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Identification No. 42

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***Expatriate Development for the Asia-Pacific Region: A Comparative Study of US, German & Korean Managers in Singapore***

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***Expatriate Development for the Asia-Pacific Region: A Comparative Study of US, German & Korean Managers in Singapore***

*Summary:*

*With increasing interests for business expansion in the dynamic Asia-Pacific region after its recovery from the recent financial crisis, Asian expatriate development has become a critical HRD issue for multinational enterprises (MNEs) from different countries, who are taking active interests in the region. In this respect American, German and Korean MNEs are found to be active in regionalization of their business operations in Asia, and expatriation is becoming a significant human resource management issue. There has been substantial research on expatriate management in the west, but very little can be found on Asia-Pacific. This paper presents empirical findings of a descriptive study conducted on key international HRD issues, specifically relating to training and development of expatriates from America, Germany and Korea working in Singapore. The study was conducted using a three-pronged approach consisting of interviews, focus group meetings, and an extensive survey. The results provide significant information about the types of expatriate training programs, training contents, duration, delivery modes, and providers of effective training programs that would lead to productive expatriate performance in the Asia Pacific region. Implications of the findings and future research directions are discussed at the end.*

Key words: Expatriate Development, International HRD, Overseas Assignment, International Training, Asia pacific, Singapore, Regionalization

# **Expatriate Development for the Asia-Pacific Region: A Comparative Study of US, German, & Korean Managers in Singapore**

## **Introduction**

Owing to rapid internationalization of business activity, human resource development (HRD) has become increasingly important in recent years. This is especially true when domestic human resource management takes on international dimensions as it deals more with multicultural workforce. International HRD, much of it embodied in cross-cultural training, has been proposed by many scholars as a means of facilitating more effective interaction among managers, employees and customers from different national-cultural backgrounds. Various reasons have been cited for this, the most prevalent being that such training is not thought to be necessary and thus top management sees no need for it. However, the fundamental reason behind the lack of training seems to lie in wrong assumption that good management is good world-wide (Black & Mendenhall, 1989; 1985; Black, 1988; Schwind, 1985; Runzheimer, 1984; Tung, 1981; 1984; Graham, 1985; Landis & Brislin, 1983; Brislin, 1981; Bouchner, 1982; Harris & Moran, 1979; Zeira, 1976).

Global and cross-cultural training and career development planning becomes necessary for managers in today's organizations, regardless of their domestic or international assignments (Osman-Gani, 1996; Marquardt & Engel, 1993; Odenwald, 1993; Reynolds & Nadler, 1993; Johnston, 1991; Rhinesmith, 1991). While much has been written on expatriate training and development, very little was documented on comparative analysis between American, European and Asian expatriates in Asia. With Asian economies ready to take centre stage in the twenty-first century, it is only logical that we should have a better understanding of the comparative expatriate management issues spanning the three continents. This study attempts to fill the research gap in this area of international management literature, which by far focused mainly on the Western economies.

East Asia was one of the fastest growing regions in the world until the recent regional financial crisis which has affected it since the last quarter of 1997. According to the UN World Economic Survey, East Asia grew by an annual average rate of 4.5% during the last decade, while ASEAN's (Association of South East Asian Nations) average was at 6.8%. The comparable rate for the US was 1.4% and 1.7% for Europe. ASEAN member countries were ranked among the world's largest hosts of foreign direct investment inflows. At the same time they are becoming significant foreign investors themselves, mostly in other less-developed Asian countries. The OECD has projected the Asia-Pacific to grow by 5-6% to the year 2010. On the other end, the comparable rates for North America and Europe were set at 2-5% and 3-4% respectively.

America, Germany and South Korea are known as economies with extensive overseas operations in the region. South Korea is the most export-oriented country in Asia (after Japan). On the other hand, America and Germany have long been known as economies with extensive overseas operations. However, the predominance of the literature in English has been on the American MNEs with little information on the training of these expatriates for the Asia-Pacific region.

This paper reports on a study conducted on the expatriates from these three economies working in the Asia Pacific region with the view to obtain descriptive accounts on the types of training programs considered important for preparing expatriates, the areas of emphasis in the training programs, the duration of such programs, the training delivery methods, and the agency that should deliver training so as to ensure greater effectiveness. In addition to the descriptive findings, the authors also explored the differences in what the expatriates from these economies perceive on these aspects of training. The authors chose to use expatriates as the source of data as they provide a relatively unbiased information being individuals who have been deployed on overseas assignments and who being "in the field," so to speak, could provide insights into the training needs of expatriates. The expatriates would be able to relate to their personal experiences on the use and effectiveness of various types, methods, and content areas of the training programs. Differences are expected in the training and development strategies in the light of differences in the domestic environments of the sending organizations. Differences exist between the three economies: these lie in the socio-cultural, legal, national and economic environments, which are at different levels of economic development.

In order to address the issues on comparative expatriate development, the following research questions are formulated for this study:

- 1) What types of training programs are considered to be important for preparing American, German and Korean expatriates to take up overseas assignments in Asia?
- 2) What important areas should be incorporated in an expatriate training program for the Asia-Pacific?
- 3) What should be the appropriate duration for a pre-departure training program provided to American, German and Korean expatriates?

- 4) What training delivery methods are considered to be appropriate to ensure effective expatriate performance in the Asia-Pacific?
- 5) Who should deliver the expatriate training to ensure greater effectiveness in the Asia-Pacific?

### **Methodology**

The research methodology for the study consisted of interviews and a survey of American German and Korean expatriate professionals in Singapore. Intensive exploratory interviews were conducted on a group of expatriate managers taking 10 from each national group. This was followed by three focus group meetings conducted on groups of expatriate managers (numbering 10 to 15), who were working in Singapore. The qualitative information gathered from the interviews and the focus group sessions were compiled and analysed, which were subsequently used for developing a comprehensive survey instrument for conducting the survey. An extensive survey was conducted on a representative sample of managers taken from each group. Relevant data on several issues relating to training and development and other areas of expatriate management were collected through the administration of a questionnaire. In designing the questionnaire, some items were selected from previous surveys used in similar studies conducted in other countries, which were integrated with additional items developed from the findings of the interviews and the literature review.

A panel of experts comprising of university business faculty, and senior business executives, was consulted to verify the content, sequence, structuring and relevance of the questionnaire items. This provided with the opportunity for checking on the validity of the research instrument. In addition, it was administered to a sample of forty expatriates each from America, Germany and Korea in a pilot test. Test-retest method was used to test for the reliability of the questionnaire. Based on the pilot data, the questionnaire was revised and used for final administration. In the process of checking for validity and reliability, views and suggestions gathered from the respondents were incorporated for further improvement to the questionnaire so that it is comprehensive enough to cover the relevant issues and is easy enough to complete by the expatriates. The questionnaire was administered personally to achieve a good response rate. The questionnaire was prepared using the simpler form of English language, since the expatriates working in Singapore were found to have a reasonable level of English proficiency (which was one of their selection criteria before sending them to Singapore). The personal administration mode of questionnaire administration helped the respondents to get clarification on any word or sentence that was not clear to them. The research investigators (senior university students) did not report any problem in communicating with the respondents, excepting very minor clarification issues with a few Korean engineers, which was handled effectively through explanation and discussions.

It may be mentioned here that the scope of this study is limited to the expatriate professionals from these three countries, who are working in Singapore. Generalizations could only be made on their expatriate performance in Singapore. Considering the similarities which exist in socio-cultural environments in many East Asian countries, some implications could be drawn for other countries of the region, although it should be remembered that there remains substantial differences in the levels of economic development among the countries of the Asia-Pacific region.

For the purposes of the study, the authors obtained stratified random samples of American (180), German (180) and Korean expatriates (170). The expatriates represented various multinational enterprises (MNEs) operating in different business sectors in Singapore. Stratified random sampling was used to draw the three samples from the sampling frames. The study focused on the companies from the three major business sectors representing the three classification strata of the study. Each strata comprise of ten companies from each of the three major business sectors: Manufacturing, Transportation/Logistics, and Financial Services. These three sectors cover most of the MNEs based in Singapore. The classifications of the three major industrial sectors were taken from the Singapore Standard Industrial Classification (1990).

A total of 103 completed questionnaires were obtained from the Korean sample (response rate of 60.59%); 72 questionnaires were obtained from the American sample (40.0%); 80 questionnaires were received from the German sample (44.44%).

### **Results**

#### ***Respondents' Profiles***

The representation of the expatriates from the three major business sectors is shown in Table 1 below:

**Table 1**  
**Distribution of Respondents by Industry and Economy**

<b>Economy Industry</b>	<b>Manufacturing</b>	<b>Transportation/ Logistics</b>	<b>Financial Services</b>
<b>America</b>	47.22	33.33	19.44
<b>German</b>	47.50	35.00	17.50
<b>Korea</b>	41.75	33.01	25.24
<b>Total</b>	45.09	33.73	21.18

Table 2 presents the distribution of age of the responding expatriates, it can be observed that most of the respondents were of ages between 30 to 44 years old, while there were no respondents under the age of 25 for Germany and Korea. Male respondents formed an overwhelming majority in all three groups of respondents. The American respondents manifest the same imbalance although there is a higher representation of female expatriates compared with the other two. This gender imbalance is consistent with worldwide trend of overseas assignees, and is not peculiar to American, German and Korean MNEs only. Of the three groups of respondents, it appears that American and Korean MNEs prefer to send married expatriates whereas German companies are open to both.

**Table 2**  
**Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents (%)**

<b>Age</b>	<b>£ 24</b>	<b>25-29</b>	<b>30-34</b>	<b>35-39</b>	<b>40-44</b>	<b>45-49</b>	<b>&gt;50</b>
<b>American</b>	1.39	5.55	13.88	23.61	30.56	16.67	8.33
<b>Germany</b>	-	18.75	15.0	18.75	21.25	13.75	12.5
<b>Korea</b>	-	5.83	20.38	36.89	30.09	4.85	.009
<b>Total</b>	0.3	9.8	16.9	27.6	27.6	11	6.7

<b>Marital Status / Gender</b>	<b>Married</b>	<b>Single</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>American</b>	83.33	16.67	81.94	18.06
<b>Germany</b>	60.00	40.00	97.5	2.5
<b>Korea</b>	91.26	8.74	93.07	6.93
<b>Total</b>	79.5	20.5	91.3	8.7

Table 3 depicts the primary functional areas represented by the respondents. General Management and Marketing functions were the two most prevalent areas for expatriates in Singapore.

**Table 3**  
**Primary Functional Areas of the Respondents (%)**

<b>FUNCTIONAL AREA</b>	<b>America</b>	<b>German</b>	<b>Korea</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>General Management</b>	27.9	57.7	31.4	38.7
<b>Production/Engineering</b>	8.8	12.8	13.7	12.1
<b>Human Resources</b>	4.4		6.9	4.0
<b>Information Technology</b>	4.4		1.9	2.0
<b>Finance/Accounting</b>	11.8	7.7	20.6	14.1
<b>Public Relations</b>			1.9	.008
<b>Marketing/Sales</b>	29.4	15.4	20.6	20.9
<b>Research &amp; Development</b>	8.8	3.8	1.9	4.4
<b>Distribution</b>	4.4		.009	1.6
<b>Customer Service</b>		2.6		.008
<b>Others</b>			.009	.004
	100	100	100	100

### ***Training & Development Issues***

Research has shown that expatriate training is often neglected or handled poorly in many international organisations. Baliga and Baker (1985) found that only 25% of the largest U.S. MNCs provide extensive pre-departure orientation programs. Tung (1981) also observed that only 32% of the U.S. companies surveyed provided some international training. Expatriate training seemed to be more prevalent amongst the European and Japanese MNEs, with 69% of the European and 57% of the Japanese multinationals rendered some form of training to their expatriates. Studies have also found that between 16% and 40% of American managers sent on overseas assignments return prematurely because of poor performance or because of the inability to adjust to the foreign environment. The costs for expatriate failure also include unquantified losses like damaged corporate reputation and lost business opportunities. Clearly, some form of training is necessary to minimise expatriate failure (Baker & Ivanceich, 1971; Tung, 1981; Black, 1988; Harvey, 1989).

Training and development of expatriates should begin where the selection process ends. The basic aspects of expatriate development are, the development of expatriates before, during, and after overseas assignment; the orientation and training of expatriate families before, during, and after foreign assignments; and the development of the headquarters staff responsible for the planning, organization, and control of overseas operations.

International training and development programs need to recognise the importance of bringing about attitudinal and behavioural changes in the expatriates and their families. Rahim (1983) proposed a model to guide the development of expatriates. The major developmental issues that need to be considered are summarised in this model, which emphasised the need for constant feedback to allow for evaluation of the expatriate's performance. It is also through these feed backs that corrective actions can be taken to resolve any difficulties the expatriate may be facing, thereby helping to improve the expatriate's job performance in the host environment. Mendenhall and Oddou (1986) proposed three critical areas in which the organizations should prepare their expatriates. These are: cultural training, language instruction training and orientation training on familiarity with everyday matters. Similarly, Rahim's model also emphasised these areas. Preparation can take place before departure, post-arrival or during re-entry. The aim of the preparation is to ensure the expatriate is familiar with the host-country conditions, culture and his family's needs in a new environment.

### ***Types of Training***

Tung (1982) identified six major types of cross-cultural training used by American, European and Japanese companies. They are: (1) environmental briefings used to provide information about such things as geography, climate, housing and schools; (2) cultural orientation designed to familiarise the individual with cultural institutions and value systems of the host country; (3) cultural assimilators using programmed learning approaches designed to expose members of one culture to some basic concepts, attitudes, role perceptions and customs of another culture; (4) language training; (5) sensitivity training designed to develop attitudinal flexibility; and (6) field experience, which sends the participant to the country of assignment to undergo some of the emotional stress of living and working with people from a different culture. Tung also observed that both American and West-European companies recognized the need for more rigorous training for the CEOs and functional heads than for trouble-shooters and operatives. In contrast, the Japanese firms appeared to provide slightly more rigorous training for the operatives. Tung's findings were also confirmed by other studies. Brewster (1988) observed that the emphasis placed by European and Scandinavian MNEs on pre-departure training, particularly language training, continues to be stronger than that of American multinationals. Feldman (1989) surveyed American firms regarding relocation programs and found that only 13% of the respondents indicated that they would offer expatriates an orientation program. More recently, McEnery and DeHarnais (1990) estimated through a review of American practices that between 50 and 60 per cent of American companies operating abroad do not provide any preparatory training for expatriates. Those that do provide, focus only on brief environmental summaries and some cultural and language preparation, and only half of these programs would last longer than a week. Again, Barham and Devine (1990) found that European, Scandinavian, and Australian firms place less priority on providing pre-departure training for the spouse and family.

Depending on the location of overseas assignment, the expatriate and family may have to confront and adapt to a culture which is markedly different. Contrasts can also manifest in the forms of language barriers and encompasses aspects of social life, political climate, and religious orientation. The expatriate must not feel a sense of isolation from the host-country. Some form of adaptability training is essential to ensure that the negative feelings are minimised. Derr and Oddou (1993) advocated cross-cultural seminars as a training method

for internationalisation of managers. Baliga and Baker (1985) suggested that the expatriate receive cross-cultural training focused in the assigned region's culture, history, politics, economy, religion, social and business practices. They advocated a training program concentrated on a particular location as opposed to one in which expatriates are taught the broad differences in cultures and encouraged to be receptive to them.

However, cultural training is not provided by many organisations. Dunbar and Katcher (1990) observed that only 30% to 45% of the MNEs offer relevant cross-cultural orientation to their expatriates. As Earley (1987) mentioned, a major objective of inter-cultural training is to help people cope with unexpected events in a new culture. Cultural training enables individuals to adjust more rapidly to the new culture and be more effective in their new roles. This cultural preparation is necessary for overseas assignment because financial ability alone does not determine success (Dowling, Schuler & Welch, 1994; McEnery & DesHarnais, 1990).

Language training is needed for successful and productive expatriate performance abroad and should form the part of any long-term management development program for aspiring global executives. Mendenhall and Oddou (1986) stressed that willingness to communicate does not refer to the level of fluency in a foreign language but rather the expatriate's confidence and willingness to use the host-country's language. Proficiency in a foreign language can improve the expatriate's effectiveness and negotiability strength, and can improve the expatriate's access to important information regarding the host-country's economy, government and market.

Practical assistance training makes an important contribution toward the adaptation of the expatriate and the family to their new environment. Some MNEs like Colgate-Palmolive (Lublin, 1992) believe that there is no substitute for on-the-job training in this regard. Ronen (1989) proposed a set of methods and techniques for intercultural training and identified the purposes for each of those methods. There is no unanimity among scholars in recommending a set of training methods and techniques or types of training that would be effective in all nations and cultures. This study aimed at identifying the effective types of training programs for expatriates working in the Asia-Pacific.

*Research Question 1 : What types of training programs should be provided to the expatriates before embarking on an overseas assignment in Asia?*

In this study, the three groups of expatriates working in Singapore were asked to rate the relative importance of various types of training programmes that should be provided before going on overseas assignments. Six different training programmes were suggested in the questionnaire, and the respondents rated the following types of training in terms of their importance. Table 4 presents the findings with mean scores of the respondents' views.

**Table 4**  
**Important Types of Training Programmes to be provided for Effective Expatriate Performance**

	America		Germany		Korea		F-value	P-value
	Mean <sup>+</sup>	S.D.	Mean <sup>+</sup>	S.D.	Mean <sup>+</sup>	S.D.		
Cross-cultural training	3.40	0.88	3.41	0.95	3.13	0.74	3.374*	0.036
Host country language training	2.85	0.99	3.09	0.96	3.61	0.98	14.257**	0.000
Family adjustment orientation	3.33	0.86	3.11	0.81	3.05	0.73	2.851	0.060
Area Study	3.06	0.79	2.68	0.87	3.43	0.76	19.823**	0.000
Practical training on living conditions	3.11	0.90	2.74	1.11	3.00	0.74	3.433*	0.034
Overseas acquaintance trips	3.35	0.97	2.61	1.05	2.64	0.82	15.247**	0.000

<sup>+</sup>(1= Least Important, ..... 5 = Most Important)

\* = significant at 0.05 level

\*\* = significant at 0.01 level

Table 4 reveals differences in the importance attached to the types of training by the different groups of expatriates. Host language training is rated as very important training programme for pre-departure training of Korean expatriates. However, the American and German expatriates place greater importance on cross-cultural training. Prima facie, this finding appears contrary to prior studies on expatriate training indicating the importance of language training but can be explained by the fact that English is the main language of commerce. The American expatriates do not need training in English for deployment in Singapore and the German expatriates may have English language capability as English is a second language in the school curriculum. Cross-cultural training was rated as the most important type of expatriate training by the American and German expatriates. It is



also interesting to note that overseas acquaintance trips were not considered as important by the German and Korean expatriates whereas the American expatriates rated this as the second most important type of training (mean of 3.35). For the Korean expatriates, overseas acquaintance trip is not important probably because they are familiar with the region. In the case of the German expatriates, this finding is interesting as America is further away in distance from Singapore when compared to Germany. Hence, it would not be possible to assert that the trips are not required as they are usually costly and time-consuming, and the marginal benefit derived from these trips over the other training programs does not justify the additional time and resource commitments. This difference could be explained by the fact that German companies have a longer history of overseas operation in Asia compared to the American companies. This situation may be compounded by the fact that it is traditional for managers to be rotated within the domestic confines of the United States with overseas appointments being the exception rather than the rule. As the ANOVA results show that there are significant differences in the mean scores for importance between the three groups, the authors conducted a post hoc analysis of the means (using Tukey's HSD method) that were found to be significantly different.

The post-hoc analysis bears out the earlier observations on the importance placed by Korea on host country language training; American and German expatriates do not rate it as highly important as the Koreans and there is no significant difference in the importance attached to it by the Americans and Germans. Similarly, the earlier observations on overseas acquaintance trips is borne out by the post hoc analysis. The results showed that Korean expatriates place greater importance on area studies than the Americans, followed by the Germans. This difference may be explained by the availability of information within the sending MNCs and the philosophy behind the pre-departure training. An observation is necessary on family adjustment orientation training. It is the type of training with no significant difference across the countries. It is ranked as the third or fourth most important training in each group when the types of training are ranked by the means.

### **Training Contents**

In designing training and development programs for expatriates, companies need to recognise the importance of multiple home-country and host-country role relationships. Rahim's (1983) model for developing key expatriate executives showed major relations between the expatriate manager and other parties interested in international business. The content, mode of delivery and training rigor are important factors in determining the success of training and development programs for overseas assignments. It is very important to identify the relevant areas of training content before designing an expatriate training program so that the required knowledge and skills are provided for effective expatriate performance. Osman-Gani and Toh (1995) conducted a study on more than 200 senior managers of Singapore-based companies involved in international business. The study covered several issues of training and developing managers for success in overseas assignments in the Asia-Pacific region. They identified several areas of training needs with specific content requirements. Seven broad areas were identified, knowledge in which were found to be critical for successful performance in overseas assignments. This study sought American, German and Korean expatriates' views on these different training content areas.

*Research Question 2 : What important areas should be incorporated in an expatriate training program in Asia?*

In order to respond to the above research question, respondents were asked to rate the relative importance of various training content areas which should be included in an international training program designed for expatriate managers and professionals. The respondents rated the importance of the seven areas. The mean scores together with the ANOVA results are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5**  
**Important Areas to be Incorporated in an Expatriate Training Program**

	America		Germany		Korea		F -value	P -value
	Mean <sup>+</sup>	S.D.	Mean <sup>+</sup>	S.D.	Mean <sup>+</sup>	S.D.		
General management factors	3.57	0.87	3.58	0.61	3.43	0.75	1.087	0.339
Human resource and labor factors	3.68	0.85	3.46	0.59	3.13	0.68	13.382**	0.000
Socio-cultural factors	3.58	0.82	3.51	0.84	2.86	0.70	23.447**	0.000
Accounting, financial and taxation factors	3.35	0.86	3.26	0.82	3.60	0.87	3.854*	0.022
Legal and environment factors	3.40	0.83	3.36	0.82	3.24	0.88	0.953	0.387

Production and Technology factors	3.25	0.90	3.25	0.80	2.90	0.71	5.792**	0.003
Marketing factors	3.40	0.93	3.46	0.95	3.30	0.78	0.822	0.441

+(1= Least Important, ..... 5 = Most Important)

\* = significant at 0.05 level

\*\* = significant at 0.01 level

General management is the training area that is rated highly by all three groups of expatriates. Ranked by the means scores, general management is ranked the most important by the Germans, second by the Koreans and third by the Americans. It can be observed that there is similarity in top three training contents (ranked by the means scores) deemed important by the American and German expatriates: human resources and labour factors, socio-cultural, and general management. In contrast, the Korean expatriates consider issues concerning accounting, financial and taxation policies of the host country to be most important, followed by general management issues and marketing issues. It is interesting to note that the Korean expatriates did not consider the socio-cultural factors and production/technology factors as important training content areas relevant to their performance. The post hoc analysis reveals that the Koreans means score differ significantly from the Americans and Germans, whose means are not significantly different among themselves. This may be owing to the Koreans' familiarity with the socio-cultural environment of the region, and with the job related factors that they would be dealing with. This can be contrasted with Osman-Gani & Toh 's (1995) findings where the top three preferred areas of training were general management, human resource & labour, and legal & environmental issues.

### **Training Duration**

Determining the right amount of pre-departure training for expatriates is not an easy task. If too little time is spent on pre-departure training, the expatriates may not be well prepared, which could lead to poor job performance and even premature termination of the expatriate assignment. On the other hand, if too much time has been spent for pre-departure training, the trainees may suffer from information overload and boredom, and the company may be spending too much resources. Among the various types of training programs for international managers, some last only few hours, others last for months. Some are fairly superficial, others are extensive in coverage.(Mendenhall & Oddou, 1988; Hodgetts & Luthans, 1994). The preferred duration of training for overseas assignment in the Asia-Pacific would vary widely with mean hours of 17 to 51 hours for a program depending on the type and contents of the program. The majority of the companies (54.35%) had pre-departure expatriate training programs of an average duration of one to four weeks per program in a year (Osman-Gani & Toh, 1995). This study aimed at identifying appropriate duration of pre-departure training program for expatriates working in Asia.

*Research Question 3 : What should be the appropriate duration for a pre-departure training program provided to expatriates for assignment in Asia?*

To answer this question, the expatriates were asked to identify the appropriate duration for an expatriate training program to be conducted before taking an overseas assignment. Table 6 presents the findings of the expatriates' views in order of their importance, the ANOVA results.

**Table 6**  
**Appropriate Duration for Pre-departure Programmes**

	America		Germany		Korea		F-value	P-value
	Mean <sup>+</sup>	S.D.	Mean <sup>+</sup>	S.D.	Mean <sup>+</sup>	S.D.		
1 day (8 hours)	2.25	1.18	1.45	0.75	2.01	0.94	12.986**	0.000
3 days (24 hours)	3.07	1.20	2.08	1.01	2.55	0.79	17.678**	0.000
1 week (40 hours)	2.79	1.29	3.01	1.25	3.01	0.92	0.958	0.385
2 weeks (80 hours)	2.00	1.10	3.36	1.15	3.36	1.02	39.333**	0.000
More than 2 weeks	1.75	1.34	2.36	1.21	3.84	1.20	63.491**	0.000

\* = significant at 0.05 level

\*\* = significant at 0.01 level

Table 6 shows that there are distinct preferences on training duration for expatriates from each economy. There is no commonly preferred duration for training indicated by the expatriates. What can be

discerned from the means scores for each group of expatriates is a distinct preference on the part of German and Korean expatriates for training to be of a longer duration. These two groups of expatriates have a preference in the descending order of training duration from longer to shorter. There is a difference in that Korean expatriates' top preference is for training to be more than two weeks in duration whilst the German expatriates rated this as their 3<sup>rd</sup> preference. In contrast, American expatriates prefer training to be of a shorter duration instead. Whilst the American preferences are not exactly in perfect descending order, they prefer training of three days, 1 week and 1 day as the top three preferences according to the mean scores. When the means scores for each group of expatriates is analysed using ANOVA, there is no significant difference in the scores for the duration of "1 week."

The post hoc analysis supports the earlier observations that the Korean and German expatriates share similarities as there is no significant difference in the mean scores for "2 weeks" and "more than 2 weeks." There are significant differences in the means for "1 day" (only between Americans and Germany, and Germany and Korea) and "3 days" (between all three groups). The reasons for these preferences may be cultural.

### ***Training Delivery***

Selection of appropriate training delivery methods depends on many factors, the most significant one being the training rigor, which is again dependent on job and culture novelty issues. Research shows that training rigor is critical to the success of cross-cultural/expatriate training programs. The ability of a firm to determine the appropriate degree of training rigor needed for its global managers is the secret to cross-cultural training design. Black and Mendenhall (1989) presented a model showing the relationship of high and low rigor training with methods of delivery and time spent on training. According to them, low rigor training includes approaches such as lectures, films, area briefings, and books. Whereas high rigor training approaches are interactive language training, assessment centers, and sophisticated cross-cultural simulations. The duration of low rigor training was four to twenty hours, and for high training rigor, it is between 60 to 180 hours (Black, Gregersen & Mendenhall, 1992; Black, Mendenhall & Oddou, 1991; Black & Mendenhall, 1989; 1990). This study attempted to identify the suitability of various types of training delivery methods for the expatriates for effective performance in their overseas assignments in Asia.

*Research Question 4 : What training delivery methods are considered to be appropriate to ensure effective expatriate performance in Asia?*

Six most common training delivery methods used for expatriate training were identified through literature search, and the respondents were asked to rate the relative appropriateness of the methods to ensure effective overseas performance. The findings and the ANOVA results are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7**  
**Appropriate Training Delivery Methods for Effective Expatriate Performance**

	America		Germany		Korea		F-value	P-value
	Mean <sup>+</sup>	S.D.	Mean <sup>+</sup>	S.D.	Mean <sup>+</sup>	S.D.		
Lecture / classroom training	2.71	1.07	2.55	0.84	3.01	0.75	6.250	0.002*
Workshop / seminar	3.33	1.16	3.29	0.91	2.86	0.65	7.471	0.001*
Case-study / video system	3.11	0.99	3.28	1.01	3.12	0.85	0.754	0.472
Role play / Interaction	2.60	1.24	3.46	1.09	2.82	0.85	13.573	0.000**
Self-instructional training modules	2.53	0.96	2.42	1.08	3.10	0.75	14.026**	0.000
On-site (on-the-job training)	3.78	1.12	4.05	0.87	4.11	0.87	2.779	0.064

<sup>+</sup>(1 = Least Appropriate, ..... 5 = Most Appropriate)

\* = significant at 0.05 level

\*\* = significant at 0.01 level

On-site or on-the-job training has been ranked as the most appropriate and effective training delivery method by all three groups of expatriates. The ANOVA results show that there is no significant difference in the means for this delivery method between the groups. This could be because such form of training is by far the most direct form of instructional method. It provides trainees with an opportunity to learn through hands-on experiences under real-life business settings. The ANOVA results also show that there are no significant differences between the groups for case-study/video system based training programs.

When the delivery methods preferred by each group are ranked by their means, one can observe similarity in the preferences between the Americans and the Germans. After on-site training which is common to all the groups, these two groups prefer workshops (American – 2<sup>nd</sup>; German – 3<sup>rd</sup>), case study (American – 3<sup>rd</sup>; German – 4<sup>th</sup>), and lectures (American – 4<sup>th</sup>; German – 5<sup>th</sup>) in the descending order of preference (based on the ranking of the means). The only exception is role play which is ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> most important by the German expatriates. The post hoc analysis reveals that there is no significant difference between American and German expatriates in the mean scores for lecture/classroom teaching, workshop/seminar, and self-instructional training modules; the first two findings confirming the observation on the similarity in American and German preferences.

Korean expatriates appear to prefer delivery methods that are in one direction with less interaction where there is possibility of “loss of face” or public embarrassment. They appear to opt for situations of one to one or one to small group learning (e.g. on-site). Their aversion to interactive learning is seen in the preference for self directed learning (ranked 4<sup>th</sup> based on means), lectures (ranked 3<sup>rd</sup>) and case/video system (ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>). The Korean expatriates viewed that the role play/interaction and the workshop/seminar methods were least appropriate for expatriate training programs. The above findings are also consistent to a great extent with previous studies on international training and development.

*Research Question 5 : Who should deliver the expatriate training to ensure greater effectiveness?*

In order to identify the effective providers of expatriate training programs, the respondents of this study were asked to rate the relative effectiveness of the various training providers. Table 8 presents the findings as follows.

**Table 8**  
**Effective Providers of Expatriate Training Programmes**

	America		Germany		Korea		F-value	P-value
	Mean <sup>+</sup>	S.D.	Mean <sup>+</sup>	S.D.	Mean <sup>+</sup>	S.D.		
In-house / company personnel headquarter	3.08	0.93	3.18	1.08	3.31	0.85	1.268	0.283
Host country subsidiary / partner personnel	3.69	0.93	3.63	0.86	3.68	0.86	0.100	0.905
Outside professional consultants	3.07	1.05	2.99	1.01	3.00	0.70	0.178	0.837
University / academic professionals	1.88	0.82	2.35	1.06	2.53	0.81	11.222**	0.000

<sup>+</sup>(1 = Least Effective, ..... 5 = Most Effective)

\* = significant at 0.05 level

\*\* = significant at 0.01 level

Host country subsidiary/partner personnel has been regarded by the expatriates as being the most effective and qualified to provide the necessary training for effective expatriate performance. This could very well be due to their familiarity with the conditions and environment of the host-country, and hence are in the best position to impart the necessary knowledge and skills of host-country management to the expatriates. The ANOVA results show that there is no significant difference in the means. In-house/company personnel/headquarter is the second most important in all the groups. It may be interesting to note that the expatriates for all the three countries viewed the university/academic professionals as being the least effective among the four groups of expatriate training providers.

**Conclusions**

In the past, studies on expatriation often focused on nationals outside Asia. However, as the Asian economies have gradually become interesting to foreign investors and MNEs, the relevance of those studies in the context of current business trends needs to be re-assessed. Fundamental differences in historical, cultural and political backgrounds exist between the East and the West. Research findings in the past pertaining to expatriates from countries such as the United States and other European countries may not necessarily apply to the rapidly growing number of expatriates from Asian countries. Further, the recent involvement of MNEs from developed countries in Asia provides an excellent opportunity to re-evaluate the training of expatriates in this region. This study, through focusing on the three groups of expatriates from three continents, may uncover new perspectives and directions in international human resource management, particularly relating to the critical HRD decisions of design, development and delivery of effective training programs for expatriate assignments in Asia. Empirical findings from this study showed significant differences among the expatriates' views on various issues of training and development, which might provide first hand information that could be utilized for making appropriate decisions in that regard. MNE managers and HRD professionals can use the information for making relevant decisions in developing the expatriates for effective performance in their overseas assignments in the

Asia-Pacific region. Results from this study would add value to the existing models of training by making necessary modifications to those for the Asia-Pacific region as indicated through the empirical findings, particularly for assignments in Singapore. Country specific divergent (rather than traditional convergent) views should be adopted in designing international HRD programs if significant differences are found as obtained through this study. This study gathered experience-based views of expatriate professionals in Singapore, instead of hard evaluative corporate data from the MNEs. Future research could attempt to collect such corporate data through the HR managers of MNEs from different countries, which are operating in different countries in the Asia-Pacific region. This will help in making comparative analysis among country locations as well as among the corporate practices and expatriates' views on expatriate development. Although this study serves to narrow the research gap on expatriate management/development in the Asia-Pacific region, it is far from being comprehensive and exhaustive. Future research in this area is needed to explore other aspects of expatriate development in many other countries of Asia that have not been studied. More studies on expatriates in Asia are definitely needed since increasing interest is observed for investments in this rapidly growing region of the world. It would be interesting to identify a broad conceptual framework of expatriate development for Asia by looking at the contrasts and similarities among the Western and Asian perspectives of HRD strategies/practices. Hopefully, the findings from this study will trigger greater research interest on expatriate management and development in Asia, which might contribute to the generation of new knowledge, and development of new theories in the field of international management.

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