

## Impact of Different Types of Cross-Cultural Training on Cross-Cultural Adjustment

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### Abstract

Due to globalization, corporate sent expatriates from their home country to host country to extend their business worldwide. When expatriates reside in a foreign culture they face a lot of challenges to adopt the unfamiliar culture, which may cause premature return from a foreign country without completing their project. Moreover, early repatriation causes loss of financial as well as human assets in the form of health and mental issues like depression, withdrawal from friends and activities, sleeping problems, low energy, confused thinking, extreme mood swings, etc. To overcome this problem, sound “cross-cultural training” should be adopted which can prepare expatriates to behave and perform efficiently in a different cross-cultural setting. This literature review investigates the impact of various forms of CCT on CCA. Most of the articles included in this study are empirical in nature. This study supports the results of prior studies that found that “cross-cultural training” methods have a better relation with “cross-cultural adjustment” but the “post-arrival training” gives the better results as compared to “pre-departure training”. Moreover, we find that “post-arrival training” is strongly related to work adjustment and “language training” is greatly associated with interaction adjustment and general adjustment. The review revealed that there is greater need to further explore the deficiency in CCT methods and modify them according to need of the situation.

**Keywords:** Cross-cultural training, cross-cultural adjustment, pre-departure training, post-arrival training, language training, expatriates, repatriation

### Introduction

Due to the increasing rate of globalization, multinational corporations need to manage their competitive advantage in the international market to sustain their position worldwide. Consequently, large numbers of personnel are being placed on international assignments than ever before, it encourages the need of expatriates in the coming times (Hawley, 1999; Van der Bank & Rothmann, 2006) [30, 65]. To preserve succession in the global market human resource strategy contributes a significant role through “cross-cultural adjustment” of expatriates. Expatriates need to be interculturally proficient to successfully perform their foreign duty (Bennett *et al.*, 2000; Lenartowicz *et al.*, 2014, Leung *et al.*, 2014 Kempf & Holtbrugge, 2020) [4, 39, 40, 36]. Black & Mendenhall (1989) [7]; Kim & Slocum (2008); Mendenhall *et al.*, (1987) [45], came to the conclusion that on an average 20-40% of all expatriates that placed on international missions come home prematurely, due to which economic and social losses have to be suffered by organizations, these all ultimately indicate the adjustment related issues faced by them in their new culture. Previous observations state that 10% to 80% of expatriate failure rates exhibit a loss of \$40,000 to \$1 million for each unsuccessful assignment (Hawley, 2009; Vogel & van Vuuren, 2008) [31, 66]. Expatriates' inability to adjust in foreign settings impacts their performance there (Chew, 2004; Qi *et al.*, 2005; Swaak, 1995) [18, 50, 61], also decreases their morale, and their capacity to function effectively after they return to their native nations. (Collings *et al.*, 2018) [20]. According to (Jannesari & Sullivan, 2019) [32], Cross-cultural differences have an influence on the expatriate employee as well as the managers

and colleague in the destination country. This emphasizes the need for CCT programs that ready the expatriates for upcoming challenges that they may have to face in a different cross-cultural environment. Most scholars agree that CCT is the best method for managing human resources globally, and its potential advantages have long been acknowledged (Dowling & Welch, 2004; Kamoche, 1996) [22, 33]. It is extremely difficult for organizations to find appropriate employees for relocation. Because of this, the training it offers to their families and workers becomes crucial. Both researchers in this field and human resources (HR) professionals have the same opinion that pre-departure training and cross-cultural training can support expatriates to adjust in different cross-cultural settings (Forster, 2000) [26]. Despite this multinationals give less attention to it (Brewster, 1995; Waxin & Panaccio 2005, Selmer, 2000) [11, 67, 54]. Therefore, one of the finest method to improve their intercultural competence is to provide them proper information and understanding of the target country's customs and practices, mostly via cross-cultural training. CCT aims to change individuals' perception and behavior rather than merely imparting information that's why it is different from other training programs (Bhagat & Prien, 1996) [5]. Most business executives refuse to give cross-cultural training to their personnel because they doubt the program's efficacy (Black & Mendenhall, 1990) [8]. Therefore, our aim of the study is to know how cross-cultural training helps expatriates to face less difficulty in different cross-cultural settings which results in easily adjust to the new environment and examine the effect of CCT on CCA by reviewing the empirical and

conceptual papers, and also aware the organization how much it is important for the organizations' growth.

### Relevance of the Study

This research will show that how and to what extent CCT assists the expatriates to adjust in different cross-cultural environments. This study will also help the organization to understand which type of cross-cultural training needs maximum attention. The study's findings will also assist organizations' professionals in creating and implementing a CCT program that suits the requirement of the assignments.

### Research Methodology

For collecting the data related to CCT and CCA a detailed analysis of published and unpublished articles was undertaken. Most of the articles included in the study are from renowned databases like Wiley online library, Springer, Emerald, Taylor & Francis, etc. Perused studies published between 1966 and 2021. To deepen our understanding on this issue reference of review articles and meta-analyses were examined. Also, we find Google Scholar a better and convenience medium to explore our knowledge on this topic through easy access to all the suitable studies. Finally, more than seventy exclusive studies were examined during the search process. Most of the papers included in the study are from Western and Asian countries. The search queries include the terms "Cross-cultural adjustment" with the phrases "intercultural training", "cross-cultural training", and "multicultural training". These were also linked with the words "effectiveness," "impact," and "influence" to find more significant research. The articles that are included in the study related to the relation between CCT and CCA. The articles that have been evaluated used a variety of statistical methods, including "t-tests", "correlations", and "chi-square tests", as well as "exploratory factor analyses" (EFA), "confirmatory factor analyses" (CFA), and "structural equation modeling" (SEM) and many researches were reliant on the same sample, and we only kept one study with more precise data in terms of sample independence.

### Literature Review

#### Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA)

CCA defines a person's psychological comfort level and acculturation level towards a new culture (Black, 1988., Parker & McEvoy, 1993; Caligiuri, 2000) [6, 48, 12]. Research shows that if expatriates effectively adjust to their new environment, they are more interested to accept the new culture and able to build on the foundation set by their own culture by adopting new customs, norms, and behaviors (Church, 1982) [19]. But if the expatriate feels discomfort in the assigned nation's environment it would be hard for them to accept the behaviors, norms, and rules of the approachable country vice versa bad experiences in the host nation might sometimes cause expatriates to think of their own culture as too idealistic and host nations' culture unworthy to them. Black (1988) [6] defines three aspects of adjustment: "work adjustment", "interactional adjustment", and "general adjustment". Work adjustment deals with the feeling of familiarity that individual acquire at their workplace (Chen, 2015) [16]. The amount of ease with engaging and socializing with people in a new country is referred to as interactional adjustment, and the degree of adjustment to necessities of life such as Climatic conditions, food, health care, shopping facilities, and housing situations are referred to as general adjustment (Black, 1988) [6]. Previous empirical studies

verified the reliability and validity of these three aspects of expatriates 'adjustment (Sousa *et al.*, 2017; Tahir & Ertek, 2018) [60, 63]. According to previous studies, CCA is a primary outcome that defines the significance of an expatriate's assignment and it affects the growth of another immediate outcome of CCA. Therefore, Cross-cultural adjustment is a significant issue for businesses since it influences expatriate assignments.

#### Cross-Cultural Training (CCT)

In order to communicate effectively across cultures, people need to improve their cognitive, emotional, and behavioral abilities through the CCT learning process (Ran & Huang, 2019) [51]. These programs enhance executives' ability to deal with people from other culture by strengthens their cognitive comprehension and following the ways of host nations' culture (Earley & Peterson, 2004) [3]. The probable benefits of valuable training have long been recognized, and most experts view CCT as one of supreme job in universal human resource management (Dowling & Welch, 2004, Kamoche, 1996) [22, 33]. Effective CCT enhances trainees' knowledge, which enables them to understand the various aspects of cultural diversity and cross-cultural competency for both themselves and their organization and enhances their ability to interact with cultural differences. Academics have found that CCT significantly impacts expatriate assimilation. For example, Black & Mendenhall (1990) [8] found that CCT helps the expatriates to adjust in different environment with ease. Expatriate success can better be achieved by expatriate adjustment. (Furuya *et al.*, 2007; Graf, 2004) [27, 28]. Thus, CCT is an effective technique for addressing both business performance and multicultural policy objectives.

#### Cross-Cultural Training and Cross-Cultural Adjustment

Numerous researches have revealed that CCT aids an individual in adjusting to a novel cross-cultural environment; it improves their ability to adjust (Chemers *et al.*, 1966; Randolph *et al.*, 1977; Becker, 1982; Befus, 1988; McDaniel *et al.*, 1988) [15, 52, 2, 3, 41]. Many multinational firms should give constant counseling for expatriates to adapt easily in the foreign culture through CCT programs. CCT starts before an expatriate departs and lasts till they reach the destination country (Selmer *et al.*, 1998) [58]. CCT is efficient in acquiring cross-cultural expertise and facilitates CCA as well as individual job performance (Deshpande & Viswesvaran, 1992, Wang & Tran, 2012) [21]. The findings of the Chenyag (2021) [17] meta-analysis study were consistent with those of earlier research, which showed that CCA is helpful in enhance cross-cultural intelligence, cross-cultural adaptability, and job performance. Earley (1987) [22] discovered that CCT improved both management performance and cultural adaption in the host nation. Wang & Tran (2012) discovered a favorable correlation between general, interpersonal, and job adjustment skills and pre-departure CCT, post-arrival CCT, and language training. According to Okpara & Kabongo (2011) [47], several forms of CCT can predict how well expatriates would adjust. Brewster and Pickard (1994) examined that expatriates and their partners believe in efficiency of CCT practices because they assume that training would enhance their ability to better manage the difficulties of the foreign culture.

#### Pre-Departure Training and Cross-Cultural Adjustment

Before departing for the foreign country, the expatriate participates in a series of activities that are designed to

increase cultural knowledge, suitable behaviors, abilities, and a favorable attitude toward the new culture in the form of pre-departure training. The main goal is to increase the expat's cultural sensitivity and understanding of how to deal with cultural challenges, which should expedite the learning process and increase the expatriates' ability to easily adjust in the foreign setting (Wang & Tran, 2012). Pre-departure training has a favorable impact on CCA according to recent research on pre-departure and expatriate adjustment (Okpara, 2016; Tahir, 2018) [46, 63]. The results of the survey conducted by Ko & Yang (2011) [38] suggested that pre-departure English language training supports the expatriates' adjustment and enhanced their capacity to communicate across different cultures. These consequently have a favorable impact on their capacity to establish a rapport with the local workforce, complete their abroad missions, and, ultimately, improve performance at work. Several studies have given different results; Selmer (2005) [62] identified that pre-departure CCT shows a weak significant association with work adjustment but exhibits a very strong relationship with general and interaction adjustment. Kealey & Protheroe (1996) [35] after analyzed the various papers on CCT and CCA came to the conclusion that maximum number of studies used seriously defective methodology and found it difficult to provide accurate conclusion about the effects of pre-departure training on expatriate adjustment. Wurtz (2014) [68] also exclaimed no statistical impact of pre-departure CCT on expatriates' performance when it compared with the other expatriates' performance. But most studies exhibit its significant relation with cross-cultural adjustment. So, Pre-departure training provides real experience of the host culture in advance in the home country which helps expatriates to learn how to face adjustment-related issue in a foreign country.

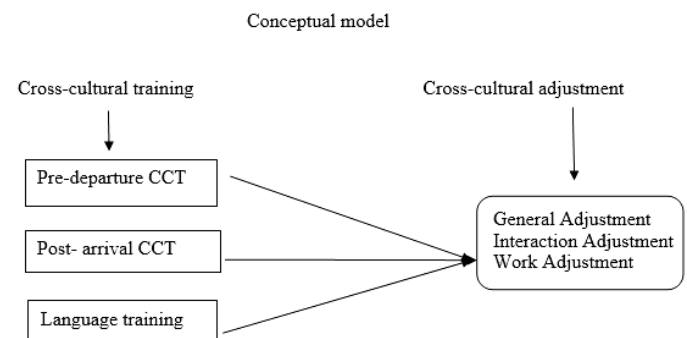
### Post-Arrival Training and Cross-Cultural Adjustment

Many businesses still perceive post-arrival training as inefficient and expensive but according to empirical research, it is better than pre-departure training (Mendenhall *et al.*, 2002; Selmer *et al.*, 1998) [43, 58]. After arriving in the destination nation, expatriates often face adjustment related issues in their new cross-cultural context as a result the organization that invested in its expatriate's assignment might suffer a huge financial loss. Post-arrival training offers some essential tools such as social support and on-site instructions, although it seldom happens after the expatriates arrive (Mendenhall & Wiley, 1994) [44]. Wang & Tran (2012) discovered a favorable correlation between post-arrival CCT and general, interpersonal, and work adjustment. Expatriates who obtain CCT after relocating abroad perform efficiently than those who don't receive it or who just receive pre-departure training (Wurtz, 2014) [68]. Another intriguing finding is that a significant portion of expatriates opted for post-arrival training as a result multinational firms continuously increase their interest in such training (Selmer, 2001) [57]. Thus, the need for post-arrival CCT is continuously increasing because it helps to learn local customs and laws which further enhances expats' capacity for cross-cultural proficiency, cross-cultural adjustment, and job-related performance (Ko & Yang, 2011) [38].

### Language Training and Cross-Cultural Training

When expatriates move to a new country, language plays a crucial role in communicating their thoughts and feelings and understanding the thoughts and feelings of the local population. Interpersonal connections can be improved by

expatriates who can express themselves well in the local language. Fish (2005) [25] asserts that communication is a key managerial skill for expatriates and a basic element of leadership. As part of the training process, foreign language training is also necessary. According to empirical research by Peltokorpi (2008) [49], linguistic ability, particularly in Asian countries, promotes adaption to social situations. The language which is spoken by host nationals also impacts the expatriates' expectations before the international assignment and having accurate expectations led to a remarkable impact on cross-cultural adjustment. Additionally, it would be challenging for native speakers of the host nation to understand the expatriate language. Therefore, expatriates must learn the language of their new nation. Selmer (1999) [55] asserts that expatriates who establish connections with locals feel less uncomfortable as a consequence of cultural differences although such relationships need knowledge of the local language. When language classes are incorporated into training programs, it is more likely that expatriates experience less difficulty to adjust (Fish, 2005) [25]. According to Zhang & Peltokorpi (2016) [69], the ability to express their thought in host nations' language has a variety of effects on the adjustment of expatriates in both their professional and personal lives. Cross-cultural communication strongly influences expatriate adjustment, according to Abugre *et al.*, 2019 [1]. Language learning is related with all three aspects of adjustment but is closely associated with work adjustment (Wang & Tran, 2012). The inclusion of language training in addition to pre-departure and post-arrival training would thus be more advantageous for an expatriate assignment. CCTs that actively and completely focus on all domains provide a better opportunity to enhance participants' CCA Compared to CCTs that focus on just one particular factor of change (Sit *et al.*, 2017) [59]. Thus, learning a new language in association with post-arrival training and aid activities may help an expatriate's adjustment.



Source: Wang & Tran 2012

Fig 1: Conceptual model

### Discussion

The goal of this research is to ascertain how the various forms of CCT affect the three aspects of adjustment. The findings of this research are similar with the result of prior studies. Sequential CCTs help an expatriate change their attitudes toward their new surroundings and also boosts their self-assurance and capacity to adapt (Okpara & Kabongo, 2011) [47]. By considering adjustment and CCT as multidimensional concepts rather than as unitary phenomena, this study offers a deep knowledge of these relationships. The biggest challenge that is faced by expatriates in foreign settings are the lack of current information about the local business environment, the extremely brief length of the majority of these courses, the



absence of guidance on how to handle family issues while on international assignments, and the absence of follow-up training after they had begun international assignments (Forster, 2000) [26]. This study discovered that post-arrival CCT appears to have a somewhat greater impact on expatriate adjustment than pre-departure CCT. According to Selmer (2001a, 2001b) [56, 57], when expatriates have lengthier overseas postings they preferred post-arrival CCT to pre-departure CCT. (Okpara & Kabongo, 2020). When conducting a relative analysis of these three types of training it was found that post-arrival CCT adds more to overall adjustment and professional adjustment. Most businesses give post-arrival CCT less attention since it is expensive and time-consuming. Consequently, management increasingly depends on pre-departure cross-cultural training programs. If companies have adequate resources and finance then expatriates should undergo a variety of training programs, including pre-departure, post-arrival cross-cultural training and language training because expatriates with cross-cultural competency are essential in global commercial economies. Post-arrival CCT should maximize the adjustment of expatriates if the organization is limited in these resources. But if organizations provide training programs in the absence of post-arrival and language training, expatriates' job performance may suffer because it is difficult for them to adjust in a new environment. According to Black *et al.* (1992) [10], pre-departure training would be even more beneficial if it was continued in the assigned nation, which is regarded as the best location to learn about a new culture. Their performance and productivity rise when expatriates are well-adjusted. Therefore, human resource managers in multinational businesses should create pertinent interventions to raise the degree of adjustment for expatriates to improve their performance and prevent failure. If an organization wants to get a competitive edge in the worldwide market then it should carefully plan its strategy for expatriate adjustment. Instead, Managers should offer assistance, such as mentorship programs, to improve the interaction and work adjustment of expatriates to their new workplace. In conclusion, expatriate success enhances the organizations' ability to compete in worldwide markets and assists the individual in finding satisfaction in their career growth.

#### Limitation, Implications, and Future Research Direction

**The number of studies on** cross-cultural adjustment to date have used expatriates from western nations as samples, while studies on the adjustment of expatriates in India are scarce. It is advised to do more studies to identify the other important variables impacting the correlations between CCT and outcomes, especially by increasing the sample size. For instance, types of expatriates (Bozionelos, 2009) [9], and prior international experience may moderate CCT-outcome relationships, Further research should include more outcome variables either added with cross-cultural adjustment or included as an outcome of cross-cultural adjustment (in which CCA plays a role of mediating or moderating variable). Further study should also include various antecedents of cross-cultural training. This study may also motivate other researchers to carry out further explore this topic to deepen our understanding in this field as there is very less research on this subject in India. By using CCT in the form of pre-departure, post-arrival, and language training, we may be able to better understand how socio-cultural adjustment and expatriate adjustment are related and how other factors impact their adjustment process. Organizational disregard for training

spouses and families of expatriates may contribute a special role in the failure of expatriates' assignment. Companies that are strategically planning their human resource management for expatriates must also include progression planning and career development program in the expats' preparation program. As a result, their performance and productivity often rise when expatriates are well-adjusted.

#### Conclusion

The study finds the positive influence of these three types of trainings on every aspect of cross cultural adjustment but post arrival training plays a major role to enhance adjustment, training provides in the absence of this found it difficult to meet our expectations that we had from these program. The finding of this study supports the opinion that has been held by scholars over the past 20 years. More work is required for a detailed analysis of the variables or factors that affect expatriates' adjustment and other outcome variables that expressly and impliedly prevent the growth of the corporate at the international level. The finding of this study helps organizations to formulate various types of CCT programs that enhance expatriates ability to adjust in new foreign settings.

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