



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***EFFECTS OF SUPPORT FROM ORGANISATIONS, HOST COUNTRY
NATIONALS AND SPOUSES ON EXPATRIATE SUCCESS***

CHAN HAK LIONG

GSM 2016 2



**EFFECTS OF SUPPORT FROM ORGANISATIONS, HOST COUNTRY
NATIONALS AND SPOUSES ON EXPATRIATE SUCCESS**

By

CHAN HAK LIONG

**Thesis submitted to the Putra Business School in Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the award of Master of Science**

July 2016

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, siblings, relatives and friends who have never doubted me during this arduous journey.

Voon Sui Min (mother)

Chan Tin Tuck (father)

Chan Hak Seng (Sam) (brother)

Chan Li Keng (Minori) (sister)

El áa Blanche Claudel (niece)

Voon Lan Fah (aunt)

Voon Sui Fah (aunt)

Voon Chong Foon (aunt)

Collin Hiew Ko Ling (cousin)

Connie Hiew (cousin)

Wong Yik Tat (friend)

Foo Pui San (friend)

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

EFFECTS OF SUPPORT FROM ORGANISATIONS, HOST COUNTRY NATIONALS AND SPOUSES ON EXPATRIATE SUCCESS

By

CHAN HAK LIONG

July 2016

Chairman: Dahlia Zawawi, PhD

Faculty: Putra Business School

This study examined the effects of support from primary stakeholders, specifically organisations, host country nationals (HCNs) and spouses on expatriate success in Malaysia. Each stakeholder had a vital role to play in facilitating expatriates' assignments in different manners. Malaysia was chosen as the research setting on account of its increasing number of multinational companies (MNCs) and international firms that strengthens the country's economic growth. To see expatriate success in a wider angle, this study included the three essential criteria concerning cross-cultural adjustment, job performance and withdrawal intentions. In addition, Hobfoll's conservation of resources (COR) theory was used as an overarching theory to complement and explain the research phenomenon with the key variables involved. A quantitative approach, employing a self-reporting questionnaire, was used to collect the data from the respondents. The whole data collection process took around three months to complete, and 112 expatriates working in different industries in Malaysia were surveyed. Multiple regression analyses were performed to test the six hypotheses. The results substantiated that support from both organisations and HCNs were significant to expatriates' adjustment by helping them acclimatise to life in the host country. Notably, the findings of this research also indicated that support from organisations was the strongest predictor of the expatriates' withdrawal intentions. This had highlighted that the crucial role organisations played in minimising the issue of expatriate failure during international assignment. The findings also revealed the significant relationships between expatriate adjustment, withdrawal intentions, and job performance. The discussion of these findings was teamed with interviews from five expatriates to cast some light on the understanding of the relationships. Finally, this research contributed to the area of international human resource and cross-cultural management, and subsequently provided additional solutions to practitioners.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

**KESAN-KESAN SOKONGAN DARI ORGANISASI, WARGA TEMPATAN
DAN PASANGAN SUAMI ISTERI KE ATAS KEJAYAAN EKSPATRIAT**

Oleh

CHAN HAK LIONG

Julai 2016

Pengerusi: Dahlia Zawawi, PhD

Fakulti: Sekolah Perniagaan Putra

Kajian ini mengkaji pengaruh sokongan daripada pihak berkepentingan utama, khususnya organisasi, warga tempatan dan pasangan suami isteri ke atas kejayaan ekspatriat di Malaysia. Pihak berkepentingan memainkan peranan penting untuk melancarkan kerjaya antarabangsa dengan cara-cara yang berbeza. Malaysia dipilih sebagai tempat ujian ini disebabkan pertambahan bilangan syarikat multinasional dan firma antarabangsa yang dapat mengukuhkan pertumbuhan ekonomi negara. Untuk melihat kejayaan ekspatriat dengan lebih luas, kemasukan tiga kriteria mengenai penyesuaian silang budaya, prestasi kerja dan niat perlepasan ekspatriat adalah penting. Tambahan pula, kajian ini juga disokong dengan menggunakan Hobfoll teori pemuliharaan sumber (COR) untuk menjelaskan fenomena kajian yang melibatkan pembolehubah utama. Pendekatan kuantitatif merangkumi soal selidik telah digunakan untuk mengumpul data dari responden untuk kajian ini. Keseluruhan proses pengumpulan data mengambil masa selama tiga bulan dan 112 ekspatriat yang bekerja di industri berbeza yang berada di Malaysia ditinjau. Analisis regresi telah digunakan untuk menguji enam hubungan hipotesis. Keputusan analisis menyokong bahawa sokongan daripada organisasi dan warga tempatan memberi kesan signifikansi kepada penyesuaian ekspatriat supaya dapat membantu mereka menyesuaikan diri dengan kehidupan di negara ini. Hasil kajian ini juga menunjukkan bahawa sokongan daripada organisasi adalah peramal yang paling kuat bagi niat perlepasan ekspatriat. Ini menekankan bahawa organisasi memainkan peranan yang amat penting dalam mengurangkan isu kegagalan ekspatriat ketika kerjaya antarabangsa. Akhir sekali, hasil kajian ini juga menunjukkan hubungan signifikansi antara penyesuaian ekspatriat, niat perlepasan dan prestasi kerja. Perbincangan mengenai semua hasil kajian juga disokong oleh lima temu bual oleh ekspatriat untuk menambah pemahaman tentang hubungan-hubungan pembolehubah utama. Kajian ini menyumbang kepada bidang pengurusan sumber manusia antarabangsa dan silang budaya dalam konteks ekspatriat dan menyediakan penyelesaian kepada pengamal-pengamal.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Let perseverance be your engine and hope your fuel.

H. Jackson Brown. Jr

I particularly like this popular saying, ‘When life hands you lemons, make lemonade’. I believe that if we can make the best in the face of adversity with a can-do attitude, we will probably find the sweetest part of it. Being a postgraduate research student is challenging, it is a lonely journey that needs a lot of hard work and sacrifices. Perseverance is the lubricant to make this thesis possible after a long demanding struggle.

Writing this thesis can be an intimidating task without the assistance, guidance and encouragement from several individuals. First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my main supervisor, Dr. Dahlia Zawawi for her confidence and trust in my ability to complete this thesis on time. Her share of knowledge and experience always motivates me to continue striving for betterment whenever I am dejected. Our discussions, every time with laughter, make me feel more relaxed and less apprehensive. I would also like to extend my gratitude to my co-supervisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Serene Ng Siew Imm for giving her insightful comments and suggestions to improve the quality of this thesis and my presentation skills. To be honest, I enjoy working with them during my study at Putra Business School. Despite their busy schedule, they do not mind to spend a little time to respond to my questions through mobile phone when I need clarification from them. Indeed, their strong sense of responsibility toward my research progress is highly appreciated and treasured. I hope that we will be able to work together sometime in the future.

Besides my supervisors, I am grateful to Prof. Dr. Murali Sambasivan for his abundant knowledge about management research and statistics. His lectures always impress me with clear explanation and prepare me to become a more resourceful research student. I would also like to thank Prof. Dr. Foong Soon Yau for her criticism toward my research work. My appreciation goes to all the staffs of Putra Business School, especially Norizan and Parimala for handling administrative tasks. I am truly indebted to the School for providing me financial support to attend national and international conferences that allow my work to be shared with scholars from other parts of the world.

This thesis would not have been made possible without the kind cooperation from the management staffs and respondents who I approached. I owe a debt of gratitude to all these helpful people, especially Allison, Aris, Charley, Dalvinder, Elaine, Janice, Joyce, Kah Mei, Melissa, Sharifah, Su Ping and Yuen Kiat who never doubt me. In spite of their pressing work commitment, they are willing to lend me a helping hand in questionnaire distribution and interview arrangement with the respondents. My sincere gratitude also goes out to all the respondents of the questionnaire survey and interview for taking time out of their tight schedule.

Last but not least, I would like to convey my thanks to my family members and friends for their unwavering support throughout my whole duration of study. Thanks to my understanding parents and siblings for being patient with me, allowing me to pursue my education at this level. A special thank goes to my relatives in Kuching, particularly my aunties (Voon's sisters) and cousins (Esther and Connie) for their cheers of encouragement when I feel down. I am glad that my cousins often have their phones ready by side to listen to my grumbling via WeChat. I am thankful to my good friend, Yik Tat who never gets bored of listening to all issues involved in my thesis preparation although he is not familiar with it. My appreciation is also extended to several friends of mine, Cecy, Chia Khang, Emily and Mdm. Seow Phaik Choo who play some roles in helping me out in data collection, and whose names are not mentioned above, your selflessness towards this thesis completion will always be remembered.



I certify that an Examination Committee met on 19 July 2016 to conduct the final examination of **Chan Hak Liong** on his thesis entitled '**Effects of Support from Organisations, Host Country Nationals and Spouses on Expatriate Success**' in accordance with the Universities and University College Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U. (A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the degree of **Master of Science**.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AUM	Anxiety/Uncertainty Management
CMV	Common Method Variance
COR	Conservation of Resource
CQ	Cultural Intelligence
EQ	Emotional Intelligence
HCN	Host Country National
JD-R	Job Demands and Resources
LMX	Leader-Member Exchange
MNC	Multinational Company
OCB	Organisational Citizenship Behaviour
PLS	Partial Least Square
POS	Perceived Organisational Support
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Science
USA	United State of America

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter starts with the background that serves as the platform for this research. The next section discusses the expatriation in Malaysia. This chapter describes the practical and theoretical problems this study intends to address. Based on these problems, several research objectives are set to achieve. This chapter includes the significance of the study in terms of both theory and practice. Before the chapter ends, the main definitions used in this thesis are explained. Finally, there is an overview of how this thesis is structured.

1.1 Background of the Study

Globalisation has allowed many multinational companies (MNCs) and other organisations to show their interest in the growth of job mobility and relocations among the employees. In order to meet global workforce demands, these firms are highly reliant on expatriates to manage their business operations abroad (Huff, Song, & Gresch, 2014). Expatriates are employees who work abroad within a specified time frame (Woods, 2003). They migrate to another country in a voluntary or temporary basis for a special purpose and return home once their mission is complete (Koveshnikov, Wechtler, & Dejoux, 2013). This process is termed international assignment as part of global coordination and control strategies in strategic human resource management (Dowling, Festing, & Engle, 2008). Expatriates must be able to function in different cultural, economic, and political backgrounds during their assignments. They represent the home company to carry out top responsibilities in terms of maintaining organisational performance, developing public relations and instilling the headquarters' values in host nationals (Lin, Lu, & Lin, 2012, p.190).

In this globalised world, those talented and skillful employees require international assignment as an effective tool to help them develop their cross-national and cross-cultural competencies (Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997). Since MNCs and international firms depend on expatriates to undertake the business activities in the host country, it is vital for expatriates to have the ability to adapt to the local environment, to understand the local cultures, and to develop a global mindset (Lee & Kartika, 2014). Notably, these organisations must realise that changes in expatriates' attitudes, behaviour and knowledge can influence the individuals' identities. Although expatriate adjustment is an important index of successful expatriation, it is attainable when an expatriate is able to fulfill another two criteria, referring to job performance and retentions cognitions (Caligiuri, 1997; Caligiuri, Joshi, & Lazarova, 1999; Harrison & Shaffer, 2005).

From an employee's point of view, an international assignment is potentially attractive. However, expatriates who are compelled by their organisations to accept it may experience culture shock and the adjustment process is likely to take longer than expected (Pinto, Cabral-Cardoso, & Werther, 2012b). When expatriates are able to handle these

challenges effectively, it indicates that they have completed part of the professional achievement in their assignments. In contrast, poor cross-cultural adjustment leads to a daunting expatriate experience with lower job performance that may result in expatriate failure. Expatriate failure is defined as an expatriate returns home prematurely before the assignment comes to its completion (Dowling et al., 2008). It happens when expatriates have difficulties in changing their attitudes and behaviours to suit the local contexts (Okpara & Kabongo, 2011). Other factors include family concerns, new job opportunities, security concerns and work environment issues (Dowling et al., 2008). Such failure marks a negative change in the expatriates' impression as their self-esteem, self-confidence, and prestige among peers evaporate that can cause future performance's uncertainty. They may be perceived as individuals who lack motivation, and are treated differently with limited promotion opportunities and increased productivity to compensate for the failure (Dowling et al., 2008).

There is vast information found in the literature that covers various antecedents of expatriate adjustment and job performance as important measures of successful expatriation. Given that this research looks at expatriate success in a broader perspective, it focuses on withdrawal intentions as an ultimate criterion (Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Harrison, Shaffer, & Luk, 2005) which refers to an expatriate's condition that precedes physical evacuation from an overseas assignment (Caligiuri, 2000). It also looks at how different sources of support address expatriates' ability to conquer the crises and transitions of life that expand the researcher's understanding of the importance of support on expatriate adjustment. Social support is a major contributor to poor cross-cultural adjustment (Beehr & Glazer, 2001; Glazer, 2006), and this research would like to give a better insight into how support can help expatriates deal with the uncertain changes in life during their assignments in the host country.

Earlier studies on the effect of support on expatriate adjustment and job performance have been well documented (e.g., Kraimer, Wayne, & Jaworski, 2001; Lee & Vorst, 2010; Lee, Veasna, & Wu, 2013; Abdul Malek, Budhwar, & Reiche, 2015). In particular, Takeuchi (2010) noted that organisations, host country nationals (HNCs) and accompanying spouses are primary stakeholders that should not be neglected because they can influence or are influenced by an expatriate's assignment goals. Miao, Adler, and Xu (2011) also emphasised that expatriates desire support from stakeholders especially at the beginning of the relocation. They can help expatriates achieve main objectives by providing whatever they need to succeed. This research investigates the role of support from organisations, HNCs and accompanying spouses as primary stakeholders on expatriate success. With the inclusion of expatriate adjustment and withdrawal intentions as outcomes of support, it seems logical that the two criteria are able to provide an impact on job performance simultaneously. Although a few studies have discussed expatriate withdrawal and turnover in details (Shaffer & Harrison, 1998; Caligiuri, 2000; Takeuchi, Marinova, Lepak, & Liu, 2005; Pinto, Cabral-Cardoso, & Werther, 2012a), the idea of discovering whether the support received by expatriates can affect withdrawal intentions, and the impact upon job performance is still under-researched. This area has yet to receive much scholar's attention especially in a developing country like Malaysia.

In summary, based on the notion of conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989), this research would like to increase our understanding of expatriate adjustment and withdrawal intentions by including perceived organisational support (POS), HCN support and spousal support as the main proxies. The basic premise of COR theory is that when individuals are under pressure due to diminishing resources, they will struggle to keep the resources they possess to cope with the negative repercussions of stress. In relation to this, support from primary stakeholders can serve as resources to help expatriates overcome poor adjustment and withdrawal intentions, which are likely to have a substantial impact on expatriate performance.

1.2 Expatriation in Malaysia

Malaysia is one of the best locations in South East Asia rated by expatriates in terms of their career satisfaction and quality life (HSBC Expat, 2015). Its resilient economic growth continues to be the backbone of the country that allows foreign talents to seek career opportunities (The Star Online, 2015). The growing number of MNCs and foreign businesses in Malaysia help stabilise the country's economic stability and build the connectivity to Southeast Asia and availability of investment-friendly incentives (The Star Online, 2015). To align with the blueprint of Vision 2020 proposed by the current Malaysian Prime Minister to foster the local workforce and improve economic growth in Malaysia (Harper, 2012), the Malaysian government has made efforts to attract foreign talents to build their careers in this country. The foreign talents are capable of addressing critical skill gaps in the short run, while some are able to provide diverse talent pool in the long run when working with Malaysian talents (Harper, 2012).

The cultural differences of Malaysia are knowingly providing a great opportunity for talents to learn from a variety of cultural and professional values (The Star Online, 2015). It is an advantage for the talents to develop ideas, innovation, and creativity from such a unique working condition. In December 2012, the Prime Minister advocated setting up the Expatriate Services Division in collaboration with Ministry of Home Affairs, the Immigration Department and Talent Corporation Malaysia Berhad to ensure that the expatriate-related policies are well implemented. The Expatriate Services Division is the new agency managing services to attract and retain skilful expatriates in Malaysia (Harper, 2012). Appropriate steps are taken to attract more of them, including planning and implementing attractive expatriate packages, putting up marketing efforts (e.g., road shows, targeted outreach), and assisting expatriates on applications (e.g., visas, work permits). With the Economic Transformation Programme, the Malaysian government has also introduced The Residence Pass-Talent with compelling benefits to allow knowledgeable expatriates who wish to continue to polish their talents to work for maximum 10 years (Hays, 2013). The main advantage of the Residence Pass-Talent is to enable expatriates to contribute their expertise and to fill in the critical skill gaps that cannot be addressed by local talents (Hays, 2013).

Expatriates are defined as skilled, managerial, professional, and technical workers earning minimum RM5000 and above in Malaysia (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2016). Expatriation is no longer a new phenomenon in Malaysia, the country has experienced three waves of incoming expatriates. The first wave of expatriates is British and most of

them are located in the large organisations such as Shell, ICI, Dunlop, Guthries, Harrison and Crosfield, and British Petroleum (Tahir & Ismail, 2007). In the government-linked organisations, the expatriates hold positions as advisors, diplomats, academics, and technical specialists. Later, the second wave arrives. They are those from the United States of America (USA) and other European countries. These expatriates are assigned to work in big MNCs such as Philips, Siemes, Volvo, Nestle, and Esso. Finally, the third wave of expatriates come to Malaysia are mainly from Asian countries such as Japan, Taiwan, and Korea with some American and European expatriates. The last wave is motivated by 'Look East' policy by the government in 1980 and its close relations with Australia and Newly Industrialised Countries in Asia, along with the continuous growth of electronics industry in Malaysia (Tahir & Ismail, 2007).

Table 1.1 presents the three levels of expatriate positions in Malaysia (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2016). Firstly, expatriates who are classified as key post hold the top managerial position. This level of position can be filled in by those who work for a foreign-owned company (e.g., MNCs) operating in Malaysia. Secondly, expatriates who are classified as executive post hold professional or middle managerial position. Lastly, non-executive expatriates are those highly skilled in their jobs.

Table 1.1: Classifications of Expatriate Positions in Malaysia

	Classifications	Level	Responsibilities	Examples
a.	Key Post	Top Managerial Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To protect companies interests and investments. • To determine the companies' policies. 	Managing Director, General Manager
b.	Executive Post	Professional / Middle Managerial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To require qualification and working experience, practical skills related to respective jobs. • To implement the company's policies and supervision toward the junior staff. 	Marketing Manager, Lecturer, Architects
c.	Non-Executive Post	Highly skilled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To require working experience and technical skills related to the respective jobs. 	Mold Designer, Manufacturing System Designer

Source: Ministry of Home Affairs (2016)

Table 1.2 outlines the six authorised governmental and semi-governmental agencies in Malaysia that are allowed to give approvals to companies and organisations from different industries to hire expatriates working for them. These agencies are Malaysia Investment Development Authority, Multimedia Development Corporation, Public Service Department, Central Bank of Malaysia, Central Bank of Malaysia, Securities Commission of Malaysia, and other expatriate committee organisations.

Table 1.2: Authorised Agencies Approving Expatriate Positions

Agencies	Position/Field
Malaysia Investment Development Authority	Expatriates working in private sectors. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New or existing manufacturing companies involving in expansion plans• Manufacturing-related services• Hotel and tourism industry• Research and development centre
Multimedia Development Corporation	Expatriates or skilled migrant workers working in information-technology-based companies, which are granted by the Malaysian government through the Multimedia Development Corporation.
Public Service Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Doctors and nurses working in government hospitals or clinics• Lecturers and tutors working in Government Institutes of Higher Education• Contract posts in Public Service• Recruitment process jobs offered by Public Service Commission or governmental agencies
Central Bank of Malaysia	Expatriates working in banking, finance and insurance sectors.
Securities Commission of Malaysia	Expatriates working in securities and share markets.
Expatriate Committee	The committee members are from various ministries that include Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of International Trade and Industry, Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Human Resources, Construction Industry Development Boards, Council of the People (Majlis Amanah Rakyat).

Source: Immigration Department of Malaysia (2012)

Based on the data provided by Ministry of Home Affairs of Malaysia, Table 1.3 (pg.6) depicts the figures of expatriates working in 14 industries in Malaysia. In August 2014, a total of 97,908 expatriates working in the country. The statistics show that a high number of expatriates working in the service-related industry (42,510), it is then followed by information technology (17,942) and manufacturing industry (10,526).

**Table 1.3: Statistic of Active Expatriates According to Sector
Expatriate Service Division, Immigration Department of Malaysia
Year 2014**

No.	Sector	Year 2014							
		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
1	Service	35,373	36,884	40,794	39,319	47,186	45,516	42,096	42,510
2	Manufacturing	9,610	9,835	10,327	9,900	11,285	11,045	10,507	10,526
3	Education	6,530	6,602	6,940	6,763	7,447	7,290	6,848	6,741
4	Oil and Gas	6,696	6,704	7,383	6,638	9,834	9,200	7,807	7,488
5	Construction	6,421	6,492	6,888	6,504	7,898	7,608	7,139	7,107
6	Trade	1,132	1,150	1,209	1,158	1,344	1,313	1,248	1,241
7	Transportation	1,123	1,119	1,142	1,097	1,431	1,383	1,284	1,244
8	Sport	224	222	236	225	265	260	241	250
9	Agriculture	251	255	274	271	889	879	828	831
10	Mining	745	793	914	892	915	898	872	851
11	Healthcare	269	264	282	264	272	266	252	233
12	Finance	477	508	529	521	612	604	586	592
13	Tourism	452	447	444	424	389	371	350	352
14	Information Technology	14,996	15,489	16,906	16,456	18,963	18,605	17,783	17,942
Total		84,299	86,764	94,268	90,432	108,730	105,238	97,841	97,908

Source: An unpublished data by Ministry of Home Affairs of Malaysia (2014)

1.3 Problem Statement

Multiple types of research on international assignment have emphasised the importance of cross-cultural adjustment to expatriate experience (Black & Gregersen, 1991; Parker & McEvoy, 1993; Shaffer, Harrison, & Gilley, 1999). According to Marston (2011), with every five to 12 assignment given to the expatriates, one of them will fail. One of the main reasons is companies mistakenly assume that expatriates who have successfully completed an assignment in one country will be able to do the same elsewhere. It was proven that 52% of the expatriates considered the inability to adapt to host culture as the greatest difficulty for them (Tower Watson, 2012). Based on Brookfield Global Relocation Services (2014), 15% of the expatriates indicated that cultural adjustment was one of the main reasons for assignment failure. These issues showed that the uncomfortable feeling from cultural challenges inhibits the expatriates from showing better job performance, which was likely to accelerate expatriate failure.

Besides poor cross-cultural adjustment, expatriates' family-related problems have also become a leading reason for assignment failure (Ernst & Young, 2013). A survey undertaken by Cartus (2014), a global relocation company, reported that 76% of the expatriates agreed that the family or personal situations were the top reason why expatriates withdrew from their assignments. In addition, 61% of them rated the inability of the family to adjust to the host location as the second reason for failure. Particularly, spouse dissatisfaction was the most influential factor of expatriate failure (Mohn, 2011). It was identified by 13% of the expatriates who found that dissatisfied spouse was a cause for them to fail the assignments (Brookfield Global Relocation Services, 2014). An overseas assignment is not cheap. It basically costs between two to four times of the expatriate's base salary, depending on its locations (Alsop, 2014). When an expatriate fails an assignment, it can cost an organisation approximately \$1million for each failure whereby this figure is multiplied by the increase of group moves (Mohn, 2011). These reasons proved that expatriate personal and family issues have become the main hurdles for expatriate success.

This study uses Malaysia as a representative sample of developing country to provide a broader perspective on the problems. Other developing countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam with similar demographic to Malaysia are interesting to expatriates in terms of comfortable lifestyle and low cost of living (HSBC Expat, 2014), but certain cultural factors (e.g., languages and cultural differences) remain challenging for expatriates to overcome (Aldred, 2012). The personal and business norms can be very different for expatriates performing assignments in developing countries, especially those cultures that place a high priority on age, hierarchy, and seniority (Brookfield Global Relocation Services, 2013). Therefore, cultural and language barriers are closely intertwined. The inability of expatriates and their family to understand and adjust to the host culture can stack the deck against successful assignments.

The researcher had also conducted interviews with four expatriates working for an MNC and a government-linked organisation to ascertain the challenges faced by them in Malaysia based on the cross-cultural adjustment model by Black, Mendenhall, and

Oddou (1991). It is imperative to discuss in this study because those challenges brought up by these expatriates had provided some concrete evidence to make this study worthwhile. In terms of general adjustment, a Sri Lankan expatriate expressed his concern over the high cost of living in Malaysia.

"Rent is very expensive in Malaysia so we do not see a lot of savings in our hands. Malaysia is an expensive place for us." (H. Mudalige, 1 year and 6 months in Malaysia, personal communication, January 27, 2015)

When it comes to work adjustment, an Indian Muslim expatriate had shared his challenging supervisory experience in the interviews in details.

"I am working as a Team Leader and I have a team having different cultural backgrounds with different mindsets. If I am dealing with them, I need to deal with 20 people from different countries in 20 different ways. For them is only one, is me! For me, I need 20 different ways. The way I am dealing with Korean, I cannot deal with Chinese or Malay. The way I am dealing with Chinese, I cannot deal with Mauritian. That is a bit challenging." (I. Ansari, 1 year and 5 months in Malaysia, personal communication, January 29, 2015)

Other expatriates participated in the interviews raised language as the major challenge for them in Malaysia either in a public area or workplace. For examples,

"The locals do the sign language, I guess that they are not very sure about the directions." (A. Jumarang, 1 year and 6 months in Malaysia, personal communication, January 30, 2015)

"What is sometimes challenging is the language because we notice that the knowledge of English for our Malaysian colleagues is not always up to standard." (J. Nijssen, 1 year in Malaysia, personal communication, February 2, 2015)

The sum of these interview information prompted further investigation on expatriates in Malaysia as effective cross-cultural adjustment is essential to manage their working life abroad. It is important to increase the expatriates' adjustment level in order to avoid assignment failure. The issues identified in the interviews are used to stipulate the formulation of the research framework as shown in Figure 3.1 (pg.49).

Apart from the aforementioned practical problems, it is important to point out the scarcity of empirical studies on COR theory and expatriate success. Extant literature on expatriate adjustment has unravelled different findings for individual, job, organisational, and non-work factors (Kim & Slocum, 2008; Awais Bhatti, Battour, Ismail, & Sundram, 2014; Lee & Kartika, 2014). Though the research seems to be growing, little has been done to examine support and expatriate success in terms of adjustment, withdrawal intentions, and job performance. Many studies have considered support from organisations and supervisors are more dependable to facilitate expatriate adjustment and job performance (Kraimer et al., 2001; Kraimer & Wayne, 2004; Stroppa & Spieß, 2011; Lee et al., 2013).

However, no known studies have looked at the integration of primary stakeholders' support (organisations, HCNs, and spouses) and expatriate success in details. Van Erp, van der Zee, Giebels, and Duijn (2014) pointed out that most studies mainly focus on expatriates themselves, but studies that consider other stakeholders have been limited in expatriate research (Takeuchi, 2010). Abdul Malek et al.'s (2015) work was the only research which included these three stakeholders in a single study. They examined POS and HCN support, and spousal adjustment instead of spousal support to predict expatriate adjustment, then job performance. Rather than focusing on adjustment and job performance, this study investigates how primary stakeholders' support can influence withdrawal intentions as instant precursors of assignment failure (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005) that can provide a broader perspective of expatriate success (Caligiuri, 1997; Caligiuri et al., 1999).

Well-known theories such as anxiety/uncertainty management (AUM) theory (Abdul Malek & Budhwar, 2013; Abdul Malek, et al., 2015), COR theory (Cao, Hirschi, & Deller, 2012; van Erp, et al., 2014; Andresen, 2015) human capital theory (Shaffer & Harrison, 1998; Shaffer, Harrison, Gilley, & Luk, 2001), job demands and resources (JD-R) theory (Mahajan & De Silva, 2012; Ren, Shaffer, Harrison, Fu, & Fodchuk 2014), social capital theory (Liu & Shaffer, 2005; Lee & Vorst, 2010) and social identity theory (Toh & Denisi, 2007; Olsen & Martins, 2009) have been used in numerous expatriate studies. The use of these theories can underpin the patterns of linkages and the relationships between different sets of predictors and expatriate outcomes in the respective studies. However, the latent assumptions of many of these theories cannot give an avenue for understanding the role of primary stakeholders' support on expatriate success in this study, except COR theory. COR theory is not commonly used in expatriate research because only a few articles are found to apply this theory as an overarching theory (van Erp, et al., 2014; Andresen, 2015) and supporting theory (Cao et al., 2012) to date. These articles, however, had yet to discover social support as effective resources in expatriate assignment. To address this limitation, this study contributes to COR theory to explain how primary stakeholders' support may function as coping resources for expatriates to deal with assignment challenges in Malaysia.

Based on the problems highlighted above, this study attempts to identify the influence of support from organisations, HCNs, and spouses on expatriate adjustment and withdrawal intentions, and in turn towards expatriate performance. Although these three criteria represent the main predictors of successful expatriate assignment (Caligiuri, 1997; Caligiuri et al., 1999), this study specifically looks at adjustment and withdrawal intentions that become the prerequisites for performance. Many researchers have suggested that POS (e.g., Kraimer et al., 2001; Kraimer & Wayne, 2004), HCNs (e.g., Lee & Vorst, 2010; Mahajan & De Silva, 2012; Abdul Malek et al., 2015), and spouses (e.g., Caligiuri & Lazarona, 2002; Wang & Nayir, 2006; Lee & Kartika, 2014) are sources of interaction that provide psychological resources to give recognition and facilitate expatriate adjustment. Stroppa and Spieß (2011) reported that social support is essential to eliminate the risk of assignment failure. Thus, this study draws on COR theory to integrate support from primary stakeholders that are expected to mitigate the problems encountered by expatriates in Malaysia.

1.4 Research Questions

The objectives of this research are to answer the questions as follows:

1. What are the factors that influence expatriate adjustment in Malaysia?
2. What are the factors that influence withdrawal intentions in Malaysia?
3. What is the relationship between expatriate adjustment, withdrawal intentions, and expatriate performance?

1.5 Research Objectives

The research objectives are stated as follows:

1. To examine the influence of POS on expatriate adjustment and withdrawal intentions in Malaysia.
2. To examine the influence of HCN support on expatriate adjustment and withdrawal intentions in Malaysia.
3. To examine the influence of spousal support on expatriate adjustment and withdrawal intentions in Malaysia.
4. To examine the relationship between expatriate adjustment, withdrawal intentions, and expatriate performance.

1.6 Significance of the Study

1.6.1 Theoretical Contribution

COR theory is more significant to be used because it takes into consideration the influence of primary stakeholders' support (organisations, HCNs and spouses) as coping mechanism for expatriates' adjustment challenges and withdrawal intentions, and the consequences they bring to performance. Section 1.3 highlights that the implicit assumptions of those prominent theories (AUM theory, human capital theory, JD-R theory, social capital theory, and social identity) have failed to capture the substance of the relationships between support and expatriate success in a more holistic way. Existing studies which utilised COR theory (Cao et al., 2012; van Erp et al., 2014; Andresen, 2015) have understood that expatriates are driven to acquire new resources as they are inundated with excessive demands. These studies have categorised the resources according to the tenet COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989) to enrich our understanding of how different resources can influence expatriate adjustment and job performance. These resources are career capital (Cao et al., 2012), intercultural traits (van Erp et al., 2014), and job embeddedness (Andresen, 2015). Although COR theory does explain that resources are crucial to deal with various situations, this theory has yet to elucidate how social support can facilitate expatriate success in an international setting. Therefore, this study contributes to COR theory as support from primary stakeholders can be considered prime resources for expatriates to cope with the challenges they face during their assignments.

This study used an existing research framework of Kraimer et al. (2001) as a basis by incorporating HCNs as one of the important stakeholders instead of leader-member exchange (LMX). Meanwhile, POS and spousal support remain in the framework because they are important sources of support to expatriates (Takeuchi, 2010). According to the literature, HCN support can improve expatriates' adjustment (Lee & Vorst, 2010). In the meantime, it is also expected to reduce their assignment withdrawal intentions (Mahajan & De Silva, 2012). Nevertheless, many researchers (Kraimer & Wayne, 2004; Takeuchi, Wang, Marinova, & Yao, 2009; Benson & Pattie, 2009; Lee et al., 2013) have emphasised that support from organisations and supervisors can help expatriates feel adjusted and perform better. In light of this, Takeuchi (2010) argued that besides organisations, other stakeholders such as HCNs and spouses should be given attention in expatriate studies as they can affect and be affected by an assignment's objectives. Gupta, Banerjee, and Gaur (2012) noted that these stakeholders can be integrated in one study to exhibit the underlying phenomenon of expatriates. To address this research gap, this study introduces support from the three stakeholders (organisations, HCNs and spouses) to provide a better understanding for expatriate success.

Despite the growing popularity towards antecedents of expatriate success, this study contributes to the literature by including support from organisations, HCNs and spouses to predict expatriate adjustment and withdrawal intentions. Some scholars have investigated these three sources of support on expatriate adjustment in independent studies, for instance, POS (Bashir, 2012; Kawai & Strange, 2014), HCN support (Lee & Vorst, 2010), and spousal support (Waxin, 2004) without considering all of them in a comprehensive study. As such, this can hardly interpret who is the most influential one on expatriate adjustment. Though stakeholders can provide useful resources for expatriates to succeed in their assignments (Miao et al., 2011), it is elusive to understand how effective their support can be in minimising expatriates' withdrawal intentions as one of the success criteria (Caligiuri, 2000). Past studies have showed that withdrawal intentions can only be influenced by POS (Shaffer et al., 2001; van der Heijden, van Engen, & Paauwe, 2009; Cao, Hirschi, & Deller, 2014). In addition, given that both HCN support (Toh & Denisi, 2005; Mahajan & De Silva, 2012) and spousal support (Lauring & Selmer, 2010) are potential determinants of expatriate success, they are expected to reduce expatriates' intentions to withdraw from the assignment. To overcome these limitations, this study proposes the three groups of stakeholders' support to determine the greatest source of support on expatriate adjustment and withdrawal intentions.

There is an argument put forth by the researchers that expatriate success has been defined in an inconsistent way (Kraimer & Wayne, 2004; Bashir, 2012). It is noted that the three most common criteria for assessing an expatriate's success are cross-cultural adjustment, withdrawal intentions, and job performance (Caligiuri, 2000; Caligiuri & Day, 2000; Bashir, 2012). However, previous studies have focused on merely one or two of the success criteria only (Shaffer, Ferzandi, Harrison, Gregersen, & Black, 2006). In many cases, the combination of the three success criteria is not given enough attention in the expatriate literature. As cross-cultural adjustment is the main pre-condition for expatriate success, Pinto et al. (2012a) postulated that the studies on the outcomes of expatriate adjustment are not well established. Bringing in COR theory, expatriates who are culturally unadjusted to the new environment due to a lack of social support may confront greater withdrawal intentions, and deteriorating job performance. To take a broad view

of expatriate success, this study incorporates the three attributes of success and explore how they are associated with each other.

1.6.2 Practical Contributions

Notwithstanding the high costs incurred in employing expatriates, the findings of this study can provide MNCs and expatriate hiring organisations with a better understanding of expatriate success. It is useful to practitioners to consider the support from primary stakeholders (organisations, HCNs and spouses) in their development of expatriate management and policy making. Practitioners have to establish an effective support mechanism to ensure that the expatriates can face obstacles they encounter in the host country. Besides, practical and professional support are necessary to accomplish assignment objectives. Practitioners are expected to provide expatriates social support to alleviate the psychological problems when culture shock intrudes. Expatriates with a substantial amount of POS are likely to have better management of stress caused by uncertain cultural adjustment and able to perform well in their assignments.

This research also recognises the importance of HCN support on expatriate success. HCNs appear to possess a great deal of information about how locals live and work in their daily life in Malaysia. It is an uphill task for expatriates who are unfamiliar with the foreign environment to hang around and mingle with the locals. The findings can help practitioners introduce buddy, induction, and mentoring programs for both HCNs and expatriates to bridge the gaps between the two groups (Toh & Denisi, 2007). These programs can also encourage HCNs to be helpful citizens to expatriates who are in dire need of support for the problem-solving during their assignments. By doing so, expatriates can build a meaningful social relation with HCNs and create a fruitful working condition to increase the likelihood of successful assignments.

Last but not least, the findings of this research can also increase the awareness of practitioners about the importance of expatriates' accompanying spouses. For sure, spousal support is more effective in dealing with expatriates' adjustment than other family members such as parents and children. International assignment is a stressful period for expatriates at the beginning, the spouses are responsible for making their partner's life less stressful in both work and non-work domains. To make it possible, practitioners can collaborate with expatriates' spouses and make use of their time and resources. They can provide customised assistance to spouses in bonding with expatriates while on the assignments. It is important to take the spouses' adjustment into account as well. This is because spouses who are emotionally and mentally stable living in the host country are always ready for giving support and help to expatriates, which may guarantee expatriate success in future.

1.7 Terms of References

The definitions for the main concepts in this study are as follows:

Expatriates	Foreign skilled, managerial, professional and technical workers earning a minimum amount of RM5000 in Malaysia (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2016).
Expatriate adjustment	The process of adaptation expatriates has to go through when living and working in a foreign country (Black et al., 1991).
Perceived organisational support (POS)	An organisation that values the employees' contributions and cares about their well-being, which is expected to contribute to positive behaviours and work outcomes (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986).
Host country national (HCN) support	Assistance and information provided by local employees and citizens for expatriates through giving a conducive living and working environment in the host country (Abdul Malek, 2011).
Spousal support	Emotional and instrumental resources married expatriates received from their partners throughout the assignment (Aycan & Eskin, 2005).
Withdrawal intentions	Cognitions that reflect what extent expatriates plan to withdraw themselves from international assignments they are currently performing (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005).
Expatriate performance	Expatriate behaviours that focus on job responsibilities and interpersonal skills to interact and establish relationships with HCNs (Kraimer & Wayne, 2004).

1.8 Organisation of the Thesis

The thesis is organised into six chapters which cover:

Chapter One: *Introduction* discusses the current issues in the area of expatriates. It highlights important information that involves expatriation in Malaysia. This chapter also stresses the nature of the research problems that formulate the research questions and objectives. Next, it provides the significance of the study and the key definitions of the terms in this research. The chapter is concluded with a summary.

Chapter Two: *Literature Review* is done in accordance with the title of the thesis. It reviews the past studies on various antecedents and models of expatriate adjustment. This chapter focuses on primary stakeholders' support, mainly POS, HCN support, and spousal support. In addition, it discusses different concepts and past studies about withdrawal intentions and expatriate performance. Then, it reviews the empirical relationships between the aforesaid main variables. The review of COR theory and its applicability in expatriate studies is provided. By the end of the chapter, there is a summary of research gaps identified from the literature.

Chapter Three: *Research Framework and Hypotheses Development* commences the introduction of research framework development with the application of COR theory as a focal theory. This chapter presents the conceptual framework and provides the linkages between the main variables. The hypotheses are developed according to the theoretical arguments to examine the relationships between the variables as portrayed in the research framework.

Chapter Four: *Research Methodology* starts with the philosophy paradigm. It proceeds to research design and explains how this research is carried out. In this section, the justifications are provided to determine the use of quantitative approach and questionnaire. This chapter also talks about the sample size determination and sampling strategy that give guidance for the researcher to get potential respondents. This chapter includes a data collection storyline, a brief description of questionnaire design, and the measurements used. Other parts of the chapter delineate the pilot testing, reliability analysis, and data analytical technique.

Chapter Five: *Results and Data Analysis* looks at the steps taken to derive the findings after data collection. It begins with data cleaning processes that encompass missing value treatment, outliers, and normality test. This chapter discusses demographic details of the respondents and the descriptive analysis of the main variables. The chapter also provides the common method variance (CMV) analysis and multicollinearity test. The final part discusses the statistical findings of the hypotheses as delineated in Chapter Three.

Chapter Six: *Discussion and Conclusion* presents the justifications for the findings of each hypothesis after data analysed. Most of the discussions are complemented by interview excerpts from the respondents. This chapter highlights the limitation of the present study. From this section, it also provides some directions for future studies in this area of research. The chapter is concluded with the overall results.

1.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter provides an overview and sums up the key ideas to support the chosen variables that are investigated in this thesis. This chapter gives a brief understanding of how this research is carried out to address the research problems, and subsequently to achieve the research objectives.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1- Questionnaire



Dear Respondents,

I am a full-time Master of Science (MSc) student at Putra Business School (formerly known as Graduate School of Management), Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). May I seek your help and cooperation with my research project?

As part of the degree requirements, I am currently conducting a research entitled “Effects of Support from Organisations, Host Country Nationals and Spouses on Expatriate Success.” The objective of this research is to determine how different sources of support influence expatriate success in Malaysia. To ensure representative result, it is required to have 383 completed questionnaires filled up by expatriates working in Malaysia. Thus, your participation is important to achieve that questionnaire number

This questionnaire will take about 15-20 minutes to complete. Your help in completing and returning this questionnaire is much appreciated. All responses to this questionnaire will be kept **strictly confidential** and no references will be made by name of the organisations and the respondents which/who participated in the research.

Our utmost appreciation for the attention you have paid.

Kind regards,

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Section A: This section is about your views on the support provided by your organisation during your current assignment.

According to the scale below, indicate how strongly you agree each statement.

1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
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My organisation

1.	values my contribution to its well-being.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	could hire someone to replace me at a lower salary if it would do so.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	fails to appreciate any extra effort from me.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	strongly considers my goals and values.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	would ignore any complaint from me.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	disregards my best interests when it makes decisions that affect me.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	is available for help when I have a problem.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	really cares about my well-being.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	would fail to notice me even I did the best job possible.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	is willing to help me when I need a special favour.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	cares about my general satisfaction at work.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	would take advantage of me if I am given the opportunity.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	shows very little concern for me.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	cares about my opinions.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	takes pride in my accomplishments at work.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	tries to make my job as interesting as possible.	1	2	3	4	5

Section B: This section is about your views of the support provided by the local community (e.g., co-workers, local friends and service providers) in the host country.

According to the scale below, indicate how strongly you agree each statement.

1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
------------------------	---------------	--------------	------------	---------------------

My co-workers/friends in the host country.....

1.	give me information about host country activities (e.g., recreation, entertainment).	1	2	3	4	5
2.	listen to me when I need to talk about personal feelings during my assignment.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	help me out in a crisis situation at work although they have to go out their way to do so.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	would let me know if I did something well at work with host country nationals.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	give me information about host country customs.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	inform me if my actions are not in compliance with the host country customs.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	give me information about where I can buy what I need for home or work.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	are concerned about my well-being during my assignment.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	make it clear what is expected of me at work.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	give me information about how to get things done at work in the local context.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	help me to take care of my family when I am busy or away.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	give me objective feedback about how I am handling things at work.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	give me information regarding interpersonal relationships with host country nationals.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	help me feel better when I am irritated working in the local conditions.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	give me tangible help (i.e., helping to unpack) in settling down in the host country.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	are easy to talk to.	1	2	3	4	5

Section C: This section is about your views of the support from your spouse with you in Malaysia.

According to the scale below, indicate how strongly you agree each statement on your spouse's support during your stay in Malaysia.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

1.	He/She provides me with encouragement.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	He/She provides me with useful information about local customs.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	He/She says things that raise my self-confidence.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	He/She listens to me when I need to talk.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	He/She shows that he/she cares about me as a person.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	He/She understands the way I think and feel about things.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	He/She provides me with direct help, that is, do or give me things I need.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I would talk with him/her when I am upset, nervous, or depressed about something.	1	2	3	4	5

Section D: This section is about your views on the overall adjustment in the host country.

According to the scale below, please indicate how unadjusted or adjusted you are to the following items. Adjustment refers to how comfortable you feel in the sense that you feel you know what needs to be done in order to successfully carry-out each of the following items. For example, if you feel "strongly unadjusted" to your specific assignment responsibilities, circle a number 1. This means that you do not feel that you know what needs to be done to successfully carry-out your specific assignment responsibilities

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly unadjusted	Unadjusted	Neutral	Adjusted	Strongly adjusted

1.	Living conditions in general	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Housing conditions	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Food	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Shopping	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Cost of living	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Entertainment/recreation facilities	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Health care facilities	1	2	3	4	5

8.	Specific assignment responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Performance standard and expectations	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Supervisory responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Working conditions	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Socialising with host country nationals outside of the work.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Interacting with host country nationals on a day-to-day basis.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Speaking with host country nationals outside of the work (fluency of understood language).	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Interacting with host country nationals outside of the work.	1	2	3	4	5

Section E: This section is about your views on the intentions to stay in your current assignment.

According to the scale below, indicate how strongly you agree each statement.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

1.	I often think about leaving the present assignment.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I intend to search for an alternative to the present assignment.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I plan to leave the present assignment.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I often think about leaving the present organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I intend to search for an alternative to the present organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I plan to leave the present organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I often think about leaving the present occupation.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I intend to search for an alternative to the present occupation.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I plan to leave the present occupation.	1	2	3	4	5

Section F: This section is about how you, as an expatriate, evaluate your job performance in current work role.

According to the scale below, rate yourself on the following aspects of job performance. For example, if you consider yourself to be “very good” to the item, circle a number 5.

1 Very Poor	2 Poor	3 Fair	4 Good	5 Very Good
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1.	Meeting job objectives.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Overall job performance.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Meeting performance standards and expectations.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Technical competence.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Meeting specific job responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Meeting his/her supervisors'/co-workers' expectations.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Adapting to foreign business customs and norms.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Interacting with host country co-workers.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Establishing relationships with key host country business contacts	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Maintaining good working relationships with host country nationals.	1	2	3	4	5

Section G: Your Background

For each question check (✓) the response option that best describes you or write your response as appropriate.

1. What is the country of origin of your organisation? (HQ's location)

2. What is your country of origin? _____

3. How long have you been working for your current organisation? ____ year(s)
____month(s)

4. How long have you been working in this country? ____ year(s) ____month(s)

5. Is this your first international assignment?

a. Yes		b. No	
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If No, how many times have you been on international assignments? _____ times

6. Are you able to speak/converse in the host country's main language?

a. Yes, fluently.		b. Yes, partly.		c. No.	
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7. I am currently working in _____ (e.g., human resource, finance, marketing, IT) department.

Section H: Demographic

Please check (✓) or write your response as appropriate.

1. Gender:

a. Male		b. Female	
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2. Age:

a. Below 20		b. 21 years - 30 years		c. 31 years - 40 years	
d. 41 years - 50 years		e. 51 years - 60 years		f. Above 60 years	

3. Marital status:

a. Single		b. Married	
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4. What is your level of assignment?

a. Top management		b. Middle management	
c. Non-managerial		d. Others	

Further comments that you would like to add regarding this questionnaire or your expatriate experience that has not been covered above.

Appendix 2 - Preliminary Interview Schedule

Opening:

Thank you for taking part in the interview for this research. Before we begin, let me just brief on how this interview will be carried out. The interview will take about **20 minutes**. If there are any question(s) that you wish not to answer, just let me know and we can skip the question(s). Also I would like to ask your permission **to record this interview**. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Interview Questions:

1. What is (are) the serious problem(s) or challenge(s) to you as an expatriate?
2. What are the cultural challenges you are currently facing in Malaysia?
3. Could you share your experience on how these challenges have influenced your adjustment in Malaysia?
4. Do these challenges influence your work in Malaysia either positively or negatively?
5. Are you able to overcome these challenges personally?
6. What are the possible solutions that may help minimise the problem(s) or challenge(s) you encounter?

Closure:

We seemed to have covered a great deal of information and you have been very patient. Before I end the interview, is there anything we left out that you would like to clarify? Thank you so much for sharing the information. I really appreciate your taking time out from your busy schedule to grant me this interview.

Appendix 3 - Preliminary Interview Transcription

Date: 27 January 2015

Time: 6.46p.m. - 6.59p.m.

Position: Senior Associate

Participant: A Sri Lankan expatriate

I: Interviewer; **P1:** Participant 1

I: What is the most serious problem to you as an expatriate?

P1: Do you mean here (*company*) or outside?

I: Yes, can be both.

P1: Can be both right? When the first time I come to Malaysia, I saw the gap, the cultural gap from a different country as Malaysia is a different country. We saw the cultural change in Malaysia so we're trying to adjust ourselves with this culture (*Malaysian culture*). Ok...the main thing we saw that when we're coming from our country to Malaysia. We will...comparing the salary with the locals. Our salary is a bit high, am I right (*laughing*)? So we saw that we are having some argument with (unmentioned word-*the locals*) why the foreigners are getting this much salary. We came here with so many sacrifices. We have to pay rent. Rent is very expensive in Malaysia, those kinds of things. So we don't see much savings in our hands. So Malaysia is a bit expensive (*laughing*).

I: I see...

P1: Ya, other thing is tax. Malaysia they have tax. Tax for expat. The first time when we come to Malaysia. The Malaysia's rule was... if you're (*expat*) staying in more than 182 days, we have to fuel the maximum tax 26%. For my salary, I think I pay like thousands plus every month.

I: Oh (*feeling surprised*), for the tax?

P1: And I'm still paying tax.

I: What are the cultural challenges as you are currently facing in Malaysia? Currently facing (*stressed tone*)

P1: Now, because since I also got adjusted with this culture (*Malaysian culture*). Now is okay. Like the first time when we're moving from our country to Malaysia. We found some issues like the people (*Malaysians*) they don't respect...

I: So who are they? Who are the people don't respect? Do you mean Malaysians?

PI: Yes, locals (refers to *Malaysians*).

I: Local. So, could you share your experiences on how these challenges influence you adjustment process?

P1: Being friendlier, sharing our opinions.

I: Because just now you mentioned that the Malaysian's attitude is not respectful, right? So, do this issue influence your adjustment in Malaysia in terms of your living, your work and interaction?

P1: Yayaya. To identify the attitudes, we also want to adjust ourselves with them (*Malaysians*). And we will try to be friendlier with them (*Malaysians*).

I: (*Laughing*)

P1: Now, thing is okaylah (*fine*).

I: How about at work? Do you mean at workplace or outside workplace?

P1: Both.

I: Do you have any experience that impresses you? Any incidents that you can't forget due to these cultural challenges?

P1: Yes, there was.

I: Can you share further?

P1: One day I went to a tailoring place. When there was a tailoring, he (*a Malaysian worker*) was saying this clothe is this much expensive. And in my country this is (*clothe*) this much (*cheaper*). Then, he said like: "Your country is low class; Malaysia is high-class". Something like that.

I and P1: (*Laughing*)

I: I see. Since you have faced these kinds of these adjustment problems, are these problems influential on your career?

P1: Yes.

I: How?

P1: I got to change myself. Now I'm okay with in this environment (*in Malaysia*). Yes...go up with my career.

I: Do these problems have effects on your performance, job performance?

P1: Yes, there was. But now since I was changed and trying to change.

I: What were the problems? Problems in jobs? How the problems affect your jobs?

P1: If someone is not listening to you, you can't work with them, right?

I: Yes.

P1: You have to be changed by how you are working together right with them?

I: So, since you have faced these kinds of problem, how you ever thought to leave Malaysia?

P1: No (*answered promptly*), because if I leave because of that (*the problem*). We came here with so many sacrifices. We came here to earn much because we got a good opportunity and so on so forth over here. If I leave Malaysia, then I will be losing other benefits as well (*stressed tone*).

I: No matter how serious the problems were, you have to stay because of the benefits?

P1: Yes.

I: What are the possible solutions that help you minimise the problems you encounter? Any solutions?

P1: Try to understand the people (*Malaysians*) right and our reacting. So, based on that, you (*the expat*) can be friendlier.

I: Your suggestion in solutions? Do you think your company and your superiors are important to help you minimise the problems?

P1: Yes.

I: Can you please elaborate further? Should be how? How should the company and your supervisors help you minimise the problems?

P1: Because the help...like the first survey right, the employer opinion survey (*questionnaire*). In that survey also, we can just mention right whatever the comments we have. They (*company and supervisors*) can review those after the survey (*filling up the questionnaire*).

I: You mean go through the questionnaire from your company? How about your supervisor (superior)? Do they really help you minimise the problems when you have these cultural challenges?

P1: Ya, they also understand, but is fine because this is a foreigner.

I: So you guys are just facing the problems together?

P1: Yes, I think so.

I: Ok. How about the local people here? The supports from local people (the Malaysians) are influential on the problems?

P1: I see most of the things like that. More workaholic like local Chinese because Chinese they kill (*complete*) one job. They will be focusing on the job and that they will not talk to. If someone is sitting next to you, they will not talk and then finish their job. They are more workaholic than...

I: Do you think that they are able to help you overcome the problems? The Malaysian workers?

P1: What I see is cultural change in Malaysia. They (*Malaysians*) work at 8 o'clock, they come back. If they finish at 5 (*pm*), they will finish at 5pm. If lunch hour is one hour, they're taking almost one hour. That's all.

I: Do they help you minimise the problems?

P1: Because in our country, we don't take care of the time (*being not time conscious*). If we have, we're just trying to finish the job. Meaning like if I'm working from 8(*am*) to 5(*pm*), I don't need to...from 8(*am*) to 5(*pm*). Maybe I will work till like 6 o'clock or 30 minutes additional than that. But I don't expect any benefits like any increments or extra incomes (*laughing*).

I: Last one is the spouse. When you face problems due to cultural challenges, does your spouse help you a lot in overcoming these challenges in Malaysia?

P1: I think spouse I recently got married, so she was not aware of these things (*cultural challenges*).

I: Do you tell your problems to her when you have these kinds of cultural challenges?

P1: Now she's back in Malaysia. She also has to adjust in case she is also facing these kinds of things (*cultural challenges*). She also has to be adjusted like what I did. Ya, I already told her that these are things that we paid...when we come Malaysia first time.

I: Do you think the support, especially the support from your company, supervisors, local people and spouse influential on your career?

P1: Yes.

I: Do you think they are supportive? Which one is more supportive?

P1: It is this if my personal life and my personal things affecting my work. My spouse will be responsible and she'll be influencing me. And, of course, like in my work affecting because of my personal things or whatever, then my supervisors and colleagues are supporting me.

I: At workplace?

P1: (*Nodded his head*)

I: Before we end the interview, is there anything we left out that you would like to clarify?

P1: They (*landlord*) are giving high rates for expats than locals for rents.

I: For example? In terms of what?

P1: In terms of if we want to rent the house or room, the charge is very high for expats. The Malaysians pay one room 200-300 (*Ringgit Malaysia*); for foreigners maybe 700-800 (*Ringgit Malaysia*) something. Anyway, 600 plus (*Ringgit Malaysia*). (*additional problem*)

Date: 29 January 2015

Time: 2.05p.m. - 2.24p.m

Position: Team Leader

Participant: An Indian expatriate

I: Interviewer; P2: Participant 2

I: The first question is: "What is the most serious problem to you as an expatriate?"

P2: Actually? (*feeling unsure*)

I: Any problems?

P2: ...You mean personal, professional, anything?

I: Anything! Yes.

P2: Ok, being an expatriate is we are working with the local people so how they take it. It depends. So, building relationships with them is very important because some may like some may not like being expatriate working in (*their*) country something like that. But,

so far I think this issue I never face but I think some of the expatriates, but I think they really face this issue because they are not in their own country so they're in the different country, so different people. So, you know, in that manner, it must basically a problem but a challenge.

I: There are challenges. Ya.

P2: Is a challenge actually. I cannot say is the problem but is a challenge. But how to deal with and how to deal with the people is something it depends on the people.

I: What are the cultural challenges you are currently facing in Malaysia?

P2: Actually for me being a Muslim, being in this country because it is an Islamic country. I do not face any cultural issues actually because I find you know my own religion everything is like all similar here. So I do not feel so much of difference, the only thing is as I said different country having a different people and different approach. So the way I need to deal with my people in my country is a difference how I am dealing with in Malaysia with different people. Because here you have Chinese, local Malay Muslim, Indian Malay so if I need to deal with them is a different approach. I cannot use the same approach with the Chinese person and the same approach with Malay. So is a two different approach basically so that is the only challenge.

I: How is the language? Do you think you have difficulties in learning Malay language?

P2: Actually I never try to learn Malay language too much. But, while communicating, yes, some areas we find it difficult to communicate like when we are taking a cab, when we need to explain where to go is very difficult. Let's find faith, u know those things. If, those key words we need to learn. If we know that key word is a bit easy, but otherwise is quite difficult. Some Chinese and some Malay people, they do not know English so is very difficult to communicate. That is the challenge.

I: I see. How about Malaysians' attitudes? How do you perceive (*them*)?

P2: Malaysian's attitude is differ person to person, differs professions to professions. If, take an example of Chinese, if I am dealing with Chinese taxi driver, his attitude is different. If I am going to a shop, dealing with the Chinese, his attitude is completely different or friendly attitude. Same goes to Malay so it depends on the people and they are actually working in which profession they are.

I: Right, ok, so the next question: "Could you share your experience on how these challenges influence your adjustment process?"

P2: Actually this is the first time I am working overseas.

I: Oh! (*feeling surprised*)

P2: I never been to any other country for working. I am being to Malaysia earlier in 2005; 2008, but only for training purpose. So I did not get much chance to, you know, meet people how to live their life. But, now when I came for this job, I need to live their life actually I have to say. Their food, their culture, their everything I need to accept. And I need to deal with them according to these. So the only challenges here is adjustment.

I: Ya, adjustment.

P2: In our country, we normally do not sleep so early but here 7(p.m) here means the dinner time. In our country, we used to dinner around 10-11(p.m).

I: It's quite late (*laughing*).

P2: It's quite late but here also we change ourselves. Now, I started taking my dinner at 8 o'clock. So, this is the change because I need to make my child sleep early. He needs to go early school. You know, we have the neighbours was Chinese, Malay. They do not like people having noise in their house after 7(p.m). So we need to deal with that...many too...time ourselves in their culture. That adjustment is a bit difficult in the beginning.

I: How about in terms of work and interaction...adjustment?

P2: Again, like here also, you see we have...I am working as a Team Leader and I have a team having a different culture, different cultural, different mindsets. So if I am dealing with them, I need to deal with like if I am handling 20 people, 20 different from different countries and I am dealing with them in 20 different ways. For them is one, for them is only one, is me! For me, is 20 different ways. The way I am dealing with Korean, I cannot deal with Chinese or Malay. The way I am dealing with Chinese, I cannot deal with Mauritian. It is challenging but it depends how one accepted.

I: Ok, good, are these challenges influential on your career?

P2: Actually yes. It improves me a lot in terms, you know, managing people because now I am quite confident enough wherever I go, whichever country I go. I can at least deal with the people. This confidence I was not having earlier because in our country, we are dealing with only the people with same culture, same mentality, same thoughts. But here is different, everything is different.

I: How about in terms of job performance?

P2: You mean my performance?

I: At workplace.

P2: Workplace, I think is improving definitely for me. I see is an improvement. Now I have a challenges some, you know when you give an opinion someone accepts, someone not accept. Those who does not accept, I take it as a challenge. So I need to make him or her accept your thoughts, accept your views. That is a bit challenge. But, again, that person might take it, might not take it.

I: Due to these challenges, have ever thoughts to leave Malaysia?

P2: Actually not, not with these challenges but the personal level. When I came here, I had some incidents, you know because which I thought maybe whether is safe to stay in Malaysia or not.

I: Can you explain further, what are the incidents that you face?

P2: Ok, I came here in October 2012, I came here. I am married with my wife. She is a professional, she is a doctor. And I am having a kid, now 4 years old. When I came here, he was 2 years old. I came here alone, after 6 months and I planned and called them (*his*

wife and son) here. In Feb 2013, they came to Malaysia. In March, just one month later, we were passing by from our condo (*condominium*) and there were two bikers came in, you know, with big knife (*parang*). They tried to snatch the bag from my wife. It was the first time happening in my life with us. In our country, it never happened to us. I never say in our country this thing never happens. It happens. To me, it never happens. It was quite shocking for all of us.

I: Yes, the safety issue here is alarming.

P2: Yes, is alarming. So, that time I was a bit disturbed almost a month. I was thinking like whether I should stay here or go back. I was in a complete disturbance. Then, finally we decided rather we stay back or go back is better we do not go outside after 7 o'clock or 8 o'clock (*at night*). If we are going outside, we ensure that we come (*home*) by cab, or, by you know very safe transport, not by at least walking on the street because we are having the habit walking on the street in the night in our country. But here is different, so that will make the commitment to ourselves rather going back we will ensure we do not do this kind of thing. We do not go out in the night so that we can avoid this issue.

I: What are the possible solutions that help minimise the problems you encounter?

P2: I think one thing is like to the government (*Malaysian government*). They know like Malaysia is being a very...is a country where people like to come, stay, work because of culture, because of the people.

I: Definitely.

P2: People are very nice, very friendly! Ok, that is why people love to come in Malaysia and work. Ya, but is the government's responsibility as well somehow to take, you know, people's security very seriously. If that part is covered, I think Malaysia can be a very fantastic place to work because most of the people they do not stay just because of security. They feel like, you know, is not really safe so they do not stay because I was having many colleagues who wanted to come. But, because of this incident, they took a decision not to come. Ya, the exception like I took a decision, I said "God is great, let's go, let's see." If anything can happen anywhere in the world. That is not about Malaysia, things can happen, that thing can happen anywhere. That is not about Malaysia that is about how you manage the thing. I think, so far...

I: How about your company? Is (*this*) your company doing enough to support your assignment here?

P2: Actually, in terms of relocation, staying, support. Yes! Company is really taking care of but when it comes to some government's norms where anything the company is helpless, cannot do anything. Then, company will straight away say: "We cannot help, so it depends". The other hand, yes, they are whenever they come about government's norm. Like take, an example, we simply we have this new instruction from the government where the visa will not be given to the dependent if the salary is less than 5000 (*Ringgit Malaysia*). This is the new norm coming from the government. So in this wake, complete cannot do anything. They need to follow the government's instruction. So, when they cannot do anything they will not. Whenever they can help, they are helping.

For me, for my development, yes, completely doing a lot. They appreciate me. They support me whenever I need their help. So far is okay.

I: How about the support from your superior? Is he or she influential on your career?

P2: For me, actually yes because we are having this on-and-on one-to-one meeting where we discuss about the career road. And, I am being involved in couple of activities which can help me to make goals on the high level. I am not sure about other team leaders, but for me, yes. So far, that is okay.

I: The third one is local workers? Are they playing a very important role in your career here?

P2: Actually in our organisation or in our team. Every team member is very important, whether is local or non-local but the only challenges we face is the non-local, the expatriates. They stay for a long (*time*) unless they get a very good opportunity in their country. They will go but they stay for a long (*time*). So, the consistency is quite high. When you talk about the locals, err...they might not stay long with us, so when...and that is a fact. This can happen in any country. If I am in my country, I will be doing the same thing. It is not about the people, but, this thing (*local turnover*) is there. When we hire locals, err...we expect that after 1.5 years or 2 years, ready for the resignation. That is acceptable.

I: How about outside workplace? Are the local people being helpful?

P2: As I said, it depends where we are. Like, some people they do not want to. But most of the time, I have seen “Yes” especially the Malays they are quite humble and they support. When you go for commercial way, the Chinese are really really you know...they are running (*improving*) very fast. I mean, they are a bit higher in terms of doing a business and all these kinds of things. In education also, if you see Chinese they are quite faster than as compared to the Malays.

I: Last one, spouse. Is spouse playing a very important role during your assignment in Malaysia?

P2: Actually, yes! Because if I stay alone I need to do everything by myself, correct? So I might not be able to pay more attention on my health, or I might not be able to pay more attention on my profession if I stay alone. Now I am staying with my wife, my spouse, she helps me a lot. Now I am having a kid as well, if I am late from office. She ensures that nothing is left, everything is done at home so that when I go home, I get food on time. I get everything on time. So, in that case, and she is quite supportive, for me, very supported. When I feel like to communicate something, to share something, I shared with her and I feel very easy. She appreciates me. She corrects me whenever I am wrong. Sometimes, I discussed with her about the professional thing and the incidents that happened in the work. Sometimes, I am upset. Sometimes, I am not too good. She helped me to understand like, you know, this thing happened. By profession, she is also a doctor. She has been all these issues in the past in her career. Now, she is not working is a different story. Yes, she makes a bit different for me staying with her. As I said, especially like, you know, in Malaysia, we find that almost like our culture. So, is a bit good so far.

I: We seemed to have covered a great deal of information and you have been very patient. Before I end the interview, is there anything we left out that you would like to clarify?

P2: No, just want to know how is this going to help you like for your study or something?

I: Bring out the real problems faced by expatriates in Malaysia. So, because based on the literature that I have read, usually, most of the problems the expatriates face are cultural adjustment, they cannot adjust in the host country. And another reason will be the family, they (*expatriates*) leave and fail the assignments because of the family. Their family members cannot adjust, so they (*expatriates*) need to follow their family to go back to their home country. So, This is the real problem.

P2: Correct.

I: These are the literatures, so we need to compare whatever the literatures said and the real life of an expatriate are similar or not. And since different industries of expatriates face different problems. Ya, since I only need to focus on only one industry, which is the outsourcing industry. I just need to identify what are the differences between outsourcing industry and other industries. For example, expatriates from hotel industry they may face different problems in hotel industry. Even in the education industry, they face different problems as well. So, I need to specifically study only one industry.

P2: Actually, when you talk about expatriates, like here, we are having many expatriates in our team. Everyone here wants to stay here for long. The only two things that really, you know, make them feel like whether they should go back only the salary, the standard of living is a bit high in Malaysia. Ya, the food and everything. If you want the luxurious life, definitely you need to pay hard. Most of them are like staying in sharing. They share with one or two or three families.

I: So, your company do not give this kind of logistic support?

P2: Company only gives when you come here. The only first time they (*company*) will allow you to relocate your things from your country to Malaysia. They will give you one-month accommodation. That's it. But, after that, there is no accommodation provided by the company. It needs to be done by our own.

I: For all levels of expatriates?

P2: All levels of expatriates.

I: In your company?

P2: Yes, standard in our company. Any levels you need to do your own accommodation. That is a bit challenge. Because, here in Malaysia, you know, the house rent here is not too (unmentioned word-*affordable*). Because we need security, we cannot go into the normal houses. We normally prefer the condo with high security and all that, but there the cost charge is very higher. So, they go for living, you know, with in sharing. But, when we are living with wife or spouse that is difficult sometimes to live in sharing. You do not want anyone to stay with you. That is the biggest challenge. So, sometimes it happens like people (*expatriates*) not to bring their spouse, not to bring their child. And, that thing really kills (*frustrates*) them. So, thinking...thinking...thinking...At the end,

they decide they have to go back. So, they can't live without their family. If salary is okay, I think they can manage everything that can help expatriates to live longer in Malaysia.

I: So, anything you want to add on?

P2: I think no.

I: Thank you so much for sharing.

Date: 30 January 2015

Time: 3.50 p.m. - 4.00 p.m.

Position: Senior Associate

Participant: A Filipino expatriate

I: Interviewer; P3: Participant 3

I: What is the most serious problem to you as an expatriate?

P3: Ok, serious problem? Ah I can say that because my family here I have children. The main issue for me is the school of my children. Why? Because local schools don't teach English. They only teach like local language (*Malay*) only. So, we have no choice to bring them to the international school. So, you know how much is the tuition fee of international school, right? So, we are not here like in a high position so basically we do not have enough budget to bring them to the international school. So, that is the biggest, main for me. I have my family here so...

I: Any other reasons?

P3: Other reasons so far, I am enjoying my life here. So, only this.

I: The second one - "What are the cultural challenges you are currently facing in Malaysia?"

P3: Cultural?

I: Ya, cultural challenges in terms of language, customs and religion, Malaysian attitudes?

P3: I guess mainly the language. You know whenever you go to the any like public even in the mall. So, because I am a foreigner normally we ask questions right? It is sometimes we lost, driving like, you know, whatsoever. So, we ask like this simple question is like they just basically like turnaround sometimes. I don't know they're afraid to talk or afraid with us, you know. So, whenever we speak in English, I guess they're afraid to answer us in English. But, I have no idea those issues. When it comes to religion, I don't see any issues, because in my country (*Philippines*) we do have like Muslims also. So, here we can easily adapt those like religion. We are expatriates so we respect. I don't see any problems when it comes to religion.

I: Can you share your experience on how these challenges influence your adjustment?

P3: This...Sorry! Can you repeat?

I: Share your experience on how these challenges you mentioned just now influence your adjustment in Malaysia.

P3: How to say that?

I: Adjustment means general living, your work adjustment, interaction...

P3: Ok, so far when my first time I moved here, so basically there is no like so I guess like when you said like first time to the country right? You are saying like that. For me, there is no period of adjustment. First, food is almost similar like our food also. Weather is almost similar. For the people like... wait (*SMS notification*) as I just now I told you - the language whenever we asked especially the locals. So, sometimes they just turned around and just do the sign language, saying I guess like - "They don't know", so those things. So far only these things because I think I enjoy living here in Malaysia.

I: Are the challenges influential on your career in Malaysia?

P3: No, I guess, you mean "affecting" right?

I: Yes, the challenges you mentioned just now?

P3: Actually, it won't affect. Ya, for me, it doesn't matter how the situation is how long as I have a job because the reason why I'm working is because of my family. I love my family. So it doesn't matter, you know, if I have an issue with those things. So far, touch wood (*knocked the table*). No issues at all. For me, I'm working happily, living happily, peacefully. I guess is fine.

I: How about your job performance?

I and P3: (*Laughing*)

P3: Job performance! Of course, actually I'm working for three years. I guess my job performance is well. I can say. I guess there is no issue.

I: Due to the challenge that you mentioned, have you ever thought to leave your assignment from Malaysia?

P3: Live? (*Feeling confused*)

I: To (*leave*) the country.

P3: Ya, that is the point like I want to go back to my country or... To be honest, I'm still looking for a new job regardless in my country or a different country. Of course, I'm looking for the opportunity, so if the opportunity is better. Why not, right? So, my mentality is in that way. I'm not stick like I will be working only in Malaysia, or this country only. If the opportunity is here, as long as I am still young or like I can still work it should be fine. I can grab opportunity.

I: What are the possible solutions that help minimise the problems you encounter?

P3: Sorry, sorry.

I: (*Question repeated*). What is your suggestion?

P3: Mainly, looking back to my first...my number one issue right, the school. I guess here in Malaysia, the solution, I can say especially for me like I have a family or children. Like, they build up the school, build the school like foreigners can easily bring the children. Just like you know, in Canada, they have the local school which like they can bring their children for free until the high school already – the secondary. But, it will be, I mean I guess the tuition fee like...there is no tuition fee at all but the tax is much higher, you know. So, at least, the studies, the school is free. I am not saying that Malaysia needs to build the free school, but at least, you know, for the foreigner like...there is a school we can bring our children because they have English curriculum. Ya, basically English curriculum so far there is no school like that right. So, no point.no choice like bring them to the international school, which is very expensive. Ya that is the main issue. I mean, my solution is at least build up the school like any foreigners can bring their children as well.

I: How is the company support?

P3: Of course, company always supports for us. I am working in (*the name of company is kept confidential*). I am working in a multinational company. So, they don't left behind.

I: Is your company doing enough to minimise the problems?

P3: Actually, in regard to my problem like, you know, school. I think they are out of this issue. So, that is my personal problem. When it comes to support and all, everything all are support. So actually your question is having different scenario. I guess but when it comes to my problem, I guess company is not related to the company. Because is my idea or my decision why I bring my children here and my family. So, whatever happens to me when it comes to the school and all is my decision not the company one.

I: At workplace, is your superior?

P3: Sorry...

I: Is your supervisor doing enough to support you?

P3: Of course. They are very supportive. My boss, my manager, even my colleagues. They are very supportive.

I: Just now you mentioned that you wanted to leave, right? You have that intention to leave.

P3: Not really like I wanted to leave. I am just looking for other opportunities. But I am not saying that I wanted to leave. If there is an opportunity, but I cannot easily leave my work or left my work here in Malaysia right. But, of course, if there is an opportunity, why not! For sure, each and everyone is having this opportunity. If is here, we can grab!

I: Do you receive support from the local people when you face problems?

P3: Of course!!!

I: Either at workplace or outside?

P3: Ya, just recommend that like just our friend, especially I took my first car here. So, I met one friend, he is a local. He helped me how to do the practising and all. So, I have my local colleagues when I have a problem with my tax. So, he went with me to the tax place and helped me, you know, to speak to those people and what to do those things. So, basically, local support is there also.

I: So the last one is spousal support. Can you describe the role of your spouse during your assignment?

P3: My wife is actually working here (*in the same company*). First, she is my wife so the support is should be always there right. So, it shouldn't be an issue when it comes to the support of the spouse, you know, to the husband.

I: Before I end the interview, is there anything you left out you would like to clarify?

P3: So far, I guess I read your interview like your questionnaire (*actually refers to interview questions*) that is why I brought this my initial problem when I first time reached here. I mean join here in Malaysia and join here in SSC (*Shared Service Centre*). So, basically the studies of my children (main problem). Nothing left.

I: Thank you.

Date: 2 February 2015

Time: 2.00 p.m. - 2.19 p.m.

Position: Head of Department

Participant: A Dutch expatriate

I: Interviewer; P4: Participant 4

I: The first question should be: "What is the most serious problem or challenge to you as an expatriate here in Malaysia?"

P4: Wow!! Serious problem. Actually I don't face any serious problems working in Malaysia. For me, Malaysia is really an easy-going country. I'd been working in Georgia, the country that forms a Russian Republic and circumstance there was much more difficult than there are here. I mean, if you come here as an expat, infrastructure is fine, internet, housing, all that kind of stuff is well arranged. I don't know is Kuala Lumpur itself seems to be very 'European' somewhere is quite easy to adapt to that circumstance. What's the problem? I guess is the time it takes before you have your papers settled like your residence permit, all kinds of official issues you've to deal with the Malaysian authorities. They're really time-consuming and it takes a lot of your patience. I think that is, for me, I'm here for almost a year. That was my most serious problem I faced. Apart from that, I'm happy.

I: Good, the next question: "What are the cultural challenges you are currently facing in Malaysia?"

P4: (*Laughing*)The cultural challenges what I face is especially the work floor, we have three different groups of Malay, the Malay Malay, the Chinese Malay and the Indian Malay. And you see that is really three different groups and with different three kinds of habits. And I think especially for shared service organisation like we are. It's important

to have a mixed because of all the national holidays but also the habits. And, our Muslim colleagues go away for prayer especially you have a product-oriented organisation and we have a production line actually. If one of our employees is not behind this task then the whole production is pending and waiting until this person comes back. So keep it everything going is important to have a right mixed of Malaysian colleagues. What's sometimes challenging is the language because we face and we notice that the English...the knowledge of English for our Malay colleagues is not always up to standard. And you know we try to enhance that we have a training programme for our employees. So, once they come here, they have a contract, we ask them to do a course as well, you know, to be able to communicate in the right way. So that I think, that is the go-through of challenge but anyway.

I: But very interesting...

(Laughing together)

I: Could you share your experience on how these challenges have influenced your adjustment in Malaysia?

P4: It takes quite a lot of your patience and sometimes you know, in the Netherlands. We think everything is very well-arranged and if you go to the especially official organisations, if you go to Immunity Parity to ask for the registration. They usually tell you what it takes you seven days and come back after seven days and your registration is done. Malaysia already faced that they said your registration takes four weeks. And after four weeks, ah...Sorry, we had a Hari Raya so we had two weeks delay. After the two weeks, someone was ill. And then it took another two weeks, and then another two weeks. So, at the end, it took like ten weeks. So that's the problem I guess, in that sense, it influenced us because that one point you're really done with it. Actually you would like to, you know *(feeling dissatisfied)* go to superior or whatever. But, that possibility is not open for us for some reasons. Errm...here *(the organisation)* also *(thinking)*. You've to be a bit careful with your planning, you know, or you capacity planning – Do you've enough staff to be able to do our thing, to be able to run our processes? So that it takes you've to take that into the account. If you don't know, when you come here, if you don't know. Sorry, the difference between those three groups, then you are not aware of it so it influences the whole process. But, all in all, you know, once you come here and our colleagues who are longer here they share the information with you. So, all in all is not bad. But, you know, you've to be aware of those differences that could influence your work.

I: Yes, because Malaysia is a multicultural country.

P4: Exactly!

I: Beside these three groups, there are also minority groups in East Malaysia.

P4: Exactly!

I: So, the next question: "Do these challenges influence your work in Malaysia?" In other words, "Do these challenges influence your assignment in Malaysia, either positively or negatively?"

P4: No, I don't think not really I mean that because we have a mixed of three groups of Malaysian colleagues. We managed around the problem and the national holidays and everything so that we're able to have a continuous process. It does not really influence me in my work or privately. I mean, you know, one point you know that this is not the Netherlands, once you move abroad, you know that you have to adapt to different cultures. And, if you are willing to do so, if you are open for the new culture, then it is easy to adapt I think. I must admit the friends I have and also the business contacts are usually other expats so is pretty difficult to be enclosed contact with Malay. On the other hands, there are also Malaysians who are really open to having contact with expats. So, all in all.

I: So, how do you perceive the attitudes of Malaysians?

P4: Ermmmm...

I: Do they give a fairly good impression?

P4: I guess so...I guess so what I have to learn is one of my friends (*a Malaysian*) told me to embrace the pace like, you know, the climate here is hot and warm. And that also means that people take their time because when you run too hard, and you get too hot, and this not healthy in this climate. So, in Netherlands, amused to, planning and do things in a fountain here. And you have to go with a flow a bit more, and something takes much more time here than they do a batch of the work. But, I think, Malaysians are friendly, and willing to help. But, I must admit sometimes they tell you something- I'm going to do this or that, and in the end, they just don't do it. And because they don't want to tell, to say 'No' to the request you have. I think it is an easier thing (*Laughing*)

I: Because it's some sort of high context culture. Because Malaysians usually they don't tell...they don't simply reject the person even though they feel not...

P4: No... (*agreed*) if you ask someone to do something for you and they are not able to do it. They will never say 'No'. (*Instead*) Sorry, I cannot do it because I don't know how. And then they (*Malaysians*) -Yes, of course, I will do it and in the end, you fling around.

I: Yes, they face problem.

P4: Exactly! (*agreed*). That's also at the office sometimes the problematic people said "Yes, yes, yes, I understand! Yes, yes, yes, everything is fine. And, after few days, you like: "You know, I told you I gave the instructions and everything was clear. What's happening?" And then, sometimes, they...

I: This is really true.

P4: I don't know it is specifically Malaysians. But I think...

I: This is (*for*) Malaysians, all Malaysians, including myself sometimes (*Laughing*).

P4: (*Smiling*) Ya, I think so. We are quite open about it - "Sorry, I cannot do that. Why? Because I don't know how to start, or I don't know - Can you give me instructions?" Meaning communicate a bit more in-depth about and you can help someone. Now, I send

someone away, and you said: “Yes, I understand what I have to do.” And after few days, you figure out that they do not know what to do. That’s a bit sometimes annoying.

I: (*Laughing*)

P4: (*Smiling*) Again, it takes quite a lot of your patience. You know, if you got front people directly, that is also not to wait. In that sense, it’s part of this cultural adaptation from my part. I think it is also from the part of our Malay colleagues, they have to work with all these silly Dutch people here.

I and P4: (*Laughing*)

P4: (*the Dutch*) who are really eager and, you know, result-oriented and the way, you know, pretty direct sometimes. I think also you are going to interview one of our colleagues but it might be interesting to you also what their experience would be with these silly expats in common here.

I: I would like to hear experience from Western expatriate. When I heard the experiences from you, are very interesting to me. The next question: “Are you able to overcome these challenges personally?”

P4: I guess so (*Laughing*). What is good I think I can overcome them myself. But, sometimes is good to share your experience with other expats because one point you really think you missing out of something yourself. For you, you just want to double check it – Hey, I did this and this person reacted like that. How did you set (*settle*) that? You know, just share your experience, that is good. And, we have the opportunity to do it at the office because we have 13 expats here at the moment so that you will see that people who are a bit longer here share their experience with people who just arrived. But is good if you really have to overcome, you have to share this information. Just too...you know, double check it and put it in the right perspective. Something it might also be in your personality. I mean the way I react is different than my boss reacts, you know. Sometimes is good to share the information to see you are still in the right track.

I: Definitely. The last question would be - “What are the possible solutions that help minimise the problems or challenges you brought up just now?”

P4: Ya...what I said is to share information with the colleagues with other expats but also to share.

I: Do you mean colleagues - with local people or other expats?

P4: Both, I think both. Both with the local because, you know, just arrived in Malaysia and you are not really aware of habits and the do’s and don’ts when you are here. And, sometimes is good to share just to share that with your local colleagues to see. Yeah, we just had a wedding, one of our colleagues got married not that long ago. It was a Malay wedding and I was like okay...what are the habits? The way you dress, about presence, the way to address your parents. Ah...that kind of stuff is just because is completely different than we do in Europe. Sometimes is good to just have a look at the insight information on the do’s and don’ts in Malaysia. And, on the other hand, especially to

discuss things with your expats just to see that you are still on the right track and the words you have. If they share those, so that is particularly something is in your hands.

I: Have ever received support from the local colleagues or the local community when you face these kinds of cultural challenges?

P4: Ya, our colleagues in the RSO (*Regional Support Office*) sometimes you know, then we just chit chat about that during lunch time. Usually we share meal and then you already see that are Muslim colleagues eat different things than we do so we talk about why Dutch always eat sandwiches, why Malay always eat rice, you know (*laughing*). We also had discussion regarding Halal food I mean, we the expats in the office here don't eat Halal food. We had this discussion about the kitchen, and using all the tableware that kind...

I: The utensils have to be separated right?

P4: Yaya, exactly. Then also have the moment that you focus on the cultural differences actually. Then that's just nice to give you a little bit more of the context in which the local colleagues' work. But, and we also would like to share a bit of our cultural background because they work for the Dutch organisation. They would like to learn a bit about our habits and our culture. So we try also to get that awareness with them as well so that they can, you know, put our behaviour in perspective. So, it works quite well.

I: So, due to these challenges, have ever thought to leave Malaysia?

P4: (*Laughing*) No....there are moments that I think Ah!!! (*feeling agitated*) but you know, I have been here for almost a year now. What I say is fine, I like the climate, I like the city, country is beautiful, the region of Asia is lovely. For me, I have a temporary placement in Kuala Lumpur until 2018. So, as far as I concern, I will serve my duty here until 2018. And then see, later on, what is going to happen. So far I never consider to leave the country because of the country. I think I would consider to leave the country because I have a better job opportunity or something like that. The place here itself, I like here very much. I'm very fine here so... (*Laughing*)

I: Do your organisation help you overcome these kinds of problems?

P4: Ya, in case, you really have, you know, you get homesick or whatever. Then we have a backup from our Ministry, the Hague, we have all these kinds of counsellors to console or social workers or psychologists or whatever. But, I don't think, you know, we have also embassies in really in a crisis area. I mean, if you work in Kabul (*capital of Afghanistan*) or in Syria or I mean that is a different kind of embassy where you work. For here, just you know, I hardly know people who need this kind of support working here. But, you know, we know that we have a whole backup organisation in the Netherlands. But in case, something is really wrong we can deal with that. Also, what is also important is we have a lot of expats working in this office they also bring their family, their partner and their children. And, for partner is especially so is quite difficult to adapt. The children, they are also fine. They go to school, they have their social structure. But, the partners stay behind at home, just do nothing and taking care of the grocery shopping and the cooking and the cleaning. But, you know, at the end of the day, partners usually want to have this kind of feeling as well. And, that is sometimes you see, the backup we

have at the Ministry is sometimes needed to keep the partners motivated to stay here as well. And, especially diplomat is not allowed to work and partners don't get a working permit here. So, the only thing they can do is to take care of the family and the households. That is really I think that is more challenging than working here.

I: What is your role of your supervisor? Or, do you have any superior?

P4: Yes, I have one superior that is the Head of here the Region Support Office. And I coordinate that department is the Consular Department and we work the moment with 17 colleagues. And I'm supervising them.

I: Do you have spouse?

P4: Yes, I have.

I: Can you describe his role in your assignment?

P4: He is my...how to say (*laughing*).

I: Is he here (*in Malaysia*)?

P4: Ya, he is here. He is my caring partner just to say. You know, the things I face in the office so is good you can tell your story what happens during the day. You know, sometimes he gives me some advice. I also have three children so he is taking of them. And I couldn't be here in this office without my partner, knowing that my partner is at home taking care of my kids. In that sense, we are a team, you know, I work here, he works at home. And we try to backup each other as much as possible. But, it's really important to have someone to fall back on, you know, so you have someone beside your work.

I: I think is okay. We seemed to have covered a great deal of information and you have been very patient.

P4: Thank you.

I: Before I end the interview, is there anything we left out that you would like to clarify?

P4: No, I think everything I have to say is set (*settled*).

I: Thank you so much for sharing. I really appreciate your taking time out from your busy schedule to grant me this interview.

Appendix 4 - Outlier Test (Outlier Labelling Rule)

Q1	Median	Q3	g	Lower	Upper	PORSUP
50		62	2.2	23.6	88.4	
	Q3-Q1=	12				
	g'=	26.4				
Q1	Median	Q3	g	Lower	Upper	HCNSUP
53		64	2.2	28.8	88.2	
	Q3-Q1=	11				
	g'=	24.2				
Q1	Median	Q3	g	Lower	Upper	SPOUSUP
31		39	2.2	13.4	56.6	
	Q3-Q1=	8				
	g'=	17.6				
Q1	Median	Q3	g	Lower	Upper	EXPADJ
50.5		63	2.2	23	90.5	
	Q3-Q1=	12.5				
	g'=	27.5				
Q1	Median	Q3	g	Lower	Upper	WDWITT
15.5		30	2.2	-16.4	61.9	
	Q3-Q1=	14.5				
	g'=	31.9				
Q1	Median	Q3	g	Lower	Upper	EXPAPFM
37		44	2.2	21.6	59.4	
	Q3-Q1=	7				
	g'=	15.4				

Note: PORSUP - Perceived organisational support, HCNSUP - Host country national support, SPOUSUP - Spousal support, EXPADJ - Expatriate adjustment, WDWITT - Withdrawal intentions and EXPAPFM - Expatriate performance

Appendix 5 - Outlier Test (Extreme Values Table)

Extreme Values

			Case Number	Value
PORSUP	Highest	1	100	73.00
		2	62	72.00
		3	111	72.00
		4	37	71.00
		5	60	71.00
	Lowest	1	95	35.00
		2	90	38.00
		3	86	38.00
		4	87	40.00
		5	68	42.00
HCNSUP	Highest	1	59	80.00
		2	73	80.00
		3	32	78.00
		4	60	78.00
		5	74	78.00
	Lowest	1	43	27.00
		2	86	28.50
		3	41	30.00
		4	95	39.59
		5	104	41.00 ^a
SPOUSUP	Highest	1	18	40.00
		2	22	40.00
		3	29	40.00
		4	35	40.00
		5	37	40.00 ^b
	Lowest	1	110	16.00
		2	43	17.00
		3	86	18.00
		4	51	19.00
		5	92	23.00 ^c
EXPADJ	Highest	1	46	75.00
		2	110	75.00
		3	10	74.00
		4	37	73.00
		5	61	70.00 ^d
	Lowest	1	44	26.00
		2	95	33.00
		3	89	36.00
		4	43	39.00
		5	70	40.00 ^e
WDWITT	Highest	1	16	45.00
		2	85	44.00
		3	68	39.00
		4	95	39.00
		5	41	38.00
	Lowest	1	100	9.00
		2	84	9.00

		3	82	9.00
		4	74	9.00
		5	65	9.00 ^f
EXPAPFM	Highest	1	10	50.00
		2	12	50.00
		3	41	50.00
		4	90	50.00
		5	98	50.00 ^g
	Lowest	1	44	26.00
		2	77	27.00
		3	69	30.00
		4	68	30.00
		5	57	30.00 ^h

- a. Only a partial list of cases with the value 41.00 are shown in the table of lower extremes.
- b. Only a partial list of cases with the value 40.00 are shown in the table of upper extremes.
- c. Only a partial list of cases with the value 23.00 are shown in the table of lower extremes.
- d. Only a partial list of cases with the value 70.00 are shown in the table of upper extremes.
- e. Only a partial list of cases with the value 40.00 are shown in the table of lower extremes.
- f. Only a partial list of cases with the value 9.00 are shown in the table of lower extremes.
- g. Only a partial list of cases with the value 50.00 are shown in the table of upper extremes.
- h. Only a partial list of cases with the value 30.00 are shown in the table of lower extremes.

Note: PORSUP - Perceived organisational support, HCNSUP - Host country national support, SPOUSUP - Spousal support, EXPADJ - Expatriate adjustment, WDWITT - Withdrawal intentions and EXPAPFM - Expatriate performance

Appendix 6 - Harman's Single Factor Test

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	22.964	31.032	31.032	22.964	31.032	31.032
2	6.598	8.917	39.948	6.598	8.917	39.948
3	5.590	7.555	47.503	5.590	7.555	47.503
4	4.838	6.538	54.041	4.838	6.538	54.041
5	3.009	4.067	58.107	3.009	4.067	58.107
6	2.649	3.580	61.687	2.649	3.580	61.687
7	1.788	2.416	64.104	1.788	2.416	64.104
8	1.628	2.200	66.304	1.628	2.200	66.304
9	1.474	1.991	68.295	1.474	1.991	68.295
10	1.467	1.983	70.278	1.467	1.983	70.278
11	1.323	1.788	72.066	1.323	1.788	72.066
12	1.213	1.639	73.705	1.213	1.639	73.705
13	1.089	1.471	75.176	1.089	1.471	75.176
14	1.013	1.369	76.545	1.013	1.369	76.545
15	.950	1.283	77.829			
16	.927	1.252	79.081			
17	.889	1.202	80.283			
18	.831	1.123	81.405			
19	.812	1.098	82.503			
20	.754	1.019	83.522			
21	.710	.959	84.482			
22	.668	.903	85.385			
23	.623	.842	86.227			
24	.573	.775	87.002			
25	.568	.767	87.769			
26	.517	.698	88.467			
27	.505	.683	89.150			
28	.479	.647	89.797			
29	.459	.620	90.417			
30	.441	.595	91.012			
31	.429	.580	91.592			
32	.383	.518	92.111			
33	.356	.481	92.591			
34	.347	.469	93.061			
35	.318	.430	93.491			
36	.313	.423	93.914			
37	.304	.410	94.324			
38	.298	.402	94.726			
39	.266	.360	95.086			
40	.261	.353	95.439			

41	.251	.340	95.779		
42	.230	.311	96.090		
43	.228	.309	96.398		
44	.213	.287	96.686		
45	.202	.273	96.959		
46	.187	.253	97.212		
47	.179	.241	97.454		
48	.167	.225	97.679		
49	.146	.198	97.877		
50	.144	.195	98.071		
51	.137	.185	98.256		
52	.115	.156	98.412		
53	.111	.150	98.561		
54	.104	.141	98.702		
55	.096	.129	98.831		
56	.093	.126	98.957		
57	.085	.114	99.071		
58	.076	.102	99.173		
59	.071	.095	99.269		
60	.063	.085	99.354		
61	.061	.082	99.436		
62	.054	.073	99.509		
63	.053	.071	99.581		
64	.049	.066	99.647		
65	.045	.061	99.708		
66	.044	.059	99.767		
67	.034	.046	99.812		
68	.032	.044	99.856		
69	.028	.038	99.894		
70	.022	.030	99.924		
71	.020	.027	99.952		
72	.015	.020	99.972		
73	.013	.017	99.989		
74	.008	.011	100.000		

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Appendix 7 – Multicollinearity

Coefficients^a

Model		Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
1	HCNSUP	.675	1.481
	SPOUSUP	.816	1.226
	EXPADJ	.724	1.382
	WDWITT	.768	1.301

a. Dependent Variable: **PORSUP**

Coefficients^a

Model		Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
1	TSPOUSUP	.850	1.177
	TEXPADJ	.761	1.314
	TWDWITT	.631	1.585
	TPORSUP	.585	1.708

a. Dependent Variable: **HCNSUP**

Coefficients^a

Model		Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
1	TEXPADJ	.720	1.389
	TWDWITT	.631	1.586
	TPORSUP	.495	2.022
	THCNSUP	.594	1.683

a. Dependent Variable: **SPOUSUP**

Note: PORSUP - Perceived organisational support, HCNSUP- Host country national support, SPOUSUP - Spousal support, EXPADJ - Expatriate adjustment and WDWITT - Withdrawal intentions

Coefficients^a

Model		Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
1	TWDWITT	.671	1.489
	TPORSUP	.488	2.050
	THCNSUP	.592	1.690
	TSPOUSUP	.800	1.250

a. Dependent Variable: **EXPADJ**

Coefficients^a

Model		Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
1	TPORSUP	.590	1.694
	THCNSUP	.559	1.789
	TSPOUSUP	.799	1.251
	TEXPADJ	.765	1.307

a. Dependent Variable: **WDWITT**

Note: PORSUP - Perceived organisational support,
HCNSUP- Host country national support, SPOUSUP
- Spousal support, EXPADJ - Expatriate adjustment
and WDWITT - Withdrawal intentions

Appendix 8 - Interview Schedule

Opening: Thank you for taking part in the interview for this research. The purpose of conducting this interview with you is to give additional insights on the understanding of the results. Before we begin, let me just brief on how this interview will be carried out. The interview will take about **30 minutes**. If there are any question(s) that you wish not to answer, just let me know and we can skip the question(s). I would also like to ask your permission **to record this interview**, but you have the right not to be recorded.

1. What are your adjustment difficulties living in Malaysia associated with work, local people or to local environment?
2. How do you describe your company's support towards your assignment?
 - How does it help you facilitate cultural adjustment?
 - How does it influence your decision to continue your assignment?
3. How do you describe the support from Malaysian friends/colleagues during assignment?
 - What do they do to make your adjustment better?
 - Do they influence your decision to continue your assignment? Why or why not?
4. How does your spouse make your assignment easier?
 - Does his/her support improve your adjustment?
 - Does he/she affect your decision to continue your assignment? Why or why not?
5. Have you considered leaving Malaysia or going back to your country after this term? Why or why not?
 - Do adjustment challenges influence your decision to stay here?
 - How does intention to leave an assignment have an impact on job performance?

Closure: We seemed to have covered a great deal of information and you have been very patient. Before I end the interview, is there anything we left out that you would like to clarify? Thank you so much for sharing the information. I really appreciate your taking time out from your busy schedule to grant me this interview.

BIODATA OF STUDENT

Chan Hak Liong was born on 26 October in Kuching, Sarawak. He was brought up in Kuala Lumpur since he was young, and he received his primary and secondary education there as well. After completing his Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia (STPM), he was sent to Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), as he always wished, to study International Business for three years and he obtained the Bachelor's degree in 2012. The courses that he loved were Cross-Cultural Management, International Human Resource Management, Issues in International Business and Introduction to International Business. He was encouraged by his former lecturers at UMS to pursue Master by Research as he would like to become an academic in future.

Hak Liong has been very passionate about teaching. He has started his first teaching career at Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan (Cina) Yoke Nam in 2009 as a temporary teacher. Again, he has hold the same position at Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan (Cina) Salak South in 2013, 2015 and 2016. He had also worked for DHL Shared Service Sdn. Bhd at Petaling Jaya right after his graduation in 2012. However, in 2014, his Master of Science (MSc) journey began. Notwithstanding some challenges in his study, he was able to complete his MSc within two years and a half as he promised himself. He also managed to present two papers in both national and international conferences. One of the papers, a conceptual paper, entitled 'The Influence of Host Country National on Expatriate Success in Malaysia' was presented at Universiti Malaya on 5th September 2015. While waiting for his viva voce, another paper was presented, entitled 'Support from Primary Stakeholders and Expatriate Adjustment: A Conservation of Resources Theory Perspective' in Bangkok, Thailand on 4th June 2016. This paper has won the best paper for a World Business Institute Journal. His future agenda is to continue writing articles and to pursue his doctoral degree.