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COPING STYLES AND ADAPTATION OF FINNISH REPATRIATES: A STUDY
OF INTERNATIONALLY EMPLOYED FINNS

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Tiivistelmä

Viime aikoina sekä tutkijat että kaupalliset yritykset ovat entistä enemmän kiinnostuneita paluumuuttajien sopeutumisesta. Kuitenkin paluumuuttajien sopeutumistyyli on jäänyt taka-alalle, ja niistä on vähän järjestelmällistä tutkimusta. Tämä tutkimus selvittää Suomeen palaajien sopeutumista, heidän käyttämiään sopeutumistyyliä sekä heidän potentiaalista sopeutumiskykyään. Tutkimukseen osallistuivat paluumuuttajat kuudesta merkittävästä suomalaisesta kansainvälisestä yrityksestä. Tiedon keruu tapahtui postitse. 60stä lähetetystä kyselystä 41 palautettiin tutkijalle. Vastausprosentiksi saatiin näin ollen 68%. Kyselylomakeet sisälsivät kysymyksiä tutkimuskohteen sopeutumisesta erilaisiin elämänosa-alueisiin, sekä paluun taustatietoja, Niitamon (1996) 60 kysymystä käsittävän Selviytymisen keinot -kyselyn, jonka reliabiliteetti havaittiin hyväksi ($\alpha = 0.6, 0.62, 0.67, 0.66, 0.79$), sekä Kelley'n ja Meyersin (1995) Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventoryn, joka mittasi palaajien potentiaalista sopeutumista. Viimeksi mainitun kyselyn reliabiliteetti oli yhtä faktoria ($\alpha = 0.24$) lukuunottamatta myös hyvä ($\alpha = 0.82, 0.67, 0.77$). Yleisesti kaikki tutkittavat raportoivat sopeutuneensa hyvin takaisin Suomeen. Korkeasti koulutetut käyttivät sopeutumiskeinoja, joissa kontrolloiva käytös oli etusijalla. He pyrkivät suoraan toimintaan ja yrittivät kontrolloida tunteitaan stressi- tilanteen laukaisemiseksi. Naiset turvautuivat miehiä yleisemmin muihin ihmisiin stressitilanteissa. Aika ulkomailla näytti vaikuttavan etäistämisen käyttöön selviytymiskeinona, mutta lopullisia päätelmiä on vaikea tehdä tutkimuksen perusteella, sillä ryhmät olivat liian pieniä. Mielialansäätely oli ainoa selviytymiskeino, joka korreloi merkitsevästi palaajien sopeutumistason kanssa. Potentiaalisen sopeutumiskyvyn sekä paluumuuttajien sopeutumistasojen välillä ei havaittu merkitseviä yhteyksiä, vaikkakin merkitseviä positiivisia korrelaatioita löydettiin tutkimuskohteiden potentiaalisen sopeutumisen ja heidän käyttämiensä selviytymiskeinojen välillä. Esimerkiksi suunnitelmallinen ongelman ratkaisu korreloi merkitsevästi kaikkien Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventoryn faktoreiden kanssa.

AVAINSANAT: *kansainvälinen henkilöstöhallinto; kansainvälinen komennus; kulttuurishokki; paluumuutto; sopeutuminen*

Abstract

Recently the topic of repatriate adjustment has received increased scholarly attention. The coping styles of repatriates following an international assignment, however, have received little investigation. This study examined the relationships between the re-adaptation of Finnish repatriates, the coping styles they had chosen to employ, and their predispositions for successful adaptation. The study was conducted with repatriates employed by six major Finnish multinational firms in the form of mail questionnaires. 41 out of 60 questionnaires were returned making the response rate to be 68%. The questionnaire package included an inquiry about subject's level of adjustment in a number of different areas, open-ended questions to discern the circumstances of their return, a sixty-question Coping Strategy Inventory by Niitamo (1996) and a fifty-question Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory by Kelley and Meyers (1995). The reliabilities of the Coping Strategy Inventory were $\alpha = 0.60, 0.62, 0.67, 0.79$. For the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory reliabilities were $\alpha = 0.82, 0.67, 0.77, 0.24$. In general, the participants of this study were skillfully adapted. Those with higher educational levels used coping techniques that required controlling behavior. They took direct action and sought to control their emotions in order to deal with the stressful situations. Women, with regard to coping style, relied more than men on others for support. Furthermore, the time spent abroad appeared to impact on the utilization of detachment and repression of the problem as a method of coping. The only coping style that significantly correlated with the level of adjustment was emotional regulation, which correlated negatively with the level of adjustment. No significant results about the possible relationship between a subject's predisposition to adjust successfully and their actual level of adaptation were found. There were, however, significant correlations between the participants' predisposition to adapt and the coping styles utilized by them. Direct, Confrontative Problem Solving factor of the Coping Strategy Inventory correlated significantly with Emotional Resilience, Flexibility/Openness and Perceptual Acuity factors of the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory. In addition Emotional Resilience correlated with Emotion Regulation/Regression.

KEY WORDS: *adjustment; culture shock; international assignments; repatriation; reverse culture shock; and stress*

CONTENTS

1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Turnover and Failed Repatriation	2
1.3 Difficulty of Reentry: Why is it a Surprise for Repatriates?	3
1.3.1 Meaning of Home	3
1.3.2 Expectations and Reality	4
1.4 Adaptation to a Foreign Culture	7
1.4.1 Steps of Adaptation	7
1.4.2 Culture Shock Indepth.....	10
1.5 Adaptation to Home Culture	13
1.5.1 Reverse Culture Shock	16
1.5.2 Dimensions of Repatriation Adjustment	16
1.6 Coping and the Repatriation Adjustment	24
1.7 Aims and Research Questions, Hypothesis	31
2. METHODOLOGY	33
2.1 Subjects	33
2.2 Procedure	34
2.3 Ethical Issues	39
3. RESULTS	40
3.1 Qualitative Questions	40
3.2 Coping Styles	46

3.3 Adjustment and Selection of Coping Styles	53
3.4 Potential Ability to Adapt and Adaptation	57
3.5 Potential Ability to Adapt and Coping Styles	58
3.6 Summary	60
4. DISCUSSION	62
4.1 Why were the repatriates of this study successful in their return?	62
4.2 What were the factors that led to one's choice of a coping style and how did that choice impact adjustment?	65
4.3 How are coping styles, levels of adjustment and one's personality related?.....	68
4.4 Summary	70
4.5 Discussion of Method	71
4.6 Recommendations for Future Research	72
REFERENCES	73
APPENDIX	78

1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

A common practice of multinational firms, including the ones in Finland, is to send their employees on overseas assignments; thus placing these individuals in an experience of living and working abroad for a number of years. This mobility is due to the globalization of today's world and it is not only those individuals in high positions of the corporate ladder but also those in lower ranks that become sojourners. For decades the expatriation issues of acculturation, adjustment, and adaptation difficulties to a different culture and a different environment have been topics of multiple research studies. Accordingly, a number of theories have been proposed to explain these initial hardships. Little attention, however, has been paid to the process of returning home from one's time abroad. In other words, repatriation issues, which can often be even harder for the individual to deal with than the issues caused by expatriation, have been neglected until recently. The issue of repatriation along with reverse culture shock has caught the interest of researchers and during the last few years a number of studies on this subject have been conducted.

Historically, reentry has been considered by organizations as a relatively easy and natural process due to the fact that the expatriates were "coming home." Repatriation was not seen as an adjustment process that required help from the organization and the society that the repatriate was reentering. Recently, however, many companies have begun to consider it a major problem, since "most expatriates find that readjusting back home, now commonly known as reverse culture shock, is more difficult than adjusting overseas ever was" (Storti, 1997, 1-2). Another reason that caused organizations to pay little or no attention to the repatriation problem was that these companies could afford to do so. Meaning, that in years past the job was the most important element in one's life and the employees took such problems as an inevitable

part of their life and work. Now-a-days, "quality of life," has become more important than the job. The values of employees have changed and they no longer see a need to move around solely for the benefit of their company, but do so for their own sake (Loewenthal & Snedden, 1986). Besides the need of companies to address the difficulties of repatriation and changing employee priorities, the major reason for this growing concern about failed repatriations is the fact that these failures cost organizations a great deal of money. In short, the issue of repatriation has become economically alarming.

1.2 Turnover and Failed Repatriations

Turnover rates of expatriates at companies after their return is one of the symptoms of the failed repatriation process. It is a physical representation of the unhappiness caused by an unsuccessful return. According to Adler (1997), as many as 20% of the employees who have completed international assignments wanted to leave their firm upon returning home. Moreover, studies by Black and Stephens (1989) and Black (1992) reported that the average repatriation failure rate is 25%, i.e. as many as one fourth of the expatriates returning to their home countries leave the firm within a year after repatriation.

Why should companies start to pay attention to the problems of repatriation? First of all, the companies can face tremendous losses due to failed repatriations. The firm has invested a large sum of money into the process; first in sending one of its employees abroad and then repatriating the individual back to the home country. "The average cost to the company of repatriating an executive and family exceeds \$100,000" (Adler, 1997, 263). Also, when considering other financial costs brought upon the firm by its global assignments, it is easy to understand the new found interest in the repatriation problem. According to Black, Gregersen and Mendenhall (1992), firms spend anywhere from \$150,000 to \$250,000 per year for each expatriate manager in

terms of salary, benefits and subsidies. Moreover, poorly managed repatriation can lead to a situation where no one is interested in taking a global assignment since that would mean a “kiss of death” for one’s career. Unhappy returnees give a “bad name” to overseas assignments and thus the interest towards them cools among the employees, especially in firms where the returnees’ careers appear to have suffered as a result of going abroad (Storti, 1997). According to Black et al. (1991, 1992, 237), “fewer than 25% of the Finnish expatriates returning home received promotions and only 11% of the American and 10% of the Japanese did.” Moreover, “upon repatriation, 77% of American, 43% of Japanese, and 54% of Finnish managers were demoted to lower-level positions than they had held overseas” (Black et al., 1991, 1992, 237). Therefore the following question is raised : why is returning to one’s own country and culture so hard?

1.3 Difficulty of Reentry: Why Is It a Surprise for Repatriates?

1.3.1 Meaning of Home

In the most practical sense, a person’s home is where he/she was born, raised or lived for a long time. It is also the environment where the person feels most comfortable, where the routines are familiar and where the individual is known, trusted and understood. Storti (1997, 14) gives the following definition for the word home: “Home is a place of rituals and routine interactions, of entirely predictable events and people and very few surprises; the place where you belong and feel safe and secure and where you can accordingly trust your instincts, relax, and be yourself.” In the case of a returning expatriate from abroad, coming home is not really a home-coming. The core of the experience of reentry is that the repatriate realizes that home is really not a home (Storti, 1997). How is it possibly that a person becomes a stranger in his/her own home country? The answer lies in the changes that have taken place at home as well as within

the individual when he/she adjusted to the foreign country. Therefore, home is not a home any longer to the repatriate and the reentering process is a difficult one: “To reenter, it turns out, is to be temporarily homeless” (Storti, 1997, 29).

1.3.2 Expectations and Reality

In addition to the feeling homeless, the returnee is frequently surprised by the difficulties of the re-entry since “returnees come back neither to the world they left nor to the world they are expecting” (Adler, 1997, 243). Furthermore, the returnee is often unprepared for the experience of reentry shock since he/she is expecting that coming home will be quite wonderful (Storti, 1997). What often happens is that the expatriate idealizes their home country while overseas — remembering only the good aspects and forgetting the bad ones (Adler, 1997). In Adler’s (1997, 244) own words “expatriates face the real changes, the gap between the way it was and the way it is, and the gap between their idealized memories and reality.” Black et al. (1992, 219) further warn that “if you look at repatriation as a ‘homecoming’ you’re setting yourself up for failure.” Therefore, repatriates are in for a disappointment if they expect to find their home, friends and family unchanged and if they expect to fit in painlessly and easily. Repatriates need to realize that a number of changes have taken place at home. For example, the home country itself has undergone changes, as well as the organization that the repatriate is re-entering. Moreover, the person has changed while an expatriate. Before the assignment that sends the individual to a foreign environment, the person has consciously and unconsciously acquired a mental map that helps him/her to function effectively in the home country. When abroad, however, most expatriates acquire new mental maps and behavioral routines that tell them how to act and what to say in the new environment. The components of change are summarized in Figure 1.

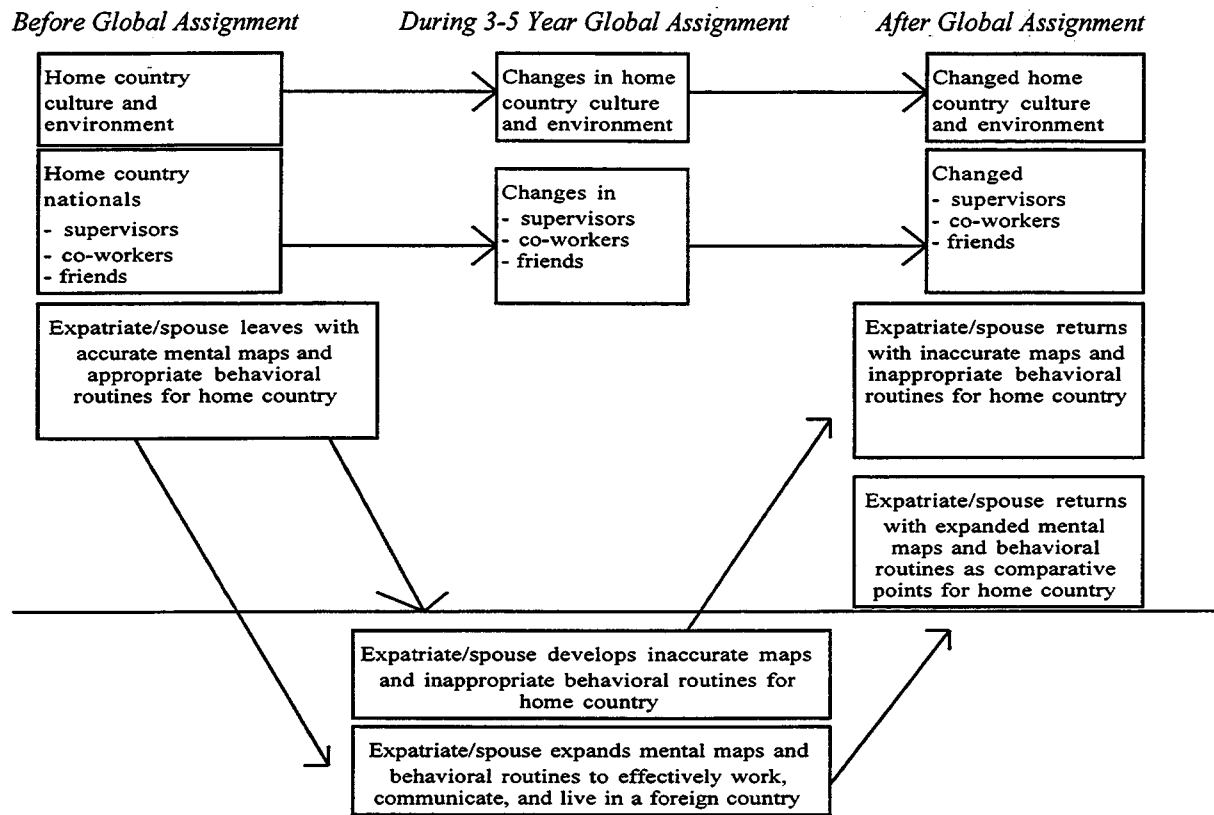


FIGURE 1. Components of change (Black, Gregersen & Mendenhall, 1992, 222)

Accordingly, realistic expectations about changes and about repatriation play an important role in adaptation. Notion of the significance of expectations in the cross-cultural adjustment process persists in the literature. Weismann and Furnham (1987) showed in their study of American sojourners in the United Kingdom that realistic expectations facilitate adaptation. In other words, if an individual has realistic

expectations about the situation he/she is about to encounter, the person will adjust to the situation sooner and easier. Moreover, Cochrane (1983, cited in Rogers and Ward, 1993) argued, based on his studies of West Indian and Asian immigrants in Britain, that unmet high expectations result in adjustment problems. At the other end, Krupinski (1985, cited in Furnham and Bochner, 1986) suggested, that unmet low expectations lead to better adaptation. From these results we could assume that it would be better to have lower expectations rather than higher expectations prior to an environmental change.

This assumption, however, is hardly the case with repatriation adjustment. According to Adler (1981), returning to one's original culture is often more difficult than moving to a foreign culture. She attributed this increased difficulty to inaccurate expectations. In sum, the adaptation difficulties during the repatriation adjustment process are often times due to the unrealistic expectations of the repatriates. These expectations are more often too high than too low. This hypothesis was researched by Black with his study on the relationship of prior expectations of the re-entry and the repatriation adjustment after the return.

Black (1992) based his study on the relationship between expatriate expectations and repatriate adjustment on the outcomes from other scholars' work. In particular, he relied on two major findings: (1) returning expatriates often lack an accurate understanding of the home country, the home office, or their new job (Tung, 1981) and (2) these individuals change in significant ways during their time overseas (Adler, 1981). According to Black (1992, 177), the significance of his findings can be summarized as follows: "In general, managers whose job and non-work expectations were met, reported higher levels of repatriation adjustment and job performance than those whose expectations were either under- or overmet." He also discovered a significant amount of spill over from job expectations to general non work repatriation adjustment and vice versa. Therefore, the individual's job expectations would be expected to play a central role in the repatriation adjustment process. Naturally, not all researchers agree with the significant role that realistic expectations are foreseen to play in the adaptation process.

One of the few studies to dismiss the role of expectations was conducted by Rogers and Ward (1993). Based on their study of twenty secondary school students that were studying abroad for one year, they concluded that there was no significant relationship between expectations and experiences, and that realistic expectations as such were unrelated to psychological adjustment. Nevertheless, this is one of the very few research studies dismissing the role of expectations in the adjustment process and not as convincing as the other studies. In other words, the evidence that speaks on behalf of the role of expectations in adjustment process is vast and more compelling.

1.4 Adaptation to a Foreign Culture

In order to understand re-adaptation to one's home environment, one should be familiar with the adaptation process to a foreign culture since repatriation is often seen as culture shock in reverse. The adjustment process of an expatriate, an immigrant, a sojourner, in other words a stranger to an environment, is known as acculturation. The dynamics of cross-cultural adjustment involve an individual's routines, ego, and self-image. According to Tsang-Feign (1996), acculturation lasts anywhere from six months to a year, and anyone who changes an environment and a culture is bound to go through this process. Gudykunst (1988) claimed that a person going through an acculturation process must learn new ways of thinking, feeling and behaving in order to coordinate their activities with the local culture. That is to say, the individual needs to alter his/her mental map to fit the cultural norms, habits, traditions as well as ways of thinking and acting presented by the new society.

1.4.1 Steps of adaptation

How does this adaptation process work in actuality? Kim (1988) presents a communication-centered model of adaptation where adaptation is conceptualized as a

stress-adaptation-growth cycle. One way of illustrating this concept is seen in Figure 2.

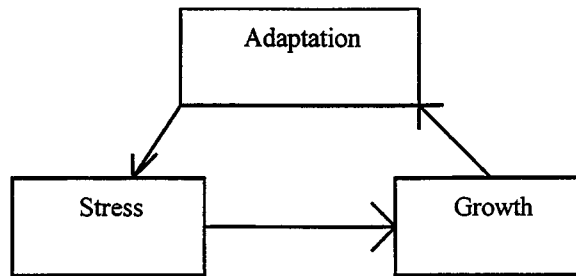


FIGURE 2. Stress-adaptation-growth cycle

This model is not a continuous linear progression, but a cyclical pattern where a person adapting to another culture is learning and changing through constant trial and error. In other words, the eventual backward motion propels the individual forward and higher, and it is this continuous circular motion that will lead in time to successful adaptation. This model is just the rough paradigm of the adjustment. Naturally there are other factors that facilitate the process.

The factors that contribute to the adaptation adjustment are, a sojourner's adaptive predisposition, a sojourner's communication, and the receptivity of a host environment. The predisposition refers to the fact that individuals approach the situation with different characteristics and circumstances. Among the characteristics that Kim (1994) believes that each person brings into the adaptation process are the following:

1. *Person's personality*: For example, characteristics like openness (receptiveness to new information, flexibility, tolerance for ambiguity, "open-mindedness", and "self-trust") and strength (resilience, risk taking, hardiness, persistence, patience, elasticity, and resourcefulness) serve as inner sources for individuals to draw from during the adaptation process;

2. *Preparedness*: This alludes to the prior level of host communication competence before the move to another culture and the cognitive predisposition to participate in the social communication activities of the host society; and

3. *Ethnicity*: Ethnic characteristic, particularly the physical features influence the way that the newcomers are accepted by the host culture.

Brown (1990), on the other hand, sees the acculturation process as a sickness that an individual has to overcome. The first stage is a period of excitement and euphoria over the newness of the surroundings. The second stage — culture shock — emerges as the individual feels the intrusion of more and more cultural differences into his own self-image and sense of security. The third stage is one of gradual recovery, while the fourth stage represents near or full recovery, either assimilation or adaptation, and acceptance of the new culture. Self-confidence, in the “new” person that has developed in this culture, is gained by that individual.

Acton and Walker de Felix (1990) have yet another model of acculturation that entails four stages:

1. *Tourist*: The early phase, in which the new culture is almost totally inaccessible; phase often referred to as entailing some degree of culture shock.

2. *Survivor*: The stage of functional language and functional understanding of the culture.

3. *Immigrant*: The degree of acculturation we expect from an educated learner who spent an extended period of time working and living in a foreign culture.

4. *Citizen*: The stage that is almost at the level of the native speaker, managing even the subtleties of the language and culture.

In sum, the adaptation to another culture is often viewed as stage-like process or so-called U-curve model as shown in Figure 3.

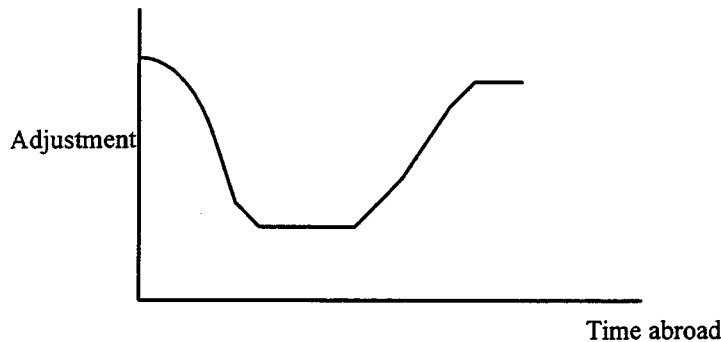


FIGURE 3. U-Curve model representing the adjustment to another culture

The cyclical model presented by Kim (1988), however, gives a point of view on the adaptation process that contributes positively to the stage theories that are most often used when describing acculturation. Kim's model gives us an idea that development of the adaptation is not necessarily a linear, stage-like development, but that the adaptation is more of a spiral notion, where draw-backs will eventually thrust you into the next "stage" if given enough time.

1.4.2 Culture Shock Indepth

Culture shock is the most acute period of an adaptation process and thus we should pay more attention to it when discussing the stages of acculturation. Adler (1972, 25-26) describes the psychological reactions to culture shock:

The individual undergoing culture shock reflects his anxiety and nervousness with cultural differences through any number of defense mechanisms: repressions, regression, isolation and rejection. These defensive attitudes speak, in behavioral terms, of a basic underlying insecurity which may encompass loneliness, anger, frustration and self-questioning of competence. With familiar props and cues of cultural understanding removed, the individual becomes disoriented, afraid of, and alienated from the things that he knows and understands.

Oberg (1958, cited in Adler, 1987, 25) defines culture shock as "a form of anxiety that

results from the loss of commonly perceived and understood signs and symbols of social intercourse.” Culture shock can be further conceptualized as “a set of negative affective reactions to encounters in the new, foreign environment wherein individuals lack a complete and accurate understanding of what is expected” (Oberg, 1960; Torbiorn, 1982, cited in Black, 1992, 179-180). These are general descriptions of the culture shock that one goes through while adapting to a new culture, but they do not really give us a full understanding why culture shock is so stressful. One should pay closer attention to impacts of uncertainty and routines to stress formation.

As Adler (1987) described, uncertainty is greatest during this stage of acculturation, i.e. culture shock. Uncertainty results from a loss of familiar environment and routines. Moreover, Gregersen and Stroh (1997) identified the reduction of uncertainty as a key component of the adjustment process. In other words, if one could diminish the uncertainty in a new situation, the adaptation process would be easier. In addition, Gudykunst and Hammer (1988) confirmed with their research collaborating anxiety reduction with intercultural adaptation, that uncertainty reduction is indeed related to adaptation. They argued, however, based on the same study, that anxiety reduction is not necessary for adaptation since although anxiety is associated with the initial stage of adaptation, once this stage is over, the anxiety reduction may no longer strongly influence on adaptation. In short, there is number of studies indicating that uncertainty does play an important role during the stage of culture shock. In fact, direct experience in the new environment helps reduce the uncertainty by learning through trial and error or observing what is acceptable in the new environment (Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Brislin,1981).

This process of acculturation, however, is a gradual process of adaptation to the target culture. Gudykunst and Hammer (1988, cited in Gao & Gudykunst, 1990,302) isolated eight variables that “affected both the reduction of uncertainty and anxiety: knowledge of host culture, shared networks, intergroup attitudes, favorable contacts, stereotypes, cultural identity, cultural similarity, and second-language competence.” These are factors that would diminish the stress caused by the uncertainty of the situation and contribute to easier adaptation. In sum, one can decrease the uncertainty

and by doing so, increase the level of adjustment. The stress caused by the loss of familiar routines and environment cannot be removed completely, but the realization of what is causing the stress may ease the impact of that stress.

Routines are highly dependent on the familiar and the known. As Storti (1997, 21) describes “a routine is anything you do without thinking, without paying conscious attention to your actions and words; indeed, in its purest form a routine is something you do while you are paying conscious attention to something else.” A person experiencing culture shock loses the basis of the routines which previously left the individual’s mental capacities available for other tasks and other areas. In the words of Black et al., (1992, 44), “the mind cannot consciously process an infinite number of issues simultaneously. Routines and the certainty, they provide, create a kind of psychological economy.” Whenever a routine is invalidated by a new environment, an individual must spend more time and energy to process even the most simple tasks. This provokes frustration and stress. Moreover, individuals are no longer cognitively sure how to behave (i.e. they have uncertainty) and thus they experience feelings of anxiety or lack of security. This loss of routines results in stress which directly impacts one’s adaptation.

Moreover, the stress is enhanced by an individual’s drive to maintain and to repair one’s self-image. Routines are a fundamental source of self-image and in strange surroundings where one’s routines are not supported the self-image suffers. Additionally, in new situations the individual is constantly confronted with messages of disapproval and belittling, e.g. “you don’t understand”, “you can’t do that” (Black et al., 1992) and other such messages that put a great strain on one’s self-image and thus on one’s adaptation. In sum, it is no wonder that the adaptation process is a stressful experience, when one considers the loss of routines, the uncertainty and the resulting the strain on one’s self-image.

Culture shock is the stage of adaptation when stress is most keenly present. According to Tsang-Feign (1996, 77), “stress is a reaction to perceived helplessness and lack of control over a specific problem or situation.” In addition, Berry, Kim, Minde and Mok (1987, 491) provide the following definition to acculturative stress: “a reduction

in health status (including psychological, somatic and social aspects) of individuals who are undergoing acculturation, and for which there is evidence that these health phenomena are related systematically to acculturation phenomena.” Accordingly, there are a particular set of behaviors that occur during acculturation stress including confusion, anxiety, depression, feelings of marginality and alienation, heightened psychosomatic symptom level, and identity confusion. However, individuals experience the stress differently. Tsang-Feign (1996) further points out that not everybody will become stressed about the same situation, since an individual’s personality, self-image and past experiences modify how one perceives the level of stress in a particular situation. In fact, when for some people acculturative changes do indeed manifest themselves as stressors, others may see them as opportunities. We will return to the topic of stress and individual differences later on in this paper, but first we need to direct our attention to the repatriate’s adaption process, that is, to the topic of adapting to the home culture.

1.5 Adaptation to Home Culture

The stages of the adjustment process to one’s own culture follow closely the format the adaptation process to a foreign culture. Nevertheless, there are apparent differences, e.g. Adler (1997) remarks that at the time of the re-entry to one’s own culture, the individual experiences the low periods earlier than in the case of the initial transition to another culture. The low period occurs during the second and third months back. Furthermore, the re-adaptation to one’s own culture is often harder than an adaptation process to a foreign culture due to the fact that one is not prepared for any of the eventual difficulties. Adler goes on to say that the sixth month is the turning point in the transition process when the returnees generally accept their situation and report feeling “average.” On the other hand, reentry-shock according to Koehler (1986) is a gradual process and not easily defined, since there are individual differences. Therefore, one

cannot segment the readjustment process into distinct and applicable time periods.

Storti (1997) presents the stages of reentry in the following format. He emphasizes, however, that the stages do not necessarily follow each other in an orderly fashion, but may alternate with each other; except that the sense of contentment and readjustment is obtained in the end.

1. *Leave-taking and departure*: This stage begins several months prior to arriving back home. Emotionally this is a bitter sweet time since the returnee is saying goodbye to people and places in the foreign country, while at the same time living in anticipation and in excitement of coming home.

2. *The honeymoon*: This time period occurs after the arrival home when things are close to perfect. The returnee is the center of attention and no demands are placed on returnee (e.g. making a decision about sick parent). The contacts with most people and places are so fleeting that the individual does not notice the changes that have taken place. During this time, the returnee is also doing all the things that he/she missed while abroad (e.g. eating foods that are typical to the home country, visiting places that were his/her favorites before going abroad, etc.).

3. *Reverse culture shock*: This stage of adjustment usually sets in after all the rounds with relatives and friends have been made and it is time to settle down and start one's new life back home. It is the time when the returnee is suffering the most, although everyone assumes that things are fine. The repatriate becomes very judgmental, criticizing ways of home as well as people. Actually, the person keeps home at a safe distance as a defensive reaction since home does not feel like home yet. The individual has started to realize how much things have changed. This stage also can be viewed as the period at the margins: the returnee functions at the edges of society rather than at the center, observing rather than participating. In this way, the returnee has a minority status and the accompanying feeling of being misunderstood, alienated, and alone. The repatriate also starts to have doubts about the wisdom of coming home. Moreover, the repatriate will resist adjusting since he/she thinks that by adjusting he/she will have to stay there. In short, escape and withdrawal are common reactions to reverse culture shock.

4. *Readjustment*: During this stage the returnee starts feeling at home as more acceptable routines are created. Increasing predictability and certainty allow the repatriate to be no longer defensive. Moreover, friends and family members start to make room for the returnee in their lives, and a sense of normalcy emerges.

Tsang-Feign (1996, 176-179) presents a slightly different model which does not start from the anticipation of returning like Storti's, but from the time the returnee sets his/her foot on the soil of the home country.

1. *Elation*: The returnee really feels welcomed by his/her long-missed family and friends, and enjoys being home. This stage lasts from several days until a few weeks.

2. *Re-entry shock*: During this stage the repatriate starts to experience feelings of isolation and confusion. The individual has begun to notice the changes that have taken place within as well as without, i.e. in the home environment. Friends and family show apparent disinterest towards the expatriate's experiences and years abroad. Moreover, acquaintances view the repatriate as the same person they knew before this person went abroad. Accordingly, the returnee may be reluctant to discuss any feelings of disappointment and confusion for fear of being misinterpreted and misunderstood. The returnee may even feel inhibited to share his/her experiences in order to not to appear "show-offish."

3. *Metamorphosis*: This stage can be characterized by disorientation. The returnee is in the process of losing his/her expatriate identity, but has not yet re-established a new identity, thus often feeling vulnerable, alienated and even stupid. Not surprisingly, the returnees long for the expatriate lifestyle and may even refuse or resent readjusting to the lifestyle of the home country. Often, the individual concludes that it was a mistake to return.

4. *Readaptation to home culture*: Eventually the returnees will re-familiarize themselves with the home environment and fit back in. This stage is not a distinct phase but a gradual change that the individual goes through. Furthermore, in contrast to Storti, Tsang-Feign believes that all the previous stages need to be experienced in order before the individual is able to successfully readjust to home.

1.5.1 Reverse Culture Shock

Re-entry shock is culture shock in reverse. A problem with reentry adaptation is that the reentry is not seen as a transition, which it undoubtedly is. As previously described the stages of culture shock experienced by the returnees are similar to the culture shock experienced by expatriates. Adjusting to a foreign culture is seen as a difficult process, while coming home is viewed as just a matter of arriving at a certain place on a certain day (Storti, 1997). When coming home, therefore, the re-entry shock is unexpected and thus not tolerated nor understood. Actually reverse culture shock is often more difficult to deal with than the original culture shock that was experienced when going abroad. One reason for this occurrence is that individuals do not anticipate any need for adjustment when returning home (Tsang-Feign, 1996). Moreover, the loneliness of the reentry makes the reverse culture shock more difficult than the initial culture shock. The re-entry is a lonely experience. When going to a foreign country an expatriate is likely to meet individuals who have gone through culture shock themselves and who can relate to that experience and offer support. Conversely, few of the people the returnee knows back home will have experienced reentry shock (Storti, 1997). Furthermore, even though more support is needed during the adaptation to one's home culture than to a foreign one, the repatriate is often times left alone to deal with it.

1.5.2 Dimensions of Repatriation Adjustment

Adjustment is a multifaceted notion, since the expatriate and his/her family has to adjust to a number of different areas of life back home. Figure 4 presents the basic framework of repatriation adjustment.

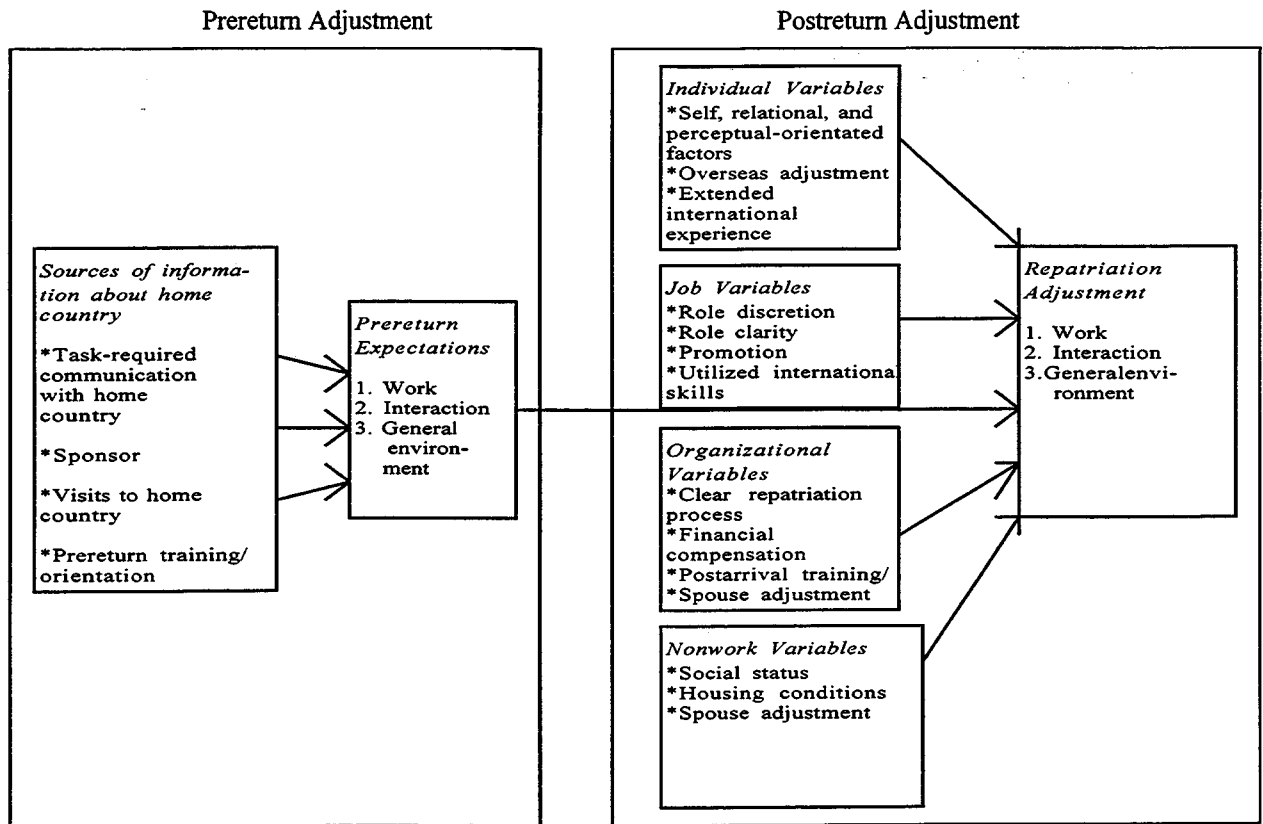


FIGURE 4. Basic framework of repatriation adjustment (Black et al., 1992, 231)

The dimensions of the prereturn adjustment and the postreturn adjustment contribute to the repatriate adjustment. Included in the postreturn adjustment are the following facets: individual, job, organizational and nonwork. The difficulty of dealing with these issues is compounded since most of them surface simultaneously. In other words, although they could all be manageable in isolation, their cumulative impact can be overwhelming (Storti, 1997).

Individual variables influence the re-adaptation process. Foremost, there are certain personality characteristics that have a positive influence and a significant impact on repatriation adjustment. For example, if repatriates have strong self-images the adjustment is easier since these individuals are more secure and confident about who they are, and less susceptible to identity problems. According to Tsang-Feign (1996, 170), returning expatriates can experience so-called identity inflation as a result of repatriation. Identity inflation means that “an individual’s sense of identity has in certain respects been blown out of proportion” while abroad (the image distorts reality). That is to say, living overseas has been in many ways a fantasy life, especially for those with weaker self-images. The expatriate loses touch with reality of home life while being freed from participation in family and community problems, and develops new interests that are global and international. When the person returns home, this fantasy life can no longer exist since little support can be found from the surrounding environment to nurture one’s international fantasies (Werkman, 1986). Thus “placed in another environment, the individual no longer feels the same about himself nor do people perceive him as in the past. The person feels deflated in importance and self-worth” (Tsang-Feign, 1996, 170). Therefore, identity inflation often leads to an identity crisis as the repatriate feels even more out of place than when he/she was overseas. Identity inflation is an inevitable part of coming home.

Furthermore, there are so-called relational-oriented factors that include language proficiency and willingness to communicate with the home nationals that make the adjustment process a great deal easier. Accordingly, the more extroverted and socially oriented individuals are expected to work through the adaptation process easier. Finally, perceptual-oriented factors like the ability to understand and grasp invisible cultural maps and rules impact positively on the adjustment process (Black et al., 1992) by accelerating adaptation.

Age is another individual factor that is thought to play a significant part in readjustment (Black & Gregersen, 1991 cited in Gregersen & Stroh, 1997). Older individuals generally have more experiences in their home country than younger ones. The idea is that this experience would guide these older individuals to manage the change

and adjustment better than younger returnees. Gregersen's and Stroh's (1997) study on Finnish repatriation adjustment, however, did not show significant proof of this hypothesis. Therefore, age might not contribute to adjustment as much as previously thought. It might even be that younger individuals would adapt better and quicker since they tend to be more flexible than the older people.

In addition, there are other factors that make it harder to adjust and thus have a negative impact on the adjustment process. For instance, the greater the cultural differences between the country that the individual completed his/her assignment in and that person's home country, the greater the negative impact on the adaptation process. For example, it is harder to return from China to Finland than from England to Finland. This corresponding difficulty is due to the fact that most of our experiences are nonverbal. Therefore, the more different the cultures are, the more difficult (if not impossible) it is for the repatriate to communicate his/her experiences with others after returning home. It is difficult to translate into words our touch, taste, smell, or sight perceptions. This nonverbal component of one's experience creates a painful barrier for comfortable communication (Werkman, 1986). Moreover, not being able to share one's foreign experience creates a feeling of being an outsider at home which leads to identity confusion (Koehler, 1986).

The time abroad also will impact on the adjustment process. Families that have lived abroad for an extended period of time seem to have a harder readjustment (Black et al., 1992). Schneider and Asakawa (1995) predicted that long term expatriates, those who have been abroad for an extended time, will lose their sense of marginal identity and have a sense of loss of roots. They may suffer from so-called "army brat" syndrome that symptomizes itself by the inability to have close friendships, by feelings of being always an outsider, and by the over-reliance on family for affective relationships. Therefore, one can expect that the longer the length of one's stay abroad and the greater the cultural difference between the host and home cultures then the more uncertainty one will face upon returning home and the more difficult the adaptation process will be.

Moreover, job factors play an important role in the post return adjustment.

Professional reentry is similar to personal reentry, but it also differs from the latter in significant ways. Often times adjustment to the work environment upon returning is even more difficult than readjustment in other areas of one's life. Furthermore, often work-life adjustment difficulties are the ones making the repatriation problematic. According to Black et al. (1992, 227), "Work-related adjustment challenges during repatriation were one of the most frequently mentioned problems by the repatriates in America, Japan, and Finland." Therefore, readjustment to one's work environment is a critical area to focus on.

There are many more problems and ingredients that make the return to the home organization difficult. The decrease of autonomy, authority, and status negatively impacts the returnees. According to Storti (1997), many employees experience a phenomenon called "job shrink" when they return, since they are often placed in a lower-level position. Moreover, the repatriates experience a loss of status and many of them are put on a holding pattern in their organizations. According to Black (1991) and Black et al. (1992, 235), "between 60% and 70% of American, Japanese, and Finnish expatriates... did not even know what their assignments would be before they returned." The returnees often experience "autonomy blues" as their previous independence is curtailed by their new positions, which in turn slows down their professional growth. Black (1991) and Black et al. (1992, 235) found that "46% of American, 50% of Japanese and 33% of Finnish managers had less autonomy and authority back home." In the case of many repatriates, being abroad led to an "out of sight, out of mind" situation. In terms of career advancement, it can be referred to as "out of sight, out of luck." In other words, the expatriates are often overlooked while they are abroad and not considered for any open positions until it is time for them to return home. This creates a situation where the returnees are given an office, a desk, a title and a salary, but no responsibility (Storti, 1997); i.e., they do not really have a position or a job except in theory. Gomez-Mejia and Balkin (1987, 12), whose study concentrated on manager's satisfaction with expatriation and repatriation experiences at the professional setting, reported all of the following reasons underlying "repatriation shock":

1. Lower levels of responsibility in their new assignment in the US relative to that in a foreign

- country where they had more direct authority to make important decisions.
2. Less prestige and status in their new assignment. In a foreign country, they felt that they were part of an elite group with an important role to accomplish. Upon return to the US, they felt like additional “faceless” employees working within a large administrative structure.
 3. A restricted number of career possibilities upon return; some felt less credit was given to work experience in a foreign assignment as compared to equivalent experience in the US.
 4. A perception that while their domestic (US) counterparts were climbing the corporate ladder during their absence, they had to resign themselves to a limited number of opportunities upon return.
 5. The period of time in a foreign assignment resulted in a removal from the mainstream of corporate life leading to a feeling of alienation upon return.
 6. Difficulty in adjusting to social changes in the US. This was particularly acute for those employees who spent several years in their foreign assignment. *

The return to one’s job therefore, can be quite a shock, full of uncertainties, misunderstandings and high level of stress that negatively influence adaptation. Black (1991) and Black et al., (1992) discovered in their research studies that if a repatriate is provided with a clear job description or a high role clarity the adjustment to the work environment and work tasks became more effective. In other words, the clarity of the situation enhances adaptation.

Furthermore, the returnees have to be brought up speed in the home organizations. Returnees can be professionally behind (e.g. new computer system) and thus they need to re-familiarize themselves and learn new skills. Moreover, organizational changes have often taken place and the returnees are often unprepared for these changes. Accordingly, it could be expected that those returning expatriates that have been “kept up to date” about changes in the home organization would have an easier time adjusting back to their home work environment.

So-called organizational variables also play a part in postreturn adjustment. The approach and attitude that an organization has towards the repatriation makes a significant difference in terms of the adjustment of returnees. For example, firms usually do not utilize the newly acquired skills of the repatriates. This impacts negatively on adaptation. According to Black et al. (1991, 1992, 237), only “39% of Americans, 54% of Japanese and 53% of Finnish managers had the opportunity to utilize international

experience after repatriation.” In actuality, under-utilization results in higher turnover rates. The returnees think that their skills are not respected or appreciated, since their firm does not try to learn from them by providing them with a new job or with new responsibilities that would put their global competencies to good use (Grove & Hallowell, 1997). Conversely, we would expect that those repatriates who feel that their new experiences and skills are utilized upon returning will report higher levels of adjustment and satisfaction.

Furthermore, the lack of clarity about the whole procedure of return often adds to the uncertainty of the situation and impacts negatively on repatriate adjustment. In reality, few companies seem to take any systematic approach toward repatriating. According to Black et al. (1991, 1992, 238), “60% of American, 27% of Japanese, and 59% of Finnish managers indicated that in their firms repatriation processes were unclear.” This uncertainty concerning the return process compounds the stress of the repatriates even further. Therefore, one would expect that a clearer and more structured return processes, e.g. organized repatriation training prior to the return, would influence positively the adaptation process.

Another factor impacting repatriation adjustment is the way the organization handles the financial aspect of returning. According to Black et al. (1991, 1992, 240), the returnees and their families are experiencing financial “withdrawal” during the repatriation process. In their own words, “75% of American, 64% of Japanese, and 78% of Finnish expatriates experienced reduced standards of living upon repatriation.” Such a reduction adversely affects repatriation by adding an extra stressor to the adaptation process. Therefore, companies should pay special attention to financial compensation packages when expatriates return home, in order to soften the effects of the return for their employees. This could be done either by providing preparatory information to the repatriates prior to the return or by actually planning a financial package that would be paid upon the return.

Nonwork issues further affect postreturn adjustment. Black et al. (1991, 1992) identified two primary factors that influence negatively on the adjustment of the returnees: shifts in social status and changes in housing conditions. Most returnees

experience a loss of social status and this change has a negative impact on adjustment not solely at work, but also within the general environment. In their own words, "...54% of the American, 47% of the Japanese, and 27% of the Finnish expatriates and spouses experienced a significant drop in social status, while fewer than 4% of the expatriates in all three countries experienced an increase in social status relative to their status during the overseas assignment" (Black et al., 1991, 1992, 240). In addition, changes that take place in housing conditions usually have a negative impact on the adjustment process. First of all, most repatriates are forced to live in hotels, sometimes even weeks after the return, before suitable housing or living accommodations are found. This inconvenience does not make the return any easier. Secondly, housing prices have often increased during the time that these individuals have been abroad, making it often impossible to purchase a similar house as the one prior to the assignment abroad (Black et al., 1992). Thus, the housing conditions after the return might and usually do add an extra stressor to the adjustment process.

Moreover, the adjustment of the repatriate's family impacts on the adjustment of the repatriate. Black (1988) showed in his study of American expatriates in Japan that the family adjustment is highly correlated with the general adjustment experienced by the expatriates. Furthermore, Black and Stephens (1989) researched spouse's adjustment and its impact on expatriate adjustment and found that the spouse's general adjustment is both positively and significantly related to all facets of the expatriate's adjustment. Accordingly, a similar relationship can be expected in the case of repatriate adjustment since the adjustment process, as previously analyzed, is more or less the same.

In addition, friends and family are often uncomfortable around repatriates. They remember the expatriates the way they were when they left home and it is as much of a surprise for them as it is to the returnees that things and people have changed. The awkwardness results from the need to feel comfortable, which in turn requires predictability. In other words, the returnees are no longer predictable and this causes discomfort to the people around the repatriate (Freedman, 1986). Furthermore, the returnees are no longer an accepted part of the society, since they now deviate from that

system's social norms (Jansson, 1986). Therefore, one could expect that adjustment would be easier for those repatriates who have kept in close contact with their friends and family while abroad since this contact maintains the connection between them. This bond allows communication channels to remain open, and fluid thus allowing changes to be registered as an on-going process instead of being an overwhelming occurrence at the time of return.

In sum, individual variables such as personal characteristics, his/her psychological disposition, time spent abroad and the culture in which the assignment was completed; as well as job variables including role clarity, possible promotion and utilization of acquired international skills; and organizational variables such as the organization's approach to repatriation and the clarity of the organization's repatriation processes will significantly impact repatriate adaptation. Furthermore, nonwork variables such as one's social status and housing condition as well as family's adjustment play a significant part in repatriate adjustment. In conclusion, adjustment to one's own culture is not a straight forward, predictable process that could be segmented into distinct stages but a dynamic process influenced by a multiple of factors and by the repatriate's individual and unique circumstances.

1.6 Coping and the Repatriation Adjustment

The ways that people differ from each other are infinite. These differences range from the structure of their nervous systems to their thoughts and feelings about a particular social situation. Every returnee is an individual and as such they all react differently to the shock of coming home. Trait theories such as Eysenck's three-factor solution and Norman's five-factor solution seem to shine some light on the background of the personality differences that make people react differently at the point of return. Each of these trait theories declare that the personality traits are measured with a number of factors, three and five respectively (Brody, 1991). These personality traits predispose

an individual to act or react a certain way in a given situation. The relationship between the traits and situations, however, is not a straight forward one, but is somewhat problematic. First of all, the meaning of the situation might be interpreted differently by each person thus causing an individual act or react uniquely. Furthermore, traits might influence on the kinds of situations one encounters. In sum, people are predisposed to act or react dissimilarly to diverse situations as well as to choose the situations that they expose themselves too.

The influence of the trait disposition views carry over to the individual differences in the case of experiencing and coping with stress. Reverse culture shock and adaptation to the home environment are straining processes that create stress. Research has shown that people react differently to stress and that they employ different coping styles to deal with it. Before analyzing the different coping styles one should answer the following question: What is stress and how does stress manifest itself?

The current definition of psychological stress is based on the idea of discrepancy between the environment and the person. According to Cox's and Ferguson's (1991,9) transactional model of stress, stress is a "psychological state which arose when there was a personally significant imbalance or mismatch between the person's perceptions of the demands on them and their ability to cope with those demands." Moreover, two different kind of stressors can be identified: episodic stressors which are short, one-time or recurrent events, and chronic stressors which involve conditions of longer duration (Kivimäki, 1996). Both of these stressors can be applied to reverse culture shock and the adaptation process, since although the adaptation itself is a continuous stress-filled process, also consists of episodic stressors. Both types of stressors, however, yield to psychological symptoms like confusion, anxiety and depression that are present in the adaptation process. According to Kivimäki (1996), the reactions to stress can be physiological, psychological, and behavioral. Therefore, an additional question is raised: What role do the individual differences play in the stress process and in coping with stress?

Kivimäki (1996) identified five different models that represent the relation between stressors and stress reactions by relating them to personality characteristics.

According to Kivimäki, individual differences may act as preceding factors for or as consequences of stress variables. Furthermore, he indicates that it is possible for personality factors to differ in terms of their relationship to one's adaptation to stress. In other words, personality variables may differ in their causal relation to the stress process. These personality factors can be both stressor- and stress reaction specific. Thus the same factor may impact quite differently in various situations. The transactional model of stress acknowledges the same phenomenon. According to this theory, the individual differences may lie in the individual's perception of the demands, the way that person is able to cope with those demands, or the way one perceives personal abilities available for coping with those demands. Moreover, people vary in the amount of control that they are able to exercise over stressful situation, not only in terms of real control, but also the control they perceive to have over the situation. Finally, people differ in their need for social support and in their skills for exploiting such support (Cox & Ferguson, 1991). In short, individual differences have a significant influence over how stress is perceived, experienced and handled.

A study conducted by Routamaa and Honkonen (1997) identified a specific linkage between personality and stress behavior. According to their results, introverted personality types become more stressed than extroverted types. More specifically, the most stressed individuals were ISFP (Introverted-sensitive-feeling-perceptive) and INTJ (Introverted-intuitive-thinking-judgmental). Furthermore, Redmond and Bunyi (1993) pointed out that the individuals who are better equipped to handle the stress brought by the culture shock are low on ethnocentrism and high on empathy, perspective taking and social decentering. In other words, the "ability to understand and adapt to others, persuasive effectiveness, enhancing relational development, and providing a supportive and confirming communication atmosphere" (Redmond & Bunyi, 1993, 238). Moreover, Smith, Wethington and Zhan (1996, 409) argued that "people with greater self-certainty possess greater behavioral options to draw upon when faced with stressful situation." In short, there are specific personal characteristics that enhance the level of adaptability and make the adjustment process easier. Furthermore, research studies have emphasized the role that intercultural communication competence plays in coping with stress and,

by extension, the adjustment process (Redmond & Bunyi, 1993). Therefore, there are many factors that bring about the way individuals view a stressful situation and how they experience it. Thus, individual differences play a significant role in coping with stress as well.

Although it was previously thought that individuals adapt themselves to stressful environments, the theoretical frameworks have begun recently to recognize that individuals might actually cope by changing stressful aspects of their environments (Bunce & West, 1996). In other words, people do not only adapt to accommodate the environment, but they may also change and improve the environment to be less stressful. Thus the division can be made between active and passive types of coping. Accordingly, the coping styles used by people can be divided into these categories. Lazarus and Folkman (1984, cited in Cox and Ferguson, 1991) distinguished between two kinds of coping strategies: problem-focused and emotion-focused. The former strategy addresses the problem directly, while the latter concentrates on the emotional response to a particular problem. These two coping strategies can be further divided into problem-focused behavioral coping, problem-focused cognitive coping, emotion-focused behavioral coping and emotion-focused cognitive coping. Figure 5 summarizes these four different coping modes and specifies responses to them.

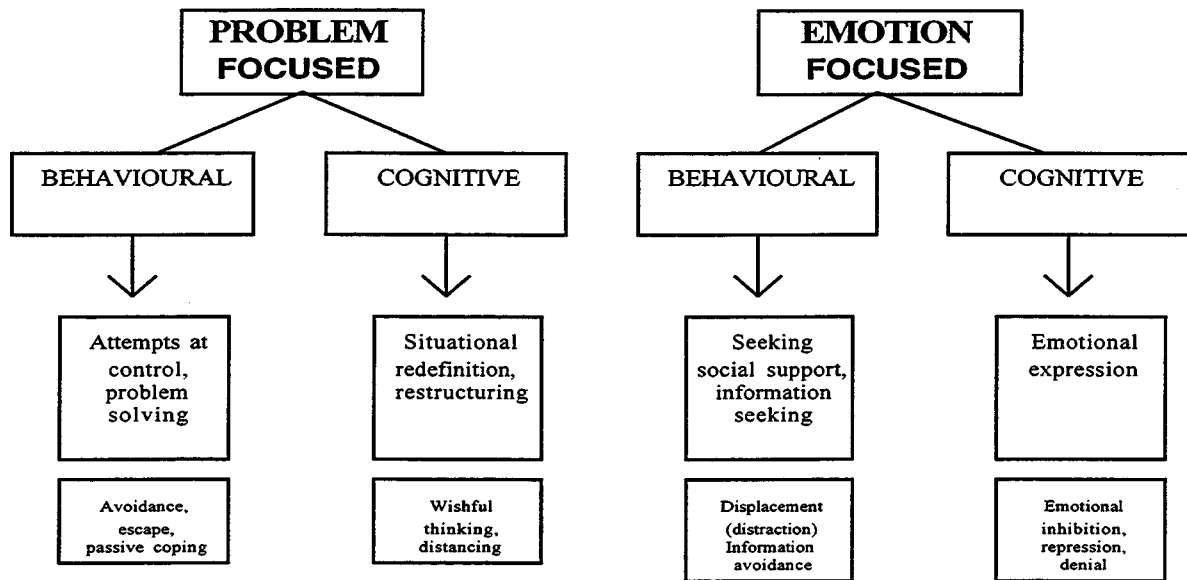


FIGURE 5. A classification of psychological coping with specific responses according to their form (behavioral or cognitive) and primary focus (problem or emotion). (Step toe, 1991, 213)

An individual employing the problem-focused behavioral coping strategy attempts to deal directly with the situation. This coping mode could manifest itself as active problem solving, or as an attempt to control or to withdraw, avoid or escape from that particular situation. With the problem-focused cognitive coping style, the individual attempts to manage the way in which stressful events are perceived. A person using the emotion-focused behavioral coping approach might seek out information related to stressful events, or might avoid relevant information all together. Moreover, the person using this strategy is the most likely to seek at social support when under stress. With the emotion-focused cognitive coping mode, the individual attempts to manage the emotion aroused during stressful situations at a cognitive level (Step toe, 1991). Which one of these is the best way to cope with stressful events? As mentioned earlier, coping

is situational. Thus, a coping strategy might be the most beneficial in one situation, but not in another. Furthermore, individual differences might also impact on the fit between the person and the chosen coping style. Although this classification of coping styles is comprehensive, it is only one of many.

Carver, Scherer and Weintraub (1989, cited in Smith, Wethington & Zhan, 1996) identified twelve distinct coping styles that individuals employ during stressful event or situation. These 12 coping styles are (1) taking action, (2) planning, (3) suppression of completing activities, (4) restraint, (5) venting emotions, (6) positive reinterpretation, (7) acceptance, (8) turning to religion, (9) mental disengagement, (10) behavioral disengagement, (11) denial, and (12) use of drugs or alcohol. Actually, this model is just a different form of Steptoe's model presented earlier, and thus one could conclude that the basic idea, that one's coping is either emotionally or behaviorally focused, behind all the coping style categories is the same. This resemblance is also repeated in the categories that have been identified as coping strategies applied by repatriates during re-entry stress.

Adler (1997) identifies three different transition strategies or coping modes that repatriates use upon their return:

1. *Resocialized returnees*: These are people who fit right into the domestic structures and environment since they ignore the things learned abroad and treat their experiences as unimportant. Furthermore, they usually have been living in expatriate ghettos which amounts to a rejection of the foreign culture.
2. *Alienated returnees*: These are individuals who believe that they could never fit back into their home society and that way of life. They have often gone "native" while abroad, meaning that they have adopted the cultural values and lifestyle of the foreign country. These type of returnees are often people who have lived in a number of different countries; e.g. ones who have had a series of global assignments.
3. *Proactive returnees*: Individuals who use this type of coping mode are able to combine both the foreign culture and home culture into new approaches to life and work. They are more optimistic and creative than their counter parts and are more satisfied than the users of the other coping styles.

Pusch (1998) introduces yet another division of styles or reentry coping strategies. As a result of her research, she divided returnees into four different types of returners:

1. *Free Spirit*: These are individuals that can be described as forever foreign, loyal to the host country (or the idea of it), conscious of self and self-absorbed. They are at home in their constructed home and they like ambiguity. Their reaction to the home culture is detachment and alienation and their main concern is to remain “unique” and to continue the experience of being different.
2. *Designer*: These returnees can be described as having strong boundary control, clear motivation and goals as well as distinct and clear loyalties. They are competent decision makers and may eventually return to the host country. They are reluctant to go back to old patterns and the home culture, and their main concern is survival and comfort.
3. *Reassimilator*: These individuals are most comfortable in the home culture. They reassimilate quickly to the home environment and are delighted to be back. They are superficially sensitive guests abroad, but competent decision makers in their own environment. They possess a clear sense of their loyalties and are achievers with clear goals. For them the reentry is easy and they fit in painlessly.
4. *Integrator*: These are individuals for whom the reentry is fairly easy, since they are concerned with finding a best fit with the home culture. These individuals can be characterized as leaders, mediators, advocates and believers. They are open to change and have a broad world view. Integrators are also tolerant of differences and adjust well.

Both Adler and Pusch attempt to categorize the repatriates into typologies, which is a static way of viewing coping styles during repatriation stress. In reality, the division between different coping styles of re-entry is not that sharp, since the boundaries between different typologies tend to be shaded. Moreover, repatriates might even apply several coping styles in order to deal with re-entry stress. In other words, each stage during the adaptation process might actually have its own coping style and an individual might employ a multiple of different coping approaches to handle the stress. Therefore, what causes a person to choose a certain coping style?

According to Routamaa & Honkonen (1997), personal qualities explain one's

reaction to stress. Therefore, a hypothesis could be drawn that personality factors might also explain one's choice of coping strategy. Smith, Wethington and Zhan (1996) have studied personality factors involved in employing a coping style. They argue that those individuals that have a clearer self-concept tend to use the taking action, planning, and positive reinterpretation methods as opposed to those subjects whose self-concept was less clearly defined. These latter individuals used more passive, potentially less adaptive coping styles such as denial, mental and behavioral disengagement, as well as drugs and alcohol. Steptoe (1991) does not contribute the probability that individuals will employ a particular coping style totally on their personality, but that each coping response depends also on situational factors and one's own efficacy expectations. In other words, people employ a coping strategy based on the situation, or at least their perception of the situation, and on the expectation of the situational outcome as well as their belief in themselves. In short, the unconscious decision to use a certain coping style depends on several things, such as an individual's attributes and characteristics as well as the situational circumstances.

1.7 Aims and Research Questions, Hypothesis

In sum, there is previous research on how and why an individual will choose a certain coping style, but there is nothing on how a particular coping style affects the level of self-reported adaptation or how well the individual feels adjusted. Moreover, there is no data on the frequencies of the coping styles used. Thus it would be fruitful to direct our attention to the following problems or research questions:

- (1) What kinds of coping styles do Finnish repatriates employ and what is the frequency that these styles are employed?
- (2) What is the relationship between the self-reported level of adjustment and the coping style used by the individual? It could be hypothesized that in Adler's model the "Resocialized returnees" and "Proactive returnees" would report higher levels of adjustment than the "Alienated returnees" and in Pusch's model the "Reassimilators"

and “Integrators” would be expected to report the highest levels of adjustment to the home culture, but since there is no previous research on the subject it is hard to set any specific hypothesis.

(3) What is the relationship between the potential adjustment ability and the self-reported levels of adjustment?

(4) What is the relation between the self-assessed level of ability to live in another culture and the coping style employed? In other words, how are the potential ability to adjust and the coping style related?

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Subjects

Forty repatriates from six different Finnish multinational firms, involved with mining, high tech, machinery, and paper served as subjects. Thirty three subjects were male and only seven female. The average age of the subjects was 43 years, the youngest being 28 years-old and the oldest 57 years-old. Of the subjects studied, 30% had a professional degree and 70% had a Master's degree. The average number of years in professional work was 18; although, one person had worked only 2 years while another person had worked 36 years. The mean number of years abroad was five years, the shortest assignment being six months and the longest 20 years.

Most of the subjects participating in the study, 68% had been on a single assignment abroad, but the remaining 32% of the participants had completed two or more separate assignments. Specifically, there were two individuals who had been on three different assignments abroad and one person that had been on four and another subject who had completed five. 52% of the subjects completed their assignments in European countries or in Russia. Four subjects lived and worked in Asia and four in Middle-East. Two subjects completed their time abroad in USA and two subjects had assignments both in USA and in Europe, one after another. One person completed his assignment in Canada and one in Australia. Moreover, there were combinations; for example, two individuals worked both in Asia and in Europe. One person divided his time abroad between Middle-East and Russia and another between Asia and Middle-East. One person completed assignments abroad in USA, Asia and Europe. In sum, most of the subjects in the study completed their assignments in European or in

Western cultures.¹ More than half of the subjects, 58%, had been back in Finland for less than a year and 15% less than six months. For 90 % of the repatriates, the time back in Finland was less than two years, and only for four individuals was the return time longer than 2 years, the longest period since the return being two and half years.

2.2 Procedure

Subjects for the study were identified by contacting the human resources' personnel in a number of large Finnish owned multinational firms that frequently send their employees on overseas assignments. After receiving a list of possible subjects, the researcher contacted them via e-mail inquiring about their interest to participate in the study and if they knew of other possible subjects for the research. Once an individual had communicated his/her interest in being a subject, that person received a questionnaire package via mail containing a letter explaining the guidelines for the study and the reasons for the researcher to tackle this particular subject. The package also included demographic questions (e.g. age, gender, the period of time spent abroad and the time back in Finland since the return), three different kinds of questionnaires, and some qualitative questions to determine the circumstances under which the individual returned to Finland. These questionnaires along with the cover letter are included in the annexes (appendix 1 through 4).

The subjects were asked to rate their acculturation after returning to their own culture using a scale from 1 to 5 (one being "have not adjusted at all" and five being "really well adjusted") in six different areas: personal orientation (identity and personal feelings about the return); adjustment to the current position (responsibilities, challenges, utilization of skills and knowledge); adaptation to the home organization (Are your skills and knowledge appreciated? Do you feel like you know what is going on?); adjustment to life outside work (friends, relatives); adaptation to the living

¹ Includes European countries, USA, Australia, and Canada.

environment; and finally adjustment to their current social status. The subjects were also asked to answer qualitative questions in order to find out little bit more about the circumstances and underlying factors for their self-rated adjustment, e.g., What did the return mean to you?, Did you come back because you wanted to or because you had to?, Did your employer offer a possibility for repatriation training/orientation?, and were you satisfied with the position you were offered when you returned?

In addition, the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (hereafter referred as CCAI) by Colleen Kelley and Judith Meyers (1995) was used in this study to measure the potential level of adaptability to another culture. The reason this particular questionnaire was chosen was that the dimensions that this specific inventory measures are essential for the successful adaptation to another culture — whether that culture was one's own or foreign. Moreover, the researcher was attempting to get a clear picture of the subjects as individuals since individual differences, as discussed in the theory part, act as important components in the process of dealing with stress and choosing a coping strategy. The translated version (translated by the researcher) was used, since all the subjects were Finnish speaking and the original questionnaire was in English (see Appendix 5 for the original). CCAI attempts to evaluate individuals in four dimensions (emotional resilience, flexibility and openness, perceptual acuity and personal autonomy), from which the persons skills and predispositions for a successful adjustment are calculated. The higher the individual scores in these four areas, the better the person's predispositions for a successful entry to another culture or re-entry to one's own culture. Subjects were asked to respond with a scale DT (definitely true), T (true), TT (tends to be true), TNT (tends to be not true), NT (not true) and DNT (definitely not true) to a set of fifty statements in order to describe themselves (e.g. I have ways to deal with the stresses of new situations.). These answers were later translated to a numerical form in order to analyze the results by SPSS statistical program. In other words, the subject replies were re-coded with a scale of 1 to 6.

Four dimensions, which are all sum factors, were measured in the CCAI: (1) "Emotional Resilience" refers to the ability to cope with ambiguity and stress, to maintain a positive attitude and to tolerate strong emotions. Moreover, "Emotional

Resilience” measures one’s ability to cope with the unfamiliar and to react positively to new experiences. This dimension also measures the ability to maintain one’s self-confidence and self-esteem which is an essential skill for healthy adaptation. The reliability for this factor was $\alpha = 0.82$ and the factor included 18 items. (2) “Flexibility/ Openness” dimension measures the ability to be open to different ideas and to adapt to different ways of thinking and acting. People who are strong in this dimension possess high tolerance, lack of rigidity and liking for and comfort with all kinds of people. The reliability for this factor was $\alpha = 0.67$ for 15 items. (3) “Perceptual Acuity” dimension determines one’s attentiveness to interpersonal relations and to verbal and nonverbal behavior. It also involves paying attention to the context of the communication, being able to read people’s emotions, being sensitive to one’s affect on others, and to communicating accurately. The reliability was $\alpha = 0.77$ for 10 items. Finally, (4) “Personal Autonomy” measures the individual’s sense of identity. This dimension describes the ability to maintain one’s own personal values and beliefs, to take responsibility for one’s actions, and to respect one’s self and others. The reliability for this factor was low, $\alpha = 0.24$ for 7 items, and it remained low, $\alpha = 0.38$, even after reversing questions 35 and 41 that correlated poorly with the rest of the items.

The second questionnaire called “Selviytymisen keinot”, Coping Dispositions in English, is a measurement tool developed by Petteri Niitamo (1997) from the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health. The questionnaire maps out people’s coping styles or strategies that they employ during a stressful event or period in their lives. This particular questionnaire was chosen by the researcher for three reasons. First of all, this measuring tool was developed by a Finn to measure Finnish subjects. Thus the validity of the tool is expected to be high. Secondly, as illustrated in the theory part, readaptation to one’s own culture results in stress and a questionnaire developed for the purpose of measuring people’s ability to handle stress can also be applied to people’s ability to handle readaptation. In other words, this study concentrates on repatriation stress and the coping styles employed and as such, this specific measuring tool fulfills the researcher’s purposes. Finally, this particular measuring tool has not been used

previously in this content and thus this study will also provide new information about the measuring tool. In the coping dispositions questionnaire, the subjects were asked to evaluate how they usually act in stressful situations and how often they use a particular strategy with the following scale: 0 = not at all, 1 = little bit, 2 = often, and 3 = very often. The questionnaire contained sixty items (e.g. I talk to someone about my feelings; I learn to live with it; I take action to correct the situation) and the sum factors identified five different coping techniques.

The first coping style is “Detachment/Repression” (“Etäistäminen”). This dimension measures the probability that an individual will employ detachment or repression of the problem as a coping mode. A high score on this dimension indicates that an individual represses the problems. The person is detaching him/herself from the problem. The individual does not want to or cannot face the problem, since such an approach could lead to failure. This mode, however, also has positive characteristics and thus represents a bipolarity of negativism and positivism within this dimension. For example, on the negative end the individual does not deal with problems, but on the positive one, this strategy allows the individual to remain productive and functioning since he/she does not “collect” extra problems but lets them pass by. Basically, detachment refers to an unconscious attempt to control one’s own feelings by repressing acknowledgement of problems. The reliability for the factor was $\alpha = 0.60$ for 10 items which is high enough.

The second coping strategy is “Direct, Confrontative Action” (“Suora toiminta”). An individual’s high score on this dimension indicates that the individual takes direct action in order to solve the stress causing situation. This dimension is action oriented and it often overpowers planning, careful thinking and evaluating as coping strategies. The reliability for this factor was $\alpha = 0.62$ for 8 different items.

The third coping technique is “Planful, Reflective Problem Solving” (“Ongelman erittely, Suunnittelu”). An individual who employs this coping strategy attempts to obtain an overview of a stressful situation before acting. The focus is on evaluating problems, as well as on attempting to solve them. This approach is socially desirable; in the sense, that those who score high on this dimension are to some extent introspective,

interested in increasing their self-knowledge. They tolerate and even feel comfortable in ambiguous situations and environments. On the other hand, this strategy can result in too much thinking and overanalyzing of the problem thus leading to indecisiveness. The reliability score for this particular factor was $\alpha = 0.67$ for 10 items.

The fourth coping mode is “Social Interaction” (“Sosiaalinen vuorovaikutus”). The individual who employs this coping strategy is able to use the help of other people to cope with stress. Such a person willingly takes help that is offered, but also possesses the necessary skills to ask for help and support from others. Significantly, this type of person does not feel ashamed about the fact that he/she needs help and thus does not cover up that need. The individual is not afraid to take his/her frustrations out on the people present. As a coping strategy, this approach is mature. Nevertheless, it is possible that an individual with a high score in this dimension is unable to cope independently with stress. Someone who scores low on this dimension, however, is likely to use immature ways of coping with stress: over controlling and detachment from others. The reliability for this factor was $\alpha = 0.66$ for 9 items.

The fifth and last coping technique measured by the Coping Dispositions Inventory is “Emotion Regulation/Regression” (“Mielialan säätely”). This strategy is regressive and attempts to control one’s emotions but possibly ends up being overpowered by them. Moreover, this dimension describes an individual’s introspection concerning feelings of anxiety and self-knowledge. A person scoring high on this dimension has a tendency to slide into indecisiveness, losing the hold on action and analytical thinking. This strategy is immature and hardly an adaptive way of handling stress. The reliability score for this factor was $\alpha = 0.79$ for 9 items.

In the cases where a subject failed to write down an answer, either by accident or by purpose, the missing values were handled similarly in all the questionnaires. The number of the missing values remained low in both questionnaires (5 to be exact) and these few missing values were replaced by the mean of other questions in that particular dimension. With this approach the missing value came to appear as close to the individuals’ answers as possible.

2.3 Ethical Issues

The conduction of this study placed no ethical dilemmas on the researcher. All of the subjects participating in the study were informed that the participation was strictly confidential and anonymous as well as voluntary. The topic of the study was known to all subjects even before they replied to the e-mail sent by the researcher asking for their willingness to participate. Furthermore, the participants provided addresses for where they wanted the questionnaire package to be sent, and most often the address provided was the work place. Finally, the subjects were informed of the results of the study via e-mail in order to give them a sense of closure as well as to thank them for their time and effort. The researcher also provided her contact information to the participants in the case any of them had any questions.

3. RESULTS

Sixty questionnaire packages were sent off, from which forty-one were returned to the researcher. Therefore the answering percentage was 68%. Only forty replies were used in the analysis due to the fact that the last one arrived over a month after analysis.

3.1 Qualitative Questions

It will be recalled that a number of qualitative questions were asked to discern the circumstances under which the subjects participating in the study returned to Finland. These answers should be reported first in order to acquire a sense of the underlying conditions that encompassed the re-entry. One subject failed to answer to this set of questions, possibly because they were more time consuming than the multiple-choice questions that appeared elsewhere in the study.

When the subjects were asked to state why they decided to return, most individuals replied that it was their own wish to return. Thus most of them were willing repatriates. The reasons for their return are categorized in the following table (Table 1). Together with the person who failed to answer any of the qualitative questions, there was one subject who did not write anything for this particular question. The results, however, indicate that the majority of subjects experienced the return positively.

TABLE 1. Repatriates' reasons for the return

Reason for return	Number of individuals
Longed to return to Finland	17
Due to family reasons	12*
Normal career cycle/Contract ended	6
Personal reasons	1
Multiple of different reasons (not specified)	1
Forced to return	1
Total	38

* two reported that the return was against their wishes

In addition to asking about the reasons for their return, it is important to determine their attitudes about accepting another assignment abroad. Would they be willing to accept another assignment and if so, how soon? In the following chart (Table 2), the repatriates' attitudes toward another assignment are presented.

TABLE 2. Repatriates' attitudes toward a possible new assignment abroad

Repatriates' attitudes	Number of individuals
Willing to return to work abroad as soon as possible	15
Would accept, but not in the near future	6
Not sure, but most likely	3
Would accept, but due to family reasons could not	1
Would accept if had to	1
Would not leave Finland again	1
Total	27

Only 27 out of 39 subjects replied to this question. This could indicate that some subjects either saw this item as irrelevant or missed it since it was a part of the first question (What does the return to Finland mean to you?). In sum, except for a few individuals, the attitudes toward further assignment abroad are positive among the repatriates in the study.

The participants of the study were also asked to indicate whether or not their home organization provided them with the tools to handle the return more effectively. In other words, subjects were asked if their organizations provided any repatriate training or orientation either prior to or after their arrival to Finland. These results are summarized in Table 3.

TABLE 3. The degree of offered repatriation training

	Number of individuals
Organization did not offer any training	32*
Did not know	2
Possibility for training/orientation	5**
Total	39

* 8 of those individuals said that no training or orientation is needed and only 2 individuals expressed the need for such training.

** One of the 4 individuals did not participate in the offered training, two reported that they had gone through one-day orientation and one person received help with choosing a school and finding an apartment.

Most subjects reported that their home organizations did not offer any training, but then again only two people indicated that there is a need for such training. Eight individuals expressed, even strongly, that any kind of repatriate training or orientation is a waste of time e.g. "I am an adult and thus I would have not even participated. I need some computer skills, but naturally I will acquire them on my own." Nevertheless, the

question about the training did not specifically target on its necessity. Thus these ten opinions may not express the reality of the need at all.

Furthermore, the subjects were asked to report their view of the foreign assignment as a career enhancer. These answers are summarized in the following table (Table 4).

TABLE 4. The affect of foreign assignments on the repatriate's career

	Number of individuals
Helped forward career	23
Helped in some extend	2
Did not help at all	13
Career has suffered	1
Total	39

64% of all respondents felt that the foreign assignment did enhance their careers. In contrast to 33% that felt that it did not, although these individuals often reported that living abroad gave them other things, such as a valuable personal experience. Only one individual reported that his career suffered from the time abroad. In short, most repatriates were satisfied with the gains of the foreign assignments in terms of their careers.

The previous results are closely linked to the following ones. Table 5 represents the satisfaction of the repatriates' with their job or the position that they were appointed to after their return.

TABLE 5. Repatriates' satisfaction with the current job/position

	number of individuals
Satisfied	24
Somewhat satisfied	8
Unhappy	6
Total	38

In sum, most of the repatriates participating in the study were satisfied and content with the position that they were appointed to after their return.

The subjects were asked if they felt appreciated in their home organization. In other words, do the repatriates' home organizations respect the knowledge and skills that they accumulated during their foreign assignments, and do companies utilize the newly acquired know-how. The following table (Table 6) outlines the results.

TABLE 6. The utilization of the skills and knowledge that the repatriates attained while abroad

	Number of individuals
Yes (did not specify how)	7
Yes, as trainers and experts	14*
Better offers, more challenging projects and more responsibility	3
Only when expertise needed	1
Financial reward	1
Yes, somewhat	2
No, not at all	9
Total	34

* Two subjects wished that their skills and experience would be used more.

A great number of the repatriates felt that their new skills and knowledge were well utilized and valued in their home organizations. Nevertheless, there were individuals who did not feel that way, and this may indicate that either the organizations possess different attitudes toward the foreign assignments or these individuals perceive the organizations' attitudes differently.

Finally, the subjects were asked to describe briefly the communication between the home organization and the expatriate during the foreign assignment. The summary for these replies is in Table 7.

TABLE 7. The level of the communication between the expatriate and the home organization during the foreign assignment

	Number of individuals
No communication or updates	17
Somewhat informed, but not enough	5
Informed enough	1
Well-informed	16
Total	39

The experience about the level of the communication was controversial. Some 44% of the subjects were genuinely content with the level of communication, but the exact same percentage of repatriates were reporting the absence of communication.

3.2 Coping Styles

It will be recalled that the first research question attempted to discern the coping styles of the Finnish repatriates and the frequencies these coping strategies were being employed. The means of the five different coping strategies (Table 8) give some indication of the rate that they were being used.

TABLE 8. The means of the five different coping styles used by the repatriates

Coping style	N	Mean	Std.
Detachment/Repression	40	9,25	3,61
Direct, Confrontative Action	40	16,20	2,66
Planful, Reflective Problem Solving	40	18,10	3,55
Social Interaction	40	14,68	3,67
Emotion Regulation/Regression	40	6,08	3,87

Although no comparisons can be made from the mean values, it is somewhat clear that “Emotional regulation/regression” as a coping style is less used by the repatriates than the four other coping strategies. In order to find out more about the coping styles of the Finnish repatriates and to analyze the differences between the group means, a nonparametric alternative to one-way ANOVA, Kruskal-Wallis Test was conducted. The five different coping styles were studied with regard to the education, gender, age of the subjects, as well as the time they had been abroad and the time they had been back in Finland (Tables 9-13).

TABLE 9. The coping styles used by Finnish repatriates according to their education

Coping style	Education	N	Mean Rank	p
Detachment/Repression	Professional degree	12	19,63	,753
	Master's degree	28	20,88	
	Total	40		
Direct, Confrontative Action	Professional degree	12	14,63	,036
	Master's degree	28	23,02	
	Total	40		
Planful, Reflective Problem Solving	Professional degree	12	15,29	,064
	Master's degree	28	22,73	
	Total	40		
Social Interaction	Professional degree	12	18,21	,415
	Master's degree	28	21,48	
	Total	40		
Emotional Regulation/Regression	Professional degree	12	14,83	,043
	Master's degree	28	22,93	
	Total	40		

The individual's educational background does have an association with the coping style the individual chooses to employ. Those subjects with a Master's degree used "Direct/Confrontative Action" as a coping style more often than the subjects with a professional degree. Furthermore, the individuals with a Master's degree employed "Emotional Regulation/Regression" as a coping strategy more often than the repatriates with a professional degree. The other coping styles did not indicate any significant differences due to the education level of the subjects.

Next the relationships of gender on selecting a coping style were examined. The results are summarized in the following table (Table 10).

TABLE 10. The coping styles used by Finnish repatriates according to their gender

Coping style	Gender	N	Mean Rank	p
Detachment/Repression	Male	33	21,50	,223
	Female	7	15,79	
	Total	40		
Direct, Confrontative Action	Male	33	20,44	,943
	Female	7	20,79	
	Total	40		
Planful, Reflective Problem Solving	Male	33	20,32	,830
	Female	7	21,36	
	Total	40		
Social Interaction	Male	33	18,45	,016
	Female	7	30,14	
	Total	40		
Emotional Regulation/Regression	Male	33	20,64	,872
	Female	7	19,86	
	Total	40		

Gender appears to play a part in the selection of “Social Interaction” as a coping style. Females chose to use this coping strategy more than males. In terms of the other coping styles, no significant mean differences were found.

Age can also relate to the coping mode that an individual chooses to employ (Table 11).

TABLE 11. The coping styles used by Finnish repatriates according to their ages.

Coping style	Age	N	Mean Rank	p
Detachment/Repression	28-37	13	15,50	,065
	38-47	12	19,54	
	48-57	15	25,60	
	Total 40			
Direct, Confrontative Action	28-37	13	22,00	,747
	38-47	12	18,50	
	48-57	15	20,80	
	Total 40			
Planful, Reflective Problem Solving	28-37	13	18,58	,437
	38-47	12	24,08	
	48-57	15	19,30	
	Total 40			
Social Interaction	28-37	13	21,92	,808
	38-47	12	20,75	
	48-57	15	19,07	
	Total 40			
Emotional Regulation/Regression	28-37	13	19,73	,939
	38-47	12	21,38	
	48-57	15	20,47	
	Total 40			

No statistically significant mean differences were found between the groups. Thus we can conclude that the age of the repatriate had no measurable impact on the coping technique that the returnee chose to employ.

The relationships of the time period that the individuals spent abroad on the coping styles were also explored. The results are in the following table (Table 12).

TABLE 12. The coping styles used by Finnish repatriates according to the time abroad

Coping style	Time abroad	N	Mean Rank	p
Detachment/Repression	less than 1 year	3	26,50	,049
	1-2 years	9	13,33	
	2-3 years	7	16,86	
	3-5 years	7	26,86	
	5-10 years	8	17,44	
	10-20 years	6	29,17	
	Total	40		
Direct, Confrontative Action	less than 1 year	3	16,67	,427
	1-2 years	9	22,06	
	2-3 years	7	25,64	
	3-5 years	7	13,43	
	5-10 years	8	22,94	
	10-20 years	6	19,08	
	Total	40		
Planful, Reflective Problem Solving	less than 1 year	3	21,33	,605
	1-2 years	9	15,89	
	2-3 years	7	23,14	
	3-5 years	7	19,21	
	5-10 years	8	19,56	
	10-20 years	6	26,67	
	Total	40		
Social Interaction	less than 1 year	3	27,17	,330
	1-2 years	9	24,33	
	2-3 years	7	24,86	
	3-5 years	7	16,36	
	5-10 years	8	15,06	
	10-20 years	6	18,42	
	Total	40		
Emotional Regulation/Regression	less than 1 year	3	12,50	,786
	1-2 years	9	20,11	
	2-3 years	7	20,36	
	3-5 years	7	22,50	
	5-10 years	8	19,31	
	10-20 years	6	24,50	
	Total	40		

The time abroad had an association on the selection of "Detachment/Repression" as a coping style. There seems to be significant differences between the groups, indicating that the time spent abroad would have an impact when choosing a coping strategy. Nevertheless, when the groups were further redivided into three groups (subjects that were abroad less than a year, N=3; subjects that were abroad anywhere between 1-5 years, N=23; and subjects that were abroad more then 5 years, less than 20 years,

N=14) in order to take a closer look at the group differences, no significant differences between the groups surfaced.

Finally, the repatriates' time spent in Finland and its' connection with coping style selected were analyzed. The results are summarized in the following table (Table 13).

TABLE 13. The coping styles used by Finnish repatriates according to the time back in Finland

Coping style	Time back in Finland	N	Mean Rank	p
Detachment/Repression	less than 6 months	14	22,61	,774
	6 mo - 1 year	9	17,67	
	1-2 years	13	20,73	
	more than 2 years	4	18,75	
	Total	40		
Direct, Confrontative Action	less than 6 months	14	21,07	,288
	6 mo - 1 year	9	24,83	
	1-2 years	13	19,65	
	more than 2 years	4	11,50	
	Total	40		
Planful, Reflective Problem Solving	less than 6 months	14	19,07	,785
	6 mo - 1 year	9	19,39	
	1-2 years	13	23,23	
	more than 2 years	4	19,13	
	Total	40		
Social Interaction	less than 6 months	14	21,96	,623
	6 mo - 1 year	9	21,67	
	1-2 years	13	20,27	
	more than 2 years	4	13,50	
	Total	40		
Emotional Regulation/Regression	less than 6 months	14	23,43	,580
	6 mo - 1 year	9	18,94	
	1-2 years	13	20,12	
	more than 2 years	4	15,00	
	Total	40		

The time period back in Finland since the return had no association with which coping style the repatriates chose to utilize.

In sum, the educational level of the repatriates, their gender and the time spent

abroad were related with what coping style the individual chose to apply during the adjustment period. The more educated individuals utilized techniques that required analytical thinking. Results indicate that subjects with master's degrees used more "Direct/Confrontative Action" as their coping style. This coping technique can be characterized as an individual taking direct action in order to solve a stressful situation. In addition, these individuals reported using "Emotional Regulation/Regression" as a coping technique. This strategy is directed towards controlling one's emotions. Women used "Social Interaction" as a coping strategy to a greater extent than men did. Thus women relied on the help of other people in order to cope with stress. Time period spent abroad seems to have had a slight association with the utilization of "Detachment/Regression" as a coping style. Individuals employing this particular coping strategy attempt to deal with a problem by repressing and detaching themselves from it. Therefore, different variables impact on the selection of a coping style. How does a particular coping style that is chosen influence the level of adjustment of the repatriates?

3.3 Adjustment and Selection of Coping Styles

It will be recalled that the second research question was concerned with the relationship between the self-reported level of adjustment and the coping style used by the individual. The individuals rated their level of adjustment to Finland after their return on a 5-point rating scale. The means in Table 14 show a subjects' self-reported level of adjustment on six separate areas of life.

TABLE 14. Means of repatriates' self-reported adjustment to different areas of life

Area of adjustment	Mean	Std.
Personal adjustment	3,98	,95
Adjustment to current job/position	3,80	,97
Adjustment to home organization	3,95	,96
Adjustment to non-work life	3,88	1,04
Adjustment to living environment	4,13	,91
Adjustment to social status	3,98	,97

The fairly high means of the self-reported adjustment subscales indicate that the subjects have adapted well to Finnish life. All of the mean values are close to four, which is "well adjusted" on the 5-point scale. The mean value of the adjustment to living environment is especially high, since 4,13 lies between "well adjusted" and "very well adjusted." The six areas of adjustment were reduced to two factors using the Principal Component Analysis. These two factors "Non-work adjustment" (Personal adjustment, Adjustment to non-work life, to living environment and social status) and "Work adjustment" (Adjustment to current job/position and home organization) explain 76% of the variance. These two new factors were used to investigate the correlations between the level of adjustment and the coping style employed by the repatriates.

The Spearman's nonparametric test was used to measure the correlations between the adjustment and coping styles. There were no significant correlations between the coping strategies and the "Work-adjustment" factor. Nevertheless, some significant correlations were found between the "Non-work adjustment" factor and the coping styles. Correlations between the coping styles and the adjustment measured by the two main factors can be seen in Table 15.

TABLE 15. Correlations between the coping styles and the level of adjustment

Speaman's rho	Coping styles		Non-work adjustment	Work adjustment
	Detachment/Repression	Correlation Coefficient	-,124	-,022
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,447	,891
		N	40	40
	Direct, Confrontative Action	Correlation Coefficient	,356*	-,178
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,024	,271
		N	40	40
	Planful, Reflective Problem Solving	Correlation Coefficient	,085	,086
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,601	,596
		N	40	40
	Social Interaction	Correlation Coefficient	,277	,208
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,084	,197
		N	40	40
	Emotion Regulation/Regression	Correlation Coefficient	-,330*	,072
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,038	,660
		N	40	40

“Direct, Confrontative Action” and “Emotion Regulation/Regression” as coping styles correlate with the level of adjustment. “Direct, Confrontative Action” correlates positively with the non-work adjustment, when “Emotion Regulation/Regression” correlates negatively with the non-work adjustment. No other significant correlations between the coping styles and the level of adjustment can be detected. On account that the causality cannot be detected from the correlations, a regression analysis was conducted in order to find out some indication of the way that the causality could be detected between the adjustment and coping styles.

As the regression analysis chart reveals (Table 16), there are strong correlations between “Direct, Confrontative Action” and “Emotion Regulation/Regression” as independent variables and the level of non-work adjustment as a dependent variable.

TABLE 16. The regression model of coping styles and non-work adjustment

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-1,038	,970		-1,070	,292
Direct, Confrontative action	,104	,054	,278	1,950	,059
Emotion Regulation/Regression	-,107	,037	-,416	-2,920	,006

The use of “Emotion Regulation/Regression” has a negative affect on the level of non-work adaptation. The “Direct, Confrontative Action” as a coping style is not as significant, but it appears to have a positive affect on the non-work adaptation of the repatriates. The model as presented in Table 17 does explain 32% of the variance.

TABLE 17. The fit of the regression model of coping styles and non-work adjustment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,569	,323	,287	,8446

The degree of the variance that the regression model explains is not very high and thus the conclusions about the causality relationship between the coping styles and the level of adjustment cannot be made.

To summarize, the coping style that a repatriate chooses to employ when returning to Finland does impact on an individual’s level of adjustment in a few instances: “Emotion Regulation/Regression” as a coping style where the individual employing this technique attempts to control his/her emotions, lessens the level of

adjustment for the individual. “Direct, Confrontative Action” where an individual employing this technique takes direct action in order to solve a stressful situation has a positive affect on the level of adjustment. These results, however, are not quite conclusive. The causality relationship between the coping styles and the adaptation can work both ways. In other words, the coping style that the individual employs can be a basis for the adaptation level to non-work life and vice versa.

The educational level of the repatriates, their gender and the time spent abroad are useful predictors of which coping style an individual will choose to apply during the re-adjustment period. Moreover, “Emotion Regulation/Regression” as a coping style affects negatively on the re-adaptation.

3.4 Potential Ability to Adapt and Adaptation

The next question would be to ask if one’s potential ability to adapt is an indicator of one’s eventual level of adaptation attained? It will be recalled that the third research question was set out to inquire into such a possible relationship. First, the means of the four dimensions were examined in order to find out what the potential level of adaptability among the subjects appeared to be. The descriptives of the four dimensions are summarized in Table 18.

TABLE 18. Means of repatriates’ CCAI dimensions

Dimension of CCAI	N	Mean	possible min	possible max	Std.	variance
Emotional Resilience	40	81,60	64	108	8,37	70,04
Flexibility/Openness	40	65,58	0	90	5,88	34,61
Perceptual Acquity	40	43,95	38	60	4,91	24,15
Personal Autonomy	40	30,40	26	42	2,88	8,30

Subjects do not show particularly high scores in any of the four dimensions, but the means of the dimensions are all distributed lower than possible medians. The variance is greatest within “Emotional Resilience” (an ability to cope with ambiguity and stress, ability to maintain a positive attitude and to tolerate strong emotions) and indicates that individuals differ prominently in this dimension from one another. The subjects appear to be more homogeneous in the “Personal Autonomy” (an individual’s sense of identity) dimension. In all of the four dimensions the subjects were distributed normally. Therefore, in order to grasp any possible correlations between the self-reported level of adjustment and the potential adjustment measured by the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory, nonparametric correlations using Spearman’s test were conducted. No significant results were found. In other words, the potential ability to adjust and the self-rated adjustment level did not correlate in any way. This would further indicate that no causality could be drawn between these two measuring tools. How about the relationship between coping styles and the potential ability to adapt?

3.5 Potential Ability to Adapt and Coping Styles

The last and the final research question was concerned with the relationship between the potential ability to adapt and the coping style an individual decided to employ. A nonparametric Spearman’s test was conducted to find out about the possible correlations. The correlation matrix is summarized in the following table (Table 19).

TABLE 19. Correlations between the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory and the coping styles used by the repatriates

Coping styles		Emotional Resilience	Flexibility/Openness	Perceptual Acquity
Detachment/Repression	Correlation Coefficient	-,127	,093	,021
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	,435	,569	,898
	N	40	40	40
Direct, Confrontative Action	Correlation Coefficient	,195	,209	,254
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	,227	,195	,114
	N	40	40	40
Planful, Reflective Problem Solving	Correlation Coefficient	,332*	,559**	,506**
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	,036	,000	,001
	N	40	40	40
Social Interaction	Correlation Coefficient	,242	,178	,218
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	,133	,271	,177
	N	40	40	40
Emotion Regulation/Regression	Correlation Coefficient	-,348*	-,170	-,064
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	,028	,293	,693
	N	40	40	40

The correlation coefficients reveal significant correlations between some factors of the potential ability to adapt and some of the coping styles. “Emotional Resilience” (the ability to cope with ambiguity, strong emotions and the unfamiliar while reacting positively to new experiences) one of the factors measuring the potential ability to adapt correlates positively with “Planful, Reflective Problem Solving” (an individual attempts to get an overview of a stressful situation before acting) as a coping style and negatively with “Emotion Regulation/Regression” (an individual attempts to control his/her emotions) as a coping style. The “Planful, Reflective Problem Solving” as a coping style correlates significantly with “Flexibility/Openness” (the ability to be open to different ideas and to adapt to different ways of thinking and acting) and with

“Perceptual Acuity” (one’s attentiveness to interpersonal relations as well as verbal and non-verbal behavior). “Personal Autonomy” (an individual’s sense of identity, and the ability to maintain one’s personal values and beliefs, and to take responsibility for one’s actions) from the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory was not included into the correlation test because of its low reliability scores. In sum, there are some associations between one’s potential ability to adapt and the coping style an individual chooses to employ; however, only a few of these correlations are significant.

3.6 Summary

Thus to summarize the findings of this study: The repatriate’s educational level, gender, and the period of time on a foreign assignment are good predictors of which coping style that individual will choose to apply during the re-adjustment period in Finland. Of the five different coping styles, “Emotion Regulation/Regression” (an individual attempts to control his/her emotions) is the only one that indicates a possible causality towards one’s level of readjustment. In other words, “Emotion Regulation/Regression” as a coping style could diminish one’s readaptation to Finland. An individual’s potential ability to adapt and how the individual actual adapts have no relationship according to this study, but the individual’s potential ability to adapt and the coping style one selects to employ have a few strong correlations. These associations are between “Emotional Resilience” (the ability to cope with ambiguity, strong emotions and unfamiliar reacting positively to new experiences) and “Planful, Reflective Problem Solving” (an individual attempts to get an overview of a stressful situation before acting). Furthermore, a strong correlation can be seen between “Emotional Resilience” and “Emotion Regulation/Regression.” Substantively strong correlations, however, are to be found between “Flexibility/Openness” (the ability to be open to different ideas and to adapt to different ways of thinking and acting) and “Planful, Reflective Problem Solving” (an individual attempts to obtain an overview of the stress causing situation before acting) as well as between “Planful, Reflective

Problem Solving” and “Perceptual Acuity” (one’s attentiveness to interpersonal relations, including verbal and non-verbal behavior, being able to read people’s emotions and communicating accurately).

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Why were the repatriates of this study successful in their return?

To begin with, one should turn one's attention to the circumstances under which the subjects of this study, the Finnish repatriates, returned to Finland. For the majority of the repatriates in the study, the foreign assignment was a positive experience. As one may recall, most returnees reported their willingness to accept another foreign assignment almost immediately after their return. One can conclude that either the repatriation was a successful experience for the majority of the subjects or it was such a strenuous process that the returnees feel the need to return to their lives abroad. From the high levels of self-reported adjustment, however, one has to make an assumption that the first conclusion is closer to the truth. The fact that the adjustment levels of the subjects were so high naturally impacts on the results. The theory of repatriation adjustment deals mostly with problems that make the repatriation process unsuccessful. This research, however, failed to identify most of these problems, e.g. job shrink; underutilization of newly acquired skills and knowledge; and identity confusion. In short, this study of Finnish repatriates failed to confirm the problems and components that previous studies have identified as underlying factors for reverse culture shock and for difficult re-adjustment. There are, however, some explanations that might explain the high levels of adjustment to the home culture by these repatriates.

First of all, the subjects for this study were identified by the human resources personnel of the various organizations. Therefore, it is possible that the researcher was not able to include those repatriates whose return was unsuccessful. In other words, it is probable that those individuals left the particular company either during the assignment

or immediately after their return. There was thus no way of tracking down the repatriates that had changed organizations possibly due to a failed repatriation process. Furthermore, the participants of the study might have been self-selected. That is to say, that only those whose repatriation experiences were pleasant returned the questionnaires to the researcher and those whose return to Finland was difficult shied away from sharing their ordeals. Yet, there could be other explanations for the successful readaptation process of these returnees.

More than half of the repatriates reported that their foreign assignments actually enhanced their career growth and only one individual in the study recounted that his career had suffered. Perhaps the overseas assignment fitted well to the subject's career development. As discussed in the theory part, one of the main factors causing repatriation to fail was stifled career growth and obviously that was not a factor with the subjects of this study. It can be recalled that number of studies (Black, 1991, 1992; Grove & Hallowell, 1997) argued that most repatriations fail because of under utilization of newly acquired skills and home organization's under appreciation for the new knowledge. Further evidence to support the hypothesis that adjustment levels and job adaptation go hand-in-hand is that most subjects were satisfied with the positions that they received after their return. In other words, there was no "job shrink" or dissatisfaction with the positions to make the reentry exceedingly problematic. Moreover, the majority of the repatriates felt that their skills acquired overseas were utilized and appreciated by their home organizations. The fact that most of the subjects felt this way further explains the high adjustment levels received in this study.

The degree of communication between the expatriate and the home organization did not seem to impact the level of adaptation in such a degree as been expected. Previous studies (Black & Gregersen, 1992) have emphasized the importance of communication and the lack of it as a critical factor influencing repatriation adjustment, but this specific study did not confirm those results. It should be recalled, that half of the subjects felt that the level of communication was not sufficient but the other half of the participants felt it was adequate. More importantly, however, was the finding that those individuals dissatisfied with the level of interaction did not report any lesser

adjustment levels. Subsequently, one should ponder the reasons why the repatriations of the participants of this study were so triumphant.

One could make a couple of assumptions or hypotheses. First of all, it could well be that the Finnish multinational organizations had learned to plan the careers of their employees, so that foreign assignments fitted into the career development of the employees, and thus problems like “job-shrink,” lack of authority and under utilization of international skills acquired had already been acknowledged and dealt with. This is a questionable assumption, however, since one can see from the results concerning the repatriate training that no organized handling of the repatriation process has yet to be implemented. Nevertheless, it could well be that the multinational organizations represented in this study have realized the value and necessity of international experience for their employees and thus the atmosphere welcoming their return is more favorable to them. That is to say, that the respect and utilization of the returnees’ knowledge and skills have increased in these organizations.

Another possible explanation for the success of the re-adaptation and for the high rate of adjustment reported by the repatriates is that these returners may well be a self-selected group of individuals in the first place. That is to say that certain kinds of individuals leave for overseas assignments in the first place. Although the mean values of the CCAI did not demonstrate higher than normal scores for the participants of this study, nor gave they any statistical proof for the subjects’ higher potential for the handling of changes successfully, the heterogeneity, especially in the “Emotional resilience” dimension, demonstrated that individual factors could play an important part in handling repatriation. As discussed in the literature review of this study, individual differences have a great influence over how stress is perceived, experienced and handled by an individual (Kivimäki, 1996; Routamaa & Honkonen, 1997). It may also be recalled, that Kim (1994) pointed out that a person’s personality, especially personal characteristics such as resilience, flexibility and tolerance for ambiguity, serve as inner sources for individuals to draw from during the adaptation. Thus one can conclude from the variety of the subjects’ answers, under the dimensions of the CCAI that these repatriates differed in terms of their personalities from each other and thus they are

likely to handle the stress uniquely and most likely the best way for their personalities. In sum, the participants did not demonstrate advanced adjustment skills as a group, but as individuals they appeared to be well prepared to readapt.

In addition, one can not disregard the role of expectations when explaining the reasons for the high levels of adaptation reported by the participants of this study. As one may recall, Black (1992) concluded that those repatriates whose job as well as non-work expectations were met, reported higher levels of readaptation compared to those returnees whose expectations were either under- or overmet. Furthermore, the repatriates participating in the study could be highly motivated to adapt. Although the questionnaires did not tap the motivation of the subjects, the high impetus levels of the repatriates to readapt to the home culture and society can be seen by their positive attitudes toward the return. In addition, there is a possibility that the self-rated 5-point scale failed to measure the real level of the repatriate adjustment. It could be that the questions were leading and thus resulted in unrealistic scores. The whole problem lies on how to measure adaptation accurately. It might have been better to ask the subjects to write down, for example five problems that the repatriation caused them in order to obtain a clearer picture of an individual's adaptation. The interviews could have also helped to clarify the level of adjustment. Perhaps these approaches would have been better ways to take into account the subject's personality and characteristics, for what might have been important to one individual, could be insignificant to another. The discussion of the adaptation levels of repatriates leads us into the next pursuit of this study -- the coping styles that the returnees used.

4.2 What were the factors that led to one's choice of a coping style and how did that choice impact adjustment?

From the results one can clearly see that there are number of factors impacting one's choice of a coping style. These factors include: the repatriate's educational level, gender

and time period spent abroad. In light of the theory section of this study, the length of the expatriate assignment was expected to impact on the readaptation of the returnee, but its effects on the coping styles were fairly unknown. However, the particular coping style where an individual attempts to deal with the stress by repressing and detaching oneself from the problem could be seen as a logical result. That is to say, that after an individual has spent a fairly long period of time in another culture the reverse culture shock is more severe. Often this reverse culture shock will display itself in the form of the returnee distancing him/herself from others. Thus, detachment could be expected to be used as a coping mode by these individuals. Furthermore, in Adler's (1997) and Pusch's (1998) categories of returnee types, one can see that this particular coping mode ("Detachment/Repression") is mentioned as a characteristic of "Alienated Returner" and "Free Spirit" respectively. Adler (1997) mentions in the description of an "Alienated Returner" that these individuals often are people who have lived in a number of different countries, thus implying that these returnees have spent a long, continuous period of time abroad. Pusch (1998), on the other hand, did not particularly point out the time abroad as a major influence for one to be a "Free Spirit" returner, but she described these individuals as forever foreign, loyal to host country, detaching and alienating themselves from the home culture. One could then assume that these "Free Spirit" returnees might have been abroad for a long period of time, so that they had formed a sense of being unique and are thus determined to remain as such. Therefore, it would be only logical to assume that those individuals that have spent a long time abroad would use detachment and repression as their coping technique and their returning style could often times be described as "alienated" or "free spirited."

In addition, the education level of the returnee impacts on one's choice of a coping technique. According to this study, those repatriates with advance degrees chose to use coping modes that require analytical thinking. The individuals with higher levels of education attempted to control the situation by taking direct action to solve the situation as well as to control their emotions. The first technique is socially desirable while the latter is probably the least desired of the five coping styles since it does not further the adaptation, but hinders it. By trying to control one's emotions the individual

is in danger of becoming passive and indecisive. One can conclude that although educational level expands one's choice of coping techniques, it does not result in the more educated people in choosing a more appropriate coping mode. Actually, one could go even further, and say that higher education levels reduce the returnee's chances for successful adjustment to the home culture, organization and society since repatriates with higher educational levels use more emotion regulation as a coping style than those with lower educational levels.

Furthermore, according to the results of this study, women relied more on the support from others as a coping mode. This would indicate that women might be in a better position for re-adaption since social interaction as a coping technique implies that the user of this technique is a mature person, able to reach out to others. This technique is also socially desirable, but then again, someone using this coping style excessively might demonstrate an incapability to handle stress alone. All and all, women appear to be better equipped to handle stress including stress caused by repatriation and reverse culture shock, and therefore should readapt more successfully than men in general.

It may be recalled that no significant associations between coping styles and the level of adaptations were found. This was a disappointment since logically some relations should have existed as hypothesized in the research questions. The only indication about a probable relationship might lie between emotion controlling as a coping technique and modest adaptations levels. However, one cannot be sure that the particular coping mode has a lessening affect on adjustment. It can well be that low levels of adaptation foster the utilization of this socially undesirable coping style. Not the other way, that the utilization of this less socially desirable coping style results in low adaptation levels as assumed in the hypothesis.

4.3 How are coping styles, levels of adjustment and one's personality related ?

Next, it would be logical to discuss the individual differences and personal qualities as explanatory factors for dissimilar styles of handling stress. This particular study did not find any connections between the predispositions or personal characteristics of the repatriates and their level of re-adaptation, but as one may recall, there were significant correlations between the predispositions and the coping styles of the returnees.

According to this particular study, one's personality or one's predisposition to adapt has nothing to do with the actual level that the individual readapts. Could this be so simple? The answer is no. First of all, one should question the validity of the measuring tools for these two ratings. It could well be that the measuring of the level of adjustment for repatriates participating in the study failed. This supposition was discussed earlier in detail. In addition, one should question the validity of the CCAI. The four dimensions that it claims to measure: emotional resilience; an individual's flexibility and openness; a person's perceptual acuity; and his/her personal autonomy, are extremely difficult to measure. Although all these dimensions rise distinctively from the theory (according to Kim (1994), personal characteristics like openness and strength serve as inner sources for individuals to draw from during the adaptation process.), it is demanding to measure these characteristics and thus one should question if these characteristics can even be accurately measured. At least in the case of personal autonomy, the measuring tool evidently failed.

Nevertheless, there were a wide variety of responses within these four dimensions indicating that participants of this study possessed different personal characteristics. Over all, as a group the returnees did not demonstrate any higher degrees of predisposition for adjusting successfully. This could mean two things, either the repatriates are a representative sample of the general population and thus no better equipped to handle stressful adjustment process, or the measuring tool did not measure

what it claims to measure. However, one should also accept the possibility that there is no connection between the so-called potential level of adaptability or the predisposition for adjustment and the actual adjustment. This brings us back to the debate of can adaptation be measured and if so, how.

In spite of the insignificant results between the predisposition to adapt and the actual levels of adaptation, there were strong correlations between the CCAI dimensions and the coping styles that the repatriates used. In the light of the theory (according to Kim (1994), strength characterized by resilience, risk taking, hardiness, persistence, patience, elasticity and resourcefulness increases a person's ability to deal with adaptation process) it is only natural that CCAI's emotional resilience dimension correlates positively with a coping style where an individual attempts to get an overview of the situation before acting. Furthermore, it could have been expected that the often ineffective coping style of emotion regulation correlates negatively with ability to cope with ambiguity, strong emotions and the unfamiliar. Moreover, the fact that an individual's ability to be open to different ideas and the ability to adapt to different ways of thinking and acting (CCAI's flexibility/openness dimension) and the individual's attentiveness to interpersonal relations as well as verbal and non-verbal behavior (CCAI's perceptual acuity dimension) correlated positively with a coping style that has to do with direct action to solve a stressful situation (Direct, Confrontative Action). Both of these predispositions require analytical thinking and a keen observational ability and the individual using this particular coping style must also possess those same abilities.

All and all, one should consider a possible hypothesis that the coping styles might not explain the level of readjustment, and the coping styles per se might have no affect on the level of repatriate's readaptation to his/her home culture, but that the predispositions to adjust might impact on which coping style an individual chooses to employ. Additionally, it should be noted that there are coping styles that are more acceptable than other and thus, although the coping style used might not impact on the adaptation level, the employed coping style might make the adjustment process more acceptable for those around the returnee. Thus, the repatriation adaptation and the

coping styles of returnees could be tackled from a slightly different point of view. In addition to asking and measuring repatriates' adjustment and what coping styles they use, the people around the repatriates also should be heard. The colleagues at work, supervisors in the home organizations, friends and family should be interviewed in order to develop a more comprehensive picture of the readaptation. New research topics sprouting from this study could be to explore the repatriation adjustment with a wider lens for sources of information (interviews, rating of colleagues, supervisor, family and friends) and then to look into the possible relationships between the levels of adaptation and the coping styles employed by the returnees, i.e. what affect will these other sources of information have on the latter. A more extensive net of information about the returnees' adjustment level would provide us a more accurate view of the actual adaptation level.

4.4 Summary

In sum, the returnees of this study were better adapted than one could have expected from familiarizing oneself with the previous research studies and the literature on the subject. However, there are many explanations that arise from the theory to illustrate the reasons for this study's participants' high levels of readjustment. For example, the facts, that the careers of many of the repatriates participating in this study were actually enhanced and the skills that they acquired overseas were appreciated in their home organizations, could most likely explain at least a part of the participants' successful readjustment to Finland. Thus, one could conclude that the problems theory pointed out as reasons for failed readaptation can influence positively to readjustment when paid attention to.

This study also confirmed the importance of the motivational as well as personality factors of the returnees in the case of readaptation. These individual dimensions seem to contribute to the adaptation process as expected, although no significant proof for direct link or relationship between the returnees' predispositions to

adapt and their actual level of readaptation was not identified by this study.

Moreover, no significant associations between coping styles and the level of adaptation were found. This neither confirmed or contradicted theory, since there was no previous studies on the particular subject. However, the results of this study indicated that there is some kind of a relationship between the predispositions of the returnees to adapt and the coping styles they choose to employ to cope with stressful events.

4.5 Discussion of method

In every research study there is a question about its reliability and validity. The two questionnaires, the CCAI by Colleen Kelley and Judith Meyers (1995) and the Coping Strategy Inventory by Petteri Niitamo (1996), used in this study were reliable in most of the factors. That is to say, that only the factor “personal autonomy” in the CCAI was not a reliable factor and thus it was not used when reporting results. All the other factors measured in the study were reliable. Both the construct and internal validity of these two questionnaires should also be assumed to be high since both of them are published and widely used measuring tools. The validity of the questions concerning the level of returnee’s adaptation, on the other hand, is tougher to determine. As examined earlier in the discussion, the way of measuring the repatriate’s level of adjustment might not have been the most valid way or yardstick for the individual’s adjustment level.

The external validity of the research should also be considered competent although the sample of the participants was not completely random. As it may be recalled the subjects were gathered by contacting different organizations and receiving the contact information of repatriates that the human resources personnel could access or remember at the moment. It could be argued, however, that the sample of the repatriates or the subjects of this study is comprehensive enough because they seemingly represent the target population of Finnish business expatriates.

4.6 Recommendations for future research

This study has concentrated on three main focal points: repatriates' readjustment to Finland, the coping styles employed by them and how their predisposition to adapt impacts on the adjustment process. Although this study represents a comprehensive attempt to tackle these issues related to repatriation, there are still many avenues that need to be explored before we fully understand the process of repatriation. Accordingly, the ideas that were investigated in this research should be explored further, with more subjects and different measuring tools. This study approached the issues of adaptation and coping from the perspective of an individual acting alone. The environment where the individual acts, however, should be investigated, quantified, and analyzed in more depth. Moreover, the number of the subjects should be increased to reach a more accurate validity, while employing a more systematic procedure to enlist the subjects.

The company's philosophy or management of repatriates should also be examined in future research studies. It would be interesting to see if those factors play a significant role in choosing a coping style and if so, how.

Furthermore, it would be fruitful to conduct similar research studies in other cultures. Finland is considered a highly individualistic culture and as such, the members of this culture have learned to be self-reliant. In another culture the coping styles utilized by the repatriates as well as their affects on the readaptation process might differ drastically.

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Hyvä paluumuuttaja

Nimeni on Tiiu Mäkelä ja opiskelen Jyväskylän yliopistossa pääaineenani psykologia. Olen myös uudessa maisteriohjelmassa ICIR (Intercultural Communication and Intercultural Relations). Olen asunut Yhdysvalloissa 8 vuotta, josta palasin noin puolitoista vuotta sitten takaisin Suomeen. Nyt teen pro gradu -tutkimusta paluumuuttajien sopeutumisesta takaisin Suomeen. Yritän kartoittaa repatriation tuomia ongelmia ja työelämässä olevien sopeutumista. Siksi tarvitsen siis apuasi.

Olen hyvin kiitollinen, jos vastaat seuraaviin kysymyslomakkeisiin. Niitä on kolme erilaista ja kaikki kolme käyttävät eri asteikkoja (pyydän Sinua siis olemaan huolellinen). Pyydän Sinua lähettämään vastauslomakkeet 1 ja 2 (sama paperi, eri puolet) sekä ensimmäisen kysymyslomakkeen takaisin mukana olevassa vastauskuoressa niin nopeasti kuin mahdollista, mieluiten ennen helmikuun loppua. Kaikki vastauksesi ovat luottamuksellisia, eikä nimeäsi tai organisaatiosi nimeä tulla mainitsemaan missään.

Olen kiitollinen vaivannäöstäsi ja ajastasi. Jos Sinulla on kysymyksiä, ota yhteyttä.

Kiittäen,

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pro gradu -tutkimus

- 1) Syntymävuosi _____
- 2) Sukupuoli M N
- 3) Koulutus ___ ammatillinen tutkinto ___ yliopistollinen tutkinto ___ lis. tai toht.
- 4) Työssäoloaika vuosina _____
- 5) Ammatti _____
- 6) Organisaatio _____
- 7) Kuinka kauan ulkomailla? _____ vuodet _____ kuukaudet
- 8) Kuinka kauan viimeisen komennuksen jälkeen takaisin Suomessa? _____ vuodet _____ kuukaudet
- 9) Missä maassa/kulttuurissa asuit ja työskentelit? _____
- 10) Miten hyvin tunnet tällä hetkellä sopeutuneesi seuraaviin elämäsi osa-alueisiin palattuasi Suomeen?
Esimerkiksi, jos tunnet sopeutuneesi erittäin hyvin, ympyröi 5, ja jos et tunne sopeutuneesi ollenkaan, ympyröi 1.

Esimerkki: 1 2 3 4 5

en ollenkaan jossain määrin keskinkertaisesti hyvin erittäin hyvin

- a) Miten hyvin olet sopeutunut nykyiseen tehtävääsi (velvoitteet, haasteet, tietojesi ja taitojesi käyttö)?
- 1 2 3 4 5
- b) Miten hyvin tunnet tällä hetkellä sopeutuneesi henkilötasolla (identiteetti, tuntemukset)?
- 1 2 3 4 5
- c) Miten hyvin olet sopeutunut kotiorganisaatioosi (tunnetko olevasi perillä asioista, arvostetaanko kokemustasi/tietojasi)?
- 1 2 3 4 5
- d) Miten hyvin tunnet sopeutuneesi työelämän ulkopuoliseen elämääsi (ystävät/tuttavat)?
- 1 2 3 4 5
- 5) Miten hyvin tunnet sopeutuneesi asuinympäristöösi?
- 1 2 3 4 5

6) Miten tyytyväinen olet nykyiseen sosiaaliseen statukseesi?

1 2 3 4 5

11) Kuvaile lyhyesti, mitä Suomeen paluu Sinulle merkitsi. Esim. palasitko mielelläsi vai tulitko pakon edessä? Haluatko jäädä Suomeen vai lähdetkö ulkomaille niin pian kuin mahdollista?

12) Tarjosiko organisaatiosi mahdollisuuden paluumuutto orientaatioon/ koulutukseen (training)?

Jos KYLLÄ, niin minkälaista? Kauanko se kesti, mitä se sisälsi?

13) Tunsitko, että ulkomaan komennus auttoi Sinua urallasi eteenpäin?

14) Arvostaako/arvostiko organisaatiosi Sinun ulkomaan kokemustasi/ulkomailla hankittua tietouttasi? Miten? (esim. esitelmöitsijänä, asiantuntijana, kouluttajana, rahallisesti ym.)

15) Oletko tyytyväinen työpaikkaan, jonka sait palattuasi? _____

16) Tunnetko/tunsitko, että Sinut pidettiin ajan tasalla kotimaan asioista sekä organisaatiomuutoksista että poliittisista ym. asioista ulkomailla ollessasi?

KIITOS!

PWC60-pnii97

SELVIYTYMISEN KEINOT

Seuraavassa kartoitetaan ihmisten tapoja toimia kun he kohtaavat elämässään vaikeita tai stressaavia tapahtumia tai aikoja. Eri ihmisillä on hyvinkin erilaisia tapoja selviytyä tilanteissa. Sinulla on tilaisuus arvioida miten yleensä toimit läpikäydessäsi stressaavia tapahtumia tai aikoja. Erilaiset tilanteet tai tapahtumat virittävät toki erilaisia toiminta- ja kokemistapoja, mutta arvioi miten yleensä toimit merkittävässä stressitilanteissa.

Kirjoita vastauksesi erilliselle vastauslomakkeelle. Ympyröi vastauslomakkeen asteikolta oikea vaihtoehto osoittamaan, kuinka paljon käytät kutakin keinoa yleensä stressitilanteissa selviytymiseen. Esimerkiksi jos käytät fyysistä liikuntaa suuressa määrin keinonasi selviytyä stresseissä ympyröit vastaavalta asteikolta numeron 3.

Esimerkki: 0 1 2 3

Vastaa jokaiseen väittämään. Mitään oikeita tai väriä vastauksia ei tällaisessa tehtävässä ole. Tärkeää on, että kerrot, miten itse toimit, etkä miten ihmiset yleensä toimivat tai miten olisi suotavaa toimia. Muistin virkistämiseksi voit palauttaa mieleesi jotain merkittäviä stressikokemuksiasi ja käyttää niitä pohjana vastauksillesi.

1. Keskitän ajatukseni seuraavaan askeleeseen - mitä tehdä seuraavaksi.
2. Huomaan ryhtyväni puuhailemaan aivan muun kuin pääongelman parissa.
3. Kysyn neuvoja samankaltaisia kokemuksia läpikäyneiltä ihmisiltä.
4. Keskustelen jonkun kanssa ymmärtääkseni tilannetta paremmin.
5. Opettelen elämään asian kanssa.
6. Pohdin erilaisten ratkaisukeinojen seuraamuksia.
7. Toivon ihmettä tapahtuvaksi.
8. Panen toimeksi sen sijaan että alkaisin liikaa pohdiskella asiaa.
9. Jatkan eteenpäin ikäänkuin mitään ei olisi tapahtunut.
10. Pyrin pitämään tunteet visusti sisälläni.
11. Koetan nähdä asioissa myös myönteisiä puolia.
12. Nukun tavanomaista enemmän.
13. Ilmaisen suuttumukseni henkilö(i)lle, joka on tilanteen aiheuttanut.
14. Vastaanotan muiden myötätuntoa ja ymmärtämystä.
15. Pyrin unohtamaan koko asian.
16. Hankin lisätietoja voidakseni paremmin hallita ongelmaa.
17. Pyydän anteeksi tai yritän korvata mahdollisesti aiheuttamaani harmia.
18. Laadin toimintasuunnitelman jota sittemmin noudatan.
19. Ilmaisen ulospäin tunteitani, tavalla tai toisella.
20. Pyrin sovittamaan voimavarani vastaamaan ongelman vaatimuksia.
21. Keskustelen jonkun kanssa joka voisi konkreettisesti vaikuttaa tilanteeseen.
22. Helpotan oloani syömällä, juomalla, lääkkeillä tms.
23. Haen myötätuntoa tai ymmärrystä joltakulta henkilöltä.
24. Koetan välttää liian hätäisiä, mielijohteenomaisia ratkaisuja.
25. Ryhdyn konkreettisiin toimiin asioiden korjaamiseksi.

26. Välttelen muiden seuraa.
27. En anna asioiden liikaa vaivata itseäni, en murehdi liikaa.
28. Kysyn neuvoa arvostamaltani ystävältä tai sukulaiselta.
29. Jätän kertomatta muille kuinka huonolla tolalla asiat todella ovat.
30. Suhtaudun stressitilanteisiin kevyesti, kieltäydyn ottamasta niitä liian vakavasti.
31. Puhun jollekulle tuntemuksistani.
32. Pidän jalat tiukasti maassa ja ponnistelen aikomukseni toteuttamiseksi.
33. Puran turhautumista ja ärtymystäni muihin.
34. Mielessäni välkkyvä ajatus että oikeastaan ansaitsin tämän ongelman.
35. Tiedän aina mitä on tehtävä joten kaksinkertaistan ponnistukseni asioiden muuttamiseksi.
36. Kieltäydyn uskomasta tilannetta tapahtuneeksi.
37. Laadin ongelmaan useankin erilaisen ratkaisumallin.
38. Koetan hillitä tunteitani häiritsemästä liikaa asioita.
39. Muutan jollain tavoin itseäni tai asennoitumistani tilanteeseen.
40. Toivon että tilanne poistuisi päiväjärjestyksestä.
41. Kuvittelen tilanteelle mitä mielikuvituksellisimpia seuraamuksia.
42. Rukoilen korkeamman johdatusta.
43. Pohdin mitä aion tilanteessa sanoa tai miten toimia.
44. Kuvittelen miten arvostamani henkilö toimisi tilanteessa ja otan sen ohjenuoraksi itselleni.
45. Erittelen ja puntaroin ongelmaa ymmärtääkseni sitä paremmin.
46. Ryhdyn johonkin muuhun toimintaan saadakseni ajatukset pois tilanteesta.
47. Ajattelen että aika auttaa ratkaisun syntymiseen - paras keino on odottaa.
48. Tartun asiaan välittömästi - seurauksista piittaamatta.
49. Lohduttelen itseäni jollain tavoin oloni kohentamiseksi.
50. Odotan tilanteen kehittymistä ennen kuin ryhdyn mihinkään konkreettiseen toimeen.

51. Keskitän voimani saadakseni asiassa jotain näkyvää aikaiseksi.
52. Otan asiaan etäisyyttä, pyrin lepäämään tai lomailemaan.
53. Puren hampaani yhteen enkä näytä huoltani ulospäin.
54. Sisuunnun ja taistelen asiani puolesta.
55. Elättelen unelmia paremmista ajoista tai olosuhteista.
56. Pidän tärkeänä ettei asia liikaa veisi aikaani.
57. Pyrin katselemaan tilannetta myös toisen henkilön silmin.
58. Muistutan itseäni siitä kuinka paljon huonommin asiat voisivat olla.
59. Siirrän kaikki muut asiat syrjään kohdistaakseni koko tarmoni ao. ongelmaan.
60. Ryhdyn askel kerrallaan tilanteen edellyttämiin toimenpiteisiin.

CCAI

Lue alla olevat väitteet ja valitse vastaus, joka kuvailee Sinua tällä hetkellä parhaiten. Kirjoita vastauksesi erilliselle vastauslomakkeelle (vastauslomake numero 2). Ympyröi vastauslomakkeen asteikolta oikea vaihtoehto osoittamaan, miten hyvin tämä väite kuvailee Sinua. Esimerkiksi jos väite “yleensä totta” pitää kohdallasi paikkansa, ympyröi lyhenne YL (EHD T YL EVT ET EET). Jos haluat vaihtaa vastaustasi, piirrä X entisen vastauksesi päälle ja ympyröi sitten uusi vastauksesi (EHD T YL EVT ET EET).

Jotkut väitteet saattavat vaikuttaa samankaltaisilta. Älä kuitenkaan huolehdi siitä, ettet olisi johdonmukainen vastauksissasi, vaan valitse vastaus, joka tuntuu oikealta tähän väitteeseen.

EHD	Ehdottomasti totta
T	Totta
YL	Yleensä totta
EVT	Ei välttämättä totta
ET	Ei totta
EET	Ehdottomasti ei totta

1. Minulla on keinoja selviytyä uusien tilanteiden aiheuttamasta stressistä.
2. Uskon, että voisin elää kokonaisvaltaista elämää toisessa kulttuurissa.
3. Yritän ymmärtää ihmisten ajatuksia ja tunteita puhuessani heidän kanssaan.
4. Luotan siihen , että selviydyn elämästä missä sitten olenkin.
5. Voin viihtyä kaikenlaisten ihmisten parissa.
6. Uskon, että selviän tehtävistäni myös oudoissa ympäristöissä.
7. Osaan nauraa itselleni, kun teen kulttuurisidonnaisia virheitä.
8. Pidän kaikenlaisten ihmisten kanssa olemisesta.
9. Minulla on realistinen näkemys siitä, minkälaisena toiset ihmiset näkevät minut
10. Työskennellessäni muista kulttuureista tulevien ihmisten kanssa, minulle on tärkeää, että saavutan heidän hyväksyntänsä.
11. Pidän useista ihmisistä, joiden kiinnostuksenkohteet ovat erilaiset kuin omani.
12. Uskon, että kaikki ihmiset ovat tasa-arvoisia rodusta riippumatta.
13. Pidän uusien asioiden kokeilemisesta.
14. Jos minun pitää sopeutua entistä hitaampaan elämäntyyliin, minusta tulee kärsimätön.

15. Olen ihminen, joka ei tuomitse toisia sen takia, että he ovat erilaisia kuin minä itse.
16. Jos minun pitää palkata ihmisiä, joilla on erilainen tausta kuin minulla, olen varma, että osaan tehdä oikeita ratkaisuja.
17. Jos ideani ovat ristiriidassa niiden ihmisten ideoiden kanssa, jotka ovat erilaisia kuin minä, seuraan omia ideoitani mielummin kuin heidän.
18. Voisin elää missä vain ja nauttia elämästä.
19. Minulle on tärkeämpää tehdä vaikutus ihmisiin, jotka ovat erilaisia kuin minä, kuin olla oma itseni heidän kanssaan.
20. Osaan tulkita ihmisten tunteita, vaikka he olisivat erilaisia kuin minä.
21. Saan helposti ystäviä.
22. Kun olen ihmisten kanssa, jotka ovat erilaisia kuin minä, tunnen itseni yksinäiseksi.
23. En pidä uusien ruokien kokeilemisesta.
24. Uskon, että kaikilla kulttuureilla on jotakin tarjottavana.
25. Tunnen itseni esteettömäksi pitämään kiinni omista arvoistani, vaikka muut eivät niitä jakaisikaan kanssani.
26. Vaikka epäonnistuisinkin uudessa elämäntilanteessa, voisin silti pitää itsestäni.
27. En ole hyvä ymmärtämään ihmisiä, jos he ovat erilaisia kuin minä.
28. Kiinnitän huomiota siihen, kuinka ihmisten kulttuurierot vaikuttavat heidän havaintoihinsa minusta.
29. Pidän uusista kokemuksista.
30. Nautin yksinolosta, jopa oudoissa olosuhteissa.
31. Lannistun harvoin, vaikka työskentelisinkin ihmisten kanssa, jotka ovat hyvin erilaisia kuin minä.
32. Minua tuntevat ihmiset kuvailisivat minut suvaitsemattomaksi toisten erilaisuutta kohtaan.
33. Harkitsen, kuinka tekoni vaikuttavat muihin.
34. Minun on vaikea lähestyä outoja tilanteita positiivisella asenteella.
35. Teen päätökset mielummin omien arvojeni mukaisesti, vaikka muilla asianosaisilla olisikin erilaiset arvot.

36. Pystyn selviytymään mistä tahansa hankalista tunteista, joita saatan kohdata uudessa kulttuurissa.
37. Kun tapaan ihmisiä, jotka ovat erilaisia kuin minä, minulla on taipumus tuomita heidän erilaisuutensa.
38. Kun olen ihmisten kanssa, jotka ovat erilaisia kuin minä, tulkitsen heidän käyttäytymisensä heidän kulttuurinsa valossa.
39. Voin toimia tilanteissa, joissa asiat ovat epäselviä.
40. Kun tapaan ihmisiä, jotka ovat erilaisia kuin minä, olen kiinnostunut tietämään heistä lisää.
41. Oma arvosysteemini perustuu omiin uskomuksiini eikä muiden ihmisten asettamiin normeihin.
42. Luotan taitooni kommunikoida oikein uusissa tilanteissa.
43. Nautin keskustelusta ihmisten kanssa, jotka ajattelevat eri lailla kuin minä.
44. Kun olen uudessa ja oudossa ympäristössä, pidän mieleni avoimena.
45. Voin hyväksyä puutteeni riippumatta siitä, kuinka muut ne näkevät.
46. Olen ihminen, joka ei tuomitse toisia sen takia, että he ovat erilaisia kuin minä itse.
47. Odotan, että muut kunnioittavat minua kulttuuritaustastaan huolimatta.
48. Selviydyn uusien tilanteiden ja ihmisten tapaamisesta aiheutuvasta stressistä.
49. Kun tapaamani ihmiset ovat erilaisia kuin minä, odotan pitäväni heistä.
50. Kun puhun ihmisten kanssa, jotka tulevat eri kulttuureista, kiinnitän huomiota heidän kehonkieleensä.

CCAI

The purpose of this inventory is to help you assess your ability to living in another culture and to interact effectively with people from different cultures. Read each statement carefully and choose the response that best describes you right now. Indicate your response by circling the appropriate abbreviation to the right statement. For example, if you think a statement “tends to be true” about you, circle TT next to that statement.

Some items may sound very similar. Don't worry about being perfectly consistent in your answers. Just choose the most appropriate response for each item.

Use a ball point pen or a pencil to circle your answers (DT T TT NT DNT). If you decide to change an answer, draw an X through your original answer and then circle your new answer (DT T TT TNT NT DNT).

DT Definitely True
 T True
 TT Tends to Be True
 TNT Tends to Be Not True
 NT Not True
 DNT Definitely Not True

1. I have ways to deal with the stresses of new situations
2. I believe that I could live a fulfilling life in another culture
3. I try to understand people's thoughts and feelings when I talk to them.
4. I feel confident in my ability to cope with life, no matter where I am
5. I can enjoy relating to all kinds of people
6. I believe that I can accomplish what I set out to do, even in unfamiliar settings
7. I can laugh at myself when I make a cultural faux pas (mistake)
8. I like being with all kinds of people
9. I have a realistic perception of how others see me
10. When I am working with people of different cultural background, it is important to me to receive their approval
11. I like a number of people who don't share my particular interests
12. I believe that all people, of whatever race, are equally valuable

13. I like to try new things
14. If I had to adapt to a slower pace of life, I would become impatient
15. I am the kind of person who gives people who are different from me the benefit of the doubt
16. If I had to hire several job candidates from a background different from my own, I feel confident that I could make a good judgement
17. If my ideas conflicted with those of others who are different from me, I would follow my ideas rather than theirs
18. I could live anywhere and enjoy life
19. Impressing people different from me is more important than being myself with them
20. I can perceive how people are feeling, even if they are different from me
21. I make friends easily
22. When I am around people who are different from me, I feel lonely
23. I don't enjoy trying new foods
24. I believe that all cultures have something worthwhile to offer
25. I feel free to maintain my personal values, even among those who do not share them
26. Even if I failed in a new living situation, I could still like myself
27. I am not good at understanding people when they are different from me
28. I pay attention to how people's cultural differences affect their perceptions of me
29. I like new experiences
30. I enjoy spending time alone, even in unfamiliar surroundings
31. I rarely get discouraged, even when I work with people who are very different from me
32. People who know me would describe me as a person who is intolerant of others differences
33. I consider the impact my actions have on others
34. It is difficult for me to approach unfamiliar situations with a positive attitude
35. I prefer to decide from my own values, even when those around me have different values
36. I can cope well with whatever difficult feelings I might experience in a new culture

37. When I meet people who are different from me, I tend to feel judgmental about their differences
38. When I am with people who are different from me, I interpret their behavior in the context of their culture
39. I can function in situations where things are not clear
40. When I meet people who are different from me, I am interested in learning more about them
41. My personal value system is based on my own beliefs, not on conformity to other people's standards
42. I trust my ability to communicate accurately in new situations
43. I enjoy talking with people who think differently than I think
44. When I am in a new or strange environment, I keep an open mind.
45. I can accept my imperfections, regardless of how others view them
46. I am the kind of person who gives people who are different from me the benefit of the doubt
47. I expect that others will respect me, regardless of their cultural background
48. I can live with the stress of encountering new circumstances or people
49. When I meet people who are different from me, I expect to like them
50. In talking with people from other cultures, I pay attention to body language