Success: Perceptions of New Zealand Expatriates in Singapore

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Abstract:

With growing international business opportunities the practice of employing expatriates is becoming widespread among New Zealand companies. New Zealanders are commonly selected or seek out expatriate assignments with Singapore being a key country where many expatriates relocate. New Zealand has a long established and close relationship with Singapore making it an invaluable market to maintain strong relationships and trade. Expatriates and New Zealand businesses are provided with a gateway into the Asian markets and the rest of the world. Singapore also offers the stimulus of an Asian economy, attracting a miscellaneous group of expatriates. This creates numerous cultural, financial and social reasons for why it is important to ensure expatriates are successful within their roles.

The purpose of this empirical study is to understand if levels of pre-departure preparation, on-arrival and continued support affect the self-diagnosed perceived success of New Zealand expatriates in Singapore. This research offers two emergent frameworks, the first is a ‘model of expatriate success’ derived from the literature, the second, the ‘three factors of success model’ emanated from the results.

Results were gathered using on-site interviews and an online survey. They show that all stages of expatriation are important to the success of an assignment, with emphasis around ‘on-arrival support’ significantly assisting adjustment. In addition to these stages, the personal characteristics and abilities of an expatriate are also shown to be important to success.

Adjustment is a key attribute pivotal to the success of an expatriate assignment in Singapore, with inadequate adjustment correlated with expatriate failure. Success is the result of a successful acclimatisation and adjustment phase, with methods endorsed or provided by their organisation. Pre-departure preparation, on-arrival and continued support all contributed to the perceived success of expatriate assignments, with those methods recognised to be focused heavily on the adjustment of the expatriate gaining greater recognition. The success of an expatriate assignment also appeared to be focused on the expatriate’s personal values and measures of success. A ‘success’ paradigm was
formed through the understanding that success was achieved through satisfaction of three key areas: professional, personal and reward.

This research contributes to the study of expatriate’s experiences through the perceptions of success of expatriates on international assignments. The results and their implications for international firms are discussed in detail.
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Reflecting on the journey I began nine months ago and extending to my five years here at Otago University, I have accomplished a lot. My success and this Masters thesis would not have been possible without the right determination and attitude or the support and encouragement of so many individuals.

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“Every worthwhile accomplishment, big or little, has its stages of drudgery and triumph; a beginning, a struggle and a victory.” - Ghandi
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Chapter One:

Introduction

Expatriates sent abroad on international assignments are very important for organisations, acting as a fulcrum between the home and host country. If successful they may provide a strong source of competitive advantage.

As more New Zealand companies expand internationally it is important that the face of each business, often a New Zealand expatriate, is successful in their role. Social, financial and cultural factors can be harmed if an expatriate assignment is unsuccessful and as expatriation is a costly process, failure can be detrimental to both the expatriate and organisation success. In order to increase the success rate of expatriates research needs to focus on the factors that lead to success. This research investigates the levels of pre-departure preparation, on-arrival and continued support provided to New Zealand expatriates in Singapore.

New Zealand and Singapore have a long and close relationship, with Singapore being New Zealand’s sixth largest trading partner. The two countries both have open economies and often take similar views internationally and regionally on trade issues (MFAT, 2011). Singapore also provides a gateway for New Zealand businesses to access the rest of the world, making it an invaluable market to maintain strong relationships and trade. For New Zealanders, Singapore offers a thriving business market and economy offering further career opportunities not available within New Zealand.

An aim of this research is to increase understanding of the success of New Zealand expatriates in Singapore. This is achieved by examining if the levels of pre-departure preparation, on-arrival and continued support provided to expatriates, affect the self-diagnosed perceived success of their expatriate assignment.

This research was conducted through on-site, face-to-face interviews, which provided rich data and a more complete understanding of the participants who experience expatriation. As expatriation is very context dependent, conducting
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Interviews in Singapore provided a greater understanding of the work and living environment participants operate in. Expatriate assignments are heavily influenced by the customs, culture and environment of the new country, therefore, it was important to engage and recognize this when making observations and collecting data. Following the interviews, an online survey was created from the research to further clarify ideas that emerged and triangulate the research results, strengthening the validity.

Results allowed for two emerging frameworks to be created from the literature and the findings. The first, a ‘model of expatriate success’, was derived from the literature. The second, ‘three factors of success model’, emanated from the results. Pre-departure preparation and support were considered to be important in connection with the success and adjustment of expatriates. Results may offer guidance to expatriate human resources practitioners or indicate further research and investigation. Limitations of the current research are also discussed.

This chapter will explore the literature surrounding expatriation, introduce the concept of expatriation in its traditional form and look at other models of contemporary expatriation. Selection, training and support are well-researched areas in literature on expatriation and this chapter will look into each phase and the successes and failures associated with them.
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**Literature Review:**

Increased knowledge, innovation and processes constantly change the world of business. People have long since been trading and providing services between individuals, towns, cities and countries. In modern times communication, technology and transportation have allowed an ease of transfer of goods and services around the world. The world has rapidly become a competitive and opportunistic place for business opportunities, with organisations seeking to find strategies to provide them a competitive advantage in the evolving business market.

Internationalisation has led to increased cross-cultural interaction between organisations and their people. Organisations use expatriation as a process to temporarily transfer the organisation’s human resources to a host country. An increase of expatriates as a method to gain competitive advantage in an international market has led to employees living and working overseas. It is, therefore, crucial these employees are successful within their roles. Expatriates not only experience an adjustment to work but new ways of living (Black, Mendenhall, & Oddou, 1991). Given the difficulties and complexities involved with expatriation it is not surprising a number of expatriates fail to complete their expatriate assignments (Mendenhall, Dunbar, & Oddou, 1987).

The literature surrounding some aspects of expatriation is extensive, yet some is outdated with the majority of well-known authors having published research in the 1980s (Adler, 1983; Black & Mendenhall, 1989; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1988; Tung, 1987) The world is constantly developing and evolving and there is a perpetual need for recent and up-to-date research. The limitation of the large body of existing literature is based on large multinational corporations in the United States (Mendenhall et al., 1987; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985; Schwind, 1985; Tung, 1982). Although these are looking at expatriates, the organisations involved are far more experienced and larger, equipped with greater finances and resources than New Zealand companies. Literature on New Zealand expatriates is limited. Enderwick & Hodgson’s (1993) study appears to be the first empirical study of New Zealand expatriates, suggesting New Zealand’s recent shift into international business. The findings from their study were relatively consistent with
earlier expatriate research. Enderwick & Hodgson (1993) acknowledge that internationalisation will increase over time and this emphasises the need for greater continued research focused on New Zealand expatriates. Selvarajah’s (2009) exploratory study looked at New Zealand expatriates’ perception of organisations’ support during expatriation. Although there is extensive research surrounding expatriates internationally, Selvarajah (2009) also acknowledges the sparse literature surrounding New Zealand expatriates. Despite the research findings being limited with a 30 percent response rate, the findings of this study provide a good platform on which to build further research. Selvarajah (2009) links the limited processes around expatriates to New Zealand’s newly developed international expatriate business realm. Selvarajah (2009) supports this with findings that ‘most’ participants received little to no training and their primary support systems were mentors or senior managers who were fellow employees on assignment. Selvarajah (2009) concluded that greater pre-departure training and support systems should be utilised in reducing the failure rates of expatriates.

The most recent New Zealand focused research was conducted by Ritchie (2010) and focused on public sector organisations. The report researched the critical success factors for New Zealand Trade and Enterprise (NZTE) commissioners on international expatriate assignments. Ritchie (2010) concluded that the organisational, individual and contextual success factors of NZTE were similar to existing Multi-National Enterprises (MNE) research. Through the increasing prevalence and sophistication of technology and communication as well as the flow of information, it is suggested there is a need to update work in the area of expatriate success factors (Ritchie, 2010).

*Expatriates:*

An expatriate is an individual who is transferred to a country other than their home country, to complete an international assignment (Harvey, 1985). Expatriates are not migrant workers, who move internationally for purely economic or asylum reasons, but a product of the changing world, with the need for organisations to send expatriates overseas from the home country. International assignments are unsettling and emotional experiences, that hold large unknowns for both family and work (Shaffer, Harrison, Gilley, & Luk, 2001). Expatriates engage in a complete lifestyle change and through
these experiences expatriates face new roles, increased challenges, pressures, responsibilities, opportunities and prestige (Harvey, 1985).

Most commonly, organisations assign expatriate staff to international locations as an interface between headquarters and the local subsidiary (Tung, 1987). They are assigned for a variety of reasons including to:

- exert control in overseas subsidiaries,
- bridge the gap where host nationals may have difficulty relating to organisation members and possess unfamiliarity with headquarter’s culture,
- solve staffing shortages,
- transfer specific expertise,
- increase globalisation of business activities and industries,
- offer opportunities for employees to gain career development and experience in strategic markets, and
- develop management talent (Bhuian, Al-Shammari, & Jefri, 1996; Feldman & Thomas, 1992; Harris & Brewster, 1999; Tung, 1987).

The international career opportunities are a large pulling factor for New Zealanders, with New Zealand only holding a small number of career advancement and growth opportunities due to its small size and isolated location. Employees are commonly used as a source of competitive advantage (Selvarajah, 2009), increasing the need for well supported and organised human resource departments. International business not only hires highly skilled and knowledgeable employees, but existing employees are sent on expatriate assignments throughout the world. Expatriates are a fast and effective way of transferring the knowledge, practices and organisational culture (Selvarajah, 2009) of the home country and organisation into a foreign environment. Expatriates are, therefore, seen as an essential element to the success of an overseas operation of an organisation.

Utilising expatriates as a method to export products and services is a relatively new process for New Zealand companies. Until recent times, companies used simple modes of exporting, usually moving into markets similar to New Zealand (Selvarajah,
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2009), leading to a weak understanding of foreign markets (Akoorie & Enderwick, 1992; Selvarajah, 2009). New Zealand is steadily increasing its presence in international markets, with a strong exporting sector and an expanding number of companies looking into alternative export methods. New Zealand businesses’ model of internationalisation uses expatriates when moving into a foreign market. It traditionally follows a pattern where companies export, then operate joint-ventures, strategic alliances, contract manufacturing and subsidiary operations before moving eventually into closely related cultural countries (Selvarajah, 2009). These often include Australia, United States of America (USA), Canada and the United Kingdom (UK), due to low entry barriers, English being their primary language and close economic development (Coviello & Munro, 1997; Enderwick & Hodgson, 1993). Asian countries are particularly different from New Zealand often being very diverse in their customs, culture and having language difficulties. Singapore can be seen by organisations as the perfect medium for business, being a gateway into South East Asia and the Asian markets. Singapore offers a hybrid westernised society and lifestyle, where English is the primary business language. The expansion of New Zealand business models, has lead to the increase of employees visiting and engaging in international markets on temporary, contract or permanent assignments (Selvarajah, 2009).

**Types of Expatriates:**

Expatriate assignments differ in nature, depending on the needs of the parent company and the place to which people will be expatriated. The idea and notion of a ‘traditional expatriate’ is changing. Not only are expatriates sought and employed to fulfil a role, but individuals themselves are also seeking international work. Expatriates generally flow from first world countries and often embark on international assignments for personal and career development (Crowley-Henry, 2007). Past studies assume that expatriates are internationally relocated by their employers (Katz & Seifer, 1996; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985; Tung, 1987). However, in practice this is not the only method of expatriation and, more commonly, expatriates make their own arrangements. Traditional expatriates are far from redundant but are now co-existent with other methods of international employment. Contemporary researchers (Banai & Harry, 2004; Crowley-Henry, 2007; Harvey, Price, Speier, & Novicevic, 1999; Miller & Cheng,
1978; Suutari & Brewster, 2000) have begun to look at expatriate categories beyond the traditional expatriate, which have previously gained much less attention. Little research has been conducted around those expatriates who are locally hired and those who relocate internationally, exposing themselves to self-initiated foreign work experience.

The following section looks at three types of international expatriates: traditional, locally hired and self-initiated foreign work experience expatriates. These types of expatriates are often distinguished by their method of recruitment in contemporary literature.

1. Traditional expatriate

A traditional or ‘orthodox’ expatriate is sent by an employer to a local subsidiary for a fixed period of time, before being repatriated as an employee back into the home organisation (Dowling & Welch, 2004). Traditional expatriates are commonly employed to exert leadership, taking the company’s culture, processes, goals and values with them. They lead by example and influence the culture of the overseas subsidiary or operation. A traditional expatriate remains an employee of the organisation and often receives continued support from the parent company, throughout the duration of the assignment. This support is mainly financial and most commonly comes in the form of accommodation and travel allowances including return flights to the home country. Employees are also repatriated back into the home country and organisation at the end of the posting (Crowley-Henry, 2007). Since the initiative for leaving the home country comes from the employer, funding for the move, in terms of salary and expenses, will also come from the employing organisation (Inkson, Arthur, Pringle, & Barry, 1997). Consistent with previous research (Miller & Cheng, 1978), international experience, financial gain and career opportunities are the main motivators for accepting an international expatriate assignment (Dowling & Welch, 2004). The goal for an assigned expatriate employee tends to focus on the completion of specific organisational projects in the host country.
2. Locally hired expatriates

Locally hired expatriates are more commonly individuals who move to take up employment in a foreign country with another organisation and are often hired on local contracts. Locally hired expatriates are also individuals with a desire to work in a country other than their home country and seek opportunities working for an organisation internationally. Individuals may also require or aspire to career opportunities not offered in their current surroundings. Once expatriated they are also inclined to shift organisations and roles once relocated to a foreign country. Locally hired expatriates are unlikely to receive the support and benefits (especially financial) to the degree a traditional expatriate would, also experiencing no formal repatriation phase. Locally hired expatriates commonly have experienced an expatriate assignment, and become reluctant to return home. They are more common where the individual takes control of their own career (Crowley-Henry, 2007), not following the traditional vertical career path (Crowley-Henry, 2007) and embarking on a ‘boundary-less’ career. A boundary-less career does not distinguish any single career type but rather a range of possible forms that are not bounded, suggesting that people take responsibility for their own career futures (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). Harris and Brewster (1999) found that locally hired expatriate assignments were often unplanned, with little long term plans to repatriate.

3. Self initiated foreign work experience

Self-initiated foreign work experience expatriates travel abroad to find their own work. This is a widespread phenomenon and often popular with young people combining travel, work and tourism (Inkson et al., 1997), and is often referred to as an OE (overseas experience). These expatriates receive no pre-departure preparation or support as they have already relocated and often temporarily settled in a new environment. There is little or no expectation of support outside of career development, as individuals are not regarded any differently than other local employees. Suutari and Brewster’s (2000) research found that self-initiated foreign work experience and traditional expatriates had different individual backgrounds, employer and task related variables. There were also different motives towards remuneration and repatriation
packages between groups. However, as the research looked at Finnish expatriates, further research would need to be conducted to see if this holds true for other cultures. Career related motives are a major influencing factor for self initiated foreign work experience expatriate assignments, including augmentation of hierarchical levels and financial success (Crowley-Henry, 2007).

This collection of types of expatriation assignments indicates that expatriation is not a simple term, but can be used widely to incorporate a range of individuals working outside their home country.

**Motivations**

Expatriate assignments are accepted or sought for various reasons. These are often related to an individual’s circumstance. Crowley-Henry (2007) suggested that money and promotion is not all that is important for an employee, with the need for more research focused on what is important for an individual’s career and expatriates’ decisions to move and take on international assignments. Motivations to engage in expatriate assignments vary extensively between individuals and depend largely on personal circumstances (Crowley-Henry, 2007). Factors including quality of life, work-life balance and family stability, all assist in the decision-making process of an international career, future career direction, and later whether to remain in the host country (Crowley-Henry, 2007). Further motivations for international expatriate assignments included financial benefits, personal interest, international experience and career progression and opportunities (Miller & Cheng, 1978). Employers and employees adopt a more transactional relationship in today’s society; however, with regards to expatriation, organisations need to look at employees’ career needs and how certain factors influence individuals in their career, which should correlate to enhance success and effectiveness of employees (Crowley-Henry, 2007).

Enderwick and Hodgson (1993) distinguished through their research that MNE and New Zealand companies had different expatriate management practices. MNE organisations (usually overseas-owned) were likely to have their own distinctive expatriate practices (Enderwick & Hodgson, 1993) with companies’ motives for international expatriates evenly spread between further development of the organisation,
further development of the individual and filling a vacant position. New Zealand owned organisations’ predominant motive for overseas assignments was to further develop the organisation as a whole. Enderwick & Hodgson (1993) suggest that due to New Zealand’s lack of experience in international business, they value expatriates and their experience as a resource which is of great value to the organisation as a whole.

The need for an expatriate to be successful and cope long term in a culturally different place does not change regardless of how and why people become international expatriates. Although employing a locally hired expatriate habitually involves less fixed costs in regards to relocation and allowances, they are still expensive to recruit and train. This research investigates all expatriates and involves both traditional and locally hired expatriates. For the purpose of this project, ‘expatriate’ will be broadly defined as the process of an individual moving to a different country (Brewster & Scullion, 1997). It will exclude self-initiated foreign work experience and migrant workers because they do not expect or require pre-departure preparation and support to guide and support them through relocation and settlement. Locally hired expatriates do not expect these methods either, but due to the nature of acquiring their job, the organisation is in the position to offer these methods of preparation and support.

Just as there are varying types of expatriate assignments, there is no ‘one type’ of expatriate, with characteristics of expatriates varying greatly. The Brookfield Global Relocation Services Survey that looks at global relocation trends, found that the majority of expatriate employees (69%) were between the ages of 30 and 49, while 19% of expatriates fell between the ages of 50 and 59 (Brookfield Global Relocation Services, 2010). The same survey found that 18% of expatriates were female, while the number of married males was 63%. Spouses accompanied 80% of those married on assignment and 47% were accompanied by their children. In many circumstances it is not just the expatriate living abroad; their family often join them in the host country. In addition it is important to note that 60% of spouses were employed before an assignment, but not during the assignment, while only 12% of spouses were employed both before and during an assignment. Of those employed before departing on assignments, the reasons for spouse unemployment include difficulty in finding employment, high unemployment
in developed countries, difficulty in work permits and increase of assignments in emerging countries (Brookfield Global Relocation Services, 2010).

**Assignment duration**

International assignments vary largely in length, with the majority (62%) of assignments lasting between one and five years (Brookfield Global Relocation Services, 2010). With 47% claiming that their assignments lasted between one and three years, 18% of assignments lasted between three and four years, and 15% lasted between six months and one year. These statistics have remained unchanged over the past five years. New Zealand research by Enderwick and Hodgson (1993) supports this, with the average duration of an international assignment being two to three years. At assignment completion, the employee is sent back to their home country (Brookfield Global Relocation Services, 2010; Tung, 1987). However, transferring expatriates to another international location for a subsequent assignment is rising as an emerging trend, (Brookfield Global Relocation Services, 2010). Furthermore, Brookfield’s (2010) research showed that expatriates are not necessarily relocated or repatriated into the country that has the organisation’s headquarters, with only 57% of assignees relocating to or from the country with the organisation’s headquarters. In regards to previous assignment experience, 12% of respondents already had expatriate experience with the remaining 88% having no expatriate experience (Brookfield Global Relocation Services, 2010).

**Factors affecting expatriate assignments**

**Technology and communication**

Through the modernisation and sophistication of communication technologies, it is becoming increasingly easier to communicate globally, which in turn reduces the distance between expatriates and their home company and country. Technology plays a major role in the effectiveness of expatriates, as organisations become information based, electronically connected and globally independent. Organisations are using technology to resolve issues of distance, time and culture and provide stronger and instantaneous support to expatriate workers (Elkin, Cathro, & Elkin, 2012). Although
technology is becoming much more advanced it is not replacing the need to expatriate. Countries where deep and purposeful relationships are considered vital include Asia and the Middle East (Movius, Matsuura, Yan, & Kim, 2006) which accentuate the need for personnel in the host country. Technology is increasing the speed and variety of methods with which individuals can communicate, impacting heavily on an expatriate lifestyle, providing accessibility globally. This is important to those expatriates that have left family and friends behind, reducing the psychological distance between them (de Cieri, Dowling, & Taylor, 1991). Through the development of greater communication capabilities from technology, success is likely to be increased due to strengthened connections of support and communication with family, friends and the home organisation. Subsequently the advancement of technology can add external pressure to expatriates, allowing few opportunities to escape work. The line between work and life often becomes blurred for expatriates with the commitment to video and telephone conferencing across time zones (Shortland & Cummins, 2007).

**Work Hours:**

New Zealand has a relatively strong work-life balance. The Department of Labour advocates a number of initiatives to support this (DOL, 2011). New Zealand has an average forty hour working week, working between the hours of 9.00am-5.00pm, Monday to Friday. In a study conducted by Shortland (2007) it was found that two thirds of expatriates reported working longer hours in a host country than at home, with only 27% of respondents saying they worked similar hours. The average work week when on an overseas assignment was 51.9 hours, which was 13.4 hours more than when they were at home. An increase of work intensity and work hours add to the difficulties of New Zealand expatriates to adjust to foreign assignments.

**Remuneration**

An incentive for some expatriate assignments is the monetary gain received from either a healthy and generous expatriate package or the tax incentives of working in a foreign country.
For New Zealanders, there may be significant advantages to working in Singapore relative to taxation issues. New Zealand has a PAYE (pay as you earn) taxation system with tax rates ranging from 12.54% - 35.04% of every dollar, relative to your income bracket (IRD, 2011). Singapore, by contrast, has a lower taxation rate, with Singapore’s tax rates also ranging relative to your income bracket from 0 - 20% (IRAS, 2011b) which is not paid immediately, but billed at the end of the financial year (IRAS, 2011a).

While preparing for an expatriate assignment these are factors that need to be considered by both the organisation and the expatriate because success comes from being able to endure and acclimatise to the lifestyle changes an assignments brings. The following section looks at the expatriate process from selection to repatriation.

**Expatriation Process:**

Literature on expatriation suggests a range of human resource management (HRM) practices for companies to employ in order to achieve the desired results from their expatriate staff. Past expatriation research (Ashamalla, 1998; Aycan, 1997; Black, 1988; Katz & Seifer, 1996) has centred on four areas:

1. Selection of an expatriate
2. Preparing the employee for the international assignment
3. Support during the assignment
4. Repatriation of the employee

The inadequate management of any of these four phases is said to lead to expatriate failure (Hung-Wen, 2007). A number of studies investigating international assignments find that these phases are often not well conducted (Kupka, Everett, & Cathro, 2008; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985). Expatriate failure, defined as the premature return from an overseas assignment (Ashamalla, 1998; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985; Tung, 1987) is often inevitable. It is very important to understand the basic framework of an expatriate assignment, before looking at the success and failure of an assignment. The expatriate process should be thorough and begins with the identification of the need to recruit and expatriate. Effectiveness of training differs at various phases of foreign
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assignments. Training should be sequenced with appropriate methods at each level and different training periods, so learning from each phase can enhance the later phases (Selmer, Torbjoen, & Leon, 1998). Regardless of the specific stages, expatriation can be categorised into three main groups: before assignment, on assignment and after the assignment.

The period of time before an assignment commences can vary and recruitment can take an extended time. The time before an expatriate departs on an assignment is largely impacted by the need and reason for recruitment of an expatriate for an international assignment. Some assignments are planned long in advance allowing the HRM department adequate time to undertake appropriate processes before departure. Contrary to this, some expatriate assignments need to be fulfilled immediately, limiting the time before departure. Often there is an inadequate time before departure to prepare expatriates which is a common failure factor (Ashamalla, 1998; Selmer, 1999) but sometimes unavoidable.

Tung (1982) comprised a comprehensive study focused on selection and training procedures. The research compared MNE from the USA, Europe and Japan. Large variances were found between the different countries, suggesting the need for personalised expatriate packages for each culture. Even though at first glance the USA and UK are viewed as relatively similar, especially as they are both westernised and speak English, respondents from each research group produced comparatively different results (Tung, 1982). This accentuates the need to test expatriate theories and models before they are applied across cultures. Tung (1982) concluded that, given the degree of contact required with local culture, the varying duration of expatriate assignment and varying differences between home and host country, no one selection criterion or training method will fit every case. Selection and training programmes need to be adapted and be flexible to account for the tasks and environmental factors associated with each individual assignment.

Expatriate managers can have serious problems on foreign assignments (Tung, 1987; Vance & Paik, 2002) not just with technical incompetence, but also with difficulties in cultural adjustment. Researchers subscribe to the need to endorse
substantial research on selection and training methods to increase expatriate success (Tung, 1987; Vance & Paik, 2002). This research looks broadly at the four areas, selection, preparation, support and repatriation, as they have the greatest affects on the success and failure of an expatriate assignment. This section will look more in-depth at pre-departure preparation and support, as, once selected for an assignment, these are the areas that will have the most impact on how the expatriate succeeds in their assignment.

**Before Departure - Selection:**

Expatriate selection follows the same process as domestic recruitment, but the process needs to incorporate further issues and factors not relevant to domestic workers. Careful selection must be made, because successful managers at home may not necessarily be successful overseas (Baker & Ivancevich, 1971). Many organisations seem to believe that success in a high performance executive role, technical expertise and a successful track record will translate to a successful placement internationally. Baker and Ivancevich (1971) state that the desired objective of hiring an expatriate is finding the most qualified person for an overseas position. In simple terms, organisations believe that a manager who is effective and successful in the domestic market will perform the same overseas (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985). Although this may be applicable in some situations it is often quite different. Employees are performing similar roles, however the added external and environmental pressures and differences require different attributes to be successful than those purely related to job performance success. Mendenhall and Oddou (1985) acknowledge that there is a need for a clear method that is effective for selecting and training expatriates with simplistic methods consistently utilised, as organisations do not understand the added complexity of an international assignment (Baker & Ivancevich, 1971; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985; Tung, 1982). In light of this research by Mendenhall and Oddou (1985), organisations often send expatriates with little or no preparation or acculturation training on arrival (Baker & Ivancevich, 1971; Tung, 1981). To initiate better recruitment, recruiters need improved selection practices in critical areas including screening candidates and pre-departure training. Research by Anderson (2005) contradicts this, advocating that expatriate selection may be due to good luck rather than good management practices, suggesting a cloud of understanding around selection practices.
Researchers have suggested various methods, models and ways to improve selection methods and processes (Baliga & Baker, 1985; Hays, 1974; Katz & Seifer, 1996; Tung, 1981). Organisations that look at failed assignments can assess what attributes and factors may have lead to the failure of an assignment. Mendenhall and Oddou (1985) suggest three categories to be used in expatriate management selection:

2. Relational skills: relationship development, willingness to communicate, language.
3. Perceptual skills: understanding host nationals, why they behave, think like they do and making correct inferences about motives (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985).

Adaptability and flexibility to new environment settings and communication were the most important criteria for selecting candidates by MNE in the USA (Tung, 1982). While the criteria for Western Europe and Japanese expatriates focus more on hard skills including managerial talent and technical knowledge of the business (Tung, 1982). For all countries, interest in overseas work was important. Putting weight on employee experience in the company of Japanese expatriates, reflects their culture and the importance Japanese place on relationships as well as Japan’s employment system. Surprising in light of Tung’s (1982) findings that there was little correlation between the methods used and assessment of the attributes and criteria deemed important (Tung, 1982).

Oddou (1991) suggests six questions that should be asked when recruiting for an expatriate. Questions look at past performance and are tailored towards the following areas: change, adaptability, open-mindedness, family support, stress, management, self-reliance and self-confidence. Oddou suggested that when an organisation analyses these questions it works as a strong substitute for expensive and lengthy personality tests and invalidated questionnaires (Oddou, 1991).
The majority of literature based on selection (Mendenhall et al., 1987; Tung, 1982) has a heavy North American bias and focus. New Zealand focused research on selection techniques is outdated, with research by Stone (1991) commenting on data collected between 1987-1988. The research focused on the Asia-Pacific rim, looking at leading MNE’s from Australia, New Zealand, UK and USA that had bases in South Asia. It was reported that companies still do not recognise the complexity of international selection compared to that of domestic selection.

Comments and recommendations regarding selection from participants mirrored those recommended previously by researchers and practitioners (Mendenhall et al., 1987). Expatriate selection was considerably more difficult than selection for domestic positions but many organisations did not recognise this. However, an updated version of this research needs to be conducted to assess if it still holds true (Stone, 1991).

Selection is an important phase in an expatriate assignment. For without proper selection and orientation, organisations risk failure of expatriates (Stone, 1991). It is too simple to assume that the same recruitment process applied domestically is appropriate for international expatriate selection. Recruiters need to look beyond factors of technical ability and position suitability to include external factors, incorporating spouse and family in the consideration process. Expatriates also need to have a different set of personal and perceptive skills, which need to be tested.

Pre-departure Preparation:

With inadequate pre-departure training of expatriate employees cited as one of the main reasons contributing to expatriate failure (Selvarajah, 2009), it is important that companies provide training, specifically cross-cultural training, to their expatriate employees. Expatriates and their families often experience culture shock when they first enter a new country (Selmer, 1999). Pre-departure preparation and training can help expatriates and their families adjust to the new culture and ultimately lead to the effective functioning of the expatriate and a successful assignment (Ashamalla, 1998). With changes in language, food, concepts of personal space, living conditions and a large number of other ethnic differences, expatriates both live and work in a new cultural
context with which they are unfamiliar. This can cause a great amount of stress (Kaye & Taylor, 1997), and adjustment is vital (Chang, 2005).

Expatriate adjustment can be defined as “the degree of psychological adjustment experienced by the individual within a new society, or the degree of psychological comfort and familiarity perceived within a new environment” (Puck, Kittler, & Wright, 2008, p. 2183), and is imperative to expatriate success. Traditionally, international adjustment is described as “a succession of phases or stages” (Selmer, 1999), with four common periods: honeymoon, culture shock, adjustment and mastery (Black & Mendenhall, 1991). These periods presume a U-curve to depict the adjustment stages individuals go through, suggesting that initial optimism in a new culture is followed by a dip in the level of adjustment and then a gradual recovery (Selmer, 1999). In order for expatriates to smoothly move to the fourth mastery stage, training and support should be provided by the employing organisation. Expatriates require a special method of training as their role is complex and incorporates foreign components that provide added stresses, that impact on the assignment and can cause psychological problems. When, where, who and how much training should be provided varies with the degree of difference between cultures and the levels of interaction expected in the assignment influencing the level of preparation provided (Selvarajah, 2009). Mendenhall & Oddou (1987) suggested that the rigour and length of training are influenced by assignment characteristics.

**Do companies use training?**

A number of studies show that training is not used to the extent that the literature suggests it should be (Li-Yueh & Croker, 2006; Oddou, 1991; Tung, 1982) Black, Gregersen, Mendenhall & Stroh (1999) found that 62% of US firms offered some type of cross-cultural preparation. These researchers also found that only 32% of training programmes were offered to the whole family, and training lasted for less than a day, on average. Forster (2000) found that 77% of staff received cultural adjustment training, while only 43% of partners did. He also discovered that 49% of expatriates had language training, and 60% went through orientation programmes.
Tung (1982) looked at different cultures and found different results around formalised training programs. Comparing USA and European samples, 32% of USA companies had a formalised training program, compared to 69% of European companies. Respondents’ reasons for not providing training included the tendency to employ local nationals, the temporary nature of the assignments, doubt in the effectiveness of a training program, and lack of time to provide training (Tung, 1982). Further research into reasons for not providing pre-departure preparation included:

- belief that cross-cultural and training programs are generally ineffective (Baker & Ivancevich, 1971; Tung, 1981),
- trainees’ past dissatisfaction with expatriate training programs (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985),
- lack of time between selection and departure on assignments (Baker & Ivancevich, 1971; Oddou, 1991; Tung, 1981),
- perception that temporary placement does not warrant training (Tung, 1981),
- unjustified costs involved (Oddou, 1991), and
- no perceived need for a training program (Schwind, 1985).

Supporting Tung’s USA company findings, 65% of organisations researched by Oddou (1991) offered no pre-departure training. Of those that did receive training, only 26% believed it improved their performance (Oddou, 1991). This does not necessarily mean that training is redundant and ineffective, but highlights the importance to “match the type of experience the expatriate will have with the corresponding training method and content” (Oddou, 1991, p. 304).

In respect to the New Zealand perspective, Enderwick & Hodgson’s (1993) research found only 15% of respondent companies claimed to conduct formal training programs for expatriates. The primary reason for omitting training was that the company only operated in countries similar to New Zealand, limiting the need for extensive preparation as it is seen as unnecessary (Selvarajah, 2009). This was consistent with New Zealand’s early stage of internationalisation, expanding first into similar countries. Further reasons included: support was available if needed, employees already had
international experience, full assignment briefing had been given, the employee was familiar with requirements and training was deemed unnecessary (Enderwick & Hodgson, 1993). The least recorded reasons for omitting training were that the organisation was new to internationalisation or that they had not thought of it. Further recent research by Selvarajah (2009) found most respondents received little to no pre-departure training consistent with findings from other research (Li-Yueh & Croker, 2006; Tung, 1981, 1987).

Expatriates experiencing training from Selvarajah’s study, received brief environmental briefing and or basic language training on arrival. This was noted to be very useful, while 50% took an orientation visit to their new place of residence. New Zealand’s businesses are very small in comparison to global organisations. This may explain the lack of pre-departure training New Zealand businesses provide their expatriates (Selvarajah, 2009). New Zealand businesses also experience difficulty finding suitable trainers for such individual assignments. Although training was viewed as difficult or unnecessary, it was conceded that a more extensive preparation and the inclusion of spouse and family would have been useful in providing more prior knowledge and understanding of the environment and difficulties they may encounter (Selvarajah, 2009). Lack of training is sometimes attributable to the lack of money and resources for extensive training programmes and it is assumed that New Zealand businesses have a lack of knowledge and understanding of how to manage and prepare expatriates for assignments, resulting in few processes and practices in place for departing expatriates (Selvarajah, 2009).

Training is an important phase in the expatriate process with a relationship between greater rigour used in selection and training and less incidents of expatriates’ poor performance (Tung, 1982). “The fact that a majority of companies involved in international trade do not provide any preparatory training for managers and employees destined to work abroad is surprising” (Schwind, 1985). Organisations and expatriates offer various reasons for absence and inclusion of pre-departure preparation programmes. With the organisational goal of expatriates to accomplish successful international assignments, expatriates’ cross-cultural competencies have grown in
importance (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985) and researchers have called for better training of expatriate workers and their families (Chang, 2005).

*Why is training important?*

Expatriate failure is commonly attributed to the absence of cross-cultural training and preparation programs (Ashamalla, 1998; Selmer, 1999) along with spouse and family adjustment (Tung, 1987). Training helps an expatriate understand the culture of a foreign destination: providing expatriates, spouses and families with reasonable guidelines on what to expect within the new culture, and how they should interact with locals. In addition, training can provide the expatriate with job expectations and clarify uncertain factors that may be critical to enhance performance. There is also a clear link between training and performance for example, Earley (1987) documented that expatriates who received training performed better, with less perceived difficulty in adjusting to the new culture, than those who did not receive training. However, there seems to be a flaw in the application of the literature to ‘real-life’ expatriate training, with numerous companies throughout various studies suggesting that there is a deficiency in pre-departure training for expatriates (Aycan, 1997; Katz & Seifer, 1996; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1986; Tung, 1981).

*Who should receive training?*

Training should not just be limited to the expatriate. Tung’s (1987) study found that the inability of the manager’s spouse to adjust into a new culture was the main reason for failure among expatriate employees. Other family-related problems were also in the top three reasons for failure. In concert with Tung (1987), Harvey (1985) identified the family as a critical aspect in the expatriation process, with spouse adjustment having a spillover effect into the work domain, impacting the performance of the expatriate. Black and Stephens (1989) support these findings, suggesting that non-work factors do indeed have a spillover effect on the expatriates’ performance during the international assignment: “If aspects of the family situation are going well, then this will have a positive spill over effect on the job and will be positively related to intentions to stay” (Black & Stephens, 1989, p. 531). With spillover effects from the home-life into
work-life, it is crucial that the spouse and other family members adjust to the host-culture as quickly as possible.

It is commonly believed that the spouse has the most difficult time adjusting to the new culture (Adler & Gundersen, 2008). Expatriates often remain in a relatively familiar situation to at home, with the employing organisation providing an atmosphere of stability, an ongoing network of colleagues on which to rely for support (Harvey, 1985) and job structure (Adler & Gundersen, 2008). The spouse pays the greatest price for an international move (Gaylord, 1979), often experiencing high levels of stress due to disruptions in children’s education, loss of self-worth, identity, a sense of community, close contact with family and friends and often a loss of job or potential career possibilities (Harvey, 1985). Harvey (1985) also advises that children will experience additional adjustment problems related to education, language differences, social relationships and cultural values. These stresses on both the spouse and children are likely to compound and spillover into the expatriate’s work life, affecting their performance and ultimately how long they last in their overseas location.

With a clear link between the family situation and expatriate stress and success it is important that the adjustment of both the spouse and children occurs. A number of studies, however, show that organisations tend to exclude the family in the expatriation process. Kupka, Everett, & Cathro (2008) found that only 35% of expatriate’s spouses received some form of intercultural communication training before the commencement of their assignment. Forster (2000) found that only 43% of spouses received cultural adjustment training, and only 7% were given language training. This is further supported by various authors (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985; Schwind, 1985; Tung, 1987) who suggest organisations provide a lack of cross-cultural training for expatriates and their accompanying spouse and family, accompanying them on assignment. Additionally, Runzheimer (1984), as cited in Mendenhall et al., (1987) reported that 80% of companies only included the expatriate in cross-cultural training.

Since family related problems are at the top of reasons why expatriates fail, it is crucial that the adjustment of both the spouse and children occurs. The probability of a successful assignment is much higher if training includes both spouse and children.
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(Adler & Gundersen, 2008). Pre-departure training needs to be provided to expatriates as well as their accompanying spouse and children (Harvey, 1985; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1986; Selvarajah, 2009).

**Content of Training**


1. Companies should brief the selected expatriate and his or her family, providing them with basic information about both work and living related issues.

2. Training should “target the specific needs of the expatriate” (Ashamalla, 1998, p. 58). This includes both cross-cultural and language training, which help with knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to adjust to the host-culture. These types of training are also suggested to minimise the level of culture shock expatriates experience (Black et al., 1999).

Most expatriates do not initially know how to deal with culture shock (Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985). Learning about the new culture, the country’s business, social customs and behaviours is necessary for an expatriate to be effective within his or her role. This supports the need to provide cultural-training to facilitate an effective and rapid adjustment into their new culture and organisational role. Training content should be specific to what an organisation feels is appropriate for the skills and experiences of the expatriate, their task, culture change and the allowance of the training budget, with different jobs and interactions requiring different preparation (Tung, 1981). Training content also varies between an expatriate and their spouse and/or children, making it crucial for the company to tailor its training program to meet individual needs. Important issues to take into account when preparing expatriates for an overseas assignment include but are not limited to: family adjustment, cost of moving and settling in, language and culture training and personal attitudes to needs and goals (Ashamalla, 1998; Oddou, 1991).
The scope of training programs must include all acculturation aspects (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1986). They suggested that it is unethical, illogical and poor business practice to not provide comprehensive training as poor adjustment problems can lead to a variety of both personal and interpersonal problems, that can affect one’s life outside work (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1986). The ‘Cross-cultural training approach’ model for expatriate assignments advocated by Mendenhall and Oddou (1985) suggests three approaches to cross training:

- **Information Giving Approach.** The most basic of all three which provides static information and resources including country and cultural briefings, provides static resources (films/books) and ‘survival level’ language training.

- **Affective Approach.** A mix of information and impression approach incorporating static information as well as a taste of the new environment. This uses methods including cultural and language assimilator training, role playing, cases and moderate language training.

- **Impression Approach** is the most extensive hands-on training approach providing insights and opportunities to experience what the new environment may be like including assessment centres, field experiences, simulations and extensive language training.
Figure 1: Cross cultural training approach chart. Mendenhall & Oddou (1985 p. 78)

Figure 1 incorporates two relationships: the level of rigour in relation to the degree of integration and the length or training in relation to the length of stay. It also suggests, the greater the length of stay, level of integration, and level of rigour and length of training, the more in-depth the training approach. This model is supported by Selvarajah’s findings (2009) that appropriate training programmes need to be created in accordance to the length of stay, cultural difference, interaction with host nations and previous cultural experience of the expatriate. This model is also reflective of the six major categories. Tung (1982) suggests that six areas need to be incorporated in successful training programs:
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- Environmental briefing (information about geography, climate, schools)
- Cultural orientation (cultural institutions and value systems)
- Cultural assimilator (brief episodes describing cultural interactions and encounters)
- Language training
- Sensitivity training (developing attitudinal flexibility)
- Field experience (sent to and immersed in the culture), Tung (1982).

Additionally, Selvarajah (2009) notes that appropriate financial counselling and support assists expatriates with the ambiguity of living in a foreign country, offering knowledge on living costs and the relative pricing of things. Banking and investment advice may also be incorporated here. These and other commonly used methods used in pre-departure training, proposed by researchers are outlined in Table 1. The table is useful to deal with the different ideas.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Author:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Briefing on company policies</td>
<td>(Ashamalla, 1998)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business etiquette</td>
<td>(Enderwick &amp; Hodgson, 1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career counselling for the spouse</td>
<td>(Harvey, 1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict management</td>
<td>(Jassawalla, Truglia, &amp; Garvey, 2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country briefing</td>
<td>(Ashamalla, 1998; Black, Gregersen, &amp; Mendenhall, 1992; Brewster &amp; Pickard, 1994; Mendenhall &amp; Oddou, 1985; Oddou, 1991; Selvarajah, 2009; Tung, 1982)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture Assimilator</td>
<td>(Mendenhall &amp; Oddou, 1985; Tung, 1982)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions with former employees</td>
<td>(Oddou, 1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial training</td>
<td>(Enderwick &amp; Hodgson, 1993; Selvarajah, 2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job related briefing</td>
<td>(Oddou, 1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language training</td>
<td>(Ashamalla, 1998; Enderwick &amp; Hodgson, 1993; Mendenhall &amp; Oddou, 1985; Oddou, 1991; Selvarajah, 2009; Tung, 1982)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation visit</td>
<td>(Ashamalla, 1998; Mendenhall &amp; Oddou, 1985; Selvarajah, 2009; Tung, 1982)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management training</td>
<td>(Enderwick &amp; Hodgson, 1993)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Methods of pre-departure training outlined by researchers

In addition to methods commonly used by organisations, expatriates would generally like to see greater improvement in areas of expectations between domestic and international site management, clarity of performance criteria and review process, time off between arriving and beginning assignment to reduce stress, language training to facilitate casual conversation and better understanding, training expanded to include spouse and family, support systems and mentors (Oddou, 1991; Selvarajah, 2009).

Pre-departure training, whether offered by the company or self-initiated, assists expatriates’ adjustment into their new environment, increasing the assignment success rate (Selvarajah, 2009). A well-thought out and planned training program is necessary to facilitate the smooth adjustment of expatriates and their family into the host-country and
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culture. The lack of cross-cultural training for both the expatriate and accompanying spouse and children is among the top reasons why expatriates fail in their overseas assignments. It is, therefore, critical that this aspect of training is included within a training program, and that an expatriate’s spouse and children both receive training. Training is considered an essential component to achieving success overseas.

On assignment - Adjustment and Support

Adjustment and support is the third phase in the expatriation process and begins when an expatriate departs on an assignment. This phase is focused on supporting and assisting expatriates into their new role and environment. Support has been related to success with greater support typically needed for expatriates that have accompanying spouse and families (Kraimer, Wayne, & Jaworski, 2001; Shaffer & Harrison, 1998). Expatriates experience a full range of emotions, difficulties and challenges on assignment. Many of these feelings are foreign. So, in order to aid successful assignments, organisations need to assist expatriates through this.

Adjustment

Current literature considers and focuses on factors that affect the adjustment and relocation to a foreign assignment, and the effect on the spouse and family in addition to the expatriate. Black, Mendenhall & Oddou (1991) provide a framework for the three different levels of adjustment expatriates experience. General adjustment is the degree of comfort with living conditions, climate, food, housing and cost of living. Interaction adjustment is the individual’s comfort at socialising and interacting with host nationals. The third dimension is adjustment to work, which includes understanding and adapting to foreign specific work duties, responsibilities, standards and expectations. Expatriates reach a level of comfort when all levels of adjustment have been satisfied.

Intercultural adjustment is “the degree of an individual’s psychological comfort with various aspects of a host country” (Gregersen & Black, 1991, p. 498). The degree of comfort can change over time and this can be modelled by Black & Mendenhall’s (1991) ‘U-curve of cross-cultural adjustment’. The model has four different stages that
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over a period of time, expatriates will experience. Black & Mendenhall (1991, p. 226) have summarised the stages as:

1. ‘Honeymoon’ - The initial stage, where expatriates are fascinated and excited by the new and interesting culture. They experience infatuation with their new environment.

2. ‘Culture shock’ - The second stage where expatriates have disillusionment and frustration. They begin to deal with the reality of seriously living in the new culture on a day-to-day basis.

3. ‘Adjustment’ - The third stage where individuals gain gradual adaption into the new culture and environment. They learn how to behave appropriately according to social and cultural norms.

4. ‘Mastery’ - The fourth and final stage is characterised by slowly adapting into the host country, until the expatriate is completely and comfortably able to effectively function in the new environment.

![Figure 2: The U-Curve of Cross Cultural Adjustment (Black & Mendenhall, 1991, p.227)](image_url)
Levels of pre-departure and cultural training help to reduce the ambiguity and uncertainty of relocating internationally. The degree of difference between home and the host country being expatriated to impact the length and rigour of cross-cultural adjustment and acculturation. Mendenhall & Oddou (1985) describe “cultural toughness” as the various levels of difficulty adapting to different cultures and countries. The degree of cultural differences between home and the host country also affects acculturation (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985), with some cultures being more difficult to adapt to than others. While all countries offer different obstacles to acculturation, those with the greatest ‘cultural overlap’ are likely to create the most effective acculturation (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1986). Mendenhall & Oddou (1986) use a chart to represent the relationship between the ‘level of cultural toughness’ and the ‘degree of expertise in acculturation skills’. The table can be used to predict the overseas effectiveness of an expatriate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of cultural toughness</th>
<th>Degree of Expertise in Acculturation Skills</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
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<tr>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>LOW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MODERATE</td>
<td>MODERATE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Relationship between pre-departure expertise in overall acculturation skills, cultural toughness and future level of acculturation (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1986)

Although a relationship between acculturation skills and cultural toughness exists, it must be acknowledged that this relationship is susceptible to change. Once on assignment, expatriates can also shift between the cells with appropriate training, increasing acculturation skills (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1986). Often cross-cultural problems related to an assignment will not become apparent until the expatriate is well immersed in the environment (Selvarajah, 2009). This flexibility surrounding acculturation indicates the importance of continued support on the assignment, to assist the acculturation of the expatriate and accompanying spouse and family. Previous overseas experience helps the adjustment of expatriates (Black et al., 1991; Gregersen &
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Black, 1991) and the cross-cultural adjustment process (Shaffer, Harrison, & Gilley, 1999) but does not necessarily reduce culture shock (Black & Mendenhall, 1990). Black (1989) remarks that previous overseas experience is related to the increase of work adjustment but not general adjustment. These findings advocate the need for cultural training, to increase the level of adjustment and success. While expatriates move through the four phases of expatriation and cultural adjustment, support is an important factor for organisations to administer.

Support

Through the relocation of an expatriate on a foreign assignment, expatriates experience the loss of the majority of their social support (Grant-Vallone & Ensher, 2001), including their web of friends, colleagues and extended family. Social support can be identified as helping to reduce the uncertainty of new and foreign situations for individuals (Kraimer et al., 2001). Three important sources of support which influence adjustment are: the spouse, organisation and supervisor. Support can be attained from an assortment of sources including: management, co-workers, friends, family, sports and religious groups (Selvarajah, 2009).

This correlates with studies by Black (1992) and Mendenhall & Oddou (1985) that show that social support is positively related to the adjustment, satisfaction and retention of expatriate employees (Black et al., 1992; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985). With a loss of support networks, organisations need to play a crucial role in the support of an expatriate and their family (Grant-Vallone & Ensher, 2001). Brewster and Pickard (1994) looked at the relationship between pre-departure preparation and support, and acknowledged that those who received the same pre-departure training adjusted better and had a more positive feeling about the pre-departure training they received if they also received support from local expatriates on arrival. Suurtari and Burch (2001) looked at the local support systems and emphasised that “on average expatriates perceive the host company support practices as necessary with regards to issues both outside the workplace and at the workplace” (p. 308). This supports Brewster and Pickard’s (1994) research that found local community support increases expatriate success and that building relationships with host country nationals and adapting to local customs can ease
the transition of an expatriate and their family (Harrison & Shaffer, 2001). Harrison and Shaffer (2001) suggest that how well a spouse adjusts to local customs and culture impacts the overall adjustment of a family. Organisational support is the degree to which employees believe that their organisation is concerned with their health and well being as well as assisting their reduction of conflict between employees’ personal and professional work life (Grant-Vallone & Ensher, 2001). Organisational support needs to be ongoing from the pre-departure stage to repatriation of the employee. Employees who see their organisation as being supportive, are likely to fully perform their role within the organisation. Organisational support is also positively related to reduced absenteeism, commitment, production and retention (Fasolo, Eisenberger, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990), and these are often found in both domestic and expatriate employment situations. An ‘out of sight, out of mind’ mentality is a fear of expatriates (Oddou, 1991). As expatriates lose daily contact with management, co-workers and subordinates, they generate feelings of exclusion and isolation.

The use of a mentor system was noted by Selvarajah (2009) as a crucial component for expatriates to assist the adjustment into a new work environment. E-mentoring is an electronic method of contact between protégé and mentor, with the use of electronic communication systems rather than face-to-face communication (Elkin et al., 2012) and is increasing in popularity in expatriate assignments. E-mentoring assists in the reduction of expatriate failure (Elkin et al., 2012), and through electronic methods allows the capability, flexibility and accessibility to a mentor anywhere. Well co-ordinated activities between home and host country ensure expatriates do not feel abandoned and isolated on assignment and increase the prospect of a successful assignment (Mendenhall et al., 1987). This can be a complex process, co-ordinating business units with home headquarters and outside subsidiaries.

Oddou (1991) found that the most effective support practices for expatriates from the organisation include:

1. regular contact with expatriate (exchange information, avenue for discussion, potential problems and future plans). Company newsletters and information about policy changes at the very least should be sent.
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2. liberal long distance calling privileges for expatriate.
3. continued effort to organise social activities, finding methods to include expatriates.
4. language instruction.
5. assigning a mentor (Oddou, 1991).

While working abroad, organisations need to surround expatriates with support networks. Support comes from a variety of sources but should include social, local and organisational support. A study by Haworth & Lewis (2005) examined the experiences of work and leisure in relation to well-being in the contemporary society, finding that many people find themselves becoming slowly distanced from friends, family, relationships and leisure activities with increased work hours and intensified work. Loneliness and eroding support networks were also described as results of this. These findings highlight the importance of providing strong organisational support to expatriates in an attempt to diminish these consequences, aiding the success of an expatriate assignment.

**After the Assignment - Repatriation:**

Repatriation back to the host country is out of the scope for this research project. However, it should be acknowledged as the fourth and final phase of a ‘traditional’ expatriate assignment, whereby expatriates are brought home from an assignment and integrated back into the organisation. Self-initiated and locally hired expatriates will not experience this phase of an expatriate assignment, as they have no home organisation to repatriate to. Maintaining an effective repatriation program is important for organisations after developing senior management through providing them international experience and multinational perspectives. Their new perspective and experience is highly beneficial and provides significant value to an organisation on repatriation (Oddou, 1991).

Once selected, expatriates should be given a realistic understanding of the impact of the expatriate assignment. Many expatriates have expectations that engaging in an expatriate experience will increase their career potential (Oddou, 1991). A total 83% of respondents from Oddou’s (1991) research thought that the expatriate experience would
have a positive effect on their career, but only one third were given a clear idea about career opportunities after repatriation. A further 40% claimed that no specific job was available on return for them, operating in a ‘hold over’ position until something in the organisation came up. Another 20% of repatriated employees left after six months. This is an issue for organisations considering that employees returning from an international assignment generally have increased knowledge about the global operations of the firm. Through an expatriate assignment, employees generally grow networks, gain stronger communication skills and confidence, become more capable of planning and motivating in complex environments (Oddou, 1991). Therefore, these repatriated employees are potentially an important asset to an organisation and they need to employ effective utilisation of expatriates on re-entry into the home organisation, gaining benefit from their expatriate experiences (Oddou, 1991). Retaining them should become a major human resource priority.

**Success:**

The definition of success is inconclusive as it has been contaminated by operational and practicality difficulties (Paula M. Caligiuri, 2000; Hays, 1974). However researchers have generated some themes that assignment success factors centre around:

1. *Expatriate Adjustment* (Black & Stephens, 1989). This has been explained in the previous section, with emphasis on Black & Mendenhall’s (1991) U-Curve adjustment theory.

2. *Completion of the global assignment* (Andreason, 2008). This is defined as staying the full term of the assignment and/or meeting the assignment objectives.

3. *Expatriate Performance* (Paula M. Caligiuri & Day, 2000). Expatriate performance is an important factor of an expatriate assignment (Paula M. Caligiuri & Day, 2000; Harrison & Shaffer, 2005; Tung, 1987), meeting the needs and expectations of the organisation. Expatriates are sent internationally to fulfil roles for various reasons. There is, therefore, no one method to assess and define performance. Job
performance success can be defined in terms of task completion, relationship building and overall performance (Harrison & Shaffer, 2005).

Research on expatriate success factors became popular in the 1980s as a result of MNE expatriates prematurely returning from an assignment becoming a reoccurring problem (Baker & Ivancevich, 1971; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985; Tung, 1981). Researchers predominantly looked at selection and training methods of success, with Tung (1981) grouping variables related to the crucial factors of success into four broad sections:

1. technical competence,
2. personality,
3. environment,
4. family.

Methods that have been acknowledged by expatriates to lead to an increase of success on assignment include: language training, adequate time for preparation before departure, clarification of performance criteria and consistent expectations domestically and internationally, provision of regular contact with expatriates, and assigned mentors and provision of social networks for expatriates (Oddou, 1991). Soft skills are related to the success of expatriate assignments, with the individual having a greater spatial awareness and interpersonal skills. This is supported by a key observation by Harris and Brewster (1999) that interpersonal and cross-cultural skills have a heavy influence on the success of an international assignment.

Further recent research by Ritchie (2010) on New Zealand expatriates, found that the success factors of NZTE trade commissioners was similar to the success factors of MNE. The research (Waxin et al, 2007, as cited in Ritchie, 2010, p. 11) meta analysis of ‘the integrative Model of Cross-Cultural Adjustment’. The model has three major components with regards to cultural adjustment: organisational, individual and contextual. Each component is made up of various factors:
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- **Organisational Success**: organisations can control these factors; they include job related factors, organisational social support, logistical support, intercultural training and organisational similarity.

- **Individual Success**: organisations cannot control these but can test and question them in selection processes; they include adjustability and prior international experience.

- **Contextual Success Factors**: organisations do not have much control over these factors but can assist and support in the preparation of an assignment; they include partners social support, length of time spent in the host country and country of origin.

By focusing on these factors, organisations can assist with the success of their expatriate assignments.

Pre-departure preparation is important along with selection and support and is used to reduce culture shock and ease adjustment into a new environment. However, it is not the distinctive factor as to whether an expatriate assignment is successful or not (Oddou, 1991), with what does make a successful assignment still unclear.

**Failure:**

Not every international assignment is a success. In current literature, the term ‘expatriate failure’ is used to encompass two themes: ending the international assignment before the contract expires as well as underperforming expatriates. The majority of studies broadly define expatriate failure as the premature return from an overseas assignment and/or the inability to function effectively in a foreign environment. Failure of an assignment can have both a short and long term effect on the operations in the host country which is often dependent on the reason and severity of failure (Ashamalla, 1998; Enderwick & Hodgson, 1993; Fukuda & Chu, 1994; Harris & Brewster, 1999; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985; Naumann, 1992; Tung, 1982, 1987).
Empirical studies of expatriation have reported inconsistent failure rates among assigned expatriates, with failure rates found to be different across nationalities (Forster, 1997; Harzing, 1995). Buckley and Brooke (1992) claim that failure rates among corporate expatriates range from 25% to 40% in developed countries with, rates climbing up to 70% in developing countries while, Tung (1987) found lower rates with 76% of US multinational corporations (MNCs) experiencing expatriate failure rates greater than 10%, while only 3% of European MNCs, and 14% of Japanese MNCs had failure rates above 10%. Oddou (1991) reported estimated failure rates of 20% and higher. Failure results may also be inconclusive because in past studies expatriate assignments were seen to have large numbers of failure (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985). As a result of expatriate research, changes have been made by organisations to ensure contemporary assignments have much higher success rates. There are only a small number of solid empirical studies on expatriate failure rates (Harzing, 1995), and with these studies yielding contradictory results, exact expatriate failure rates for corporate firms cannot be reported.

New Zealand organisations report low levels of expatriation failure (Enderwick & Hodgson, 1993). This may be attributed the internationalisation models that New Zealand businesses adopt, expanding initially into countries similar to New Zealand. This reduces relational and cultural difficulties associated with relocating into a very culturally diverse environment. Enderwick & Hodgson (1993) suggest that with New Zealand’s growing internationalisation and opportunities in Asian markets, increased attention needs to be made to expatriate processes that are linked to success. Successful cross-cultural performing expatriates produce a source of competitive advantage for New Zealand businesses looking to operate in culturally different locations.

Costs associated with failure

The costs of expatriate failure are also conflicting. Costs of corporate failure are commonly reported. However, those costs associated with the premature return of self-initiated expatriates are scarce. While researchers agree that there are both direct and indirect costs associated with the failure of an international assignment (Harvey, 1985;
Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985; Naumann, 1992), it is difficult to place an exact monetary value on the overall cost of a failed assignment. The direct costs associated with a poor international staffing decision are typically: cost of relocation, compensation and training a replacement. In total these are said to range from as low as US$55,000 (Mendenhall et al., 1987) to US$1.2 million, per failed assignment (Ashamalla, 1998).

Enderwick & Hodgson (1993) suggest the cost of an expatriate is three times that of a national, due to the organisation offering a premium to attract and retain qualified and capable staff, as well as compensation and the salary adjustment across economies (Enderwick & Hodgson, 1993). The respondents from the study indicated that it was difficult to measure the cost of failure, but the costs were considerable (Enderwick & Hodgson, 1993). This suggests the importance of the need to conduct studies into minimising failure. The most recent figures from Ritchie’s (2010) report estimated the average cost of sending a New Zealand Trade Commissioner overseas to be NZ$450,000 per annum.

A failed assignment will cost companies differing amounts, depending on how much ‘damage’ the expatriate caused. It is much more difficult to place a monetary value on the indirect costs associated with failure, as these are often unknown. However, research suggests that indirect costs include: the loss of market share, weakened relationships with clients and local businesses, and damaged company reputation (Andreason, 2003; Ashamalla, 1998; Naumann, 1992). In alliance with failure and loss for the organisation, expatriates may also incur losses such as diminished prestige among their peers and lowered self confidence (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985). Not only does failure cost the employing company money but it constitutes a “human resource waste since most of those who failed had a note-worthy track record in the home office prior to overseas assignment” (Tung, 1987, p. 117).

Reasons for failure

Expatriation is so unique as seen by the inconclusive failure rates, costs and numbers, that there is no one method or system to reduce expatriate failure. Failure is a waste of resources and, therefore, it is important to understand the various reasons behind failure, although failure is sometimes inevitable and caused by things that are
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uncontrollable. Failure is possible at all stages of the expatriate process. The research on factors contributing to expatriate failure has been vast. There is strong evidence (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985; Tung, 1982) that MNC experience premature return of expatriates due to an inability to adjust to host culture, social and business environment. The majority of results tend to focus on three main areas: (1) selection of employees (Ashamalla, 1998; Forster & Johnsen, 1996; Harvey, 1985; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1986; Selvarajah, 2009; Tung, 1982), (2) the absence of cross-cultural training programs (Ashamalla, 1998; Selmer, 1999) and (3) spouse and family adjustment and spill-over issues (Black & Stephens, 1989; Hays, 1974; Tung, 1982, 1987). Further reasons from various studies include: poor selection, inadequate preparation (insufficient time between selection and departure or lack of commitment to training), increased stress associated with expatriation, compensation, interference with career path, employees’ personality or emotional maturity, employees’ inability to cope with larger responsibilities provided by overseas work, employees’ lack of technical competence for the assignment and a lack of motivation to work overseas (Tung, 1982). This is consistent with Hay’s (1974) findings that family situation and relational abilities are often responsible for failure.

Spouse and family adjustment issues are often the main reason for failure with the inability to adjust to a new environment having a large impact on the expatriate’s assignment. In research conducted by Tung (1982) all the top reasons for failure were adjustment, spouse and family related. In order of importance failure was attributed to: the inability of spouse to adjust to physical or cultural environment, the inability of employees to adjust to physical or cultural environment, other family related problems.

Spouse and family that do not effectively adjust to their new environment have a large impact on the expatriate’s assignment, with the affects of their difficulties affecting the morale and job performance of the expatriate (Harvey, 1985; Mendenhall et al., 1987; Tung, 1982). To minimise this factor influencing the success of an assignment, organisations can incorporate spouse and family in the selection process and pre-departure training (Mendenhall et al., 1987; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985; Tung, 1982). The inability of spouse and/or children to adapt to cross cultural factors can have a large impact on the success of an assignment. An unadjusted and unhappy accompanying
spouse can lead to psychological problems for the expatriate hindering work practices and performance. Other factors had little impact on performance. Failure was either low or organisations were unaware of potential reasons for failure (Selvarajah, 2009).

The inability of spouse and family to adjust to an international relocation is reported as one of the greatest catalysts and reasons for failure and supported by strong evidence from the literature. While an expatriate may hold the necessary skills to be successful in an international assignment, if a spouse does not possess these same skills, it is likely that it will cause an inability to adjust resulting in failure of the expatriate assignment. Organisations need to place high emphasis up on including the spouse in both the selection and pre-departure preparation phases. This increases the likelihood of assignment success, through assessment of the spouses’ adjustment capabilities and facilitation of their adjustment. When expatriate preparation is not provided it increases the likelihood of failure on assignment. This is particularly pertinent at the initial stages of an assignment, as companies place highest expectations on expatriates to perform (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1986), yet it is the most difficult, confusing and demanding period if an expatriate did not receive training.

Contextual New Zealand research was consistent with these findings. New Zealand expatriates’ top three reasons for failure from Enderwick & Hodgson’s (1993) research were related to these factors including: failure to integrate, inability of family to settle and inability to change. Inadequate training was also recorded. Participants in Selvarajah’s (2009) study received little to no training and on observation they all appeared to be well adjusted and personally believed they were effective in their new environments. This may be attributed to New Zealanders’ personal characteristics and capabilities: “…the New Zealanders appear more accepting of other cultures… there is an understanding that in order to succeed in the host culture, a degree of assimilation is necessary” (Selvarajah, 2009, p. 76).

The contemporary rate of expatriate failure is inconclusive but research underlines that it is costly to organisations and caused by a level of discomfort experienced by an expatriate. The main reason cited in the literature was the inability of the expatriate, spouse and family to adequately adjust to their new environment.
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Through previous methods, failure can be minimised, although failure is sometimes inevitable.

**Summary**

Chapter One presented a review of the literature related to pre-departure preparation, on-arrival and continued support of expatriates and success. The chapter also explored contextual New Zealand research into expatriates. However, the literature related to this area was greatly limited.

The chapter began with an overview of expatriation, revealing the variance of types of expatriates and that companies are shifting beyond ‘traditional’ to more contemporary methods of expatriation. The literature advocated that both organisations and individuals have different motives for creating and accepting expatriate positions. The body of the literature research examined the process of expatriation, incorporating the phases and areas surrounding expatriation. This section related to the process of expatriation, formed the theoretical conception of pre-departure preparation and support that informed the research question. Methods were analysed in regards to expatriate phases.

The final part of this chapter looked at the importance of a successful assignment and the cost involved with failure, providing evidence that success is essential in an expatriate position. The amalgamation of the key ideas from the literature, presented the foundation for this research.
Chapter Two:

This chapter explores the research objectives, looking at the research question, aims and hypothesis resulting from a gap in the literature reviewed in Chapter One. To be discussed is the framework that emerged from the review of the literature, followed by the methodology used to conduct this research. Lastly the results from the research conducted are reported.

Research Objectives, Aims and Hypotheses

The literature examined establishes and highlights that the extent of pre-departure preparation and support has an impact on the success of an expatriate assignment. Singapore is a temporary home to many working New Zealanders. It has a strong trade relationship, a stable and booming economy and is a gateway for New Zealand businesses into Asia. In reviewing the relevant literature, a gap emerged concerning the success factors for New Zealand expatriates in specific regions, including Singapore. As New Zealand companies expand and globalise into international markets, it becomes increasingly important that the face of these companies, who are often New Zealand expatriates, are successful within their roles.

Research Question: “How does the extent of pre-departure preparation, on-arrival and continued organisational support for expatriates and their accompanying families from private enterprise organisations, affect the self-perceived success of New Zealand expatriates in Singapore?”

This project set out to:

1. Identify what pre-departure preparation and continued support methods are being offered to New Zealand expatriates relocating to Singapore,
2. Identify the extent these methods are offered to the accompanying spouse and families,
3. Assess how the extent of methods used, affect the expatriates perceived success,
4. Identify the preparation and support methods deemed most desirable and important by New Zealand expatriates in Singapore.

In order to focus the research the following hypotheses were formed:

**Hypothesis 1:** Greater pre-departure preparation increases the self-perceived success of New Zealand expatriates in Singapore.

**Hypothesis 2:** Greater on-arrival and continued support increases the self-perceived success of New Zealand expatriates in Singapore.

**Hypothesis 3:** A combined increase of both H1 and H2 increase the self-perceived success of New Zealand expatriates in Singapore even more.
Emerging framework

From the review of the literature, a ‘model of expatriate success’ has been created to explain the factors that impact on the perceived success of an expatriate assignment.

The model is influenced by both independent and dependent variables.

The independent variables are the personal characteristics of the expatriate and their family (this includes spouse and children) and the place and culture being expatriated to. These variables have a heavy influence on the expatriate and determine the level of support and preparation required for an assignment. They are fixed because they are unlikely to change.

The dependent variables (1, 2 and 3) are the inputs organisations can control, the level of pre-departure preparation and support methods received by the expatriate.

All five domains affect perceived success. The dependent variables are reliant on the organisation, with the literature suggesting that when an organisation increases the level of 1, 2 or 3 the perceived success by expatriates increases. Variables 1, 2 and 3 consist of a range of methods that organisations can select to provide. The greater quality, quantity and intensity of these methods increase the perceived success an expatriate is likely to achieve. The model relates to Tung’s (1981) four factors crucial to success, with technical competence replaced by the preparation and support offered by organisations.
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Figure 3: Model of Expatriate Success
Methodology:

**Overview**

This research uses a general inductive qualitative analysis approach, where the process has been uniquely designed to fulfil the particular research aims and objectives (Thomas, 2006). The research was administered in two parts. Initially a literature review was conducted followed by data collection, which involved on-site face-to-face semi-structured interviews, followed by an online survey. Specifically twenty respondents collected from a range of sources were used to make up the sample. Participants were engaged in a one-hour face-to-face interview, using semi structured interview techniques. Data from these interviews were analysed using general inductive qualitative analysis techniques. Following the interviews, online surveys were distributed to forty-six participants using a range of questioning techniques. Secondary sources were used to support the research findings.

**Research Design:**

The design for this research was modelled off recent public sector research conducted by Ritchie (2010). This research collected three types of data and included the use of both primary and secondary data. The primary data consisted of the information derived from both the interviews and the online survey. The research provided data that were analysed using a mix of both qualitative and quantitative methods. Secondary data were collected in the form of published articles, research and books. This use of various methods provides triangulation by using more than one method of data collection. This is used to cross-examine the results, increasing validity and enhancing confidence in findings (Jick, 1979).

Denzin (1970) outlines four methods used to create triangulation and this research employs two of the four methods. The first, *methodological triangulation*, is where more than one method is employed to collect data. This was achieved through the use of interviews and survey conduction, using qualitative and quantitative questioning techniques. The second, *Data triangulation*, is where data are gathered through several
collection strategies, including different social situations as well as a variety of people (Denzin, 1970).

**Participants:**

In order to conduct this research a sample group of participants needed to be enrolled. Certain inclusion criteria were used to focus the sample. The participants sought were New Zealanders currently engaged in expatriate assignments for New Zealand private enterprise organisations in Singapore. The research population could not be definitively recorded; the New Zealand Chamber of Commerce provided an estimated figure that in 2011, approximately 3000-3500 New Zealanders were either living, working or studying in Singapore. Statistics Singapore website (Government of Singapore, 2011) provided recent statistics that Singapore’s population was 3,771,000.

This research used *non-probability* sampling, as the probability of each case being selected from the total population was not known. This style of research can be generalised but not on statistical grounds. It is suitable for this research as it lends itself to case study research (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 1997). The total population is not known, as there is no accessible database of all New Zealanders employed in Singapore. To acquire the participants for the research, a range of methods were employed, attributable to the difficulty in finding participants.

Originally the research had much narrower participant criteria. The initial study attempted to research New Zealanders working for New Zealand owned private organisations. Participants also had to have been in their current Singapore posting for a period of more than six months, but no longer than five years. This criterion was selected to meet the four expatriate relocation phases; honeymoon, culture shock, adjustment and mastery (Black & Mendenhall, 1991). In the first six months expatriates are experiencing change and adjustment into their new lifestyle and environment, their perception on their assignment is also likely to shift over this period of time. After five years expatriates reach a level of mastery in the culture and environment they are in. Support is unlikely to have an influence on their assignment and the process they went through five or more years prior may begin to get forgotten or outdated. New Zealand Trade and Enterprise did not have an exhaustive list of New Zealand companies
operating in Singapore employing New Zealand expatriates but produced a contact list of seven that met this criterion. However, as participant numbers were dependant on the availability and the success in contacting these individuals, the parameters on the research were not feasible.

The criterion that expatriates were required to be employed by a New Zealand company was removed and the criterion relating to the period of time the respondents had been on assignment in Singapore was extended from three months to eleven years, to increase participant numbers. The final participant specifications were that the participant was a New Zealander currently engaged in full time employment for a private enterprise organisation in Singapore. Participants had to relocate to Singapore internationally to commence employment to be included. Participation in the research was voluntary. Demographic data collected from participants was for analysis, to ensure the sample was not unusual. All data were treated as confidential and participants retained their anonymity through the duration of the study and publication of the results.

To obtain research participants, four different avenues of participant research and collection were conducted. Firstly, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise offered seven contacts of companies to contact, which were followed up with emails requesting their participation. Secondly, the New Zealand Chamber of Commerce (NZCC) placed an advertisement in their weekly online newsletter for four weeks, outlining the nature of the research and asking for people interested in participating to contact the researcher via email. Thirdly, a message was put on a social media website by the researcher asking for participants. Fourthly, using the KEA network (Kea, 2010), emails asking for participants were sent out to eighty-seven members who met the characteristics of New Zealanders living in Singapore. These four collection avenues fall within three sampling methods: self-selected sample, snowballing and convenience sampling. All three methods were used in parallel with each other.

1. Self-selected sample

Self-selected sampling allows an individual to identify themselves and desire to take part in the research. The researcher publicises the need for participants and data is collected from those that respond. This type of sampling is not representative of the
population as often those who acknowledge their interest in participating have an interest or opinions about the research area (Saunders et al., 1997). This project used self-selected participants through advertisements in the NZCC, which individuals had to respond to.

2. Snowballing

The snowballing technique is used to gain participants for research, when members of the population are difficult to identify. Contact is made with a few people in the population and they are asked to identify others within the population, who are also asked the same thing, and so forth until the desired number of participants are collected. The main problems with this method is that it is difficult to make the initial contacts, and the sample is often not representative of the population as respondents are likely to identify other participants similar to themselves (Saunders et al., 1997). This is, however, sometimes the only way to contact members of the population. For this project, in each case, respondents were asked to identify anyone else that may fit the research criteria, causing the snowball effect.

3. Convenience Sampling

Convenience sampling selects those participants who are easiest to obtain for the sample. Participants for this research may be classified as a ‘convenience sample’, as “information or data for the research is gathered from members of the population who are conveniently accessible to the researcher” (Cavana, Delahaye, & Sekaran, 2001, p. 454). The selection process is continued until the required sample size is reached. This method is widely used but is prone to influences and bias beyond the researcher’s control. For a convenience sample the researcher must remain confident that volunteer participants will not compromise the validity of the study. Participants may only appear in the sample because of the ease of getting them (Saunders et al., 1997), with these participants often being people who are available at the time the research is being conducted. This method explains the expansion of the participant criteria. As the research had a limited time to be conducted, participants had to be available during that time period.
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Once a contact was identified, an email was sent requesting their participation in the study, either through an on-site face-to-face interview and/or completing the online survey. This lends the research to using an element of self-selection as, once contacted, participants had to accept the research invitation. Interviewees were further contacted arranging a time to be interviewed, following the interview all twenty were sent a link to the online survey. Twenty-six survey-only participants were contacted with a link to the survey once it was opened.

Statistical analysis generally requires a minimum sample of thirty. This number can, however, be smaller for non-statistical analysis (Saunders et al., 1997). Twenty to twenty-five participants were sought for interview, and a minimum of thirty were sought for the survey. All methods used to gain the sample population have limitations and lend an aspect of bias to them. However, they were valid for this inductive research with each respondent matching the participant criteria.

**Interview Design:**

The researcher travelled to Singapore to conduct the interviews over a period of five working days. It was feasible to hold a maximum of five interviews per day, allowing a total of twenty-five available time allocations on the proposed interview schedule. To gain rich qualitative data the research process began with semi-structured interviews. Interviews offer a rich source of data which provide access to how people account for both their troubles and their good fortune (Silverman, 2001). Participants were initially contacted using email to take part in a face-to-face interview in Singapore at allocated time periods. Expatriates who met the criteria and were available during the research period were followed up with a confirmation email and a copy of the ethics consent form and accompanying documents (refer to appendix). Interviews were semi-structured with “themes and questions known in advance, but the questions and their orders vary depending on the flow of the interview” (V. Anderson, 2009, p. 187). Research themes and questions were derived from the literature review preceding the research design. This style of questioning allowed for ‘unstructured questioning techniques’, while semi-structured interview techniques enabled themes and ideas that
emerged through the interviews to be questioned and explored in more depth. Certain areas of interest or areas that were not originally planned could also be explored.

Questions and themes used in the interviews were developed from the literature and closely refined. The interviews began with a few demographic questions. This was followed by questions that intended to cover the process participants went through once selected for their role in Singapore. With initial questions focusing on the pre-departure preparation and support they received as well as their self-perceived experience and the presence or absence of these methods. Following this the interview explored how they perceived and defined the success of their assignment, their commitment to any social networks and any advice they would have liked to have known or would pass on to expatriates departing or New Zealand employers sending employees to Singapore. At the conclusion of the interview, participants were offered the opportunity to provide any further information or comments they believed to be relevant. Interviewees were given a New Zealand chocolate bar (pineapple lump or peanut slab) as a token of thanks.

Interviews took place in a range of environments, with interviewees asked to choose an area convenient for them, where they would feel comfortable to be interviewed. The majority of interviews were held in interviewee’s offices (twelve of twenty) or a nearby coffee shop (six of twenty). One was in her home and one was conducted over Skype. Notes in the style of an ethnographic diary were taken during the interview. Each interview was immediately written once finished to ensure accuracy of what had been recorded and to develop themes. These themes helped structure future interviews. Once all twenty interviews had been completed, results and data were collated and analysed using general inductive research techniques.

**Survey:**

Using the themes gathered from the initial interview analysis, supplemented with preparation and support methods that were predominant in the literature, an online survey was constructed. This was deployed to gain further data on main themes and the preparation and support processes used. The survey collected both qualitative and quantitative data using a variety of questioning methods, including:
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- Open-ended questions,
- 5-point Likert scales,
- Category listings (participants asked to select appropriate methods from a list),
- Rating scales (participants asked to rate categories in order of importance).

Due to the preceding interviews, a large quantity of information had already been gathered. Therefore, the survey focused on well-structured questions that were less problematic to analyse (Bell, 2005). A pilot study of the survey was conducted with nine New Zealand expatriates working in the United Arab Emirates. The pilot study was conducted to trial the survey for unambiguous questions, double meaning, unnecessary information, question wording and the time allowance needed to complete the survey. The survey was distributed through a tangible paper method so participants could add comments and feedback on the survey. Using the feedback and data collected from the pilot test, the survey was critiqued and loaded into an online format. An online survey was constructed using ‘Select Survey’, an online survey software tool. The survey was to be distributed via email to participants. This was test piloted one final time with six new participants to test the software, before being distributed.

The final version of the online survey incorporated six sections with a total of six-sixty questions. The initial section collected demographic characteristics of the participants such as age, gender, relationship status, children, years in Singapore and any other previous expatriate assignments. The following five sections looked at: pre-departure preparation, on-arrival support, continued support, perceived success and a section of miscellaneous questions. The survey was deployed to forty-six participants using the software. A link was sent to participants by email outlining the nature of the study, the participants’ criteria and the ethics consent form. The survey was open for fifteen days, with a reminder sent out to those who had yet to participate within the last week.
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**Ethical Considerations:**

This research followed the guidelines established by the University of Otago human ethics committee. Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the ethics committee. In accordance to the University of Otago human ethics committee, Maori consultation was also undertaken. Attention to ethical issues was aimed at protecting the rights, privacy and safety of the participants, while addressing any ethical concerns. Significant issues addressed with the participants included consent for participation in the research, the purpose and aim of the research, what the participants were asked to do, what data or information would be recorded and what would be done with this, including the protection and storage of the data. Participants were also informed they may withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage to themselves, offering complete voluntary participation. In offering confidentiality, participants were ensured that their names, organisations and private information would not be made public or published in any form. All information collected was relevant to the research aims and objectives.

**Data Analysis:**

General inductive research is typically theory building research that is usually limited to the presentation and description of main themes or the most important categories (Thomas, 2006). Interviews were analysed used general inductive research analysis. This style of research has three broad tasks:

1. *Data reduction* (analysis): data analysis is guided by objectives, which provide a focus of domains and topics to be investigated, but the findings are extracted straight from the data (Thomas, 2006). This step was conducted within the interviews, with semi structured interviews asking questions guided by objectives, with analysis following immediately after the interview where themes began to emerge.

2. *Data display* (reporting): once categories and themes are identified these are put into a model or framework (Thomas, 2006).

3. *Conclusion drawing*: Findings are shaped by evaluator’s experiences and assumptions. Due to the large amount of data, the researcher needs
to decide if the data was important enough to be included, for the conclusion to be useable (Thomas, 2006). The outcome from the process is that the research should be able to create a model or framework that summarised the key process or themes from the findings.

Analysis is conducted by the deployment of coding. This process includes preparing the data by grouping it into the most commonly written form. Data and text are then closely read, whereby the researcher is familiar with the content and has a thorough understanding of the themes. From this categories are created and refined. Initially the researcher may discover upper level general categories (around thirty to forty) from the evaluations. These will eventually become lower level specific categories through multiple analysis of the data, by evaluating overlapping data, continuous revision and refinement of the category system. Research findings should conclude with three to eight categories (Thomas, 2006).

A framework is used to discuss findings from the research. This can be a list of specific categories that need to be considered. The findings are reported by creating a label for the refined category, followed by the author’s description and meaning of the category. Quotations from the raw text are inserted to back up the research, showing how the coding was used and elaborating on the meaning. Both a framework and categories were created from the data collected. The review and analysis of the literature formed the initial creation of the Model of Expatriate Success (Figure 3). The results from the interviews and surveys were then applied to test if this holds true. From the results a further framework ‘Three factors of expatriate success’ (Figure 4) was created. Five key themes and three subsections were also drawn from the data collected.

Simple quantitative statistics equations were conducted to analyse quantitative data from the surveys. Statistical and regression analysis was used to analyse the data including, mean, median, mode and range calculations. From this appropriate conclusions could be drawn. Due to the limitation of the small number of respondents, the conclusions drawn from the quantitative data in the surveys were not very strong and held less importance to the findings of the research.
Summary

Using Ritchie (2010) to guide the research design, a method was created utilising both interview and survey techniques. The participants sought all met the proposed criteria with the data being analysed by a general inductive approach, creating a framework and a list of themes emerging from the results.

The research produced a collection of valid data that was suitable for analysis using a variety of methods. The following section reports the results from the research.
Chapter Three:

Results

This section conveys the results of the analysis of both interviews and survey data. Quotes have been inserted to give richness and support findings. To maintain the anonymity of participants, interview participants have been coded one (01) to twenty (20), while quotes from the survey have been coded with a (S). The numbers in the brackets indicate the interview number of the respondent. This is related to the numbers in Table 3. This research, examined preparation and support for New Zealand expatriates in Singapore and whether they impact on the success of expatriate assignments.

The sample:

Interview participant demographics

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with twenty New Zealanders in Singapore. All participants were employed full-time by private enterprise organisations in Singapore and had relocated to take up their expatriate assignment. There were six females and fourteen males. Participants’ ages ranged from 29 - 58, with a mean of 43 years old. A total of 75% of participants were married; 20% had a partner, and 5% were single. All married participants had children, with 80% of the children living with the parents in Singapore. Children not accompanying parents were older and self sufficient, or still in schooling and living with extended family in New Zealand.

The participants were employed by organisations in nine different industries: Automotive (1), Consumer Goods (3), Education (2), Energy (2), Financial Services (4), Information Technology (4), Media (2), Medical (1), Publishing (1). Interviewees ranged in the length of time on assignment from three months to eleven years. Thirteen were locally-hired expatriates while the remainder were classified as traditional expatriates. The average period expatriates had been on assignment was three and a half years. Table 3 visually displays a selection of the demographic data, grouped by industry
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sectors, although no relationships are identified. The table also includes the age of participants, length of time expatriates have been on their current assignment in Singapore and where they relocated from to take up their current position in the organisation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Shanghai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>29</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>39</td>
<td>Consumer Goods</td>
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<td>New Zealand</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
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<td>9</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
</tr>
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<td>34</td>
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<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>58</td>
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<td>China</td>
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<tr>
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<td>35</td>
<td>Publishing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Demographics & organisational information of interview participants

Survey participant demographics

In parallel with the interviews, an online survey was sent out. This received thirty-two responses from forty-six invitations, producing a relatively high response rate of 70%. The survey was also distributed to all interview participants, causing participant overlap. Sixteen from twenty interview participants responded to the survey. Due to this
high number, interview and survey data could be broadly applied to the whole research sample.

Respondents were all New Zealanders, thirty one of which are currently living in Singapore, one recently returned. A total of 19% were employed by a New Zealand company, while 81% worked for an international company. The participants were made up of seven females and twenty-five males. The average age of participants was 39, ranging between 28 and 61 years old. This is similar to the interview participants who had an average age of 43 and a range of 29 - 58 years old. Of the sample 16% were single, 12% in de-facto relationships and 72% were married. Within the group 91% of those married had children, with just over half (57%) of the children accompanying the parents on assignment. The length of the majority of assignments was unknown, while those who did give this information were relatively evenly spread between one and five years. The participants were almost evenly split between those who had previously been on an international expatriate assignment (54%) and those who had not.

Job related demographics

The gross salary average (mean) earned by the sample participants was SGD$250,000. The results showed two extreme values at both ends with $800,000 and $36,000, although these outliers did not strongly skew the results. There was no relationship between the industry and salary. The range of organisations participants were employed by was similar to those of the interviewee participants. It did include a greater range of industries, also including legal, transport and telecommunications. Information technology and financial services were the most populous industries participants were employed in followed by consumer goods and energy/power. This variance of industries and fair spread of respondents across them enables the findings to be generalised across industries.

The majority (75%) of expatriates worked for organisations employing 1500+, while 21% employed between 50 to 1,000 and one outlier worked for a company with three to nineteen employees. Five expatriates worked for New Zealand owned companies while the other organisations were internationally owned.
The demographic results from both the interviews and survey are relatively similar, indicating the two data sets can be generalised for the analysis of research information. The following section analyses the information and data collected. Major differences between the interview and the survey sample are acknowledged.

**Expatriates**

The interview sample was made up of a mix of traditional and locally hired expatriates. The following table shows the distribution types.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Local Contract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No support</td>
<td>Relocation Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same organisation</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New organisation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Table displaying the 'types' of expatriates from interviews

Table 4 shows an almost even split between expatriates that worked for their existing organisation (53%) before expatriating to Singapore and those who relocated to commence employment with a new organisation (47%). A larger split is seen between traditional expatriates (35%) and locally hired expatriates (65%). The table also displays the different packages and relocation support offered by organisations to expatriates. A ‘full package’ includes relocation, accommodation and travel allowances.

**Selection of an individual:**

Although the research did not specifically look into the selection process, it was commonly referred to by expatriates, especially in relation to success. The selection of expatriates was considered to be a crucial factor in the success of an expatriate assignment, with personal characteristics and attributes related to the success of an assignment.

“*selection is most important (01).*”

“*...drive your own success (10).*”

Attributes and capabilities related to the role and culture expatriating to should be used to assist in the selection of individuals for expatriate positions. Due to the nature
of international assignments, expatriates cannot be monitored in their environment and therefore organisations need faith and trust in their loyalty and work ethic.

Organisations need someone who has the “desire to get things done (08)”.

“It is all about the person, you are employing them to be the face of the company or because of their ‘job specific knowledge’ (09).”

In Asia business practices value relationships and networking to conduct business, this highlights the need for expatriates to possess the ability to develop these.

“Selection is important…need to select an individual that can network and get involved in local networks (01).”

Expatriates in Singapore “need to be a good networkers, Asians are masters of this (05),”

On a personal level an expatriate needs to possess attributes that cannot be taught including being:

“proactive, open minded, flexible, adaptable and an understanding that things are not always as you assume (01)”.

These are viewed as key characteristics of New Zealanders, which makes them successful on expatriate assignments.

Nine of the individuals interviewed used the phrase ‘open mind’ to describe an essential attribute an expatriate needed to possess, to be successful in their role, understanding it to mean that expatriates needed to be impartial to the differences between cultures and countries and the different experiences they will encounter. This phrase also emerged commonly in the open-ended survey responses.

“When you leave New Zealand, pack an open mind (02).”

“In my opinion, an international transferee should hold no expectations. Go with an open mind and you are more likely to adjust should things go awry (05).”

“Don’t bring pre-existing conceptions. Take people as you find them. Be open to others. What may be seen as rude in New Zealand may be normal in Singapore and learn to accept this (10).”
“Keep an open mind and no expectations… [go with the mindset that], let’s go look and see what happens…[I ask myself], why are we happy, because we had no expectations (15).”

“The last thing you should pack and the first thing you should unpack is an open mind and without that you’ll struggle, anywhere (17).”

“Come with a very open mind and respect for other cultures…be willing to do things and try stuff. Basics from eating out, to interesting things you may be served up…be adaptable. Question things you believed were absolutes back in New Zealand (19).”

“To achieve success, an individual has to be open minded and prepare knowing they will need to adjust (20).”

Why people move to Singapore:

The top four factors attributed to accepting or seeking expatriate employment from the interviews in order of popularity were:

1. International experience,
2. Career,
3. Financial reasons,
4. Travel.

Survey results supported this, with correlating factors including the challenge of an international relocation (68%), job (58%) and experience of a new culture and remuneration (55%). Other less significant reasons included change, spouse, global experience, job package and meeting new people.

Singapore is a first step into Asia, offering greater job opportunities particularly in specific industries: banking and financial services, information technology and manufacturing.

“Singapore is a great opportunity to get Asia on your CV and corporate profile. Good for banking and manufacturing sector as Asia is the place to be. Singapore has a stable economy (09).“
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**Remuneration**

Remuneration, specifically money, was mentioned as one of the top four reasons for taking an expatriate assignment, with a relationship observed between money and intentions to stay.

A financial gain increased expatriates’ intentions to stay in Singapore, while a lack of financial gain and financial strain increased expatriates intentions to leave Singapore prematurely or at the completion of their assignment. Monetary gain was a bonus and incentive for expatriates to stay, with the low tax rate, making saving possible.

“...I asked myself the other day, if my savings plan fell into my lap tomorrow, would I pack up and go home... I think, yes I would be gone - tomorrow (04).”

Reasons for wanting to return to New Zealand included, missing home, friends “and olds, getting a bit old now”.

“Easy place to live, [from a] tax point, makes it attractive (11).”

“[Singapore’s] good work opportunities and low tax has a huge pulling factor (14).”

Lack of monetary gains encouraged departure. With one participant (16), leaving Singapore in the coming month because costs (living and schooling) have become too expensive for the package they are receiving.

“[Moved to Singapore] under the illusion, would be more better off [in terms of wealth] but costs change that (16).“

This highlights the cost of living in Singapore and the threshold factor expatriates need to earn, for the money to not negatively impact on lifestyle factors including quality of life, living expenses and ability to travel. Some expatriates also mentioned that money had little effect on an assignment:

“Money is not an issue. Not better or worse...didn’t come for the money...not driven by money, there is more to life (06).”

“Taking on the expatriate assignment was not for money but for the opportunity (07).”
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“...money influence is not a big player for working in Singapore (15).”

This suggests that expatriates may not be purely money driven and reasons for taking an expatriate assignment branches further than this including lifestyle and career opportunities.

**Previous Assignments:**

Previous expatriate experience increased the likelihood of the success of subsequent assignments. A total of 83% of expatriates agreed it increased success while 17% offered a ‘neutral’ response. There was no negative view offered of previous experience hindering success.

“Previous expatriate experience was more important than pre-departure or on arrival support which was adequate...appropriate (S).”

Preparation and support should be personalised to the individual with the process and methods used focused and tailored accordingly to personal circumstances.

“Business needs to understand personal circumstances, as everyone is unique (11).”

“Success is dependent on the individual. For families I would imagine preparation is far more important than a single person (S).”

**Pre-departure Preparation:**

Time between selection and departure of an assignment allows expatriates to pack up and tidy up their personal affairs before relocating to Singapore. The majority of expatriates (twenty-five of thirty-two) received one to three months between selection and their departure. The time expatriates received, ranged between one month and six months with one outlier receiving more than six months to prepare.

The frequency and level of pre-departure preparation methods provided was derived from the review of literature (See Table 1). Participants acknowledged the methods they were provided from this table. While twenty-nine out of thirty-two (91%)
of participants received at least one method of pre-departure preparation, fifteen out of twenty-five spouses and only three out of nineteen of children received at least one method of pre-departure preparation.

Cultural training was offered to six out of twenty-nine expatriates. Brief cultural training was offered to only three of twenty-five spouses. It was acknowledged by expatriates who relocated from New Zealand that greater cross-cultural training especially in the workplace would be beneficial. Cultural training was also seen to be most effective on arrival, rather than in pre-departure preparation.

Participants were asked to rank the top three most beneficial preparation methods provided. The most beneficial methods by order of popularity categorised by expatriates were:

1. orientation visit before moving to Singapore,
2. informal discussions with other company employees who have worked in Singapore, and
3. formal induction course on living in Singapore, with factual background information and accommodation support.

Overall, twenty of thirty respondents ranked an orientation visit in the top three most beneficial preparation methods provided. This was closely followed by informal discussions with other companies who have worked in Singapore, where eighteen of thirty respondents ranked it in the top three most beneficial preparation methods provided. Twenty of twenty-nine expatriates received an orientation visit. Orientation visits lasted between two to seven days and were viewed as crucial to the beginning of an assignment. They helped individuals with the adjustment process, as they knew where they were going and had a basic understanding of what to expect.

“Looksee trip is beneficial, absolutely (01)”

“Looksee trip is critical at the beginning of an expatriate assignment. Needs to be structured, to make the most of the time and see the things that are important during this time... schooling, accommodation, site seeing etc. (02)”
“Had a look see trip; met agent, found an apartment, was shown food, CBD... made it easy, on arrival moved straight in, everything was pre shipped and hit the ground running (08).”

“Look see trip familiarises yourself with new surroundings...need to be comfortable on arrival so you can work effectively and ‘hit the ground running’ on arrival (10).”

“Didn’t receive looksee trip...had a six week secondment in Singapore, but it would have been good to see the sites and start a few arrangements for the move [agents](11).”

“Organisation provided a looksee trip that ensured we got a feel for Singapore. It incorporated schooling and accommodation. Received a real overview of the country, visually and informative...outstanding treatment (12).”

This suggests that an orientation visit and informal discussions with people having experienced life in Singapore are the two most beneficial methods to prepare an expatriate for the adjustment into Singapore. Other provided surrounding pre-departure methods were predominantly logistical preparation methods: accommodation costs, relocation assistance, schools, social network and orientation.

An analysis of whether the amount of pre-departure preparation expatriates received helped ease their adjustment into Singapore from the surveys presented inconclusive results. The average response was ‘agreed’ (2.8), from thirty-one respondents, two strongly agreed, eight agreed, fifteen were neutral, and six disagreed. These findings were relatively similar to the adequacy of on-arrival support expatriates received. The average response was also ‘agreed’ (2.7).

Most expatriates (twenty-three of thirty-two) thought the level of difficulty adjusting to life and work in Singapore would be easy if provided with more pre-departure training, while four of thirty-two stated it would have no change on their adjustment.

“Undoubtedly more easy if had been given support, but was not under any illusions to what it would be like (13).”
A somewhat normal distribution explained the level of difficulty in adjusting to Singapore given no pre-departure training, however the majority (fourteen of thirty-two) of expatriates rated that it would be difficult.

“[Didn’t receive any pre-departure preparation and found it very] challenging, didn’t know where to start [researching living costs, schools and accommodation] (13). “

The vast majority believed their pre-departure preparation was generic (twenty-three), while only three said it had individual components and one expatriate thought the methods provided and process were uniquely individualised.

Surprisingly when asked how likely greater pre-departure preparation would increase the success of their assignment, the results produced a relatively normal distribution between very likely to very unlikely.

“Not sure that pre-departure materials would help much. Think ‘success’ is more determined by one's mind-set and openness to new ideas and new cultures. (S)”

Cultural and country briefings, along with schooling information, were the most common methods expatriates felt would increase their success. Other methods included receiving information and briefings on company policies and the health care system with further acknowledgement of a large number of on-arrival support methods including support networks, friends, housing assistance.

“Preliminary work should be providing information packs, a buddy system and help people assimilate into new society. Need basics of how to do this, associations, whom to talk to about information, expatriate websites (10).”

“Huge amount of information pre-departure about schooling and the life for the children...very reassuring to know the children would be okay...information on Singapore prior to departure, historical and comparative costs...Wasn’t extensive just the logistics...no struggle relocating, everything ran smoothly (12).”

Expatriates acknowledged that they conducted a lot of personal research themselves, assisting in their knowledge of Singapore and adjustment.
“Did a lot of online preparation myself…living cost, accommodation, travel, amenities…by doing this I was more aware of things myself (17).”

Organisations can support expatriates with personal research through offering a supply of informative resources including, but not limited to, books, useful websites, videos and information guides.

“No support and preparation, but would have been nice…used ‘Contact Singapore website’ online cost of living calculator, but underestimated costs in Singapore…more information would have been good…especially a document or booklet with contacts and pointed out daily activities and organising necessities and utilities… (18).”

**On-Arrival Support**

On arrival support was deemed an essential phase in the success of an assignment.

“Transition phase important to success (12).”

“Success is how smoothly the transition went (15).“

Effective and fast adaption to the new environment in Singapore assisted in family happiness and the expatriates’ effectiveness at work, overall increasing the perceived success of the assignment. The key objective of on-arrival support was to adjust as quickly as possible to the new environment.

“Settle as fast as you can to be productive, get organised and gain stability (01). ”

“Need to be comfortable on arrival so you can work effectively and ‘hit the ground running.’ (11)”

**Time between arrival and job commencement**

Expatriates receive a minimal amount of time between arriving in Singapore and commencing their employment, with the data positively skewed.
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<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>15 – 21</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Time between arrival and commencement of employment

Expatriates who had accompanying spouse and families stated that a period of time less than one week was inadequate. Appropriate time allowance between arriving and commencing employment was important to the adjustment into Singapore.

“No struggle, everything ran smoothly. On-arrival met at airport and started with a two-week orientation that got everything sorted personally and professionally... bank accounts, real estate, supermarket, laundry, travel, job specifics, because of this I feel we have been very successful and effective (12).”

“Well organised and smooth process... had one week before work to sort accommodation and settle family (19).”

“Started orientation two days later and work started the following week. More time would have been better... could have had a week or two to organise accommodation... (20).”

Single expatriates and those without accompanying spouse and families did not require the same time between arrival and commencing employment. Work was a good distraction to culture shock and feelings of absence from family.

“Need to be comfortable on arrival so you can work effectively and ‘hit the ground running’ on arrival... leaving [my] children behind was largest concern... I acclimatised almost immediately... heavy work, distracted me, didn’t have time to miss my kids (10).”

“At work, hit the ground running, training for the role... induction first two to three weeks. Didn’t have time to miss family or think about the move because so absorbed in new role (15).”

“I went straight from the airport to work at 7.00am. Wife and the kids followed six weeks later (S).”
Types of on-arrival support received

Twenty-three of thirty-two (72%) were provided with a relocation company to assist in their relocation and adjustment into Singapore. Of those who were provided this support the following were shown: housing 91%, shopping centres 52%, schooling, Singapore as a city, supermarkets 35%, and attractions 22%. From this a greater number of spouses than expatriates were shown schooling and supermarkets.

Relocation companies significantly helped the relocation and adjustment phase of expatriates. A selection of different companies were mentioned to be an “invaluable (01, 02)” service, often offering far greater support than just the relocation of possessions, providing information booklets and agents to help find suitable accommodation and the top level of support assisting with the connection of utilities and setting up expatriates with basic amenities.

“It was a very much value added system (02).”

“Would have liked support and preparation on a higher level and a factsheet or list of phone numbers to help set up and arrange things in Singapore...schools, accommodation, agents to contact, phones, utilities (07).”

The most beneficial on-arrival support methods provided to expatriates were: a relocation company to show housing, social support, banking and financial services, formal hand over of responsibilities, appropriate time to adjust between arrival and beginning assignment, accommodation provided on arrival. Other methods were focused around logistical and financial support. The adequacy of support was evenly distributed between very inadequate to very adequate, offering no conclusive results.

Expatriates selected for assignments were expected to be top employees and therefore capable of organising, adjusting and acclimating themselves into a new environment, given the appropriate resources.

"Give them the tools and leave them to their own devices (08)."

“There is a lot of help out there if you want ...therefore give information and let them utilise it (09).”
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The majority of respondents, (twenty-one of thirty-two) found the degree of difficulty in adjusting to work and life in Singapore given the on-arrival support received easy, with only two of thirty-two stating it to be difficult. All respondents either thought that the level of difficulty in adjusting to their assignment in Singapore would be easier or neutral if they had been provided ‘more’ support.

“The infrastructure at ... was highly mature and sophisticated, the benefit was that you hit the ground running on day one (08).”

“Transition not smooth...envious of others relocation support... would have been more effective if had greater support...had to take time out of work to arrange relocation...doesn’t get any easier with experience (15).”

Participants expressed that the provision of on-arrival support was extremely important for spouses and family. This had a large impact on the success of an assignment, through facilitating adjustment of those accompanying.

“Organisations need to provide more support on arrival, for wife and children (06).” “Adjustment preparation and support, not just about the employee but also about the family, if kids are not happy, parents will not be happy (12)”. 

“Doesn’t work to bring families overseas and not accommodate for them (15).”

**Continued Support**

Continuous support is maintained throughout the duration of the assignment and is more commonly provided to ‘traditional expatriates’ who are repatriated at the end of the term of the assignment. Continuous support was provided to just over half of the survey respondents (seventeen of thirty-two), while this was even less for spouse and children.

Respondents were asked to indicate what methods of on-going support they received, from a list constructed from methods found in the review of the literature. Management support (thirteen of seventeen), followed by peer support (twelve of seventeen), were the two greatest methods received. Other methods included social support and mentoring. Further support expatriates received that was not from the
literature included financial support, allowances and memberships to expatriate clubs and communities, home leave, local staff and business management. Some expatriates expressed that they didn’t receive support anymore and that they were “relatively independent (S)” and other than financial support it was no longer essential after a period of time.

“Expectation after four years that as a senior executive you have all you need to do the job (S).”

Greater peer support, mentoring, language training and social support were all mentioned as methods that would increase the success of expatriate assignments, along with annual flights home to remain connected and eliminate isolation from family and friends in New Zealand.

Expatriates said it was at the four-to-eight week period that expatriates needed the most support.

“Allow time to adjust...would be great to receive general words of advice on what to expect...[At] 6-8 weeks, wow I have really moved. And cut yourself some slack...don’t expect to be 100% effective both professionally and personally (06).”

“4-6 week period is the most crucial time once on assignment, hit the wall and realise it is not a vacation. Need support and timeout (11).”

**Social networks**

Social networks were viewed as crucial for the success of an expatriate assignment.

“[Social support is] very important (07).”

“Networks are vital! (12)”

“Social isolation as an expat, you will not succeed (12).”

Relocation companies in some instances identified social networks that expatriates could join. It was rare for an organisation to acknowledge or supply social networks for expatriates to participate in. Continued social support was provided to five of twenty-seven expatriates and seven of twenty-seven spouses by organisations.
“...Don’t want the company to interfere in your personal life [but would appreciate help connecting people and acknowledging networks and groups available. NZCC etc.] Value guidance in some of those areas (11).”

02 Received no assistance or advice on social networks, clubs and societies. “Would have been useful with relocation skills (02).”

03 Had no friends or networks outside of work, he didn’t know how about any social networks, but believed having social support and contacts would increase the success and enjoyment of his assignment in Singapore.

Social networks were created through various different activities including participation in sports, community centres and churches. (13) Participates in social networks through school and church, which also host social activities. Would definitely look into other networks if didn’t have these networks.

“To create a healthy environment for yourself, [you] need networks (13).”

Many expatriates were members of Australia and New Zealand Association (ANZA) and New Zealand Chamber of Commerce (NZCC), New Zealand expatriate networks in Singapore. Expatriates with accompanying children, found schools and children’s extracurricular activities to create opportunities for expatriates to create a social network. Not all social networks were created through formal networks, but informally, through work or friends of friends. Expanding social network is important:

“never been one for joining clubs etc. but here it’s important (06).”

Social networks provide enjoyment of Singapore, activities, support, and friendships and reduce isolation.

“I think the most important thing is to have a network of friends or likeminded people to engage with to make adjustment to life in Singapore easy (S).”

“Yes, [having a social network] definitely adds a huge amount to happiness... much harder if you didn’t (1).”

“Essential to have social support, networks, can’t survive without...[benefits received is the opportunity to share experiences and talk about things not in a textbook (05).”
“I think it is crucial [to have a social network], in a new environment, you look for something similar (10).”

Social support was more important for accompanying spouses, as they do not have the social connection, activity and routine of work each day like an expatriate has.

“It is important that the spouse and children feel comfortable in new surroundings through opportunities to meet new people and having social networks. Not so important for employee and they are travelling a lot...organizations should help find or suggest networks, communities and groups for expatriates to connect with (02).”

“Social networks are especially important for families...[as working adult is busy with work]...me, I can get by (15).”

“Social networks are important for spouse given they are not working...need to be kept active and not bored (17).”

“Social support and networks are critical for spouse...less important for the working individual as they are working hard (19).”

**Motivations**

**Reasons for leaving**

Failure is most commonly defined by a premature departure from an expatriate assignment. Over half of expatriates (twenty of thirty one) agreed they had seriously considered returning home prematurely. Reasons for returning back to New Zealand (or onto another place of residence) included family, lifestyle and nature of the expatriate job was unsatisfactory. Children’s schooling was also mentioned as a reason for leaving. The prime reasons for returning from an expatriate position were family, work hours, lifestyle and monetary reasons.

If it wasn’t for her husband’s love of his job, (07) believes they already would have returned home, as found setting up and settling difficult due to young family, long hours and lack of support from organisation. (07) Given no preparation or support by organisation other than a list of relocation companies.
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These factors suggest the importance of a careful expatriate selection process, factoring in families and spouse. Ensuring the individual and their families can deal with these reasons for returning home prematurely and prepare them for a change in lifestyle. This suggests the need for organisations to support expatriates prepare for a change in lifestyle and find adequate substitutes for the loss of certain aspects of the expatriates’ previous lifestyles.

“[On assignment] ... we have a different balance in life, to where at home we are very family focused (20).”

The provision of return flights home once a year as a method of support, reducing the distance between families.

“Family’s so far away, which is hard and makes your friends very important. I don’t think we would have stayed as long if we didn’t have flights home each year (20).”

Lifestyle

The Singaporean lifestyle impacted on both the enjoyment and success of living in Singapore as well as providing difficulties. Expatriates considered that the lifestyle they led in Singapore was different to that back at home, with cultural, social and environmental differences. Pre-departure preparation provided information that was relevant to living in Singapore, but the information and preparation could never fully prepare expatriates for the actual experience. The connection between the information and reality was not clearly understood or comprehended properly until the expatriate was immersed in the lifestyle. The Singaporean lifestyle was attributed to being centred on the Singaporean dream and its competitive environment that is very success and money-driven.

“The Singaporean dream, [where] the three C’s that count; cash, condo and car (05).”

“[the country is] structured, so it can succeed (15).”

“Singapore brings in talent and encourages foreign talent (19).”

Lifestyle factors impacted on, but were not essential, to the success of expatriate assignments. Positive aspects of the lifestyle in Singapore included orderly country,
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easy, efficient public transport system, safe on both personal and property levels, English speaking, enjoyable and simple to adjust.

19 described how he often goes to the park with his children. At the edge of the park they drop their shoes, bags and scooters. They disappear inside for an hour or so and come back with no worries that everything would be as they left it. This shows the safety in Singapore and how it assures comfort and peaceful living.

“Living in Singapore is easy, so easy, it is hard to imagine returning home anytime soon (S).”
“Personal and property safety, we probably take it for granted (19).”
“…safety, cleanliness - take it for granted (18)”

The lifestyle factors that negatively impacted on expatriate assignments were the absence of New Zealand environmental factors.

”Nature, clean green spaces (S)”
“NZ lifestyle (beaches, space, quiet)(S).”
“Lifestyle reasons. Singapore is too hot, and most activity is indoors. NZ offers greater variety of outdoor activities and less stressful work environment. NZ also better place to raise a family (S).”

Singapore is a big city, with almost four million people living in the area relative to the size of Lake Taupo, New Zealand. New Zealand expatriates feel claustrophobic with a lack of space and environmental surroundings.

”[If I didn’t have] so much travel, I would go stir crazy, just a big city (11).”
“Singapore is very claustrophobic..It is a big city, but can get bored very quickly...Need to escape there...need to travel around the region (13).”
“Going to get claustrophobic soon... everyone knows everyone (18).”
“Living is quite different from New Zealand...small space...form of living is more claustrophobic...[there are] trade offs, but overall positive experience (20).”

Expatriates need to be aware of the environmental cultural difference as it also impacts on the lifestyle activities individuals can participate in.
“Activities are great, except outdoor pursuits such as surfing and bush running. The greenery is all false, can’t replicate natural ‘flow’” (09).

“Have to dig for less mainstream things; talks, quirky cafes...Cool pockets, need to be in the know (11).”

Singapore lifestyle was characterised by being ‘Disneyland’, an experience that emanates an ideal life.

‘Singapore is “anal... not a ‘real’ life... so manicured (5).”’

“Like living in Disneyland...[Your success rides on your sanity]...If it is Disneyland, need to keep it real (08).”

“Disneyland view of the world (11).”

Expatriates need to “make Singapore a reality (19)” with suggestions to immerse yourself in the local culture.

“Get to know the local people and community...get a much richer experience (20),””

In building yourself a ‘real life’ in Singapore, expatriates need to distinguish from the beginning that they are moving to a new place and that Singapore will be ‘home’.

“If you’re going to stay in a place [long term], don’t think about where you have come from, but make your new place ‘home’ this is important (06).”

The hype and fast paced life of Singapore was seen as a positive. The divergent lifestyle from New Zealand was attributed to attracting and retaining expatriates.

“Singapore is frenetic (05).”

“Larger Asian economy and larger opportunities.” New Zealand is seen as “vanilla - no flavour or colour (08).”

“I feel I belong here more than New Zealand, I jumped at the opportunity, [I could] see the potential (10).”

“New Zealand is small and sleepy...these views have come since being away...[Singapore is a] new city...evolving...something always going on (18)”.

Travel opportunities with proximity to international destinations were also seen as a positive trade off for relocating to Singapore.
“Opportunities to travel internationally are very cheap...travel heaps living in Singapore...ot the opportunity that you have living in New Zealand. The move has opened avenues to travel (10).”

“Good for now enables a lot of things I enjoy on a personal level. I love travelling... but won’t be here when I am 90 (11).”

Living Cost:

The research found that expatriates felt unprepared for Singapore's living costs. They were not made aware of the differences between New Zealand and Singapore living costs and this was key information that they needed to know as large ticket items such as accommodation and cars were incredibly expensive in comparison to New Zealand prices. Although in contrast day-to-day costs including food and public transport were relatively cheap,

“...things that are ‘bad’ for you are heavily taxed...even a chocolate bar is slightly more...rent is very expensive...beer and wine are heavily taxed...transport, taxi fares and food are much cheaper than in New Zealand” (04).

Expatriates commented that greater research and acknowledgement of living cost would aid success. This is compatible with expatriate reasons for leaving. Expatriates mentioned they did research into living costs themselves but not extensively enough and it was an area organisations could supply greater support to expatriates, especially to those not on full expatriate benefit packages.

“Do [personal] cost research, if not everything is provided...surprised by a few hidden costs (07).”

“Have to be earning a certain amount of money before it is viable to be here (17).”

To achieve a high quality of life need to be earning a fair salary. Figures above SGD$200,000, provide an expatriate family a good quality of life (13).

Schooling for children expensive and was a reason for departure, with international schooling costs between SGD$25-30,000 per child, per annum (07).
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Furthermore many expatriates found the change in working hours to be difficult, impacting on their personal lives. Expatriates particularly experienced this with families and young children.

“Hours are a lot later than expected starting the job working 10.00am - 8.00pm. Which is difficult as I have young children and struggle to see them on a work night. I miss the balance of kiwi organisations (07).”

“Hours are much longer than in New Zealand, minimum ten hour days. This would have been difficult if came from work life balance in New Zealand, but was already working extended hours (10).”

“The work ethic in Singapore is long and hard...culture is very work focused...working for a New Zealand organisation, I get work life balance. I have a young family and couldn’t work to the Singapore culture (13).”

“Heavy work culture (14).”

“Work hours are much longer (16).”

“Singapore has long work hours. My office is a global company and driven by time, hours impacted by time differences (London & USA)(19).”

Success:

Expatriates predominantly believed that their assignment had been successful thus far with no negative views recorded. Eighteen of thirty-one strongly agreed their assignment has been a success so far, while nine of thirty-one agreed.

A body of the research was structured around how expatriates perceived success and the factors that impacted on success. From the questions, similar themes and factors emerged. Table 6 displays the results from four different questions (horizontal axis), against the top five reasons in order of importance (vertical axis). The results to all questions were structured around three reoccurring themes: career, personal (happiness, adjustment and experience) and money, as seen in Table 6.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Q1. Importance of factors rated from the literature</th>
<th>Q2. Factors that define success - expatriates</th>
<th>Q3. Main factors that affect success</th>
<th>Q4. Reasons for personal success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Order of importance</td>
<td>Job Performance</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>Experience of a new culture</td>
<td>Career opportunities and achievements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Adjustment of expatriate</td>
<td>Lifestyle (including travel)</td>
<td>Happiness of self/family</td>
<td>Personal characteristics (open-mind, adaptive, self-awareness),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Adjustment of spouse</td>
<td>Enjoyment and socialisation</td>
<td>Financial position</td>
<td>Happiness and adjustment of self and family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Adjustment of children</td>
<td>Money</td>
<td>Lifestyle/travel</td>
<td>Money/tax benefit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Making a profitable saving</td>
<td>Gaining international experience</td>
<td>Job factors</td>
<td>Lifestyle/travel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Success factors

The following section looks at the four research questions from Table 6 in greater depth.

**Q1.** Expatriates were asked to rate the *importance* of twenty factors derived from a review of the literature that defined their success. Ratings ranged from 1 - *very important* to, 5 - *very unimportant*. Results were averaged, as seen in Table 7 to evaluate the most important factors that were drawn from success factors in the review of the literature.
**Table 7: Importance of success factors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Success factor</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adjustment:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expatriate</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifestyle similar to home</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying full term of the contract</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Performance</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making a profitable saving</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q2. Expatriates were asked an open ended question regarding how they define their success, the top five reasons as displayed in Table 6 were career, happiness of self/family, financial position, lifestyle/travel, gaining international experience. Further reasons included cultural experience, socialisation, networks, meeting goals and personal achievements, health and wellbeing, work life balance, lifestyle change and successful repatriation. The success of an assignment was also attributed to being dependant on the city and country expatriates were being expatriated to.

“Where you go makes all the difference (19).”

Q3. The main factors that impact on expatriate success in the order of importance from the survey were experience of a new culture, lifestyle (including travel), enjoyment and socialisation, money and job factors.

Q4. Expatriates stated that the top five reasons attributed to their personal success of their expatriate assignment in order of importance displayed in table four were career opportunities and achievements, personal characteristics, happiness and adjustment, money, travel, and lifestyle. Further reasons included social network, hard work, help and support of organisation, cultural experience, engagement in the community, desire to succeed and curiosity/patience.

Success themes that emerged from the interview results were mirrored by the findings in the survey. The top three reasons related to success from the survey were happiness, money and career development correlating with the three areas success was attributed to: professional, personal and money from the interviews.
“Success has three levels. At a professional level it is meeting goals, communicated by both parties. On a personal level, that the experience is rewarding and the least stressful for the family and on a financial level having a variable income, making savings and investments (13).”

“Success is gaining career experience, financial returns and broadening general life experience (8).”

“Success is measured on friendships developed, money in the bank...I feel I have succeeded so far, on a professional level I am receiving...compliments and bonuses...[on a personal level], I have made long term friends, my marriage is stronger... (10).”

These reasons were described to increase levels of success. Each individual had a different value to identify and associate each area to his or her perceived success. The attributes associated to these were:

**Personal** - happiness, lifestyle, enjoyment of Singapore, friends, travel, settled family, involved in the local community and relationships still strong.

“On a personal level, success comes from being open to culture and customs...don’t just get focused on the expatriate life but take interest in local culture and customs...measured on happiness ratio (01).”

“Success is what you make of it (10).”

**Professional** - career development, meeting job objectives and targets, job satisfaction and staying the full term of the assignment.

“Lifestyle changes, made life easy and aided to success personally, but were not restricted to this, ‘success’ was more strongly valued on a professional-employment level. (05)”

“On a professional level, have to be contributing. At the early stages (up to 3 months) only 50% contributing, this needs to be 100%, by about 6 months and no more than a year. You want to feel needed and that the company is getting their moneys worth (06).”

“Success is the quick adjustment into new job and job satisfaction on a professional level and adjustment of family into new lifestyle on a personal level. Happiness is a measure of this success (07).”

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“Success is hitting 80-100% effectiveness at work relatively quickly, 2-3 months. Which is achieved through support from the office and on a personal level. You also need to be adjusted in your personal life, so you are comfortable (11).”

Not all expatriates were on rolling or fixed term contracts. Therefore, continued employment and reinstatement conveyed that they were successful in their jobs.

“Professionally if you are reinstated each year you know you are successful and need to be shown appreciation for your work and feel valued, usually through tangible products (12).”

Money - savings and tax incentive.

“Success is measured by money in Singapore. Singapore is driven by money and well-educated individuals…money doesn’t rule as much in New Zealand and less pressure is on education (02).”

“Financial reasons are a huge reason for success. Saving an amount of money that would not be possible in New Zealand (04).”

“Money doesn’t buy happiness, but it helps (12).”

The measures of success were perceived to be both relatively similar and different to how expatriates would evaluate success back at home. However, when on assignment, expatriates mentioned that these measures had a structured timeline to them. At home, success was expected to be achieved over time, with less pressure around them and was not necessarily referred to as strongly as they were on assignments.

“Success is different. Money and opportunities available do not happen in New Zealand world. In Singapore success is based on material belongings in New Zealand, based on intangible experiences and profession (12).”

“Yes the measurement factors are the same. Happiness, belonging, settled and homeliness. Job satisfaction factors. Saving lots of money. I guess this is not quite the same as in New Zealand, but because it is not possible…” (21)

Success is measured differently to New Zealand, because in New Zealand “family is already assumed to be happy
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“and therefore success is purely job related opposed to everything else (07).”

Individuals also expressed the concept of ‘goals’ they had for an assignment, which closely aligned to the success of their assignment. Success was rated against how well they achieved these goals.

“... I guess we had goals of what we wanted to get out of our assignment; to travel, save some money, meet the local people and be part of a local community.” (1)

Living in Singapore you have a clear set of objectives (enjoy cultural experience, travel, personal development and learn a new language). The difference in success is that in Singapore these goals are time bound, but at home they are open. - “Crystallises goals, how long do I have and what do I want to achieve” (13).

Summary:

This chapter presented the results of this research, interchanging between interview and survey data. The primary purpose of this research was to examine whether the levels of pre-departure preparation, on-arrival and continued support increase the perceived success of expatriates. Results offer support that preparation and support aid success. Success also surfaced as a complex phenomenon, which needed to be understood. The following chapter discusses the results in further detail.
Chapter Four

Summary of Results:

The question that guided this research was:

*How does the extent of pre-departure preparation and continued organisational support for expatriates, and their accompanying families, from private enterprise organisations, effect the self-perceived success of New Zealand expatriates in Singapore?*

The data collected and analysed from interview and survey responses in Singapore supported the research question and all three hypotheses. Expatriates acknowledged that preparation and support increased self-perceived success by facilitating a smooth and fast adjustment into Singapore, speeding the process of reaching comfort in their personal life and effectiveness at work. Preparation reduced ambiguity of the expatriation process and life in Singapore, while support decreased the burden and struggles associated with expatriation.

The research established that success is not purely related to job factors and outcomes but on multiple factors dependent on the individual. Adjustment to Singapore and a new role underpinned all support and preparation methods, as success and effectiveness in the job were all attributed to a quick and successful adjustment.

**Aims**

Four aims were used to structure the research. Through the mixed utilisation of interviews and online surveys the aims were fulfilled, comprised within the discussion section. The aims formed the structure for the research but are not explicitly acknowledged in the findings or discussion.

**Hypotheses**

Hypotheses are acknowledged in the discussion of results, with the results accepting all hypotheses:
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1. Hypothesis one: Greater pre-departure preparation increases the self-perceived success of New Zealand expatriates in Singapore.

2. Hypothesis two: Greater on-arrival and continued support increases the self-perceived success of New Zealand expatriates in Singapore.

3. Hypothesis three: A combined increase of both H1 and H2 increase the self-perceived success of New Zealand expatriates in Singapore even more.
**Discussion of Results:**

The research question asks if pre-departure, on-arrival and continued support affects the perceived success of New Zealand expatriates. Comparing the academic literature with the results shows some interesting insights into preparation and support methods and what expatriates perceive as success.

It became evident that success was an important and intricate term to explore, as expatriation is a complex and individual experience. There is no one correct way to describe or define the process of achieving self-diagnosed success.

The research focused on the ‘success’ along with pre-departure preparation, on-arrival and continued support. Results were grouped into five key themes and three subsections:

1. Personal attributes and characteristics
2. Preparation
3. Adjustment Period
4. Support
   - Logistical support
   - Social support
   - Continued support
5. Three Success Factors

This chapter looks at the five themes derived from the data, as they relate to the research question and hypotheses. Following this Figure 4 is discussed and visually represents the three factors of success. This is followed by a review of the ‘Model of Perceived Success’ (Figure 3).
1. Personal attributes and characteristics

Expatriates have unique sets of skills, attributes and experiences. The expatriation process works best when individual differences are take into consideration, including personal characteristics, where they have come from, where they are going and whom they are leaving behind. Accompanying spouse and family need to be integrated into the expatriation process alongside the expatriate.

Selection of the right person is crucial for the success of an expatriate assignment in Singapore. Personal attributes and characteristics related to the right person were heavily contextualised to the environment that the expatriate was entering. Singapore is an Asian country and expatriates need to be adaptable and flexible (Tung, 1982) and possess an open mind to all differences. Expatriates need to be hardworking with the desire and drive to get things done, especially as they can often experience the loss of a large organisations’ support or team structure in their new role. Relationship building, networking and patience were acknowledged as important skills to possess to conduct and engage in business in Singapore.

The location an expatriate relocates to impacts on success. Where they have come from also has an impact. Not all New Zealand expatriates relocate to Singapore directly from New Zealand. In the study cohort almost half of the expatriates had previous expatriate experience. This experience depends on where an expatriate has been and in what employment they have been engaged. Those experiencing more culturally diverse Asian countries (e.g. Japan and China) found Singapore easy to adapt to, mainly because English was the main language and there was a comparably strong western lifestyle present. Previous expatriate experience sped up the adjustment period. Expatriates were still, however, vulnerable to culture shock (Black & Mendenhall, 1990). Expatriates still require logistical assistance in adjustment and establishment in Singapore, regardless of the geographical location they have come from. Expatriates with no previous expatriate experience experienced greater culture shock and difficulty adjusting to the work culture and customs. These findings are consistent with Black (1989) that previous experience is related to work adjustment, not general adjustment.
Who an expatriate is taking with them or leaving behind is an important aspect in the selection, preparation and support phase. Tung (1987) attributes assignment failure to the inability of spouse and families to adjust. These reasons were supported in the research, with the distance from home and the daily absence of family and friends contributing to the expatriate’s considerations to leave Singapore prematurely. Commonly, expatriates found methods to minimise failure and premature departure by acknowledging that Singapore was their new home, keeping regular contact, and visiting family and friends at home. Other family members accompanying an expatriate on an assignment also need to be recognised and effectively prepared and be supported through the expatriate process (Oddou, 1991).

**Different types of expatriates**

Regardless of how an expatriate position is sought (local-contract or traditional expatriate) all new employees require preparation and training. The major difference in preparation and support methods between traditional and local contract expatriates are the costs and funding provided. Traditional expatriates generally are sourced offshore and, therefore, it is assumed that all relocation and setup costs will be taken care of by the organisation. Locally hired expatriates sought employment themselves. Therefore, organisations felt no obligation to financially support the expatriate. However, in both cases, employers want employees who are the most effective in their role, requiring them to hit the ground running on arrival in Singapore. Failure at any level is costly for an organisation; therefore, to ensure an expatriate is successful and efficient within their role, preparation and training needs to be provided irrespective of how the expatriate obtained his or her position.

Each assignment needs to be assessed in relation to individual circumstances. Unwarranted preparation, training and support can waste resources, in particular time and money. Expatriates should be selected on their personal attributes and characteristics that will lead them to succeed. Consideration also needs to be made for accompanying spouse and family as well as the problems associated with leaving them behind.
2. **Pre-departure preparation**

Pre-departure preparation and training is heavily documented in the literature and has been demonstrated to be an established factor in expatriate success. Research has shown an increase in people receiving pre-departure preparation, with a similar increase in successful assignments. A total of 91% of research participants received at least one method of pre-departure preparation, considerably higher than research by previous researchers (Black et al., 1999; Enderwick & Hodgson, 1993; Kupka et al., 2008).

Even the most effective employees in their domestic setting are not expected to perform at 100% effectiveness on arrival in Singapore. Employees must adapt to a number of settings to reach their most effectiveness at work; cultural changes, work settings and learning to interact in a different environment (Andreason, 2003). To shorten the adjustment process and increase an expatriate’s ability to ‘hit the ground running’, organisations start the process before departure with preparation and training. When adequately prepared and supported, time, energy and focus are effectively diverted from those areas related to the relocation, so the expatriate can focus on adjusting to his or her new role or the adjustment of accompanying family and spouse.

The most beneficial pre-departure method perceived by expatriates was an orientation visit. An orientation visit is an exploratory trip to Singapore to gather valuable information for the expatriate’s relocation (Ashamalla, 1998). Not all expatriates were offered orientation visits but acknowledged the offer to do this would have eased the adjustment phase, reducing ambiguity and increasing their understanding of where they were going. Good orientation visits were advantageous when structured, to make the most of the time and view everything that was important. Of those offered orientation visits some did not take them, due to previous experience in Singapore or they felt it would not affect their success or decision to relocate.

Informal discussions with employees who had previously worked in Singapore was the second most beneficial preparation method. Expatriates acknowledged that a discussion with any current or previous residents in Singapore was incredibly useful in the preparation phase, gaining first hand actual information.
Expatriates indicated they conducted a lot of pre-departure preparation by personally researching the country, accommodation and living costs. They also asked around for contacts of people in Singapore or recently returned. Expatriates found their personal research to be accurate and felt conducting the process themselves made them more aware. Better information from organisations would assist expatriates in their personal preparation.

_Cross cultural training_

Training almost always addresses cross-cultural differences (Black et al., 1999) and is advocated as an important means for adjustment (Brewster & Pickard, 1994). Although the majority of business is conducted in English, expatriates going to Singapore face varied culture training as Singapore is a cluster of three different cultures: Chinese, Malay and Indian. Brief environment and basic language training is very useful (Selvarajah, 2009) although only seven of thirty-two of the research participants received brief cultural training. It was advocated that it would have been more beneficial if provided on arrival.

Pre-departure preparation needs to target the specific needs of the expatriate (Ashamalla, 1998) requiring personalised programs to deal with individual differences. With only eight of thirty-two expatriates feeling they received any more than ‘generic’ pre-departure training, organisations need to look at the individual they are expatriating and tailor the training to the individual and their role. The inabilities of spouse and family to adjust were the main reasons for assignment failure, emphasising the need for spouse and children to be included in pre-departure training. A total of 71% of spouses received some form of pre-departure preparation, which is considerably higher than previous research has discussed (Forster, 1997, 2000; Kupka et al., 2008; Selvarajah, 2009). Expatriates should receive a thorough briefing of the cultural and lifestyle situations informing expatriates and accompanying family what to expect and how this may impact on their personal lives. An organisation, however, can only prepare an expatriate so far and individuals will have different views of the environment when they arrive and settle.
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Surprisingly, when asked how likely greater pre-departure preparation would increase the success of their assignment, participant’s responses were not very enthusiastic. The results produced a relatively normal distribution from very likely to very unlikely. However, these results are inconclusive, as expatriates who answered ‘very unlikely’ may have received very adequate preparation, in which any further preparation would not be perceived to increase their success.

Knowing things in advance about relocating to Singapore reduced ambiguity and the adjustment period and increased expatriates’ effectiveness at work. Preparation training needs to be organised, well planned and tailored to the goals and needs of the organisation and expatriate to get the most from its utilisation. Country, company and culture briefing were all seen as being highly valued methods along with an orientation visit and discussions with previous expatriates who had been in Singapore.

Overall, pre-departure preparation was recognised to effectively assist in the adjustment of an expatriate into their new role and lifestyle in Singapore, increasing their perceived success of their assignment. Therefore, hypothesis one is accepted.

**Hypothesis one: Greater pre-departure preparation increases the perceived success of New Zealand expatriates in Singapore.**

**3. Adjustment Period**

A successful and quick adjustment to Singapore is associated with an expatriate’s self-perception of the success of their assignment. Individuals and families that had difficulty or struggled to adjust seriously considered prematurely leaving Singapore. Once an expatriate and their accompanying spouse and family were adjusted into their new life and environment expatriates acknowledged they were efficient and more successful in their role.

Three types of adjustment are experienced during expatriation: personal, work and cultural. These areas are consistent with Black, Mendenhall & Oddou’s (1991) three levels of adjustment. A level of comfort is achieved when adjustment at all levels is
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fulfilled. Expatriates acknowledged methods that supported them through these three levels of adjustment.

**Personal:** While logistical support is valuable in the adjustment period, greater time between arrival and commencing work was beneficial and assisted in the success of an expatriate assignment. Expatriates were provided between zero and seven days on arrival before commencing work. Determining where to live, selecting accommodation, arranging utilities and day-to-day activities all required a lot of time and effort. A desire for a reasonable adaption period of seven to fourteen days was seen as being adequate for expatriates with accompanying family, while the time period was smaller for expatriates without accompanying family.

**Work:** Adjusting to work quickly was attributed to supportive and informative colleagues and understanding of the role and company processes. Settlement and adjustment in personal life was thought to be crucial to adjustment at work, reflecting the spill over effect (Black & Stephens, 1989). Expatriates felt it took three to six months to reach 80-100% effectiveness at work. Organisations needed to be flexible with expectations of expatriates, as they need a generous period to adapt before operating at 100% effectiveness. This is somewhat conflicting with Oddou (1991) that expatriates wanted equal expectations between home and host country positions.

**Cultural:** Cultural training is provided to ease the adjustment into a foreign country and culture. It is suggested by the literature that it be provided in the pre-departure training phase (Brewster & Pickard, 1994; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985; Oddou, 1991). Contrasting this, expatriates viewed it to be more beneficial on arrival, when immersed in the culture. It was inconclusive that cultural training was deemed essential in relocating to Singapore. However, it was favourably accepted and those who did not receive any, acknowledged that it would have been useful, saving some moments of error.

The feelings expatriates experienced throughout the adjustment period suggest that they required the most support at the four to eight week period. This mimicked the U-curve adjustment model (Black & Mendenhall, 1991), correlating to the end of the
Success: Perceptions of New Zealand Expatriates in Singapore

honeymoon phase (Black & Mendenhall, 1991), where expatriates have exposure to ‘culture shock’ and experience disillusionment and the reality of living in a new culture and environment hit. Acknowledgement of these phases in pre-departure preparation was desired to prepare expatriates for what they are likely to experience, and understand that it is normal. Expatriates need to be apprised to not knock themselves about while going through the adjustment period, as it is normal and takes time.

The adjustment period was the underlying factor in the success of an expatriate assignment. The inability to adjust was directly related to failure of an expatriate assignment. Pre-departure, on-arrival and continued support practices were all contributing factors to the adjustment period.

4. **Support**

Support was a recurring theme throughout the results relating to the success of an assignment. Those who had expected more or did not receive adequate support and preparation (in their perception) had an overall dissatisfaction with work and quality of life. There was also resentment towards companies that they had not been sufficiently supported and prepared. Three major subsections emerged out of the universal term support: logistical, social and continued. These will be discussed in more depth below.

*Logistical Support*

Logistical support facilitates the relocation, establishing an expatriate in their new environment and includes assistance with requirements such as housing, schooling, grocery shopping and significantly aiding adjustment (Shaffer et al., 1999). Research participants attributed greater logistical support to a quick adjustment into life in Singapore.

Expatriates related the utilisation of a relocation company to providing logistical support to a quick adjustment into their Singapore lifestyle. It was also associated with less stress and anxiety regarding the relocation and adjustment into new surroundings. A relocation company was advocated as the most beneficial logistical support method for expatriates, providing up to date knowledge about the country and living areas, and distinguishing between organisation and personal affairs.
Multi-national companies have well-established expatriate processes, either through the employment of a relocation company or in-house human resource department, providing full and adequate support. Expatriates who received this level of support reported to ‘hit the ground running’ on arrival, feeling comfortable in their surroundings. This is consistent with Enderwick & Hodgson’s (1993) distinction between multi-national corporations and New Zealand companies, where smaller and less experienced New Zealand companies did not offer preparation and support at the level multi-national corporations did.

Relocation companies that provide full logistical support including relocation, setup and orientation are expensive, making them unfeasible for some organisations, particularly small and start up businesses. If a relocation company is not offered, equipping expatriates with resources to adequately establish themselves in Singapore sufficed. Resources to assist in relocating included reasonable time between arrival and job commencement and a list of contacts for accommodation, schooling, utilities, phone and set up, and were advocated as the ideal in supporting expatriates. Logistical support is provided at both pre and post departure phases, deemed most effective integrated into an orientation visit to Singapore. During this time, expatriates understand the environment, create contacts and begin the research process.

Although expatriates require logistical support to increase the speed of adaption and reduce the stress and burden of an expatriate assignment, expatriates did not want all logistical decisions to be pre-arranged by the organisation, desiring information and contacts in order to arrange logistics at their own discretion. Logistical support allows expatriates to focus on job and family adjustment, providing benefits for both the individual and the organisation.

**Social support**

Social support, often through social networks, is crucial to the success of an international assignment, due to the loss of social contacts because of distance from family and friends (Harvey, 1985). Expatriates need to have a social network to diminish the sense of isolation and loneliness (Haworth & Lewis, 2005) that leads to failure through the premature departure from an assignment. Social networks are considered
most important for accompanying spouses, who have been removed from all networks and familiarities, with no daily job or routine (Adler & Gundersen, 2008). Expatriates have a lesser desire for social networks as their time and energy is occupied by their career and job, gaining a level of social interaction through their work environment (Harvey, 1985) and having a purpose for being in Singapore.

Singapore has a large selection of churches, clubs, communities, groups, organisations, sports clubs and expatriate networks (ANZA, NZCC, KEA - New Zealand global network), for expatriates to become members of. This is supported by Brewster & Pickard (1994) who found local community support increases expatriate success. Social networks are essential to the success of an expatriate and therefore organisations need to acknowledge this, offering support either through contacts, information, memberships or hosting their own events for expatriates (Oddou, 1991).

**Continued Support**

Once assimilated into Singapore, expatriates were comfortable to be left on their own. Continued support was more focused on organisational support, for the expatriate and their role within the organisation. It was acknowledged that continued support after six to twelve months was not essential, but significant to success in the first six months.

There were large variances in the level of support and preparation provided by organisations. There was a positive relationship between the provision of pre-departure preparation and support and the positive adjustment and settlement of an expatriate and any accompanying spouse and family. Greater adjustment is positively related to quick adjustment and effectiveness at work. The research sample spanned between those that received a full relocation and support package to those who received nothing at all.

Given that support on assignment is intensified at the early stages of the assignment, it is separated into two sections: on-arrival and continued support. On-arrival support was considered significantly important to a smooth and effective adjustment into Singapore. Adjustment of expatriates and accompanying family was essential to the success of an assignment, and on-arrival support was associated with greater perceived success. Continued support, however, was not so strongly advocated
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by expatriates, but those receiving it felt it aided the success of their assignment. Continued support was closely related to the expatriate’s role. As a result, hypothesis two is accepted.

Hypothesis two: Greater on-arrival and continued support increases the perceived success of New Zealand expatriates in Singapore.

Synchronised pre-departure preparation and support process provides an effective transition into Singapore and increases expatriate adjustment, enjoyment and success. Therefore in relation to accepting hypothesis one and two, hypothesis three is accepted.

Hypothesis three: A combined increase of both H1 and H2 increase the perceived success of New Zealand expatriates in Singapore even more.

5 - Three Success Factors

Success for an expatriate is not purely job related, but a mixture of different elements. To increase the self-perceived success of an expatriate’s assignment, organisations need to recognise the sphere surrounding success for each individual, providing appropriate methods and systems to support these. Increasing expatriate’s effectiveness at work through appropriate preparation and support will have a positive outcome and return for the organisation. This research shows that expatriates assess and value success on three levels: personal, professional and reward. Success needs to be attained at each level for an expatriate to feel successful. These levels correlate with previous success factors found in the literature: expatriate adjustment (Black & Stephens, 1989), completion of assignment (Andreason, 2008) and expatriate performance (Paula M. Caligiuri & Day, 2000).
Figure 4: Three factors of expatriate success

The ‘Three factors of the expatriate success model’ Figure 4, displays the three spheres of success and how they overlap. Expatriates perceive overall complete success to be when they reach the inner (darkened) area, where all three spheres overlap. The greater the amount of overlap, the greater the perceived success expatriates achieve. Expatriates place personal value on each factor, and the three factors are made up of attributes and elements, which include:

1. **Personal**: happiness, lifestyle, enjoyment of Singapore, friends, relationships, involvement in Singapore culture and community and experience.

2. **Professional**: career development, promotion, bonus, job satisfaction, meeting job objectives and targets and staying the full term of the assignment.

3. **Reward**: money, expatriate package, lifestyle and travel

In accordance with these three factors, expatriates perceive success to be goal and time orientated on assignment. While at home individuals may measure success against the same factors, they are not bound to being achieved within a particular time frame as they are for an expatriate.
‘Model of expatriate success’

From a review of the literature the ‘model of expatriate success’ was created, to explain the variables that influence the perceived success of an expatriate.

From the research, preparation, on arrival and continued support all impacted on the perceived success, with the organisation controlling this variable. The discussion suggested that providing methods of preparation and support predominantly facilitate the adjustment period, assisting expatriates to be comfortable in their new surroundings. Business goals and targets are presumed the key result for an organisation sending an expatriate abroad. Therefore by providing pre-departure preparation and support, expatriates will have a quick adjustment period positively influencing their effectiveness at work. On a personal level, exclusive to the organisation intervention, perceived success was also influenced by the personal characteristics and family/spouse dimension. Place and culture, affect the perceived success as well as the training and preparation provided need to be dependant on the difficulties expatriates are likely to experience. The findings from the research hold the model of expatriate success true.

This model could be expanded to include the ‘Three factors of success model’ (Figure 4) generated from the findings from the research. The factors are the internal attributes personal to the expatriate, in which they put their own value. This would sit inside the ‘perceived success’ box, as the internal factors personal to the expatriate that influence success.

Summary:

This research advances Ritchie’s (2010) expatriate success research on public sector organisations and provides a recent perspective to understand the success of New Zealand expatriates in Singapore. This research offered two models relating to the success of expatriates. The ‘Three factors of success’ (Figure 4) can be used to understand the combined factors that make individuals successful, while the ‘Model of expatriate success’ (Figure 3) looks at the variables that affect the success of an
Success: Perceptions of New Zealand Expatriates in Singapore

expatriate and how they can be controlled to increase the success of an expatriate’s assignment.

The following section discusses the practical implications, research limitations and areas for further research.

This study advances research that looks at the success of New Zealand expatriate assignments and looks specifically at one group of expatriates in Singapore. The results from this research provide empirical support for organisation preparation and support of expatriates, while offering a viewpoint that individual success is a multi-facet concept.

Practical Implications:

This research looked at the experiences of expatriates in Singapore through the interviews and survey and the results are, therefore, useful for practical application by organisations. Present and future organisations that are expatriating New Zealanders into Singapore may use the results of the present study to better prepare and support expatriates and increase the likelihood of their success. This could also provide expatriates an insight of what to expect and ask for when accepting an expatriate assignment.

This researchers conclusions aim to inform and prompt organisations to reflect and critique company expatriate practice, such as the on-arrival and adjustment support process; offering an adequate adjustment period for all the family and acknowledging the need for developing social networks. Human resource staff based in New Zealand will generally be unaware of the situation and environment they are sending expatriates to. They are unlikely to have personally visited the environment themselves, and therefore, hold no greater knowledge or understanding of the environment than the expatriate relocating. This research can be used by human resource departments to better understand why pre-departure and ongoing support is so important. It also shows the most effective methods of preparing expatriates for their international assignments and provides ideas and practical suggestions for human resource professionals to improve their expatriate practices. Areas such as: access to a relocation company; pre-departure in-house training; information on new networks or support in finding them,
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and current information on living costs would greatly improve an expatriate’s knowledge of their relocated country, giving them a good foundation to settle in the new country.

The two frameworks; ‘model of expatriate success’ and ‘three factors of the expatriate success model’, may also be employed by human resource departments to understand the factors surrounding expatriate success and align preparation and support methods to assist their staff and family into the new country.

**Further Research:**

As established the research provides practical findings that organisations can apply, however, due to the contextual importance of expatriation, these results are difficult to generalise to other countries and cultures outside of Singapore without further research. Further research could be conducted to replicate the study in other countries and compare the findings to understand if the results are context dependant to the county expatriated to, or to New Zealanders as a whole.

**Models:**

Although researchers have created numerous theories and models to explain preparation and support methods, this research created and tested its own two models related to the self-perceived success of expatriates specifically in relation to preparation and support. Further research could also be conducted with a larger participant sample in Singapore.

**Organisation wide perception:**

The potential exists to extend this research to collect a triangulation of perspectives. Collecting the data from the organisation’s perspective and repatriated or returned expatriates would provide the research an overall view of how success is viewed and the importance of pre-departure preparation and on assignment support. Comparisons could be constructed between the three sample groups to understand whether assignment success has a universal classification, and if the preparation and support methods offered correlate with those viewed as important.
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\textit{Remuneration}

The results suggested that expatriates are not purely money driven and reasons for taking an expatriate assignment include lifestyle choice and career opportunities. This, however, may be a culturally acceptable claim and requires further research.

It is important to note that this study has researched a limited context that is specifically related to New Zealand expatriates within Singapore. It is a ‘springboard’ for further contemporary research.

\textit{Limitations:}

\textit{Participant constraints:}

Initially research was to be solely New Zealand focused, collecting data only from New Zealand expatriates working for New Zealand owned companies. However, due to the size and internationalisation models of New Zealand companies the participant pool for the research was too small. The participant criteria was extended to incorporate all New Zealand expatriates working in Singapore for any business.

The process of contacting research participants was time consuming, using a range of contact methods. Once contact had been made an interview time had to be arranged to meet travel constraints of the researcher, and work constraints of the expatriate. This caused the research to lend itself to convenience sampling as the sample consists of participants available at the time of research. When on site in Singapore, cancelled interviews placed limitations on the sample size as there was limited time to reschedule interviews.

\textit{Research design}

The research design executed an online survey following the interviews and was deployed to all interviewees in addition to a survey-only research sample. The survey and interview participants overlapped, but they do not match up for a conclusive
representative sample. The survey sample was made up of thirty-two respondents, exactly half (sixteen) of which were interview participants. To compare the two research groups separately a greater sample needs to be collected. Due to the timeframe surrounding this research, it was not feasible to acquire further participants. Research validity would also be strengthened with a larger participant sample.

**Generalisation of findings**

Due to the context driven characteristics of expatriation, it would be wrong to push the findings beyond its context without further research. The small sample and limited research time address that further research would need to be conducted to enable further generalisation.

**Time Constraints**

Due to the nature of the research project the time constraints for the research, limited the research participant pool as identifying and contacting participants was a lengthy process. The time on site in Singapore was also constrained limiting the number of expatriates that could be interviewed.

**Conclusion:**

With the increase of international expatriate assignments, there is a need to understand what makes expatriates successful and how organisations can adequately prepare and support them, minimising potential failure. Expatriation processes are highly contextual. With research literature focusing on New Zealand expatriates relatively scarce, importance lies in understanding what makes New Zealand expatriates successful. Studies have established four phases of expatriation (Ashamalla, 1998; Kupka et al., 2008; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985) and the importance in providing preparation and support throughout them. With limited New Zealand focused research, it was essential to the purpose of this research to examine whether pre-departure
preparation, on-arrival and continued support impact on the perceived success of New Zealand expatriates in Singapore.

This research also planned to look at to what extent these methods were offered to accompanying spouse and family and what preparation and support methods were deemed most desirable by New Zealand expatriates in Singapore in order to grasp if there is a relationship between what expatriates desire and what they are receiving.

Using semi-structured interviews and an online based survey, data were collected from twenty face-to-face interviews and thirty-two survey respondents. Interviews were analysed using inductive research techniques to code and deconstruct the data forming seven themes, while statistical and regression analysis was used to analyse the survey data.

The study found that pre-departure preparation, on-arrival and continued support increased the perceived success of a New Zealand expatriate in Singapore, with all three hypotheses being accepted. The extent that these methods were offered to accompanying spouse and family was documented to be significantly higher than previous literature (Forster, 2000; Kupka et al., 2008) suggesting organisations are recognising the need to extended preparation and training to accompanying spouse and family.

The ‘model of expatriate success’ created from the review of literature was also accepted, with all five variables impacting on the success of an expatriate. The research found that expatriates do not perceive assignment success to be purely job related, evaluating and defining success within three domains: personal, professional and reward. To be successful, a level of comfort needs to be achieved at each domain. Organisations can increase success by providing appropriate methods and tools to foster success.

In conclusion, the findings of this research support the argument that companies need to adequately offer and provide pre-departure preparation on arrival and continued support tailored specifically to New Zealand expatriates and their accompanying spouse and family, in Singapore. Additionally, the research provided insight into how New Zealand expatriates perceive success. Through understanding and recognising how
expatriates value and measure success. Organisations can offer appropriate preparation and support to increase expatriates’ success, while satisfying the three factors of success, personal, professional and reward.

The research also highlights the need for further studies to look at the success of an expatriate assignment from the organisation’s perspective to understand if there is a link between factors of success and methods offered to encourage this. It is vital to continue to understand the complexities of expatriate assignments and success factors of expatriates. Intending to connect success factors to pre-departure, on-arrival and continued support methods, essential to the continued success of international assignments.
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Reference List


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Appendices

Appendix 1: Participant Email - First contact with participants, seeking their participation.

Dear ,

I am a Masters of Business student at Otago University, New Zealand.

The aim of my research is to investigate how the levels of pre-departure preparation and continued organisational support of New Zealand expatriates affect the perceived success of their assignments in Singapore. As New Zealand companies expand and globalise into international markets, it becomes increasingly important that the face of these companies, who are often New Zealand expatriates, are successful within their roles.

I am using Singapore as the target destination because it has a long established and close relationship to New Zealand. It is a growing market and provides a gateway for New Zealand businesses to access the rest of the world, making it an invaluable market to maintain strong relationships and trade.

To obtain the data for this research I am seeking participants to participate in a face-to-face interview followed by a 30 minute on-line questionnaire. Employees sought for participation will relocated internationally to take up their assignment and are also, required to be engaged in full-time employment for a private sector organisation. The Otago University Ethics Committee has approved the research and data questions. All data collected will be confidential and anonymous and companies will not be identified.

The university has funded me to visit Singapore between 21 – 26 August 2011 to conduct my field research. Would it be possible for me to interview your expatriates working in Singapore during these dates? If this is feasible could you please provide me the email address and any further contact details of New Zealand expatriates you have
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working in Singapore so I can contact them directly? A summary of the findings from the research will be available to you at the end of the study.

I would appreciate hearing from you as soon as possible to confirm if this is possible so that I can continue to arrange the details for my trip.

Kind regards

Jessica Smart

University of Otago
Appendix 2: Sample of the questions used in the interviews:

**Interview Questions - Semi Structured**

... Following ‘Background’ Questions ...

How does the extent of pre-departure preparation and on-going organisational support impact on the perceived success of New Zealand expatriates working in Singapore?

1. Could you explain the process you went through once selected for this position.

   Best/most beneficial methods received

   Was it what you were expecting?

   Did the presence/absence of these methods improve/decrease your expatriate experience and your effectiveness?

   **PRE-DEPARTURE - ON-ARRIVAL - CONTINUED SUPPORT**

2. Could you describe your perceived success of your assignment in Singapore?

   What leads to success on an expatriate assignment?

   How will you measure your success?

   Do you think the factors of success differ from those in employment in New Zealand?

   **Few further Questions**

3. Are you part of an expatriate network in Singapore?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes:</th>
<th>No:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How did you find out about it?</td>
<td>Have you heard about them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why did you join?</td>
<td>Why haven’t you joined?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What benefits do you receive from being a member?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

114
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you think it aids to your success of an expatriate?</th>
<th>Do you think it would aid the success of your assignment?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. What advice would you provide to an organisation about to send an expatriate to Singapore?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What advice would you provide to an expatriate about to embark on Singapore?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What are your views on Singapore? Living circumstances, lifestyle changes, weather. Has this impacted your success?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Any further Comments?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you kindly for this meeting, it has been highly interesting understanding your views and it is hugely beneficial for my study. At the end of the week I will send you though a link to an online survey. I would really appreciate if you could take the time to fill this in as it is devised from prior literature research and information gained from these interviews to follow up themes and ideas that have emerged.

Give Chocolate & Thank again.
Appendix 3: Email sent with Survey invitation

Dear,

Thank you for showing an interest in this research project about how pre-departure preparation and continued organisational support of New Zealand expatriates affect the perceived success of their assignments in Singapore. I hope you will find it interesting and thought-provoking, and believe that the resulting findings and recommendations will be worthwhile.

- Survey Specifics -

For the purpose of this study, “New Zealand expatriate” refers to a New Zealander working in a country outside New Zealand. “Assignment” means your job, employment, or contract.

The survey should take no longer than 25 minutes. It needs to be completed in one sitting, prior to 9 September, so please ensure you have enough time to answer all the questions. (If you are unable to meet this deadline but would still like to participate, please email me directly.)

Questions marked with a red asterisk (*) require an answer before moving to the next page. Questions without a * are optional and you may leave them blank if you prefer to not answer.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at smaje843@student.otago.ac.nz

I have appended the university’s required information and consent sheets which include details about the study.

The link to the survey is:
Success: Perceptions of New Zealand Expatriates in Singapore

If you do not wish to respond to this survey, please click on the link below to decline:

Thank you in advance for responding to the survey,

Kind regards,

Jessica Smart

Otago University

INFORMATION SHEET FOR SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

Thank you for showing an interest in this project. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate we thank you. If you decide not to take part there will be no disadvantage to you and we thank you for considering our request.

What is the aim of the project?

This project is being undertaken as part of the requirements for the Masters of Business, in Management. The aim of the project is to investigate how the levels of pre-departure preparation and continued organisational support of New Zealand expatriates are perceived to affect the success of expatriate assignments in Singapore.

What type of participants are being sought?

Participants sought for this research are New Zealanders currently engaged in expatriate assignments in Singapore. There is no limitation regarding age, gender, marital, or religious status. People sought for participation are required to have relocated to Singapore to take up an employment offer or transfer and currently be engaged in full-time employment.
What will participants be asked to do?

Should you agree to take part in this project, you will be asked to take part in an online survey in your own time, taking approximately 25 minutes, about your current expatriate assignment.

Please be aware that you may decide not to take part in the project without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

What data or information will be collected and what use will be made of it?

The research for this project seeks to obtain information from participants regarding their expatriate assignment in Singapore. No personal data other than demographic information will be collected. Demographic information includes: gender, age, relationship status, children, and various questions about position within the organisation. Your email will not be connected to the data collected from the online survey; hence, all responses will be anonymous, as well as treated confidentially.

The researchers will be the only people to have access to any personal information. All efforts will be made to protect the anonymity of participants. No data or information identifying an individual or organisation will be reflected in the completed research. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve your anonymity.

The data collected will be securely stored. Only those mentioned below will be able to gain access to it. At the end of the project any personal information will be destroyed immediately except that, as required by the University’s research policy, any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for five years, after which it will be destroyed. Reasonable precautions will be taken to protect and destroy data gathered by email. However, the security of electronically transmitted information cannot be guaranteed.
Access to results will be provided to you on conclusion, should you be interested in the findings.

**Can participants change their mind and withdraw from the project?**

You may withdraw from participation in the project at any time and without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

**What if participants have any questions?**

If you have any questions about our project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:

Jessica Smart
Department of Management
smaje843@student.otago.ac.nz

or

Graham Elkin (supervisor)
Department of Management
University Telephone Number: 0064 3 479 8189
graham.elkin@otago.ac.nz

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 0064 3 479 8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome. Reference Number 11/152 issued 17 June 2011.
Success From Preparation & Support?

Survey Consent
This is the information provided in the introductory email. Please skip to the first question if you have already read it.

Thank you for showing an interest in this project. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate I thank you. If you decide not to take part there will be no disadvantage to you and I thank you for considering my request.

What is the aim of the project?
This project is being undertaken as part of the requirements for the Masters of Business in Management. The aim of the project is to investigate how the levels of pre-departure preparation and continued organisational support of New Zealand expatriates are perceived to affect the success of expatriate assignments in Singapore.

What type of participants are being sought?
Participants sought for this research are New Zealanders currently engaged in expatriate assignments in Singapore. There is no limitation regarding age, gender or religious status. Employees sought for participation are required to have relocated to Singapore to commence pre-arranged employment and will be engaged in full-time employment.

What will participants be asked to do?
Should you agree to take part in this project, you will be asked to take part in an online survey in one sitting. In your own time, taking approximately 20 minutes about your expatriate assignment you relocated to Singapore for.

Please be aware that you may decide not to take part in the project without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

What data or information will be collected and what uses will be made of it?
The research for this project seeks to obtain information from participants regarding their expatriate assignment in Singapore. No personal data, other than demographic information, will be collected. Demographic information includes: gender, age, relationship status, children and various questions about position within the organisation. Your email will not be connected to the data collected from the online survey.

The researcher will be the only people to have access to any personal information. All efforts will be made to protect the anonymity of participants. No data or information identifying an individual or organisation will be reflected in the completed research. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Waikato Library (Epsom, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve your anonymity.

The data collected will be securely stored, only those mentioned below will be able to gain access to it. At the end of the project any personal information will be destroyed immediately except that, as required by the University’s research policy, any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for five years, after which they will be destroyed. Reasonable precautions will be taken to protect and destroy data gathered by email. However, the security of electronically transmitted information cannot be guaranteed.

Access to results will be provided to you on conclusion, should you wish to be interested in the findings.

Can participants change their mind and withdraw from the project?
You may withdraw from participating in the project at any time and without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

1. Do you consent to participation in this study? *
   □ Yes
   □ No

Success From Preparation & Support?

General Information
Thank you for taking the “Success From Preparation & Support” survey. This survey has 4 sections with a total of 60 questions. Your time and honesty in answering these questions is greatly appreciated.

2. Are you a New Zealander? *
   □ Yes
   □ No

3. Are you currently living in Singapore? *
   □ Yes
   □ No

4. Are you currently employed full time by a private enterprise organisation? *

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5. Did you relocate internationally to take up your current role? *
   - Yes
   - No

6. Do you work for a New Zealand organisation?
   - Yes
   - No

7. In what country is the home head quarters of your organisation?

8. Gender *
   - Female
   - Male

9. Relationship Status *
   - Single
   - De facto
   - Married

Success From Preparation & Support?

10. Do you have children? *
    - Yes
    - No

Success From Preparation & Support?

11. Number of Children
    - 1
    - 2
    - 3
    - 4
    - 5
    - 6

12. Children’s ages

13. Are they with you on this assignment? *
    - Yes
    - No
    - Some
    - Not Applicable

Success From Preparation & Support?

14. How long have you been on this assignment?
    Please answer in the format years and months

15. What is the expected length of this assignment? *
    - Less than one year
    - One year
    - Two years
    - Three years
    - Four years
    - Five years +
    - Unknown

16. What age were you when you started this assignment?

17. Have you ever been on an expatriate posting outside of New Zealand prior to this assignment? *
    - Yes
    - No
Success: Perceptions of New Zealand Expatriates in Singapore

PRE - DEPARTURE PREPARATION

This section looks at the pre-departure preparation methods your organisation provided (or did not provide) you prior to your current role in Singapore.

23. How long were you given between being selected for this assignment and departing for Singapore? *
(Use *Most important)

Method: [ ] One [ ] Two [ ] Three

24. Please rank the THREE most beneficial methods that would prepare you for your adjustment to Singapore:
Please use the corresponding numbers from Q.23, OR write your own answer. *

25. Please list any other pre-departure preparation methods that you were provided with:

26. The pre-departure preparation I was provided with, by my organisation was: *
   # Very Inadequate
   # Inadequate
   # Neutral
Success: Perceptions of New Zealand Expatriates in Singapore

**Success From Preparation & Support?**

**PRE - DEPARTURE PREPARATION continued**

27. Given the pre-departure preparation that was provided to you, the degree of difficulty in adjusting to your assignment and life in Singapore was:
   - ☑ Very Easy
   - ☑ Easy
   - ☑ Neutral
   - ☑ Difficult
   - ☑ Very Difficult

28. Had you been provided MORE pre-departure preparation, how would you rate the level of difficulty in adjusting to your assignment and life in Singapore?
   - ☑ Very Easy
   - ☑ Easy
   - ☑ Neutral
   - ☑ Difficult
   - ☑ Very Difficult
   - ☑ No Change

29. Had you been provided NO pre-departure preparation, how would you rate the level of difficulty in adjusting to your assignment and life in Singapore?
   - ☑ Very Easy
   - ☑ Easy
   - ☑ Neutral
   - ☑ Difficult
   - ☑ Very Difficult
   - ☑ No Change

30. How would you rate the extent of pre-departure preparation you received?
   - ☑ Very Effective
   - ☑ Effective
   - ☑ Neutral
   - ☑ Ineffective
   - ☑ Very Ineffective

31. Further Comments:

32. How individually tailored was the pre-departure preparation you received?
   - ☑ Very generic
   - ☑ Generic
   - ☑ Moderate
   - ☑ Individual components
   - ☑ Uniquely individualised

33. Why were you provided this type of preparation?

34. How likely do you think greater pre-departure preparation from your home organisation would increase the success of your assignment?
   - ☑ Very Likely
   - ☑ Likely
   - ☑ Neutral
   - ☑ Unlikely
### Success From Preparation & Support?

#### ON ARRIVAL SUPPORT

This section looks at the on-arrival support methods your organisation provided (or did not provide) you on your initial arrival into Singapore.

36. How much time (in days) were you given between arriving in Singapore and starting your assignment?

   - Please Select -

37. As a method of on-arrival support, were you, your spouse and/or your children shown the following by a relocation company, employees or locals?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Expatriate</th>
<th>Spouse</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.) Attractions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.) Housing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.) schooling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.) New city</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.) Shopping centres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.) Supermarkets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

38. What on-arrival support was provided to you, your spouse and your children on arrival to this assignment in Singapore?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Expatriate</th>
<th>Spouse</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>g.) Social support (introduce to other expatriates and groups)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h.) Career assistance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.) Banking and financial services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j.) Formal hand-over of responsibilities (if applicable)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k.) Provision of names of co-workers etc. (if applicable)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l.) Provision of reporting relationships and requirements (if applicable)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.) Emergency arrangements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n.) Accommodation time to adjust between arrival &amp; beginning assignment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

39. Please rank the THREE on-arrival support methods that assisted your adjustment to Singapore the most: Please use the corresponding letters from Q.37 & Q.38, OR write your own answer. One = Most important

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>One</th>
<th>Two</th>
<th>Three</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

40. Please list any other on-arrival support methods you may have been provided:

41. The on-arrival support I was provided by my organisation was:

   - Very Inadequate
   - Inadequate
   - Neutral
   - Adequate
   - Very Adequate
Success: Perceptions of New Zealand Expatriates in Singapore

ON ARRIVAL SUPPORT continued

42. The degree of difficulty in adjusting to your assignment and life in Singapore given the on-arrival support you were provided was:

- Very Easy
- Easy
- Neutral
- Difficult
- Very Difficult

43. Had you been provided MORE on-arrival support, how would you rate the level of difficulty in adjusting to your assignment and life in Singapore?

- Very Easy
- Easy
- Neutral
- Difficult
- Very Difficult
- No Change

44. Had you been provided NO on-arrival support, how would you rate the level of difficulty in adjusting to your assignment and life in Singapore?

- Very Easy
- Easy
- Neutral
- Difficult
- Very Difficult
- No Change

45. Further Comments:

46. What other on-arrival methods would increase your perceived success on this assignment?

47. Would greater on-arrival support from your home organisation increase the success of your assignment?

- Very Likely
- Likely
- Neutral
- Unlikely
- Very Unlikely

Success From Preparation & Support?

CONTINUED SUPPORT

This section looks at the continued support methods your organisation is/are not currently providing you on your assignment in Singapore.

48. Please indicate all the continued organisational support methods that you are currently receiving in this assignment in Singapore:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Expatrate</th>
<th>Spouse</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home-country organisational and social support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing method of social support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

49. Please list any other continued support methods provided by your organisation that you currently receive:

Page 10
50. What method of continued support are you receiving that is most important to the success of your assignment for you and your accompanying family?

51. What OTHER continued support could your organisation provide you that would increase your success and effectiveness of your expatriate assignment?

52. Would greater continued support from your home organisation increase the success of your assignment?
   - Very Likely
   - Likely
   - Neutral
   - Unlikely
   - Very Unlikely

**Success From Preparation & Support?**

**Perceived Success**
This section looks at how you personally perceive ‘success’. How you value and define the success of your own assignment.

53. In defining ‘success’ for your expatriate assignment, please rate the importance of the following factors that impact on success:*
Where 1 = very important and 5 = very unimportant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adjustment of expatriate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjustment of spouse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjustment of accompanying children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifestyle similar to that of home country</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying the full term of the contract</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job performance (expatriate)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making a profitable saving from lowered tax rate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

54. Please list any other factors that impact on your success:

55. What factors do you think have led to your personal success on this assignment?

56. How would you define the success of your assignment in Singapore?
   * This may include both personal and job perspectives
Few Further Questions:

57. I have seriously considered returning to my home country or relocating elsewhere, prior to the completion of this assignment.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

58. If you considered returning home, what was the main reason for this?

59. I believe my assignment has been successful thus far:
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

60. The pre-departure preparation I was provided helped ease my adjustment into Singapore:
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

61. The on-arrival support I was provided adequately set me up for this assignment:
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

62. My spouse/family found it easy to adjust to life in Singapore:
   - Not Applicable
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

63. If you have previously been on an expatriate assignment, do you believe this will increase your success on this assignment?
   - Not Applicable
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

64. What were the main reasons for taking on this expatriate assignment in Singapore?
   - You may select multiple reasons.
   - Job Package
   - Compensation
   - Job
   - Experience new culture
   - Challenge
   - Meet new people
   - Other, please specify

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