

**Re-examining Organisational Support for the Trailing Spouse during International
Assignments: A Comparison of Practical, Professional, and Social Support**

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on data collected over a 4-year period from a survey of 264 trailing spouses in 54 host-locations, we identify key issues related to three types of organisational support (practical, professional, and social support) provided to trailing spouses during international assignments and how important this support is perceived to be. With a focus on the link between organisational support and trailing spouse adjustment, professional support to address the dual-career issue and social support to alleviate marital stress were found to be important. Both types of support were nonetheless lacking. Practical support was also frequently criticised. Implications for addressing intrinsic needs, and in particular, the need for organisational support to assist in developing a portable identity, emerged as major findings.

Key Words: international HRM, cross-cultural management, social perspectives, cross-cultural HRM, employee relations

INTRODUCTION

Organisational support for the trailing spouse is an important issue given that, of the approximately two-thirds of expatriates who are married, nearly 90 percent are accompanied by a spouse and about half by children (Brookfield Global Relocation Services, 2009; Cartus & Primacy, 2010). Hence, expatriate family issues has been a major source of interest in the literature (Andreason, 2008; Birdseye & Hill, 1995; Fukuda & Chu, 1994; Harvey, 1995; Haslberger & Brewster, 2008; van der Zee, Ali, & Salome, 2005), and family issues has emerged as important across all work domains (Duxbury, Higgins, & Lee, 1994; Harvey, 1985; Richardson, 2006; Starr & Currie, 2009; Wilkinson & Singh, 2010). In light of these difficulties, studies have moved beyond the conclusion that trailing spouses are critical to international assignment success in terms of willingness to go (Brett & Stroh, 1995; Permits Foundation, 2009), assignment completion (Black & Gregersen, 1991; Tung, 1986),

expatriate adjustment (Black & Stephens, 1989; Caligiuri, Joshi, & Lazarova, 1999), and expatriate performance (Kraimer, Wayne, & Jaworski, 2001; Lazarova, Westman, & Shaffer, 2010), to also examine specific aspects of assignment support, e.g. cross-cultural training (Kupka, Everett, & Cathro, 2008), social support (Copeland & Norell, 2002), dual-careers (Harvey, 1997; Harvey & Wiese, 1998) and parental demands (Takeuchi, Lepak, Marinova, & Yun, 2007), as well the deeper issue of identity re-construction (Shaffer & Harrison, 2001; Shaffer, Harrison, Gilley, & Luk, 2001). Research has also examined trailing spouse support in a variety of settings, e.g. North America (Black & Gregersen, 1991; Guzzo, Noonan, & Elron, 1994), Australia (De Cieri, Dowling, & Taylor, 1991; Fish & Wood, 1997), and Europe (Forster & Johnsen, 1996).

The theoretical context for our study rests in family systems theory (Minuchin, 1974; Voydanoff, 1980). Prior research on expatriation demonstrates that there are significant family system effects during international assignments, where spillover between the trailing spouse, expatriate employee and other family members such as children, can influence attitudes and behaviors, and in turn, assignment success (Nathanson & Marcenko, 1995). In an ideal family situation, relationships between family members exist in a state of balance, or equilibrium, where each reciprocally affects the psychological state of the other, and in some instances may also have physiological effects (see Anderzen & Arnetz, 1997; Marks, 1989; Walton, 1990). During expatriation, families invariably go through a variety of developmental stages whilst at the same time attempting to maintain a sense of equilibrium. Factors both internal and external to the family system have been suggested to exert pressure on family equilibrium during international assignments. During expatriation, one would expect ongoing adjustments as family members strive to maintain equilibrium by offsetting a change in one domain (family life as a result of a move) with a corresponding change in another domain (increased organisational support to cope with the demands). For the trailing spouse it is proposed that dealing with individual demands and building appropriate capabilities are likely to be influenced by the types of organisational support provided to expatriate families.

When comparing the types of support provided to the trailing spouse, consulting companies (e.g. Mercer, 2005-2006; ORC Worldwide, 2008) report that up to 80 percent of companies provide extensive practical support during an international assignment (e.g. pre-assignment visit to the host

location, furniture storage, tax advice, interim accommodation, home-sale assistance, language courses, cross-cultural training, and immigration paperwork), yet only 50 percent provide support towards the professional integration of the trailing spouse (e.g. job search, career counseling, resume preparation, work permit assistance, and retraining/tuition reimbursement), and less than 30 percent provide company support towards the social integration of expatriate families (e.g. introductions to other expatriates, memberships to sports and private social clubs, and information about and access to internet expatriate forums and spouse networking groups). Furthermore, Cartus and Primacy (2010) report that firms' interest in improving spouse and family assistance is waning, with only 13 percent of firms making it a priority for the next three years, down from 19 percent in 2007. It was also found to be the least important priority overall in a list of seven priorities, and when asked to list the greatest mobility challenges in terms of future impact on their organisations, firms listed nine challenges of which spouse and/or family issues did not warrant mention. Adding to this is research which has shown that the trailing spouse receives less training and pre-departure support than the expatriate (Kupka et al., 2008; Mercer, 2005-2006) and is often excluded from the selection process (Anderson, 2005; Arthur & Bennett, 1995; ORC Worldwide, 2008). Thus, whilst companies generally give considerable attention to the logistics of an international relocation, much less attention is given to the professional and social skills necessary for the trailing spouse to adjust to a new country and their new circumstances in terms of adapting to and building a portable life (Adler & Gundersen, 2007).

In light of the above findings, we could locate only a few rigorous empirical studies which have directly investigated trailing spouses expectations of support during an international assignment (e.g. Selmer & Leung, 2003), and even fewer studies which use an exclusive sample of trailing spouses (e.g. Copeland & Norell, 2002). We therefore agree with Bauer and Taylor (2001) that more research on trailing spouse issues is required because understanding the perceptions of trailing spouses regarding the support they require may provide some useful insights into where current gaps and difficulties in organisational support exist. We justify an examination of organisational support for trailing spouses by proposing that organisational support needs to extend beyond only external and practical support, to also include adequate levels of professional and social support.

To bridge this gap, we draw on data from a survey of 264 trailing spouses in 54 host-locations and 28 nationalities to identify key issues related to the organisational support provided to trailing spouses during international assignments and how important this support is perceived to be. We are particularly interested in the impact of organisational support on trailing spouses' adjustment and satisfaction. Our fundamental argument is that adjustment and satisfaction will be influenced by a combination of practical, professional, and social support which is offered to trailing spouses in varying degrees according to their unique circumstances. Importantly, support for the trailing spouse has to be relevant in order to produce the desired results. As Haslberger and Brewster (2008) note, "the wrong type of support may aggravate rather than alleviate problems" (p 330). We propose that practical support will help spouses adjust to their external environment, whereas professional support to address the dual-career issue and social support to alleviate marital stress will help spouses with intrinsic adjustment and, in particular, the development of spouses' identity. Before explaining our study, we briefly examine three important adjustment concerns of the trailing spouse: identity reconstruction, the dual-career issue, and marital stress.

Adjustment Concerns of the Trailing Spouse

The adjustment process is conceptualised as one where individuals are continuously engaged in the balancing of demands against capabilities (Haslberger & Brewster, 2008, 2009; Patterson, 1988) . Demands may include *stressors*, i.e. one-off events such as the move abroad; *strains*, i.e. ongoing unresolved tensions resulting from stressors that manifest over time, such as the trailing spouse giving up a job/career to move abroad (Harvey, 1998; Harvey & Wiese, 1998), changed family routines (Caligiuri, Hyland, & Joshi, 1998), children starting new schools (Takeuchi et al., 2007), and changes in financial status (Punnett, 1997); and *daily hassles*, i.e. dealing with locals in a foreign language (Patterson, 2002). Capabilities may include coping behaviours as well as resources such as *emotional support*, e.g. from friendships, clubs, and associations, as well as the internet (Copeland & Norell, 2002); *informational support*, e.g. company assistance with finding a job for the spouse (Harvey, 1997); and *instrumental support*, e.g. company funded relocation allowances, residency permits (ORC, 2005). Other resources may be found in "socio cultural brokerage" (Glanz, Williams, & Hoeksema, 2001, p. 104), for example, where children may facilitate access to social networks and friendships for

the trailing spouse. Whilst the present study does not explore or examine trailing spouse adjustment directly, it nonetheless recognises that good organisational support can facilitate better coping mechanisms for individuals who move into unfamiliar cultural environments.

Drawing on identity disruption theory (Burke, 1991), Shaffer and Harrison (2001) conceptualise spouse adjustment as a process that is largely pre-occupied with reformulating one's identity in a new environment. Spouse adjustment was found to be affected by three inter-related antecedents: *personal* identity (i.e. language fluency, employment status, and self-efficacy); *social* identity (i.e. relationships with family, friends, acquaintances); and *situational* identity (i.e. cultural novelty, living conditions and assignment duration). Shaffer and Harrison (2001) found that the greatest impact on adjustment stemmed from the spouses' ability to re-establish a social sense of themselves, which mirrors other findings (Copeland & Norell, 2002). Additionally, retaining a *past* identity was not found to be as important to spouse adjustment as the establishment of a *new* identity through the building of interpersonal relationships in the host-country. We therefore argue that a new identity will be facilitated by professional support to address the dual-career issue and social support to alleviate family and marital stress. Furthermore, given the increasing number of re-assigned expatriates who may spend many years outside their home country (e.g. Wittig-Berman & Beutell, 2009), the intrinsic needs of spouses will likely emerge as the most important issue towards building "a portable identity" (Bryson & Hoge, 2005; Parfitt, 2008). Hence, intrinsic adjustment is unlikely to be addressed by the provision of only superficial orientation activities (Adler, 1991).

Harvey (1997) found that unresolved dual-career issues negatively influenced the adjustment cycle for the trailing spouse due to heightened dysfunctional family relationships. Brown (2008) demonstrated that abandoning or interrupting a spouses career leads to a loss of power, identity, and self-worth, which may have spillover effects to other family members. The limited research available on male trailing spouses indicates that spousal problems may be more serious when men are adjusting to the role of the trailing spouse (Linehan, 2002; Selmer & Leung, 2002). Other problems associated with the dual-career issue include higher refusal rates to accept international assignments (Harvey, 1996; Konopaske, Robie, & Ivancevich, 2009; Permits Foundation, 2009), discontinuity of trailing spouses career leading to family and marital stress (Harvey, 1995; Haslberger & Brewster, 2008), disruption to

family income (ORC, 2005; Punnett, 1997), increased risk of assignment failure (KPMG, 2006), and repatriation and re-engagement issues arising from trailing spouses often prolonged absence from the workforce (Harvey & Buckley, 1998). Conversely, The Permits Foundation (2009) reported that employed trailing spouses perceive that working during an assignment has a positive impact on their adjustment, family relationships, health and wellbeing, as well as willingness to complete and to extend their current assignment and to go on a new assignment. The lack of formal organisational support to address the dual-career issue (as shown) is nonetheless concerning, despite that such support is reported to be highly valued by expatriates and their spouses (Harvey, 1998; Punnett, 1997). Although psychological as well as physiological stress during international assignments has received much attention in the literature (e.g. Ammons, Nelson, & Wodarski, 1982; Brown, 2008; Elloy & Smith, 2003; Herleman, Britt, & Hashima, 2008; Walton, 1990; Wilkinson & Singh, 2010), marital stress between couples has received limited attention (Pascoe, 2003). Of the few published studies we found, marital factors were found to be related to relocation adjustment for expatriates and their spouses (James, Hunsley, Navara, & Alles, 2004; Sweatman, 1999). Thompson (1986) found that “a strong marriage” was perceived by trailing spouses to be an important factor in coping with international life, which supports earlier work (Torbiorn, 1982). One of the main sources of marital stress is expatriates’ long working hours which preclude them from spending time with their spouse (Brown, 2008; Thompson, 1986). Specifically, time conflicts between expatriate work and family demands have been shown to be a source of marital tension (De Cieri et al., 1991), as well as loneliness and isolation (De Verthelyi, 1995). Other factors which can contribute to marital stress include abandonment of a spouse’s career, altered financial status, a change in relationship dynamics, and the loss of social support networks (Caligiuri, Hyland, Joshi, & Bross, 1998; Punnett, 1997; Sanchez, Spector, & Cooper, 2000). Hence, a move abroad can either reconfirm the couple bond due to an increased reliance on each other for social and psychological support, or it can place a strain on a relationship which may lead to separation or divorce (Imundo, 1974).

METHOD

The sample was sourced through collaboration with various expatriate associations, including newcomer’s clubs, international women’s associations, social and sporting clubs, websites, chambers

of commerce, and embassies. A description of the study was forwarded by email to an appropriate stakeholder in each association, who then on-forwarded information about the study to their members. Only trailing spouses were invited to participate. Interested participants were directed to find out more about the study by accessing a website detailing a summary of the study's objectives (including informed consent) and a link to an online questionnaire. We surveyed 264 trailing spouses while on assignment. To ensure anonymity no identifying information about respondents was captured. The large sample can be attributed to the long period of data collection (2001-2005). Table 1 summarises the sample characteristics for the study. The typical trailing spouse in this study was married (97%) for at least 4 years (72%), female (91%) with children (57%), and under 40 years of age (54%).

Questionnaire development proceeded in several steps. Literature was reviewed and relevant existing measures were gathered and modified to provide a starting point for examining trailing spouse organisational support. The questionnaire was then pre-tested with three trailing spouses to determine any problems of clarity and ambiguity. A small group of international HRM experts then reviewed the questionnaire and several revisions and reductions in the number of questions were made based upon their feedback. Lastly, all questions were formatted to a five-point Likert scale design ("very important" to "very unimportant") to reduce the complexity. Questions covered a variety of issues relevant to important issues identified by previous research. Importantly, the purpose of the study was not to measure specific factors per se, but to instead identify which are important to trailing spouses. Responses were analysed using a means analysis, frequency distribution scores, and individual item analysis to determine the perceived importance of each item towards trailing spouses' adjustment. A satisfaction measure was developed containing a 19-item measure from the work of Caligiuri et al. (1998), Harvey (1997), and Tung (1998). Spouse adjustment was gathered using a 22-item measure developed by Black and Gregersen (1991) and Harvey (1997). Marital stress was assessed with a 6-item measure created for this study based on the work of Torbiorn (1982) and Thompson (1986).

KEY FINDINGS

Evidence in our study shows that a mix of practical, professional, and social support were perceived to be important to trailing spouses during an international assignment (regardless of whether support was actually provided). Table 2 uses ratings of a variety of organisational support practices for spouses

drawn from the study, to rank potential organisational support in order of importance. These practices may serve as a starting point for companies wishing to identify practices that can be incorporated into the expatriation process. Less than one third of trailing spouses (29%) rate organisational support as “good” or “excellent”. Frequently spouses complained of having an indirect or “shadowed” relationship with their spouses’ organisation and subsequently found it difficult to obtain information about relocation policies and practices. As one spouse said, “I feel cut off from a process that affects my life deeply”. Adding to this stress is the feeling that companies abuse the role of the trailing spouse by expecting them to assume relocation responsibilities that should instead be outsourced to external vendors and/or assigned to the expatriate employee. As one spouse explained:

My husband is supposed to keep working his hours and relocate. Most companies base this on the fact that there should be a housewife at home dealing with it ... I object to spending hours and hours of my time trudging round like an unpaid company scivvy trying to set us up so that they can save the cost of a relocation company.... it’s the whole hidden labour market on it that I don’t like; like it will all be taken care of by itself.

Findings also point to a frequent complaint about the lack of respect and professionalism shown by HR staff towards trailing spouses. Words used to describe HR staff included “mean”, “stubborn”, “out of touch”, and “clueless”. Trailing spouses felt that their needs were trivialised or ignored by HR staff, as one spouse explains:

One of the things that has been continually disappointing to me is that corporate HR departments seem to be populated with people who have never relocated, in some cases even resent expats, and who have no interest in learning how they might improve their relocation services. Their motivation is to get the employee into his or her new job as quickly as possible and there is little acknowledgement that the relocation process and transition into a new culture for the entire family is an important issue.

As expected, we found that spouse adjustment is a multi-dimensional construct which is influenced by a range of factors as outlined in Table 3. Trailing spouses identified a range of activities which they perceived would help with their adjustment during an international assignment (see Table 4). Using internet and email (91%), socialising with expatriates (90%), and spending time with their spouse and children (81%) were the top three adjustment activities. Unfortunately, spending enough time with their employed spouse proved to be a tremendous challenge and was cited by trailing spouses as a

major source of marital stress and frustration. The least important activity was voluntary or unpaid work (41%), which was resented by some spouses as “supporting the local citizens for free”, without being “good enough to be employed, pay my taxes and be given my independence”.

Trailing spouse identity issues emerged as a major finding of the research overall, which confirms prior studies (e.g. Shaffer & Harrison, 2001). One spouse compared her identity crisis to “being a woman in a third world country; I’m not permitted to work and everything is at the discretion of my husband”. Another said, “I’m not living my life, I’m living his”. For others there was a feeling that identity issues were caused by “dreams being destroyed in a minute”, which often led to resentment at being stereotyped as a trailing spouse who wanted to only “drink coffee, do charity work, gossip, and watch day-time TV every day”. Social support was found to be an important facilitator of spouses’ identity reconstruction as a way “to belong” and “to be able to create a life of my own”. Yet, assistance with social support was lacking. Being “dumped in to either sink or swim” and “being treated by the company as totally invisible” were frequent complaints. Providing assistance to the trailing spouse to source clubs and associations, as well providing a list of email addresses of other spouses in the company were suggested as important improvements. Similarly, language training was found to be important for building self-esteem and coping with everyday practicalities, where fluency in the host-country language was perceived to provide “power and independence”.

We found that 84 percent of trailing spouses had a tertiary qualification or a college education and 79 percent had a career prior to relocating. Yet, only 36 percent were able to continue their career once relocated due mainly to visa and work permit restrictions¹. Professional support for the career-oriented spouse therefore emerged as a poorly met need (“a major failing” as one spouse described it), in areas such as providing outplacement services, the services of a career coach, career guidance and counseling, education reimbursement, assistance to obtain a work permit, professional contacts, and fair opportunities. Cash allowances were not perceived by spouses to be of much benefit. The lack of

¹ It is worth noting that many spouses changed careers once relocated to accommodate the restrictions placed upon them in the new location to continue in their chosen profession, which explains the careers listed as inter-cultural trainer, website designer, writer, researcher, and student – i.e. portable careers to accommodate mobility. It is also worth noting that only 22 percent of spouses were able to obtain paid work once relocated, despite that 36 percent indicated they were able to continue their career. For some this was due to working illegally or working offshore in ‘virtual’ self-employed businesses.

dual-career support led to deep resentment for having sacrificed a job and proximity to family to support someone else's career. Some serious outcomes relating to this issue were reported:

I know for a fact a number of the female partners of my husband's male colleagues who have all relocated here have had serious problems adjusting due to their inability to work and make friends in this location. Many wish to return home, others are really stressed, and two are potential suicide cases ... should I not be able to obtain work after a reasonable amount of time, I will seriously consider breaking the contract because I can think of a half dozen expat wives who are on anti-depressants because of it and I won't be joining them.

At the heart of the dual-career issue appears to be a loss of identity stemming from an inability to work. As one spouse said, "I do not live for my husband, not do I live for his work and the company just couldn't understand that. He did not marry a housewife and I will never be one". For others, there was a sense that not working led them to "feel like a second-class citizen", where "my self esteem has taken a beating" and "I feel that I have given up my real self and become less of a person". One spouse went so far as to say that "it is a lonely way to live as we are left to reinvent ourselves and our children after every relocation. It's exhausting and unrewarding. I regret my life".

In terms of marital stress, 99 percent of trailing spouses rated "a strong and stable marriage" as the most important adjustment factor during an international assignment, with 71 percent indicating that it is harder to adjust in a new location when there is a high degree of marital stress. Sources of marital stress for the trailing spouse were due to spending insufficient time with their spouse and a lack of understanding about the deeper adjustment issues and challenges they faced. Female spouses in particular spoke about their needs being trivialised by their husbands because they were perceived to be "on holiday" and had "a cook, a maid, and a driver and you get to do whatever you want at any time of the day". One spouse stated, "what upsets me is the feeling that his company does not offer enough (or any) family support, and that he is not willing to fight for it or for us". Another said, "it's difficult to explain how you can feel stressed and depressed when all you have done is taken the children around in the car and played tennis". When asked if they were considering separating or divorcing because of the stress of relocating, 6 percent indicated "yes", as the following spouse explains:

The breaking up of marriages is dealt with like an embarrassing individual failure and the fact of more than 50 percent separations and divorces is simply ignored. The rest of these marriages is having affairs or show neurotically obsessive behavior, like

uncontrolled eating, shopping, drinking, suicidal attacks, depression or drug abuse. After two different support groups in two different countries, I have seen it all.

To alleviate marital stress, counseling sessions for couples were suggested to be helpful in terms of outlining possible areas of future conflicts, as well as providing advice on how to deal with them in a foreign location. Trailing spouses also suggested more vacation time, time off during the relocation for the expatriate to help with the move, a reduction in business-related travel during the first month of the assignment, flex Fridays, accompanying spouses on business trips, company functions for the family, and not scheduling business meetings and conferences during leisure time and on weekends. There was a general feeling that organisations “need to admit that they moved a family and not just the employee, so don’t expect the family to adjust without assistance from the working spouse”.

DISCUSSION

On the whole, the results depict an unfortunate situation for trailing spouses, with organisations failing rather miserably in their efforts to support them beyond only practical organisational support. Whilst it is noted that some progress has been made in terms of dual-career issues (ORC, 2005), findings in our study nonetheless point to a level of overall organisational support that continues to disappoint trailing spouses. The issues that were considered to be poorly addressed were dual-career issues (professional support), social support, assistance to re-construct one’s identity, and marital stress, i.e. factors that contribute to long-term intrinsic adjustment. The issue which was perceived unanimously by spouses, almost without exception, to have the greatest effect on spouse adjustment was a strong and stable marriage. The findings support previous research (e.g. Adler & Gundersen, 2007; Cartus & Primacy, 2010; ORC Worldwide, 2008) showing that much less attention is given to the professional and social skills necessary for the trailing spouse to adjust to a new country. Furthermore, the practical support that was offered to trailing spouses was frequently criticised.

On a more positive note, the findings present an interesting perspective on trailing spouse adjustment, which emerges as multidimensional and socially constructed. The conflict between identity and dual-career issues creates psychological challenges which are manifested in feelings of isolation, loneliness, resentment, depression, and marital stress. In line with spillover and work-family research (Caligiuri et al., 1998; Punnett, 1997), we found that international assignments rarely impact just one aspect of life

for a trailing spouse, but instead feeds into and influences other areas of life such as feelings of self-worth, self-esteem, identity, and marriage and family relationships. At a more general level, they also echo a relatively new theme in the expatriate management literature which has recently focused attention on spouse identity and is centred on social support (Copeland & Norell, 2002; Glanz & van der Sluis, 2001; Shaffer & Harrison, 2001).

Theoretically, these findings can be explained by the fact that different people will have different interpretations of what it means to be a trailing spouse and how that influences their view of the effectiveness of the organisational support provided to them. In this regard, our study confirms other research which has shown that the personal characteristics of a spouse (e.g. dual-career versus stay-at-home) (Harvey, 1997), previous experience and knowledge of a particular country as well as life-cycle of an assignment (i.e. where certain stages of a move are more stressful than others) (Stahl & Caligiuri, 2005), and stage of family life-cycle (e.g. no children, school aged children, grandchildren) (Takeuchi, Yun, & Tesluk, 2002) are important considerations. In developing specific policies and practices, organisations therefore need to consider that all spouses will need some training and support but some will need more than others. Attitude also plays an important role in the trailing spouse experience. Despite some rather negative findings, spouses recognised that there are limits to what organisational support can accomplish. Recognising that the trailing spouse experiences both an outer as well as an inner journey, spouses were clear that “it comes down to the individual” where “being the trailing spouse can be viewed as an encumbrance or an opportunity”.

CONCLUSION

The focus of this research has been to identify key issues related to the organisational support provided to trailing spouses during international assignments and how important that support is perceived to be. One critical gap in knowledge which has been addressed is to identify the dominant stressors for trailing spouses during international assignments and how organisations can begin to meet those needs. Hence, the study has contributed to a better understanding of the sources of stress for trailing spouses, both externally as well as intrinsically, which may begin to address how to build a portable identity. This has been achieved by enhancing our understanding that expatriation is a gains and losses event for the trailing spouse, whose overall assignment satisfaction is dependent upon striking a

balance between missed opportunities in the home-country and new opportunities arising from the relocation to the host-country.

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Table 1: Sample Characteristics

	n=264	%		n=264	%
Gender			Questionnaire Response		
Female	241	91	Online	258	98
Male	23	9	Paper	6	2
Respondent's Age			Number of Children		
21-29	10	4	0	115	4
30-39	122	46	1	34	13
40-49	83	31	2	78	30
50-59	44	17	3	30	11
60 and over	5	2	4	6	2
Number of Relocations			Children Living With You		
1	97	37	Yes	109	63
2 to 4	133	50	No	47	27
5 to 7	20	8	Some	16	10
8 to 10	10	4			
More than 10	4	1	Number of Languages Spoken		
			1	109	42
Length of Marriage			2	83	32
Less than one year	13	5	3	39	15
1 to 3 years	59	23	4 or more	31	11
4 to 10 years	75	29			
11 to 20 years	68	27	Time Since Lived in Home-Country		
More than 20 years	40	16	Less than one year	75	30
			1-5 years	116	46
Marital Status			6-10 years	47	18
Married	257	97	11-15 years	6	2
Engaged	3	1	More than 15 years	10	4
Single/Divorced	4	2			
			Longest Time in One Location		
Home-country Region			3 months to 1 year	28	12
North America	101	38	1 to 2 years	50	20
South America	3	1	2 to 3 years	67	27
Middle East/Africa	7	3	More than 3 years	100	41
Asia Pacific/Australia/NZ	61	23			
Europe/UK	92	35	Number of Countries Lived In		
			1	106	42
Host-country Region			2 to 4	115	46
North America	63	25	5 to 7	24	9
South America	28	11	8 to 10	4	2
Middle East/Africa	25	10	More than 10	1	1
Asia Pacific/Australia/NZ	55	22			
Europe/UK	80	32			

Table 2: Ranking of Potential Organisational Support in Order of Importance

Item	Important	Neither important or unimportant	Unimportant	n
Access to technology (email, internet)	95%	4%	1%	261
Finding and/or subsidising housing	94	5	1	262
Ongoing support after first 3 months	85	9	6	261
Sufficient time for family to adjust	82	14	4	257
Company funded home-country visits	82	13	5	260
Subsidising decreases in family income	80	15	5	260
Education assistance for trailing spouse	76	18	6	260
Outsourcing relocation program to external vendors	74	20	6	262
Pre-departure training	71	25	4	259
Expatriate employee's availability to assist with relocation	68	11	21	260
Access to a mentoring or coaching program	51	39	10	258
Assistance with finding paid work for the trailing spouse	44	29	27	259
Expatriate employee's work-related travel schedule	43	20	37	262

Table 3: Trailing Spouse Adjustment Factors

Item	Important	Neither important or unimportant	Unimportant	n
Strong and stable marriage	99%	1%	0%	261
Lack of stress in the marriage	94	4	2	259
Sufficient time for family to adjust	82	14	4	257
Manageability of expatriate employee's job demands	71	16	13	259
Expatriate employee's availability to assist with relocation	68	11	21	260
Trailing spouse's ability to earn an income	52	20	28	257
Expatriate employee's work-related travel schedule	43	20	37	262

Table 4: Adjustment Activities

Activity	%	n
Using internet or email	91	260
Socialising with expatriates	90	263
Spending time with spouse/children	81	264
Keeping in touch with family back home	79	264
Socialising with locals	74	259
Learning host country language	71	262
Sporting clubs and associations	57	263
Massage, yoga, meditation, journal writing	47	262
Voluntary or unpaid work	41	264