

Global Staffing: Current Developments, Challenges and Directions for Future Research

Proposed Joint Symposium for International Management, Human Resource Management and
Organizational Behaviour Tracks

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Summary: The proposed symposium is focused on current issues related to global staffing and international human resource management. The four panelists will present different perspectives global staffing as outlined in the abstracts. Professor Engle will provide an integration of the papers through his commentary.

Panelist: Peter J. Dowling, LaTrobe University, AUSTRALIA

Title: Emerging Challenges and Threats for the International HRM Function in MNEs

Abstract:

This presentation will overview the issues involved in potential challenges and threats for the International HRM function in MNEs. Terrorism, managing uncertainty and asymmetric threats will be outlined and discussed. Overall conclusions will be drawn with regard to managing safety and security in 21st century MNEs.

Panelist: Yvonne McNulty, Singapore Institute of Management University, SINGAPORE

Title: Extending the Construct Development of Corporate Expatriation for Research and Practice in Asia

Abstract:

This presentation critically examines the extent to which historical definitions and conceptualisations of the traditional company-assigned expatriate construct remains meaningful in the context of contemporary expatriation for multinational corporations (MNCs) and the assignees they employ in Asia. Utilizing the under-theorised, but broadly defined field of expatriation studies, it: (a) analyses existing assumptions about the universality of the expatriate construct (concept validity); (b) engages in reflexive reexamination of the knowledge base about expatriates via construct development (construct validity); and, (c) begins new theorising about corporate expatriates. The fundamental argument is that, without pausing to examine the expatriate construct while simultaneously acknowledging the shift in expatriation practice through the recent emergence of different types of assignees and changes in the work experiences of expatriates over the past decade, research about expatriates is at risk of failing to support global staffing in practice. Drawing on a number of research disciplines including management, careers, psychology, and international HRM studies the paper opens up new global staffing possibilities for MNCs in Asia in terms of how expatriates are defined from a policy perspective, from where they can be sourced and deployed, and implications arising from the dynamic nature of their international career trajectories. A key goal is to achieve construct clarity about the 'meanings of expatriate' through construct development and new theorizing about corporate expatriates by extending existing conceptualisations beyond the PCN/TCN vs HCN, and CAE vs SIE, paradigms, to include a range of new types of assignees.

Panelist: Michael J. Morley, University of Limerick, IRELAND

Title: On Coping, Competence and Capacity Building: The Nature and Role of Expatriate Cross-Cultural Training among Recently Internationalised Irish MNCs

Abstract:

The increasing pace of internationalization and the changing forms of globalization, coupled with the shifting contours of foreign direct investment location decisions away from developed in favour of emerging locations, make the landscape of international business more complex than ever. These developments and their attendant forces, in combination, mean that the intercultural encounter, in all

its guises, is becoming an increasingly challenging experience in a greater array of work settings in an ever-increasing number of countries and regions. Preparation for, and success in, this encounter is a critical issue for MNCs and their network of expatriate assignees. Despite a number of often cited advantages attaching to the implementation of cross-cultural training (CCT) programmes in preparing expatriate employees, research indicates that the amount of training undertaken is often modest. This paper explores the use, role and perceived value of expatriate cross-cultural training in developing an international staff in recently internationalised Irish owned MNCs. Drawing upon qualitative data from in-depth interviews conducted in 12 Irish MNCs, we highlight the ad hoc approach of some MNCs to the provision of any such training, justified on the basis of the plain urgency associated with many international assignments and the sporadic nature of these transfers. Despite this, all interviewees demonstrated an awareness of the potential value of CCT and a majority openly articulated the potential of a formalised CCT initiative in enhancing intercultural competence and serving an auxiliary role in buttressing multiple domain aspects of the assignment. Chief among the perceived benefits of CCT were its role in structuring expectations and generating a reality anchor along with its capacity to facilitate some basic cultural mastery in increasingly diverse, challenging host locations.

Panelist: Nealia S. Bruning, University of Manitoba, CANADA

Title: Expatriate's Core Self Concepts and Their Effectiveness: Are There Consistent Relationships?

This presentation is a result of collaborative research with Xiaoyun Wang and Anastasia Sizykh. A number of researchers over the years have examined the role of various personality characteristics in expatriate employees' effectiveness with contradictory results. Many of these studies examined different elements of employees core self concept. A review of the personality-effectiveness research and primary data on two studies involving expatriates personality-effectiveness will be presented. The primary data represents over 300 expatriates, one dataset includes questionnaire responses from expatriates on assignments in China and the second dataset is composed of expatriates on assignments in various countries but all from a single firm. These data and the review will provide direction for future research on the expatriate personality-effectiveness question.

Chair and Discussant: Allen Engle, Eastern Kentucky University, UNITED STATES