

CHAPTER 9

DO REPATRIATE SUPPORT PRACTICES INFLUENCE REPATRIATE EXPERIENCE, ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT, TURNOVER INTENTIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF CAREER SUCCESS?

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The focus of this chapter is the development of a model for the effective management of repatriation in multinational enterprises (MNEs). It reviews the literature associated with the relationships between repatriate support practices, repatriation experiences, organizational commitment, turnover intentions, and perceptions of career success. A model has been developed where it is hypothesized that the perception of the provision of important and higher quality practices will result in positive repatriation experiences. A positive experience will be positively related to organizational commitment, and perceptions of career success, and negatively related to turnover

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intentions. These relationships are based on the concepts of social support, uncertainty reduction theory, and psychological contract theory.

Over the past 2 decades globalization has been increasing significantly (Werner, 2002) which has been supported by increases in the availability of advanced information communication technologies, globalization of markets and production, the convergence of consumer tastes and falling trade barriers worldwide. Levels of world trade has steadily being increasing (World Trade Organization, 2005) and in response, organizations are either maximizing international opportunities or are forced to internationalize in order to survive. Organizations use international assignments and expatriation to fill positions, to develop business, and to develop people for future leadership positions. Research has found that these assignments create a “global mindset,” and this is often prerequisite for leadership positions in large multinational enterprises (MNEs) (Pucik & Saba, 1998; Tung, 1998). However, there is research that indicates that some people leave their organization after their international assignment, as they are dissatisfied with their repatriation experience (Yan, Zhu, & Hall, 2002). This therefore represents a loss of talent and investment in the repatriate for the assignment. If the organization plays a major role in determining someone’s repatriate experience, then appropriate support practices for repatriation have a long term and strategic implication.

The objective of this chapter is to review the literature associated with repatriate support practices in relation to a number of outcome variables, which include repatriate experience, organizational commitment, turnover intentions and perceptions of career success. For this chapter, support practices have been classified into four important areas, which include “pre-assignment support,” “on assignment support” “pre-repatriation support” and “post-repatriation support.” Understanding the impact of these factors on outcome variables is important to determine relationships among these variables, so that organizations may improve organizational practices. It is also important from the employee’s point of view that the repatriation process is successful.

In general, repatriation in the literature has been referred to as returning an individual to their country of origin after the completion of an international assignment (Black & Gregersen, 1991; Caligiuri & Lazarova, 2001; Feldman & Tompson, 1993; Gregersen & Stroh, 1997; Harvey, 1982). Researchers suggest that the goals of repatriation are to return and retain an international assignee who will be a valuable addition to the organization in contributing knowledge, experience and networks gained overseas (Stroh, Gregersen, & Black, 2000). However, these

goals are not always met, as repatriation is commonly plagued with problems and repatriates can often find themselves having a negative repatriation experience (not having a job to come back to, placement into holding patterns or ambiguous roles, no promotional opportunities, limited responsibility or status, and difficulties in retaining repatriates) (Yan et al., 2002). Surprisingly, research has found that 50% of organizations did not measure or track their repatriates and their career outcomes on returning (Cendant International Assignments Services, 1999). Previous research has found that the career experiences of repatriates can be frustrating, and that organizations lack effective repatriation practices and international career development systems (Caligiuri & Lazarova, 2001). A survey conducted by GMAC Relocation Services (2005) of 125 organizations, where 46% of those were headquartered in the United States, found that 23% of repatriates leave their organization after 1 year, and a further 20% leave after 2 years. This can be a poor return on investment from the organization's point of view if the organization had sent the individual for career development reasons, and be problematic for the repatriate if they believed that their international assignment would further their career in that organization. These findings suggest a range of unmet expectations about repatriation. Figures suggest that companies invest an average of \$1 million (Sheridan, 1998) to \$1.3 million U.S. per assignment (Smith, 2002), therefore it is important that international assignees are appropriately supported and repatriated, so the firm does not waste that investment and retains that human capital. In addition it has been suggested that MNEs commonly face problems in regards to attracting executives to accept foreign assignments (Scullion, 2000) and therefore one way to make assignments more attractive is to ensure repatriation is successful through appropriate support mechanisms.

Repatriation is the final link in the completion of an international assignment (Bonache, Brewster, & Suutari, 2001; Brewster & Scullion, 1997). It is important to examine repatriation as it can be a stressful situation similar to the expatriation process and some repatriates may experience reverse culture shock. Researchers have argued that expatriation tends to receive the most attention by academic researchers (Jassawalla, Connolly, & Slojowski, 2004), while repatriation has not been considered in depth. It is important, therefore to attempt to develop knowledge in this area. From an Australian perspective it is important to consider repatriation because of the dearth of literature in the area, and it has been recognized at a national and governmental level that repatriation is an area that organizations should focus on to support repatriates with their reintegration back into Australia (Department of the Senate, 2005).

THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO REPATRIATION

The provision of support is the overall principle for facilitating a successful assignment, repatriation and future career development within the organization, and perceptions of career success for international assignees. Lazarova and Caligiuri (2001) suggest that social support is positively related to successful repatriation. From a business point of view it is within the organization's interests to support their staff appropriately while on assignment in order to facilitate the successful execution of [international] organizational strategies (Bonache et al., 2001). Researchers suggest that social support serves as a "protective" factor to assist people's vulnerability on the effects of stress on health (House, 1981).

Psychological contract theory (Rousseau & Arthur, 1999) is useful in explaining why repatriates may leave an organization. Perceived lack of the expected support may influence the individual in breaking their psychological contract with the organization. For instance, repatriates may have a range of expectations about the levels of support from their organization during their assignment, leading into repatriation, and expectations about their repatriation. If repatriates have high expectations about their repatriation prior to their assignment, a perceived lack of support may break the repatriates' psychological contract they had with the organization in regard to their return home (Suutari, 2003). That is, the individual expected specific supports, and these were not provided, and perceived that they had a poor repatriation experience, therefore not meeting expectations, such as not having a fulfilling job to come back to, and this resulted in breaking the psychological contract the individual had with the organization. If repatriates perceive that those expectations of support are not being met then lower levels of organizational commitment may result (Stroh, Gregersen, & Black, 1998).

Expectations of positive repatriation experiences are developed in both relational and transactional contracts (Yan et al., 2002). Individuals with relational contracts with an organization would be characterized as having a successful repatriation experience if they received a job back from their organization (Yan et al., 2002), that was challenging, entailed responsibility and autonomy, utilization of their international skills and knowledge, and may include future promotional opportunities. Those individuals on transactional contracts, where their assignment and employment is for a finite period, would expect to find employment elsewhere (Yan et al., 2002), and would have a successful repatriation experience, if they actually did find a job somewhere else. For individuals on a relational contract with their organization, unmet expectations would occur where individuals are not supported through organizational support practices, and are not given a position that they expected on return.

A broken psychological contract results in lower levels of organizational commitment, attachment and turnover intentions increase (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). If a person has a negative repatriation experience, their perceptions of career success will also decrease.

A MODEL FOR THE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF REPATRIATION

This chapter develops a model based on previous literature, and is an extension of other models in the research field. Researchers Lazarova and Caligiuri (2001) developed and tested a model that focuses on popular repatriate support practices in relation to overall organizational support, and the relationship with other variables such as turnover intentions, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Similarly, the model in this chapter examines repatriate support practices, turnover intentions and the link to organizational commitment. Refinements to Lazarova and Caligiuri's model of repatriate support practices are made by considering support practices in a temporal sense. This idea is developed from Jassawalla et al.'s (2004) work, which characterizes support in a temporal sense based on prior to departure, during their international assignment, and after return support. They examined these issues in relation to outcomes for the firm (improved retention, return on investment) and for the employee (lower uncertainty and anxiety, greater satisfaction, greater feeling of belonging). The ideas presented in the Lazarova and Caligiuri and Jassawalla et al. models are extended and further developed in the model presented in this chapter. In this model, perceptions of repatriation experience and perceptions of career success are included.

A model has been developed that indicates how international assignees may be appropriately supported over their assignments and then repatriated back into their home country organization. This model is more relevant to longer-term assignments such as 2-3 year assignments but could also be applied to 1-year long assignments. The model would not be so relevant to short-term assignments such as a month or two, as these assignees would maintain regular contact with the organization, and have their job to come back to in a number of months. Furthermore Harvey (1983) has argued that the longer someone spends away from home, the more likely that home conditions will change, thus increasing uncertainty upon return.

Successful repatriation will also have positive impacts for the organization, as the organization is able to utilize the knowledge, skills and networks that individuals have developed while on assignment. Researchers, Stroh and Caligiuri (1998) advocate that international assignments are important for organizations to develop a pool of global

leaders for operating internationally (Lazarova & Caligiuri, 2001) and developing a “global mindset.” This global mindset could be used for the development of future international strategies. Previous research in the area has found that human resources (HR) policies and practices do play a prominent role in explaining successful repatriation transitions (Stevens, Oddou, Furuya, Bird, & Mendenhall, 2006). These researchers have developed a framework for managing the repatriation of international assignees to ensure a successful transition based on social support. Hence, it could be argued that HR support for repatriation does provide repatriates with a better experience when returning home. Newton and Hutchings (2006) found that the willingness to provide support for repatriation is dependant on the value that the organization places on internationalization and international experience, therefore, the more value placed, the more likely support practices will be available. For instance, research by Engen (1995) found that some organizations have been filling positions as overseas type assignments rather than having career development assignments, and therefore, repatriate support practices were not needed. Furthermore it is important to examine support practices as researchers Cavanaugh and Noe (1999) found that where HR practices were designed to make repatriates feel supported, employees were more satisfied and intended to stay with the organization. A model is presented in Figure 9.1. As stated above, the HR support practices are characterized into pre-assignment support, on-assignment support, pre-repatriation support, and post-repatriation support. The appropriate provision of these will have an impact on the individual’s repatriation experience that is it will be positive, which will influence an individual’s organizational commitment, their turnover intentions and their perceptions of career success. The model is now discussed in relation to previous literature.

Pre-Assignment Support

The first recommendation to improve repatriation is to select the correct person in the first place (Engen, 1995) for an international assignment. This means the person selected is an appropriate fit for the assignment to increase the probability of assignment success. Selection for an assignment may also be based on how important that assignment is for an individual’s career, or the type of career development that they gain from the experience (Rehfuss, 1982). Previous research indicates that the appointment of a “career manager” or advisor is essential for effective mobility management and this person monitors the expatriate’s development, keeps him or her informed and serves as an advocate during



Figure 9.1. A model of the effective management of repatriation in multinational enterprises.

the company's career succession planning sessions (Jassawalla et al., 2004). It has also been suggested that in regards to an individual's career, the repatriation stage is often ill-planned and haphazard (Linehan & Scullion, 2002b). The HR planning at the "pre-assignment" stage is important in order to make predictions or scenarios as to the types of positions that international assignees could be placed into on their return to their home country (Poe, 2000; Solomon, 2001). Organizations can contribute to successful repatriation by articulating the likelihood of positions available on return as this is known to reduce levels of stress (Jassawalla et al., 2004). This practice has the effect of adopting a strategic HRM orientation in regard to international assignments. Jassawalla et al. also suggest that poor planning is more likely to result in turnover and HR planning is essential. Coupled with HR planning, it is also necessary to include career planning and management initiatives to assist the assignee in working towards his or her career goals, during and after the assignment (Downes & Thomas, 1999; Yan et al., 2002). It is important to manage the expectations of individuals about what is going to occur during an assignment and on repatriation in order to reduce levels of uncertainty (Caligiuri & Lazarova, 2001; Linehan & Scullion, 2002b; Stroh & Caligiuri, 1998). This will help to ensure that the psychological contract between the organization and employee is maintained. It is possible that it will take time to find the returnee an appropriate job or that obtaining a promotion would be a lengthier process than they imagined. GMAC Relocation Services (2005) reports that 81% of respondent organizations discussed repatriation before the individual went on assignment, which assists in the development of expectations. Formal policies also promote the development of expectations about repatriation. If organizations had formal policies and signed contracts in regards to promises regarding repatriation this could further reduce the uncertainty of the international assignee and encourage them to take on an assignment (Harvey, 1983; Jassawalla et al., 2004). These researchers found in their qualitative research that formal policies for repatriation such as written guidelines will assist in reducing uncertainty as repatriates have information to follow up on. However, GMAC Global Relocation Services reported that 57% of respondents did not provide written contractual guarantees to employment post-expatriation. One reason might be that organizations lack long term strategic orientation to HR planning or are reluctant to do so as they may perceive that it is difficult to plan for in 2 to 3 years time when an expatriate assignment has finished.

Giving international assignees realistic previews for repatriation processes would have the effect of developing sound and realistic employee expectations (Jassawalla et al., 2004). An understanding of what repatriation may entail would assist in the development of that per-

son's expectations about repatriation. Gregersen and Stroh (1997) found that human resource policies that attempt to clarify repatriate job roles should ease uncertainty upon repatriation. As long as the individual perceived that they received support practices such as realistic previews of the repatriation processes, and their expectations were met, this would influence their satisfaction on return. Therefore, the following proposition is offered:

Proposition 1: The perception of adequate and relevant pre-assignment support will have a positive effect on the individual's repatriation experience.

On Assignment Support

There are a number of support practices that an organization can provide to ensure that individuals are supported while on assignment, which relate to repatriation. This can include mentoring which is broadly referred to as the 'extent to which there is an advocate back at the home country who will look after an assignee's interests' (Feldman & Thomas, 1992). Having mentor support in the host country is important so the individual is mentored into the everyday running of the office, and have someone who can provide advice and feedback (Feldman & Bolino, 1999). In addition Engen (1995) suggests that mentors should be appointed in both the home and host country office. A home country mentor can also maintain contact with the international assignee to keep them up to date with what is going on in their home country office such as changes that may be occurring. Research on women's repatriation in particular also found that having a mentor at the repatriation stage is important as assignees can obtain information, training, advice and career direction from them (Linehan & Scullion, 2002a, 2002b).

Jassawalla et al. (2004) suggest that maintaining regular levels of communication is important to create feeling of connectedness with the organization. The sending of newsletters and information about current occurrences in the home organization is a critical strategy that helps to keep communication lines open (Downes & Thomas, 1999). Assignees should be encouraged to maintain personal contact with their colleagues in their home office while on assignment as this personal contact assists in feelings of being included and in touch with the organization. Other types of practices can include providing trips back home once a year (Poe, 2000), travel allowances for family members or partners who remain in the home country to visit, and allowances for communication technology and telephone calls to call family members and friends. Gregersen and

Stroh (1997) suggest that giving trips home to people will reduce the amount of uncertainty after returning home from assignments, as people can see first hand changes that may occur while on assignment. This helps to reduce reverse culture shock when the international assignees return permanently to their home country. It also allows them an opportunity to mingle with people in their home office, to reduce an “out of sight and out of mind syndrome.” Telecommunications technology such as e-mail assistance may also be useful so that international assignees have a point of contact that can be called upon when problems need to be sorted out. Web based tools may also be appropriate so that international assignees can have access to a range of resources online to assist them (GMAC Global Relocation Services, 2005). Increasingly organizations are using these tools as innovative practices to support international assignees while away (GMAC Global Relocation Services, 2005). Therefore, the following proposition is offered:

Proposition 2: The perception of adequate and relevant on-assignment support will have a positive effect on an individual’s repatriation experience.

Pre-repatriation Support

Adequate and timely preparations and arrangements should be made for international assignees, for their return. Mendenhall, Dunbar, and Oddou (1987) suggest that an internal position search should occur 6 months before the end of an assignment. Results of the GMAC’s (2005) survey indicated that 83% of organizations found new jobs for repatriates within the company which is positive. A designated international assignment manager or HR consultant should be assigned to each individual during the repatriation process to ensure that the repatriates have a point of contact to help with job search other issues relating to their return to the home country. Black and Gregersen (1991) suggested that the provision of pre-return/cross-cultural training for the expatriate and/or spouse is also a way to ensure and facilitate reentry adjustment. Apart from finding a suitable job for the repatriate, preparations for return may include making relocation arrangements, such finding a place to live, arranging school places for their children, finding a job for the spouse, ways of assisting the repatriate to reconnect with people such as family, friends and colleagues. To address pre-repatriation support, the following proposition is developed:

Proposition 3: The perception of adequate and relevant pre-repatriation support will have a positive effect on the individual's repatriation experience.

After Repatriation Support

It is necessary to provide appropriate after repatriation support to reorientate the international assignee back into the home organization. As levels of uncertainty and anxiety could tend to be high on reentry for many individuals, Forster (2000) has suggested the design and delivery of reentry orientation programs. These include organizational specific information regarding new organizational processes, practices, people and power structures as well as other matters that impact on the repatriates. Apart from all the issues relating to housing, employment, educational placement assistance for dependent children discussed earlier, researchers also suggest that it is important to include spouses in the repatriation process, such as debriefings, as they also experience reentry shock and any problems they have may have a "spillover" effect onto the repatriate (Black, Gregersen, & Mendenhall, 1992b). Including family in reorientation programs is important to facilitate their re-adjustment of the whole into the home country (Black et al., 1992b; Liu, 2005).

In general, Solomon (1995) has suggested that a process for debriefing is suitable, so that the international assignee can share their knowledge with their peers, colleagues and supervisors. Solomon (1995), in her examination of Monsanto Corporation found that a debriefing session was held after three months with the person's superior, peers and colleagues to work out problems and to determine whether they felt that their skills were being utilized. This was organized with the assistance of a trained facilitator. The process gave the home office valuable insight into the experience gained by the individual and allowed their skills to be leveraged effectively (Solomon, 1995). Reorientation initiatives also help the repatriate's manager align their expectations with the actual situation encountered upon arrival in the home country and this is proposed to influence reentry satisfaction (Hammer, Hart, & Rogan, 1998). To address this area, the following proposition is offered:

Proposition 4: The perception of adequate and relevant after repatriation support will have a positive effect on the individual's repatriation experience.

Repatriation Experience

In terms of repatriation experience, the MNE's goal is to return and retain an expatriate employee who will be a valuable addition to the organization in contributing knowledge, experience and networks gained overseas. In this chapter, we include a number of variables when defining repatriation experience. These include receiving a position on return in the organization that is fulfilling; that has autonomy and responsibility; the utilisation of international skills, valuation of international experience; the maintenance/increase of social status; promotion; attractive future assignments; and continued development (Yan et al., 2002). For the purpose of this chapter, an individual achieving these outcomes would be defined as an individual who had a successful repatriation experience and conversely, not achieving these outcomes would be considered an unsuccessful repatriation experience. Whether repatriation is successful or not is also a matter of expectations of what the repatriate expected when they returned home. These expectations may have been developed through organizational support practices. If these expectations were met, then it is more likely that the repatriate would exhibit higher commitment to their organization than repatriates whose expectations were not met (Stroh et al., 2000).

Black, Gregersen, Mendenhall, and Stroh (1999) argued that successful repatriation would include being given a job with a clear job description that met the person's expectations, and assurance that they were not placed into a holding pattern (Black et al., 1999). For the purposes of this chapter we define a holding pattern as "being placed into a position, that is not really a job, but waiting for something more permanent to come up." Placement into a holding pattern can be problematic and soul destroying to an employee and has an impact on that individual's psychological contract, thereby having an impact on retention (Harvey, 1989). It may also have an effect on the organization trying to attract people to participate in international assignments (Lazarova & Caligiuri, 2001). International assignees often have fulfilling roles while on assignment as they are usually given more responsibility than in the home office, and when they return their positions may not be perceived by them as so fulfilling. Therefore, they may feel a sense of loss of status, career or promotional opportunities (Mendenhall et al., 1987), challenging roles and under utilisation of their talent. There is also risk of returning home to an undesirable job, which is putting people into jobs that they do not really want to do, simply because there is nothing else available (Gomez-Meija & Balkin, 1987).

Repatriates may experience a loss of authority and autonomy when they return from assignment (Black et al., 1999). Therefore, managers seeking to retain and motivate repatriates who will remain committed to

the organization's goals and objectives should seek to give them appropriate levels of responsibility, status, and autonomy and continued development (Yan et al., 2002). The effective utilisation of international skills may also be a good indication of a successful repatriation experience. For instance, expatriates gain unique country and cultural knowledge, language proficiency, and international management skills while on assignment (Black et al., 1999). Therefore, we have included the utilisation of those skills as a measure of success. Also scholars (Lazarova & Caligiuri, 2001; Stroh, 1995) have argued that repatriated staff can leverage the strategic capabilities of the organization, through their international skills. Hence, it is important to keep individuals who are high performers, who fit with the organization's strategic goals, and can contribute to the achievement of the organization's vision.

If these skills are underutilized, or used inconsistently, this could be frustrating for the repatriate and may make them feel undervalued. It also may be a waste of an investment into the employee's development from the organization's point of view, not to use such international skills (Black et al., 1999). Black, Gregersen, and Mendenhall (1992a) suggest where managers do not value international experience it may hinder that individual's organizational commitment and influence turnover intentions of the repatriate. It can be frustrating for the repatriate to come back to a position that does not use or leverage their skills, and this may result in the repatriate seeking more professionally rewarding opportunities elsewhere (Stroh, 1995). International assignments require high investment from the organization (Boyacigiller, 2000) and failure in repatriation means the organization not only loses the new skills and experience of the international assignee, but also the return on its investment in the employee (McNulty & Tharenou, 2004).

A perceived decrease in role status, especially if it was unexpected, could contribute to negative feelings and dissatisfaction in the repatriate on their return. Caligiuri and Lazarova (2001) found that individuals who experience positive outcomes during repatriation are more satisfied with work than individuals who do not, and also they found that it has an effect on positive turnover intentions. In their study, perceptions of organizational support were positively related to intentions to stay. Therefore, a successful repatriation experience would mean that the individual utilized the skills and knowledge that they had developed while on assignment on their return to the home country (Yan et al., 2002). Similarly, repatriates should feel as though they are being challenged by their new jobs at least to the same level, if not beyond, the challenges they experienced on assignment. To come back to positions without the expected challenges would be demotivating and demoralizing to repatriates resulting in dissatisfaction. Yan et al. (2001) found that an individual's assessment of assignment

success will be based on how positive an impact the completion of the assignment will have on the career development of the individual, and whether the expectations were met or unmet. Success is measured by longer term career growth, continued development opportunities, challenging job assignments, or enlargement of responsibilities. Research by Black et al. (1999) found that only one in ten repatriates are given a promotion on return. Their research also found that 77% of American repatriates were given a demotion in comparison to the level that they had been on while away on assignment. This demotion may be associated with the fact that people had higher status jobs in a foreign location or there had been significant organizational restructuring while they were away on assignment. Demotions may have a negative influence on whether people feel that they have achieved career success from their international assignment. For instance, Gomez-Meija and Balkin (1987) find that satisfaction with repatriation is influenced by the impact that the assignment had on the person's career. Therefore, the more positive result the assignment had on a person's career, the more that these individuals would perceive that their repatriation experience was successful.

A number of relationships have been proposed in this chapter with the variable repatriation experience and other variables. These other variables include organizational commitment, turnover intentions and perceptions of career success. These variables are discussed in the remainder of the chapter.

Organizational Commitment

The concept of organizational commitment (OC) has occupied a prominent place in organizational behavior research for many decades and continues to be of interest to behavioral scientists, practicing managers and human resource professionals. Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian, (1974) argued that organizational commitment generally could be characterized by three dimensions. These are (a) a strong belief in, and acceptance of, the organization's goals and values, (b) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and (c) a strong desire to remain with the organization and to work hard toward its goals (Porter et al., 1974). More recent research has postulated that organizational commitment (OC) is a multidimensional construct consisting of affective, continuance and normative commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Allen & Meyer, 1996). Affective commitment refers to an employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in a particular organization. Continuance commitment refers to commitment based on the costs that the employee associates with leaving the organization. Normative commitment refers to

the employee's feelings of obligation to stay with the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Allen and Meyer (1990) suggest that these three components develop from different antecedents. For example antecedents of affective commitment relate to work experiences that "satisfy employee's needs to feel comfortable in their relationship with the organization and to feel competent in the work role" (p. 4).

It has also been posited that there is a relationship between organizational commitment and the perception of positive repatriation experiences. A study by Stevens et al. (2006) of 305 Japanese repatriate managers found that the development and implementation of supportive HR policies had an impact on how committed and attached repatriates were to their organization. If organizations provide what is perceived to be appropriate support in regards to repatriation, the more committed repatriates will be to their organization. Stroh et al. (1998) also examined repatriates' expectations about repatriation and organizational commitment. More specifically they found a relationship between repatriates' expectations about their job performance and standards at repatriation and levels of organizational commitment. Met expectations were positively related to higher levels of commitment to the organization (Stroh et al., 1998). Stroh et al.'s study found that with respect to job discretion, those whose expectations were overmet displayed higher levels of commitment to their organization than those who had undermet expectations. This meant that if people believed that they were only going to be given some responsibility and job discretion, and they were given more than what was expected they were more committed to their organization (Stroh et al., 1998).

Organizational commitment has been found to be related to turnover intentions. Lazarova and Caligiuri (2001) found that while there was no direct positive link between repatriate support practices and organizational commitment it could be measured indirectly through the respondents' intention to stay or to leave the organization. This supports earlier findings by Whitman (1998) that organizational commitment including affective, continuance, and normative commitment, was significant and negatively related to the repatriate's intentions to leave the organization, with commitment the strongest predictor of intent to leave. Thus with contrary evidence this link between repatriation support practices and organizational commitment is still uncertain and remains to be tested. The following proposition is developed about the relationship between repatriation experience and organizational commitment.

Proposition 5: The perception of a positive repatriation experience will have a positive effect on the repatriate's level of organizational commitment.

Turnover Intentions

It has been reported that 23% of repatriates leave the organization after 1 year of returning, and 20% of repatriates leave after 1 and 2 years of returning from their foreign assignment (GMAC Global Relocation Services, 2005). Previous research has examined the extent to which negative repatriate experiences have had an influence on the turnover of repatriates (Adler, 1981; Black et al., 1992b). They proposed that repatriates who had the experience of being placed in nonchallenging jobs, having a lack of promotional opportunities, a loss of status and autonomy, a lack of career planning and counseling, a lack of support on behalf of managers and colleagues and sluggish career advancement would influence people's turnover intentions (Adler, 1981; Black et al., 1992). Feldman and Thompson (1993) found that the most important factor in retaining repatriates in MNEs was how well the MNE managed their repatriation process, and indicated this implied that the better that the organization is managed, the less likely that repatriates will leave. This suggests that if repatriation issues are addressed by organizations when strategically planning, it is less likely that repatriate regrettable turnover will occur. Furthermore, Lazarova and Caligiuri (2001) found that the activities that ensure high retention are more likely to happen during the expatriate assignment, rather than after it, and hence this suggests that organizations should also be concerned with ongoing management of expatriates while on assignment. These researchers found that perceptions of organizational support were directly associated with intentions to stay. From this past research the following hypothesis is developed:

Proposition 6: The perception of positive repatriation experience will have a positive effect on the repatriate's intentions to stay with their organization.

Career Success

Prior research has rarely considered the effect of repatriation experience on the career success of individuals. Considering that most people take international assignments for the purpose of advancing their careers (Adler, 1986), it would be worthy to examine the relationship between a person's repatriation experience, whether it is positive or negative, and their perceptions of their career success. Examining relationships between repatriate support practices and career success would also be important as the provision of HR support practices may influence whether people find appropriate jobs on return or receive career promotions. It has been suggested that repatriation is a critical phase in a

repatriate's career. Suutari and Brewster's (2003) investigation of repatriated Finnish engineers found that the engineers believed that their assignment would be beneficial for their career. Stahl and Cerdin (2004) found that repatriates were frustrated with the long term planning of their repatriation. Mendenhall et al. (1987) have suggested that research examining the effect of expatriation on the careers of individuals is deficient, and therefore, future research is necessary to investigate this area. To meet this deficiency, the relationship between repatriation experience and perceptions of career success is examined in the model proposed in this chapter. For the purposes of this chapter career success is defined as both objective and subjective career success (Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Wormley, 1990). Objective success encompasses whether an individual receives a promotion, and an increase in salary, whereas subjective success includes career satisfaction. A promotion is defined as "any increases in level and/or significant increases in job responsibilities or job scope" and an increase in salary is defined as "having increase in the amount of money one receives" (Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001, pp. 358). Career satisfaction is defined as whether the person was satisfied with the progress that they had made in achieving their career goals, their income levels, their skill levels and advancement (Greenhaus et al., 1990). If repatriates are appropriately supported in their repatriation, having a positive influence on their repatriation experience that meets their expectation, this should have a positive effect on their perception of their career success.

Proposition 7: The perception of a positive repatriation experience will have a positive effect on the repatriate's perception of career success.

FUTURE RESEARCH AND CONCLUSIONS

This research differs from previous research as it seeks to develop a more comprehensive model on the effective management of repatriation and to examine the influence of repatriate support practices on the repatriate's perceptions of career success. Research on repatriation continues to be an important issue as organizations continue to globalize. Repatriation is not always handled well by organizations, and people's repatriation experiences can be negative at great cost to the individual and the organization. One way to reduce a negative experience is by providing appropriate HR support to repatriates. The chapter sought to review the literature related to repatriation support practices, organized according to four types of support; before assignment, during assignment, pre-repatriation and after repatriation support. The authors have attempted to

develop a normative model on how to manage repatriation processes based on the concepts of uncertainty reduction, social support and psychological contract theory. International literature in the field was reviewed to develop this model. The relationships between HR repatriation support practices in relation to repatriation experience were examined, and it was suggested that higher the perception of repatriation support the higher the quality of repatriate experience. Repatriate experience was then related to outcome variables such as organizational commitment, turnover intentions and perceptions of career success.

To understand whether this model is appropriate quantitative research methods could be used to explore its facets and would allow an understanding of the complex phenomena and relationships surrounding repatriation, organizational commitment, turnover and career success. This would allow exploration of the experience of repatriates who have returned after a lapse of time, to understand how their repatriation had been managed and whether the perception of higher quality relevant and appropriate levels of repatriation support had positive effects on their perception of career success. Therefore a quantitative approach that tests the relationships suggested in this chapter would be a contribution of knowledge to the research literature, and especially the effect that repatriation experiences would have on people's perception of career success.

The appropriate management of repatriates would hopefully see that more people are encouraged to participate in international assignments, and that this has a positive effect on their future career. International assignments commonly develop many attributes in people that are beneficial for organizations. This includes knowledge of overseas conditions, markets, people, distribution networks, and expertise in international business (Gerhard & Ulrike, 2005). The effect of repatriation on family members can also be examined in future research (Liu, 2005) as the family unit can have an impact on the work experiences of the repatriate employee (Black et al., 1999) and vice versa. It would also be appropriate to examine innovative practices used by MNEs for repatriation and to publish these as case studies. It is poor strategic practice if organizations cannot utilise employee competencies and expertise developed on assignment, if they have poorly managed repatriation processes, especially when they result in talented repatriates pursuing opportunities elsewhere. Retaining repatriates, especially high performers, will then have positive effects on the further execution of international strategies. In conclusion, developing appropriate strategies to support repatriates is becoming an important area that MNEs need to focus on, to retain high performing international assignees, as businesses continue to internationalize.

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