A Study of Expatriate Adjustment from a Multiple Stakeholder Perspective: Mainland Chinese Expatriates (MCEs) in Hong Kong

by

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Declaration

I hereby certify that the work embodied in this Dissertation Project is the result of original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other University or Institution.

Signed: _____________________
Date: January 23, 2015
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SYNOPSIS

This research investigates the adjustment of Mainland Chinese Expatriates (MCEs) working in Hong Kong from a multiple-stakeholder perspective. Expatriate adjustment is defined as how well psychologically and capably an expatriate adjusts to perform their job in a foreign country. While it is well understood that successful expatriation, requires the expatriate to adjust to their new working and living environment and that personal ability, family, co-workers and home-country colleagues are instrumental in the process, few studies explore these factors in unison, despite the rational expectation that they are to some degree interdependent. Moreover, traditionally research on expatriation examines the experience of developed country or ‘Western’ expatriates so there is little known of the applicability of insights from this literature to the experience of non-traditional expatriates from developing countries. Uniquely, this study explores the experience of Mainland Chinese Expatriates (MCE) in Hong Kong. The experience of these expatriates in the special administrative zone of Hong Kong has not previously been considered in expatriate research, despite their significance as an expatriate cohort in Hong Kong and despite the unique challenges they face.

Through in-depth interviews with MCE in Hong Kong this study explores the experience of expatriate adjustment from a multiple stakeholder perspective and provides novel insights into the role of each for adjustment. This research finds that the expatriate’s personal ability is strongly related to expatriate adjustment. Job related skills, language (Cantonese and English) and culture awareness skills (consequent to a perceived cultural distance between the mainland and Hong Kong) are found to be vital for adjustment. As might be expected, supports from the expatriates families was found to be a crucial factor for successful adjustment, however, the family-support revealed in this study goes well beyond what is envisaged by extant research. Despite, perceived cultural difference (and reported tension within the general environment), information sharing, cultural-training and job skills as well as living supports from the host country co-workers were found to be widespread and very positive for MCE adjustment in Hong Kong. By contrast home-country supports from China were lacking. The implications for extant understanding of expatriate adjustment and future research are discussed and in keeping with the practical
focus of the DBA degree, practical implications for MNCs and international human resource managers are clearly articulated.
CHAPTER 1  INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

An expatriate is defined as employees who leave their home country to work for an international assignment for an organization (Harrison, Shaffer, & Bhaskar-Shrinivas, 2004a). Such assignment helps the expatriate obtaining global management skills that has been proven to be valuable for their future career (Daily, Certo, & Dalton, 2000). Expatriate assignment seems positive for the expatriate as well as the organization, but problems also come along like adjustment issues for the expatriate to perform (Golden-Biddle & Rao, 1997; LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Overseas assignments also benefit the organization to develop their international human assets and grow their international business (Sambharya, 1996). Expatriate adjustment is defined as how well psychologically and capably one adjusts to perform in a job in a foreign country (Black & Stephens, 1989; Harrison et al., 2004a).

Consequent to the importance of this practice for organisations, there are many studies on expatriate adjustment (Caligiuri, Hyland, Joshi, & Bross, 1998a; Kraimer, Wayne, & Jaworski, 2001b; Shaffer, Harrison, Gregersen, Black, & Ferzandi, 2006). The findings of such studies enrich our knowledge about the antecedents and outcomes of expatriate adjustment (Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Harrison, Shaffer, & Luk, 2005). Moreover, there are a number of theories in relation to expatriate adjustment in a cross-cultural foreign environment (Awang, Hussain, & Malek, 2013; Aycan, 1997a, 1997b; Black & Gregersen, 1991; Harrison et al., 2004a). In spite of this, gaps remain wide that requires further study before we have a better if not thorough understanding of expatriate adjustment. One major loophole lies in the fact that most studies is predominately about the capability of the expatriate only but comparatively little work in done on the role of other stakeholders (Feitosa, Kreutzer, & Kramperth, 2014; Freeman, 1984; Selmer, 2006) who can influence and be impacted by expatriates such as spouse (Caligiuri et al., 1998a; Takeuchi, Yun, & Tesluk, 2002a) and host country co-workers (Awang et al., 2013; Shay & Baack, 2006; Vance & Paik, 1995). A stakeholder is defined as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the firm’s objectives” (Freeman, 1984: 25). The
stakeholders for expatriate will be the expatriate (as the primary stakeholder) and others who can influence and be impacted by expatriates that can include spouses/families, parent country co-workers and host country co-workers. Moreover, numerous researches have used stress as a viewpoint to study the antecedents and outcomes of expatriate adjustment (Harrison et al., 2004a; Kraimer & Wayne, 2004). Stress and other antecedents like role ambiguity and role conflict can all be influence by multiple stakeholders. This leads to the first of two important rationales for this research (summarised below).

1. In this study, it is proposed that each of the above mentioned stakeholders (family, the expatriate, the home-county colleagues and host-country colleagues) can affect or is affected by the achievement of the multinational firm’s objectives of successful international expatriate assignments and each can play a role in expatriate adjustment experiences. Therefore, it is important to explore “how” and “what role”

As Yin (1994) notes that when the research includes answering “what” and “how” questions this will lead to qualitative research because such questions deal with events that need to be linked rather than observed as mere frequencies or incidence. Therefore, the most appropriate methodology is a qualitative approach, which is discussed briefly below in section 1.5 and in more detail in Chapter 3.

2. A second rationale for this study relates to the importance of understanding how the adjustment patterns established through extant research on expatriation, apply to non-traditional research samples. Why? Because the majority of insights on expatriation come from studies on western expatriates, but few have examined Chinese expatriates and fewer still (if any) have considered the adjustment experience of the growing numbers of Mainland Chinese Expatriates (MCE) in Hong Kong.

Cognizant that by the end of 2013 (since 2003), there was a total of 65,143 Mainland Chinese granted permits to work in Hong Kong to meet local manpower needs and
enhance Hong Kong’s competitiveness in the globalized market ("Facts and Statistics - Visa Control - Hong Kong Immigration Department," 2013), this study is timely. Moreover, as outlined in section 1.4 below, adjustment challenges and even tension between mainland expatriates and the local population have been publically recorded in the mainstream media. In light of this, research exploring the adjustment challenges of these under researched expatriates is warranted. With this in mind, research objectives and questions to guide this exploratory study are outlined in the next section.

1.2 Research Objectives and Research Questions

This study will interview Mainland Chinese Expatriates and understand expatriate adjustment from the multiple stakeholder perspectives such as parent country co-workers, host country co-workers, family support as well as the expatriate's own capabilities in the context of their adjustment to working in Hong Kong. The following principle research question is posed and four (sub) research questions will aim to find out the impact of expatriate adjustment of MCEs working in Hong Kong by interviewing the expatriates.

- **What is the role of multiple-stakeholders in the successful adjustment of MCE in Hong Kong?**

To answer this overarching research question 4 sub-questions need to be addressed.

Research question 1: What is the role and impact of the expatriate's own capability on expatriate adjustment?

Research question 2: What is the role and impact of family support on expatriate adjustment?

Research question 3: What is the role and impact of parent country co-workers on expatriate adjustment?

Research question 4: What is the role and impact of host country co-workers on expatriate adjustment?

1.3 Definitions

In the interests of reader clarity some key definitions are provided at the outset.
• Expatriate is defined as employees who leave their home country to work for an international assignment for an organization (Harrison et al., 2004a).

• Expatriate adjustment is defined as how well psychologically and capably for an expatriate to perform in a foreign country (Black & Stephens, 1989; Harrison et al., 2004a).

• A stakeholder is defined as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the firm’s objectives” (Freeman, 1984: 25). The stakeholders for expatriate will be the expatriate (as the primary stakeholder) and others who can influence and be impacted by expatriates that can include spouses/families, parent country co-workers and host country co-workers.

• Mainland Chinese Expatriates (MCEs) is defined as the expatriates who are from Mainland China but come to work on overseas assignment in Hong Kong.

• Host country co-worker is defined as the co-workers in Hong Kong of the expatriate.

• Parent country co-worker is defined as co-workers from China.

• Family stakeholder is defined as the expatriate’s partner, children and their parents.

1.4 Justifications and Importance of the Study

There is continued research on expatriate adjustment among multinationals, indicating how important this topic is (Borg & Harzing, 1995; Jack & Stage, 2005; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1988). But most of the literatures focused largely on single player (the expatriate’s ability to adjust) rather than from the multi-player perspectives (co-workers from both the parent and the host country). Multinationals have hence developed their strategy to train the expatriates only and rarely putting any attention to others involved employees like the parent country managers and the host country employees as agreed by Vance and Ring (1994). Furthermore, as noted briefly above, there is little study about Mainland Chinese expatriates despite their significance in Hong Kong and the significance of China on the world stage.

China’s economy has undergone transformational changes since Deng Xiaoping initiated the “Open Door Policy” in 1978 (Wei, 1995). With a high economic GDP growth, China
is now becoming the world’s second largest economy body in 2011 ("China Overview - The World Bank," 2014). Chinese enterprises are aggressively expanding their international business especially in Hong Kong. There is a dramatic increase in the “population of China-funded enterprises (CFEs) in Hong Kong” from just 122 to about 1,830 in 1996 (Wulan, 1997). There is also a total of 179 H-share (refer to the shares of companies incorporated in mainland China that are traded on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange) with a total market capitalization of HK$5.7 trillion or USD0.73 trillion ("List of H Shares Companies," 2015). Furthermore, at the end of 2013 (since 2003), there is a total of 65,143 Mainland Chinese granted permits to work in Hong Kong to meet local manpower needs and enhance Hong Kong’s competitiveness in the globalized market ("Facts and Statistics - Visa Control - Hong Kong Immigration Department," 2013). This highlights the importance of studying Chinese expatriates in Hong Kong generally, and specifically, their adjustment to perform well in their workforce.

Moreover, with the growth of more Chinese expatriates working in Hong Kong, from the newspaper and the Internet, we see increasing conflicts between Hong Kong people and Chinese expatriates due to the cultural and political issues. This is likely to have important implications for adjustment. For example, Mr. Dou Wen Tao is a well-known TV host of Phoenix New Media Limited (www.ifeng.com) who has been working in Hong Kong for more than 10 years and he publically shared his personal experiences and this is the quote from him “Hong Kong co-workers are very professional and supportive in the workplace. But I find it very hard to truly understand their Western-like culture as a mainlander.” ("Hong Kong people and mainland Chinese are so different - Phoenix TV,"). Although his experience was positive, he explicitly notes the cultural challenges. Others have not been so positive. For example, this media report from a person holding a teaching post in Hong Kong since 2010. The person state that “Hong Kong people have negative view about mainland people as less civilized (like dirty, uncivilized, rude, corrupted, language problems, not professional). They think they are more superior. I think it is not a fair view. This affects me as I need to work with my colleagues and make local friends.” ("Hong Kong think they are more superior in the culture and the society ", 2014). In a similar negative vain, another articles reported on Ms. Xiang who works in Hong Kong since 2004.
She explains, that “I speak both Cantonese and English. My relationship with local people is immediately shortened once I speak Cantonese. Though many people are Chinese, but they have a different Western culture unlike mainland China. We find it hard to adapt to the local culture. They have a negative view about us (like our Cantonese accent and some even think we are all communist). They think we are here to get their jobs or their social resources” ("In the Middle of Dilemma," 2013).

While these examples are of course anecdotal, they do flag a need to study Chinese expatriates in Hong Kong generally, and specifically, the need to understand adjustment challenge and questions remain as to the applicability of insights from Western studies in this context. There are numerous studies targeting the Western expatriates (from most recent ones to the early 1980s) reaching the conclusion that the expatriate adjustment is due to the result of the inability of the expatriates (like job skills, cultural awareness, language, experiences) to adjust to the new working and living environment (early studies like (Caligiuri, 1997; Freeman, 1984; Greehalgh, 1997) and more recent studies like (Selmer, 2006; Shaffer, Harrison, & Gilley, 1999; Shaffer, Harrison, Gregersen, Black, & Ferzandi, 2006). But after a detail and comprehensive search (around 400 journal articles), we find only few studies about Chinese expatriates. Selmer et al (2000) had carried out a study about MCEs (Mainland Chinese Expatriates) in Hong Kong, but this research study was focusing on personal characteristics of Chinese expatriates only (like gender, marital status, age, accompanying spouse or not, origin of provinces like Guangdong). That study found out that younger, male, accompanied by spouse and who are from neighbouring Guangdong province (same spoke Cantonese language as Hong Kong) have a better adjustment. Selmer (2006) had a study about Chinese expatriates, but again, it is about their personal ability (like local language) and the higher the language skills, the better the adjustment. Most recently, there was a research study from Chen (2011), but again the study was focusing on the expatriate’s personal ability (skills like cultural intelligence). For this study, we will expect to find a similar conclusion as Western expatriates, but we will also aim to have a deeper understanding what personal abilities (like job skills, language skills, cultural awareness skills and etc.) they have for their adjustment commonly and specifically for Chinese expatriates.
The extant literature also provides insights into the role of other stakeholders, which we seek to expand in this study. Family support is always treated as one of the crucial factors for expatriate adjustment and lacking of it will lead to poor job performance (Shaffer & Harrison, 2001). The support from the spouse, children and parents could solve the potential family-to-work conflicts that might hinder the expatriate adjustment (Ford, Heinen, & Langkamer, 2007). Selmer (2000) also found that the expatriate could have a better adjustment if the spouse is supportive (and accompanied the expatriate to stay in Hong Kong). Chinese families have a long tradition of supporting each other especially if the expatriate is male. Such cultural tradition is rooted from Confucianism more than 2,500 years ago by Confucian (551BC to 479BC) who was a Chinese philosopher and scholar in the Spring and Autumn Empire era (Fan, 2000). But since China adopted one-child policy (formal name is Family Planning Policy) in 1979 ("One-Child Policy," 2015), they are allowed to have only one child. This might have a significant impact from the parental/family supports to the expatriates whether they are male or female. This is something that needs to explore not from a western perspective, but from the perspective of those Mainland Chinese expats themselves.

Furthermore, there are only few adjustment studies on Chinese expatriates (but mostly about personal ability and family supports, for example Selmer 2000 & Selmer 2006) but we find no study about other stakeholders (like host country co-workers and parent country co-workers). Host country co-worker support is one of the most popular areas for expatriate adjustment (Shaffer & Harrison, 2001; Toh & DeNisi, 2007; Waxin, 2004). The onus for expatriates to perform well and integrate into the host country’s environment has proven to be challenging (Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Harrison, Shaffer, & Luk, 2005). Also, social interactions between the host country employee and the expatriate could reduce expatriate adjustment (Shaffer & Harrison, 2001). The dominant model of expatriate adjustment (Black, Mendenhall, & Oddou, 1991) has found evidence that host country co-workers may assist expatriates’ adjustment in the host country (Olsen & Martins, 2009). Generally, the host country co-worker support is positively related to expatriate adjustment (Waxin, 2004). It may be a mistake to assume that there won’t be any big issues related to host country co-worker supports as Hong Kong and China share the same language (but both written and spoken languages are not totally the same) and culture origin. But since Hong
Kong is under British sovereignty for more than 100 years, and just return to China in 1997. As suggest in the media examples provided above, Hong Kong is also a capitalist city while China is still a communist regime. There is a political tension too (some people in Hong Kong considered them as Hongkonger instead of Chinese). This study will aim to find out how such cultural, language and political issues will have an effect on host country co-worker support.

Finally, most past studies that investigated the expatriate parent organization stated the impacts of the parent country co-workers on expatriate to have a better adjustment with a level of support from home/parent organization and colleagues (Kraimer & Wayne, 2004; Kraimer et al., 2001b; Waxin, 2004). Organization supports (like logistics supports and trainings) had been related to better expatriate effectiveness (Kraimer et al., 2001). Parent organization support (like culture trainings) is also positively related to expatriate adjustment (Wang & Takeuchi, 2007). But, most expatriate have to solve their adjustment issues by themselves due to lack of organization support from the parent company (Kraimer & Wayne, 2004; Waxin, 2004). Most importantly, expatriate needed the organizational support (like logistics supports, apartment and assignment briefing) especially during the early days of the expatriate assignment (Shaffer et al., 1999). Relocation support is also considered important too for better adjustment (Chen, Tzeng, & Tang, 2005). In Chinese culture, the manager will behave like a parent and they may tend to provide more supports (or intervention) to the expatriates and the subordinate (expatriates) are supposed to follow orders 100% from the parent company (Fan, 2000). But due to distance problems, this study will find out if the parent company is still providing good supports or have a similar conclusion as Western expatriates (where they have to solve all the problems by themselves). Most importantly this study is unique in that it takes a holistic view about how all these four stakeholders affect the expatriate’s adjustment (the expat, family, host and home co-workers).

1.5 Methodology

This complex and complicated journey of research started in July 2011 when researcher first enrolled in this DBA programme. The researcher begins with identifying his research
areas and topics of interest and the application of three schools of thoughts called paradigms (Kuhn, 1962), about the processes of how the research should be conducted and what the results should achieve. The three paradigms are: positive research, interpretivist research and lastly critical research.

Positivist research is a school of thought that emphasizes testing and measuring of the theory using logical and mathematical means. It uses existing theories to test the hypotheses and is relatively structured, and the researchers are objective (Carson, Gilmore, & Perry, 2001).

Interpretivist research is a school of thought that emphasizes on theory building, meaning exploration and theory understanding. It is relatively unstructured or semi-structured, and the researcher is involved as instrument (Carson, Gilmore, & Perry, 2001).

Critical research is a school of thought that emphasizes on empowering people for improvement through self-reflection and, and the researcher is involved to challenge taken-for-granted norm and hence find new insights or a better world (Cavana, Delahaye, & Sekaran, 2001).

This research is about exploring meanings and having better understanding of the people involved in complex relationships that may affect expatriate adjustment but not about scientific or mathematical testing and measurement of the theory. Also, it is not about self-improvement of creating a better world. Therefore, the researcher adopts an interpretive approach (Van Maanen, 1979) to understand deeply how expatriates from Mainland Chinese adjust to working and living in Hong Kong. This involvement of the researcher will help to develop, monitor and guide the research. The interpretive qualitative research method unlocks meaningful insights and in-depth understanding of an issue in a managerial context, and aims to find possible reasons for an issue without biased adjustment (Carson, Gilmore, & Perry, 2001).

Such social research can be conducted by quantitative or qualitative methods. While quantitative methods are measuring numerical facts, focusing on variables, separating data and theory, being independent of context, gathering many subjects, calculating statistical
analyses, being reliable and purely objective, and the researcher is detached, qualitative approaches are used building a social situation or cultural meaning, focusing on interactive processes and incidents, being genuine, integrating both theory and data, being situational constrained, referring to a few incidents or subjects, being analyzed by subject, and the researcher is involved (Creswell, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Marvasti, 2004; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

Qualitative research can help grasp the complexity and the multiple dimensions of the adjustment patterns of interest to this study (Das, 1983). From several qualitative techniques (Patton, 1990; Denzin and Lincoln, 1998) the method of in-depth interviews (Minichiello, Aroni, Timesell, & Alexander, 1995) is deemed to be most appropriate with a focus on gathering detailed descriptions of the incidents, events, situations and interactions among people (Patton, 1990a), as the participants have firsthand experience (Das, 1983) through mainly open-ended and semi-structured questions without rigid structures (Eisenhardt, 1989). By asking participants to share their rich personal experiences and insights with the researcher in a less rigid environment (Cooper & Emory, 1995), semi-structured interviews could create the best environment for them to express even sensitive issues. Neuman (1994) also states that in-depth semi-structured interviews the interviewer encourages in-depth discussions, which was an important goal of this methodological study.

In light of the above, the methodology of in-depth semi-structured interviews (Patton, 1990a) was selected as the data collection method for this research.

1.6 Outline

This section details and discusses the outline of the research.

• Chapter One: Introduction

• Chapter Two: Literature Review

• Chapter Three: Research Methodology
• Chapter Four: Findings and Results

• Chapter Five: Implications and Conclusion

1.7 Conclusions and Limitations

This study is not without limitations. Several limitations of the present study are important to note and expanded on in the final section of the thesis.

In summary it’s noted that the use of English for the personal interviews was a challenged. As all expatriates are from Mainland Chinese, it is not surprised that not all of them have perfect use of English though they can speak fluently. Therefore, their use of English tends to be simple and may not be able to communicate complicated and sophisticated information. In order to minimize such issue, the researcher will have to explain to them slowly and also repeatedly ask them questions to verify their message is correct.

Second, the results of this study are only exploratory and have not been empirically tested in a representative sample of the population of Mainland Chinese Expatriates (MCE).
CHAPTER 2      LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

“Expatriate is defined as employees who leave their home country to work for an international assignment for an organization” (Harrison et al., 2004a). Such assignment helps the expatriate obtaining global management skills and has been proven valuable for their future career (Daily et al., 2000). Overseas assignments also benefit the organization to develop their international human assets and grow their international business (Sambharya, 1996). Expatriate assignment seems positive for the expatriate as well as the organization, but the problems also come along like adjustment issues for the expatriate to perform (Awang et al., 2013; Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Golden-Biddle & Rao, 1997; LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Expatriate adjustment refers to “the degree of fit or psychological comfort and familiarity that individuals feel” (Black & Stephen, 1989; Brock, Shenkar, Shoham, & Siscovick, 2008; Harrison et al., 2004a; F. Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2005).

Consequently, there are many studies on expatriate adjustment (Caligiuri et al., 1998a; Kraimer et al., 2001b; Shaffer et al., 2006). The findings of such studies enrich our knowledge about the antecedents and outcomes of expatriate adjustment (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). Expatriate adjustment is defined in this study as how well psychologically and capably for an expatriate to perform in a foreign country (Black & Stephens, 1989; Harrison et al., 2004a).

There are a number of theories in relation to expatriate adjustment in a cross-cultural foreign environment (Aycan, 1997a, 1997b-a; Black & Gregersen, 1991; Harrison et al., 2004a). In spite of this, gaps remain wide that requires further study before we have a better if not thorough understanding of expatriate adjustment. The major loophole lies in the fact that most studies is predominately about the capability of the expatriate only but other stakeholders are not considered in unison (Freeman, 1984) i.e. stakeholders who can influence and be impacted by expatriates such as spouse (Caligiuri et al., 1998a; Takeuchi
et al., 2002a) and host country co-workers (Toh & DeNisi, 2007b; Vance & Paik, 1995; Varma, Pichler, Budhwar, & Biswas, 2009). A stakeholder is defined as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the firm’s objectives” (Freeman, 1984: 25). The stakeholders for expatriate will be the expatriate (as the primary stakeholder) and others who can influence and be impacted by expatriates that can include spouses/families, parent country co-workers and host country co-workers.

Furthermore, numerous researches have used stress as a viewpoint to study the antecedents and outcomes of expatriate adjustment (Harrison et al., 2004a; Kraimer & Wayne, 2004). Antecedents such as role conflict and role ambiguity are usually considered as stressor that leads to poor expatriate adjustment. As a result, Harrison et al (2004: 240) urged further studies in examining other issues related to adjustment not just the stress or the comfort of the expatriates and we would add the role of others in creating and/or reducing stress for adjustment.

Consequently, the above review highlights the importance of studying multiple stakeholders for expatriate adjustment instead of just focusing the study on the expatriates.

2.2 A Review of Expatriate Adjustment

Study on expatriate issues has been hot for decades since 1970s ((Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985; Newman, Bhatt, & Gutteridge, 1978) and has drawn more and more attention with the effort from some of the early well-known researchers (Black, 1988; Gregersen, 1992; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985). The most popular adjustment model is “instigated and galvanized a large body of evidence. It is the most influential and often-cited theoretical treatment of expatriate experiences, and it can be considered a context-specific reflection of the stress or stress-strain sequence” (Black, Mendenhall, & Oddou, 1991). There are numerous studies on social-cultural adjustment (Brock et al., 2008; Earley & Ang, 2003; Ward & Kennedy, 1993). Black (1988) and Black and Stephens (1989) categories cross-cultural adjustment into three types: general, work, and interaction. General adjustment means the psychological level of comfort in relation to host country socio-cultural
environment (e.g., food, living condition and others). Work adjustment means the level of comfort in relation to the potential different work expectations, values and standards. Interactional adjustment means the level of psychological comfort in relation to the way people communicates in the host country.

So far, it has two meta-analyses about expatriate adjustment (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Hechanova, Beehr, & Christiansen, 2003). They study both antecedents and outcomes of three types of expatriate adjustment (“general adjustment, work adjustment and interaction adjustment”). These meat-analyses are similar but with difference as well. Hechanova et al. (2003) classify antecedent variables into four types (“individual, work related, environmental and family related”), but Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al. (2005) classify them into five types (“anticipatory, individual, job, organization, and nonwork”) and more recent studies are also included in his study.

Based on their studies, language ability is notably and positively related to interaction but not to work or general adjustment. Previous international assignment experience is positively and significantly related to interaction and work adjustment but not to general adjustment. Regarding individual factors, self-efficacy is positively related to both interaction and work adjustments. Relational skills are positively related to all three types of adjustment. Hechanova et al. (2003) also proved that the level of education is positively related to work and general adjustment but related to interaction adjustments negatively. Regarding job factors, role discretion and role clarity are positively related to all three types of adjustment. Role conflict is related to interaction and work negatively but not to general adjustment. Hechanova et al. also states that job level is positively related to interaction adjustment but is negatively related to work and general adjustment. Organizational tenure is positively related to interaction and work adjustment but not to general adjustment. Duration of stay on assignment and outcome expectancy are positively related to all three types of adjustment. Furthermore, cross-cultural training is also negatively related to all three types of adjustment. Regarding the organizational factors, co-worker support is positively related to all three types of adjustment but logistical support is positively related to interaction and general but not to work adjustment. Finally, for non-
work factors, culture novelty is negatively related to all three types of adjustment. Also, spouse adjustment is positively related to all three types of adjustment.

In light of the above, this study can draw on much existing insights, but we note that despite good progress related to our understanding of expatriate adjustment, there is a mix in results and these studies have not been conducted with Chinese expatriates and taking a multi-stakeholder perspective.

2.3 Implicit Assumptions of Expatriate Adjustment

Though the expatriate adjustment model from Black et al.’s (1991) spiked numerous empirical study for meta-analyses (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Hechanova et al., 2003), but it also constrained most future studies on few areas: (1) Study is predominately about the expatriates themselves and the associated variables. (2) Consider adjustment as the outcome but not a mean for an end. (3) Measure such variables already in the model only. (4) Investigate only direct and linear relationships among antecedents and adjustment. For instance, most studies only measure outcome of expatriates themselves but only few about the consequences of expatriate adjustment. The few study on consequences include "work and non-work satisfaction" (Shaffer & Harrison, 1998; Takeuchi et al., 2002a), organizational commitment (Shay & Baack, 2006; Takeuchi, Wang, & Marinova, 2009), premature return of assignment (for example, Shaffer & Harrison, 1998; Wang & Takeuchi, 2007), and performance (Caligiuri, 1997b; Kraimer & Wayne, 2004; Kraimer et al., 2001b; Shay & Baack, 2006) (Notwithstanding, the meta-analysis done by Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al. (2005) identify only around ten studies related to consequences of adjustment. Lacking of such study may be attributed to the difficulty of getting more rating sources to measure expatriate outcomes (Harrison, Shaffer, & Bhaskar-Shrinivas, 2004b). Furthermore, it is also hard to reach to the expatriate population for study.

Though having the sufficient sample to conduct the research is difficult, it is vital that we need to understand the implicit assumptions of expatriate adjustment. It seems that the assumption is that the study should be predominately focusing on the expatriates
themselves instead of including a holistic study of all related stakeholders (for example, family, parent country co-workers and host country co-workers). Also, the stress theory is always the primary and sometimes the sole theoretical underpinning in these studies (Harrison et al., 2004a; Kraimer & Wayne, 2004). Furthermore, variables are always related to each other in a simple and linear relationship (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Takeuchi, Shay, & Li, 2008). Most empirical studies have such implicit assumptions without adopting a multiple stakeholder perspective.

Multiple stakeholder perspectives study how expatriate adjustment is impacted by and also influence three stakeholders. They are (1) family (Caligiuri, 1997b; Ford, Heinen, & Langkamer, 2007; Greenhaus & Powell, 2003; Shaffer, Harrison, Gilley, & Luk, 2001b) (2) host country co-workers (Toh & DeNisi, 2007b; Toh & DeNisi, 2003; Vance & Paik, 1995; Varma et al., 2009), and (3) parent country organization (Aycan, 1997b; Gong, 2003a, 2003b; Gupta & Govindarajan, 2000). While such stakeholders have being identified, there isn’t much in-depth study about them.

Moreover, while taking an exploratory approach we note that there are also under explored theories that may be suitable to understand stakeholder interactions. For example, interactionist theory can help to understand a more complex relationship between antecedent variables and outcomes of expatriate adjustment (Ekehammar, 1974; Pervin, 1989; Terborg, 1981). Interactionist theory is a new approach for expatriate adjustment to examine individual behaviours by focusing the “continuous and multitudinous interactions between person characteristics and situational characteristics” (Terborg, 1981). This theory is a popular management theory but surprisingly it is being neglected for expatriate adjustment study (Vianen, Pater, Kristof-Brown, & Johnson, 2004). Moreover, when investigating the multiple interfaces between expatriates and their stakeholders, the “person–situation interaction” provides a potentially good approach to understanding the process of adjustment.
2.4 A Review of Multiple Stakeholder Perspective of Expatriate Adjustment

A review of multiple stakeholder perspective is discussed here to discuss how the individuals or groups who can impact or can be affected by expatriates. A stakeholder is any one or group who can be influenced or impacted by the expatriate for an overseas assignment (Freeman, 1984) and also includes the management support and control (Edstrom & Galbraith, 1977; Shay & Baack, 2004). The stakeholders can include (1) spouses and families, will be the most crucial factor in affecting the expatriate’s adjustment if they are unable to adapt to the foreign environment that results in expatriate adjustment (Hays, 1971, 1974); (2) the parent organization, who can help in increasing the level of adjustment that leads to better performance (Wang & Takeuchi, 2007); and (3) host country co-workers, whose willingness to support is useful for expatriates to succeeding (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Toh & DeNisi, 2007b) or unwilling to support will lead to failure (Toh & DeNisi, 2003). Also, with the list of these stakeholders, it will highlight the importance of examining the inter-relationship between expatriates and all the stakeholders from the multiple stakeholder perspectives.

Many researchers related the expatriate adjustment to the inability of the expatriates to adjust (Awang et al., 2013; Feitosa et al., 2014; Golden-Biddle & Rao, 1997; LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Selmer, 2006). Socio-cultural differences were also considered commonly by many key literatures as the one major factor for expatriate adjustment (Adler, 1997; Brock et al., 2008; Eriksson et al., 2009; Hofstede, 1980a, 2001a). While most studies were focused on expatriate’s adjustment (Levy-Leboyer, 2004; Patton, 1990b), but less attention was put about host country co-workers (Carson, Gilmore, Perry, & Gronhaug, 2001; Toh & DeNisi, 2007b; Yin, 1994). Also, Liu and Shaffer (2005) stated out that the host country co-workers' cultural factors as well as competencies had a direct impact on expatriate's performance (Fox, Robinson, & Boardley, 1998). As the studies from Tsui et al (1997), the expatriate had a detachment feeling due to lack of organization support from the parent country (Hutchingson, 1997; Subramaniam, 2010). Organization support had been related to better expatriate effectiveness (Aryee , Chay, & Chew, 1996; Takeuchi et al., 2009; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2002).
But there was little study about the expatriate adjustment of Mainland Chinese (Selmer, 2006; Wulan, 1997). Though Selmer et al (2000) had a study about MCEs in Hong Kong, but its research study was focusing on personal capabilities only (Selmer, Ebrahimi, & Li, 2000). Most recently, Chen (2011) had a such study, but again it was focusing on the expatriate’s personal ability only and there was a gap to examine expatriate adjustment from multiple stakeholder perspectives (Chen, 2011).

2.5 Review of Expatriate Adjustment

Table 1 below briefly gives an overview of existing literatures about expatriate adjustment and there are numerous studies examine either one specific facet or multiple facets of adjustment (general, work, and interaction) of adjustment. Spouse and family members, are among all, possibly the most frequent study. Hays (1971, 1974) found out that the inability of the spouses to adjust to a foreign environment as the second most crucial factor for expatriate to fail. But there aren’t many studies to investigate the influences of other stakeholders on expatriate and even less studies that examine the impact of expatriate on other stakeholders. Based on insights from the literature listed below, the rest of this chapter reviews each area to understand how each of the four research objectives/sub-questions are informed by extant research.

Table 1: List of Journal Articles Related to Expatriate Adjustment

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<th>Adjustment related to personal ability</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Feitosa, Kreutzer, &amp; Kramperth, 2014: personal traits, selection and training</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Takeuchi, 2010: multiple stakeholder review (including personal ability)</td>
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<td>1. Selmer (2006): Quality of expatriates and training lead to better adjustment</td>
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<td>1. Selmer (1996): Training after expatriate deployment</td>
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<td>1. Morgan (1988): Training and expatriate adjustment</td>
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<td>1. Tung (1982): Professional training</td>
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<th>Adjustment related to family support</th>
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<tr>
<td>2. Palthe (2004): Family adjustment</td>
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<td>2. Waxin (2004): Partner social support</td>
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### Adjustments Related to Host Country Co-worker Support

- Awang, Hussain, & Malek, 2013: Multiple stakeholder perspective
- Toh and DeNish (2007): Role information
- Shay and Baack (2006): Co-worker's perceived performance of expatriates
- Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Harrison, Shaffer and Luk (2005): Depth of co-worker relationship
- Waxin (2004): Supervisory social support
- Selmer (2001): Social involvement with co-workers
- Caligiuri et al. (1999): Positive attitude about expatriate adjustment
- Shaffer et al. (1999): Social support from co-workers
- Black et al. (1991): Social support from co-workers and superiors at host country
- Black (1988): Interaction with host nationals

### Adjustments Related to Parent Country Co-worker Support

- Takeuchi, Wang, Marinova and Yao (2009): Expatriate work adjustment
- Wang and Takeuchi (2007): Expatriate adjustment
- Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al. (2005): Logistical support
- Kraimer and Wayne (2004): Expatriate adjustment
- Palthe (2004): Parent country socialization
- Waxin (2004): Organizational social support
- Kraimer, Wayne and Jaworski (2001): Leader-member exchange
- Caligiuri, Joshi and Lazarova (1999): Expatriate adjustment
- Shaffer, Harrison and Gilley (1999): Logistical support
- Aycan (1997b): Strategic planning
- Black, Marshall and Oddou (1991): Logistical support

## 2.5.1 Expatriate’s Personal Ability

**Insights from extant literature to understand what is known is relation to:**

**Research question 1**: What is the role and impact of expatriate's own capability on expatriate adjustment?

Selection and training were focused by many large multinationals to improve their ability to adjust to the new working and living environment (Caligiuri, 1997a; Chang, 2005; Feitosa et al., 2014; Kupka, Everett, & Cathro, 2008). Expatriates were trained to
understand the cultural differences prior to their international assignment (Hofstede, 1980b, 1991, 2001b; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1993, 2005). Such cultural awareness training was common among multinationals to help the expatriates to understand the proper behaviours in the new environment (Black & Mendenhall, 1990). But despite such, Chen et al (2005) found that it was still common that expatriates still made culture-related mistakes during the overseas assignment (Chen, Tzeng, & Tang, 2005).

Such prior cultural training in some degree helped expatriates to build a basic understanding to help them more easily to adopt to the new environment (Black & Mendenhall, 1990). But there was the issue of stereotype and result in inaccurate assumption of the real situations (Adler, 1997). As the study from Morris and Robie (2001) correctly stated that the common framework of cultural differences were built on the theory that culture could be classified logically which might be seriously wrong (Morris & Robie, 2001).

There are numerous studies (from most recent ones to the early 1980s) reaching the same conclusion that the expatriate adjustment is due to the result of the inability of the expatriates to adjust to the new working and living environment (Caligiuri, 1997b; Freeman, 1984; Greehalgh, 1997; Patton, 1990a; Selmer, 2006; Shaffer et al., 1999; Shaffer et al., 2006). The expatriate’s personal ability is the core reason of the premature return of assignment (Shaffer & Harrison, 1998; Wang & Takeuchi, 2007). The recent research also have similar conclusion that personal skills play a vital role in expatriate adjustment (Feitosa et al., 2014). This study seeks to make contributions to the literature about the positive effect of personal ability to expatriate adjustment of Chinese expatriates.

There are also studies about the local language. An inability to speak the local language is one of the greatest challenges faced by the expatriate (Selmer, 2006) and is often an overlooked aspect in the context of foreign operations (Welch & Welch, 2008). Similarly, if the expatriate has acquired language skills relevant to the host country prior to training, they will have a greater absorptive capacity (Awang et al., 2013). Therefore, an expatriate
with a working knowledge of the host language will learn specific language skills more effectively during training.

Furthermore, an expatriate can exchange knowledge from their interactions with host country co-workers, but this is not possible if there is no shared medium of communication (Welch & Welch, 2008). Subsequently, language differences are often the basis for informal inclusion and exclusion (Marschan-Piekkari, Welch, & Welch, 1999). Exclusion from everyday interactions with host country co-workers may have adverse consequences for expatriates, such as miscommunication and decreased interactions with them. When the expatriate is unfamiliar with the host language, they are more likely to lack confidence when communicating with co-workers (Feitosa et al., 2014; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985; Selmer, 2006; Welch & Welch, 2008).

Also, the study from Tung (1982) found out that there was a direct and clear correlation between expatriate adjustment and the lack of professional training from the organization. But on the contrary Selmer (2002) found no linking between training and expatriate adjustment. Selmer suggested the training should be after the expatriate had been working in the new environment instead of prior training before it so that the expatriate could know the ground reality (Selmer, 1996). Shay and Baack (2004) studied to find the relationship between adjustment and performance. They found out that sufficient trainings and qualified expatriates would lead to better outcomes and they were able to control and adapt to the new environment (Shay & Baack, 2004).

As a summary among all the above studies, the expatriate’s inability to adjust to the new working and living environment was the major causes for expatriate to adjust. But it failed to include other possible factors into consideration.

2.5.2 Family/Spouse Stakeholders Review

Insights from extant literature to understand what is known is relation to: Research question 2: What is the role and impact of family support on expatriate adjustment?
There are many early studies on the impact of spouses on expatriate adjustment (Harvey, 1985; Hays, 1971, 1974), but only few really study the influence that family/spouse members have on the expatriates. Most studies stated that spouse and family adjustment is positively related to the level of cross-cultural adjustment by the expatriates. Some studies have investigated the relationships between overall levels of spouse/family and expatriate adjustment ((Black, 1988; P.M. Caligiuri, Hyland, Joshi, & Bross, 1998b), while some studies the relationship between a particular facet of spouse/family in relation to expatriate adjustment (Black & Stephen, 1989; Takeuchi et al., 2002a), and some other studies a mix (Palthe, 2004; Shaffer et al., 1999; Shaffer & Harrison, 1998, 2001). Some studies focused the influence of social support on expatriates, like the influence of the social support of the spouse in general (Kraimer, Wayne, & Jaworski, 2001a; Waxin, 2004) or the influence of male spouses’ social support on female expatriates (Caligiuri, Joshi, & Lazarova, 1999; Caligiuri & Lazarova, 2002; Varma, Toh, & Budhwar, 2006).

Many studies stated that family and spousal support is just as imperative as personal ability or organizational support (Cole, 2011; Gupta, Singh, Jandhyala, & Bha, 2013). This is because expatriates and their families become dependent on each other for encouragement due to isolation and loss of pre-existing support systems (Takeuchi, Yun, & Tesluk, 2002b). It is believed that the family, particularly the spouse, can provide the expatriate with first, a continual source of affect. Family has been found to be one of the most important factors contributing to expatriate success (Brown, 2008). Family support is always treated as one of the crucial factors for expatriate adjustment. Lacking of it will lead to poor job performance (Shaffer & Harrison, 2001). The support from the spouse, children and parents could solve the potential family-to-work conflicts that might hinder the expatriate adjustment (Ford et al., 2007). But again in this area, the findings are mixed and not totally clear. Caligiuri et al. (1999) stated that family support is positively related to female expatriates’ overall adjustment level, and Waxin (2004) stated that partner social support is positively related to expatriates’ interaction adjustment. Herleman, Britt, and Hashima (2008) found that social support from friends is positively related to spouses’
personal and interaction adjustment. But, Kraimer et al. (2001) fails to identify a direct relationship between spouse support and expatriates’ general and work adjustment.

From the above critical review, several findings can be discovered. Firstly, mostly early studies are very restrictive (few variables only, and commonly about family/spouse support or adjustment. Secondly, the variables are always commonly assumed to have a linear and direct relationship with expatriate adjustment. But, Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al. (2005) found that expatriates might have a non-linear adjustment process depending on their duration of stay in a foreign country, it is probably that the case that the relationships between antecedents and adjustment (or adjustment and outcome) are having a nonlinear relationship (Mendenhall & Macomber, 1997; Mendenhall, Macomber, Gregersen, & Cutright, 1998). Thirdly, while studies using work-family life literature as a theoretical basis is helpful it is not always directly related to family support as a mechanism of expatriate adjustment (Caligiuri et al., 1998b). Moreover, Few studies have investigated the impact of expatriates on their spouses (Shaffer & Harrison, 1998; Takeuchi et al., 2002b) and the broader family unit, which might include parent support. Takeuchi et al., (2002) found out that it is likely that the expatriates and their family members might have a reciprocal influence on each other and in this study it is proposed that the broader family unit may play a very important role in collectivist culture like China. Therefore, an exploration of the role of family support in the case of MCE in Hong Kong might be expected to reveal new insights into the literature that draws primarily on the experience of spousal support for Western expatriates.

A final body of literature that may provide insights into the impact of family on expatriate adjustment is that which examines work/family conflicts.

In organizational research, the work/family interface (especially work/family conflicts) is becoming a popular area to study (for example, meta-analysis by Ford, Heinen, & Langkamer, 2007; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998). Current research about this topic has been established, one way is about “work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflicts” (Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996). Work-to-family conflict happens when the work conflicts with family duties and family-to-work conflicts happen when family duties
conflict with the work (Netemeyer et al., 1996). Work/family conflicts are crucial aspect for multiple stakeholder analysis of expatriate adjustment as family members are always one of the important stakeholders that are being impacted or be affected by expatriates (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Greenhaus & Powell, 2003).

As a result, work and family conflict is proven to be related to expatriate adjustment (Shaffer et al., 2001). Also, the “stressor-stress-strain” perspective has been adopted for studying expatriate adjustment issues (Harrison et al., 2004a; Kraimer & Wayne, 2004). In essence, work/family conflict comes from inter-role conflicts in which there is a clash of role responsibilities between work and family. As a result, the expatriates find it hard to meet the demands of both family and work (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) and results in three forms of work/family conflicts: “time-based conflict (time constraints limit role involvement), strain-based conflict (strain produced by role membership), and behavior-based conflict (when behaviors associated with one role are incompatible with another role)”. Each type of the conflicts may influence expatriates’ adjustment and will also impact the family members.

When work role work role responsibilities make the expatriate unable to perform family duties (i.e., work-to-family conflict) this can cause stress and dissatisfaction (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1997). Consequently, the expatriate may spend less time on work and instead spend more time with the family (Koslowsky, 2000; Vistness, 1997). This will result in using less time for the work (i.e. leave early or arrive lately for work) and this will lead to poor job performance. Family-to-work conflict has been proven to be related to tardiness and absenteeism (Frone et al., 1992), and such negative work behavior can impact the job performance. Thus, it can be expected that family/spouse support will likely reduce the possible conflicts and hence a better outcome (e.g., adjustment and performance) because they can have more time and effort on work.

Furthermore, Takeuchi et al. (2002) explicitly examined the reciprocal crossover effects between spouse general adjustment and expatriate general and work adjustment and have empirical support for such two-way effects. Additional consequences that may be specific to family members or spouses include but are not limited to spouse’s marriage happiness,
children’s and family’s psychological and mental well beings (Hammer, Cullen, Neal, Sinclair, & Shafiro, 2005; Rothausen, 1999; Williams & Alliger, 1994).

Finally, it is possible there may be a complicated relationship between expatriates and their family members. For example, Takeuchi, Wang, and Marinova (2005) found an interaction effect between having an accompanying spouse (vs. not) and with children (vs. not) and the expatriate perceived the highest level of psychological work strain when they are not accompanied by spouse but are accompanied by children. This consider is considered to be reasonable as it will put more stress to the expatriate in terms of time and effort for both work and for the children without the spouse to support. Putting their findings together with Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al.’s (2005) meta-analytic results, it is concluded that family support can act as a moderator in the relationship between role stressors (e.g., “role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload”) that expatriates adjust at work and their overall level of expatriate adjustment. Though these moderating effects are not with doubt, nonetheless it tells us the possibility of a more complicated relationship between expatriate and family members worthy of further exploration in the case of MCE in Hong Kong.

2.5.3 Review of Parent Organization Stakeholder

**Insights from extant literature to understand what is known is relation to:**

**Research question 3:** What is the role and impact of parent country co-workers on expatriate adjustment?

The importance and rationale for parent country support can be understood in the context of expatriates and strategic HRM i.e. “the pattern of planned human resource deployments and activities intended to enable an organization to achieve its goals” (Wright & McMahan, 1992, p. 298). Since strategic HRM seeks to ensure that HR practices affect the outcomes for the organization (Becker & Huselid, 2006; Wright & McMahan, 1992), a strategic approach to expatriation might be expected to supports mobile human capital to deliver organizational outcomes in subsidiaries outside the home country. However, Werner’s (2002) summarizes that most research lacks the focus on organizational outcome. In this regard, the importance of outcomes may include knowledge transfer from the parent country to the local subsidiary (for example, product knowhow, design, work process, job
skills and innovation) that can increase the competitive advantages to the organization (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2000; Subramaniam & Venkatraman, 2001). When expatriates are adjusted well in the foreign country, they can transfer such knowledge more efficiently and effectively. Also, Takeuchi et al. (2008) found that there is empirical support of the global strategy and workflow integration pressure put by parent country organization on overseas subsidiaries and therefore the need for expatriate adjustment serves important organizational goals for MNCs.

Most past studies that investigated the expatriate-parent organization interface have a focus about the influence of the parent organization on expatriate and related their adjustment to the level of support (Black et al., 1991; Shaffer et al., 1999) and also the more on meta-analysis of expatriate adjustment by Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005 on stress/performance and organizational support (Caligiuri et al., 1999; Kraimer & Wayne, 2004; Kraimer et al., 2001b; Waxin, 2004). We have already reviewed the perspectives of host country employees in relation to expatriate adjustment. This section we will review how the parent country employees (including reporting managers and co-workers) whom may also play an important role in expatriate performance (Sergeant & Frenkel, 1998).

As the findings from Tsui et al (1997) note, the expatriate developed a strong sense of detachment if there was lack of organization support from the parent company (Hutchingson, 1997; Tsui, Pearce, Porter, & Tripoli, 1997). Organizational support was perceived by expatriate for their commitment but there was little attention was given to this from the organisation (Guzzo, Noonam, & Elton, 1994). Expatriate needed the organizational support especially during the early days of the expatriate assignment (Shaffer et al., 1999). Mendenhall and Oddou (1991) suggested regular visits and calls were critical so the expatriate could feel the sense of support from the parent company for better performance (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1991).

Organization support had been related to better expatriate effectiveness (Aryee et al., 1996; Black & Gregersen, 1991; Kraimer et al., 2001b) but there was little study on relocation support (Chen et al., 2005). Kraimer et al. (2001) studied the implications of parent country support and they found strong empirical support between expatriate
adjustment and the organizational support using Leader-Members-Exchange (LMX) model (Kraimer et al., 2001b). Their studies were supported by Liden and Maslyn (1998). Findings from Tsui et al (1997) also showed that a better employer-employee relationship will be able to improve job performance, which could be relevant for the support the expatriate is getting from the employer they have left in HQ and or the trust built. Ring and van de Ven (1992) found that the trust between the expatriate and the parent country organization to have better adjustment and performance. Moreover, the expatriate assignment in the foreign country was often considered as less trusting than what the expatriate had before the assignment (Johnson & Cullen, 2001).

With the assumptions that expatriates had to work out the solutions for their problems in overseas assignment (Gregersen & Black, 1992) and Kobrin (1988) observed that parent country managers underestimated the importance of organizational support to the expatriates. It was argued that the management normally would provide help on an immediate problem without clear role clarity. The role and responsibility of both the expatriate and the parent country managers were not defined and communicated clearly (Black & Gregersen, 1999). They found that “role clarity, role discretion and role conflict” were very important for work adjustment and it was agreed by further studies by Sagiadellis (2004).

Furthermore, past research that investigated the expatriate and parent country co-worker interface tended to find out the influence of the parent company on expatriate adjustment with more focus on the level of the supports (i.e. logistical) (Black et al., 1991; Shaffer et al., 1999; Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005) and organizational support (Caligiuri et al., 1999; Kraimer & Wayne, 2004; Kraimer et al., 2001a; Takeuchi et al., 2009; Wang & Takeuchi, 2007; Waxin, 2004). In brief, such findings state that parent company support (organizational or logistical supports) relates positively to expatriate cross-cultural adjustment (work, general and interaction). While some earlier research focused on the overall organizational supports from the company (Black et al., 1991; Caligiuri et al., 1999; Shaffer et al., 1999; Wang & Takeuchi, 2007), more recent studies try to use a multiple view in relation to organizational support (headquarter and the overseas subsidiary:
In a related piece of research, Kraimer et al. (2001) and Kraimer and Wayne (2004) investigated and found “leader-member exchange is positively related to expatriate task and contextual performance but not to expatriate adjustment.” There are some important findings from their study that might give insights into the role of leadership from HQ in expatriate adjustment. They found there is a strong social exchange interface between the expatriate and the parent company in relation to adjustment (Kraimer & Wayne, 2004; Takeuchi et al., 2009). But, only perceived organizational support and leader-member exchange were studied. It is also important to note that the variables were typically considered to have a direct and linear relationship with expatriate adjustment (except Takeuchi et al., 2009). Lastly, it was always one-way influence about the impact from the parent company (but no study had examined the influence that expatriates had on the parent company).

In summary, the findings from extant literature in general show that parent country organization support is positively related to expatriate cross-cultural adjustment (general, work, and interaction). There is little doubt that an expatriate might feel less isolated with supportive interactions with the home unit and that supports as the expatriate is about to go on assignment (such as logistic supports) are important. However, the likelihood that the expatriate will rely solely on ex-colleagues in the home unit for adjustment purposes is very low. Therefore, while parent country supports will play a role in adjustment we suggest that it will be in unions with other stakeholder supports and we seek to explore the experience of MNC in Hong Kong in this context. We now review the literature on host country supports.

2.5.4 Review of Host country Co-workers Stakeholder

Insights from extant literature to understand what is known is relation to: Research question 4: What is the role and impact of host country co-workers on expatriate adjustment?
The last stakeholder to be explored is the host country organization (and co-workers). The co-worker support is one of the most studied areas for expatriate adjustment (Black et al., 1991; Shaffer et al., 2001b; Toh & DeNisi, 2007b; Waxin, 2004); and also the meta-analysis by Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005).

While there were many studies with the focus on expatriate’s adjustment (Aycan, 1997a; Morley, Burke, & Finn, 1999), some have examined if multinationals train their host country employees about the cultural background of the expatriate which could improve the expatriate’s job performance (Cox, 1994; Vance & Ring, 1994). Vance and Ring (1994) stated that the management had failed to pay attention to provide culture training to the expatriates as well as the host country employees.

Host country co-worker support is one of the most popular areas for expatriate adjustment (Shaffer & Harrison, 2001; Toh & DeNisi, 2007b; Waxin, 2004). The onus for expatriates to perform well and integrate into the host country’s environment has proven to be challenging (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005) but good social interactions between the host country employee and the expatriate could reduce expatriate adjustment (Shaffer & Harrison, 2001). The dominant model of expatriate adjustment (Black et al., 1991) has found evidence that host country co-workers may assist expatriates’ adjustment in the host country (Olsen & Martins, 2009). Generally, the host country co-worker support is positively related to expatriate adjustment (Waxin, 2004).

Some other studies aimed to find out the degree of knowledge/training of host country employees could affect the expatriate’s job performance (Shaffer, Harrison, Gilley, & Luk, 2001a; Tsui et al., 1997). Furthermore, Liu and Shaffer (2005) found out that the host country employee’s cultural and competencies had a direct effect on expatriate performance (Liu & Shaffer, 2005b).

Erickson et al (1988) stated that social interactions between the host country employee and the expatriate could reduce expatriate adjustment problems (Brass, 1984; Caligiuri, 1997a; Shaffer et al., 2001a). Social networks were defined as a set of relationships and connections among different people to communicate and interact with each other (Hoang
& Antoncic, 2003). So both the expatriates and the host country employees had to have the knowledge and cultural understanding while interacting with each other for better performance (Aycan, 1997b). Louis et al. (1983) also argued that the expatriate was heavily relying on the host country employees to provide the related information during the early stage of the expatriate assignment (Louis, Posner, & Powell, 1983).

Sanchez and Brock (1996) gave the explanation on how the support and commitment from host country employees affected expatriate performance (Sanchez & Brock, 1996). Some host country employees even hide the vital information from the expatriate due to cultural differences and personal interests (Pucik & Katz, 1986). Barham and Devine (1990) further stated that the host country employee’s unwillingness to work closely with the expatriates also contributed to the high expatiate failure rates (Barham & Devine, 1990). Vance et al (1993) argued that there was a strong need for training of the host country employees in their “attitudes, perceptions and skills” so that they would be supportive for the expatriate (Vance, Wholihan, & Paderon, 1993). Apart from training of cultural differences, local employees should be trained to understand the intention of the organization for expatriate assignment for expatriate performance (Pucik, 1988).

Generally, the host country co-worker support is positively related to expatriate adjustment, but meaning of co-worker is not clearly defined (i.e. other expatriates, host country co-workers or even nationals from other nationals (Shaffer et al., 1999; Waxin, 2004), which may be important when investigating the different types of support i.e. informational vs. socio-emotional). Nonetheless, the majority of studies tend to adopt a more general meaning of social support without having a clear meaning of it. Caligiuri et al. (1999) also concluded that the more the support from the host country co-workers towards expatriates, as perceived by the expatriates themselves, was positively related to expatriates’ overall adjustment.

Further, there are few studies that investigated variables from a social network viewpoint (Johnson, Kristof-Brown, Vianen, Pater, & Klein, 2003; Liu & Shaffer, 2005a). More specifically, Johnson et al. (2003) proved that the number of host country co-worker contacts is positively related to both expatriate interaction and work adjustment. They also
found the level of relationships expatriates had with host country co-workers is positively related to expatriates’ general adjustment. Liu and Shaffer (2005) found “expatriates’ consideration of host country co-worker’s interpersonal skills is positively related to their work and interaction adjustment, while the depth of the relationship is positively related to interaction adjustment and expatriate performance.”

2.6 Social Exchange Point of View

Another viewpoint that may be useful to understand the expatriate adjustment is the social exchange theoretical perspective (Guzzo et al., 1994; Takeuchi et al., 2009), which may be an appropriate lens through which interactions with host-country co-workers might be understood. Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960; Homans, 1961) states that two parties (i.e., two persons, two groups, two firms or a combination of any of two) (i.e., employee-employer, manager–subordinate, or team lead/team member), go into an exchange relationship between them not from the financial point of view but a social point of view. Over time, if such relationship is bilaterally satisfying to each party and both will have to contribute more to further develop and maintain such relationship. Both parties in the social exchange are expected to work hard to reach balance (Homans, 1961). If one party exceeds the normal expectations of the relationship and this will exert more pressure for the other party to reciprocate by contributing more. This component of the social exchange is known as “the norm of reciprocity”. Such social exchange theory provides a potentially valuable framework for investigating the interfaces between expatriates and host country co-workers.

For instance, when host country co-workers think that they have a better social exchange relationship with expatriates, they are more likely to reciprocate by providing better support to expatriates with their work and non-work issues. Furthermore, host country co-workers may act as mentors to teach expatriates (i.e. job skills, culture, work processes) the ways to solve their practical problems (Feldman & Bolino, 1999). Feldman and Bolino (1999) found the mentoring provided by host country co-workers is positively related to the level of socialization of expatriates, which in turn is positively related to expatriates’ willingness to complete the assignment. Also, Kraimer and Wayne (2004) found the quality of leader-member exchange (perceived by the expatriates) is positively related to
the overall adjustment of expatriates. While longitudinal design is necessary to find out the
cause and effect (i.e., antecedents and outcome), a social exchange theory tells us the
importance of social relationship between the expatriates and host country co-workers and
how they affect each other for expatriate adjustment.

However, again the interaction and impact is complex. For example, Van Vianen et al.
(2004) examined the common values and their similarities between expatriates’ home
culture and host country culture and found self-transcendent cultural values can affect each
other (expatriates’ values and perceived host country co-workers’ values) and also affect
expatriates’ interactional and work adjustment. When expatriates are well adjusted to a
foreign country, they are more likely to be perceived by the host country co-workers as
someone like them and this will help to have a better adjustment because of liking and
familiarity (similarity-attraction paradigm; Byrne, 1961). For example, Thomas and Ravlin
(1995) found that the cultural adjustment of Japanese manager is positively related to the
level of perceived similarity by the American subordinates. Also, Thomas and Ravlin
(1995) found that internal attributions made by the host country co-workers moderated the
relationship between similarity and intentions to help.

In sum, interactions with host-country co-workers and the quality of the social exchanges
and relationships the expatriates develops with the co-workers is likely to have a major
impact on expatriate adjustment. Perceived similarity between the expatriate and host-
colleagues will help, however, as established in the introduction to this study, although,
MCEs in Hong Kong may come from a culturally aligned mainland, cultural differences
may also exist leading to adjustment challenges. We need to be careful to consider
expatriate adjustment in this unique context i.e. Mainland Chinese Expatriates. We do so in
the penultimate section to this chapter.

2.7 Review of Expatriate Adjustment about Mainland Chinese

There are only few studies on expatriate adjustment of Mainland Chinese even though
many large Chinese firms were now globalizing their operation (Wulan, 1997). A study of
MCEs in Hong Kong aimed to find out how the expatriate's personal abilities attributed to the expatriate adjustment but other factors were excluded (Selmer et al., 2000). Most recently, a similar study to find the relationship between expatriate adjustment and their personal characteristics (Chen, 2011) concluded that a further research was justified to have a more in-depth understanding of expatriate adjustment of MCEs from multiple stakeholder perspectives like parent country and host country co-workers as well as the family support.

As noted in the introduction to this thesis, with the growth of more Chinese expatriates working in Hong Kong, we see increasing conflicts between Hong Kong people and Chinese expatriates due to the cultural and political issues. This is likely to have important implications for adjustment. The anecdotal examples were provided in chapter 1 to flag a need to study Chinese expatriates in Hong Kong generally, and specifically, the need to understand unique adjustment challenge and to raise questions as to the applicability of insights from Western studies in this context. After a detailed and comprehensive search (around 400 journal articles), we find only few studies about Chinese expatriates indicating a strong research need to develop a deeper understanding of the experiences of this cohort of expatriates.

2.8 Implications of the Study (potential implications)

There is a continued need to understand expatriate adjustment among multinationals (Borg & Harzing, 1995; Jack & Stage, 2005; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1988). But most of the literatures focused largely on single player (the expatriate’s ability to adjust) rather than from the multi-player perspectives (co-workers from both the parent and the host country). The multinationals are hence developed their strategy to train the expatriates only and rarely putting any attention to other involved employees like the parent country managers and the host country employees as agreed by Vance and Ring (1994).

Furthermore, there is little study about Mainland Chinese expatriates despite the fact that China is the world’s 2nd largest economy and there are more than 1,830 CEFs in Hong
Kong in 1996 (Wulan, 1997).

This study will examine various reasons for expatriate adjustment and contribute new ideas and theories to past research that has commonly and widely explained the expatriate adjustment “as a result of the inability of the expatriate to adjust” to the unfamiliar host country environment (Briscoe, 1995; Caligiuri, 1997a; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985; Shaffer et al., 1999).

Apart from finding reasons of expatriate adjustment from the personal ability perspective of the expatriate to adjust to the new working and living environment. This study will go further to find out the multi-player perspective in which how the parent country and host country co-workers impact the performance of expatriate assignment. Based on the findings, the managers could use this idea and theory to select and train their employees for a better expatriate job performance.

This research is timely, in light of the dramatic increase in the “population of China-funded enterprises (CFEs) in Hong Kong” from just 122 to about 1,830 in 1996 (Wulan, 1997). Also, China is becoming the world’s second largest economy body in 2011 but there was little attention to investigate Mainland Chinese expatriate (MCEs). Selmer et al (2000) had carried out a study about MCEs in Hong Kong, but it research study was focusing on personal characteristics of the expatriates only. Most recently, there was a research study from Chen (2011), but again the study was focusing on the expatriate’s personal ability only and there was a gap to be filled to look at expatriate adjustment from multiple stakeholder perspectives. This study can help the Chinese enterprises to understand the understanding principle for expatriate performance from multi-player perspective and not only the expatriate and hence implement the appropriate organizational strategy to improve their expatriate success.

2.9 Conclusion

There are many literatures related to expatriate adjustment but most of them have a narrow view of focusing on the expatriate’s personal ability only (Briscoe, 1995; Caligiuri, 1997a;
Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985; Shaffer et al., 1999). Also, there is little study about the Mainland Chinese expatriates (MCEs) except Selmer (2000) and Chen (2011) had carried out the studies targeting MCEs but they also paid little attention on other multi-player factors for expatriate adjustment but only on the inability of the expatriate.

In addition, expatriate adjustment and performance is a very complex phenomenon and the use of multiple stakeholder perspective can help to understand more about this in further details. This is the primary contribution of the multiple stakeholder view of expatriate adjustment and performance by highlighting the importance of multiple stakeholders who are likely to have an influence on expatriates.

More specifically, multiple interfaces (spouse/family–expatriate, host country co-workers–expatriate, and parent country co-workers–expatriate) can be used to investigate the interaction effects between the stakeholders that are likely to affect expatriates’ level of adjustment and performance. In doing so this research can address calls in the extant research. For example, many studies have suggested including the spouse in managing expatriate adjustment and performance. In addition, Vance et al. (1993), Vance and Paik (1995), and Toh and DeNisi (2003) advocated for the inclusion of host country co-workers in managing expatriate performance. For example, Vance and Paik (1995: 157) stated that “there is a surprising lack of attention to the development needs and potential contributions of the host country national co-workers associated with the expatriate management assignment.” This opinion was supported by Toh and DeNisi (2003: 617), who stated that “existing IHRM [international HRM] studies have neglected the host country co-workers’ role in the success of expatriate assignees, placing the burden largely on the expatriate.” These findings however are still only limited in that one stakeholder is being focused. It may be time to start examining not just one but more than one stakeholder to see if each stakeholder has an independent as well as an interactive implication on expatriates. Only then will multinationals begin to understand how to devise intervention programs to help expatriates adjust to the new foreign environments, which in turn will achieve better outcomes for the organization.
This study seeks to explore Mainland Chinese Expatriates adjustment from the multiple stakeholder perspectives seeking to address the following principle research question - *what is the role of multiple-stakeholders in the successful adjustment of MCE in Hong Kong?* To answer this research question, four sub-questions are needed to examine the role of each of the four stakeholders - the expatriate; the family; the co-workers and parent country co-workers host country co-workers. With these research goals in mind an appropriate methodology is explained in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 3  RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction
The objective of this chapter is to outline the methodology and design used in this research. To demonstrate the thoroughness of the process in choosing an appropriate method, this chapter will outline the theory considered, the research method, the research design and the implementation. Limitations and ethical issues of the research will also be addressed.

3.2 Theory
This complex and complicated journey of research started in July 2011 when student researcher first enrolled in this DBA programme. The researcher begins with identifying his research areas and topics of interest and the application of three schools of thoughts called paradigms (Kuhn, 1962), about the processes of how the research should be conducted and what the results should achieve. The three paradigms are: positive research, interpretivist research and lastly critical research.

Positivist research is a school of thought that emphasizes testing and measuring of the theory using logical and mathematical means. It uses existing theories to test the hypotheses and is relatively structured, and the researchers are objective (Carson, Gilmore, & Perry, 2001).

Interpretivist research is a school of thought that emphasizes on theory building, meaning exploration and theory understanding. It is relatively unstructured or semi-structured, and the researcher is involved as instrument (Carson, Gilmore, & Perry, 2001).

Critical research is a school of thought that emphasizes on empowering people for improvement through self-reflection and the researcher is involved to challenge taken-for-granted norm and hence find new insights or a better world (Cavana et al., 2001).

This research is about exploring meanings and having better understanding of the people involved in complex relationships that may affect expatriate adjustment but not about scientific or mathematical testing and measurement of the theory. Also, it is not about self-
improvement of creating a better world. Therefore, the researcher adopts an interpretive approach (Van Maanen, 1979) to understand deeply how expatriates from mainland Chinese adjust to working and living in Hong Kong. This involvement of the researcher will help to develop, monitor and guide the research. The interpretive qualitative research method unlocks meaningful insights and in-depth understanding of an issue in a managerial context, and aims to find possible reasons for an issue without biased adjustment (Carson, Gilmore, & Perry, 2001).

Such social research can be conducted by quantitative or qualitative methods. While quantitative methods are measuring numerical facts, focusing on variables, separating data and theory, being independent of context, gathering many subjects, calculating statistical analyses, being reliable and purely objective, and the researcher is detached, qualitative approaches are used building a social situation or cultural meaning, focusing on interactive processes and incidents, being genuine, integrating both theory and data, being situational constrained, referring to a few incidents or subjects, being analysed by subject, and the researcher is involved (Creswell, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Marvasti, 2004; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

Qualitative research methodology, such as in-depth and open-ended research methods, could grasp the complexity and the multiple dimensions for organizational decision-making patterns the best (Das, 1983). From several qualitative techniques (Patton, 1990; Denzin and Lincoln, 1998) the method of in-depth interviews (Minichiello et al., 1995) is chosen for this research as they could focus in gathering detailed descriptions of the incidents, events, situations and interactions among people (Patton, 1990a), as the participants have firsthand experience (Das, 1983) through mainly open-ended and semi-structured questions from a prior theory without rigid structures (Eisenhardt, 1989). By asking participants to share their rich personal experiences and in-sights with the researcher in a less rigid environment (Cooper & Emory, 1995), but semi-structured interviews could create a more friendly environment for them to express even the more sensitive issues.
3.3 Alternative Research Methods

To be thorough, several alternative qualitative research methods were also considered for this research before the most appropriate qualitative approach was applied.

One alternative research method to explore causes and better understanding of a specific phenomenon is case study research in a specific organisation (Patton, 1990a). Collecting substantial descriptions about a case through in-depth interviews provides meaningful insights about a unique incident, but the objective of this study is not to explore one or multiple cases in great depth – rather the experience of being sent on an expatriate assignment to Hong Kong from the MCE perspective.

Another alternative method is grounded theory (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). A wide coverage of literature is accessible explaining in-depth, often isolated factors that caused issues of expatriate adjustment. Since this new study targets to seek a more holistic view of expatriate adjustment by exploring the relationship of several stakeholders in their complex context, grounded theory was considered not an appropriate approach primarily because we do have existing insights/theory to draw on although we are applying them in a new and underexplored context.

Focus group interviewing is another method used in qualitative research. The objective of focus group interviewing is gathering data through the interactions of group members which would be hardly discovered in such depth compared to one-on-one interviews (Morgan, 1988). Since this research aims to collect in-depth information about an expatriate’s own experiences this method is also not considered to be inappropriate.

3.4 Research Design and Implementation

This section highlights the key elements of the research design applied: sampling method, participant selection, interview protocol, pilot interview, transcripts and coding.

The data for this qualitative research study was gathered through semi-structured in-depth interviews (Neuman, 1994) with twenty Mainland Chinese expatriates about their adjustments. Questions will be asked related to their expatriate adjustment of working and
living in Hong Kong from multiple stakeholders’ perspectives like the personal ability of expatriate himself/herself, the co-worker support from the host country, the co-worker support from the parent country and also the family support.

The interview protocol provided the overall direction of the semi-structured questions (Patton, 1990a). The language used in the interviews was English when Mainland Chinese expatriates were interviewed. The researcher speaks fluent English. The Mainland Chinese expatriates are native Mandarin speakers but also speak in English, so that transcripts taken by the researcher and reviewed by the participants were in English. By using English as the language in the interviews instead of Mandarin translated to English, the use of interpreters and the disadvantage of misinterpretation (Carson, Gilmore, & Perry, 2001) could be avoided.

3.4.1 Sampling Method

As the focus of this research is on collecting in-depth quality data the technique of non-probability sampling was used (Miles & Huberman, 1984). The researcher cooperated with a consulting firm, Global Talent Services Limited, assisting the researcher in recruiting purposive samples for this research to recruit 20 participants who were employees of its member organizations. They helped in selecting the potential participants and then the researcher sent invitation letters for their willingness to participate in this survey. Based on their replies, twenty participants were interviewed. To maintain confidentiality, the companies that helped on recruiting respondents for the interviews have no knowledge about who finally participated as the participants were coded and no real names were being identified. Also the participants have no knowledge about who were the other participants in the interviews.

3.4.2 Interview Protocol and Process

The researcher used an interview protocol that provided the overall direction for the interviews, ensured that the research issues were addressed as well as enable consistency across the interviews (Eisenhardt, 1989; Patton, 1990a) but also allowed enough flexibility to change questions during the interview process whenever is appropriate to collect more
in-depth data related to the research issues (Patton, 1990a).

The aim of the research is to explore the relationships and experiences of the multiple stakeholders in an expatriate assignment, the expatriate himself/herself, the parent country co-workers, the parent country co-workers and the family members. Therefore, the protocol included questions about the participant’s perception of the phenomenon about his/her own ability and how the support from other stakeholders impacts expatriate adjustment. Since the review of existing literature revealed a strong need on pre-expatriation stage training, participants were also asked to describe how they were prepared, organizational supports and trainings, previous overseas working experiences and how they evaluated the usefulness of such training.

At the end of each interview there was an open session in which participants could reflect on what they think was most important success factors for expatriate adjustment.

It was important for the researcher that the participants were aware of the purpose of the research because it is important for validity (Yin, 1994). The information provided to the participants was carefully prepared by the researcher to avoid bias and a pre-determined direction (Patton, 1990a). Even though already briefed about the objective of the research through an introduction letter participants were informed more in detail about sample questions and procedure of the interviews by the researcher in personal emails and phone conversations. Participants got clarifying questions answered by the researcher on request.

All participants were sent in advance a written description of the objective of the study, a letter of confirmation of confidentiality. In personal meetings or phone conferences or both, participants received further explanations about the study and clarifying questions were discussed. All respondents declared their consent in writing.

Patton (1990) strongly recommended using tape recording during the interviews. The researcher decided to use tape recording during the interviews and all of the respondents accepted such arrangements. The researcher also had to take notes as a guide to have a smooth interview and important messages were noted and all of the respondents were informed.
Since the focus of this research was on collecting and exploring perceptions, the interview protocol was designed to enable a smooth flow of personal experiences and views about the research issues but not expected to move questions in a linear manner. Also the researcher expected that all participants answered all questions.

Before the interview with all 20 participants, a pilot interview with two Mainland Chinese expatriates and provided an opportunity for any minor adjustment for the subsequent interviews. Based on insight from the two pilot interviews, there were no major changes to the set of questions being asked.

The list of questions used in the protocol followed the purpose of exploring how the personal ability, the host country co-worker support, the parent country co-worker support and the family support affected the expatriate adjustment. The main questions that should guide the exploration were:

1. What formal organizational supports were provided to you and/or your family when expatriating to Hong Kong?
2. Can you please describe what you see as the personal abilities and characteristics, which helped or hindered your adjustment to living and working in Hong Kong?
3. Can you please describe the role that your co-workers played (if any) in helping you to adjust to living and working in Hong Kong?
4. Can you please describe the role that your parent-co-workers played (if any) in helping you to adjust to living and working in Hong Kong?
5. Can you please describe the role that family support played (if any) in helping you to adjust to living and working in Hong Kong?
6. In summary – Based on your experience, what are the critical success factors for MCE adjustment in Hong Kong?

The researcher was responsible to collect the data. Ensuring that the transcript was an accurate documentation of the participant’s spoken words (Sandelowski, 1994), notes of their responses were extensively written down by the researcher frequently during the interviews and after a topic was widely discussed responses were clarified by the
researcher with the participants before putting them into the transcript. The (unidentified) transcripts were done by a third party transcript service company so as to avoid researcher bias and also maintained a high level of accuracy in transcripts.

3.4.3 Data Analysis

From the data in transcripts and notes, the method of content analysis (Patton, 1990a) was used to code the groups of words arranging them into patterns which allowed clustering the segments related to a particular theme (Miles & Huberman, 1984), such as perceived personal ability, perceived parent country co-worker support, perceived host country co-worker support and perceived family support.

The analysis was conducted in two steps, “axial and selective coding” (Neuman, 1994). In the first step, data were grouped into segments as classified based on literature review, for example, level of organizational support, expatriates’ pre-departure training, expatriates’ previous overseas work experiences, Cantonese language proficiency, English language proficiency and others. In the second step, selective coding, the segments were whether summarized on similarities or contrasted, for example on how differently the relationship and supports from the multiple stakeholders like parent country co-worker, host country co-worker and family members was stated on the same issue or on which issues multiple participants voiced the same perspective. The results from comparing and contrasting real personal work experiences and participants perceived views on the discussed research issues were compared to existing literature. Overlaps between the role of stakeholders were also explored in both the research interviews (by asking follow on question) and in data analysis by careful assessment of when one stakeholders role in expatriate adjustment influenced or was influenced by anther. Finally, with the goal of understanding the relative importance of different stakeholders from the expatriates perspective, interviewees were ask to rate on a scale of 1-5 the importance of each of the stakeholders being discussed so that their perception of the relative importance of each stakeholders role in adjustment could be built into the analysis of the interview transcript.
3.5 Respondents Selection

The research focus required that participants were expatriates from Mainland Chinese and working in Hong Kong from the multiple stakeholder viewpoint even though the classical factors contributing to expatriate adjustment as commonly discussed in literature, such as inability of the expatriate to adjust to an overseas cultural working and living environment were considered, the primary objective of the study was to have a holistic view of expatriate adjustment from multiple stakeholder perspectives - the expatriate himself/herself, the host country co-worker, the parent country co-worker and the family members.

The researcher got the help from a consulting firm to recruit 20 participants who were employees of its member organizations. The researcher randomly selected 20 expatriates who volunteered to be part of the study through an open call to participate.

7 Interviewed expatriates were aged between 31 and 40 and 13 expatriates were aged between 21 and 30. 12 participants were male and 8 were female. 8 were married and 12 were single. From the 20 interviewed expatriates, 3 had previous work experience as expatriates.

Please see table on next page for summary.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Participant Code-Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>China Province</th>
<th>Language Skills</th>
<th>Duration of Stay</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Interview Time</th>
<th>First Assignment</th>
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<td>Guangdong</td>
<td>Cantonese, Mandarin, English</td>
<td>1.5 years</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Nov 2013</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expat-016</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>Guangdong</td>
<td>Cantonese, Mandarin, English</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Nov 2013</td>
<td>No, Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expat-017</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>Guangdong</td>
<td>Mandarin</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Dec 2013</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expat-018</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>Guangdong</td>
<td>Cantonese, Mandarin</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Dec 2013</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.6 Validity, Credibility and Reliability

In order to support establishing validity of the research all interviews were tape recorded and the transcript was being completed from a third party service company (Yin, 1994).

The credibility, dependability and conformability of this qualitative research originate from the vigilant interpretation, examination and assessment of appropriate literature, and from carefully structuring the data to ensure full and descriptive evaluation and assessment. This analysis will be connected back to prior theory from literature. Data analysis and conclusions will be made transparent to the reader.

The following techniques being some of those suggested by Denzin and Lincoln (1994) were used to ensure the quality of research results of this interpretive research:

- Interviewees were chosen randomly among expatriates who chose to participate.
- Depth and intimacy of interviewing in one-to-one discussions
- Research is about the expatriate’s personal experiences and from the expats perspective.
- Comparing results across from multiple stakeholder perspectives for the same research issue

3.7 Limitations

The aim of this research is to understand the Mainland Chinese Expatriate (MCE) adjustment from multiple stakeholder perspectives, but the study restricted to the perceived personal ability, perceived host country co-worker support, perceived parent country co-worker support and perceived family support from the expatriate’s viewpoint only.

Most participants can speak fluent English, but sometimes they find it difficult to precisely
communicate their messages as English is their second language.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Newcastle, Australia with approval number H-2013-0307. The study complies with the requirement by the committee, that in order to protect participant confidentiality.

All recipients received a consent form and were informed of their rights in relation to the interviews and their freedom to withdraw at any time.
CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS & RESULTS

This chapter will discuss the findings and results of the research study. The data related to the four research questions will be analysed to find the impacts of the four stakeholders on expatriate adjustment. Firstly, the impacts of personal ability on expatriate adjustment will be discussed. Secondly, the impacts of family support on expatriate adjustment will be discussed. Thirdly, the impacts of host-country co-workers’ support on expatriate adjustment will be discussed. Fourthly, the impacts of parent-country co-workers’ support on expatriate adjustment will be discussed. At the end of each section, there will also be a conclusion. To represent the key themes emerging across the data under each of the four stakeholder analyses themes are also highlighted in bold and italics.

4.1 Expatriate’s Personal Ability

Most studies on expatriate adjustment are related to the expatriate’s personal ability to adjust or not (Feitosa et al., 2014; Kraimer et al., 2001a; Shaffer et al., 2006). Qualified expatriates and sufficient trainings would have a better adjustment and hence lead to a better outcome in the new environment (Shay & Baack, 2004). Many expatriates were also trained to understand the cultural differences prior to their international assignment for better adjustment (Hofstede, 2001; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2005).

It is not a surprise to find that almost all the Chinese expatriates (18/20 or 90%) ranked the importance of personal ability on expatriate adjustment as 5 (5 as most important and 1 as least important). In addition to this, Expat-003 and Expat-019 ranked personal ability as 4 (2/20 or 10%). The percentage of high ranking (4 and 5) is 100%. Their stressing of how important their own ability is for adjustment is in line with the literature that personal ability is always considered as one of the most important factors for a better adjustment in their international assignment (Wayne & Jaworski, 2001; Shaffer, Harrison, Gregersen, Black & Ferzandi, 2006). This rating provided insights into how the qualitative data on the role of personal ability and what personal abilities were most important.

Going deeper into the analysis, all the expatriates (Expat-001-Expat-020) consider their job
skills as their personal ability for a better adjustment. It was noteworthy that interviewees focused their discussion of personal ability on how it related to adjustment on the job rather than adjustment more broadly to living in Hong Kong. Perhaps revealing the priority they place on workplace adjustments and their abilities to settle into their new work context. The job skills are grouped under two categories: the hard skills and the soft skills (Andrew & Higson, 2010; Ford et al., 2010; Feitosa et al., 2014). Hard skills include the hard business knowledge (i.e. professional qualification, business knowhow, technical skills, related work experiences, computer skills and etc.) for a person to carry out its job duties efficiently and effectively. Soft skills are defined as interpersonal competencies (i.e. language skills, culture awareness skills and people skills) of interpersonal communication for a better performance (Andrew & Higson, 2010). In relation to the latter, a reoccurring theme in the literature was the cultural awareness was in fact needed in Hong Kong for MCEs. Interviewees were unanimous in the conclusions that cultural ‘skills’ can help MCE in Hong Kong and that they are required for those who do not have them.

For hard skills, all the expatriates (Expat-001-Expat-020) considered it as important personal ability for better adjustment (20/20 or 100%). It is not a surprising finding as there is numerous studies related to expatriate adjustment to personal ability (Wayne & Jaworski, 2001; Shaffer, Harrison, Gregersen, Black & Ferzandi, 2006). But unlike Western expatriates, all the Chinese expatriates reported that they felt they had the hard skills for the assignment indicated that there is a hard skill matching during the selection stage for Chinese enterprise (Feitosa et al., 2014, Johnson et al., 2003, Shay & Baack, 2004). They believed that the ability to do the job was the first issue in being sent there are all other skills come secondary.

For soft skills, all the Chinese expatriates (Expat-001-Expat-020) considered it as important personal ability for better adjustment. Going further into the analysis, there are language skills (Cantonese and English), Expat-001, Expat-002, Expat-003, Expat-004, Expat-005, Expat-006, Expat-007, Expat-009, Expat-010, Expat-015, Expat-016, Expat-017, Expat-018, Expat-019 and Expat-020 considered Cantonese as important personal ability (15/20 or 75%). Expat-001, Expat-002, Expat-003, Expat-004, Expat-005, Expat-008, Expat-010, Expat-011, Expat-015, Expat-016, Expat-017, Expat-018, Expat-019 and
Expat-020 considered English as important personal ability (14/20 or 70%). The findings are in line with the literature to some extent, but there are very high skills requirements on language (both Cantonese and English) are considered as personal ability for a better adjustment. That Cantonese was considered so important was a surprise, in the MCE moving to Hong Kong (whose first language was Mandarin), needed multiple language skills – English and Cantonese. The latter was reported as being particular important for social adjustment.

There are more findings about soft skills. Expat-001, Expat-002, Expat-003, Expat-004, Expat-005, Expat-007, Expat-008, Expat-009, Expat-014, Expat-015, Expat-016, Expat-017, Expat-018, considered cultural awareness as personal ability for better adjustment (13/20 or 65%). Expat-001, Expat-002, Expat-003, Expat-004, Expat-010, Expat-012, Expat-14, Expat-015, Expat-016, Expat-017, Expat-018, Expat-019 and Expat-020 considered people skills as important personal ability (13/20 or 65%).

In conclusion, all the expatriates considered personal ability as important factor for better adjustment. For hard skills, all the expatriates (20/20 or 100%) considered it as important personal ability. For soft skills, there are at least 13/20 or 65% expatriates considered soft skills as important personal ability for better adjustment. This is hardly a surprise. There is a Chinese proverb saying “Gong Yu Shan Qi Shi,Bi Xian Li Qi Qi”, it means “A workman must sharpen his tools if he is to do his work well.” This highlights the importance for Chinese expatriates of having a good personal ability or skills for the job. This is in line with the literature in which expatriate is always need to depend on their own personal ability to solve the assignment problems (Shaffer et al., 2006; Wang & Takeuchi, 2007; Feitosa et al., 2014).

### 4.1.1 Hard and Soft Job Skills

For this study, after the data analysis, the result of this research is in line with the literature in which expatriate is always need to depend on their own personal ability to solve the assignment problems (Wayne & Jaworski, 2001; Shaffer, Harrison,
Gregersen, Blakc & Ferzandi, 2006). Almost all the expatriates considered job skills as the critical factor for expatriate adjustment. The job skills are grouped under two categories: the hard skills and the soft skills for further analysis (Andrew & Higson, 2010; Ford et al., 2010).

4.1.1.1 Hard Skills

Hard skills include the hard business knowledge (i.e. professional qualification, business knowhow, technical skills, related work experiences, computer skills and etc.) for a person to carry out its job duties efficiently and effectively (Ford et al., 2010; Andrew & Higson, 2010). For hard skills, all the expatriates (Expat-003-Expat-020) considered it as important personal ability for better adjustment (20/20 or 100%).

“Before I was assigned to this role, they match my job related hard skills like technical skills, business knowledge and also the previous work experiences. My experiences of working in a multi-cultural environment enable me to have the good people management and communication skills in Hong Kong where there are colleagues from Hong Kong, China and also overseas. I can also communicate effectively with both languages (English as well as Mandarin). With these job related hard skills, I am able to finish my expatriate assignments without any issues.” (Expat-008)

Expat-008 explained he has the relevant job related hard skills, technical skills and business knowledge for this assignment. He also has previous work experiences. This is the reason why he is selected during the skill matching stage for this assignment. Such hard skills help him finishing his tasks easily.

“I worked in China for many years. I also have worked in Germany for five years and Japan for around 3 years. My international exposure gives me the business skills, job skills and also skills on management and communication with different people. Also, I have a professional background on project management and due diligence. Such skills are important for my current role to communicate and
Expat-011 explained that she worked for overseas projects for many years in Japan and Germany (though not in Hong Kong). The international working experiences give her good business skills, hard skills, good management and people communication skills. She also has professional skills on project management and due diligence. Such job related skills are primary the reasons of choice for this assignment and based on the data, this was the case for the majority of expats and a priority over soft stills. These hard skills are very useful for her to achieve the company goal without any issues.

On the other hand, Expat-003 thinks he lacks some hard skills like job skills and business knowledge and reported this as a major problem for adjustment.

“I am from Shanghai, China. My skills like technical and business knowledge aren’t exactly meeting all the requirements for my assignment in Hong Kong as china is less demanding. My lacking of such skills make me difficult to finish my tasks on time and the quality is in doubt. This impacts me a lot for my adjustment during the initial months of my assignment. I have to learn it most by myself and also sometimes from my colleagues. (Expat-003)

Expat-003 further explains that he lacks some hard skills like job skills and business knowledge. This causes him some problems of adjustment especially during the initial months of his assignment. He is then unable to finish his tasks on time and the quality of his work is also not up to standard. He has to learn such hard skills mostly by himself as well as from his host country co-workers.

It is concluded that all the expatriates (20/20 or 100%) considered hard skills (i.e. professional qualification, business knowhow, technical skills, related work experiences, computer skills and etc.) as important personal ability for better adjustment. It seems such result matches with other Western expatriates’ studies that all the expatriates have all the hard skills for the assignment indicated that there is a hard skill matching during the
selection stage for Chinese enterprise (Chen et al., 2005, Shay & Baack, 2004). Furthermore, the classification of personal ability to hard and soft skills will provide more details how different personal abilitys affects the expatriate adjustment.

4.1.1.2 Soft Skills: Language Skills (Cantonese and English)
Soft skills are about interpersonal competencies (i.e. language skills, culture awareness skills and people skills) of interpersonal communication for a better performance. There are something widely discussed in the literature (e.g. Andrew & Higson, 2010) and were also a major theme in the data from this study. Surprisingly and despite what might be expected to be a culturally close host-location for the MCE, the theme of language was strong in the data and indeed multiple language requirements.

Further into the analysis, there are language skills (both Cantonese and English), Expat-001, Expat-002, Expat-003, Expat-004, Expat-005, Expat-006, Expat-007, Expat-009, Expat-010, Expat-015, Expat-016, Expat-017, Expat-018, Expat-019 and Expat-020 considered Cantonese as important personal ability (15/20 or 75%). Expat-001, Expat-002, Expat-003, Expat-004, Expat-005, Expat-008, Expat-010, Expat-011, Expat-015, Expat-016, Expat-017, Expat-018, Expat-019 and Expat-020 considered excellent English as important personal ability (14/20 or 70%).

“I think the main personal ability is my language ability. I am from Guangdong, and I can communicate easily with my Hong Kong colleagues. I was told the reason why they select me for this expatriate assignment, this language skill [Cantonese] is one of the key reasons (as most people from China can’t speak Cantonese). I speak English as well though not very native, but I have no issues for professional conversation. During the meetings (both internal and external), such language skills help me a lot. This is surely useful for me to perform my tasks effectively.” (Expat-007)

Expat-007 explained that his soft skills are his language skills. As he is from Guangdong, he can speak fluent Cantonese (same as Hong Kong). Most of people from China can’t
speak Cantonese, but only speak Mandarin. Although both languages are similar they are also quite differently (not just spoken, but also written) and interviewees stressed this. Moreover, Hong Kong’s written language is Traditional Chinese, while China is Simplified Chinese. Expat-007 can also speak fluent English too (but not - in his opinion - good enough for professional conversation). Such language skills are surely helpful for him to communicate effectively with both colleagues and customers. This can help him work adjustment more smoothly.

“I think my language skills are my personal ability. Firstly, I am a native Cantonese speaker. Secondly, I can communicate in English with my colleagues. I am familiar with Hong Kong culture too. With such language skills, I find it easy to communicate the people. This surely is very helpful for my assignment. Without it, I don’t find my company will choose me for this job and I won’t have a chance to work in Hong Kong. Language skill is definitely an important asset for any international assignment.” (Expat-005)

Expat-015 explained that his soft skills in both Cantonese and English language skills were key to his adjustment. He is a native Cantonese speaker. He can speak fluent English too. This is sometimes the reason why Chinese headquarters select them for the expatriate assignments in Hong Kong. He is like an international citizen and can communicate effectively with people of different culture and language background. This helps him to adjust to Hong Kong easily. His job performance is benefited too.

It is concluded that many expatriates (15/20 or 75%) considered Cantonese as important personal ability. Also, many expatriates (14/20 or 70%) considered English as important personal ability (14/20 or 70%), but perhaps the overlap is most interesting. The findings are in line with the literature to some extent about the personal ability to expatriate adjustment (Wayne & Jaworski, 2001; Shaffer, Harrison, Gregersen, Black & Ferzandi, 2006), but there is an exceptionally high language skills requirement (both Cantonese and English) that is unlike Western expatriates. With higher language skills, the better is the adjustment (Selmer, 2006), but for MCE the higher in one may not be enough. This placed an extra burden on MCE adjustment.
4.1.1.3 Soft Skills: People Skills

Soft skills like people skills are being considered as one key factor for expatriate adjustment based on that interview data. Expat-001, Expat-002, Expat-003, Expat-004, Expat-010, Expat-012, Expat-14, Expat-015, Expat-016, Expat-017, Expat-018, Expat-019 and Expat-020 considered people skills as important personal ability (13/20 or 65%).

“I think my personal ability is my soft skills like interpersonal skills. I have good people skills. I am open-minded. I am also very flexible and friendly. Though I am from China, I treat all the people alike and can make friends with almost everybody. Therefore, I have good relationship with colleagues and they are eager to help me. I think this people skills is my personal ability too. Such people skill is definitely useful for my expatriate assignment.” (Expat-003)

Expat-003 explained that he has good people skills. He makes friends with people from Hong Kong as well as from China. Many expatriates tend to make friends of the same background (i.e. from China). This could lead to problems when you are perceived as a “Mainlander”. With his good people skills, his Hong Kong co-workers are very willing to work and help him with his works. Such skills help his adjustment and hence he can finish my work effectively and efficiently.

“About my personal ability, I think it is my soft skills like people skills. I am open to meet other people and this will help me to learn. I can learn a lot like local culture and local language by being friendly. I have made many friends in my company. They help me with my work and also provide advice for my living too. I have good interpersonal communication skills too and this is key to making personal connections. Some people told me that attitude decides everything. I also work very hard and believe that everything can be done with hardworking and help from the friends.” (Expat014)

Expat-014 explained that he has a good people skill. He is friendly and has good interpersonal communications skills. With this skill, he can make many friends and make him easier to finish the tasks and easy to adjust too. Chinese people tend to be friendly too.
There is a Chinese proverb saying “Zai Jia Kao Fu Mu, Chu Wai Kao Peng You”, it means, “At home, you rely on your parents. Away from home, you rely on your friends.” Many interviewees stressed that relational skills and good soft interpersonal skills were important, especially as a mainlander where other barriers (or perceived barriers) need to be overcome.

It is concluded that most Chinese expatriates (13/20 or 65%) considered **people skills** as important personal ability and it is in line with literature for a better adjustment (Wayne & Jaworski, 2001; Shaffer, Harrison, Gregersen, Black & Ferzandi, 2006).

### 4.1.1.4 Soft Skills: Culture Awareness Skills

A final major theme emerging in the data from this section of the interview on MCEs in Hong Kong was the value and need for **cultural awareness skills**. The importance of this was stressed by multiple interviewees and that it was such as issue, in what might be deemed a culturally close context is significant. Expat-003, Expat-004, Expat-007, Expat-008, Expat-015 and Expat-017 all stressed that **culture awareness** is the important soft skill for better expatriate adjustment of MCE in Hong Kong. Expat-001, Expat-002, Expat-003, Expat-004, Expat-005, Expat-007, Expat-008, Expat-009, Expat-014, Expat-015, Expat-016, Expat-017, Expat-018, also specifically considered **cultural awareness** as **personal ability** for better adjustment (13/20 or 65%) that MCE must have to work in Hong Kong.

“I have the soft skill of cultural awareness. I am aware that there is a culture difference between Hong Kong and Mainland China. Hong Kong tends to be too direct and professional while we used to be more relationship based. But I am familiar with such culture, and this is useful when communicating with Hong Kong colleagues. We work closely as one team and this enables me to finish my task without any cultural conflicts or political issues.” (Expat-016)

Expat-016 explained that she has good soft skills of cultural awareness. She is fully aware that the culture between Hong Kong and China is different. Hong Kong people are more professional and sometimes they separate personal (or relationship) from the work. She explains that this is good as I can work with them easily without worry that they are not
willing to work with me (as she is from China). Her cultural awareness skills can help her focusing on the work without making cultural conflicts, which will affect the work negatively.

“I have working experiences in multiple countries like China, Germany and Japan. I have a strong cultural awareness due to my international working experiences. I am aware that Hong Kong culture (both working and living) is different. People tend to separate personal relationship from professional relationship. People are very professional in working. I am no problem with this and even find it easy for me to work with them. With the understanding of such cultural differences, we can focus on important work tasks and this is helpful for me.” (Expat-011)

Expat-011 explained that she has worked in a multi-cultural environment for many years. She is aware that culture is not always the same in different places. You have to respect the local culture. There is a Chinese proverb saying, “Ru Xiang Sui Su”, it means, “When you are in Rome, do as the Romans do.” Again, that this discussion/theme was repeated across interviews was noteworthy. This interviewee is comparing the same need for cultural awareness between Germany, Japan and Hong Kong. This revealed just how much and how important cultural distance is perceived between Hong Kong and mainland China for this interviewee.

It is concluded that most expatriates (13/20 or 65%) considered culture awareness skill as a very important personal ability for better adjustment and such finding is in line with the literature (Hofstede, 2001; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2005). Also, it is found that Hong Kong’s culture is more Western and is towards a more professional relationship while Chinese expatriates always puts personal relation over professional relationship. Such issue is solved with their good cultural awareness skills.

On the other hand, for soft skills, Expat-004 lacks some soft skills like language and cultural awareness and she has faced some difficulties. That is, on the flip side a lack of these skills were also explicitly reported as causing adjustment problems.
I'm from Hubei, central part of China. I lack some skills. For example, I can’t speak Cantonese and my English language is just average. I find it hard to communicate effectively with my colleagues and the work is hence impacted. Also, there is a big cultural difference between Hong Kong and China. I sometimes don’t understand properly what my colleagues are discussing. In order to solve these problems, I have to learn Cantonese and culture by myself and sometimes my colleagues also help me to learn too. (Expat-004)

Expat-004 further explains that she is from Hubei and she can’t speak Cantonese language placing her in a cultural disadvantage in relation to adjustment. She finds it hard to communicate effectively with her colleagues. And hence her work is impacted. Also, she sees there is a cultural difference between Hong Kong and China. She sometimes lacks the knowledge to understand fully the perspectives of her colleagues. She needs to learn it by herself and sometimes with the help from her colleagues to learn Cantonese language and also the cultural differences.

It is hence concluded that most Chinese expatriate (13/20 or 65%) considered soft skills like multiple language and cultural awareness skills as important personal ability for better adjustment. A lack of cultural awareness was believed to have a negative impact on the adjustment, in line with existing literature (Hofstede, 2001; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2005). This study finds out the importance of language and culture skills on MCE adjustment in Hong Kong. It is a surprise as Hong Kong and China are assumed to have a common language and culture origin. It is causing adjustment issues if Chinese expatriates don’t have such skills.

4.1.2 Skills (adjustment) and support from the host country co-workers

Apart from the expatriate’s own personal ability, there were job skill supports provided from other stakeholders. This finding in the data was the first to illustrate an overlap between the roles of different stakeholders that were under examination in this study. Expat-004 mentions he has the job skills support from his host country co-workers.
“During the work, when I have some job difficulties, they always support me to improve my job skills. My colleagues are very helpful. If they think Cantonese is too difficult for me to understand, they will translate it to Mandarin. They also teach me some job related skills like using the computerized system for workflow processing. They also teach me Cantonese during the work too. They also teach me about the Hong Kong culture, both working and living. Only with their support, my work become easy and I can finish my business tasks.” (Expat-004)

Expat-004 explained his host country co-workers are very helpful. They teach her the job related skills (i.e. use the computerized work flow system). They also help her in translation from Cantonese to Mandarin during her early stage of the assignment (she doesn’t speak Cantonese well as she is from Hubei province, northern part of China). They also teach her the culture of Hong Kong too. With the co-worker’s support on job related skills, she is able to professionally finish her business tasks and the learning time is significantly reduced. This interviewee also revealed that the skill level and cultural awareness of co-workers played a role in lessening the adjustment challenged presented by language and cultural distance.

4.1.3 Skills supports from the host country co-workers

There are culture ‘training’ supports from other stakeholders was also discussed providing insights into the role that co-workers may play in lessening adjustment problems, when adjustment has to occur due i.e. in the form of training. For example, Expat-014 mentions he has the culture trainings support from his host country co-workers.

“I think Hong Kong culture is different compared to China. Sometimes they speak English and also think in a more Western manner. I feel isolated and different sometime. This causes me a big problem during the first few months of my assignment. But since I aware the cultural difference, I do some research my study to learn more about Hong Kong culture. My colleagues are also very helpful. They invite me to meet with their friends and tell me more about Hong Kong culture. Later on, I find out that Hong Kong people is more straight forward and
business centric. With the culture training supports from my host country co-workers, I learn more about Hong Kong culture. This is very important for my assignment as I have to work with many Hong Kong colleagues together. With a good understanding of this culture element, it can help my assignment a lot.” (Expat-014)

Expat-014 explained he thinks there is a cultural difference between Hong Kong and China but most importantly that host country co-workers are providing him with the culture trainings and supports to adjust and develop the skills he feels he is lacking. After this, he is able to have a good understanding of the Hong Kong culture. This is very important for his assignments as this helps me to work more closely and effectively with his colleagues.

It is concluded that the expatriates also have the support from other stakeholders on job skills and that the skills identified as being challenges if absent can be trained to some extent by host country colleagues. Such support is very helpful for their adjustment. This finding fills the gap to understand how other stakeholder like host country co-workers can help to improve their personal ability for better adjustment. There is also gap and further study is required in this area on how other stakeholders can play a more important role in helping the expatriate in their ability for better adjustment for hard and soft skill.

4.2 Family Support

Family support is always treated as one of the crucial factors for expatriate adjustment. Lacking of it will lead to poor job performance (Shaffer et al., 2001) The support from the spouse, children and parents could solve the potential family-to-work conflicts that might hinder the expatriate adjustment (Ford et al., 2007).

The most noticeable finding after interviewing Chinese expatriates about family support on expatriate adjustment is that all the expatriates (literally all) have the mental and psychological supports from their families that include their partner, children and the parents and note it as vital to their adjustment. For all expatriates their response to the question related to the family support is all “Yes” and indicated a high level of family
support of their expatriated assignment. However, the findings related to family support go beyond the extant literature in that they reveal an extended-family support, both as an expectation for expatriates to adjust, in practice around their adjustment and as a factor that in absence, would cause the expatriate to reconsider being on the assignment. As with the previous section, to best represent the key themes emerging across the data in this section sub-themes are also highlighted in bold and italics.

All the expatriates have the mental and psychological support from their family (20/20 or 100%). Apart from such support, Expat-001, Expat-002, Expat-003, Expat-004, Expat-005, Expat-006, Expat-011, Expat-012, Expat-013, Expat-014, Expat-015, Expat-016, Expat-017, Expat-018, Expat-019 and Expat-020 has the household and living support from their partner (16/20 or 80%). Not just the support from the partner, even their parents come to provide some housekeeping by travelling to Hong Kong especially if they live in the nearby Guangdong provinces. Their parents are also providing unquestionable mental and psychological supports to the expatriate and it is noteworthy that the expatriates think about family support and report on it not just in relation to spouses, but to the extended-family.

Consistent with the collectivist culture, there is a long Chinese tradition for the family to support the other members of the family. The parents are always very committed to support their children’s educational and career development as by doing so, the family as a whole will be benefited. As a tradition, the male member of the family (the son or the husband or the father), has a dominant role in the family (Fan, 2000). Historically, they tend to have a high priority over the female members of the family. It is then not surprising that the male has always the full family support for their expatriation in this sample, but surprisingly, in this study; even for female expatriates (married or single) they have the full support from their family irrespective of their gender. All the parents are providing strong mental and psychological support to their daughters. In addition to the parent support, the husband is also providing all the mental and psychological support to the wife for their career development based on the interviews in this study.
Expat-007, Expat-009 and Expt-019 ranked the importance of the family support as 4 (6/20 or 30%), and all other expatriates ranked it 5 (5 is the highest and 1 is lowest) (16/20 or 80%). The total percentage of 4 and 5 is 100%. This finding indicates the all expatriates consider the family support as important or very important (rank as 4 or 5) for better expatriate adjustment. This is in line with the literatures that the family support is positively related to expatriate adjustment (Herleman et al., 2008; Waxin, 2004).

The findings show that the Chinese expatriates are always having the family support. With their family’s mental and psychological supports, all the expatriates reported positive impact on adjustment. This highlights the importance of family support for better adjustment. But on the other hand, their adjustment will be impacted without their family support. Some expatriates do indicate their consideration of leaving the assignment and go back to China if they face a strong objection from their family.

Further into the analysis, the Chinese expatriate has 100% supports from their partner and the kids. They also have 100% supports from their parents. Perhaps surprisingly in the Chinese context, it is also true for female expatriates that they have the 100% support from their parents or partners.

4.2.1 Mental and Psychological Supports from the Partner and the Kids

The most notable finding while doing the data analysis about family support on expatriate adjustment is that all the expatriates have the mental and psychological supports from their families that include their partner, children and the parents. All the expatriates their response to the question related to the family support is all “Yes” and indicate a high level of family support of their expatriated assignment. Significantly, they routinely discussed multiple family member support in unison.

“My wife and kid live with me in Hong Kong from Liaoning province. They have full mental and psychological supports to me. They start learning Cantonese (they only speak Mandarin before) and understand more about the local culture. My kid
goes to local school. My wife will take care of my kid and the family. She is now looking for a job too. With their mental support, I can focus on my work for a better performance. I can work overtime and even work late during weekends if required to meet the busy work schedules. My work will surely fail without my wife’s mental support.” (Expat-009)

Expat-009 further explained that his family has the mental and psychological support to him while moving to work in Hong Kong from Liaoning province, China. He thinks his assignment will surely fail without the spouse support. Traditionally in China, the role of the wife is for home or “internal” affairs and the role of the male is for work or “external” affairs and this sentiment was also very apparent in the data when asking questions about family supports. For example, ….

“I am from Xianjing, China. But I had worked in the US and Australia before. Now, I am working in Hong Kong, my wife and kids move with me from China too. My wife and kids provide me the mental support to move here. We can’t speak Cantonese, but we can communication with people in English and Mandarin. ….. As I am holding a senior executive post, it is a busy job with frequent international travel too. My wife is always providing me with full mental and psychological support as this is considered to be good for my career and the family. With no worries of the family issues and focus on the work, I get promoted recently to cover a wider regional for business growth after just staying in Hong Kong for around 1.5 years.” (Expat-015)

Expat-015 explained that he has the full mental and psychological support from his family. As a senior executive of a large organization, his work is very busy with frequent international travels. But with his wife’s total mental support he is able to work without family worries. He got promoted to a regional management role after just working in Hong Kong for around 1.5 years. Importantly, he stress that he considers it possible only if he has the total mental support from his family.
It is concluded that all the Chinese expatriates have the mental and psychological supports from their families that include their partner, children and the parents. This is in line with the literature that family support is positively related to expatriate adjustment (Herleman et al., 2008; Waxin, 2004). But surprisingly in the Chinese context, it is also true for female Chinese expatriates working in Hong Kong.

4.2.2 Mental and psychological supports for the female expatriates from the Parents and the Husband

It is a Chinese custom for the family to support the other members of the family. The parents are always very committed to support their children’s educational and career development. By providing full supports, they think the family as a whole will be benefited. Traditionally, the male member of the family (the son or the husband or the father), has a dominant role in the family and hence the supports. They tend to have more supports compared to the female members of the family. It is then not surprising that the male has always the full family support for their expatriation. But surprisingly, in this study, even for female expatriates (married or single), they have gained the full support from their family irrespective of their gender. All the parents (100%) are providing strong mental and psychological support to their daughters (Expat-004, Expat-008, Expat-016 and Expat-020). In addition to the parent support, the husband is also providing mental and psychological support to the wife (Expat-005 & Expat-011) for their career development.

“I am from Fuzhou, southern part of China. My parents support me for my work in Hong Kong. They come to visit me whenever they can in around four times a year. My husband also works in Hong Kong. We have no kid yet. We both can speak fluent Cantonese and English. So we adjust quite well both in living and working. He supports me psychologically. He has no complaints and has full support for my career even I sometimes need to work overtime on weekdays and occasionally on weekends. My husband thinks it will be good for the family as a whole if I have a good career. This helps me a lot in adjustment and my career is progressing very well. But as a member of the family and a wife, I may have to forgo my career if my family stops supporting me in the future. (Expat-005)
Expat-005 explained that she has the strong mental and psychological supports from her parents, which again was a theme raised in several interviews – extended-family support. They will come to Hong Kong around four times a year to help her in living too. Also, her husband also provides full support to develop her career. Her husband thinks the family as a whole will be benefited if she has a good career. This is being one of the underlying reasons that the husband also provides mental and psychological support to her. She has a better expatriate adjustment with their supports and hence her career is progressing well too.

Other female expatriates reflecting on family support also reverted to an extended-family context. For example,

“I am from Guangdong, southern part of China. I am not married and I have a boyfriend in Hong Kong. .... My family like my parents provide me the psychological supports to me. They support my work in Hong Kong and they think Hong Kong will be a better place for my career. My boyfriend also provides me supports. We both think it will be better to work and live in Hong Kong. With their supports, I have focused on my career development without having to worry about the family. My career is smooth and my adjustment in working and living in Hong Kong is quite well. (Expat-016)

Expat-016 explained that she has the mental and psychological supports from her parents. They support her career’s development in Hong Kong. She is single and has a boyfriend in Hong Kong too. Her boyfriend also provides her the mental and psychological supports. They think Hong Kong is a better place to work and to work. He also thinks her successful career will benefit the family as a whole. As a result, she has a better adjustment by focusing her work and her career is hence benefited with the family’s supports.

It is a surprise to conclude that even for female Chinese expatriates that they have the 100% support from their parents or partners. This comes out unexpectedly as Chinese is
always putting the male as the dominant centre of the family. There is an area for future study as generalisation about the cultural context in China might not be accurate based on the insights from the female expats in this study.

4.2.3 Mental and Psychological Support from the Parents

All the Chinese expatriates have the mental and psychological support from their family (the percentage is 100%). All the expatriates (from Expat-001 to Expat-020) all reply with a “Yes” without any hesitation to the question about the family support from their family but what is perhaps unique with this sample of MCEs is that inclusions of parents in much of the discussion.

“My parents support me mentally and psychologically. Though they live far away from Hong Kong in Hubei. But they sometimes come to visit me. They also call me and text me almost on daily basis. I know they love and care about me very much. They support me and they think working in Hong Kong is beneficial to me. I am still single, but my girlfriend (from China too but also work in Hong Kong) provides psychological support to me. With their mental support, I can really invest all my time on working and my job performance is quite satisfactory now.” (Expat-004)

Expat-004 explained that his parents support him mentally and psychologically. Mental support was important to him while he decides to stay in Hong Kong. They sometimes visit me to provide him the psychological comfort. It is a long tradition that the parents always put their children’s future as top priority. It is very common that you will see Chinese parents quit their jobs to help the study so that they can go to the best school. It is also not surprising that the parents will join their children’s job interviews. This shows that the parents are willing to sacrifice everything to support their children. On the other hand, it is also important that the children get their parent’s consent and support too. For the expatriate, they can achieve a better job performance with their parent’s support.
“I am from Shanxi, western part of China. We speak Mandarin, not Cantonese. There is strong support from my wife and my parents. My wife also joins me to work in Hong Kong and adjusted well without any problems. She will take care of our daughter and also look after me. My daughter adjusts well too and she goes to the local Hong Kong and can speak the local language. My parents don’t live in Hong Kong, but they come to visit me all the time. With their support, there is no family worry for me, and the focus is on working and the result is satisfactory.” (Expat-010)

Expat-010 explained that he has the mental and psychological support from his wife, the kid and the parents. His wife comes to Hong Kong and has found a job there. His wife takes good care of their daughter and also the expatriate too. His daughter adjusts very well and goes to the local school. She can speak fluent Cantonese too and is very happy living there. His parents live far away in the western part of China, but they support his work in Hong Kong and will come to visit him. With the family support, he has good job performance.

“My parents support me mentally and psychologically. They don’t live in Hong Kong, but they live nearby in Guangdong. They can both speak Cantonese and the culture is similar. They always come to visit me. They support me to develop my career here. My wife lives with me in Hong Kong. She is from Guangdong too so she has no language and cultural issues. I adjust it very well in Hong Kong as I have the support from my wife and my parents. My Cantonese skills and cultural awareness are also my strength. With family support, my job performance is excellent. If they don’t support me, I must leave Hong Kong.” (Expat-018)

Expat-018 explained that he has the mental and psychological support from his wife and his parents. As they are all from nearby province (Guangdong), they can speak Cantonese and the culture is similar as Hong Kong. They find it easy to adjust too. As his parents live nearby, they always visit me and support him. His wife also accompanies him in Hong Kong. He has good job performance with the strong support from his family. But he
seriously mentioned that he must leave Hong Kong if his family asks him to leave. In Chinese society, there is a very high ethical standard to the parents (called “siao”), it means treat your parents with full respect and provide them the best available support). Fail to do so he will be blamed by the whole society.

It is concluded that all the Chinese expatriates (100%) that they have the support from their parents and that this is very important to them – i.e. in addition to support from the spouse and kids. This is a new finding especially for Western as well as Chinese expatriates where there aren’t too many studies on expatriate adjustment about impacts of the parents on expatriate adjustment. This may be a unique perspective for future studies on the support of parents on expatriate adjustment especially in collectivist cultures where the family support is seen very much as extended-family support.

4.2.4 Family Support and the impact of Stakeholders on Adjustment

This section we will discuss the supports from other stakeholders who might help the family members to adjust and hence a better adjustment for the expatriates. As above in the case of expatriate personal abilities the data did reveal area where there were overlaps between the roles stakeholder played in adjustment. This section looks at some of the practical supports provided by other stakeholders that overlapped with the discussion of family support in the interview data.

4.2.4.1 One-time logistics support from the parent country co-workers

Although we have not reported on the role of parent country co-workers yet in this chapter, there were supports reported from the parent country co-workers in helping the family members to adjust and hence a better adjustment for the expatriate. There was also a sentiment that the parent country co-workers were aware of how important family co-worker support was. For example, Expat-015 mentions that he has the support from the parent country co-workers to the family.
“My parent country co-workers didn’t help me a lot. [BUT] They only help me with some logistics supports before my assignment to Hong Kong ... They help in applying for Hong Kong business Visa for my families and myself. They also help to provide the school information for my kid. Such supports are really helpful that my families are adjusted easily” (Expat-015)

Expat-015 sought to stress he has supports from his parent country co-workers around his family. They help him in apply their Hong Kong business Visa for himself, his wife and the kid. This is very helpful as they will be able to adjust and settle down easily. With such supports from the parent country co-workers with hence help the family members to support the expatriate for his better assignment.

4.2.4.2 Living supports from the host country co-workers

There are also living supports to the family members from the host country co-workers discussed in the interviews. Expat-013 mentions he has living supports to his family about the apartment and his kid’s education.

“My host country co-workers help me a lot with the living part too especially about the apartment and my kid’s education. When I have the difficulty in finding the apartment, they provide me the advice and I am able to find a cheaper and more convenient place to live. For my kid, they provide information about Hong Kong’s education system. Based on that, I am able to find a good local school for my kid. Also my wife accompanies me to Hong Kong and my colleagues help her finding a job too. They help to advice on how to apply a Work Permit for her too. This is helpful for my families. Without such living supports, they won’t be adjusted to Hong Kong so easily.” (Expat-013)

Expat-013 explained he has strong living support from his colleagues. They help him with the apartment when he firstly arrive Hong Kong. With the help, he is able to find a good apartment, which is cheaper and more convenient. Also, most importantly, they provide information about Hong Kong’s education system so that he is able to find a good local
school for his kid. As his wife accompany him to Hong Kong, his colleagues also help her finding a job and also apply the Work Permit in Hong Kong. His co-worker are very helpful for his living adjustment and he were reported as having a direct impact on family adjustment, which I turn facilitated his family supporting him. That this discussion occurred as part of the family support interview questions is part proof of the integration of the different stakeholders in the adjustment of the expatriate.

The contributions of these findings are in line with the literature that family support is positively related to a better adjustment. But it also contributes about expatriates especially Chinese expatriates, female expatriates and introduces the very important role of the extended-family for MCEs.

4.3 Host Country Co-worker Support

In the previous two sections, we have the findings of expatriate adjustment related to family support and personal ability. For personal ability, it is primarily the hard and soft job skills of the expatriate himself/herself for better adjustment. But there is also support about improving their ability and skills from another stakeholder; this is the host country co-worker. This section will have a detail analysis of this stakeholder (host country co-worker) for expatriate adjustment.

Host country co-worker support is one of the most studied areas for expatriate adjustment (Shaffer, Harrison, Giley & Luk, 2001b; Toh & DeNisi, 2007; Waxin, 2004). Also, social interactions between the host country employee and the expatriate could reduce expatriate adjustment (Shaffer et al., 2001a). Generally, the host country co-worker support is positively related to expatriate adjustment (Waxin, 2004). Toh & DeNishi (2003) stated that the host country employee’s unwillingness to work closely with the expatriates also contributed to the high expatriate failure rates. Waxin (2004) gave the explanation on how the support and commitment from host country employees affected expatriate performance. Some other studies aimed to find out the degree of knowledge/training of host country co-workers could affect the expatriate’s job performance (Shaffer, Harrison, Gilley & Luk, 2001). Furthermore, Liu and Shaffer (2005) found out that the host country employee’s
cultural and competencies had a direct effect on expatriate performance. However, it was also noted at the outset of this study that adjustment challenges and even tension between mainland expatriates and the local population have been publically recorded in the mainstream media, which raised questions about how much of this important co-worker support might be received in the context of MCE in Hong Kong. With these insights and within this context, the findings are presented and analysed below.

This study finds that 13/20 or 65% of expatriates rank host country co-worker support as 5. Expat-007, Expat-008, Expat-009, Expat-012 and Expat-013 ranked it as 4 (5/20 or 25%). The total for rank 4 & 5 is 18/20 or 90% but only two expatriates (Expat-018 and Expat-019) ranked it as 3 (10%). It is not a surprising result and in line with the literature as host country co-worker support is also considered as important for a successful expatriate assignment (Shaffer, Harrison, Giley & Luk, 2001b; Toh & DeNisi, 2007; Waxin, 2004). What is perhaps surprising is the unanimously positive pictured painted by MCE in this sample.

In summary, the findings reveal that all the Chinese expatriates felt they have the support from the host country co-workers. We find that there are basically two types of supports to the expatriate from the host country co-workers. The first support is the working-support that includes job skills, information provision and culture training. The second support is the living support.

Further into the analysis, on the working side, all the host country co-workers (20/20 or 100%) are always willing to provide the supports related to job skills so that the expatriate is able to finish the work effectively. They also provide the necessary information without hiding vital information and this helps the expatriate to access the information needed to finish his works (19/20 or 95%). The last support is related to culture training. All the co-workers (except for Expat-003, Expat-004, Expat-016 and Expat-018) are willing to help the expatriates (16/20 or 80%). They are willing to train him/her about the cultural differences between Hong Kong and China. With these co-workers' supports, the expatriate has a good adjustment experience. That cultural training was something that
was actively perused by co-workers and expatriates alike, revealed important perceived cultural distances between MCE and their new work environment.

Likewise, on the living side, all the co-workers (except for Expat-003, Expat-004, Expat-016 and Expat-018) are willing to help the expatriates (16/20 or 80%). They provide living and dining tips and they go out and play as friends after work. For living, there was some advice on apartment, dining, shopping and Expat-013 got advice on kid’s education and the husband’s job in Hong Kong. There is a Chinese proverb saying, “Si Hai Zhi Nei Jie Xiong Di”, it means, “Within the four seas, all men are brothers.” It is a Chinese traditional culture to treat others especially co-workers as friends (or brothers in Chinese saying).

### 4.3.1 Job Skills Support

The research finds that all Chinese expatriates also received job skills support from the host country co-workers as part of their adjustment. This is in line with the literature that the support from host country co-workers can help the adjustment (Sanchez and Brock, 1996, Toh & DeNisi, 2007; Toh & DeNisi, 2003; Varma et al., 2009). The example below again integrated the discussion of personal ability (language) and the support of co-workers in this regard. Interestingly, it was not unusually in the data for the issue of language and culture to be discussed in relation to how it helps to develop job skills as in this example …

“During the work, when I have some job difficulties, they always support me to improve my job skills. My colleagues are very helpful. If they think Cantonese is too difficult for me to understand, they will translate it to Mandarin. They also teach me some job related skills like using the computerized system for workflow processing. They also teach me Cantonese during the work too. They also teach me about the Hong Kong culture, both working and living. Only with their support, my work become easy and I can finish my business tasks.” (Expat-004)
Expat-004 explained his host country co-workers are very helpful. They teach her the job related skills (i.e. use the computerized work flow system). They also help her in translation from Cantonese to Mandarin during her early stage of the assignment (she doesn’t speak Cantonese well as she is from Hubei province, northern part of China). They also teach her the culture of Hong Kong too. With the co-worker’s **support on job related skills**, she is able to professionally finish her business tasks and the learning time is significantly reduced. An important sub-theme within this discussion was that interaction with the hosts and the supports they received were enhanced by language similarity but not dependent on it. The host-country workers were willing to support MCE to do their work besides barriers and actively sought to overcome them if necessary. However, it was easier with shared Cantonese.

“**Actually, my supervisors always have some professional training for me and help me to improve my job skills. He also helps me to get familiar with the internal procedures. I am then able to finish the tasks better and faster. For language, I can speak Cantonese and can communicate easily with my colleagues as I am from Guangdong. With the improvement in job skills, I am now competent in doing my job with ease.**” (Expat-015)

It is concluded that on the working side, all the host country co-workers are always willing to provide the supports related to job skills so that the expatriate is able to finish the work effectively. This is in line with the literature that the support and commitment from host country employees affected expatriate performance (Sanchez and Brock (1996, Toh & NeDisi, 2007; Varma et al., 2009). It might have been concluded that the unanimous supports around on the job training may have been surface-level support, however, the next theme which reports on their willingness to share information with MCE – i.e. informally and collegially, suggested a deeper collaborative approach by host country co-workers leading to positive adjustment.

**4.3.2 Information Sharing Support**
One of the problems for expatriate assignment is the unwillingness of the host country co-workers to disclose vital information for a successful assignment (Louis et al., 1983). Expatriates can be seen as outsiders and coming from mainland China to a position in Hong Kong, raised potential greater barriers. However, with only one exception, co-workers were reported as being willing to share information (and at times tacit knowledge) to the expatriates in this sample.

“In job related part, they help me a lot like understanding the current system and the skills required for the job. They are willing to provide all the work details to help me understand the projects better. They will share all the information and they never hide vital information from me. Colleagues from my department and also other departments are both very willing to share the information to me. I am then able to finish my works effectively. (Expat-010)

Expat-010 explains that his host country co-workers are willing to provide him with vital business information whether the people are from his department or from other departments. They will share the information related to the project and the current systems. This helps me a lot in adjustment and in helping him finish his works effectively and he felt as an expat that he was privy to as much information as anyone else.

Others also reported very positive cooperation when queries on potential challenges and discussed the sharing of formal and informal information.

For working side, as I work as project manager and there is a lot of inter-team cooperation. We work together all the time. My colleagues will tell me the scope of the project and also when the project needs to be finished. They will share all the important business information to us. Though they are busy, they still provide me all the supports that I needed. This helps me to adjust easily and able to finish my works on schedule and in good quality. (Expat-011)
Expat-011 explains his host country co-workers from his and other departments are providing him with important business information. They will tell him the project details and other related project information so that he can do his works better. This helps me to adjust easily and he can finish his tasks on time and in good quality.

On the other hand there was one exception in that, Expat-007 had problems in getting the vital information for his works. The co-workers aren’t willing to share the information but there was no indication that he was more or less disadvantaged as MCE – yes there may have been problems stemming from the fact that he was an expatriate and therefore was not familiar with the operation of the subsidiary, however, as evident in the extract below, it is very possible that this was just a general problem in that organisation.

“When I need to get some information from other departments, they will reject my request and my work may not go smoothly. This may be due to the reason that they are too busy and not because they don’t want to support me. But these are important information, without it, I am unable to finish my works. This causes me a lot of problems and my assignment are being impacted significantly.” (Expat-007)

Expat-007 explains that he has some issues in doing his works. This is due to the reason that his host country co-workers are not willing to share the vital business information to him. As a result, he didn’t have all the information to carry out his works and there is adjustment issue for him.

That the majority of Chinese expatriates were able to obtain the necessary information without hiding was positive for adjustment. When asked if host-country co-workers held anything back because they were an expatriate, answers seem to suggest that the opposite was the case, in that their Hong Kong counter parts actively shared important information that would help the MCE integrate and adjust. In line with the literature, the degree of knowledge/training of host country co-workers could affect the expatriate’s job performance (Shaffer, Harrison, Gilley & Luk, 2001), the co-workers in this sample were reported to be very supportive and an integral part of MCE adjustment in Hong Kong.
4.3.3 Culture Trainings Support

The last support is related to *culture training*. All the co-workers (except for Expat-003, Expat-004, Expat-016 and Expat-018) are willing to help the expatriates. They are willing to train him/her about the cultural differences between Hong Kong and China. The role of host-country co-workers was a very important theme in that it reflected not only the need for *cultural training* but an active willingness, and at times pride, in teaching MCEs about culture in Hong Kong. Combined with the importance placed on cultural competence as a personal ability in the early parts of the interview, the perceived cultural difference between Hong Kong and mainland China was a reoccurring theme throughout the interviews.

“I think Hong Kong culture is different compared to China. Sometimes they speak English and also think in a more Western manner. I feel isolated and different sometime. This causes me a big problem during the first few months of my assignment. But since I aware the cultural difference, I do some research my study to learn more about Hong Kong culture. My colleagues are also very helpful. They invite me to meet with their friends and tell me more about Hong Kong culture. Later on, I find out that Hong Kong people are more straight forward and business centric. With the culture training supports from my host country co-workers, I learn more about Hong Kong culture. This is very important for my assignment, as I have to work with many Hong Kong colleagues together. With a good understanding of this culture element, it can help my assignment a lot.” (Expat-014)

Expat-014 explained he thinks there is a cultural difference between Hong Kong and China. But his host country co-workers are providing him with the culture trainings and supports. After this, he is able to have a good understanding of the Hong Kong culture. This is very important for his assignments as this helps me to work more closely and effectively with his colleagues.
Furthermore, the proposition at the outset of this study, that tensions between mainland China and Hong Kong may exist, was explicitly discussed by interviewees as a ‘cultural conflict’ that they needed to understand and one that the was collaboratively overcame to adjust effectively.

There is a cultural conflict between Mainland Chinese and Hong Kong. The culture is different compared to Mainland China and Hong Kong. There are many negative news about Mainland Chinese in the newspaper, TV and especially in the Internet. But I am lucky. My colleagues are very nice. They are always willing to help me and provide culture trainings to me. Now, I have a better understanding of cultural difference between Hong Kong and China. This benefits my assignment a lot and many potential conflicts can be eliminated with this. ” (Expat-016)

Expat-016 explained he see there is clearly a difference in culture between Hong Kong and Mainland China. But his host country co-workers are providing him some culture training and can now understand a lot about Hong Kong culture. With this support, he has a better expatriate adjustment. He can finish his tasks effectively.

It is concluded that all the host country co-workers (except for Expat-003, Expat-004, Expat-016 and Expat-018) are willing to help the expatriates. They are willing to train him/her about the cultural differences between Hong Kong and China – train was a term repeated in the interviews. With these supports, the Chinese expatriate has less adjustment issues and thus able to adjust easily. It is in line with the literature the host country employee’s cultural and competencies had a direct effect on expatriate performance (Liu and Shaffer, 2005; Varma et al., 2009; Toh & DeNisi, 2003 & 2007). In this study a supportive but slightly different conclusion can be made. That cultural competency was paralleled with a motivation to engage in culture training that was seen as welcome and necessary for MCE adjustment in Hong Kong.
4.3.4 Living Support

Leading to better general adjustment, on the living side, all the co-workers (except for Expat-003, Expat-004, Expat-016 and Expat-018) are willing to help the expatriates also. They provide living and dining tips and they go out and play as friends after work. For living, there was some advice on apartment, dining, shopping and Expat-013 got advice on kid’s education and the husband’s job in Hong Kong. There is a Chinese proverb saying, “Si Hai Zhi Nei Jie Xiong Di” it means “Within the four seas, all men are brothers.” It is a Chinese traditional culture to treat others especially co-workers as friends (or brothers in Chinese saying) so to receive such supports from the Hong Kong colleagues were particularly valued by the interviewees.

“Yes my colleagues are also like my friends. They help me with the living side too. We go out together and we play the games like badminton and hiking together sometimes. They help me with my apartment too when I firstly arrive Hong Kong. I can understand more about Hong Kong’s living and culture from them.” (Expat-005)

Expat-005 explained she has a friendly relationship with her colleagues. They help her with the living side too. They help her finding a good apartment. They always go out dinning and playing together. Her colleagues also teach her about the local Hong Kong culture. This helps her easily to adjust to the living in Hong Kong.

“My host country co-workers help me a lot with the living part too especially about the apartment and my kid’s education. When I have the difficulty in finding the apartment, they provide me the advice and I am able to find a cheaper and more convenient place to live. For my kid, they provide information about Hong Kong’s education system. Based on that, I am able to find a good local school for my kid. Also my wife accompanies me to Hong Kong and my colleagues help her finding a job too. They help to advice on how to apply a Work Permit for her too. This is helpful for my families. Without such living supports, they won’t be adjusted to Hong Kong so easily.” (Expat-013)
Expat-013 explained he has strong living support from his colleagues. They help him with the apartment when he firstly arrive Hong Kong. With the help, he is able to find a good apartment, which is cheaper and more convenient. Also, most importantly, they provide information about Hong Kong’s education system so that he is able to find a good local school for his kid. As his wife accompany him to Hong Kong, his colleagues also help her finding a job and also apply the Work Permit in Hong Kong. His co-worker is very helpful for his living adjustment.

It is concluded that on the living side host country co-workers (except for Expat-003, Expat-004, Expat-016 and Expat-018) are willing to help the expatriates for the most part and expatriates reported it as important for their adjustment. As can be seen in the example above the overlap with family was again evident in the family adjustment can be facilitated by co-workers in addition to adjustment helped for the expatriate themselves at the workplace.

Leading naturally from this discussion in the interviewees was a contrasting experience in relation to the role of co-workers from the parent organisation. In fact, comparative assessment of the co-workers support for adjustment in the host unit versus what could be provided by the parent unit were a feature of the data at this point in the interviews. For example this interviewee explains that good host-country support meant that without parent country support, he was still able to adjust effectively.

“I think there is nothing particular for my parent country co-worker to help ... though Bank of China and Bank of China (HK) are in the same group. The culture is not the same in Hong Kong as most of the colleagues there are Hong Kong people. They tend to work more professional and the pace of work is very fast (while China is quite slow). Without their support, I have no issues and is able to finish my task myself. “Expat-007)

Expat-007 explained that he didn’t expect too much support from the parent country co-workers. He was briefed before his expatriation (but only about the goal, not the mean). He finds out that Hong Kong people are more professional. Their pace of work is a lot
faster than Mainland China too. He doubt China headquarter will be fully understand the situation and hence provide the proper support. He is then more relying on himself to solve the problems and achieve the company goal with support by people on the ground in Hong Kong. Others also raised the limits of their parent unit co-workers relative to their own abilities and understanding of what it is like on the ground in Hong Kong.

“My parent country co-workers are in Hangzhou, China. They provide some support in applying my work permit and also arrange for the flight tickets the first time when I plan my trip to Hong Kong. That’s enough for me. I don’t need other supports. As an expatriate, surely I have to do myself, solve the problems and achieve company goal all by myself. I also don’t think they can help me due to remoteness.” (Expat-008)

This section of the interview led into our analysis of the role of the final stakeholder (the parent country co-workers and the parent country unit) and specifically their role in helping MCE adjust in Hong Kong

4.4 Parent Country Co-worker Support

In the previous sections, we analyse about impact of expatriate adjustment of the three stakeholders (the expatriate’s own person ability, family support and the host country co-workers). In this section, we will analyse the last stakeholder, the parent country co-worker, about their impacts on expatriate adjustment. Again key themes are italic and bold and extracts are presented as examples of those themes in the data.

Most past studies that investigated the expatriate-parent organization stated the impacts of the parent country co-workers on expatriate to have a better adjustment with a level of support (Kraimer & Wayne, 2004; Kraimer et al., 2001b; Waxin, 2004). Organization support had been related to better expatriate effectiveness (Kraimer et al., 2001). Kraimer et al. (2001) studied the implications of parent country support and they found strong empirical support between expatriate adjustment and the organizational support (Kraimer et al., 2001b). The findings in general show that parent organization support is positively to expatriate cross-cultural adjustment (Wang & Takeuchi, 2007). Most importantly,
expatriate needed the organizational support especially during the early days of the expatriate assignment (Shaffer et al., 1999) – for example relocation support (Chen et al., 2005).

Based on the interview data in this study, a key theme around parent country support was inability to help. This should not be seen as a negative, rather a sentiment in the data that the parent country co-workers cannot and do not have the Hong Kong experience to draw on and therefore can provide limited support out of context. And the expatriates did not feel the parent country co-workers could have a major impact on adjustment. Unlike the other stakeholder rating on importance to adjustment (which were uniformly high), only one expatriate (Expat-011) ranked parent country co-worker support as 5 and only two expatriates ranked it as 4. The others ranked it 3 or below. The majority of them don’t consider the support of parent country co-workers as having been very important to their adjustment. Moreover it was also found, in line with the literature, that there is less support to the expatriate from the parent country co-worker.

4.4.1 One-time Logistics Support

Supported that were given – logistical supports: Further into the analysis, all the expatriates have the one-time logistics supports from the parent country co-workers like Visa, apartment and flight. But most expatriates received no other supports from the parent country co-workers. Only Expat-003, Expat-006 and Expat-011 got good ongoing support for job related issues. There is a one-time logistics support from the parent country co-workers related to Visa application, apartment and also flight arrangements for all expatriates in the sample. But even when these supports were discussed the interviewees often pointed out that – this was enough ….

“My parent country co-workers are in Hangzhou, China. They provide some logistics support in applying my business Visa and also arrange for the flight tickets and that’s enough for me. I don’t need other supports. This is helpful to my assignment especially during the early day of my expatriation.” (Expat-008)
Expat-008 further explains that the parent country co-workers help him with some logistics supports. They help him to apply business Visa. They also help me book the flight tickets. This is very helpful for his assignment especially during the initial stage of the expatriation.

“My parent country co-workers help me with logistics supports. They apply Hong Kong business Visa for me. They also arrange the apartments for me too. There is no other support apart from that.” (Expat-020)

Expat-020 explains that she has some logistics supports from the parent country co-workers. They help her to apply the business Visa. They also help in arranging an apartment for her too. There aren’t any other supports from the parent country co-workers.

“My parent country co-workers didn’t help me a lot. They only help me with some logistics supports before my assignment to Hong Kong. They help in applying for Hong Kong business Visa for my families and myself. They also help to provide the school information for my kid. Such supports are really helpful that my families are adjusted easily” (Expat-015)

Expat-015 explains that he has the logistics supports from his parent country co-workers. They help him in apply Hong Kong business Visa. This helps him and his family to adjust easily.

It is concluded that 20/20 or 100% of expatriates have the logistics supports from the parent country co-workers like Visa, apartment and flight. This is in line with the literature that Chinese expatriates do have the good one time logistics supports during the early days of the expatriate assignment for relocation (Shaffer et al., 1999 & Chen et al., 2005).

4.4.2 No Supports due to remoteness, distance and cultural difference

Apart from the one-time logistics supports, the majority of them have no support at all
while on the assignment in Hong Kong. This is in line with the literature that there is less support from the parent country co-workers (Kraimer & Wayne, 2004; Waxin, 2004), but was surprisingly stark in the data. The idea of being out of sight out of mind was apparent in the data, but there was also an acceptable that there was an inability to help due to remoteness and lack of understanding of the host context even when they wanted to help and again cultural differences were raised.

“Yes, my parent country co-workers want to help me to adjust to living and working in Hong Kong. But it is very difficult for them to help me as they are in China, not in Hong Kong. I think it is the remoteness. They are too far way to provide any solid and immediate support. They don’t understand the culture in Hong Kong too. It is quite different. So I have to do all the things by myself. But such limitation didn’t affect my adjustment and work there as I don’t expect too much support from them as it is an expatriate assignment. I plan to finish the work mostly by myself.” Expat-005

Expat-005 explained that there isn’t any parent country co-worker support. She also finds it hard for them to support her as it is too remote. It is virtually impossible for Beijing headquarters to help her if she has any urgent and immediate help, so it is better she can solve all the problems on her own. It is in fact expected. Before she comes, she was explicitly told there isn’t too much support. She has to use all her personal ability solve all the ground problems. She didn’t think it is a problem and she can still able to achieve the company goal without any problems. There is a Chinese proverb saying “Zhi Chi Qi Li”, it means “One depends on oneself”. Once he left the parent country to a foreign country, you have to depend on yourself. Again, as noted above, the expatriates (perhaps unlike Western expats) had little expectation that they would or could receive ongoing adjustment supports and were proud to take on the responsibility themselves.

“Because the distance is far from Hong Kong. Culture is different from Hong Kong, so my teammate in Mainland can’t support me many times. I am usually on my own to solve all my problems. Beijing is too far and it will take 3-4 hours flight to reach Hong Kong. This is in fact expected. I don’t expect I need to get help
from them all the time. This is actually not affecting my work and adjustment.”

(Expat-006)

Expat-006 explained that he thinks the distance is too far away. It will take 3-4 hours flight between Beijing and Hong Kong. Also, the culture of the two places is different. There might be problems for the parent country co-workers to actually understand the ground reality fully. He didn’t expect too much support from them and will solve all the problems based on the real situation. Without this support, he finds it no problem of finishing his tasks.

“I think there is nothing particular for my parent country co-worker to help. Before my assignment, I was briefed clear about the assignment (but just the goal, not the mean). I then have to achieve the company goal with my own abilities. Also, though Bank of China and Bank of China (HK) are in the same group. The culture is not the same in Hong Kong as most of the colleagues there are Hong Kong people. They tend to work more professional and the pace of work is very fast (while China is quite slow). Without their support, I have no issues and is able to finish my task myself. “(Expat-007)

Expat-007 explained that he didn’t expect too much support from the parent country co-workers. He was briefed before his expatriation (but only about the goal, not the mean). Later on, when he is on board, he finds out that Hong Kong people are more professional. Their pace of work is a lot faster than Mainland China too. He doubt China headquarter will be fully understand the situation and hence provide the proper support. He is then more relying on himself to solve the problems and achieve the company goal. He has done well and such support is not considered very important.

“My parent country co-workers are in Hangzhou, China. They provide some support in applying my work permit and also arrange for the flight tickets the first time when I plan my trip to Hong Kong. That’s enough for me. I don’t need other supports. As an expatriate, surely I have to do myself, solve the problems and achieve company goal all by myself. I also don’t think they can help me due to remoteness.” (Expat-008)
Expat-008 explained that he has some support the first time when he is planning his trip to Hong Kong. They help him with the Visa application and book him the flight and arrange a hotel room for him. Apart from this (and since then), there is no much support from them. The goal is briefed before his trip. After landing, he has to do all the works by himself. This didn’t cause any problems for him and he is able to finish the job satisfactorily.

It is concluded that the majority of the Chinese expatriates has no ongoing support and no pre-departure support of training. This is in line with the literature that there is less support from the parent country co-workers (Kraimer & Wayne, 2004; Waxin, 2004). However, of note in this study is that interviewees also wished to stress the host country co-workers were better able and willing to provide supports in adjustment than their parent country co-workers, even with the logistics of general environment adjustment.
CHAPTER 5  IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter will discuss the conclusions, implications and the areas for future research related to Chinese expatriates undertaking international adjustments. In keeping with the practical focus of the DBA, managerial and scholarly implications will be discussed. The chapter is organised to remind the reader of the key literature in the area and to discuss when this study aligns with central best-practice propositions in the literature, where it offers new insights to the body of literature with a focus on the needs of MCEs and the implications.

5.1 Expatriate’s Personal Ability

There are numerous studies, from early studies (e.g., Freeman, 1984 & Caligiuri, 1997b and more recent studies (e.g., Shaffer et al., 2006, Wang & Takeuchi, 2007 & Feitosa et al., 2014, related personal ability as one of the crucial factors to expatriate adjustment. They all concluded that personal ability is vital for a better adjustment for expatriates.

Though there are many studies about personal ability of Western expatriates to adjustment, but there is little study about Mainland Chinese expatriates despite the fact that China is the world’s 2nd largest economy and there are more than 1,830 large Mainland Chinese firms in Hong Kong in 1996 (Wulan, 1997) and 174 H-shares listed in Hong Kong Stock Exchange ("List of H Share Companies," 2014). There was a study (Selmer, 2000) about Chinese expatriates, but the study was mainly about the basic personal characteristics (like age, gender, marital status and duration of stay). This study aimed to find out a more and deeper understanding about personal ability and how they impact the expatriate adjustment of Chinese expatriates.

The findings show that most Chinese expatriates consider personal ability as important for their international assignment. Lack of it will impact their adjustment and hence job performance in a negative way. It is hence concluded that personal ability is vital for a better adjustment for Chinese expatriates. Such finding is not really a surprise at all. There are numerous studies (from most recent ones to the early 1980s) reaching the same conclusion that the expatriate adjustment is due to the result of the inability of the
expatriates to adjust to the new working and living environment (Caligiuri, 1997b; Freeman, 1984; Greehalgh, 1997; Patton, 1990a; Shaffer et al., 1999; Shaffer et al., 2006). The expatriate’s personal ability is the core reason of the premature return of assignment (Shaffer & Harrison, 1998; Wang & Takeuchi, 2007). Their stressing of how important their own ability is for adjustment is in line with the literature that personal ability is always considered as one of the most important factors for a better adjustment in international assignment (Kraimer et al., 2001a).

5.1.1 Implications for managers – expatriate selection

Most of researches about the personal ability are for Western expatriates, but less on Chinese expatriates. Selmer (2000) did conduct a study about the personal characteristics like sex, age and education level of Chinese expatriates working in Hong Kong on adjustment. This study further enhances the importance of personal ability on adjustment for Chinese expatriates. The recent research also have similar conclusion that personal skills play a vital role in expatriate adjustment (Feitosa et al., 2014). This study makes contributions to the literature about the positive effect of personal ability to expatriate adjustment of Chinese expatriates and reiterates to managers that expatriate selection should be a thorough process. Qualified expatriates would have a better adjustment and hence lead to a better outcome in the new environment (Graf, 2004; Shay & S. Baack, 2004). This study has a practical implications for Chinese firms to develop a selection strategy to find quality people based on their technical skills for their international assignment and hence a better performance.

5.1.2 Hard Job Skills

Good technical skills are vital for a better adjustment (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Kraimer et al., 2001). Feitosa et al., (2014) recently classified the job skills into two groups (hard business-related skills and soft business related skills). Hard business-related skills like professional qualification, business knowhow, technical skills, related work experiences and computer skills were found important for a better adjustment. But his
study was targeting European expatriates, and this study will fill the gap by understanding the impact of job skill impacts of expatriate adjustment of Chinese expatriates.

Based on the findings, all the expatriates consider their hard job skills as their personal ability for a better adjustment. All Chinese expatriates have equipped with the necessary hard job skills (e.g., technical skills, product knowledge) before the assignment. As a result, they are able to do their tasks effectively. It is hence concluded that hard job skills are important for their adjustment. Job knowledge and technical competence are for many organizations the most important and often single criterion when selecting employees for foreign assignments (Caligiuri, 1997b; Sinangil & Ones, 2003).

### 5.1.2.1 Implications for scholars

This study reaches similar conclusions as previous studies that technical skill is vital for a better adjustment (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Feitosa et al., 2014; Kraimer et al., 2001a). But further than that, this study contributes to the existing theory of expatriate adjustment about Chinese expatriates with a clear focus on hard job skills. It will have a practical implications to Chinese firms and consider the personal ability like hard job skills as the primary selection criteria for their expatriate assignment. Relational abilities and the various other selection criteria espoused by the literature, while important, may be less of a feature for mainland Chinese expatriates who were very vocal in relation to being selected as competent in hard skills first and foremost. Future studies examining the selection criteria applied to MCE may need to take this into account.

### 5.1.3 Local Language Skills

The literature explains that an inability to speak the local language is one of the greatest challenges faced by the expatriate (Selmer, 2006) and is often an overlooked aspect in the context of foreign operations (Welch & Welch, 2008). Similarly, if the expatriate has acquired language skills relevant to the host country prior to training, they will have a greater absorptive capacity (Awang et al., 2013). Therefore, an expatriate with a working
knowledge of the host language will learn specific language skills more effectively during training. This study revealed a dual language requirement of Cantones and English for MCE in Hong Kong. Furthermore, the literature has also explain that an expatriate can exchange knowledge from their interactions with host country co-workers, but this is not possible if there is no shared medium of communication (Welch & Welch, 2008). Subsequently, language differences are often the basis for informal inclusion and exclusion (Marschan-Piekkari et al., 1999). Exclusion from everyday interactions with host country co-workers may have adverse consequences for expatriates, such as miscommunication and decreased interactions with them. When the expatriate is unfamiliar with the host language, they are more likely to lack confidence when communicating with co-workers (Feitosa et al., 2014; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985). This very much fits with the sentiment revealed in our findings in relation to Cantonese. English language proficiency is one thing, but to get access to informal information and to adjust faster and with great depth of interaction, Cantonese was shown to be crucial.

There is a gap to understand the language ability in relation to expatriate adjustment for Chinese expatriates. Even though there was a study from Selmer (2000), but the language was only about English. For this study, we have a broader range of expatriates from different parts of China (not just nearby Guangdong area). This perhaps leads to a have a better representation of Chinese expatriates as most people are unable to speak Cantonese in most parts of China.

Most expatriates considered Cantones and English as important personal ability. This is also reaching the similar conclusion as other studies that an inability to speak the local language is one of the greatest challenges faced by the expatriate (Selmer, 2006 & Marschan-Piekkari et al., 1999). Similarly, if the expatriate has acquired language skills relevant to the host country prior to training, they will have a greater absorptive capacity (Awang et al., 2013). Therefore, an expatriate with a working knowledge of the host language will learn specific language skills more effectively during training.
5.1.3.1 Implications for managers – pre-departure language training

There is also a study from Selmer (2006) about the English is vital for Chinese expatriates to have a better adjustment in Hong Kong. But there is no study about Cantonese language. This study contributes to the literature of expatriate adjustment that Cantonese language is like other local language that is vital for a better adjustment by having a better communication with the local co-workers. In the absence of such personal ability being considered in the selection process, pre-departure language training for MCE going to Hong Kong is an obvious practical implication of this study. Managers should not assume the Mandarin and English will be enough for effective and efficient adjustment.

The implication for Chinese firms for their selection and training strategy should treat the ability of speaking the host country language as the key personal ability for a better adjustment. For Hong Kong regions, both English and Cantonese are Hong Kong’s official language and are considered as host country languages and the expatriate’s bilingual ability is vital for such assignment. As Hong Kong’s sovereignty returning back to China from UK in 1997, there is an increasing importance of Mandarin Chinese, there is an area for future studies to understand the impact of the ability of Mandarin Chinese of Chinese expatriates.

5.1.4 Culture Awareness Skills

Culture Awareness Skills are positively related to the expatriate adjustment (Hofstede, 2001; Trompsearras). Expatriates should be trained to understand the cultural differences prior to their international assignment (Trompseaars & Hampden-Turner, 2005). Openness to experience and higher adaptability predicted performance of managers in a cross-cultural training program (Lievens, Harris, Van Keer and Bisqueret 2003). Shaffer et al. (2006) reported that cultural flexibility was positively related to expatriate work adjustment and performance. But most such studies were targeting Western expatriates. There is a gap to understand the impact of cultural awareness skills on expatriate adjustment for Chinese expatriates and a major questions remained – is there a cultural distance the needs to be bridged and how important is it from an adjustment perspective?
For this study, most expatriates considered *culture awareness skill* as a very important personal ability for better adjustment. Many Chinese expatriates stressed that there is a cultural difference between Hong Kong and China even though they seem to share the same culture origin. Most expatriates are able to solve this cultural issue with the help from the host country co-workers – a finding discussed in greater detail below. Such finding is in line with the literature that cultural skills are positively related to the adjustment (Hofstede, 2001a; Trompsears & Hampden-Turner, 2005).

### 5.1.4.1 Implications for managers and scholars - cultural training

The findings discussed in the previous section clearly highlights the importance of cultural training to have the skills so that the expatriates can have the knowledge or cultural framework for solving such cultural issues (Feitosa et al., 2014; Littrell & Salas, 2005). There perhaps is a surprise finding that host country co-worker could play a more important role in training the expatriates about the local culture as most cultural training are more focus on the prior training or pre-departure trainings. Therefore managers will need to think carefully about the timing of cultural training and by whom it should be delivered. Organizations can use this finding to have an alternative way of culture training.

There is also an area for future research for scholars who need to discover the types of trainings specific to Chinese expatriates like difference between western (or Hong Kong) and China culture and their implications. More importantly, the findings reveal that any assumption that Hong Kong and China’s unity translates into cultural unity would be flawed. This has important implications for our understanding of the potential importance of culture as a variable in Chinese expatriate adjustment.

### 5.2 Family Support

Family support is always treated as one of the crucial factors for expatriate adjustment. Lacking of it will lead to poor job performance (Shaffer & Harrison, 2001). The support from the spouse, children and parents could solve the potential family-to-work conflicts
that might hinder the expatriate adjustment (Ford et al., 2007). There is little study about Chinese expatriates (except Selmer, 2000 & 2006), but this study helps to find out more about the role and impact of family support of Chinese expatriates.

The most noticeable finding after interviewing twenty Chinese expatriates about family support on expatriate adjustment is that all the expatriates (literally all) have the mental and psychological supports from their families that include their partner, children and the parents and note it as vital to their adjustment. Many studies stated that family and spousal support is just as imperative as personal ability or organizational support (Cole, 2011; Gupta et al., 2013). This is because expatriates and their families become dependent on each other for encouragement due to isolation and loss of pre-existing support systems (Takeuchi et al., 2002b). It is believed that the family, particularly the spouse, can provide the expatriate with first, a continual source of affect. Family has been found to be one of the most important factors contributing to expatriate success (Brown, 2008).

To go deeper into the findings, all the expatriates have the mental and psychological support from their family. This is in line with the literatures that the family support is positively related to expatriate adjustment (Herleman, Britt, & Hashima, 2008; Waxin, 2004). Not just the support from the partner, even their parents come to provide support by travelling to Hong Kong especially if they live in the nearby Guangdong provinces. Their parents are also providing unquestionable mental and psychological supports to the expatriate. Such family supports provide the expatriate to cope with difficulties abroad, there increasing psychological well-being (Lu & Cooper, 1995; Kraimer et al., 2001). This in turn will likely motivate the expatriate to invest efforts into navigating the new environment. The expatriates are getting the same if not more family supports. This study contributes to the existing literature that family support is vital for a better adjustment for Chinese expatriates but uniquely reveals that the family support should be understood as extended-family support.
5.2.1 Implications – for managers and scholars

With the importance of family emphasized by Chinese expatriates, support of family arrangements by managers in Hong Kong and at parent HQ would be very beneficial. The evidence from this sample suggest that there isn’t too much from the organization but only some logistics supports like Visa and the apartment. There are no formal supports from the host country co-workers but some informal social supports related to living and helping the family adjust, which in turn helps the expatriate. In order to provide support for the expatriate, the family itself needs to be provided with their own sources of support. In particular, offering families alternative resources such as support groups, personal peer networks (Avril and Magnini, 2007; Gupta et al., 2012), and social relationships (Magnini, 2009) are all beneficial because they aid in family adjustment (Cole, 2011; Takeuchi et al., 2002b). It is also advantageous to offer training to the expatriate’s family as it can ultimately aid in the overall adjustment of the expatriate (Avril and Magnini, 2007; Gupta et al., 2013). Fundamentally, the training should aim to ensure that the expatriate’s family has a realistic view of what their new life will be like and that they are learning the correct behaviors and cognitions that they should employ while overseas to ensure psychological adjustment (Vo¨gel et al., 2008). In light of the support provided by the extended-family in the case of MCE, less supports from the organisation might be needed in one sense, but the impact of a little more support for the extended-family could be substantial in light of the importance of this stakeholder in expatriate adjustments.

Going forward, scholars will need to consider the impact of not having strong family supports as the sample in this study did not reveal the consequences of the absence of such supports. The implications of the extended-family theme should also be carefully considered. When studying MCE (and perhaps expats from other collectivist and paternalistic cultures), family supports must be understood and examined through a broader lens that is the norm in the literature, as the great bulk of extant literature discussion the support of the ‘spouse’ only. A research focus that can also be informed by this study as discussed in the next section.
5.2.2 Mental and Psychological Supports from the Spouse

Spousal support is one of the most researched areas and is considered as one of the most important factor related to expatriate adjustment (Caligiuri et al., Takeuchi, Yun & Tesluk, 2002a). In fact, in a meta-analytic review of 12 predictors of adjustment for expatriates, the spouse’s adjustment was the most salient (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). But there is less study about spousal support of Chinese expatriates (except Selmer, 2000). There is a gap to understand the role and impact of spousal support for Chinese expatriates. All the expatriates have the mental and psychological supports from their spouse and consistent with the literature it is apparent that this can provide the expatriate with a continual source of support during stressful expatriation (Feitosa et al., 2014; Kraimer et al., 2001a). Family concerns are critical to understanding expatriate career trajectories because international assignments affect the family as a whole – especially since the spouse has been found to be one of the most important factors contributing to expatriate success (Brown 2008). There is a long Chinese tradition for the family to support the other members of the family. It is then not surprising that Chinese expatriates always have the full family support for their spouse.

The practical implications to Chinese firms that they also need to provide the supports to the spouse so that there will be a better adjustment for the expatriates. There is an area for future study to understand how the spouse of Chinese expatriate can develop their own career (as now Hong Kong’s law now allow the spouse to work too while holding the dependent Visa).

5.2.3 Family support - female expatriates

The literature also suggests that the impact of male spouses’ social support on female expatriates is crucial (Caligiuri, Joshi, & Lazarova, 1999). Caligiuri et al. (1999) found family support to be positively related to female expatriates’ overall adjustment level, and Waxin (2004) found partner social support to be positively related to expatriates’ interaction adjustment. Herleman, Britt, and Hashima (2008) found social support from friends to be positively related to spouses’ personal and interaction adjustment. But there is
less study about female expatriates for Chinese expatriates, and as suggested at the outset, traditional roles in Chinese society might have forewarned a difference experience for the female expatriates in the sample. Perhaps surprisingly, in this study, female expatriates (married or single), gained the full support from their career development for a better adjustment. While it must be noted that the sample was male dominated, the implication of finding that female Chinese expatriates receive such positive supports is worthy of further research, both in terms of the support received from souses and the extended family. Educated and skills expatriate women in Hong Kong form mainland China may have a very different experience to their parent county colleagues, but based on the few insights that could be gained from this small sample, the experience overseas should not be assumed to reflect traditional or perhaps stereotypical expectations.

5.3 Host Country Co-worker Support

The literature indicates that a local subordinate can become a facilitating or hindering factor in the expatriate adjustment process (Toh & DeNisi, 2007a; Toh & DeNisi, 2003). Co-worker support is related to expatriate work adjustment (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). Other researchers have provided empirical evidence for how host county co-workers might contribute to this adjustment or the relevant factors that might facilitate or hinder host country co-workers willingness to provide such support (Toh & DeNisi, 2007b; Varma et al., 2009; Varma et al., 2006). The interactions with host country co-workers facilitate expatriates’ adjustment, and the social contacts and exchanges can also be linked to successful foreign assignments more generally (Aycan, 1997a; Caligiuri, 2000; Varma et al., 2009). There are many studies about co-workers support for Western expatriates (Toh & DeNisi, 2007; Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005) and there was one recent study targeting Asian expatriates like Malaysia (Awang et al., 2013) and there were studies about Chinese expatriates (e.g., Selmer, 2000 & 2006) (but they were focusing only on personal abilities). So there is a clear gap to study the impact of host country co-worker support for Chinese expatriates.

This study finds that most Chinese expatriates’ rate host country co-worker support as very important for a better adjustment is consistent with the literature, but uniquely this study
revealed very active and skilled co-workers. The cultural training, the logistic supports, job skills, living, the family supports and even the language supports were all stressed as central to adjustment in the data. Despite the proposition forwarded at the outset of this study that tensions might exist based on known (and acknowledged) cultural and political tensions, host-country co-workers were seen as perhaps the most influential in mainland Chinese expatriate adjustment and most supportive. Moreover, as outlined in the last chapter, their role as stakeholders in adjustment overlapped with (and made up for shortcomings with) the other stakeholders (for example in the case of a lack support from parent country co-workers).

5.3.1 Implications – for managers and scholars

For scholars, the contention that host country co-worker support is one of the most important areas for expatriate adjustment must be maintained and extended to the experience of MCE (Shaffer & Harrison, 2001; Toh & DeNisi, 2007b; Waxin, 2004). More research into how this stakeholder compensates for the shortcoming of other stakeholders would also be welcome to build on the important insights revealed in this study. That those co-workers *culturally trained* MCEs and were so eager to do so provide insights into, and raises questions about, Hong Kong residents’ motivations to share culture. Such questions cannot be answered in this study but the implications for scholars is that the cultural difference needs to be studied more in this context and the implications for managers is that host country co-workers are willing to help.

There is little doubt that social interactions between the host country employee and the expatriate could reduce expatriate adjustment (Shaffer & Harrison, 2001) and that the host country co-worker support is positively related to expatriate adjustment (Waxin, 2004). This study contributes to the existing literature that the support of the host country co-workers is beneficial to the Chinese expatriate’s adjustment. The Chinese firms should use this finding to design the co-worker supporting plan to the expatriates (i.e. culture trainings, work process, job skills, communication channels and etc.). Some of the specific areas arising from this study are summarised briefly below.
5.3.2 Job Skills Support – implications for managers

If expatriates lack the required job knowledge then they would not be able to perform on their jobs and would not be accepted and trusted by host-country national employees (Hawes and Kealey 1981 & Feitosa et al., 2014). This should affect their work adjustment and their unit’s performance. This study demonstrated the kinds of co-worker supports for Chinese expatriate for a better adjustment in relation to job-skills linking the role of the co-worker as a stakeholder to the other key stakeholder the expatriate themselves. There are numerous studies reaching the conclusion that the expatriate adjustment problems is due to the result of the inability (i.e. job skills) of the expatriates to adjust to the new working and living environment (Caligiuri, 1997b; Freeman, 1984; Greehalgh, 1997; Patton, 1990a; Shaffer et al., 1999; Shaffer et al., 2006). That this research illustrated that Chinese expatriates had job skills support form co-workers (e.g. job skill trainings, mentor, use of work flows and others) is significant. This findings demonstrates that support from host country co-workers can help the adjustment in the most practical way on the job (Feitosa et al., 2014; Kraimer et al., 2001a) and far from being defensive, the co-workers for the MCE were accommodative. Despite the sample featuring a very skilled and qualified cohort of expatriates, host-country co-worker support was reported as an important part of successful job performance. For the managers of Chinese firms, it has the practical implications that they should design a system or mechanism so that there is job skills support and cooperation from the host country co-workers to the expatriates (like a mentor).

5.3.3 Information Sharing Support

The literature also discussed that one of the problems for expatriate assignment is the unwillingness of the host country co-workers to disclose vital information (Louis et al., 1983). But this study indicated that co-workers were willing to share business information to the expatriate and revealed that language skills such as Cantonese provide the expatriate with the opportunity to enjoy deeper social interactions to get access to formal and informal sources of information. Again the closeness of interaction and the important role of the co-worker were emphasised. This finding is consistent with extant literature in that
Mezias and Scandura (2005), suggest that to better adjust to living in their host country, expatriates need mentors from the host country co-workers to provide better information flow. Co-workers (i.e. mentor) should systematically present feedback to trainees by evaluating performance results, learning measures, reaction measures, and including a behavioural assessment (Luthans & Farner, 2002). Accordingly, feedback is important because it ensures the expatriate is learning and understanding their new position overseas along with the host-country novelties, which in turn, has a positive impact on the expatriate’s cognitive and behavioural adjustment outcomes (Caligiuri, Philips, Lazarova, Tarique, & Burgi, 2001; Kupka et al., 2008). To do this fully, language and other social barriers needed to be minimised.

5.3.3.1 Implications for managers and scholars

As Shaffer and Harrison (2001) claim that interaction with host country co-workers builds an appreciation of and sensitivity to cultural differences; naturally it seems likely that deeper relationships with HCNs would also facilitate adjustment. In a practical point of view, Chinese firms should provide an information sharing system to facilitate information sharing and work to facilitate interaction when expatriates are on assignment. On a positive note the findings in this study suggest that this may not be too big a challenge since co-workers are so engaged to help visitors and have the language abilities as hosts, to help expatriates that may be lacking such skills. That the findings in chapter 4 reveal that host country co-workers were able to train (across English, Cantonese and Mandarin) demonstrates culturally competent co-workers. Future research may wish to consider and study the relative skills of co-workers as stakeholders in expatriate adjustment. That is the more skilled the co-workers are the quicker the adjustment of the expatriate. Another important question for future research is, are Hong Kong co-workers more culturally competent hosts than many other locations due to their long history of hosting visiting expatriates from various countries?

The importance of cultural training to have the skills so that the expatriates can have the knowledge or cultural framework for solving such cultural issues cannot be underestimated (Feitosa et al., 2014; Littrell & Salas, 2005). Shaffer et al. (2006) reported that cultural
flexibility was positively related to expatriate work adjustment and performance. We would suggest that this can be extended to the co-worker of the expatriate as well.

This study also illustrates the role of this stakeholder in support and assistance of the expatriate spouse which was deemed beneficial in reducing the stress and anxiety associated with relocating to the host country and socially integrating into the local community. This finding shows that most host country co-workers are willing to help the expatriates. They are willing to train him/her about the cultural differences between Hong Kong and China. With these supports, the expatriate has less adjustment issues generally in Hong Kong and this is important for the expatriate and the family.

Interpersonal or social support has been found to prevent burnout by reducing the amount of emotional exhaustion that a foreign assignment creates (Eriksson et al., 2009). Within the stress-management literature, social support has been found to alleviate stress and facilitate coping in novel situations (Ashford and Taylor, 1990; Pinder and Schroeder, 1987). Thus, an expatriate with social support has greater psychological well-being, and therefore may be more inclined to apply learned skills to the adjustment process. With the evidence presented above, we suggest the following: social support from host country co-workers help the expatriates to adjust better to the host country (Aycan, 1997a; Caligiuri & Lazarova, 2002). Interpersonal support (i.e. social support) encompasses personal and interactive relationships with people to help with the adjustment of the expatriate (Bozionelos, 2009; Magnini, 2009). Interpersonal support is especially important to international workers because the sudden change of environment brings about disturbance of previously established social networks (Copeland & Norell, 2002) and having interpersonal support can reduce the uncertainty in these times (Kraimer et al., 2001a). On the living side of this interpersonal support, the study finds that most host country co-workers are willing to help the expatriates in that they provide living and dining tips and they go out and play as friends after work. Managers need to make sure they do what they can to facilitate this sort of interactions when expatriates are assigned to their Hong Kong subsidiaries of mainland Chinese firms.
5.4 Parent Country Co-worker Support

5.4.1 One-time logistical support

Most past studies that investigated the expatriate-parent organization stated the impacts of the parent country co-workers on expatriate to have a better adjustment with a level of support (Kraimer & Wayne, 2004; Kraimer et al., 2001a; Waxin, 2004). Organization support had been related to better expatriate effectiveness (Kraimer et al., 2001a). Kraimer et al. (2001) studied the implications of parent country support and they found strong empirical support between expatriate adjustment and the organizational support using Leader-Members-Exchange (LMX) model (Kraimer et al., 2001b).

Based on our findings, most of Chinese expatriates state that they don’t have much of the supports from the parent country co-workers in part because of an inability to help. Consistent with prior studies the role of the home colleagues is believed to me limited by the fact they cannot fully appreciate the experience on the ground (and in this study this was routinely explained in the context of cultural difference between mainland China and Hong Kong). Most of the expatriates in this study have to solve their adjustment issues by themselves due to lack of organization support. This finding is matching with many studies that the expatriates have to use their own ability to adjust with lacking support from the parent company (Kraimer & Wayne, 2004; Waxin, 2004). But more importantly, expatriate needed the organizational support the most especially during the early days of the expatriate assignment (Shaffer et al., 1999). This study finds a similar pattern. There is a one-time logistics support from the parent country co-workers related to Visa application, apartment and also flight arrangements. All the expatriates have the logistics supports from the parent country co-workers like Visa, apartment and flight.

5.4.1.1 Implications for managers and scholars

The findings do not suggest that MCE had any major issue with the lack of home country support on the ground, but they did suggest that they would welcome more. Despite this, they acknowledge the limits on what the parent unit could do.
Despite the findings with this robust sample of expatriates, we concur with the idea in the literature that that the parent company to create a supportive organizational climate to support expatriates (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). The parent company should show support through constant open communication (Black et al., 1991), financial incentives, performance indicators (Avril & Magnini, 2007) and by providing a foundation that promotes a positive learning environment (Min, Magnini, & Singal, 2013). Information on role clarity (Guzzo et al., 1994), non-acceptable behaviors (Okpara & Kabongo, 2011) and explicit company practices (Guzzo et al., 1994) are all factors that should be part of the company’s offered support. It is not uncommon for an expatriate to have feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and confusion when transitioning to a new culture and it should not be up to other stakeholders (such as co-workers to compensate). These are all legitimate reasons that highlight the importance for an expatriate to feel that they have the full support of their home company and ability to reach out to them (Avril & Magnini, 2007; Chang, 2005).

We encourage scholars to remember that findings in general show that parent organization support is positively related to expatriate cross-cultural adjustment (Wang & Takeuchi, 2007). From the practical implication point of view, for Chinese firms, the parent country co-workers (reporting managers or someone with similar expatriation experiences or even general administration staff) should use this finding to provide more supports to the expatriates. Currently, technology is enabling an expatriate to receive immediate responses from people all over the globe through online forums like emails (Lea, Yu, & Maguluru, 2006). Expatriates have the ability to ask questions and receive answers from multiple people, often with experience abroad – this should include ongoing support from the parent unit.

5.5 Conclusions and Limitations

Consequent to the importance of expatriation as a global staffing practice for multinational companies and the known adjustment challenges faced by expatriates, scholars and international human resources management practitioners continue to seek a better
understanding of what contributes to a successful expatriate assignment. In this context, this study proposed that the role of multiple stakeholders in expatriate adjustment should be explored, as the expatriates’ family, home-county colleagues, host-country colleagues as well as their own skills can affect and be affected by the expatriate adjustment experience. In addition to the many practical implications of the findings discussed throughout this chapter, this study makes two important contributions to the field of research.

Based on the findings presented in chapter four and summarised above, the first key contribution this study makes is that it provides new insights into the overlapping and integrated roles of multiple stakeholders in expatriate adjustment. The findings presented repeatedly illustrate the value of taking a holistic (multi-stakeholder) approach to understanding expatriate adjustment and provides new insights into how the role of one stakeholder may compensate for and/or enhance the role of another.

The second major contribution that this study makes to the field of research is that it enhances our understanding of how adjustment patterns established through extant research, apply to non-traditional research samples, in this case, mainland Chinese expatriates. This study adds a rare empirical contribution to the field through its focus on this cohort of expatriates and cognizant that 65,143 Mainland Chinese firms now operate in Hong Kong, this study is very timely. Idiosyncratic aspects of the Chinese experience were also revealed, such as the important role of the extended-family in expatriate adjustment and the consequences of cultural differences between mainland Chinese expatriates and the local population were articulated in detail.

It must be acknowledged that this study has clear limitations. Resource and time constraints are the first clear limitation leading to a small sample size and interviewing respondents though their second language was a challenge in collecting rich empirical data. The other limitations of this study are those common to qualitative studies, including an inability to generalize the findings to the larger population, sample size, and the difficulties associated with data analysis and presentation. However, as a key priority for this study was to apply a methodology that acknowledges both context and process and to explore the
adjustment experience through the views of the "actors" i.e. the expatriates themselves, the method chosen was appropriate. Guided by the exploratory research question, *what is the role of multiple-stakeholders in the successful adjustment of MCE in Hong Kong?*, this study has enhanced our understanding of the role of each stakeholder in the adjustment of Mainland Chinese Expatriates (MCE). Finally, as illustrated by suggestions throughout this chapter, the insights gained in this study can guide future research into the experience of MCEs and other cohorts of expatriates that have been underexplored to date.
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Appendix A – Interview Guide
A Multiple Stakeholder Study of Expatriate Adjustment: Mainland Chinese Expatriates (MCEs) in Hong Kong

Part A: Personal Backgrounds

1. Name: ___________________

2. Sex
   1. Male □
   2. Female □

3. Marital status
   Single □
   Married □

4. Age
   21-30 □
   31-40 □
   41-50 □
   50+ □

5. Which province of China do you come from?
   ______________________

6. What language(s) can you speak fluently?
   Cantonese □
   Mandarin □
   English □

7. Is this your first overseas assignment?
   Yes □
   No □ If No, please also specify how many times?
8. Duration of stay in Hong Kong?

___________________

Based on your experience, what do you see as the main challenges/barriers faced by Mainland Chinese expatriates coming to work in Hong Kong?

Part B: Formal Organizational Support

1. What formal organizational supports where provided to you and/or your family when expatriating to Hong Kong?
   - Prompt/follow-up – what pre-departure training was provided and what post-departure support training was provided?

2. How effective was any formal organizational support to preparing you to (a) live (b) work in Hong Kong?

Part C: Adjustment related to Personal Ability

1. Can you please describe what you see as the personal abilities and characteristics, which helped or hindered your adjustment to living and working in Hong Kong?
   - Prompt/follow-up – What was the role of language ability, previous travel or work experience (or lack of it), work related job skills and cross-cultural awareness etc.? Please explain how these factors impacted on your adjustment.
   - Prompt/follow-up Are there any abilities that you feel are essential for MCE to adjust to living and working in Hong Kong?

2. What, if any, personal abilities did you need to develop to adjust to living and working in Hong Kong and how did you go about developing them?
   - Prompt/follow-up – Have you learned new languages, work related job skills, cross-cultural skills etc.?

3. What barriers existed to you developing the abilities you needed to adjust to living and working in Hong Kong?
   - Prompt/follow-up – time commitments, lack of organizational support etc?

Part D: Adjustment related to host-country co-worker support

1. Can you please describe the role that your co-workers played (if any) in helping you to adjust to living and working in Hong Kong?
   - Prompt/follow-up - What type of support from co-workers was most important in the work context and how did it help you?
   - Prompt/follow-up - What type of support from co-workers was most important outside the work context and how did it help you?
2. What barrier existed to co-worker support?
   - Prompt/follow-up – language, cultural, political, conflicts of interest etc?

3. Based on your experience how does/could a lack of co-workers support hinder MCE adjustment in Hong Kong?

Part E: Adjustment related to parent-country co-worker support

1. Can you please describe the role that your parent-co-workers played (if any) in helping you to adjust to living and working in Hong Kong?
   - Prompt/follow-up - What type of support from parent co-workers was most important in the new work context and how did it help you? Did you keep in touch with parent country co-workers and how did it help your current role in Hong Kong?
   - Prompt/follow-up - What type of support from parent co-workers was most important in outside the work context and how did it help you - did you get advice from precious MCEs, what was it and how did it help?

2. What barrier existed to parent co-worker support?
   - Prompt/follow-up – Remoteness, lack of experience of expatriation, unable to understand new work context, no need for interaction?

3. Based on your experience how important is having continuing support from parent-county co-workers?

Part F: Adjustment related to family support

1. Is your partner/family accompanied you in this assignment (if married)?
   - Yes ☐
   - No ☐

2. Can you please describe the role that family support played (if any) in helping you to adjust to living and working in Hong Kong?
   - Prompt/follow-up - What type of support from family was most important and how did it impact on your working life?

3. What barriers existed for family support?
   - Prompt/follow-up – impact of partner’s career, children education, re-adjustment, language barrier etc?

4. Based on your experience how important is having continuing support from your family to MCE adjustment in Hong Kong?

1. In summary – Based on your experience, what are the critical success factors for MCE adjustment in Hong Kong?
2. Please rate the role of each in your adjustment to living and working in Hong Kong

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<tr>
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<td>2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>1</td>
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*Thank you for your time*
Appendix B – Consent Form for the Research Project
Consent Form for the Research Project:

A Study of Expatriate Adjustment from a Multiple Stakeholder Perspective:
Mainland Chinese Expatriates (MCEs) in Hong Kong

Document Version 1; Dated 11-11-2013

I agree to participate in the above research project and give my consent freely.

I understand that the project will be conducted as described in the Information Statement, a copy of which I have retained.

I understand I can withdraw from the project at any time and do not have to give any reason for withdrawing.

I consent to participating in an interview and having it recorded and I consent to being anonymously quoted.

I am aware that I can review and edit the transcript of their interview.

I understand that my personal information will remain confidential to the researchers.

I have had the opportunity to have questions related to participating in this research project answered to my satisfaction.

Print Name: _______________________________________________________

Signature: __________________________________________

Date: ____________________
Appendix C – Information Statement for the Research Project
Information Statement for the Research Project:

A Study of Expatriate Adjustment from a Multiple Stakeholder Perspective: 
Mainland Chinese Expatriates (MCEs) in Hong Kong

Document Version 2.0, Date 11/11/2013

You are invited to participate in the research project identified above which student researcher Wong Kai Leung, Eric is conducting with Dr Brendan Boyle from the Newcastle Business School at the University of Newcastle. The research is part of Wong Kai Leung, Eric’ doctoral studies at the University of Newcastle, supervised by Dr Brendan Boyle from the Newcastle Business School.

Why is the research being done?
This study seeks to explore expatriate adjustment from a multiple stakeholder perspective. Using a qualitative research method this project will provide in-depth insights into when and how multiple stakeholders facilitate expatriate adjustment and consider interdependencies between stakeholders role in this process. Studying the role of host and parent country peers as well as the expatriate’s family and the expatriate themselves. This research will aim to provide a holistic view of expatriate adjustment in relation to co-workers support from both the host-country and the parent-country and also the family support apart from the expatriate's own ability.

Who can participate in the research?
You are invited to participate if you are an expatriate from China

What choice do you have?
Participation in this research is entirely your choice. Only those people who give their informed consent will be included in the project. Whether or not you decide to participate, your decision will not disadvantage you. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason and have the option of withdrawing any data provided during your confidential interview.
**What would you be asked to do?**

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in one in-depth interview with student researcher Wong Kai Leung, Eric on questions about the effects and impacts from the multiple stakeholder perspectives - like parent-country and host-country co-workers as well as the family support in adjustment (1 hr approx). The interview will be audio recorded with the permission of the interviewee and transcribed by the researcher and/or an approved provider used by the University.

**How much time will it take?**

The interview will take approximately 1 hour

**What are the risks and benefits of participating?**

Confidentiality is assured and there is no specific risk associated with participating. However, some questions in the interview schedule request interviewees to reflect on adjustment they have experienced as expatriates from China. In the event that an interviewee requests support following these reflections he/she will be confidentially referred to the university counselling service with whom the project supervisor has liaised. This study will contribute to existing theory of expatriate adjustment, and specifically how it relates to MCEs in Hong Kong. A summary report of the findings from this study can be obtained by the individual participants from the researchers at the University of Newcastle.

**How will your privacy be protected?**

Any information collected by the researchers which might identify you will be stored securely and only accessed by the researchers, except as required by law. The recording and the transcripts (hard copy) will be stored at the student researchers premises (a secure building). The data on the computer will be stored in a password-protected program.

Data will be retained for at least 5 years, held at the University of Newcastle. Information, which might identify participants, is not to be disclosed without their prior consent.

**How will the information collected be used?**

Data from the interview will be used in a thesis to be submitted for Wong Kai Leung, Eric DBA degree at the University of Newcastle and may also be presented in academic publications.

Interviewees will only be identified by a number. Quotes will only be used to represent a theme in the data. They will be de-identified and presented in code e.g. Interviewee10 stated “xxx”. No participants will be identified by name. A summary report of the findings from this study can be obtained from the researchers at the University of Newcastle: Contact details are provided below. In accordance with the university policy on interview recording (http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policy/000417.html) participants will be given the opportunity to review and edit the transcript of their interview on request.
**What do you need to do to participate?**

Please read this Information Statement and be sure you understand its contents before you consent to participate. If there is anything you do not understand, or you have questions, contact the researcher Wong Kai Leung, Eric by email C3155518@uon.edu.au. If you would like to participate, please complete and return the attached consent form to brendan.boyle@newcastle.edu.au or hand it to Wong Kai Leung, Eric during your interview. This will be taken as your informed consent to participate.

**Further information**

If you would like further information please contact Wong Kai Leung, Eric or project supervisor Dr. Brendan Boyle.

Thank you for considering this invitation.

Dr Brendan Boyle & Mr Wong Kai Leung, Eric  
(Senior Lecturer) (DBA Candidate)

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61 (0) 2 49215014

Brendan.boyle@newcastle.edu.au c3155518@uon.edu.au

**Complaints about this research**

This project has been approved by the University’s Human Research Ethics Committee, Approval No. H2013-0307.

Should you have concerns about your rights as a participant in this research, or you have a complaint about the manner in which the research is conducted, it may be given to the researcher, or, if an independent person is preferred, to the Human Research Ethics Officer, Research Office, The Chancellery, The University of Newcastle, University Drive, Callaghan NSW 2308, Australia, telephone (02) 49216333, email Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au.