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**Abstract of the Diploma Thesis**

**A critical analysis and exploration into what type of cross-cultural training is the most useful tool for avoiding expatriation failure**

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# **A critical analysis and exploration into what type of cross-cultural training is the most useful tool for avoiding expatriation failure**

## **Summary**

This diploma thesis deals with the issues of expatriation with the stress on the training of expatriates and the negative phenomenon known as expatriation failure. Thesis explains issues connected with expatriation, highlights the importance of cultural awareness and explains different types of pre-departure training and post-departure training.

The thesis is divided into theoretical and empirical part. Theoretical part is based on compilation of academic texts. This part provides an overview of the field of expatriation and covers topics such as reasons for expatriation, expatriation failure, cultural awareness, pre-departure training and post-departure training. The empirical part is a result of author's own research about finding the most useful type of cross-cultural training for expatriates. For this purpose, qualitative research is used. The main technique for data collection is e-mail interviews. Collected data serves as a main tool for answering research questions. Discussion and conclusion are provided afterwards.

**Keywords:** cross-culture training, expatriates, expatriation, expatriation failure, international assignments, pre-departure training, post-departure training, culture

## **Objectives of the thesis**

The aim of this thesis is to introduce and explain the issue of expatriation with the stress on training of expatriates and negative phenomenon known as an expatriation failure. Own research will focus on finding the most useful type of cross-cultural training for expatriates in order to avoid expatriation failure. This thesis intends to uncover issues of concern to expatriate workers with stress on training, and to identify benefits of cross-cultural training for expatriates. In order to be more specific, following objectives of the thesis were set.

### **Objectives of the thesis**

- Explain the concept and issues connected with expatriation
- Explain consequences of negative phenomenon known as expatriation failure
- Analyses possible types of cross-cultural training for expatriates

### **Research Questions**

Author's research should provide answers to following research questions.

**RQ 1:** *What makes expatriation easier in order to avoid or decrease possibility of expatriation failure?*

**RQ 2:** *What are factors that help expatriates to adjust to host country culture?*

**RQ 3:** *What specific type of cross-cultural training is evaluated as the most useful for expatriates?*

### **Methodology**

This diploma thesis consists of theoretical and empirical part. The theoretical part is based on a compilation of academic texts. This part provides an overview of the field of expatriation. Theories known in cross-cultural management are mentioned and explained. Theoretical part covers topics such as expatriation, pre-departure and post-departure training, culture awareness and negative phenomenon known as expatriation failure.

An empirical part is based on findings from the research. For this research and the nature of research questions best serve qualitative research that might uncover issues and concerns related

to expatriation. E-mail interview is used as a technique for data collection. An author of the thesis chose this technique because it was evaluated as a best possible option. Collected data serves as a main tool for answering research questions. Conclusion is based on analysis of collected data.

## **Results and Discussion**

The research detected some interesting facts concerning the field of expatriation. The research revealed that company support and family support are two factors that make expatriation of assignees easier. Company support conceals of two important things by which company can help expatriate to avoid expatriation failure. The first one is providing some type of cross-cultural training to expatriates and the second one is securing and arranging best possible conditions for every-day life (arranging and dealing with housing, car rent, health insurance, school for kids). Respondents stated that if the company provide these types of supports, it makes their expatriation easier and greatly contributes to avoiding expatriation failure. These findings confirm knowledge gained from literature review about cross-cultural training. It is believed and now was confirm with this research that cross-cultural training greatly helps to avoid expatriation failure.

The second factor that contributes to avoiding expatriation failure is family support. Research uncovered that family welfare help expatriates to avoid expatriation failure. When expatriate is contented at home, he/she is not exposed to the stress so change that the international assignment fails is much lower. This finding corresponds with the literature that states that the most frequent reason for expatriation failures are family issues that are connected with inability to adjust to local culture. From the research results is obvious that family and contentment of family members matters to expatriates and that expatriates realize that by having both company and family support their chances that their expatriation assignment will be successful are higher.

The research also focused on cultural side of expatriation and the results indicates that the factors that help to expatriates to adjust to culture of host country are friendships with international expatriates and more importantly friendship with local people of host country. Respondents highlighted that having friends among local people help them to adjust easier and faster. By friendship with local people, expatriates can gain deeper knowledge of the host country and its culture, customs and rules. They can understand and realize differences between

cultures faster and easier that help them to avoid unpleasant situation. By being in a contact with local people that gain host culture knowledge that helps them to adjust to local culture faster and easier. This finding correspond with literature that highlight the fact that by staying in touch with local people is great assistance to expatriate in his/her process of adjusting to local culture.

The last result uncovered by the research is connected to cross-cultural training. It was find out that the most useful type of cross-cultural training are Cultural Briefings and Post-arrival Meetings with Local People. These types of training received the same amount of votes from respondents in the evaluation of cross-cultural training type.

By meetings is meant any meeting or encounter where expatriate and a citizen of the host country meet and talk. This finding is in connection with the previous finding that friendship with local people helps expatriates to adjust to local culture easier. These two outcomes greatly stress the important role of the contact with local people in expatriation. It seems that by the contact with local people and by socializing with them, expatriations can highly increase chance that their expatriation will be successful.

Cultural Briefings are believed to have same importance as Post-arrival Meetings with Local People. Cultural Briefings include information about culture, customs, history, religion and some basic information about law. With cultural knowledge that Cultural Briefings provides, expatriate is featured with the knowledge he/she needs to know for smooth process of international assignment from cultural point of view. This result supports the literature that cultural knowledge is a crucial for successful expatriation.

## **Conclusion and Recommendation**

This thesis and its results serve as a guide that recommends several changes in in company's attitude toward expatriation. Based on the results of the research that revealed that providing some type of cross-cultural training and by arranging necessities connected with everyday life (housing, car rent, schools for kids, health insurance) are two factors that helps expatriation easier, company can secure this services and contributes to successful expatriation. Company should not only cover the costs connected with expatriation, it should also arrange, sort and deal with arranging theses services in order to make expatriation easier.

It may look that company can do anything about family support but author recommends to company to provide cross-culture training also to family members or partners who are

accompanying expatriate to host country. From literature is known that family issues connected to inability to adjust to local culture is the main reason why expatriation fails. In order to avoid these issues, company provides cross-cultural training to accompaniment. With the proper cross-cultural training, the ability to adjust to local culture rises and chances to failure decreases. In order to help expatriates adjust to culture, based on the results, company should provide cross-cultural training as well as organize some events and meetings where expatriates meets with local people. It is recommended to provide both pre-departure and post-departure training. The training should be broad and should include different form of training. It is highly recommended to provide cultural briefings and preliminary visits before the original task starts. After arrival to the country, expatriates can greatly benefit from meetings with local people.

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