



Antecedents, coping strategies and consequences of repatriation adjustment: What do we know?

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Abstract

In the competitive and globalized era, expatriates and repatriates become exporters, importers and local traders of skill, knowledge and expertise and, they are the most competitive resource of the organization. For both an organization and repatriates, managing repatriation has become a challenge, and most of the organizations and repatriates get feeble returns on their investments. However, the literature on repatriation remains fragmented. This paper provides a comprehensive analysis on antecedents and coping approaches of repatriation adjustment and provides a framework. This paper enables the repatriates and the organizations to understand the repatriation process well and thus enable them to manage the repatriation transition better. Further, this study by giving a comprehensive view of repatriation literature guides future researchers to identify the gaps in the existing literature on repatriation and help them to advance the existing knowledge in this field.

Keywords: *Adjustment, coping strategies, expatriation, repatriation.*

1. Introduction

With a borderless world, the business opportunity has tremendously increased that results in increased employees' international mobility. Multinational companies send their employees (expatriates) abroad to work in their overseas subsidiary (expatriation), and they (repatriates) return to their parent organization after completing their assignment (repatriation) (Bossard & Peterson, 2005; Chiang, Esch, Birtch, & Shaffer, 2018; Kraimer, Shaffer, Harrison, & Ren, 2012; Vidal, Valle, & Aragón, 2007). In the knowledge era, as expatriates and repatriates become exporters, importers and local traders of knowledge, they are the most precious resource of all (Inkson, Arthur, Pringle, & Barry, 1998).

Up until now, the literature has mainly focused on the expatriation stage of international assignments (Chiang et al., 2018). This bias in the literature because of the perception that returning to home is less problematic than going abroad (Black, 1992; Change et al., 2018).

In the beginning, the severity of the repatriation process for corporate employees was not recognized well; organizations assumed that as repatriates were coming back home, they should have no trouble in readjusting to their home environment. Consequently, this process was often expected to require much less Human Resource (HR) attention than expatriation (Black, 1992; Black & Gregersen, 1999; Cox, Khan, & Armani, 2013; Greer & Stiles, 2016; Harvey, 1982, 1989). In contrast to their anticipation, repatriates found readjustment to their home context was more painful and challenging than their expatriation experiences (Adler & Gundersen, 2008; Gomez-Mejia & Balkin, 1987).

Repatriates were suffering from problems of adjustment which leads to adverse consequences, for example, employee dissatisfaction (Suutari & Brewster, 2003), lack of knowledge sharing (Oddou, Osland, & Blakeney, 2008) and feelings of alienation upon repatriation (Adler, 1981; Bossard & Peterson, 2005). Most importantly, the high turnover rate among repatriates was noticed following the first two years of repatriation (Brookfield, 2015). When repatriates leave an organization, the organization loses its investment and will not get any return out of their investment. Their competitors can employ the leaving repatriates, and competitors can make use of them with the least investment (Kraimer et al., 2012). This situation can affect the competitive position and weakens the organization immediately as well as in the long run. Therefore, both repatriates and organizations should take the necessary steps to manage the repatriation transition. However, successful management of repatriation has become a challenge for both the organization and repatriates (Greer & Stiles, 2016; Jassawalla, Connelly, & Slojkowski, 2004; Solomon, 1995) and they need a comprehensive view of repatriation to manage the repatriation transition better. However, the existing repatriation literature is fragmented.

Therefore, this study provides a comprehensive review on causes and coping approaches of repatriation adjustment with the aim of;

- a) Equipping organization and repatriates for the better management of repatriation
- b) Providing a platform for further advancement on repatriation research, and
- c) Providing suggestions for future research on repatriation

This paper is significant because it enables the repatriates and the organizations to understand the repatriation process well and thus enable them to manage the repatriation transition better. Further, this study by providing a comprehensive view of repatriation literature guides further researchers to identify the gaps in the literature and helps them to advance the existing knowledge in this field.

2. Scope of the review

The literature on repatriation is vast, covering different groups of repatriates such as corporate employees, students, missionaries, peace group volunteers, returning migrants, soldiers and journalists (Szkudlarek, 2010). This review focus on repatriation of corporate employees. In this review, the researcher encompass research on the repatriation adjustment process and draw on scholarly works across the fields of management, International Human Resource Management (IHRM) and International Business (IB).

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A two-stage process was adopted to select articles for consideration (Doherty, Haugh, & Lyon, 2014). To begin this process, the researcher did a keyword search using the search engine Google Scholar to generate a list of articles. The search terms were selected to ensure inclusivity and focus on the repatriation process. Using a series of keywords "repatriation", "repatriation adjustment" generated hundreds of journal publications related to the repatriation of different groups such as corporate employees, students, missionaries and migrant/refugee. The researcher selected articles that talked about repatriation of corporate employees, and end up with 52 articles from 18 journals.

In the second stage, the researcher used the reserves search method in which additional papers were obtained from the citations in the selected journal articles. This snowballing approach produced a further 38 journal papers. In the end, this two-stage process generated 90 articles from 22 journals. This review paper starts by defining repatriation and how repatriation adjustment has been conceptualized. Next, this paper explores the main themes that have emerged in the repatriation literature, including adjustment expectation, cultural shock, and identity change. Further, this study discusses coping approaches and consequences of repatriation adjustment. Finally, this study suggests a possible avenue for further research in repatriation.

2.1 Repatriation and repatriation adjustment

Repatriation is a transition from a host country to one's home country after living overseas for a significant period (Adler & Gundersen, 2008; Black, Gregersen, & Mendenhall, 1992; Kulkarni, Lengnick-Hall, & Valk, 2010). Research on repatriation of corporate employees has been developed from its research roots in domestic relocation and expatriation literature. Theory on repatriation was developed based on the work of adjustment theorists of domestic relocation (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984; Nicholson 1984) and expatriation (Black, Mendenhall, & Oddou, 1991).

In most cases, in expatriation and repatriation research, adjustment, adaptation and acculturation were used somewhat interchangeably (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985; WeShi & Franklin, 2014). However, one can observe some differences between them. Acculturation is a process that changes individuals' attitude and behaviour from one culture to another culture because of regular contact with people in other culture. Adjustment and adaptation can be seen as two essential elements of the acculturation process. Adaptation can be viewed as a process involving changes of individual behaviour to achieve a fit with many aspects of the new context (Aycan & Berry, 1996; Chan, 2000). Not like acculturation, adoption is a short-term process, and a means to achieve fit with the new context. Adjustment is a more specific concept which is psychological well-being with the various aspect of the new context (Black & Gregersen, 1991).

The process of repatriation adjustment continues until repatriates adjust adequately with different aspects of their home context (Sussman, 2000). During the adjustment period, changes occur in repatriates towards increasing fit, and decreasing clashes between environmental demands and individual attitudes and behaviour. In other words, in the process of repatriation adjustment repatriates attempt to reduce uncertainty and achieve a degree of fit with the different aspects of the home context (Black et al., 1992). Better adjusted repatriates

feel acceptance, well-being, and psychological comfort and better-fitted to the home context (Adler, 1981; Black et al., 1992).

Literature has been consistently suggesting that the process of repatriation adjustment was more severe than that repatriates expected, and their overseas adjustment. The causes for adjustment difficulties have been discussed in the literature from different perspectives such as reverse cultural shock (Gomez-Mejia & Balkin, 1987; Vidal et al., 2007), the incongruence between repatriation expectation and reality (Black et al., 1992; Harvey, 1982; MacDonald & Arthur, 2003), identity change (Kohonen, 2008; Kraimer et al., 2012), and cultural identity transition (Cox, 2004; Sussman, 2000, 2002).

2.2 Repatriates' expectations and cultural shock

Repatriates experience shock known as a reverse cultural shock that creates uncertainty and stress (Black & Gregersen, 1991; Gomez-Mejia & Balkin, 1987; Stroh, 1995). Reverse cultural shock can be a consequence of unmet expectations. Repatriates from expectations in relation to their repatriation while they are overseas. The expatriation context provided them with different stimuli that forced them to change themselves (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007; Kohonen, 2004). Expatriates accommodate these changes, which broaden the outlook and expand the mind with respect to many dimensions, such as cultural aspects, mental maturity and managerial competencies, and work-related self-concepts (Baughn, 1995; Kohonen, 2004, 2008; Shaffer et al., 2006). The new alterations change their perception of themselves. In other words, expatriates change their identity that influences their attitudes, behaviour, and perceptions. However, repatriates are not well aware of the changes within them (Martin & Harrell, 1996), and with these changes, they develop their repatriation expectations.

At the same time, the home organization can undergo substantial changes during their absence (Baughn, 1995; Greer & Stiles, 2016). Changes are likely to take place in the home organization in the form of structural and policy changes, as well as changes in employees' positions; employees may have been promoted or a new member may have replaced a previous employee. These changes may alter the power structure of the informal organization. Therefore, unfortunately, expatriates tend to form inaccurate expectations about their repatriation.

Also, they assume that they will be rewarded in terms of promotion, and the organization will be more supportive of them (Gregersen & Black, 1996; Hurn, 1999; Stroh, 1995). Contrary to their expectations, repatriates observe changes in the home context and experience a lack of recognition and lack of respect for their global expertise (Adler, 1981; Black, 1992; Harvey, 1989). This situation increases the difference between the repatriates' expectations and the reality they see upon their repatriation, resulting in feelings of uncertainty and loss of control (Black et al., 1992) and reintegration to their home organization becoming a more stressful experience.

2.3 Cultural identity transition/change

Cultural identity transition is the consequence of an expatriate's adaptation to the host country's cultural context. Cultural identity transition is "the degree to which an individual identifies with the home country and the host country" (Sussman, 2002). The key cultural

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identity transitions were labelled as subtractive (disintegrated), additive (host favoured), global/intercultural (integrated) and affirmative (home favoured) based on to what extent they established their link with home and host culture (Cox, 2004; Hyder & Lövblad, 2007; Sussman, 2000, 2002). Subtractive and additive shifters are those who have a weak link with their home culture and strong ties with their host culture, respectively. On the other hand, affirmative and intercultural shifters are those who have strong ties with home culture and those who accept both home and host culture, respectively.

As discussed above, repatriates experience repatriation as an unexpected and stressful process, and this process was more painful than their expatriation experiences. Repatriates' identity change (Baughn, 1995; Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007; Kohonen, 2008; Kraimer, 2012) and changes in home organization/country (Black et al., 1992; Harvey, 1982) make repatriates form unrealistic expectations. Repatriates' identity change (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007; Kohonen, 2004) influences their cultural identity transition. Along with unmet expectations (Black et al., 1992; Harvey, 1982; MacDonald & Arthur, 2003) cultural identity transition (Cox, 2004; Sussman, 2000, 2002) made repatriation experience a painful process. Figure 1 shows the critical antecedent conditions developing repatriation adjustment as an unexpected and stressful process.

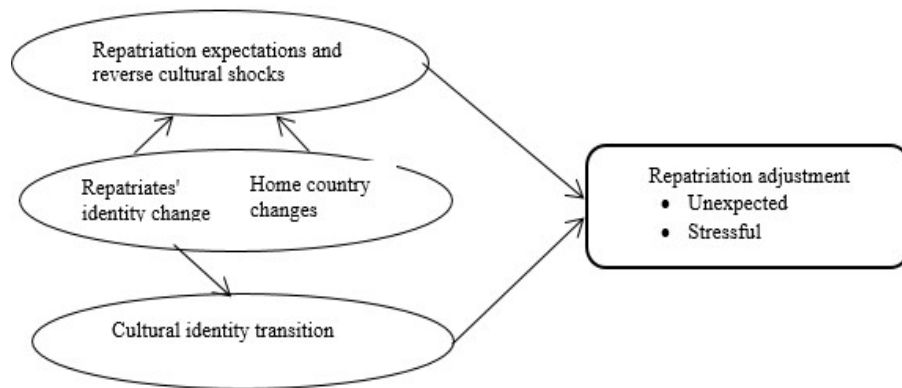


Figure 1 Key antecedent conditions of repatriation adjustment

Source: Developed by the researcher based on the review.

The antecedent conditions, mentioned above, can be common to all repatriates. For this reason, all kinds of repatriates found that the repatriation experience was stressful, and reintegration to their home organization/country was a painful process (Adler, 1981; Szkudlarek, 2010). Along with these antecedent conditions, there are more antecedent conditions of repatriation adjustment depending on the repatriation context. For example, among corporate repatriates, role clarity and role conflict were found to be significant antecedents of repatriation adjustment (Black, 1994; Black & Gregersen, 1991). The following are more specific antecedent conditions of repatriation adjustment of business employees.

2.4 Antecedents of repatriation adjustment

Black et al. (1992) proposed a comprehensive model of repatriation adjustment by explaining repatriation adjustment as a process of uncertainty reduction and re-establishing a sense of

control. This model highlights individual organizational situational and general antecedents of repatriation adjustment. According to Black et al. (1992), adjustment takes place in two stages; before repatriation (anticipatory adjustment), and after repatriation (in-country adjustment). The anticipatory adjustment refers to the process before repatriation where repatriates develop expectations concerning their work, interactions and general environment based on their experience and the information they had. In the stage of in-country adjustment, individual variables (need for control, expatriation adjustment), job variables (role clarity, role discretion and role conflict), organizational variables (post-arrival training, repatriation career objectives/policies), and non-work variables (social status, housing conditions, spouse adjustment) influence the in-country adjustment. At the same time, in addition to predictive control, behavioral control also influences in-country adjustment.

Apart from the role of individual control, this model highlighted three facets of adjustment: adjustment to work, adjustment to interaction, and adjustment to the general environment (Black et al., 1990, 1992; Black & Gregersen, 1991). This multifaceted nature implies that different antecedents may have different degrees of impact on each facet of the adjustment. For instance, Black and Gregersen (1991) found that only two variables, such as housing conditions and role discretion, influence all facets of the adjustment. Two other variables; time overseas and time back in the home country, influence work adjustment only. This may imply that particular antecedents are strictly related to particular facets of adjustment. However, there is no consistent evidence to show which antecedent is related to which facet of adjustment: there were inconsistencies among them (Black 1994; Suutari & Välimaa, 2002; Vidal et al., 2010). For example, while Black and Gregersen (1991) found role discretion was related to three facets of adjustment, Suutari and Välimaa (2002) found it was only related to work adjustment.

Hyder and Lövblad (2007) developed a model that was an extension of the Black et al. (1992) theoretical model. While the focal point of Black et al.'s (1992) model was repatriation adjustment, the focus of Hyder and Lövblad's (2007) model was repatriation experience and their retention. While Black et al.'s (1992) argument was grounded on uncertainty reduction and the personal control theory, Hyder and Lövblad (2007) developed their argument based on employment contract theory. They stress that, as expatriation and repatriation are dramatic events that relate to the relational nature of employment, the repatriates' experience can have a significant impact on this relationship. When repatriates perceive their home organization is unsupportive, and they are unable to receive what they expected, they will feel the relational contract is violated by the organization and intend to leave the organization. In addition to meeting expectations, repatriates' cultural identity (Cox, 2004; Sussam, 2000, 2002) and their demographic variables influence repatriation experience. Though Hyder and Lövblad (2007) talk about repatriation experiences, they agree that when the repatriation experience was positive, repatriates can adjust to their repatriation better.

The number of interrelated antecedents was evidence of the complexity of the adjustment process, and made repatriation transition more painful than expected by repatriates and organizations. The antecedent variables of repatriation adjustment can be related to a number of individual, organizational, cultural, and social variables. This signifies that managing repatriation is a challenging role for human resource management in organizations (Adler & Gundersen, 2008; Kulkarni et al., 2010), and in addition to the efforts of the organizations the

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contribution of existing members and repatriates is also necessary to smooth the process of repatriation adjustment (Adler, 1981).

The model of Black et al. (1992) included most of the antecedents of repatriation adjustment. This model has been empirically tested among repatriates in different cultural and organizational contexts (Black, 1994; Gregersen & Stroh, 1997; Suutari & Välimaa, 2002; Vidal et al., 2010). The expected direction of each antecedent was confirmed by the empirical study. However, a few antecedents, for example, age, showed mixed or unexpected directions towards repatriation adjustment, as detailed below.

Black and Gregersen (1991) examined the influence of 12 antecedent variables on three facets of repatriation adjustment among 125 repatriates (U.S managers) who returned after completing at least nine months of their overseas assignment. The examined antecedent variables were: age, time overseas, total years spent overseas, clarity of repatriation process, time back in US, role discretion, role clarity, role conflict, culture novelty, and social status housing conditions. They found that a few variables - such as total time overseas, housing conditions, social status and age - influenced all three facets of adjustment, and variables except cultural novelty and clarity of repatriation process influenced at least one facet of adjustment. The antecedent variables explained from 29 percent to 53 percent of the variance in the adjustment models related to the three facets of adjustment. Black (1994) examined the same antecedent variables among 173 Japanese repatriates. Black (1994) compared his results with Black and Gregersen's (1991) results. The comparison showed exciting differences between American repatriates and Japanese repatriates that signifies the contextual influences on repatriation adjustment.

Gregersen and Stroh (1997) focused on Finnish repatriates and examined the influence of the 12 antecedent variables on the three facets of adjustment. Work adjustment was found to be related to time overseas, time since returning home, and role discretion and role clarity. In regards to interaction adjustment time overseas, culture novelty, and social status were found to be correlated significantly. Antecedent variables such as time overseas and time back home related to repatriates' general adjustment.

These three studies (Black & Gregersen, 1991; Black, 1994; Gregersen & Stroh, 1997) examined the influence of almost the same antecedent variables on the three facets of adjustment of corporate repatriates in three different cultural contexts: the US, Japan and Finland. It is interesting to note that the findings of these studies were not exactly the same. Further, while Black and Gregersen's (1991) study explains up to 53 percent of the variance, the other two studies describe a maximum of 29 percent of variances in the model. Therefore, it can be concluded that the antecedents of repatriation adjustment are not the same in all contexts, even though all repatriates experience readjustment difficulties.

It is interesting to note that there is no one predictor that influences the same facet of adjustment in all studies. The antecedent variables have different weights in various studies. For example, the influence of age on three facets of adjustment has been examined in four studies (Black & Gregersen, 1991; Black, 1994; Gregersen & Stroh, 1997; Suutari & Välimaa, 2002). One study by Gregersen and Stroh (1997) found no significant influence of age on any facets of adjustment, but the other three studies found it impacted at least one facet of adjustment. Furthermore, some variables are significantly correlated with the adjustment but

have no impact on adjustment. For example, in the Black and Gregersen (1991) study age was significantly correlated to work adjustment, but in the model, it has no significant influence on work adjustment. In this case, we may say that the correlation of age with other antecedent variables make age a non-significant variable. The influence of each predictor on each facet of adjustment is discussed below.

2.5 Personal and situational variables and repatriation adjustment

All empirical research except one (Vidal et al., 2010) investigate the impact of age on the three facets of the adjustment. The empirical evidence confirms the positive impact of age on adjustment (Black, 1994; Black & Gregersen, 1991), but Gregersen and Stroh (1997) and James (2018) found no effect. However, interestingly, Suutari and Välimaa (2002) found a negative impact of age on general adjustment and no impact on any other facets of the adjustment. This contradictory relationship may be due to the cultural differences where the study was conducted.

High self-efficacy repatriates can manage repatriation transition stress better than low self-efficacy repatriates (Black et al., 1992). This variable has been investigated among the Spanish repatriates only, but it was found that self-efficacy has no impact on any facets of the adjustment (Vidal et al., 2010). Likewise, social capacity and conceptual capacity have no significant effect on any facets of the adjustment (Vidal et al., 2010). This suggests that an individual's development may facilitate them to progress well in their career path, but not facilitate them to adjust to their repatriation transition better. These repatriation adjustment difficulties can preclude them from using their newly acquired skills and knowledge which badly affects both the organization and the individual. Thus, both the organization and repatriates must take the necessary steps to ease repatriation transition difficulties.

Only one study (Vidal et al., 2010) investigated social capacity and conceptual capacity as the antecedents of the two facets of repatriation adjustment; work adjustment and general adjustment. They found social capacity has a positive impact on general adjustment but not on work adjustment. Conceptual capacity was not found to be correlated with either general adjustment or work adjustment.

The literature highlights that expatriates' unrealistic expectations make their repatriation a difficult one (Black et al., 1991, 1992; MacDonald & Arthur, 2003). However, the influence of accurate expectations of repatriation adjustment has not been empirically investigated except in one study (Vidal et al., 2010). This study found that accurate expectations have a positive impact on general adjustment, but not on work adjustment.

Concerning the time of overseas assignment, the empirical evidence was inconsistent. While Black and Gregersen (1991) found the period spent on an overseas assignment influenced work adjustment negatively, Gregersen and Stroh (1997) and Suutari and Välimaa (2002) found its negative influence on general adjustment. However, Black (1994) has found no significant impact on any facets of adjustment. This mixed result suggests that the effect of the length of the overseas adjustment may depend on the repatriation context; more empirical investigation is needed to arrive at a conclusion about its implications for the adjustment.

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As with the period spent on an overseas assignment, the time passed upon repatriation also has a substantial influence on repatriation adjustment. Repatriates need time to reduce uncertainty and reintegrate to the home country/organization (Adler, 1981; Cox et al., 2012; Sussman, 2002). While Gregersen and Stroh (1997) found time passed upon repatriation has a positive impact on both general and work adjustment, Black (1994) and Gregersen (1991) found its positive impact only on the general adjustment and work adjustment respectively.

When employees perceive that they can apply their newly acquired skills to the role performance, they will be satisfied and motivated. This positive energy may lead to better adjustment (Solomon, 1995; Stroh et al., 1998). Suutari and Välimaa (2002) and Vidal et al. (2010) investigated its impact but found it does not affect adjustment. Suutari and Välimaa (2002) and Vidal et al. (2010) found that expatriation adjustment problems influenced general and interaction adjustment negatively, whereas expatriation satisfaction positively influenced interaction adjustment, but not work or general adjustment.

Gathering up-to-date information provides a better understanding of home country changes that facilitate repatriates in developing accurate expectations and better adjustment (Black et al., 1992). Suutari and Välimaa's (2002) empirical investigation found that it had a positive influence on general and work adjustment, but did not have a significant impact on interaction adjustment.

The repatriation process can be influenced by cultural disparity (Gregersen & Black, 1996; Vidal et al., 2007). When there are significant differences between home and host country culture, repatriates' adopted host cultural values, customs, and norms contradict with the home country's cultural values and norms. This situation may lead to feelings of discomfort (Black et al., 1992). However, to what extent they have changed their cultural identity during their overseas stay influences their sense of comfort upon repatriation (Sussman, 2002). In a study among Finnish repatriates, Gregersen and Stroh (1997) found cultural novelty negatively influenced interaction adjustment only, but another two studies (Black & Gregersen, 1991; Black, 1994) found no significant influences on many facets of the adjustment.

2.6 Organizational variables and repatriation adjustment

Role discretion permits employees to adjust their work role to match their abilities better. Thus, role discretion can reduce work-related uncertainties and facilitate their adjustment. Black and Gregersen (1991) found role discretion influences all three facets of repatriation adjustment while three other studies (Black, 1994; Gregersen & Stroh, 1997; Suutari & Välimaa, 2002) observed role discretion only related to work adjustment.

Unambiguity in the role facilitates repatriates by reducing the uncertainty related to the work setting and thus would facilitate repatriates adjusting to their work setting better (Black et al., 1992). However, empirical evidence on the influence of work clarity on repatriation adjustment was inconsistent. Role conflict can lead to uncertainty in the work environment, and thus hinder work adjustment (Black et al., 1992; Nicholson, 1984). While role conflict was found to be associated with three facets of adjustment in Black's (1994) study, it was associated only with work adjustment in the other two studies (Black & Gregersen, 1991; Suutari & Välimaa, 2002). However, Gregersen and Stroh (1997) found no association with any facets of adjustment. Only one study (Vidal et al., 2010) examined the influence of work

autonomy, promotion, compensation and post-arrival training. Nevertheless, these variables have not a significant influence on work adjustment except for work autonomy. Timing of role decision and negotiation and role novelty are examined by Suutari and Välimaa (2002) only. While the timing of role decision and negotiation influence at least one facet of adjustment, role novelty has no significant influence on many facets of adjustment.

2.7 General variables and repatriation adjustment

While Black and Gregersen (1991), Black (1994), and Gregersen and Stroh (1997) found social status was related to repatriation adjustment, Suutari and Välimaa (2002) and Vidal et al. (2010) found no link between them. Black and Gregersen's (1991) study found housing conditions were related to three facets of adjustment. However, Black (1994) found housing conditions were related to only general adjustment. Gregersen and Stroh (1997) and Vidal et al. (2010) found no significant link between any facets of adjustment.

The antecedents of repatriation adjustment can be categorized into two groups. Group one is the antecedents that create or increase uncertainty and reduce a sense of control - such antecedents make repatriation adjustment a stressful process, and group two is the antecedents that reduce uncertainty and increase the sense of control - these antecedents smooth the process of repatriation, one can say such antecedents are "coping approaches". The organization, co-workers and repatriates are involved in smoothing the process of repatriation (Adler, 1981; Black et al., 1992; DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994; Feldman & Tompson, 1993; Jassawalla & Sashittal, 2011; O'Sullivan, 2002).

2.8 Coping approaches: social support

Social support practices can reduce repatriation stress and make repatriates feel comfortable. Notably, in the work environment employees may receive support from their organization and co-worker. Organizational support can be perceived from a supportive corporate culture, practice, procedures, policies and rules. Co-worker support may be in the form of providing background information about work, role behaviour, formal and informal group settings, and behavioural norms.

Co-worker support: Co-workers were not ready to accept repatriates' new identity and undervalued repatriates' overseas experience (Adler, 1981). A study by Gama and Pedersen (1977) among Brazilian returnees who returned from their graduate studies in the US found that returnees (university professors) experienced peers' professional jealousy. However, co-workers' influence on repatriation adjustment of academics has apparently been neither discussed nor empirically tested among repatriates so far.

Organizational support: Repatriates can adjust to their repatriation when they are provided with necessary support practices (Gomez-Mejia & Balkin 1987; Harvey, 1989; Kulkarni et al., 2010; Shen & Hall, 2009). A longitudinal study (Takeuchi, Wang, Marinova, & Yao, 2009) on expatriation adjustment found that perceived organizational support was positively associated with adjustment. Providing appropriate organizational support during the foreign stay and upon repatriation positively influences the adjustment upon repatriation (Black et al., 1992). However, different global assignments require different types of organizational support (Caligiuri & Lazarova, 2002). Gilliot, Overlaet, and Verdin (2002) suggested organization

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support practices such as providing a stimulating work environment, developing a diversified and dynamic career policy, and paying attention to the work-life balance, will facilitate retention of employees in academic institutions as well as in business organizations.

A study by Lazarova and Caligiuri (2002) with 58 repatriates found that organizational support practices increase repatriates' general perception about their organization. Repatriates perceived that organizational support practices help successful repatriation and those who perceived more support practices intended to remain with the organization. Their study further suggested that organizational support practices were not found to be related to repatriates' turnover intention but perceived organizational support practices were found to be related to repatriates' turnover intention. This suggests repatriates' perceived support practices may be more important than the support practices provided.

2.9 Repatriates' proactive behaviour

In the context of repatriation, repatriates are proactive: they find possibilities to change the context or make use of the context, and attempt to find necessary information for the attainment of personal and organizational goals (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994; O'Sullivan 2002). This study defines repatriates' proactive behaviors as repatriates' attempts to change the repatriation context, change themselves or change both in order to better adjust to their repatriation and fit to the organization.

Repatriates engage in proactive behaviors such as developing networks and seeking information to adjust to their repatriation better (Allen & Alvarez, 1998; O'Sullivan, 2002). Engagement in such proactive behaviors enables repatriates to adjust to the environment and achieve a better position within a short period (Jassawalla & Sashittal 2011; Stroh, 1995). The link between proactive behaviour and repatriation adjustment has not been clearly discussed in the repatriation literature. However, four studies (Adler, 1981; Black et al., 1992; Feldman & Tompson, 1993; O'Sullivan, 2002) discuss the individual's role in the repatriation adjustment process.

Adler (1981) proposed a model of coping with repatriation that focuses on the attitudes repatriates used to fit back into their home. Adler identified four different groups of repatriates (readjustment modes) based on their attitudes: whether they were optimistic or pessimistic and whether they were active or passive in relation to their re-entry adjustment. The four groups are named as re-socialized repatriates, proactive repatriates, alienated repatriates and rebellious repatriates. Proactive repatriates made attempts to change both their situation and themselves to fit back to their home organization. They quickly adopted the norms and values of their home organization and exploited their overseas experience there. Proactive repatriates were satisfied with their repatriation and saw themselves as effective.

In the theoretical framework of repatriation adjustment, Black et al. (1992) did not directly use the term 'proactive behavior' but indirectly talked about the connection between repatriates' proactive behaviour (control behaviour) and adjustment. They highlighted two different forms of a repatriate's control behavior: predictive control and behavioral control. Predictive control enables an individual to forecast the situational demand; in contrast, behavioral control enables an individual to control their behavior to reduce uncertainty and

re-establish control over the environment. Both behavioral and predictive control facilitates repatriation adjustment (Black et al., 1992).

Feldman and Tompson (1993) investigated the relevance of proactive behavior during the career transition of three transition groups: expatriates, repatriates, and domestic geographical relocations. This study has analyzed their coping strategies such as information seeking, looking for the positive side of the job, keeping feelings to themselves, refraining from telling their boss about their problems, changing work procedure, and working long hours. Most of these proactive strategies significantly influence the indices of job adjustment, such as general satisfaction, intention to remain and satisfaction with growth opportunities. Though this study supports the effectiveness of proactive behaviors for better adjustment, the generalizability of this finding to the repatriation population is limited, as the study included only 40 repatriates out of 459 respondents.

The theoretical work of O'Sullivan (2002) focuses on the role of repatriates and their proactive behavior in the process of repatriation adjustment, beyond organizational responsibility. O'Sullivan suggests that repatriation behaviors such as social networking and information-seeking aimed at securing repatriation support are an alternative means to manage repatriation transition, and proactive behavior is needed both before and after the repatriation. The model suggests proactive personality characteristics that lead to proactive behaviors are the predictors of successful repatriation outcomes. James (2019) empirically investigated the influence of the organization, co-workers and individuals (proactive behaviours) on repatriation adjustment among academic repatriates. In this study, James (2019) found that though the three predictor variables have a significant influence on repatriation adjustment, repatriates' engagement in proactive behaviour had more effect in predicting repatriation adjustment of academic repatriates.

Although these five studies viewed the repatriates' proactive behavior in different angles, they reflect that proactive behavior enables repatriates to adjust to their repatriation better. Repatriates engage in proactive behaviour such as job change negotiation (Suutari & Välimaa, 2002), information seeking (Black et al., 1992; O'Sullivan, 2002), networking (Ahad & Hyder, 2008; Black et al., 1992; O'Sullivan, 2002) and positive framing (De Fillippi & Arthur, 1994; Feldman & Tompson, 1993).

2.10 Consequences of repatriation adjustment

Satisfactory repatriation adjustment motivates employees to remain with their organization and share their knowledge. On the other hand unsatisfactory adjustment results in a lack of knowledge transfer (Oddou et al., 2008), stress and loss of motivation at work (Harvey, 1989; Sussman, 2000), low performance (Black et al., 1992; Harvey, 1989; Vidal et al., 2010), and increased employee turnover (Lee & Liu, 2007; Stroh, 1995; Suutari & Brewster, 2003).

The critical issues of repatriation adjustment discussed in the literature: antecedents and coping approaches and consequences of repatriation adjustment are summarized and presented in Figure 2. This figure provides only the antecedents and coping approaches related to repatriates' reintegration process to their home organization and the consequences of this process, which are the focus of this study. Unmet expectations, identity change, home country change, expatriation issues, and lack of home county visits and contact with the home country

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are the antecedents developed during their expatriation, which create uncertainty and loss of control upon repatriation. The antecedents that are created in the organization upon repatriation, related to organization adjustment, emerged from the organization and co-workers, or both. Such conditions make repatriation a stressful process.

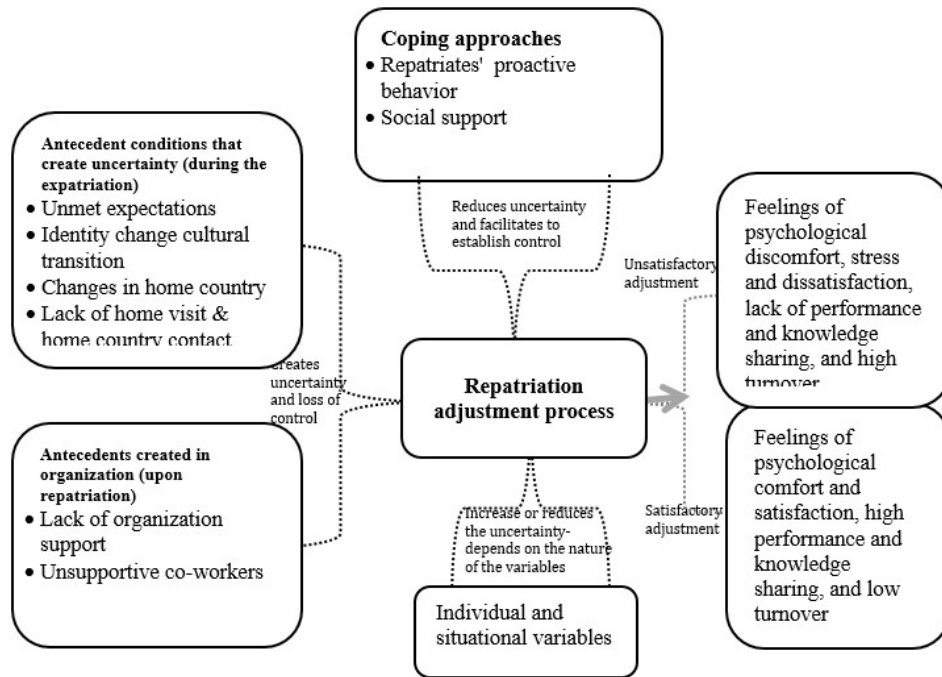


Figure 2 Antecedents, coping strategies, and consequences of the repatriation adjustment process

Source: Developed by the researcher based on the review.

Individual personal and demographic characteristics and situational factors also influence the adjustment process. Such antecedents increase or reduce the uncertainty depending on its nature. However, the organization, co-workers and repatriates all contribute to reduce the uncertainty and re-establish the sense of control that facilitates the repatriation adjustment process. A satisfactory adjustment leads to favourable outcomes for both repatriates and the organization, such as feelings of psychological comfort and satisfaction, high performance and knowledge sharing, and low turnover. In contrast, unsatisfactory adjustment leads to unfavourable outcomes for both repatriates and the organization.

3. Implication and directions for further research

This paper provides a comprehensive analysis on antecedents and coping approaches of repatriation adjustment to equip organization and repatriates for the better management of repatriation. Further, this paper highlights the gaps and limitations in the existing literature. The roles of an organization, co-workers, and individuals in the adjustment process were discussed in the literature, but there is no single study that empirically investigates these three variables simultaneously among corporate repatriates. Empirically examining the role of individual, group and organizational level effort in repatriation adjustment simultaneously

will enable scholars and practitioners to understand the single and complex effects of each variable on repatriation adjustment.

In an organizational setting, all elements are interrelated. For example, employees' intention to leave may be influenced by their perceived organizational support and adjustment. At the same time, adjustment can be influenced by perceived organizational support. Examining the influence of related variables independently and simultaneously would provide valuable knowledge to enable understanding of the independent and interrelated effects of several variables better, and enable policymakers to take appropriate decisions.

In addition to repatriate's turnover and knowledge sharing repatriates work engagement can be an outcome of repatriation adjustment. When repatriates experience unsatisfactory adjustment, they feel uncertainty, loss of control, and high stress (Adler, 1981; Black, 1992; Harvey, 1989; Stroh, 1995; Sussman, 2002) which are the conditions that adversely affect one's engagement at work (Hakenen et al., 2002, 2006; James, 2019). Therefore, further studies are required to understand the influence of adjustment on repatriates' work engagement.

Repatriates positive framing attitude can positively influence repatriation adjustment by increasing one's own resources (James, 2019). An individual involved in role transition needs resources to adjust to their transition better (Black et al., 1992; Suutari & Brewster, 2003; Saks & Gruman, 2012). Positive framing is a personal resource (Saks & Gruman, 2012) that facilitates adjustment and helps to assimilate more resources to reduce adjustment stress and overcome adjustment challenges (Hobfoll, 2002; Saks & Gruman, 2012). Empirical studies are required to assess the influence of repatriate's positive framing on adjustment. Also, the influence of the personal competencies such as self-efficacy (Vidal et al., 2007) emotional stability (O'Sullivan, 2002) right attitudes (Jassawalla & Sashittal 2011) and core self-evaluations (Chiang et al., 2018) on adjustment needs empirical investigation.

4. Conclusion

Interest in repatriation is raising, and repatriation adjustment has become a crucial part in repatriation literature. This paper provides a review of conceptual and empirical research on repatriation; particularly it focuses on causes and coping strategies of repatriation adjustment. As both organizations and individuals bear the cost of unsuccessful repatriation adjustment, there is a growing need for organizations as well as repatriate employees to understand the repatriation process and coping strategies for the better adjustment. Repatriates are the most valuable resources and they play a crucial role in strategy development and implementation process. Three levels of effort: organization, group and individual is necessary to retain repatriates and get the return on the investment made by both organization and repatriates through better repatriation adjustment. In the international assignment literature, compared to expatriation, repatriation, and particularly, coping strategies for repatriation adjustment remain under-researched areas that require more considerable scholarly attention. This study further suggests, more individual-level variables such as repatriates' positive framing, self-efficacy, and attitudes need to be included as the predictors, and engagement as a consequence of repatriation adjustment in further empirical studies.

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