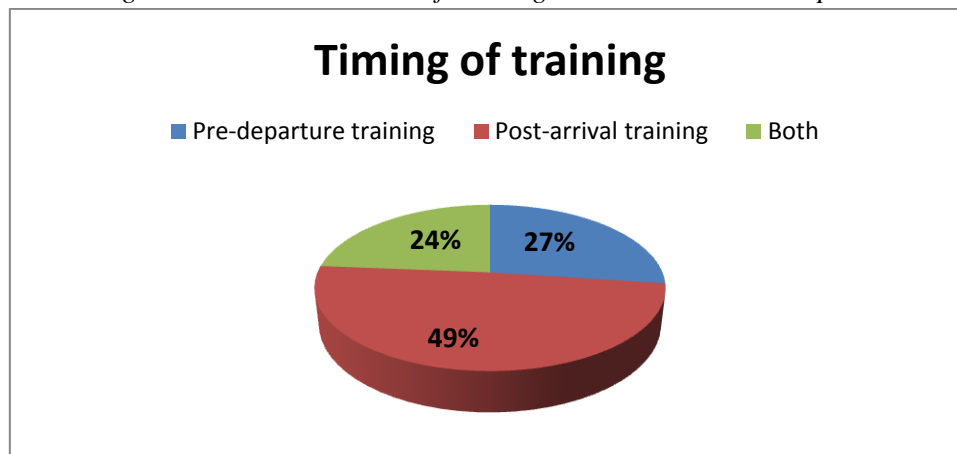
Table 4.3.11. Kruskal-Wallis test for the influence of preparation time on interaction adjustment

Kruskal-Wallis test	N	Mean rank	Chi-Square	Significance (p)
Preparation time/interaction adjustment			1,42	.49
less than a month	47	83,55		
1-3 months	88	74,32		
more than 3 months	20	81,13		

4.3.8 Pre-departure and post-arrival training

Almost half of those expatriates (49%) who have received some kind of cross-cultural preparation participated in the training after arriving to the host country. Surprisingly, 24% of them attended two training sessions, one prior departure and the next one upon arrival.

Figure 4.3.12. Distribution of training based on when it took place



In order to test the hypotheses 9-11 a set of analysis of variance and its non-parametric alternative has been adopted.

4.3.8.1. Pre-departure, post-arrival training vs. satisfaction with preparation, feeling prepared

To examine whether the satisfaction with the employers' preparation support depends on the timing of the training, a One Way ANOVA test was performed which compares the mean satisfaction of participants in the three different groups. The result of the Levene's-test demonstrated the violation of the assumption underlying the One Way ANOVA analysis, therefore the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test had to be applied (Field, 2005). The test statistics ($\chi^2 = 6,06$, $p = 0,05$) showed that expatriates who participated both in a pre-departure and a post-arrival training are significantly more satisfied with the preparation support from their organization than their peers who attended one training session (Table 4.3.12.). Pre-departure training participants turned out to be the least satisfied with their employer's support based on the test results. The timing of training did not influence the extent to which respondents had felt prepared for their assignment ($\chi^2 = 3,84$, $p = 0,15$) (Table 4.3.12.).

Therefore, Hypothesis 9 is partially validated, as there is statistical evidence that expatriates who received both a pre-departure and post-arrival training are more satisfied with the preparation support they received from their employer. Nevertheless in the sample these participants do not feel more prepared for their assignment than their peers who attended only one training session, thus Hypothesis 9b is not validated.

Table 4.3.12. Summary of the Kruskal-Wallis tests performed

Kruskal-Wallis test	N	Mean rank	Chi-Square	Significance (p)
Timing of training/satisfaction with preparation support from employer			6,06	.05
Pre-departure training	16	24,50		
Post-arrival training	29	29,12		
Both	14	38,11		
Timing of training/ feeling prepared for the assignment			3,84	.15
Less than a month	16	29,06		
1-3 months	29	27,10		
More than 3 months	14	37,07		

4.3.8.2. Pre-departure, post-arrival training vs. satisfaction with training usefulness

According to the extracted results from a one-way ANOVA analysis undertaken to test Hypothesis 10; pre-departure and post-arrival training were considered equally useful by participants for different situations emerging in the new environment ($F = 1,36$, $p = 0,26$) (Table 4.3.13.).

As such, Hypothesis 10 was not supported; expatriates who received both a pre-departure and post-arrival training do not consider the two trainings more useful than their counterparts the single training session.

Table 4.3.13. Analysis of variance for the effect of the timing of training on the satisfaction with the usefulness of training

Analysis of variance	N	Mean	F-test	Significance (p)
Timing of training/satisfaction with the usefulness of the training			1,36	.26
Pre-departure training	16	3,46		
Post-arrival training	29	3,49		
Both	14	3,86		

4.3.8.3. Pre-departure, post-arrival training vs. cross-cultural adjustment

In order to test Hypothesis 11, a one way ANOVA variance analysis was performed for the three different adjustment facets.

Results of the three analyses showed that the average adjustment levels of participants of a pre-departure training; respondents who attended the training upon their arrival; and expatriates who participated in training both before and after their arrival do not significantly differ from each other ($F = 0,76$, $p = .47$) (Table 4.3.14.).

Therefore the conclusion is that the timing of the training does not significantly impact the extent to which expatriates are adjusted to the new environment in general, to the interaction with host nationals and to the work settings in the host country.

Hence, Hypothesis 11 is not validated, as there is statistical evidence that expatriates who received both a pre-departure and post-arrival training do not demonstrate higher level of adjustment in all three dimensions than their peers who attended only one training session.

Table 4.3.14. Analysis of variance for the effect of the timing of training on the three facets of cross-cultural adjustment

Analysis of variance	N	Mean	F-test	Significance (p)
Timing of training/general adjustment			0,76	.47
Pre-departure training	16	4,06		
Post-arrival training	29	3,91		
Both	14	4,20		
Timing of training/interaction adjustment			1,27	.29
Pre-departure training	16	3,81		
Post-arrival training	29	3,55		
Both	14	3,89		
Timing of training/work adjustment			0,37	.24
Pre-departure training	16	4,20		
Post-arrival training	29	4,07		
Both	14	3,97		

4.4 Summary of the findings

Knowledge of the local language

Hypothesis 1: The knowledge of the local language will exert a positive influence on a, general b, interaction c, work adjustment.

Hypothesis 1 is validated. Language skills are positively associated with general ($r = .13$), interaction ($r = .18$) and work adjustment ($r = .05$), as well, although the correlation is only statistically significant for interaction adjustment.

Similarly, results of the meta-analysis by Bhaskar-Shrinivas and his colleagues (2005) found that host country language ability has a strongest positive and significant relationship with interaction adjustment among the three adjustment dimensions; the correlation value in their analysis is higher than in the current study ($r = .48$, $p < 0,05$). The detected positive effect of language ability on the other two facets of adjustment is stronger in the referenced meta-analysis than in this sample (general adjustment: $r = .22$, $p < 0,05$, work adjustment: $r = .18$, $p < 0,05$). The correlation coefficient of language skills and general adjustment reported by a meta-analysis incorporating 42 empirical studies about the antecedents and consequences of employees' adjustment is very close to the one in this current study ($r = .12$) (Hechanova *et al.*, 2003).

Willingness to relocate internationally

Hypothesis 2: The willingness of the employee to overtake an international assignment will be positively related to a, general b, interaction c, work adjustment.

Hypothesis 2 is fully supported. One's willingness to overtake an overseas assignment has a positive and significant influence on general ($r = .20$, $p < 0,05$), interaction ($r = .23$, $p < 0,01$), and work adjustment ($r = .20$, $p < 0,05$), as well.

This result is supporting Erbacher and his colleagues' (2006) finding, according to which one's willingness to relocate significantly predicts future expatriate success.

Previous international experience

Hypothesis 3: Previous international experience will be positively related to a, general b, interaction c, work adjustment.

Unexpectedly, previous international experience was found to be negatively related to all three facets of cross-cultural adjustment. (general: $r = -.20$, $p < 0,05$, interaction: $r = -.17$, $p < 0,05$, work: $r = -.06$, $p > 0,05$). Therefore, Hypothesis 3 is rejected.

This finding is consistent with the results of Nicholson and Imaizumi's study (1993; cited in Bhaskar-Shrinivas *et al.*, 2005) according to which prior international working experience of Japanese expatriates negatively influenced all the three facets of their acculturation. Nevertheless, in their meta-analysis of antecedents and consequences of international adjustment, Bhaskar-Shrinivas and his colleagues (2005) found positive relationships of previous overseas assignments with general ($r = .04$, $p < 0,05$), interaction ($r = .13$, $p < 0,05$) and work adjustment ($r = .06$, $p < 0,05$). Depicted on the example of American transferees in Japan; Black (1988) observed a positive, but non-significant correlation of previous transfers with work ($r = .13$) and general adjustment ($r = .21$). The meta-analysis of Hechanova and her colleagues (2003) found that previous overseas experience positively affect general ($r = .08$), interaction ($r = .11$) and work ($r = .08$) adjustment.

When comparing the average adaptation levels of expatriates with various prior international records, no significant difference was detected in case of interaction and work adjustment. However, expatriates who have not participated on an overseas assignment before reported the highest level of adaptation to the general aspects of the new culture.

Time spent on assignment

According to Oberg (1961) newcomers perceive themselves more adjusted to the new environment in the period right after their arrival. Nevertheless most of the relocated employees' adaptation shrinks in the course of the first half a year abroad. After this breaking point the longer time expatriates have spent on the assignment, the more likely they have reached the stage of adjustment; hence their adjustment level is expected to be higher. Due to the lack of linearity in the relationship of time and adjustment described by Oberg (1961), the influence of time was not hypothesized but still examined in the course of this study.

No evidence was found for either a positive or a negative effect of the time spent on assignment on general and interaction adjustment. However, time positively, but not significantly influences work adjustment ($r = .13$).

Hechanova and her colleagues (2003) reached a different conclusion in their meta-analysis and found that the months spent on assignment are positively correlated with general ($r = .14$), interaction ($r = .17$) and work adjustment ($r = .15$), respectively.

Cross-cultural training

According to the survey, only 38% of the participating expatriates received a formal CCT from their parent organization.

This rate is very similar to what Tung (1981) found in her study reporting that only 32% of the US-based multinationals offered a formal training program for their future expatriates. In the literature of expatriate research examples can be found for lower and higher percentages of corporations that provide CCT for their assigned employees. This ratio only reached 5 % in a study incorporating French expatriates relocated to Norway (Waxin 1997; cited in Waxin and Panaccio, 2005). Only one fifth of the Danish companies surveyed by Gertsen (1990) equipped their assignees with any kind of formal pre-departure training. Nevertheless, Waxin and Panaccio (2005) reported a somewhat more favorable number in their study about expatriates in India; 54% of the respondents had partaken in some kind of CCT program granted by their parent organization. According to the most recent Global Mobility Trends Report by Brookfields (2015) 45% of the multinational companies provide their expatriates with a formal cross-cultural preparation program for some assignments, while 38% of them offer an intercultural training for all the international assignments.

Influence of cross-cultural training on general adjustment

Hypothesis 4: Cross-cultural training will have a significantly positive impact on general adjustment.

CCT is positively and significantly associated with general adjustment ($r = .35, p < .05$). This outcome is confirming with Black's (1988) findings about the positive relationship between training and adaptation to the general aspects of a new culture ($r = .37, p < 0,01$). Based on the results of the regression model, the positive influence of cross-cultural training is not significant and only weak; the variance of work adjustment has only increased by 5 % due to CCT (Beta = .24). As such, Hypothesis 4 is only partially supported.

In a similar study, pre-departure preparation program ($r = .32, p < 0,01$) as well as post-arrival training ($r = .43, p < 0,01$) significantly facilitated general adjustment of expatriates assigned to Vietnam (Wang and Tran, 2012). Nevertheless, there are examples of studies that detected a negative relationship between cross-cultural training and expatriate adaptation to the culture in general (Hechanova *et al.*, 2003).

Influence of cross-cultural training on interaction adjustment

Hypothesis 5: Cross-cultural training will have a significantly positive impact on interaction adjustment.

CCT has a positive and significant correlation with interaction adjustment. Training has the strongest positive relationship with the interaction adjustment from the three facets of cross-cultural adaptation ($r = .42, p < 0,01$). CCT accounts for a 12% increase in the total variance of interaction adjustment, and its influence is statistically significant (Beta= .40, $p < 0,01$). As such, hypothesis 5 receives full support. The influence of CCT was the most relevant for interaction adjustment when taking into account all the adjustment facets.

The magnitude of the positive influence of CCT on the adaptation of expatriates to the interaction with host country nationals in this study is very similar to the impact of pre-departure (Beta = .39, $p < 0,001$) and post-departure training (Beta = .47, $p < 0,001$) observed by Wang and Tran (2012). Similarly, cross-cultural training had the strongest effect on interaction adjustment of expatriates located in India among the three facets of cross-cultural adaptation in the study of Waxin and Panaccio (2003). The meta-analysis of Hechanova and her colleagues (2003) found that training is only positively correlated with interaction adjustment from the three adjustment dimensions, although to a very low extent ($r = .06$).

Influence of cross-cultural training on work adjustment

Hypothesis 6: Cross-cultural training will have a significantly positive impact on work adjustment.

CCT had the weakest positive relationship with work adjustment among all the three facets of cross-cultural adaptation ($r = .15$). In the hierarchical regression model, CCT did not have an explanatory power concerning work adjustment. Therefore, Hypothesis 6 is not validated as CCT does not significantly influence the extent to which expatriates are adapted to the work settings in the host country.

Interestingly, the results of Wang and Train (2012) reflect exactly the opposite impact of cross-cultural training on work adjustment. In their study, both pre-departure (Beta = .46) and post-arrival trainings (Beta = .55) contributed significantly to the expatriates' adaptation at their new workplace in Vietnam.

This finding is in consonance with the corresponding result in Waxin and Panaccio's study (2003) concluding that the positive effect of CCT is the weakest on work adjustment among all the three adjustment dimensions.

On the other hand, Black (1988), and later on Hechanova and her colleagues (2003) found in their studies that the training not only failed to improve expatriates' adaptation to the work environment; but it influenced work adjustment in a negative way ($r = -.42, r = -.07$).

Cross-cultural adjustment in total

CCT is significantly and positively related with cross-cultural adjustment in total which is calculated as a mean of general, interaction and work adjustment ($r = .35, p < 0,01$) (Figure 4.3.1.).

The positive effect of both pre-departure ($r = .51, p < 0,01$) and post-arrival ($r = .60, p < 0,05$) training on expatriate acculturation is stronger in the study of Wang and Train (2012). An early meta-analysis conducted by Deshpande and Viswesvaran reported a higher correlation coefficient average ($r = .43$) of cross-cultural training and adjustment, whereas the magnitude of this corresponding correlation is lower in a more recent work integrating the results of 16 empirical studies by Morris and Robie (2001) ($r = .13$).

The impact of preparation time

According to the predisposition formulated in Hypothesis 7, expatriates who had longer time between the decision to expatriate and the departure to the host country are expected to be more satisfied with their preparation than their counterparts who had shorter preparation time. Although expatriates who had less than 1 month to prepare for their assignment are significantly less satisfied with their preparation than those assignees who were given a longer period for preparation, the most satisfied are the ones who had 1-3 months to prepare and not the expatriates with the longest preparation time available, over 3 months.

As the lack of time has a negative impact up to the threshold of 1 month, and additional time available does not further influence satisfaction with preparation over a period of 3 months, Hypothesis 7 is only partially validated. Hence, this outcome is not consistent with the findings of Suutari and Brewster (1998) who detected a direct linear relationship between the length of preparation time and expatriates' satisfaction with their assignment preparation.

Hypothesis 8 suggested that longer available time to prepare would result in higher levels of general, interaction and work adjustment. The analysis performed to test this assumption did not display significant differences in the extent to which assignees with different preparation time are adapted to the new environment in general, to the interaction with host country nationals and to the work settings. Consequently, based on the results, the length of preparation did not significantly influence expatriates' in-country adjustment. For this reason, Hypothesis 8 is not validated.

The impact of the timing of training

According to Hypothesis 9, assignees who participated both in a pre-departure and a post-arrival training are expected to be more satisfied with their employers' preparation support and to feel more prepared for the overseas posting than those expatriates who received only one training.

The results of the adopted analysis suggest that participants of both a pre-departure and post-arrival training session are more satisfied with the preparation support they received from their company than their peers who attended one training session.

On the other hand, these assignees did not feel more prepared for the relocation than the other expatriates. Hence, Hypothesis 9 is partially validated.

Hypothesis 10 stated that the expatriates participating in both a pre-departure and a post-arrival training would rate these trainings as more useful than their peers the one training session.

In this matter, this study did not find any significant differences; pre-departure and post-arrival training jointly were not proven to be more useful than these trainings one by one. Therefore, Hypothesis 10 is rejected.

Hypothesis 11 stated that expatriates who received both a pre-departure and post-arrival training would be more adapted to the foreign environment in general, to interacting with locals and to working in the host country than those assignees who attended either a pre-departure or a post-arrival training only. The applied analysis did not report any significant differences between the average adjustment levels of the three groups of expatriates.

As such, timing of the training did not exert an influence on cross-cultural adjustment. Assignees who were provided with a more extensive training including a pre-departure and a post-arrival element, as well, did not adapt easier to the new environment than their counterparts who only attended one session. Consequently, no significant difference can be observed between the impact of a pre-departure and a post-departure training variant in this study.

This is in contrast with the findings of Wang and Tran (2012) according to which post-arrival training is more beneficial for all the three facets of cross-cultural adjustment.

5. Discussion and conclusion

5.1 Discussion, implications

Findings of this thesis are partly in consonance with the data in corresponding studies examining determinants of cross-cultural adjustment. This study offers further statistical evidence about crucial factors that facilitate cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates. The results offer several recommendations for companies upon which they can optimize their global mobility practices in order to maximize future expatriate success.

Results suggest that the ability to speak the local language eases expatriates' adaptation to a new culture and environment. Not surprisingly, language knowledge is the most beneficial for interaction adjustment as it facilitates the verbal communication between the newcomer and HCNs. Locals appreciate the fact that a foreigner speaks their language, especially in non-English speaking countries, thus they will be more open and willing to help the newcomer to integrate to the new environment. Local language ability is really useful in general, every-day life situations in a foreign country; it eases the undertaking of day-to-day activities, including shopping, transport, entertainment and administration. The knowledge of the local language turned out to be least related to work adjustment among the three adjustment facets. This can be explained by the dominance of English as the official working language instead of the local language in the subsidiaries or headquarters in many of the countries the participating expatriates are relocated to. Selecting employees for expatriation who speak the local language of the target country therefore could serve as a beneficiary basis for a successful assignment.

One's willingness to relocate had the second strongest positive relationship after CCT with each of the three dimensions of cross-cultural adjustment. Among the most frequent motivating factors making employees willing to overtake an international assignment, adventurousness, financial benefits and career development can be found. In case the corporate relocation is not only the choice of the organization but of the employee, as well, it is more likely that the future expatriate will make more efforts to adapt to the new settings in a foreign country which in turn can result in higher performance on the assignment and good relationships with HCNs among many other positive outcomes (Feldman and Thomas, 1992).

As such, in order to increase the possibility of a successful future expatriate assignment, companies should integrate willingness to relocate as a crucial criterion into their selection process. Supervisors, line managers can investigate the aspirations of their employees with potential towards an international career in the course of one-to-one meetings, the annual review and build on this screening when planning an international posting. Furthermore, it is crucial to detect the underlying motivation behind relocation intentions to understand whether it fits the nature of the given overseas assignment.

According to Black and colleagues (1991) the reason why prior international experience is beneficial for the adjustment in a later assignment is that an experienced expatriate is aware of the stressors that will affect him upon arrival to the host country. Contrary to the expectation, previous international experience did not exert a positive influence on cross-cultural adjustment, but it even had a negative influence on it according to the results of this thesis.

This negative relationship could be explained by the fact that knowledge acquired on a different overseas assignment is not easily transferable one-to one to another international posting. Black (1988) argues that the lessons expatriates learnt about adjustment during their previous assignment cannot be generalized and applied for all situations independently from the country. Selmer (2002) found that not even prior international experience in an Asian country facilitated Western expatriates' socio-cultural adjustment in Hong Kong. Consequently, even though the culture of the prior and the current host country is really similar, adjustment will not necessarily be easier. As in the current sample the host country is not constant, a similar comparison was not possible. Furthermore, the negative correlation between past international experience and cross-cultural adjustment can be explained on the example of the argumentation of Caligiuri and her colleagues (2001) applying the theory of met expectations (Porter and Steers, 1973; cited in Caligiuri *et al.*, 2001). They found that expatriates going to a country where their native language is spoken will expect high similarity between their own and the host culture, and therefore believe that they will not have problems with adapting to it. Nevertheless, this belief did not correspond with the reality and therefore these untrue expectations hindered their adjustment. Adopting this line of reasoning, the negative impact of previous international assignment can be a result of the unrealistic expectations of expatriates who already worked abroad. Biased by the generalization of cross-cultural experience neglecting the specifications of each culture, they might believe they will not

experience any hardships in terms of adjusting to the new environment as they already managed to adapt to a foreign culture once or more times. As such, they will make less conscious efforts to adapt leading to lower levels of adjustment.

Although, skills acquired on a previous international assignment are undoubtedly beneficial for another overseas posting, they do not provide a 100% probability of assignment success. As such, expatriates' awareness about cultural differences should be raised by providing cross-cultural training to complement and structure the past international experiences and to prevent the forming of unrealistic, biased expectations.

Cross-cultural training was found to be a strong facilitator of interaction adjustment, but it did not exert a significant positive influence on general and work adjustment. Nevertheless, considering the fact that interaction adjustment is strongly associated with general and work adjustment, it can be concluded that in general, cross-cultural training brought benefits to expatriates for their cultural adaptation.

When looking at the distribution of the training contents, it can be concluded that information and clues regarding the communication with host country nationals were not in dominance compared to the other topics, which could have been one factor in explaining the highest contribution of training to interaction adjustment. Nonetheless, although only with a minor difference, experimental forms of training were in majority in the observed sample. Interactive forms of training are more effective in developing skills enabling a successful interaction with citizens of another country, than didactic methods (Waxin and Panaccio, 2005). Although only with a minor difference, this form of training was in majority in the observed sample. Thus, one of the reasons behind the highest positive relationship between training and interaction adjustment can be that experimental trainings are most beneficial for interaction adjustment. Nevertheless, this thesis does not provide statistical evidence for this assumption, as the differences of the impact of the various training types were not explicitly examined.

Interaction adjustment has the strongest intra-correlation with the other two adjustment facets. Thus, familiarity and confidence in interaction with host country nationals can catalyze the adaptation to the general living conditions and in the new workplace the most. Therefore, companies should provide relevant, situation and culture-specific cross-cultural training, preferably in an experimental form in order to facilitate the acculturation of their assigned employees.

Albeit cross-cultural training has proved useful for the adaptation of expatriates to the general environment, its positive contribution is not significant. Even though people receive general information affecting their day-to-day life in a foreign country, such as climate, general living conditions, political and economical situation, instinctive reactions to these are hard to modify merely through a one-time training, let it be conventional or experimental. One's preferences regarding these basic elements are deep-rooted and quite constant. For example, if somebody who did not like hot temperature all his or her life gets sent to a country with a tropical climate, he or she will not get used to it easily, even though he or she was informed information about the circumstances beforehand. Nevertheless, some hardships in adapting to the external environment do not exclude the possibility of getting on really well with the locals and performing well at the workplace.

Although, 36% of the respondents who participated in a cross-cultural training received information regarding social and business practices, working with host country nationals, networking, management and negotiation style in the host country, training was found to be the least relevant for work adjustment.

This outcome could be explained by Black's argumentation (1988) according to which expatriates with a prior knowledge acquired in training are more likely to be aware of cultural differences in the work setting and therefore concentrate more on mitigating them which is less effective than looking for similarities between the working patterns of their home country and the host country. As such, it will not help them adjust faster to the work environment.

Waxin and Panaccio (2005) found that cross-cultural training has the lowest influence in magnitude on work adjustment, as well. According to them, a possible explanation for this phenomenon is that work-related aspects do not change as much due to the relocation as interaction and other general living conditions; therefore cross-cultural training is the least relevant for this facet.

Another explanation for the low effect of cross-cultural training on general and work adjustment can be the high proportion of European countries both on the parent and on the host country side. General living conditions and working patterns do not differ as much between two European countries, as between a European and an Asian country, for example. As the gap that cross-cultural training would aim to narrow is already smaller in this case, its impact will also be less noticeable.

Nowadays, cultural encounters between remotely working associates of different nationalities happen more and more often in globally operating corporations. More and more people of different cultures work together on a day-to-day basis virtually; furthermore the use of regular business trips, extended business travels and commuting schemes between operations in different countries is rapidly growing (Brookefield, 2015). Consequently, due to these cultural confrontations more and more employees working for multinational organizations gather pieces of intercultural knowledge. Therefore, traditional, old-fashioned cross-cultural training programs focusing on merely general information about the country and quite generalized cultural differences do not further enhance these employees' intercultural skills. This phenomenon could also explain the low magnitude in the positive impact of cross-cultural training on expatriates' acculturation.

In summary, cross-cultural training facilitated both interaction and general adjustment, while it did not leave a remark on work adjustment. Nevertheless, providing cross-cultural training in order to just "tick the box" on the global mobility checklist is not sufficient. In order to maximize its effectiveness, a cross-cultural training program has to be relevant; thus it has to be tailored to the specific conditions and requirements of the given overseas assignment taking into account the personal characteristics and situation of the individual.

The low proportion of expatriates who received a training from their organization with a value of 38 % is not surprising having in mind the corresponding findings of the expatriate literature. This ratio is exactly the same in the most recent global mobility study, reporting that only 38% of the multinational companies provide an intercultural training for all of their international assignees.

There are several reasons why companies do not offer cross-cultural training for their assigned employees. Gertsen (1990) grouped the underlying argumentations into three categories: inappropriateness of training, cost of investment and time constraint. First of all, some corporations consider an intercultural preparation irrelevant as they believe expatriates will acquire the necessary knowledge on the assignment and not beforehand. As discussed above, the time between the decision to expatriate and the departure to the host country is generally short. Thus, in many of the cases expatriates simply do not have the time to participate in a formal training. On the other hand, companies are often unwilling to invest

in an intercultural training as they lack evidence of the positive return of their investment calculated in financial, tangible terms.

Although this thesis was not aimed at calculating the return of investment of a specific training program, its results provide further empirical evidence about the positive influence of cross-cultural training on expatriate adjustment, especially on adapting to the interaction with host country nationals. As such, it suggests that companies should not be reluctant to invest in culturally training their expatriates.

Albeit expatriates, who were given more time to prepare for their assignment, were more satisfied with their preparation support than their peers with a limited preparation time; they did not display higher levels of cross-cultural adjustment. The dominance of the European expatriates located in European countries in the sample can serve as an explanation in this case, as well. Time constraints are much more harmful for later adjustment in case of a longer geographic distance imposing significantly more bureaucratic and logistic burden on the expatriates and the employer. Even if the length of preparation time did not have a significant positive impact on cross-cultural adjustment in this case, it is positively correlated to it. In case assigned employees have adequate time between the announcement of the relocation and the departure to the host country, they have better chances to complete all the arising tasks due to the relocation both in the personal and professional arena of their lives, as such it can spare them the frustration and stress around the departure and arrival. Furthermore, longer available time enables organizations to carry out a more tailored, thorough preparation training which in turn will be helping assignees to adapt better in the new environment.

Providing both a pre-departure and a post-arrival training did not further enhance expatriates' acculturation. No difference was detected in the impact of pre-departure, post-arrival training separately, and their combination, respectively on cross-cultural adjustment. Selmer and his colleagues (1998) suggested that training optimally should take place in different periods of time, and its content should correspond to the expatriates' psychological receptiveness in the given stage. The reason why the combined effect of pre-departure and post-arrival training was not higher than the one of the single training sessions can be that the organizers in this case did not match the learning material with the psychological state of the participants, therefore its benefits could not be utilized.

5.2 Conclusion

As emerged from the review of the literature and the results of this study; cross-cultural adjustment is an extremely complex phenomenon shaped by a lot of intrinsic and external influencing factors. There is no single recipe for successful cross-cultural adjustment; each case is unique depending on the individual, organizational characteristics and the external, situational circumstances.

Cross-cultural adjustment is undoubtedly one of the most extensively discussed and examined topic in the field of expatriate research. Many scholars have examined the antecedents and outcomes of expatriate acculturation; nevertheless there is not even one determinant that was found with the same effect concerning adjustment in each and every publication.

This also shows that certain variables that enhance intercultural adaptation in one case can bring about negative effects on it in another situation. Nevertheless, in case a certain determinant has a significantly differing impact on adjustment than in the vast majority of the cases, it is recommended to investigate the underlying reasons for the surprising effect in order to avoid drawing false conclusions. For example, it would be an extremely poor application of the empirical findings, if organizations would exclude employees with prior international experience in the selection of future expatriates just because some studies -including this thesis- found a negative relationship between previous international experience and adjustment. Similarly, in case a company finds out that the cross-cultural training program they currently offer for their expatriates, did not bring the expected benefits, the decision should not be to abandon the usage of cross-cultural training in the future, but to investigate why the training did not work. Going further; just because this current study did not find any additional positive contribution of a combined training composing of both a pre-departure and post-departure training, it does not mean that well-designed, sequential trainings are not worth to invest in. Likewise, the lack of evidence about the positive impact of longer preparation time on later adjustment in this thesis should not discourage practitioners from striving to announce the decision about the expatriation as soon as possible.

On the other hand, this thesis provides important statistical evidence and supports the findings of numerous scholars about the positive relationship of local language skills with all facets of adjustment, but especially with interaction adjustment.

Furthermore, it proved the positive influence of cross-cultural training on general, but most significantly on interaction adjustment of corporate expatriates (Bhaskar-Shrinivas *et al.*, 2005; Waxin and Panaccio, 2005; Wang and Tran, 2012). One of the most relevant contributions of the current study is the finding about the facilitating effect of an individual's willingness to relocate internationally on cross-cultural adjustment. The antecedents of willingness to relocate have been widely investigated by researchers; nonetheless its impact on cross-cultural adjustment still has not been explicitly examined. According to the findings of this thesis, in case an employee is willing to overtake an overseas assignment, he or she will be more likely to adapt to the new environment in general, to interacting with nationals of the foreign country and to the work settings in the host location. Through integrating employees' relocation motivations, companies can make their expatriate selection process more effective that not only enhances employee satisfaction but predicts a successful assignment.

Albeit the usage of English as official working language is becoming more and more universal, local language skills are still beneficial for expatriates' adaptation. Similarly, despite of the growing number of people that travel and work with nationals of other cultures on a regular basis, cross-cultural training still facilitates newcomers' acculturation.

Even though globalization, economic, political conditions, technological advancements, changing motivations and characteristics of the workforce are shaping trends in global mobility, most of the determinants of cross-cultural adaptation of expatriates are still holding their effect as observed previously in numerous studies in the field of expatriate research.

6. Limitations

Although this thesis provides valuable findings about antecedents of expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment, it also has several limitations.

The first limitation derives from the nature of the sample. First of all, the final sample size of the study was relatively small, with 155 valid answers. As such, generalization of the findings for other expatriate assignments is not possible.

Furthermore, participants did not come from the same organization, not even from the same sector. As such, the impact of the organizational culture, that is a determinant of in-country adjustment according to the model of Black and his colleagues (1991) could not be controlled for. The strategy and the corporate culture of an organization significantly influence the settings of an international assignment (Caligiuri *et al.*, 2007). As organizational strategy and culture varies in every company; consequently, considerable differences might emerge in the assignment characteristics of expatriates from various corporations which in turn impact the way they adjust to the new environment.

The fact that various organizations were observed implies that the training program participants received was not constant. As discussed above, the type, content, method, medium, length of the training was different in every case. Hence, the impact of one specific training program could not be examined and the positive impact of extremely effective trainings was outweighed by the negative effect of poor preparation programs.

As this thesis did not merely concentrate on one organization, a two-group experimental design could not be adopted which is seen as the most reliable measure of cross-cultural training effectiveness in expatriate research (Kealey *et al.*, 1996). In this research design, cross-cultural skills of participants of a cross-cultural training, called experimental group and members of the so-called control group without training are compared before and after the training took place. Therefore, it requires that people in the two different groups come from relatively homogenous samples; in this case from the same organization in order to better evince the pure impact of the training.

Furthermore, numerous scholars have suggested the adoption of longitudinal research designs, that investigates expatriates' adjustment at different points of time as it was proven to be a non-constant phenomenon that changes over time (Kealey *et al.*, 1996; Bhaskar-Shrinivas *et al.*, 2005) that this current thesis does not provide.

Although, the impact of cultural and geographic distance on adjustment was not significant, therefore its influence did not bias the outcome, the results would have more reliability in case the country of origin and the host country were constant and not diverse as in this thesis.

Furthermore, adjustment and the usefulness of cross-cultural training were assessed by participating expatriates themselves. Although the universally accepted method of measuring adjustment is the questionnaire designed by Black and Stephens (1989) in expatriate research; self-assessment can lead to several biases. In order to increase validity, a multi source assessment should have been applied, integrating the opinion of peers or local supervisors in the host organization.

The current thesis presents findings that are in line with the majority of the corresponding data in the existing literature of expatriate research. Nevertheless, some of them deviate from the results depicted in the respective meta-analyses. The reason for this phenomenon can be that the applied scale to measure adjustment was somewhat modified compared to the one of Black and Stephens (1989) that is generally in use in similar studies.

As discussed previously, cross-cultural adjustment is a very complex phenomenon that depends on an extremely wide array of factors. As such, it is not feasible to integrate and investigate all the determinants of expatriate acculturation in one single study, as some of them are not even known for researchers. This study limited these factors to the knowledge of the local language, previous international experience, expatriates' willingness to relocate internationally and cross-cultural training. It did not take into account such important and widely-investigated antecedents of adjustment such as specific personal characteristics, spouse and family adjustment or job characteristics, for instance.

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Appendix-Questionnaire for assigned expatriates

1. What is your gender?

female

male

2. What is your nationality?

3. What is your current position in the company?

4. In what sector is your company operating?

Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing

Mining

Construction

Manufacturing

Transportation, Communication, Electric, Gas and Sanitary Services

Wholesale Trade

Retail Trade

Finance, Insurance and Real Estate

Services

Public Administration

5. What is the type of the company you work for?

national with international activities

multinational/global/transnational

6. What is the size of the company you work for?

small

medium-sized

large

7. For how long have you been working for the company?

_ years

8. In which country are you an expatriate?

9. Do you have any previous expatriate experience besides your current one?

no

less than 1 year

1-3 years

3-5 years

more than 5 years

If yes: in which country? _____

10. Prior to your current assignment, did you already have the opportunity to work together with host country nationals from the country where you are located now?

yes

no

11. What is the total duration of your assignment?

_months

or

_years

12. For how long have you been on your current assignment?

_months

or

_years

13. Concerning your spouse/partner:

- My spouse/partner lives with me in the host country.
- My spouse/partner does NOT live with me in the host country.
- I do not have a spouse/partner.

14. Concerning your child/children:

- My children live with me in the host country.
- My children do NOT live with me in the host country.
- I do not have children.

15. Were you able to communicate in the host country's language before your arrival to the host country? (at least basic language knowledge)

- yes
- no

16. How long was the period you had for preparation before the departure?

- less than a month
- 1-3 months
- more than 3 months

17. To what extent were you satisfied with the decision that you will overtake a foreign assignment?

- Not at all To a very high
- extent
- 1 2 3 4 5

18. To what extent do you agree that this assignment will positively influence your future career development?

- Not at all To a very high
- extent
- 1 2 3 4 5

19. To what extent did you consider yourself competent for the assignment?

- Not at all To a very high
- extent
- 1 2 3 4 5

20. To what extent did you feel familiar with the host culture prior your assignment?

Not at all extent To a very high
1 2 3 4 5

21. To what extent do you think intercultural knowledge is important for the success of your expatriation?

Not at all extent To a very high
1 2 3 4 5

22. Did your company provide you with preparation training?

- yes (continue with question 8)
- no (skip to the adjustment questionnaire)

23. When did the training take place?

- before departure to the host country
- upon arrival at the host country
- both

24. What was the length of training in total?

_ hours

25. What did this training program include? (more options)

- language training
- visa interview preparation
- training only related to the new job activities
- intercultural/cross-cultural training

26. What was the medium of the training?

- offline
- web-based (e-learning)
- both (combined)

27. In case you have participated in a cross-cultural training, what were the topics covered? (more options)

- general cultural awareness (non-country specific)
- general information about the country (history, geography, politics, economics)
- practical living information (transport, shopping, entertainment, administration)
- country-specific cultural awareness (cultural overview, cultural differences, attitudes, values)
- social and business practices
- working with host country nationals, networking, management and negotiation style
- communicating with host country nationals
- practical approaches to culture-shock management and lifestyle adjustment
- issues with partners and families being abroad
- host country nationals' attitudes to foreigners

28. Which of the following activities were applied in the course of the training? (more options)

- lectures, traditional briefings
- written materials
- videos, films
- case studies
- cultural assimilators/ critical incidents
- role plays
- culture contact simulation games
- video analysis of intercultural exercises
- intercultural workshops
- learning from former expatriates (on-the-job basis)
- look-see visits
- individual cross-cultural coaching
- workshops or coaching with host country nationals

29. To what extent do you feel you had adequate time to prepare for your assignment?

Not at all extent To a very high

1 2 3 4 5

30. Are you satisfied with the extent to what your employer supported your preparation?

Very dissatisfied Very satisfied

1 2 3 4 5

31. To what extent do you feel the training you have received is useful for your assignment?

Not at all extent To a very high

1 2 3 4 5

32. To what extent did you feel prepared for your assignment?

Not at all extent To a very high

1 2 3 4 5

33. To what extent did you feel the content of the training is adjusted to the reality of your assignment?

Not at all extent To a very high

1 2 3 4 5

34. To what extent do you feel the training is positively influencing your performance on your assignment?

Not at all extent To a very high

1 2 3 4 5

Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements:

35. Upon my arrival to the host country I could utilize the knowledge acquired in the course of the preparation programme/CCT I have received from my organization.

Strongly disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5

36. The training I have received from my organization helped me to reduce the initial frustrations after my arrival to the host country.

Strongly disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5

37. The training I have received from my organization helped me to moderate the cultural shock.

Strongly disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5

38. The training I have received from my organization helped me to feel more comfortable living and working in the host country.

Strongly disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5

39. The training I have received from my organization equipped me with all the essential information and knowledge necessary to adjust to the new environment.

Strongly disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5

40. The training I have received from my organization helps me to successfully execute my job in the host organization.

Strongly disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5

41. The training I have received from my organization facilitates an easier interaction with host country nationals at work.

Strongly disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5

42. The training I have received from my organization facilitates an easier interaction with host country nationals outside of work.

Strongly disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5

43. The training I have received from my organization helps me to apply the necessary behaviours required in the host culture.

Strongly disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5

44. Please evaluate the extent to which you are adjusted to the following domains in your new environment due to your assignment:

- 1: not adjusted at all
- 2: moderately unadjusted
- 3: somewhat adjusted
- 4: moderately adjusted
- 5: completely adjusted

DOMAINS OF LIFE	1	2	3	4	5
1. Living conditions					
1.1. Personal safety					
1.2. Climate					
1.3. Nature					
1.4. Pollution					
1.5. Hygiene					
1.6. Public transport					
1.7. Balance of private and professional life					
2. Housing conditions					
3. Food, gastronomic culture					
4. Shopping facilities					
5. Cost of living					
6. Entertainment/recreation/cultural facilities and opportunities					
7. Health care facilities					
8. Bureaucracy, institutions of public administration					
9. Socializing with host nationals					
9.1. Mentality					
9.2. Role as a foreigner					
10. Interacting with host nationals on a day-to-day basis					
10.1. Conflict behaviour					
10.2. Negotiation style and decision making					
10.3. Predictability and reliability					
10.4. Cooperation					
10.5. Dealing with each other					
11. Interacting with host nationals outside of work					
12. Speaking with host nationals					
12.1. Easiness of communication					
12.2. Communication in English					
13. Specific job responsibilities					
13.1. Task contents					
13.2. Autonomy					
13.3. Job-related contacts					
14. Supervisory responsibilities					
15. Distance from home, from family and friends back at home					