

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT FOR REGIONALIZING SINGAPORE BUSINESS: A CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

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I. INTRODUCTION

Overseas operations are new challenges and opportunities for many Singapore companies. Recently, many Singaporean companies began to expand overseas in anticipation of its maturing domestic economy. In this early stage of development, it can be to any MNC's advantage to staff overseas foreign divisions or subsidiaries with effective expatriate managers. As a result, these budding Singaporean MNCs will rely on Singaporeans to establish the operations abroad. The Japanese MNCs have also shown a similar tendency to expatriate their own nationals rather than to rely on recruiting suitable local nationals (Tung, 1988).

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How prepared are executives to manage regionalizing/globalizing companies? How capable firm's human resource systems of recruiting, developing, retaining, and utilizing internationally competent managers and executives? Isn't it the case that strategy is internationalizing faster than implementation and much faster than individual managers and executives themselves. As researchers (Evans, Doz, & Laurent, 1989) have gradually acknowledged, the real challenge in the international competition is not the strategies of what-to-do, but the management of human resources in a regionalizing/globalizing firm.

How will the Cross-cultural Training (CCT) approaches and methods be fitted into the company's expatriation program, is an important Human Resource Management decision. It begins with conducting a thorough job analysis to reveal the essential requirements of the job, what the ideal expatriate candidate should be, and what training he is likely to need. Furthermore, to ensure success in the development of the second economy at the national level, and progress of the globalization process at the corporate level, it is imperative to select, prepare and retain the most suitable candidates for expatriation.

This study will be divided into two parts: it will first review the literature on the selection of appropriate CCT Model and, then, an attempt will be made to provide a recommendation for a general CCT philosophy and model for the typical Singapore manager. For this purpose, the professional profile and likely overseas responsibilities of the Singapore manager are portrayed. Based on these, an attempt is made to deduce his CCT needs. Recommendations on the necessary CCT are then made.

II. THE SELECTION OF CCT METHODS

Every personnel assigned overseas posting is in need of certain

CCT which can be seen to be both universal and unique in its own way. The point is to establish as close a match between the training need and the training method. Generally speaking, the greater the training need, be it due to the unpreparedness of the trainee or the nature of the new culture and assignment, the more rigorous the CCT ought to be. As such, judicious selection of training methods is crucial in ensuring adequate preparation for the expatriates. Three frameworks, each an improvement over the preceding one, are reviewed.

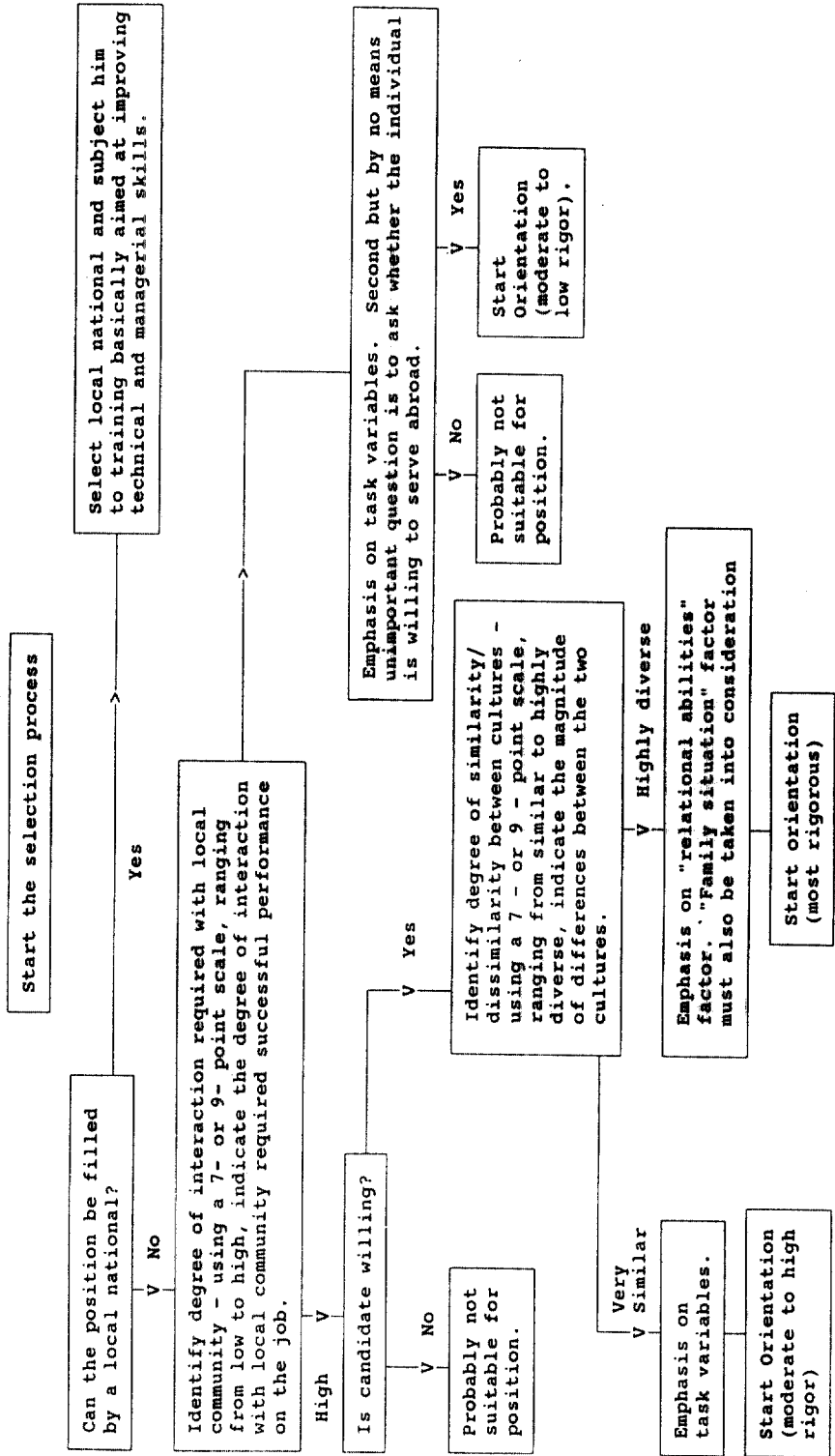
1. **Tung's Contingency Framework for CCT Methods Selection.**

Tung (1981) proposes a contingency framework for the selection of CCT methods. Her reasoning is that in view of the fact that (1) culture varies from place to place, (2) overseas assignment differs from time to time, and (3) the personal characteristics of the trainees are unique, it is not possible to attach generically constant weights to each of the three factors mentioned. Hence, she bases the selection of the CCT methods, specifically the level of training rigor, on the interplay of three considerations (See Figure 1):

- **job analysis**, in terms of the extent of interaction with the local community;
- **target country**, in terms of the degree of cultural similarity between the home country and the host country;
- **personal characteristics**, in terms of the trainee and his spouse's ability to function in a foreign cultural setting.

Where the extent of interaction with the local community is high, the degree of cultural similarity is low, and the trainee's as well as his spouse's ability to work and live normally in a foreign environment is uncertain, CCT methods of the highest rigor need to be administered to focus on building cultural awareness, sensitivity and problem-solving skills.

Figure 1. Degree of interaction with local community and degree of similarity/dissimilarity between cultures as contingent factors in the selection of expatriates.



source : Tung (1981; p.73).

Where the opposite is true, the training can be more focused on enhancing task competence. It must, however, be noted that emphasizing on honing task competence does not amount to neglecting the development of culture learning and cross cultural problem-solving skills. Neither does focusing on cross cultural competence mean a compromise on task competence. It is a matter of paying more attention to the areas that warrant it.

Tung's framework has been essential in sparking off further developments on the issue of selecting the right CCT methods or combinations of methods as appropriate preparation for fruitful performance across cultures. As a very general framework, it does not define "rigor". This is a limitation because human resource decision makers have to rely a great deal on their judgement to first define "rigor" for themselves and then determine the specific CCT methods to employ (Black and Mendenhall, 1991).

2. Mendenhall and Oddou's Framework for CCT Method Selection.

Mendenhall and Oddou (1986) enrich Tung's contingency framework by presenting one which groups the CCT methods into high, medium and low levels of rigor and suggests the desired duration of CCT.

According to Mendenhall and Oddou's (1986) paradigm, where the duration of sojourn in the host culture is long (1-3 years), the degree of interaction and integration with the foreign culture is deemed to be high. This necessitates a high level of training rigor. The corresponding training approach, the "impression approach", employs methods like assessment centres, field experiences, simulations, sensitivity training and extensive

language training. Information giving training methods like area and cultural briefings, affective training like role-playing are also included to provide the comprehensiveness the nature of the overseas assignment warrants. Hence, the length of training has to be long (1-2 months).

This framework has been criticised for not explaining how the level of rigor of a specific CCT method is determined (Black & Mendenhall, 1991). One can also caution that there is no simple one-to-one correlation between the duration of sojourn and the required degree of interaction and integration with the host culture. Whereas a three-day trip to the Philippines for the purpose of conducting a branch audit necessitates minimal cultural integration, an assignment of the same duration to the Philippines for discussing and concluding the finer details of a joint venture warrants full cross-cultural readiness and competence.

3. Black and Mendenhall's framework for CCT methods selection.

In an attempt to improve on Tung's (1981) and Mendenhall and Oddou's (1986) frameworks, Black and Mendenhall (1989) proposes a CCT methods selection framework based on the social learning theory (SLT) (Bandura, 1977).

Essence of the SLT. The social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) states that learning can take place in two ways. One, by positive reinforcement. Second, by duplicating the learned behaviour acquired symbolically or by associating the behaviours with the outcomes. The four core elements of the theory are **attention, retention, reproduction and incentives.**

The trainees are more likely to pay more **attention** if the training model used is popular and easily available. If the

training approach is the type that the trainees are used to, attention level will also be higher. In addition, where reward is expected, attention level can reach new heights. **Retention** is measured by the extent the trainees commit the principles, skills and insight acquired to memory. This can be reinforced by frequently modelling and rehearsing the desired behaviours.

Reproduction refers to translating the learned and retained behaviours into practice. The extent to which this is done is greatly influenced by two factors: (1) the motivational effects of **incentives**, specifically, how far the trainees believe that displaying the desired behaviours will lead to the desired outcomes; (2) to what extent the trainees believe they can perform the desired behaviours.

The SLT attempts to capture the essence of several important theories. It integrates the cognitive and behavioural theories. It explains the notion of motivation within the concept of self-efficacy as well. The issue of how the trainee acquire and display the desired behaviours taught to him is also addressed. However, it is noted that "the importance of certain variables of SLT is different in cross-cultural training situations (Black and Mendenhall, 1990). Also, attention, retention and reproduction can be slowed by situational factors such as high culture novelty, high degree of cultural interaction and integration, high job novelty (Black and Mendenhall, 1991), and the trainees' personal and familial characteristics (Tung, 1981).

Using SLT to account for CCT rigor and rigor of CCT methods. The SLT defines rigor as the degree of cognitive involvement required. The relative degree of rigor of specific CCT methods can also be captured in the **symbolic modelling process and the participative modelling process** within the SLT (Black and Mendenhall, 1991).

Symbolic processing can be divided into two forms. The first form refers to hearing about the behaviours and translating them into images in the mind. Observation and rehearsal of the behaviours then take place in the mind. CCT methods that utilise this form of modelling process include verbal factual briefings, lectures and books. The other form differs in that the trainees actually see the modelled behaviour before committing it into images. This form of modelling process requires greater cognitive involvement and therefore the CCT methods that utilise this process, for example films, role modelling and demonstrations, are more rigorous than the CCT methods that appeal only to the sense of hearing. The effects of symbolic modelling can be enhanced by utilising cognitive (or mental) rehearsal of the training content, which Black and Mendenhall (1991) classify as factual in nature.

Participative modelling requires greater cognitive involvement than symbolic modelling because apart from observing, the trainees also partake in modelling the behaviour. This participation comes in two forms: "verbal" participation and "physical" participation. "Verbal" participation refers to having the trainees verbalise their responses during training sessions which are analytical in nature, such as case studies and culture assimilators. "Physical" participation refers to providing actual physical response during training sessions that are experiential in nature, such as role plays, interactive language training, field trips and interactive simulations. Physical participation is more cognitively engaging than verbal participation. The training rigor of physical participation is correspondingly higher too. The effects of participative modelling can be reinforced by both cognitive as well as behavioural (or physical) rehearsal.

Black and Mendenhall (1989) proposes that the relative rigor of

a specific CCT method can be approximated by examining the modelling and rehearsal processes involved, as well as the duration and frequency of a training program. The longer the training, and the more frequently it is held, the more rigorous it is.

The SLT literature and the CCT literature lend evidence that increasing the rigor of the training amounts to increasing the trainees' effectiveness in producing the desired cross-cultural behaviours (Bandura, 1977; Tung, 1981; Black and Mendenhall, 1990). Black and Mendenhall (1989) explain that this is because rigor, expressed in the form of cognitive involvement, raises the level of attention and retention, hence improving reproduction proficiency.

Important Situational Factors. Like Tung (1981) and Mendenhall and Oddou (1986), Black and Mendenhall (1991) identify **culture novelty, degree of cross-cultural interaction and job novelty** as important factors influencing the choice of CCT methods. Yet they move one step ahead by analysing the components of each factor.

Net Culture novelty = Objective culture novelty - (the quality + quantity of an individual's previous experience).

Hofstede (1980) offers a method to estimate the culture novelty of a foreign culture relative to the American culture. He makes use of four scales: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity. The absolute difference in scores on each of the four scales between the employees of the target country and the American employees are determined and summed. A large number indicates high culture novelty. Culture novelty can also be estimated by assessing whether there is any difference in the functional languages used in the home and the host

countries, and whether there is any need to learn the languages to facilitate cross-cultural success (Black and Mendenhall, 1991).

The "quantity" of an individual's previous experience involve not only all his past experience with the host culture, but also all his previous interactions with a culture similar to the host's. The "quality" of the individual's previous experience refers to the intensity of his cultural interaction with the host culture or a similar culture. Intensity is measured by the frequency and degree of involvement of the interaction.

$$\textit{Degree of interaction} = (\textit{frequency of interaction with local nationals}) \times (\textit{importance of interactions}) \times (\textit{nature of interactions})$$

The more frequent the trainee is expected to interact with the local nationals, the higher the intensity of interaction. Where the interactions are numerous and significant, interaction intensity is high. The nature of the interactions plays a part in determining its intensity too. In this connection, the literature on communication has supplied reasons to believe that novel, two-way, unique, face-to-face, long-term, and informal cross-cultural interactions would be more trying than the opposite (Jablin, Putnam, Roberts, Porter, 1987).

Job novelty, the third important situational factor, is task-related. The more novel the new assignment is, the greater the assistance needed to help produce effective behaviour. This means that more rigorous training is required. Stewart (1982) suggests that to estimate the degree of job novelty relative to a specific trainee, three job characteristics should be considered: (1) extent of similarity in *job demands* between previous jobs and the new; (2) extent of similarity in *job constraints* between previous

jobs and the new: (3) extent of similarity in *job autonomy and authority* between previous jobs and the new.

In view of the fact that maladjusted spouses and children can directly influence the expatriates' success or failure in the host country, the novelty of the foreign culture and the degree of expected interaction with the culture ought to be assessed in much the same way as is done for the expatriates (Black and Stephens, 1989).

Black and Mendenhall (1991) integrate the notions of culture novelty, interaction, job novelty and CCT rigor by reasoning that high culture novelty, interaction and job novelty make the process of attention, retention and reproduction slower. It is necessary to add rigor to the training programs because it can capture attention better, deepen retention and facilitate reproduction proficiency. Correspondingly rigorous CCT methods are therefore selected. To add, it has been shown that job novelty is relatively easier to adjust to than culture novelty and a high degree of interaction with the host culture (Black and Stephens, 1989). And since it is possible to quantify the respective dimensions, CCT programs can be customised for each trainee.

This means that a trainee who faces a highly novel job will receive relatively more training that will increase his technical competence. Likewise, where the degree of interaction is high, learning in this area needs to be enhanced by emphasizing on training topics such as interpersonal skills and perception. Where the degree of culture novelty is high, topics such as country studies need emphasis. Thus, the trainee receives more assistance to more effectively acquire and emit the kind of behaviour that will contribute to impressive cross-cultural performance (Black and Mendenhall, 1991).

Black and Mendenhall (1991) do not distinguish between

cognitive and affective engagement. However, it is noted that affectively engaging training methods (for example, sensitivity training) are surely more rigorous than the cognitively engaging ones (for example, area studies).

In sum, the bulk of the review is focused on the work of Black and Mendenhall (1991), the reason being their work is the most refined to date, backed by the social learning theory. The common idea shared by all the three frameworks reviewed is that there must be a fit between the CCT needs of the trainees and the rigor of the CCT program adopted, at all phases of CCT.

III. PROFILE OF THE SINGAPORE MANAGER

1. Characteristics of Singapore managers.

Security-Conscious. Chew Soon Beng (1983) observes that the Singapore worker, including the manager of course, is very conscious of safeguarding their career prospects, since the government does not believe in welfarism, and economic restructuring is so frequent and threatening. In less than 30 years, the Singapore's focal economy has changed from being labour-intensive to capital-intensive to high value-added knowledge-based.

To ensure stable career growth, Singapore managers engage actively in training and further education. An engineer aspires for a Master degree in Business Administration and general degree holders seek post-graduate professional qualifications. In fact, the Singapore manager is a competent cognitive learner, as evidenced from his academic involvement in subjects like mathematics and science, his accomplishments in which are consistently more superior than his European counterpart's (*The Straits Times*,

14/12/1993, p.29). It is a general sentiment among the upwardly-mobile executives that one should not risk career stagnation by being complacent about his paper qualifications and skills.

This means that in order to ensure successful expatriation, the company needs to reassure the potential expatriate that his career with the company is secure. Given the Singapore manager's conviction in the value of education to career progress, generous CCT will be useful in signalling the company's commitment to the expatriate manager's concern for job security and career development. After all, the manager himself is taking a huge risk in accepting the expatriation challenge, one that can hardly be justified by an ample compensation package alone. It is believed that with the government's concerted efforts at encouraging Singaporeans to work overseas, more managers will be ready themselves for the challenge. They will welcome training. But they will remain loyal only if they feel secure about their career prospects in the company.

Traditionalist. In a study of the Singapore managerial style, the Singapore Institute of Management (SIM) finds that an overwhelming 61.3% of the Singapore managers are traditionalists (Ditzig and You, 1988). Logical, analytical, decisive and tough-minded, the traditionalist manager is well-organised. Planning is done well in advance. Obsessed with maintaining the existing system (no matter whether the systems appeal to them personally or otherwise) and meeting deadlines, he cannot tolerate unmotivated and lazy workers. His forte being maintenance of stability, he is skilful in setting up and upholding routines, rules, schedules, regulations and hierarchy. He has great respect for policies, contracts, and standard operating procedures, and can get very upset when these are violated.

Some of the weaknesses of the Traditionalist manager are:

impatient with delays, hasty in decision making in the interest of efficiency, relatively slow and even reluctant in responding to the changing needs of the organisation. While he can ensure efficiency, he is unable to prevent the company from becoming cold, sterile and joyless, a direct consequent of his managerial orientation. In Singapore, this seemed to have hindered effective communication within the company. The negative impact prompted the National Productivity Board (NPB) to host a "Let's Talk" campaign targeted at the corporations.

In a bid to maintain system stability, the traditionalist manager is likely to adopt an authoritarian leadership style, exerting tight control as far as possible. Non-authoritarian leadership style is a trait for global effectiveness (Odenwald, 1993). This means that to succeed overseas, the Singapore manager needs to soften his managerial approach.

Characteristic of a cautious and conservative traditionalist, Singaporeans in general believe in saving up for the future and not spending beyond their means. Singapore's saving rate, at 46% of GNP, is the world's highest (*The Straits Times*, 14/12/1993, p.29). This is another evidence of Singaporeans' high need for security.

The typical Singaporean is law abiding in the heavily regulated Singapore society. Living in one of the two safest cities in the world, Singaporeans may have grown to regard social peace as a given (*The Straits Times*, 14/12/1993., p.29).

The CCT implication is that in order to develop his cross-cultural skills more evenly, emphasis need to be placed on building his relational skills. As an expatriate manager, it is imperative that they be willing and able to relate to and empathise with people at all levels. This begins with comprehensive environmental briefing, followed by deep sensitivity

training. Otherwise, their task-orientedness can become offensive, especially in countries where the workers are used to a more relaxed pace of life.

The author assumes that since Singapore managers are predominantly traditionalist in managerial style, a large number of the expatriates from Singapore would also bear similar traits. This study shall not speculate whether Traditionalist managers are a wise choice for expatriation. The recommendations for CCT are targeted at these managers, assuming that they stand as good a chance for expatriation as any other type of managers.

2. Singapore managers' responsibilities overseas.

With reference to Henry Mintzberg's (1979) model, there are essentially three levels of responsibilities an expatriate manager can assume, with "operating core" being the first level management, "middle line" in the middle, and "the strategic apex" at the helm. The junior manager at the operating core is responsible for functional roles such as accounting and purchasing. Making decisions regarding task allocation, he is required to be careful and faithful with the standard operating procedures. In short, he has to be a Traditionalist.

The mid-level manager's primary duty is to co-ordinate the demands between departments and between the top management and the junior management. Work situations tend to vary and is therefore novel. Thus, little reliance on the standard operating procedures is necessary. As a trouble-shooter and problem-solver, the manager is required to be flexible and adaptive.

The senior manager on the strategic apex is concerned with fitting the business into the larger context of the industry. Necessarily a visionary, he must be able to capture a bird's eye view of the business in relation to competition and opportunities.

To do so, he should establish close contacts with the important figures or information sources in the host country.

3. Problems faced by Singapore managers based overseas.

It has been reported that most of the Singapore expatriates are middle level executives (*The Sunday Times, Sunday Plus*, 12/6/1994, p.2) with substantial technical and managerial experience. However, there are no lack of cross-cultural problems in the course of their work overseas. This is understandable, as situations at home and abroad invariably differ.

Some of the problems encountered by these expatriates include chauvinism, contrasting work attitude, and lifestyle differences.

Chauvinism. This can be read as an act of ignorance rather than an act of malice. For instance, American expatriates based in Singapore may be aware that the Singapore woman can be educated and savvy. But it cannot be assumed that the majority of the Americans, who have not had the opportunity to work in Singapore or a country similar in setting, see the Singapore woman in the same way. This explains why the American man can appear overly helpful and hence be perceived as a male chauvinist to the generally self-reliant Singapore woman working there.

Contrasting work attitude. In countries like Japan, Taiwan and Singapore, the executives are generally ready to work long hours to ensure a job is done well and on time. However, the experience of two computer professionals shows that such a work attitude can invite resentment in a different culture such as California. An act of responsibility is seen as an act of one-upmanship by the American colleagues (*The Sunday Times, Sunday Plus*, 12/6/1994, p.2).

In Singapore, the executives usually do not mix work and family; they try to balance the two as separate and mutually

reinforcing entities. In Papua New Guinea, work and personal problems are shared among clan members in a unique social system called *wantok*, based on a close-knit tradition of reciprocity. A Singapore manager there was amazed to see friends and relatives of an employee turning up to work on a project that was meant to be completed by one person.

It is not unreasonable for the headquarters in Singapore to want to maintain control of the operations overseas, but unless a fine balance can be struck, it can be difficult for the expatriate to function efficiently. China is a place where the amount of respect a person commands is directly correlated to the amount of authority he is vested with. This led a Fujian-based general manager of a major warehousing and transportation company to comment that the expatriate could lose the locals' respect if he was seen to be unable to make decisions even over small matters (*The Sunday Times, Sunday Plus*, 12/6/1994, p.2). The lack of autonomy therefore stymies the expatriate's success overseas.

Lifestyle differences. Executives used to a regulated, hygienic and perhaps entertaining life in Singapore find the situation in less developed countries a compromise in comfort. After the novelty of a fresh culture settles, they realise they have to put up with some inconvenience, such as in inadequate transportation, lower level of hygiene, insufficient medical supplies, and lower education standards. Leisure activities and entertainment are also not easily accessible.

4. Singapore managers' CCT needs.

Taking into account the profile of the typical Singapore manager, his likely responsibilities overseas, and problems faced by Singaporean expatriates, it is now possible to determine his CCT needs. The important situational factors to consider is no

different from those reviewed in the previous section, namely **culture novelty, degree of interaction with the host culture, job novelty and personal characteristics** of the typical Singapore manager. These situational factors form the determinants of CCT need. Note that since we are concerned with CCT, the job is considered novel only to the extent that the novelty is culture-induced. Practically all organisations conduct management training to develop their managers from one level of responsibility to another. Thus, even without CCT, a job's technical novelty accruing to a higher appointment will always be surmounted by the regular training programs. But where a change in the cultural setting brings about job novelty in a level of responsibility a manager is already proficient in, CCT is needed.

A training manager from Intel Corporation comments that in certain cultures the manager is expected to know and supervise every detail of those jobs under his charge, whereas in some cultures he is expected to be merely a facilitator providing the necessary resources to help his team perform productively (Odenwald, 1993). This illustrates the effect culture novelty can have on job novelty. A junior-level Singapore manager who is used to supervising his team closely may find the same job in the U.S. novel. This is because the American business culture is new to him. It emphasizes delegative management rather than close supervision. The novelty of the host culture makes the same job novel. So, the degree of novelty of an overseas job may be deceptively low when the influence of culture novelty is not considered. This is an anomaly that managers have to be aware of, so as to arrive at a more accurate assessment of their true CCT need.

Culture novelty for any of the three levels of responsibility is mediated by the manager's previous cross-cultural experience. The more cross-culturally experienced he is, the more ready he is

for expatriation, and therefore the less need he has for CCT.

The degree of interaction with the host culture is high for all three levels of responsibility. The middle manager's degree of interaction is expected to be higher than that of the junior manager because of the greater significance of his interaction with the local nationals. By the same token, the top manager's degree of interaction is the most significant of the three.

Married expatriate managers who relocate with their families will have to consider the culture novelty and degree of interaction relative to their family members too, so that the right kind of CCT can be provided.

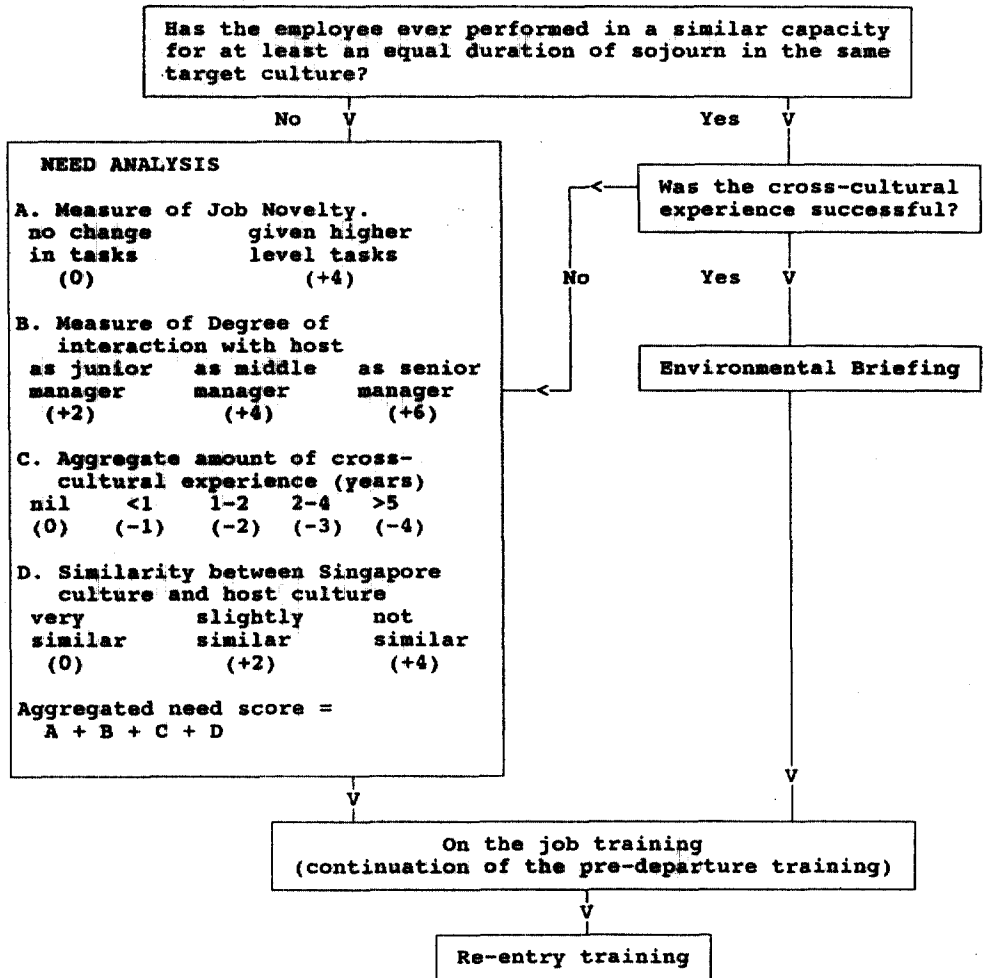
Job novelty for the Traditionalist Singapore manager is minimal at junior management, because the Traditionalist managerial style is ideal for this level of responsibility. The degree of novelty increases as the level of responsibility mounts, and the Traditionalist manager needs to learn new cross-cultural skills in order to meet the demands of the higher level of responsibility. The impact of culture novelty on job novelty has to be noted too.

Since the analysis revolves around the typical Singapore manager and not categories of managers, personal characteristics are taken as a constant. Nevertheless, the profile of the risk-averse, Traditionalist Singapore manager sets a constraint on what forms of CCT are more appropriate.

IV. A PROPOSED CROSS-CULTURAL TRAINING MODEL

In Figure 2, we try to identify those managers who need little more than an updated environmental briefing. They have had successful overseas sojourns. It is therefore a waste of time and resources to train them on something that they are already proficient in.

Figure 2. Determining Cross-cultural training need.



Fresh expatriates deserve CCT. We shall sequentially go through the flowchart in Figure 2 to determine the extent of their CCT need. Note that the frame of reference is the Singapore manager's predominant Traditionalist managerial style.

First, we measure how novel is the fresh expatriate's new job relative to his past assignments. Where there is no change in task, job novelty is taken as nil. No additional CCT is required. This explains the case in which a junior-level manager assumes a new assignment in the same capacity. If the expatriate is assigned tasks that are of a higher level than his previous assignments, we add 4 points to reflect his degree of CCT need. This accounts for the case in which, for instance, a mid-level manager is promoted to assume the responsibilities of a chief executive in an overseas unit. Notice that these scores are without a unit of measurement, which is dispensed with since it is sufficient to use the numerical value of the scores (1,2,3...) to reflect the intensity of CCT need. (*To facilitate computation, all decimal numbers will be rounded downwards.*)

Next, we measure the degree of interaction expected between the expatriate and the target culture. As explained earlier, the higher the level of responsibility, the higher the degree of interaction. Hence the senior manager has a greater need for CCT than the midlevel manager, who in turn has a greater need for CCT than the junior-level manager. The relative scores reflect this difference. Note that the minimum score is 2, because the degree of interaction for all managers is high, although some interactions are more significant and frequent, hence more intense, than the rest. The bottomline here is that every manager who makes cultural contact with people in the target country has a need for CCT. In addition, from this point onwards, repeat expatriates who have not been successful in their previous cross-cultural experience in the target culture will have to measure

their degree of CCT need alongside the fresh expatriates.

The next determinant of CCT need to be measured is the culture novelty of the target culture relative to the expatriates' home culture. There are 2 elements to measure: the expatriates' past cross-cultural experience and the similarity between the home culture and the host culture. If an expatriate has more than 5 years of cross-cultural experience, he is regarded to be a seasoned international manager. He has less need for CCT because he is likely to have learnt enough concepts and have encountered certain cross-cultural problems repeatedly.

Where the home culture and the host culture are not similar at all, there is a great deal of cross-cultural adjustment to make and more interactional skills to master. The CCT need is therefore higher. To account for this, we add 4 points to the expatriate's subtotal of CCT points. If the host culture is very similar to the home culture, cross-cultural adjustment and learning becomes almost negligible. Hence the corresponding score is zero.

Whether the manager requires intensive pre-departure training or not, ***on-the-job CCT*** should be provided. Empathising with the living conditions of the host country is never the same as actually immersing into the host culture over an extended period of time. Constant training, support and reinforcement are required to ensure that the expatriate sustains the desired behaviour he has acquired. CCT is essential at two levels. At the personal level, training helps combat loneliness and the fear of being ostracised in the foreign land. At the professional level, CCT helps the expatriate reconcile the potential conflict between doing business in the host country and obeying head office's directives. This is especially vital to the Traditionalist Singapore manager, who is likely to feel frustrated when it is not possible to find an institutionalised modus operandi that satisfies head office's demands and host country's practices readily. This is probably

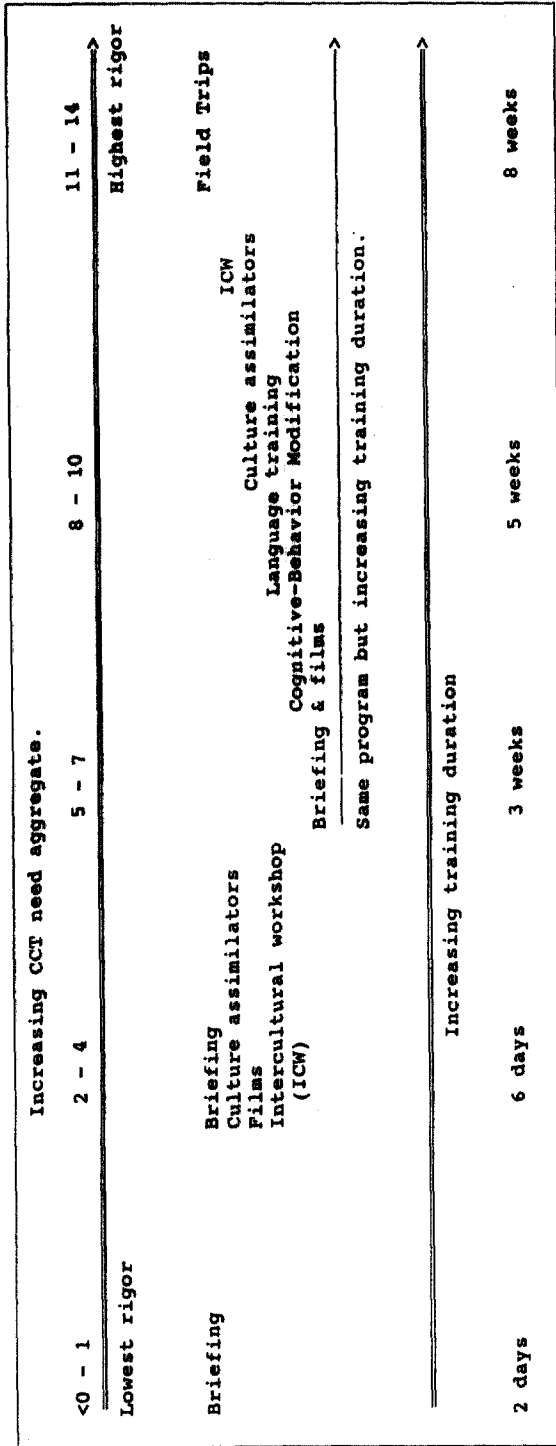
why a Training and Development manager from Proctor & Gamble (P&G) comments that a training program cannot hope to be successful if it is run from the parent country only. It is important to localise the training and let it be run by native trainers from the host country (Odenwald, 1993).

Not to be neglected is *re-entry training*, which is crucial in retaining the repatriates so as to tap their cross-cultural expertise and experience. Where possible, it would be helpful to administer re-entry training not only to the repatriates and their families but also the employees in the head office to which the repatriates return (*The Sunday Times*, 19/12/1993, p.5). This fosters mutual acceptance. Companies in which communication among and within the ranks is less than effective will benefit even more in this way.

Having gone through the flowchart in figure 2, we total up the scores obtained after examining each determinant of CCT need. The result is the *aggregated CCT need*. We realise that the aggregate, which is the intensity of CCT need expressed in numerical form, ranges from -2 to 14 (see Figure 3). The higher the numerical value, the higher the CCT need. Translated into figure 3, this means that the higher the aggregate CCT need, the more rigorous the required training.

This is consistent with the Social Learning Theory. A high need for CCT is the result of the fact that it is difficult for the trainee to focus at, retain and reproduce what is learnt, in view of the novelty of the job, host culture, and high intensity of cross-cultural interaction. To help him learn better, training rigor has to be increased. The rigor of the training forces the trainee to pay closer attention. As a result he can retain the acquired information, skills and behaviours better. In turn, reproduction of what is learnt becomes more effective.

Figure 3. Recommended training model for Singapore managers.



Rigor is defined by the richness of the training programs, comprising training methods ranging from environmental briefing to pre-posting site visit (field trips). Referring to Figure 2, we see that there are essentially 3 training programs targeted at 3 broad levels of CCT need: low, mid and high. A low CCT need aggregate ranging from -2 to 1 is indicative of low CCT need. Only the lowest training rigor is required. As such, a 2-day environmental briefing in the form of lectures and films, which appeal to the trainees' symbolic modelling process, will suffice.

For a moderate CCT need aggregate ranging from 2 to 4, more training rigor is necessary. This is matched by the addition of 2 CCT methods. The culture assimilators appeal to the trainees' "verbal" participative modelling process and help generate culture-specific awareness. The Inter-cultural Workshop (ICW) appeals to their "physical" participative modelling process and generate cultural-general awareness. The case-based training provided by the culture assimilators is expected to be welcomed by the highly-educated Singapore managers, who are competent cognitive learners with developed analytical power. The action-based training provided by the ICW will alert them to the importance being proactive in preempting change. This will also subtly attune them to attitudinal flexibility. The training duration is correspondingly increased to 6 days. At this stage we are concerned with both answering the Singapore managers' need to know about the target culture and helping them develop relational skills.

A CCT need aggregate of 5 and above requires even higher training rigor. This calls for 3 more CCT methods. Cognitive-Behaviour Modification deepens the symbolic modelling process by focusing on illustrating acceptable and unacceptable behaviours specific to the target culture. It further satisfies the Singapore

manager's characteristic need to feel safe, to know as much as possible. Language training is a must at this stage. The field trip serves up the highest rigor. By immersing the Singapore manager in the foreign culture before actual departure, we engage him completely in the experiential learning of relational and problem-solving skills. Participative modelling on his part is arguably at its highest. The training duration, correlating with the three categories of higher-end aggregated CCT need (5-7, 8-10 and 11-14), is, at minimum, three, five or eight weeks long, respectively.

The general approach is to first introduce the Singapore manager to cognitive learning in the form of lectures and cases, with which he is more familiar and hence more receptive to. Gradually, he is introduced to the more recondite information and to action-based experiential learning in the form of ICWs and pre-posting site visits. Based on the SLT, it is expected that this will deepen his understanding and retention of the information, cultural insights and relational skills acquired. The training program is successful if as a result he can reproduce the desired behaviour proficiently.

Besides ICWs, all the other recommended CCT methods are culture-specific in approach. As Singapore is culturally diverse, the Singapore manager is conditioned to living with other ethnic groups. It can be deduced that he possesses general multicultural awareness. Therefore it is more important to impress upon him the specifics of the host culture and let him discover what aspects of his character is likely to clash with that of the natives. Since he is eager to create and maintain stable relationships, he should be ready to modify his behaviour accordingly. He may then realise that he has to soften his Traditionalist managerial style.

which tends to be authoritarian.

For synergistic effects, the training will be jointly conducted by home country trainers and trainers from the target culture. Thus, the Singapore manager can get a more comprehensive perspective of cross-cultural effectiveness. This concept of bicultural training teams has been adopted successfully by Intel Corporation (Odenwald, 1993). For our purposes, the use of trainers is also necessary because this way of delivering CCT is both time-saving and cost-effective. The American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) discovers that the design and development time per learning hour for instructor-led training is about 30:1 or 40:1 hours, compared to other training-delivery methods like self-paced video and distance-learning, which yield a much higher ratio of 100:1 to 200:1 hours. The most expensive instructor-led training costs close to \$6000, while other delivery methods can cost close to \$10,000 at least (Kimmerling, 1993).

For budding Singapore MNCs, it is advisable to centralise the training function at the headquarters. This allows resources to be pooled rather than stretched. The training function can then gain the necessary training experience to be more effective in future, and to gain the trainees' and the senior management's confidence. As a guide, here is a highlight of some of the findings made by the ASTD benchmarking forum, whose members are some of the most successful American corporations (Kimmerling, 1993):

- Total annual training expenditure as a percentage of payroll ranges from 1.5% to 5%
- Number of training days per employee per year ranges from 2 to 7
- Total annual training expenditure per employee ranges from \$800 to \$1000

The ASTD members make use of benchmarking to identify the best training practices. This is possible because benchmarking calls for information sharing. In this way, training as a strategic competitive tool is continuously sharpened. Clear returns on training investments become visible. The same concept can, and should, be applied to the development of CCT for the Singapore managers. It embodies the attitude of sharing for limitless improvement, the hallmark of success. Singapore MNCs should organise a co-operative venture similar to that of the ASTD. In this way, the best CCT philosophy and model for the Singapore manager will evolve. It is also in this way that the author's recommended training model can seek refinement.

Using this framework, which is subject to further refinement, the following propositions may be developed for future research:

Proposition 1: The rigor of effective CCT for Singaporean managers is a function of expatriate's job novelty, the degree of interaction between the expatriate and the target culture, and the novelty of the target culture relative to the expatriate's home culture.

Proposition 2: To help the typical Singaporean managers to effectively adjust to the foreign countries, the Cross-Cultural Training programmes should begin with the intellectual training approach, before blending in the experiential approach for learning synergy.

Proposition 3: The design of the Cross-Cultural Training should focus on the development of attitudinal flexibility and readiness to assume the role of a visionary qualities.

Proposition 4: In order to help Singapore managers to get more comprehensive perspective of cross-cultural effectiveness, bicultural training team will be more effective than CCT conducted by only home country trainers.

V. CONCLUSION

To conclude, expatriate employees are expensive and, with increasing awareness of the cost of maintaining an expatriate, companies have acknowledged the need to focus their international human resource management practices and to seek more cost-effective alternatives. Numerous ideas and programs have been proposed for the development and training of expatriates. And yet, few studies have attempted to integrate them to develop a model that can be suitable to the demand for developing Singaporean expatriates.

This study proposed a model based on the idea that the interplay of *job novelty*, *degree of interaction* and *culture novelty* determines the degree of training rigor. The recommended training model takes into consideration the required training intensity and the profile of the Singapore manager.

As a Traditionalist according to Ditzig and You's (1988) definition, the Singapore manager seems to lack the *attitudinal flexibility and visionary zeal* required for effective management at the middle and the senior level. During overseas assignments, the importance of such qualities is even more pronounced because of the foreignness of the environment. The recommended training methods are intended to provide the type of CCT that best fit the expatriate Singapore manager. The concept of benchmarking for

identifying good CCT practices is also mooted.

In view of the business world's state of constant flux, corporations like Intel have resorted to *just-in-time* CCT (Odenwald, 1993). We may want to go one step further by introducing *preemptive* CCT. This means that the training department organises topical courses on selected countries that are deemed to be potential growth areas. For instance, with the opening of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, Myanmar looks set to be the next Indochinese state to liberalise her huge market. Culture-specific courses or discussions can therefore be conducted well before the Myanmar market opens up.

The authors acknowledge that CCT presents implications beyond the development and retention of valuable staff. For companies that are new to CCT, fresh emphasis on this aspect of global competition may entail significant re-engineering of organisation culture and individual value system. How traumatic the changes are, and how much resistance is displayed, depend on the organisation's and the individual's determination and mental readiness to succeed globally. Singapore companies' devotion to employee training has been encouraging. Accounting for 3%-4% of payroll costs (*The Straits Times*, 25/8/1992, p.36), training expenditure among Singapore companies is close to the national target of 5%-6%, comparable to the US's 1.5%-5% (Kimmerling, 1993), and catching up with Japan's 8%. We have reasons to be optimistic about the prospects of CCT in Singapore.

The importance and complexity of CCT imply that companies cannot afford to be haphazard in their attitude towards expatriation. The second purpose of this paper therefore is to recommend a general CCT model suited to the Singapore context. The author proposes a 4-step method to determining the trainees'

level of CCT need. On the basis of the intensity of their CCT need, the trainees participate in one of the three recommended training programs, each representing different degree of training rigor to match the training needs.

To prepare the typical Singapore manager effectively, the CCT begins with the intellectual training approach, before blending in the experiential approach for learning synergy. The assumptions are that as a citizen of a meritocratic and culturally diverse country he is more adept to cognitive learning and is more in need of culture-specific rather than culture-general CCT. The focus is on developing his attitudinal flexibility and readiness to assume the role of a visionary qualities he apparently lacks to succeed independently overseas. Centralisation of the training function, preemptive CCT and benchmarking for training excellence are also discussed, with a view to reinventing the value of CCT and inviting further discussion on how attention to CCT in MNCs can be promoted.

In the recommendations, the authors has chosen to target the CCT model specifically at the expatriate or to-be-expatriated Singapore managers. Although it is assumed that their family members would also be relocated, to integratively model and target the combined CCT needs of the expatriates and their family members would complicate the recommended CCT model, which is intended to provide a starting point for further study. Another limitation of this study is that the author has left unanswered issues that may draw the readers' attention in the course of examining this study. These issues, such as trainer competency, conflict of interest and trainees' adjustment problems, together with the resultant costs to the individuals, their families and their companies, merit indepth study. In the

interest of conducting a more focused study, these issues are not discussed in this study, but it is hoped that they will stimulate future research.

Finally, the recommended general CCT model is meant to be adapted to specific companies' unique business realities, not adopted wholesale. The scope of this study is limited to the majority of Singapore managers, whose managerial style is Traditionalist. The recommendations made are therefore only applicable to this type of future expatriates characterised in this study. Yet, though largely tentative, the recommended model addresses these budding Singapore international managers' need for CCT to support their overseas endeavours.

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