

# **Analysis of the Structural Formal Elements of Adjustment Process offered by German Companies in Baden-Württemberg**

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**“Bachelor of Arts”**

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## Abstract

This paper aims to provide essential information about the formal aspects of the adjustment process companies in Southern Germany utilize to adjust their employees to new surroundings. In particular, it shall be investigated and defined what formal aspects are and when firms apply them. Literature shows that companies do implement language courses, intercultural trainings or provide further information about the host country before a stay abroad. Nevertheless, the phases during and after the assignment are not taken into account with the required importance. Additionally, since national culture can be broken down into different layers, the organizational culture as one layer was analyzed, too.

By conducting a quantitative research among companies in Baden-Württemberg, this paper shows the different approaches for dealing with a stay abroad. Scientific literature about the topic of adjustment of globally assigned workers shall help emphasizing the need of a deeper cultural insight. Furthermore, by attempting to explain the organizations' culture, a better understanding of the chosen training methods shall be created. Definitions in the beginning helped to understand the concept of culture, the notion and the phases of adjustment. Almost all collected data has been accessed either through JSTOR (a digital library founded to help academic libraries or publishers) or similar databases, through the companies' websites or through the survey results it selves.

The results of this research show that the phase before the stay abroad is organized well. Companies offer pre-departure training, but during and after the expatriate time a lack of support is being observed. The firms obviously underestimate the necessary help needed during the assignment and in the return phase, which is why the thesis attempts to fill this gap. Through the organizational culture, described on the companies' webpages the author was able to draw a conclusion to the applied training methods, which results in a consistent overall picture of the described firms. Companies from the automotive sector had the highest return rate in the survey, which is why particular attention was paid to it.

Key words: *National/Organizational Culture, Cross-Cultural Training, Adjustment Process*

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# 1 Introduction

An increasing number of organizations expand their global presence through subsidiaries abroad for different reasons. By entering foreign markets, the global economic integration of commodity, labor, capital as well as consumer markets and technology<sup>1</sup> proceeds fast. Promoted by this process called globalization, an increasing number of companies geographically extend their economic activities across national boundaries<sup>2</sup> in terms of the internationalization. This process not only applies to economic factors, but also behavior-orientated aspects such as knowledge, experience and learning.<sup>3</sup> While extending these economies to countries worldwide through subsidiaries abroad, these foreign offices in some cases are staffed locally. However, there are occasions when home country nationals are needed and compose a good addition to the personnel mix overseas,<sup>4</sup> for example to represent the head quarter or to apply their technical or managerial skills. Due to these exchange programs and the internationalization, which frequents cross-cultural encounters, specific training has become increasingly important to prepare and support an individual for and during an intercultural assignment. Obviously, companies try to ensure that employees, who are in line for a foreign assignment, gain satisfying experiences.<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless, when expatriates are not able to adapt to the host country's culture, perform ineffectively and thus, fail in their tasks<sup>6</sup>, significant economic and social costs are involved. Not only preparation or return costs and the salary need to be taken into account, but also the costs that go beyond the monetary expenses of compensation: on future interactions between the home and host country organization, an unsuccessful expatriate has a negative impact.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> cf. Bordo, M.D., Taylor, A.M. & Williamson, J.G., Globalization in Historical Perspective, 2003, p.21

<sup>2</sup> cf. Haas, H.D., Internationalisierung, 2014

<sup>3</sup> cf. Holtbrügge, D., Die Lerntheorie der Internationalisierung von Johanson/Vahle, 2005, p.2

<sup>4</sup> cf. Birdseye, M.G./Hill, J.S., Individual, Organizational/Work and Environmental Influences on Expatriate Turnover Tendencies, 1995, p. 787

<sup>5</sup> ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Tung, R.L., Expatriate Assignments, 1987, p. 117

<sup>7</sup> cf. Caligiuri, P.M., Selecting Expatriates for Personality Characteristics, 2000, p.62

### 1.1 Objective of Thesis and Current State of Research

The objective of the thesis is to analyze the formal aspects of adjustment process provided by organizations to ensure a successful foreign assignment, based on the concept of culture. These aspects were identified as the cross-cultural training methods that are being utilized. The focus especially rests on the area of Baden-Württemberg since it has a strong industry and many large companies that makes it representative. At the end, it shall be found out which programs the elected companies offer and how they cohere with their organizational culture. Although there is a large pool of studies and publications in the area of expatriate adjustment, the literature emphasis conglomerates in the 1990's. However, times have changed since then and organizations started to realize the importance of support. Therefore, instead of focusing only on the time before the international assignment as it was done in the 1990's, this thesis will additionally examine the phases during and after the assignment.

### 1.2 Structure of Work

Beginning with the introduction, in which the author gives a first impression of the topic, **chapter 2** will introduce the theme and provide descriptions of the state Baden-Württemberg and its economic situation as well as the notion of an expatriate. **Chapter 3** covers the concept of culture; the paragraph will not only define national culture and their cultural standards in general, but also the culture within an organization and the understanding of it. Subsequently to the notion of culture, **chapter 4** provides essential theoretical information referring to cross-cultural adjustment. The development of adjustment process shall be demonstrated through the framework of cross-cultural adjustment as well as the culture shock a person might experience. **Chapter 5** contains the methodology of the survey as well as further interpretations of the data collection and the research method. Additionally, the questionnaire design and the data analysis are described. The final evaluation is covered in **chapter 6**, which firstly characterizes the participating companies regarding their economic and organizational culture status. Additionally, cross-cultural training methods in different stages of the stay abroad will be further analyzed. Furthermore, as an extension to the results found in this research, **chapter 7** will briefly display further research results by other authors, which are congruent. A short summary of the topic and recommendations shall be given in **chapter 8**, the last chapter in the thesis.

## 2 Point of Departure

The state Baden-Württemberg is one of the leading economic regions in Germany and even Europe. Not only does it have globally known major enterprises, but a multitude of midsize companies, a high productivity and a low unemployment rate.<sup>8</sup> The intensive industry landscape and the high export rate of these companies makes them in many cases a worldwide market leader in the respective product segments. The automotive sector and its various suppliers, followed by mechanical engineering and the metal- and electronics industry, generate a quarter of the industrial sales volume.<sup>9</sup> The strong global trade relations become apparent through the export rate: in 2011, almost 45% of the exported goods were machines and automobiles.<sup>10</sup>

Having a worldwide focus can indeed affect the staff member structure: parent companies send their employees abroad to a subsidiary overseas, which mostly happens when specific and essential managerial or technical skills are needed.<sup>11</sup> During the time when a person lives in a country other than his country of citizenship, and this is in the first place due to work reasons and temporarily<sup>12</sup>, that person can be called **expatriate**. In most of the literature, the word **sojourner** is being used for the same purpose. Indeed, the definition means a temporary stay of a person in a place.<sup>13</sup> An expatriate job assignment requires adjustment to multiple environments since the person might experience cultural differences and language barriers. How to handle these possible issues will be discussed on the following pages in the context of an analysis of the the training methods organizations in Baden-Württemberg utilize to prepare the foreign assigned staff members in the best matter. Initially, the concept of culture shall be demonstrated since it has a great influence on the outcome of the expatriate's stay abroad. Noteworthy and important to say is that due to a better readability, the generic masculine from now on will be used instead of pair forms. This form encompasses both female and male individuals who are addressed equally.

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<sup>8</sup> cf. Hofelich, P., Unser Land Baden-Württemberg, 2013

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> cf. Bannholzer et al., Baden-Württemberg – ein Standort im Vergleich, 2012, p.41

<sup>11</sup> cf. Birdseye, M.G./Hill, J.S., Individual, Organizational/Work and Environmental Influences on Expatriate Turnover Tendencies, 1995, p. 787

<sup>12</sup> Investopedia, Expatriate, 2013

<sup>13</sup> Dictionary, Sojourner, 2013



### 3 The Concept of Culture

Adjusting to another surrounding comes along with dealing with a new culture. Thus, regarding the area of culture, many different terms exist which describe culture. For this paper, the first important definition is the concept of culture. Geert Hofstede represents the etic perspective of culture, which is the view from outside the boundaries of culture comparing two or more cultures<sup>14</sup>, assuming that all cultures can be compared in terms of generalizable phenomena. He will be quoted to provide basic knowledge about culture. Since there is a broad range of literature, few limitations needed to be done to the topic of culture for the context of this work.

#### 3.1 National Culture

Meeting a person from another country implicates most of the time a different behavior than the own way of acting as well as thinking. It is not unusual that this might lead to surprises or misunderstandings in intercultural encounters. Hence, a crucial factor is to identify the reasons why people with another cultural background show certain behaviors. Moreover, it shall be discussed what characteristics culture has and what cultural standards are.

In general, **culture** cannot be applied to individuals, but is extracted from groups. Being in this group, it is difficult to perceive culture from the “inside” because it is learned, meaning it is transmitted through socialization. “[...] Culture is the learned, shared understandings among a group of people about how to behave and what everything means [...]”.<sup>15</sup> The important aspect to know is that culture is not the same as civilization or society, for society means the interactions among its members who create, share and perpetuate a culture.<sup>16</sup> There is also no complete agreement or consensus – people share culture but could disagree about some aspects such as raising children or the eating of certain foods.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> cf. Noorderhaven, N./Koen, C.I., National Cultures and Management, 2005, p.61

<sup>15</sup> Chung, J.A., Culture & Communication, 2010, Script 1

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> cf. Chung, J.A., Culture & Communication, 2010, Script 1

Different authors described and defined culture in their own words. One author, N. Forster (2000) describes culture as follows:

„We usually do not think consciously about our culture, unless we perceive it to be threatened by some external force or we are put in a situation where we are in a cultural minority. In other words, our cultures operate largely on an unconscious level.”<sup>18</sup>

The author E. Keller described the characteristics of culture on another way. In his eyes,

“all collectively shared, implicit or explicit behavioral standards, patterns of behavior, demonstrations and results of behavior which are learned by a social group and are passed on from generation to generation via symbols”<sup>19</sup> means culture.

According to the author A. Thomas, his basic assumption for example is that culture is a universal phenomenon; all people live in one particular culture and develop it. Culture always demonstrates itself in an orientation system typical for a nation, society, organization or group.<sup>20</sup> In his opinion, “that orientation system is being composed by specific symbols such as language, gestures, facial expressions, clothes or welcome rituals and is passed on to the following generation”<sup>21</sup>.

In conclusion, a person learns from early age for instance table manners, how to make friendships, his behavior towards authorities and more “instruments” to get along comfortably in the world. These recurring patterns become naturally to the person and other people presuppose them as well. As long as the individual counteracts with people from his own culture, he can assume that his subjective ideology might not be completely shared, but at least it will be understood. However, when encountering a person from another culture this mutual understanding is not self-evident anymore.<sup>22</sup> The person cannot rely on the patterns he had imprinted any longer, but rather has to sensitize himself to deviations in the behavior of the counterpart. As mentioned before,

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<sup>18</sup> Forster, N., Expatriates and the Impact of Cross-Cultural Training, 2000, p.64

<sup>19</sup> Keller, E., Management in fremden Kulturen, 1982, p.118

<sup>20</sup> cf. Thomas, A./Kinast, E.U./Schroll-Machl, S., Interkulturelle Kommunikation und Kooperation, 2003, p.22

<sup>21</sup> ibid.

<sup>22</sup> cf. Stemplinger, M., Haase, S., Thomas, A., Beruflich in der Slowakei, 2005, p.12

individuals establish certain ways of behaving and thinking. According to Hofstede, “[...] such patterns in thinking, feeling and acting are called mental programs, or [...] 'software of the mind'. [...]”<sup>23</sup> All the information for this so-called mental program is obtained and “[...] developed in childhood, reinforced throughout life, and form one of the major building blocks of national cultures [...]”<sup>24</sup> Hofstede sees culture as that mental program a person owns; “it is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another.”<sup>25</sup>

As individuals share one culture within the same “social environment, which is where it was learned, the phenomenon can be called collective.”<sup>26</sup> Crucial factors in the concept of culture are that it is not deriving from genes nor is it inherited, but the social environment “teaches” individuals. According to Hofstede, it is also important to differentiate between culture, human nature and an individual’s personality as shown in the following figure.

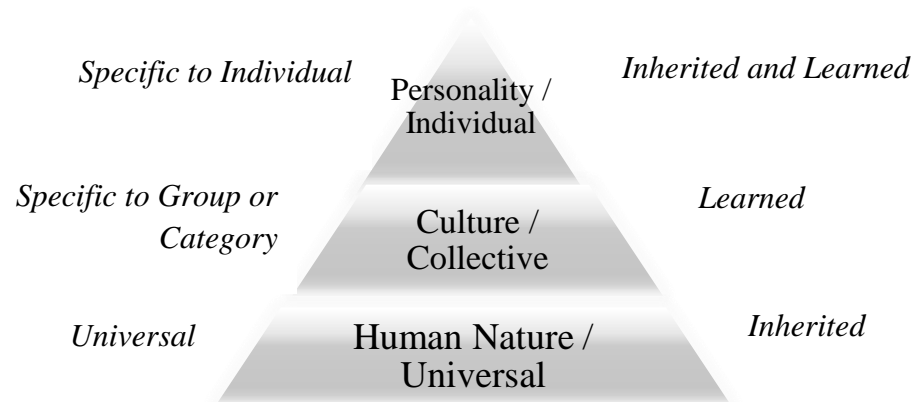


Figure 1: Three Levels in Uniqueness in the Human Mental Programming<sup>27</sup>

The most basic level and therefore not as unique as the others is the *human nature* or *universal* level.<sup>28</sup> It represents what all people no matter which nation they come from have in common and share. One can also call it the “operating system” of the human

<sup>23</sup> Hofstede, G., *Cultures and Organizations*, 1991, p. 4

<sup>24</sup> Gladwin, T.N., *Culture's Consequences: International*, 1981, p. 682

<sup>25</sup> Hofstede, G./Hofstede, G.J./Minkov, M., *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*, 2010

<sup>26</sup> Hofstede, G., *Cultures and Organizations*, 1991, p. 4

<sup>27</sup> cf. Hofstede, G., *Cultures and Organizations*, 1991, p. 4/Hofstede, G., *Culture ., Culture's Consequences*, 2001, p.3 and own illustration

<sup>28</sup> cf. Hofstede, G., *Culture's Consequences*, 2001, p.2

body, determining physical and basic psychological functions and inherited in the genes.<sup>29</sup> Characteristics of this level are:

- The human ability to feel anger, love, joy, sadness
- The need to associate with others
- The facility to observe the environment and to talk about it

The second level (culture) has already been described primarily in the paragraph above. Nevertheless, additionally to the culture-definition it is also important to know that this level is not shared with all other people, but only with some being in a certain group or belonging to a specific category.<sup>30</sup> Certain aspects can be:

- The language in which we express ourselves
- The deference to the elder
- The perception of general human activities

The summit of the pyramid of uniqueness in the human mental programming consists of true personality: “no two people are programmed exactly alike”.<sup>31</sup> Partly learned and partly inherited, it provides a range of different behaviors within the same culture. The characteristics for the individual level are:

- It is the personal set of mental programs not shared with other human beings
- It is partly inherited and partly learned

These levels of culture can also be applied to different layers. That means that people belong to different groups or categories, such as in a political point of view, the category of gender or region. Moreover, Hofstede intended to operationalize cultural differences into dimensions<sup>32</sup> as an orientation system. He conducted a survey among IBM employees in more than 70 countries in order to compare the cultures. His famous Cultural Dimensions, deriving from that survey will however not be further discussed in this paper since they have no application in the later part of the analysis. For this

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<sup>29</sup> cf. Hofstede, G., *Cultures and Organizations*, 1991, p. 4

<sup>30</sup> Hofstede, G., *Culture's Consequences*, 2001, p.2

<sup>31</sup> cf. Hofstede, G., *Culture's Consequences*, 2001, p.2

<sup>32</sup> cf. Chung, J.A., *Culture & Communication*, 2010, Script 1

reason, the following paragraph will describe cultural standards as an orientation system when entering a new cultural environment.

### 3.1.2 Cultural Standards

As mentioned previously, at a very early age people learn how to behave towards authorities or table manners, which all becomes naturally to persons. In an intercultural encounter, meaning meeting someone with another cultural background, the “tools” which regulate our behavior are from a different origin. These differing tools are called **cultural standards**.<sup>33</sup> They are to be interpreted as “specific orientation systems which are designed to understand and be able to communicate the own and foreign perception, thinking, feeling and acting in an intercultural contact situation [...]”.<sup>34</sup> Members of a culture behave according to the valid and accepted cultural standards of their proper culture. In an encounter with others they judge the own behavior as well as the behavior of person they meet on the basics of these criteria.<sup>35</sup> In general, four attributes specify cultural standards<sup>36</sup>:

- Types of perception, thinking, valuating and acting which are considered to be typical or normal for the majority of people of one specific culture
- The own and foreign behavior is being controlled, regulated and evaluated according to these cultural standards
- The individual and group-specific way of handling the cultural standards can vary within a certain tolerance range
- Behavior patterns which are not within the tolerance range are rejected by the social environment

To identify these cultural standards, the most common method is to question a high amount of persons who “[...] have experiences in different encounter situation, such as exchange students or experts globally assigned [...]”<sup>37</sup>. Through this survey, one can interrogate difficulties and problems with foreign partners, other behaviors and reactions than expected and proper explanations for these behaviors. By answering

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<sup>33</sup> cf. Stemplinger, M./Haase, S./Thomas, A., Beruflich in der Slowakei, 2005, p.11

<sup>34</sup> Krewer, B., Kulturstandards als Mittel der Selbst- und Fremdrelexion in interkulturellen Begegnungen, 1996, p. 152

<sup>35</sup> cf. Stemplinger, M./Haase, S./Thomas, A., Beruflich in der Slowakei, 2005, p.11

<sup>36</sup> cf. Thomas, A./Kinast, E.U./Schroll-Machl, S., Interkulturelle Kommunikation und Kooperation, 2003, p.25

<sup>37</sup> Thomas, A./Kinast, E.U./Schroll-Machl, S., Interkulturelle Kommunikation und Kooperation, 2003, p.29

these questions, the purpose is not to describe a certain situation, but rather to discover a “characteristic interaction process”<sup>38</sup>. Again, through these cultural standards one cannot describe the collectivity of one culture, but it can serve as an orientation to gather information about the foreign culture, to explain the unfamiliar behavior of the interaction partner and to pay attention to the own intercultural orientation system and be able to reflect it.<sup>39</sup> This definition is important concerning the cross-cultural training, which will be discussed later in the paper.

One must not only see culture within certain country borders. Nowadays, company or organizational culture has become an important concept. Particularly, certain values, rules and behaviors the company stands for are recognized as a good orientation system for employees as well as externals. This information is even posted on companies’ web pages, easily accessible for people outside the companies’ borders. It will be discussed in the next paragraph.

### 3.2 Organizational Culture

Just as the individual’s culture, the company or organizational culture is a complex and even complicated phenomenon. Nevertheless, it influences the employee’s performance and hence the performance of the whole organization to a significant part. It even represents for the lives of the company members an important determining factor to the person-situation fit.<sup>40</sup> As there is no single definition of organizational culture, the American organizational psychologist Schein (1985) for example defines it as

“[...] a pattern of basic assumptions invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration-that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.”<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> cf. Thomas, A./Kinast, E.U./Schroll-Machl, S., *Interkulturelle Kommunikation und Kooperation*, 2003, p.29

<sup>40</sup> cf. O'Reilly III et al., *People and Organizational Culture*, 1991, pp. 487 - 516.

<sup>41</sup> Schein, Edgar H., *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 1985, p. 9

One can also state that the concept is shared within an organization and consists of a set of basic assumptions, values and norms of behavior, which are manifested through the members' of the company's perceptions, feelings, thoughts and behaviors.<sup>42</sup> This set affects the efficiency of organizations as well as the internal operations. However, the internal members' perceptions and feelings affect the external behavior of an organization towards the environment, too.<sup>43</sup> The organizational culture also influences many aspects of the organization, including their structure, role expectations and job descriptions. Furthermore, it suggests how to act on the job, how to solve problems, who makes decisions in various situations and how to think about and behave toward coworkers and supervisors.<sup>44</sup> Since organizations that send their employees on a global assignment primarily send them in a subsidiary of the parent company, the intention is that the home company culture is lived and acted out in each component of the concern. Thus, the assumption is that the culture in the subsidiary is similar to the one in the home company. Nevertheless, there exists a likelihood of emerging sub-cultures within the organization influenced through the national culture.<sup>45</sup>

Schein explains through three mechanisms the creation of organizational culture: leadership identification, the social trauma or critical incident model, and the success model.<sup>46</sup> Briefly explained, the social trauma/critical incident model refers to uncertainty confrontation through productivity, cooperation or chance of survival in the organization - mostly the management provides measures helping to remove uncertainty in future similar situations.<sup>47</sup> Based on the past, the success model implies that behavior will be repeated once it succeeded in the past. The repetition goes on up to a certain point at which everyone agrees that the behavior is correct.<sup>48</sup>

Leadership identification is considered to be most influential when regarding the company structure in Baden-Württemberg, consisting of many family business like organized companies. Thus, that mechanism is described in detail in the following. In the first formation of a group or organization, the "founder" of it as a dominant figure

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<sup>42</sup> cf. Lukášová, R. et al., *Organizational culture of Czech manufacturing companies*, 2006, p. 350

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> cf. Hofstede et al, *Measuring Organizational Cultures*, 1990, p. 287

<sup>45</sup> cf. Schmid, S., *Multikulturalität in der internationalen Unternehmung*, 1996, p. 34

<sup>46</sup> cf. Schein, E.H., *Organizational culture*, 2004, pp.224-227

<sup>47</sup> cf. Koen, C.I., *Organizational Culture Research*, 2005, p. 128

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*

and his beliefs, assumptions and values influence the structure and function of the group by providing an articulated and visible model.<sup>49</sup> These founders have a major impact on the basic mission and the environmental context the group will operate in. For a good external adaptation and internal integration, the founders choose the ideal organization members, based on their own personality and cultural history since they had the original idea of founding.<sup>50</sup> The group is testing the founder's beliefs; they learn from their own experiences which of those work out for the total group. Through this process of joint learning, they establish shared assumptions, which origins can mostly be traced back to the values and beliefs of the founder.<sup>51</sup>

As defined by Hofstede previously, national culture in his eyes consists of three different levels that are to be seen as one construct and not as separated parts. Schein created a similar model to describe the organizational culture. He identifies three distinct levels in organizational cultures, referring to the degree to which the different cultural phenomena are visible to the observer:

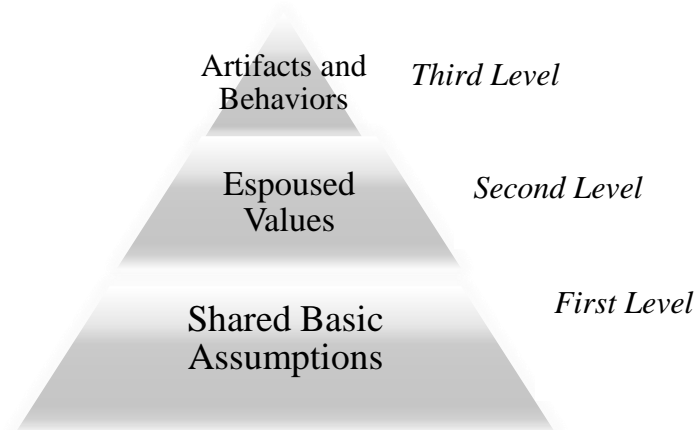


Figure 2: Organizational Culture Model<sup>52</sup>

The third level describes the surface of culture, considering the visible elements in a culture such as artifacts or behaviors. Examples are the communication with employees, customers or suppliers, dress code, the logo of the company or the corporate

<sup>49</sup> cf. Schein, E.H., *Organizational culture*, 2004, pp.226-227 and Koen, C.I., *Organizational Culture Research*, p.127

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> cf. Schein, E.H., *Organizational culture*, 2004, pp.226-227 and Koen, C.I., *Organizational Culture Research*, p.127

<sup>52</sup> Schein, E.H., *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 1985 and own illustration



philosophy. These elements are tangible and overt; hence, individuals who are not part of the culture can also recognize them.<sup>53</sup>

Below the third level, one finds the organizations stated values and rules of behavior, explaining the way the firm is supposed to be. Values can be for example honesty, trustiness, or reliability. These terms describe the behavior of the employees, their representation of the organization as well as of themselves.<sup>54</sup> Basic assumptions are to be found at the first and deepest level of organizational culture. Usually these assumptions are unconscious and taken for granted. Additionally, they are well integrated in the company, which is why members within the organization barely recognize them.<sup>55</sup>

A critical view shall be taken on this model, considering for example the problems, which might arise if the leaders' values do not agree on the general assumptions of the organizational culture, or when they are not aware of their role they play in representing the culture. Generally, the model does not consider the idea of organizations being value-free sites.<sup>56</sup> Another critic could be that organizations can contain struggles between the management and the workers, which might result in domination and oppression of the powerless by the powerful.<sup>57</sup>

In conclusion to the notion of culture, it must be considered that one cannot generate guidelines or increase understanding from memorizing cultural rules for both national as well as organizational culture. Knowing few behavior rules such as cultural standards is helpful, but it is difficult to make a rule for every situation. Therefore, one must learn to reason culturally rather than memorize cultural rules.<sup>58</sup> In other words, cultural reasoning is to understand that other peoples to a certain degree may differ or may be similar to oneself and to avoid extreme generalization or stereotype thinking.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> cf. Schein, E.H., *Organizational culture*, 2004, pp.26-27

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> cf. Schein, E.H., *Organizational culture*, 2004, pp.30-35

<sup>56</sup> cf. Lane, D.R., *Organizational Culture Theory and Critical Theory*, 2013

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> cf. Chung, *Culture & Communication*, 2010, Script 1

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*

## 4 The Concept of Adjustment

On the following pages, the process of becoming familiar with another culture, acclimatizing to new behaviors and values as well as becoming a member of a new culture will be illustrated. Additionally, the support companies can contribute to that process by offering cross-cultural training shall be described.

### 4.1 Cross – Cultural Adjustment

In an international adjustment, significant changes occur in the individual's environment. It involves changes in the cultural, social, economic and political context, “[...] dealing with unfamiliar norms related to the general culture, daily customs, living conditions [...]”<sup>60</sup> and facing a foreign language on a daily basis. Both conscious and subconscious changes demand a **cross-cultural adjustment**, conceptualized as the degree of psychological comfort and being familiar with various aspects of the host country.<sup>61</sup> Since changes occur in the non-work as well as the work context, it is seen as a multifaceted construct with different variables having relationships among each other.

Black, Mendenhall and Oddou conceptualized one of the most popular models of adjustment in 1991. Combining domestic and international literature about adjustment, the author's model of international adjustment as seen in figure four shows that individuals need both the anticipatory as well as the in-country adjustment to be able to cope with a new environment. They begin with the anticipatory adjustment and state that “[...] if appropriate anticipatory adjustments are made, the actual adjustment in the new international setting will be easier and quicker [...]”<sup>62</sup>. The anticipatory adjustment refers to the individual with previous experience and the pre-departure training. Included in these factors are the expatriate's previous international assignments (prior experience in living and working abroad)<sup>63</sup>, which is important for sojourner adjustment<sup>64</sup> and training, which has a positive impact on cross-cultural effectiveness.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Black et al., Toward a Comprehensive Model of International Adjustment, 1991, p.292

<sup>61</sup> cf. Black, J.S./Mendenhall,M., Cross-Cultural Training Effectiveness, 1990, p. 124

<sup>62</sup> Black et al.,Toward a Comprehensive Model of International Adjustment, 1991, p.305

<sup>63</sup> cf. Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al.,What have we learned about Expatriate Adjustment, 2004, p. 6

<sup>64</sup> cf. Church, A.T., Sojourner adjustment, 1982, p. 549

<sup>65</sup> cf. Black et al.,Toward a Comprehensive Model of International Adjustment, 1991, p.293

The organization factor includes the selection mechanism and criteria, which will however, not be further discussed in this paper, but needs to be seen as a complementary element.

Within the In-country adjustment, the authors focused especially on three facets of adjustment, which are firstly work adjustment (adaptation to new job tasks, work roles, and the new work environment). The second facet is interaction adjustment, which involves the comfort achieved in interacting with host nationals in both work and non-work situations. The general adjustment considers the overall adaptation to living in the foreign culture (housing conditions, health care, and cost of living).<sup>66</sup>

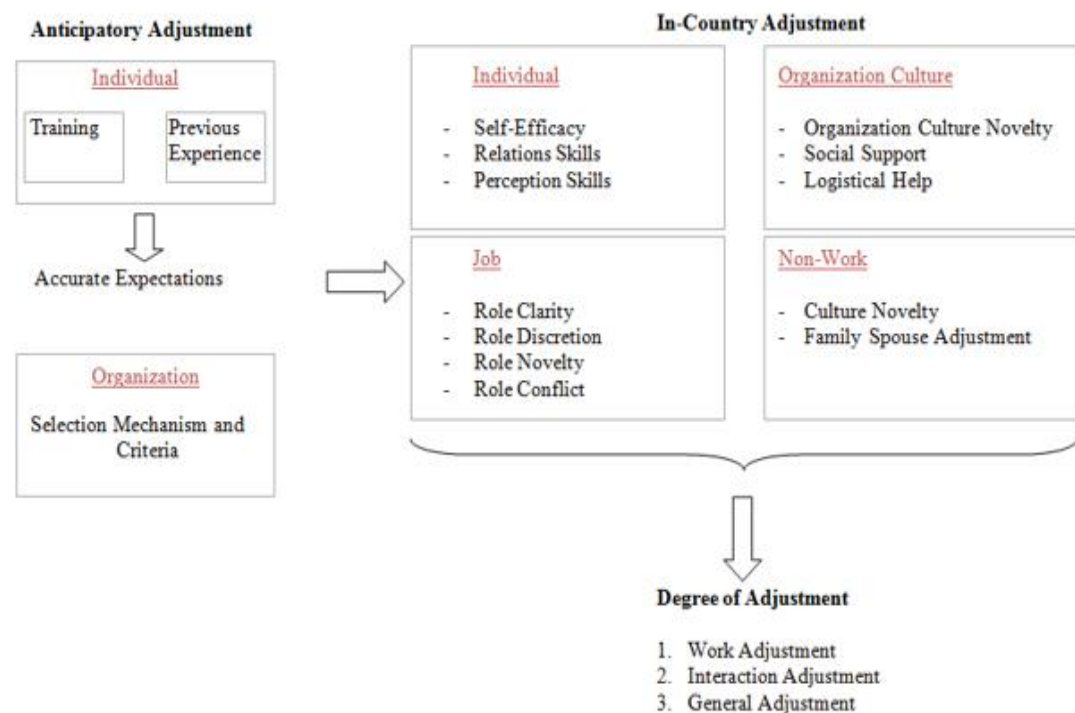


Figure 3: Framework of International Adjustment<sup>67</sup>

Different factors, such as job or non-work factors, the organization or the expatriate himself can influence each facet of adjustment, having different impacts on various outcomes of adjustment.<sup>68</sup> The four factors are described as follows: “INDIVIDUAL

<sup>66</sup> cf. Black et al., Toward a Comprehensive Model of International Adjustment, 1991, p.304

<sup>67</sup> cf. Black et al., Toward a Comprehensive Model of International Adjustment, 1991, p.304 and own illustration

<sup>68</sup> cf. Ayman, Z., Expatriate adjustment as a multifaceted phenomenon, 1997, p. 438

factors are the personal requirements for effectiveness in the overseas environment. JOB factors are features of the work environment over which the expatriate has little or no control. ORGANIZATIONAL factors are features of the overseas firm's culture and NON-WORK factors are stressors pertaining to the aspects of the foreign environment other than one's job."<sup>69</sup>

The individual factors include self-efficacy, defined as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations".<sup>70</sup> Relational skills refer to a repertoire of tools and techniques that facilitate the formation of interpersonal ties.<sup>71</sup> Through those ties, expatriates obtain necessary information and behavior-relevant feedback in the host culture.<sup>72</sup> To perceive and evaluate the host environment and its actors correctly, the perception skills entail the cognitive abilities allowing it.<sup>73</sup> Within the job factors, role clarity (exact understanding of position requirements), role discretion (decision-making autonomy), role novelty (differences between host and native country work roles), and role conflict (incompatible cues regarding job expectations) are mentioned.<sup>74</sup>

Social support is understood within the work context given by coworkers who provide the expatriates with information about appropriate norms and behaviors<sup>75</sup> whereas logistical support means for instance hiring a relocation service, both to be found in the organization culture factor. The last is the non-work factor with reference to (organization) culture novelty, also described as cultural toughness, which explains the circumstance that it can be more difficult to adapt to one culture than to another (the more different from the own culture, the harder the adjustment).<sup>76</sup> The family-spouse adjustment means that the sojourner's accompanying persons should be integrated in his own preparation program, too.

Critics to that adjustment model were made especially regarding the generalization aspect. According to this, the model is supposed to be universally applicable to all

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<sup>69</sup> Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., What have we learned about Expatriate Adjustment?, 2004, p. 7

<sup>70</sup> Bandura, A., Self-efficacy: The experience of control, 1997, Chapter 1

<sup>71</sup> cf. Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., What have we learned about Expatriate Adjustment?, 2004, p. 7

<sup>72</sup> cf. Black et al., Toward a Comprehensive Model of International Adjustment, 1991, p.293

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> cf. Aycan, Z., Expatriate adjustment as a multifaceted phenomenon, 1997, p. 438

<sup>75</sup> cf. Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., What have we learned about Expatriate Adjustment?, 2004, pp.7-8

<sup>76</sup> cf. Cohen, S./Wills, T.A., Stress, social support, and the buffering hypotheses, 1985, pp.326+347

<sup>76</sup> cf. Black et al., Toward a Comprehensive Model of International Adjustment: 1991, p.293

expatriates. However, evidence suggests that adjustment processes may be more complex, differing under certain contextual, structural and personal conditions.<sup>77</sup> Another critical point is the expatriate's psychological strains and performance that might be influenced by adjustment.<sup>78</sup> Unfortunately, only little research has been conducted about the effects of time. If there is existing literature about time, it is limited to student samples, which cannot be applied to expatriates who are expected to be business people in their international assignment.<sup>79</sup>

Since the model is highly detailed, not all of the before mentioned terms will be applied later in the part of the analysis. Nevertheless, for having the sufficient background knowledge the author explained the totality of the model and not only parts of it. Thus, the “degree of adjustment” for the scope of the work was considered elementary and will appear in the later analysis. However, individuals might not be well prepared for a stay abroad. They can go through various different phases until adjustment was successful. A successful stay abroad in the authors' eyes is accomplished when the employee does not return early and achieves all pre-determined goals he had. In the following, the author explains the phenomenon of a culture shock.

#### 4.2 Culture Shock – U-Curve and W-Curve Model

As described previously, when individuals enter a new culture they find themselves at a loss in understanding the behavior patterns of the host country nationals and might misinterpret motives and responses of the host country nationals.<sup>80</sup> This occurrence, connected to cross-cultural adjustment is called culture shock, which was defined as the time of feeling anxious which occurs before an individual feels comfortable in a new culture.<sup>81</sup> The period until a person adjusts was divided into four different phases, the U-curve framework:

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<sup>77</sup> cf. Shaffer et al, Dimensions, determinants, and differences in the expatriate adjustment process, 1999

<sup>78</sup> cf. Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., What have we learned about Expatriate Adjustment?, 2004, p. 4

<sup>79</sup> cf. Black et al., Toward a Comprehensive Model of International Adjustment, 1991, p.307

<sup>80</sup> Thiagarajan, K.M., Cross-Cultural Training for Overseas Management, 1971, p.70

<sup>81</sup> cf. Oberg, K., Culture Shock: Adjustment to New Cultural Environments, 1960, pp.177-182

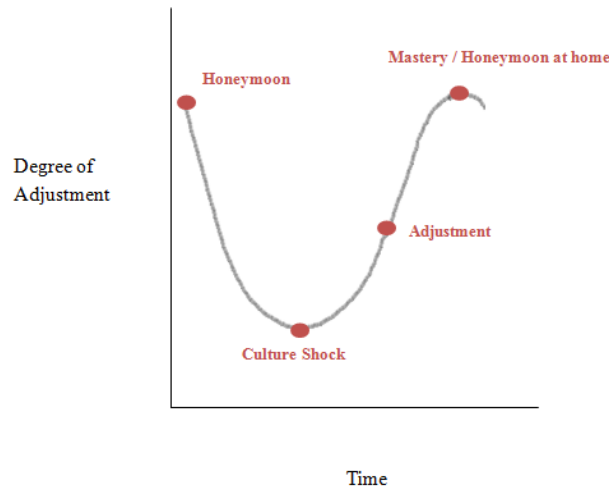


Figure 4: U-Curve of Adjustment<sup>82</sup>

Three basic causal explanations can describe the notion of a cultural shock: “the loss of familiar cues, the breakdown of interpersonal communications and an identity crisis.”<sup>83</sup> According to Oberg, an anthropologist who described the phases in the 1960’s, the first time in a new culture can be called honeymoon phase, which happens in the first three to four months, depending on the individual. The individual is “fascinated by the new in the first weeks”<sup>84</sup> and undergoes a more superficial experience with the new culture. Differences might be observed, but the optimism and excitement prevail.

The second phase begins on average after four to six months when the individual on a daily basis copes with the real conditions in the new environment. Characteristics of this stage are “a hostile and aggressive attitude towards the host country”<sup>85</sup>, anxiety and not knowing what is appropriate and what not - the culture shock. Opening to the new surrounding and the norms and values of the host country is the adjustment phase – the individual manages to act appropriate after 12 to 24 months averagely. In the last stage, the individual not only “accepts habits and customs of the new culture, but begins to enjoy them.”<sup>86</sup> In the mastery stage, which usually happens after 46 months and more the individual operates within the culture without anxiety and functions effectively.

<sup>82</sup> cf. Black, J.S., Mendenhall, M., The U-Curve Adjustment Hypothesis Revisited, 1991, p.227 and own illustration

<sup>83</sup> Weaver, G.R., Understanding and Coping with Cross-Cultural Adjustment Stress, 1994, pp. 169–189

<sup>84</sup> Oberg, K., Culture Shock: Adjustment to New Cultural Environments, 1960, pp.177-182

<sup>85</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> Oberg, K., Culture Shock: Adjustment to New Cultural Environment, 1960, pp.177-182

Primarily, this model is applied to employees who are assigned for a longer stay abroad by their companies, the expatriates.

Once the sojourner returns home, the two American psychologists Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1962) argue that he undergoes another culture shock.<sup>87</sup> In the extension of the U-curve to a W-curve, the bottom point of the curve is the strongest point and called “re-entry shock” or “reverse culture shock”.<sup>88</sup> The following figure illustrates the total picture of a culture shock:

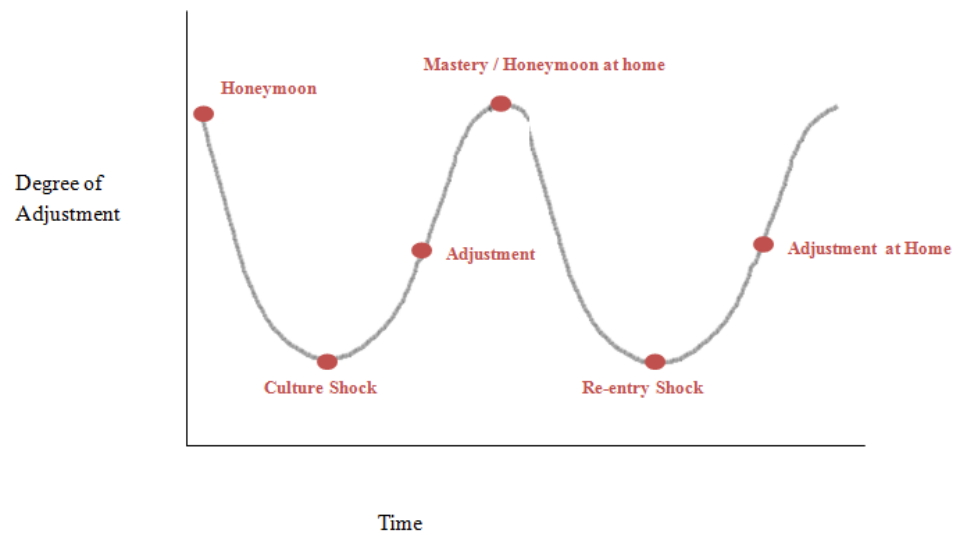


Figure 5: Extension of U-Curve to W-Curve of Adjustment<sup>89</sup>

The returned employee in the honeymoon phase at home feels happy to be back and “[...] looks forward to resume old contacts and habits, realize vocational ambitions and feels proud of the difficulties he had overcome during his stay abroad...[...]”.<sup>90</sup> Depending on each person, that phase can last from a few hours to one month.<sup>91</sup> After the euphoric condition, it can happen that the returner undergoes a feeling of depression, realizing that his expectations do not fulfill or the conditions in the home country have changed.<sup>92</sup> Within the second or third month at home, the individual can experience a re-entry shock and approximately, after six months the returned person is

<sup>87</sup> Gullahorn, J.R., Gullahorn, J.E., An Extension of The U-Curve Hypothesis, 1962, p. 34

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> cf. Gullahorn, J.R., Gullahorn, J.E., An Extension of The U-Curve Hypothesis, 1962, p. 40 and own illustration

<sup>90</sup> Kühlmann, T.M, Stahl, G., Die Mitarbeiterentsendung ins Ausland, 1995, p. 179

<sup>91</sup> cf. Adler, N.J., International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior, 2001, p. 284

<sup>92</sup> cf. Kühlmann, T.M, Stahl, G., Die Mitarbeiterentsendung ins Ausland, 1995, p. 179

adjusted at home again.<sup>93</sup> As it has also been said in the previous model, the U-Curve and W-curve mainly serve as an indication for the process over time an individual might go through.

Critics are that the outcome and development of the cultural shock are influenced to a great part by personal and situational factors. Besides, empirical studies do not regularly show that a stay abroad starts with the honeymoon-phase of optimism and fascination.<sup>94</sup> The dangers of having depressions or losing one's integrity need to be considered as well since they can cause a downfall which may never let the person come to the next phase. Additionally, the model was criticized for being too weak and for over-generalizing the phenomenon.<sup>95</sup> Nevertheless, the model can be utilized as a general orientation in the acquaintance of a cultural shock, and for the frame of the work, the author considered it an important factor in adjustment. Companies can influence the positive outcome of adjustment by providing their staff members with an appropriate support, which includes training. The next paragraph describes the notion of cross-cultural training and illustrates the different approaches.

#### 4.3 Cross – Cultural Training

Decades ago, companies did not consider cross-cultural training important before sending their employees on an international assignment. In some cases, organizations gave short orientation programs that educated their employees about the economic conditions, law, politics, customs and manners, and business practices of the country in which they will live and work.<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, employees were encouraged to learn the language of the host country.<sup>97</sup> Nowadays, training is a crucial factor for the success of a stay abroad because it can enable “[...] the individual to learn both content and skills that will facilitate effective cross-cultural interaction by reducing misunderstandings and inappropriate behaviors [...]”.<sup>98</sup> High return rates in the past, tremendous costs for companies and the negative image an early return of an employee can leave behind demands for a better support through the organization. One goal of

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<sup>93</sup> cf. Adler, N.J., *International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior*, 2001, p. 284

<sup>94</sup> cf. Kim, Y., *Intercultural Adaptation*, 1989, pp. 275 - 295

<sup>95</sup> Ward, C. et al., *Psychology of Culture Shock*, 2001, pp. 178ff

<sup>96</sup> Thiagarajan, K.M., *Cross-Cultural Training for Overseas Management*, 1971, p.69

<sup>97</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> Black, J.S./Mendenhall, M., *Cross-Cultural Training Effectiveness*, 1990, p.120



cross-cultural training is to raise the cultural awareness, meaning the individual becomes aware of the assumptions and values of his own culture group to be able to understand and appreciate cultural differences between himself and the host nationals<sup>99</sup> and hence avoid critical situations like the before mentioned. Furthermore, an individual overwhelmed by a new culture will be unable to perform required work duties effectively.<sup>100</sup> Another goal is the before described degree of adjustment which can be an indication of a successful stay abroad.

A variety of training techniques that prepares individuals for an international work assignment and thereby reduce the level of a culture shock are available. To distinguish cultural training methods, Prof. Dr. Tung (1987) implemented a complementary classification for such training. The following listing is based on her work “Expatriate Assignments: Enhancing Success and Minimizing Failure”<sup>101</sup>:

- Area studies/documentary programs: expose people to a new culture through written materials on the host country’s geography, economics, and cultural institutions (for example information booklet or guide book)
- Culture assimilator: programmed instruction method that exposes trainees to specific incidents critical to successful interaction with a target culture
- Language preparation
- Sensitivity training: people's self-awareness shall be increased
- Field experiences: exposing trainees to mini-cultures within their own country during short field exercises

For this paper, the basic assumption was that most of the globally operating companies, which will be surveyed, do already use such training methods. It was more important to find out in which stage of the stay abroad the training takes place. Hence, another distinguishing factor was time. The author divided the assignment of an individual into three parts: before the stay abroad, during and after the time of foreign work assignment. **Before** the stay can be defined as a certain length of time the firm gives the individual to get prepared through cross-cultural training methods for his work related stay abroad. **During** the assignment means for the duration of the work

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<sup>99</sup> cf. Thiagarajan, K.M., Cross-Cultural Training for Overseas Management, 1971. p.74

<sup>100</sup> Early, C.P., Intercultural Training for Managers, 1987, p.686

<sup>101</sup> cf. Tung, R.L., Expatriate Assignments, 1987, p. 120

assignment in another country where another language is spoken and another culture is prevailing. **After** the mission is the period when the individual finds himself no longer in the expatriate status, but returns in his home country and merges into his old or new job position in the parent company.

A literature review shows that there have been several studies evaluating best practices of cross-cultural training. The two researchers Parker and Evoy (1993) for instance found out that the time spent with other expatriates is negatively related to the general adjustment; consequently, they see the time spent with host country nationals positively related to the general adjustment of the individual.<sup>102</sup> By examining spouse adjustment, Shaffer et al. (1999) detected that spouse adjustment has a positive relation to general adjustment of the expatriate as well as language fluency.<sup>103</sup>

As a summary and referring to the work of the two authors Littrell & Salas, in which they review cross-cultural trainings, the following guideline, according to their paper has proofed itself to be effective regarding the preparation of an expatriate:

Design	Delivery	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adjust length of training based upon features of assignment</li> <li>Determine whether cross-cultural training should be culture-general or culture specific</li> <li>Offer CCT to expatriates and family members</li> <li>Have the human resource department play a large role in planning and implementing the CCT intervention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tailor delivery strategy according to goals of training</li> <li>Keep international staff members up to date on home organization issues</li> <li>Provide expatriate with personalized coaches</li> <li>Offer CCT prior to departure and at arrival</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate CCT program each time it is implemented</li> <li>Use numerous criteria to evaluate success and/or failure</li> <li>Conduct surveys to assess the expatriate's satisfaction with the training and the overall assignment</li> </ul>

Table 1: Cross-Cultural Guideline<sup>104</sup>

<sup>102</sup> cf. Parker, B, McEvoy, G.M., Initial Examination of a Model of Intercultural Adjustment, 1993, p.368

<sup>103</sup>cf. Shaffer, et al., Dimension, Determinants and Differences in the Expatriate Adjustment Process, 1999, p.559

<sup>104</sup> Littrell, L.N., Salas, E., A Review of Cross-Cultural Training, 2005, p. 315 and own illustration

## 5 Methodology of Survey

In this chapter, the methodology of the conducted survey shall be explained briefly, describing the research method, data collection and the program chosen. Afterwards, the collected data shall be analyzed. Furthermore, it shall be mentioned that the author considered the before displayed recommendations for the companies' questionnaire, and created it according to the explained criteria. Hereby, an overall picture of the organizations' trainings can be given.

### 5.1 Research Method and Data Collection

In order to find out about the programs offered by companies in Southern Germany the author decided to approach them by a **quantitative research**. This method was chosen because it is measurable and objective. Furthermore, the research questions focused rather on which programs have been used and how many of them are utilized in a company instead of why (qualitative research). Another reason for choosing a quantitative approach is the value-free and unbiased facts it reveals and that it strives for generalization – reasoning is logistic and deductive.<sup>105</sup> Questions have been pre-determined and derive partly from literature review as well as research which was done before. Thus, the setting is highly controlled and outcome orientated.<sup>106</sup>

The **data collection** took place among companies located in the German Southern state Baden-Württemberg. From a list called “The biggest companies in Baden-Württemberg” (Appendix 1) which had been accessed online, 63 companies have been elected and been contacted by email (see Appendix 2 for a list of contacted companies). As described in the downloaded list, the listed companies need to fulfill basic requirements: their headquarters have to be located in Baden-Württemberg and they have at least 1,000 workplaces in total to offer, or a worldwide sales volume (including all subsidiaries and consolidated firms) of minimum 500 Million Euro. Thus, the author's requirements for participating firms were fulfilled. By using the impersonal

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<sup>105</sup> Anderson, J.D., Qualitative and Quantitative research, 2006, p.4

<sup>106</sup> *ibid.*

email contact form, the likelihood of a high amount of participants was higher than through a personal approach, having the objective of a representative result in mind.

## 5.2 Questionnaire

The author attempted to find out about the companies' adjustment process of expatriates through a **questionnaire** (Appendix 3). As mentioned above, the questions were designed based on previous research, which was found in the existing literature. Five questions were considered sufficient for ascertaining the methods for the adjustment of internationally assigned employees. The questionnaire was implemented in German since the survey took place in Germany, assuming it more convenient for participants answering German questions. Furthermore, the questions had pre-determined answers. Participants could choose between checking at least one answer or several, having the option of adding further information in an open-answer field. This approach also allowed limiting the amount of questions since choices were given. Sending out the questionnaire via email (Appendix 4) in the last November week, the selected companies had time until the middle of December to take part in the survey. After seven days, the author sent a reminder email (Appendix 5), asking the companies for their support as long as they have not had participated yet. The expectations with reference to the result and the return rate were little, which was caused through previous readings in which the return rates of surveys were rather low.

## 5.3 Data Analysis

Using an online program for the survey, the companies remained anonymous while answering the questions. The program shows a report of the survey, displaying the completed responses and the number of survey visits. From the 63 companies, which were asked to fill out the questionnaire, 30 completed the survey, which results in a response rate of almost 50%. To visualize it, both charts and data will support the later analysis.

The following part of the analysis will be responsive to the methodology, which was used to find out about the aspects of adjustment companies in Baden-Württemberg utilize when sending their employee to one of their subsidiaries in the world. Furthermore, additional characteristics of the companies not revealed through the survey will be provided.

## 6 Analysis

The part of the analysis included in the thesis will connect previous defined terms with the given results and have a closer look at the survey on the following pages. Particularly, the author will examine the respondent companies of Baden-Württemberg and will provide further information. Having the background knowledge of the adjustment model, the training methods companies utilize shall be discussed. Nevertheless, the information shall not be over-interpreted. Naturally, companies considering their training methods to be good rather participated in that survey than others which still need to improve or change their preparation. Hence, the willingness of participants answering the questionnaire should be kept in mind throughout the part of the analysis.

### 6.1 Analysis of Companies

To give an idea of the companies, which were asked to participate in the survey, information was gathered and evaluated. It is important to note that the author had searched all ensued information regarding the organization's sales volume, employee number, and further characteristics on the internet through the companies' websites (Appendix 6). That means that the companies themselves on their web pages had provided the data. Thus, the data is from a secondary research. Any additional sources such as other web pages, personal interviews or phone calls found no application to the process of gathering information. Thus, the report might be not complete because the information was not accessible or not published.

After gathering first information about the companies, the author removed some of them from the list due to the criteria they had to fulfill: preferably, to have a representative result, the firms needed to dispose a subsidiary abroad. Since the survey was anonymous for the companies, it was not possible to characterize singly the questioned companies. Hence, the next overview of data shall present the total amount of the firms and will not be restricted to the 30 participants. When companies consisted of several subsidiaries, the author chose data of the consolidated group of the year 2012 in order to maintain the international aspect of this thesis. A brief summary can be seen on the following table.

Total: 63 = 100%  
 Respondents: 30 = 49.20%

Branch	Number	Percentage	Employees (Average)		Sales Volume (Average)/Mio. EURO	
			for less than 10.000	for more than 10.000	for less than 1.000	for more than 1.000
Automotive	37	58.73%	58.73%	3,626.00	104,880.00	418.31
Medical	6	9.52%	9.52%	5,100.00	229,61.00	235.00
Others	6	9.52%	9.52%	3,857.00	24,000.00	513.00
Mechanical Eng.	3	4.76%	4.76%	5,113.33	0.00	240.00
Nutrition	3	4.76%	4.76%	2,500.00	18,923.00	838.00
Construction	3	4.76%	4.76%	2,200.00	51,966.00	535.00
Doors/windows	2	3.17%	3.17%	3,567.00	0.00	699.00
Sensors	2	3.17%	3.17%	1,700.00	10,000.00	341.00
Assembly	1	1.58%	1.58%	1,005.00	0.00	130.00

Table 2: Summary of all questioned companies<sup>107</sup>

The exact return rate of the questionnaire was 49.20%. This result exceeded the author's expectations and might indicate the organization's demand for intercultural training literature since the existing research mainly covers the years 1990 until 2000. Within the scope of that literature, it most of the time referred to American organizations and expatriates. Furthermore, it proofs the effectiveness of the previous described method (reminder email) and reflects the interest of the participants on the topic.

#### 6.1.1 Facts and Figures

Primarily, information about the "hard facts" of the firms, including numbers such as sales volume or amount of employees as well as the branch they are operating in will be summarized briefly. Attached on appendix 1, the overview of all companies is to be found in an excel sheet which was not possible to insert in the paper due to the large amount of data. Later, "soft facts" such as the company culture or prevailing values will be analyzed. For a better readability, the following paragraph was divided into different parts, representing the sectors the companies operate in.

<sup>107</sup> Collected data of all websites listed in the reference list. Own illustration

## 1) Automotive Sector

Out of all companies, more than half (in total 37) can be classified within the Automotive Supplier area. Most of the mechanical engineering companies or producers do not focus singly on the automotive industry. Nevertheless, they either supply components, sensors or gear shifts, or provide automotive suppliers with machines or their knowledge in project interaction. It is not surprising that the automotive suppliers internationalize their production sites since they find themselves under a continuous price pressure from car manufacturers.<sup>108</sup> When considering China as a location for producing for example, it is an attractive region due to relatively low labor costs and the higher flexibility when reactions are needed in terms of volume fluctuations.<sup>109</sup> Within this sector, one can see a quite diversified picture: firms either form automotive suppliers, dealing with conversion technology, auto body and interior, or components or actually build cars themselves.

A remarkable fact is that some of these companies within the Automotive Supplier branch are Hidden Champions. Herrmann Simon first used that term in 1990 and set up certain criteria the firm has to fulfill for being a hidden champion:

- The company (mid-size) has to be first, second or third within the market share on the global market or first on their home continent
- Their annual sales volume is lower than three billion Euro
- To the public they mostly remain unknown<sup>110</sup>

Presenting that fact on a webpage, these companies make the impression of being proud on what they have achieved and they seem to advertise with the term, too. Their idea might be to both attract customers and especially employees. Differences are obvious when looking into the figures: a group of eight companies, standing out due to their surpassing numbers, the average employee amount is 77,476. Compared to the other group in which the employee mean value is 3,456, it is 22 times higher. Generally, the automotive companies show a quiet homogenous picture. Each company manufacturers or offers another service and product. That high level of consensus

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<sup>108</sup> cf. Kaufmann, L., Jentzsch, A., Internationalization Processes, 2006, p. 52

<sup>109</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> cf. Simon, Hermann: Hidden Champions des 21. Jahrhunderts, 2007, p.11+p.29

might indicate that each company operates in its own niche regarding the products or services, but is settled under the roof of the automotive industry. Additionally, the sales volume, which is almost increasing in accordance to the amount of staff members, could be an indicator for the homogeneity. That means firms with little amount of workers also have a rather decent sales volume and vice versa. All of the companies are located on the continents Europe and Asia. Three companies have no location on the Northern American continent whereas five companies do not operate on the Southern continent.

## **2) Medical and Pharmaceutical Sector**

The Medical and Pharmaceutical branch shows a diversified picture: none of the six companies has the same amount of employees. The figure starts at 1,500 for the smallest company, and in steps of 3,000, it increases up to 13,000. After that amount, only one company counts more than 45,000 workers and has the highest sales volume of 5,047 Million Euro. One explanation might be the products each company is specialized in. Starting with the smallest company, it produces packaging machines for the pharmaceutical branch. One firm is a manufacturer of endoscopes; the other produces medical- and hygiene products or fabricates medicine.

## **3) Others**

The following group consists of six extremely divergent firms the author could not allocate in any other sector. The Others' businesses range from producer for micro batteries, air cabin manufacturer, to steel recycler, or wood manufacturing. This heterogeneous group counts an average employee number of 7,214.

## **4) Mechanical Engineering (not operating in the Automotive Sector), Building and Construction, Nutrition and Beverages Sector**

Each of the Mechanical Engineering, the Building and Construction and the Nutrition and Beverages branch, consists of three companies. Figures are highly diversified, ranging from 5,113 staff members (Mechanical Engineering), to 13,449 (Nutrition and Beverages) up to 18,789 in the Construction and Building area. The three branches shall not be compared here, but shortly be presented since the main focus lies on the



supplier branch for the automotive sector with reference to the high amount of companies operating in that sector.

### 5) Doors and Windows, Sensors and Electrics, Assembly Sector

Taking a closer look at the last sectors, five companies out of the total amount of 63 are distributed in the Doors and Windows Manufacturing, Sensors producers or Assembly companies. They all together have had a sales volume of 3,563 Million Euro in the year 2012 and employed 19,839 people.

As a summary, the automotive sector had the biggest return rate, which is why it makes sense to focus on that branch in the following. Established by previous reading and knowledge about the state Baden-Württemberg, the author expected to have small to medium sized businesses (colloquially called family businesses) in many cases responding to the survey. However, according to the legal definition<sup>111</sup>, the amounts of employees as well as the sales volume do not fulfill these requirements. These high figures might be explainable through the internationalization process automotive suppliers find themselves in as explained previously. By expanding their businesses, companies most likely do not count in only German employees in the German locations anymore. Thus, the enterprises may legally not be seen as family businesses, but the way the companies are organized, create values and live philosophies can still be seen as a family organizational culture. That statement will be further discussed in the next paragraph. It takes into account the “soft part” of the company, meaning philosophies, values or behavior lived within the firm. These terms can be combined within the notion of the company/organizational culture and will be evaluated in the following section.

#### 6.1.2 Organizational Culture

When browsing through the automotive companies’ websites, easily one can find information about how the organization works on the inside and outside. Especially on

<sup>111</sup> German Commercial Code differentiation of incorporated enterprises

Type	Employees		Sales Revenue in Mio. EURO		Balance Sheet Total In Mio. EURO
Small enterprise	< 50	or	< 9,68	or	< 4,84
Midsized enterprise	<= 250	or	<= 38,5	or	<= 19,25
Large enterprise	> 250	or	> 38,5	or	> 19,25

the career websites, the firms' culture is published and accessible for everyone. This shows the significance a company culture has for both members within the organization as well as outside. For the research, the author examined all of the 37 firms, which had been detected as companies operating in the automotive sector.

It is important to note that all gathered information has been compiled and elected according to the frequency of existing keywords. Due to the secondary research type, which did not include a direct survey about the organizational culture, there is a likelihood that it does not create an overall prevailing picture of the companies. Precisely, the paragraph intends to give the automotive sector a common organizational culture. Carefully, the author created a pattern of artifacts and behaviors, espoused values and basic assumptions through all given information. As defined before, all these key words and characteristics found on the internet were developed by a given group (the companies) as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration. It was assumed that the mentioned characteristics worked well enough to be considered valid. Therefore, they are taught and accessible to potential new members of the companies. However, culture is the learned and shared understanding among a group of people, operating largely on an unconscious level. Hence, the given analysis of the company culture needs to be interpreted on a general scale. The automotive sector as a group is in accordance to the described values, behaviors and artifacts, but this does not necessarily mean that each company is exactly as described, since culture is not applicable to the individual, but demonstrates itself in an orientation system typical for a nation, society, organization or group.

According to the definition given in point 3.2 on page 10, the questioned firms will be evaluated with reference to their culture through a secondary research approach. Special focus is on the automotive suppliers forming the largest part of all firms.

### **1) Third Level: Artifacts and Behaviors**

Starting at the third level, which included the artifacts and behaviors, the gathered visible elements among the firms are for example the thought that the *customer determines the acting of the company*. That means the firms consider success as being dependent on the customer. This confirms also the idea of orientation to the market, meaning that organizations measure themselves on the best or aim to be the best or the

orientation to the customer. Especially for the part of the suppliers in the automotive branch, being a reliable partner is a crucial factor for success.

One of the obvious artifacts, which are also visible to members not belonging to the culture, is the *quality management*. Almost all of the companies have one or more ISO certificates or at least publish their certification online. Hereby, companies obviously can guarantee to be a reliable partner in the tough automotive sector and furthermore guarantee to produce safe parts, confirmed by an external force. Additionally, the idea of *taking care of the environment* has grown steadily within the last years. To produce auto parts in an environment-friendly process gives the organization an advantage over others and is a behavior obvious to external persons.

Another visible characteristic is the *cultural diversity* most of the companies set store by. They see a large benefit in diverse teams among employees, which may let conclude that the cross-cultural training in companies having a great cultural diversity for an expatriate is well organized and includes all the before mentioned characteristics. One more aspect, which can be listed in the third level of an organizations' culture, is the *code of conduct* or *compliance guideline*. By following certain rules and regulations, employees and supervisors can orientate themselves better in the company. Particularly when regarding the subsidiary abroad it is a helpful factor for an expatriate to have the same code of conduct at the host country subsidiary like in the parent company. Hence, the organization puts the parent companies' culture into an international context. That approach is called ethnocentric, which means organizations follow ethnocentric staffing. They transfer company specific knowledge mainly by sending expatriate managers and specialist from the parent company to the subsidiaries abroad.<sup>112</sup>

Finally, the *work-life balance* becomes increasingly important for individuals, no matter if they work in Germany or in a company abroad. The term describes methods mostly utilized in the human resource sector, which lead to a better compatibility of working and private life.<sup>113</sup> This does not only include the organization of working time or installing a workplace nursery, but also to offer sports programs or to take care of the health of the employees.

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<sup>112</sup> cf. Kidger, P.J., Human Resource Management in Multinational Enterprises, 1999, p.204

<sup>113</sup> cf. Schwuchow, K., Gutmann, J., Jahrbuch Personalentwicklung 2011 pp.25-31

## 2) Second Level: Espoused Values

Regarding the second level within an organizations' culture, the espoused values are described, administering rules of behavior. Many times the notion "*family business*" appeared, stating the family atmosphere in the company and the flat hierarchies that exist, making the communication easier and decisions taking much faster. In the theoretical part of the thesis, the leadership identification as one way of how a company culture originates was described. That is congruent to the findings on the companies' web pages, where mostly the grandfather or father founded the organization and hence influences the growth with his beliefs, assumptions and values. Thus, although companies might not be listed legally as mid-size companies, their leadership style can be defined as family business orientated.

Additionally, the *value and service orientation* is another important value for many firms, trying to promote and challenge not only the quality of each product but also the employees' work quality. Subsequently, the organizations also expect their employees to think not only for themselves, but also for the benefit of the company. Being an *entrepreneur within the enterprise*, the firms consider another important value. The sense of responsibility is delegated to all members of the organization.

*Training* the employees consequently and being trained is a valuable aspect. Not only do the companies support their staff members in being trained, but they also expect each person to actively sign up for trainings. An interesting characteristic of German companies generally is the idea of not hiring skilled workers right away, but training young people at the age of approximately 16 years and hire them as an apprentice. Doing an *apprenticeship* gives young people the opportunity to learn the very basics at the beginning and become a skilled worker within three years. Usually, after finishing the apprenticeship the persons are being hired as normal workers and are considered a great value to the company.<sup>114</sup> Since they have been gone through different departments they have a large view into the company structures and grow within the given company culture. This system is commonly practiced in industrial sectors among the blue collar technical and mechanical work. It helps creating a large internal job market<sup>115</sup> and

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<sup>114</sup> cf. Agentur für Arbeit, Ausbildung, 2013

<sup>115</sup> *ibid.*

strives against the existing skilled worker shortage in Germany.<sup>116</sup> Having an *open orientation* to different cultures and countries and bringing the company culture in the international context of the organization is an indispensable aspect in nowadays business of automotive suppliers because the competition in Germany is big. Hence, the value behind it is being able to operate globally to maintain a successful business and even increase sales volume in the optimum.

### 3) First Level: Basic Assumptions

The first and deepest level of organizational culture is the basic assumptions. They are difficult to perceive within the culture and deeply integrated in the company structure. Thus, it is not as obvious as the other levels and more difficult to describe. Nevertheless, it shall be intended to give a deeper view into these organizations and to extract certain information from the websites fulfilling the described picture of organizational culture.

This leads to one of the first characteristics that have been mentioned frequently by companies: *responsibility*. Firms find it positive when employees are proactive and act in a responsible and sustainable way. Subsequently, organizations want to trust their members and consider it to be a valuable characteristic both inside and outside the organization. Additionally, this creates a positive and pleasant working atmosphere within which the potential of each employee can be developed. To be *open to new thoughts and new cultures* is another assumption, which could describe the companies' culture.

Another characteristic and a shared thought among members within the organizations located in the South of Germany is that there are mandatory rules everyone follows. As described previously, the code of conduct helps as an orientation system and serves almost like a tacit agreement among company members. However, there are also other underlying rules such as to appreciate success, other members in the company or a good partnership with cooperating firms. Additionally, *integrity*, which means to be adhering to moral rules, completes the picture of the unwritten rules prevailing in the organizations. Giving *fair chances* to all employees can be added to the list as well,

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<sup>116</sup> cf. Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, Ausbildung - eine Investition in die Zukunft, 2007

meaning that every staff member has the same chance to work oneself up to higher position through hard work and proofing oneself. This can only happen with ambition, which can be seen as another valuable and appreciated characteristic. Hereby, employees are given the opportunity to also bring their own ideas and thoughts into the operating business.

As the organizational culture has been evaluated previously, the next paragraph focuses on the evaluation of the given answers in the survey. The main objective was to find out about the formal elements of adjustment. This means another description for different training methods like they were described in the theoretical part of the work. According to this definition and guideline, the questionnaire results will be analyzed in the following.

## 6.2 Analysis of Results – Cross-Cultural Adjustment and Training

For a better overview, the paragraph was separated into three parts according to the design of the questionnaire. The period before, during and after the foreign assignment is in the focus of this work and will now be analyzed referring to adjustment and training. Contrarily to the organizational culture that was accessed through the companies' webpages, the following analysis is based on primary research through the conducted survey. Due to the anonymity of the survey, it was not possible to state whether the companies operate in the automotive sector or not. However, since automotive firms form the largest part of participants, the likelihood is high that the answers derive from those organizations.

### 6.2.1 Before the Foreign Assignment

Remembering the framework model for adjusting in a new environment, the in-country adjustment is given a high priority. Nevertheless, it is considered a crucial factor for the effectiveness of adjustment when the expatriate receives previous preparation as mentioned previously. Hence, the first question of the survey asked for the type of preparation the employee is offered before the stay abroad. The first chart when taking a closer look shows a remarkable picture.

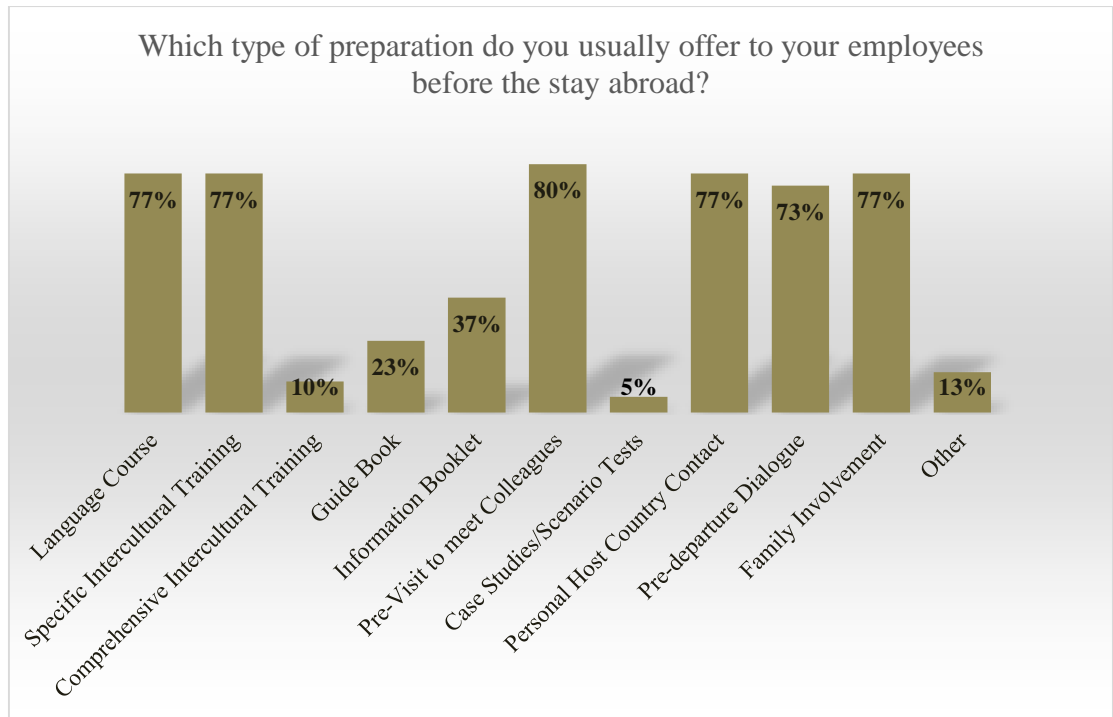


Figure 6: Preparation Employees Receive (Question 1)<sup>117</sup>

Almost all companies agree on the same preparations which are in the first place “Getting to know the future colleagues through a pre-visit”, followed by “Language Course”, “Specific Intercultural Training (for one culture and not several)”, “Personal Contact Person in the Host Country” and “Involvement of the Family/Spouse”. Only one company applies a “Case-Study/Scenario-Training”. A few companies gave additional answers to these questions, including for example “Safety Trainings for employees” or “Medical Preparation (Information about Health Care System)”.

Four of the five dominating answers were each chosen by 77 per cent of the companies and are all in accordance to the training techniques described earlier in the work. Those allow a proper language preparation to act efficiently in the host country. Additionally, the specific intercultural training can increase the self-awareness of the own culture as well as the awareness of another culture. This approach can be seen as congruent to the earlier mentioned guideline of efficient training methods since it provides for a determination according to organizational and expatriate needs whether cross-cultural

<sup>117</sup>Own illustration based on survey conducted through Zoho

training should be culture-general or culture specific. As described earlier in the work, the human nature represents what all people share, no matter which nation they come from: they have in common the ability to feel joy or anger, to communicate or to generally associate with other human beings. An intercultural training can draw attention to this universal aspect, making the future sojourner calmer and, in case less anxious about the imminent stay abroad.

Another aspect that appeared in the guideline was the recommendation to offer cross-cultural training to expatriates and accompanying family members as 77 per cent of the organizations do so. This displays the organization's priority of making the foreign work assignment as comfortable as possible not only for the employee, but also for his family members. If the wife or children do not feel well in the new environment, it can have a negative influence on the expatriate himself, paralyzing his progress or distracting him from his work. The increasing importance of a proper preparation shows a larger awareness of cultural issues an individual can have when he is obligated to deal with people from another culture. The sojourners' accompanying persons and he cannot rely on a mutual understanding anymore when encountering a person from another. The training can sensitize himself and his family to deviations in the behavior of the counterpart. This concept emphasizes the before mentioned work-life balance as a characteristic of the organizational culture.

Eighty per cent of the participating firms give the sojourner the possibility to get to know his future colleagues in the host country through a pre-visit. This method shows that success is being measured not only in figures, but also in the satisfaction of the staff members. Thus, this lets assume that companies realized how much influence a well working team has on the success outcome. By providing the opportunity to get to know the people the expatriate will work with beforehand, they might increase the possibility for efficient working and a positive working atmosphere as it has also been mentioned in the organizational culture part of the work. The firms hereby draw a coherent picture.

The organizations also consider the dialogue before departure (for example about expectations) as a characteristic, which may not be left out when having pre-departure training. Seventy-three per cent talk to their employees before the stay abroad. Since it



is a dialogue, it was assumed that the atmosphere is more of a personal nature. This could be an indicator for the family business structures, which many companies still try to maintain. By having a rather personal atmosphere within the company, it might be easier to not only talk about the positive expectations; employees might dare to talk openly about worries and anxious feelings they have when thinking of the impending foreign work assignment.

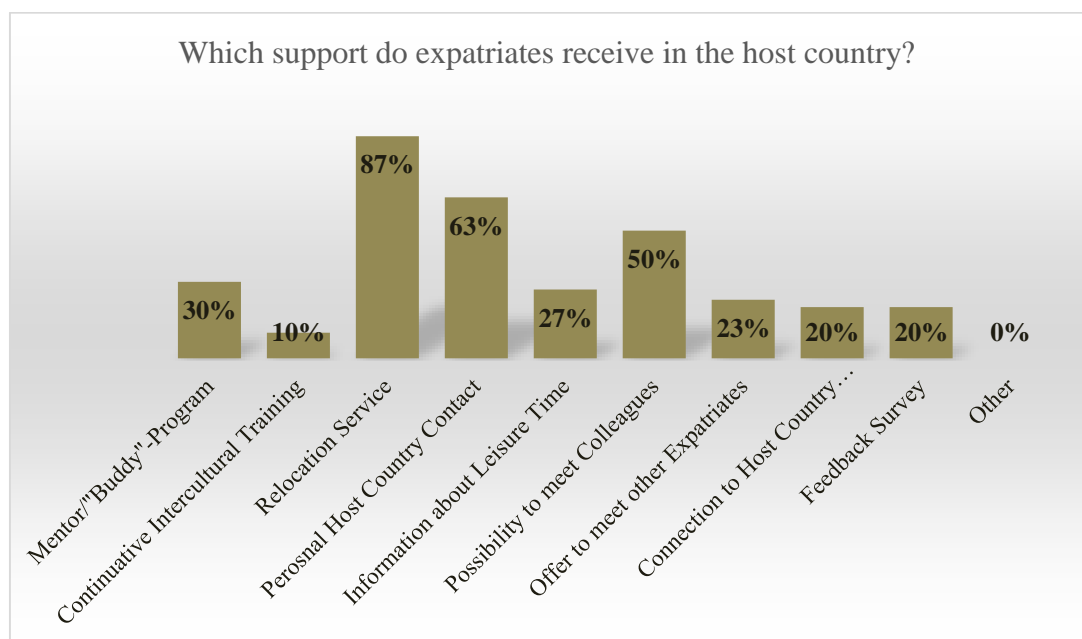
To distinguish between the next two answer possibilities was important. At first glance, the guidebook and the information booklets make the impression to have a similar goal. However, it has to be differentiated between one which is supposed to inform the expatriate about the specific norms and values of the host culture and the other which only gives a cursory look on the new surrounding (political system, health care system, shopping). Thirty-seven per cent of the firms decided for the information booklet that does not inform about specific cultural characteristics and 23 per cent for the guidebook, which does give information about the culture. The lower rate of 23 per cent can indicate that the specific cultural training already transmits the cultural part of norms and values. Hence, firms might consider the general knowledge about the country to have a high significance as well for the expatriates' orientation. This can be explainable through the responsibility characteristic the company cultures have. Not only do they feel responsible for transmitting certain information about values and behaviors, but also about where to get groceries, how to act in the case of an illness or the government system.

Below the mark of 15 per cent, one can find the comprehensive cultural training ten per cent of the firms are applying. Reasons for the low number can be that it is considered to be more effective having a specific training which prepares for one culture. Only five per cent of the firms provide case studies/scenario test. This could mean that the question had been misunderstood or, more likely that companies already include these case studies and tests in the intercultural training and do not separate both. Of course, it can also mean that this method is not applied at all. Other answers were for example medical and safety preparation, which the author assumed to be one bullet point within the information booklet.

Generally, the way the preparation is being handled in the organization is from a rather centralized nature. It seems that most of all the training techniques the Human Resource Department manages in the companies. By bringing activities together in one place, the guarantee for an efficient process is higher since decisions can be made faster due to shorter path and levels of decision-making.<sup>118</sup> Furthermore, the local and objective centralization allows quick changes or deviations in the program if necessary. Once more, having the centralized manner is in concordance to the cross-cultural training method guideline from chapter 4.3, which suggests to letting the Human Resource Department play a large role in planning and implementing the cross-cultural training intervention.

#### 6.2.2 During the Foreign Assignment

Different factors influence the degree to which the expatriate is adjusted in the host country as defined previously. Largely, the period in which the individual is actually in the country and surrounded by new behaviors customs and language is highlighted. Although it is important to provide preparation before leaving to a foreign country, the sojourner can eventually apply the learned methods better when once in the host country. The following chart shows all answers and tendencies of question 2.



<sup>118</sup> cf. Brockhaus, Zentralisierung, 2012

Figure 7: Support in the Host Country (Question 2)<sup>119</sup>

Beginning with the evaluation of the results referring to the cross-cultural adjustment, three different facets of in-country adjustment suggest achieving a large overall adjustment to the new country: work adjustment, interaction adjustment and general adjustment.

### **1) Work Adjustment**

The adaptation to new job tasks, work roles, and the new work environment are important characteristics for an expatriate's overall adjustment path. Thirty per cent of the companies offer a mentor- or "buddy" program through a person from the particular department. This complies with the organizations' culture factor which is social support (as to be seen on page 14 in figure 3: "Framework of International Adjustment"), given by coworkers who provide the expatriates with information about appropriate norms and behaviors. The best information source for proper behaving and the organization's culture in general are the people who work within this culture every day, executing and displaying the different levels of a company culture. Nevertheless, the employees do not only serve as an orientation for behavior in terms of the organizational culture, but for the national culture as well. Since culture is shared collectively only with people from a certain group, they can transmit for example the language, the deference to elder or the perception of general human activities as defined earlier. One may not forget, though that each person still has his own personality, which is partly learned within his culture, partly inherited and not shared with any other human being.

By implementing such a mentor- or "buddy" program, organizations trust their employees because the employee who performs the role of a mentor or "buddy" serves as a role model for a new member in the staff. This also promotes and challenges the worker, giving him the opportunity to act proactively by passing his skills to someone else. Additionally, the company appreciates his work since his experience and work results shall be an orientation for someone else. Both trust and promoting/challenging

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<sup>119</sup>Own illustration based on survey conducted through Zoho

are to be recovered in the organizations culture. When regarding the guideline for an efficient training, again firms considered the aspect of providing the expatriate with personalized coaches.

Another given answer option was giving the possibility to meet colleagues from the host country, which half of the companies indeed offer. The intention hereby was to find out if the companies establish a contact to colleagues outside the working life such as through common lunch or outdoor activities. For new employees it is helpful knowing the colleagues either from the department the expatriate is working in or other departments. It can strengthen the good and positive working atmosphere and the team spirit within the organization as well as create a rather personal ambience. Nevertheless, it might be seen as a misleading question. Since the sojourner meets his colleagues in any event at work, he already made contact himself. Thus, the question might have caused some bias among the answers.

The job factors as to be seen in figure three were not considered in the questionnaire. Within those, aspects such as role clarity, which means the exact understanding of position requirements, or differences between host and native country work roles are listed. However, for the context of the work that aims to analyze the formal aspects of adjustment it was not considered to be from great significance. Nevertheless, it shall be said that for example role clarity has a positive impact on adjustment<sup>120</sup> whereas role ambiguity or role conflict are negatively related to it.<sup>121</sup> Generally, Shaffer and Harrison (1998)<sup>122</sup> state that job satisfaction is positively correlated with general adjustment.

## **2) Interaction Adjustment**

To achieve a certain comfort in interacting with host nationals in both work and non-work situations, a crucial factor is to build a relationship to host country nationals. First, 63 per cent of the companies make sure that the employee who is sent abroad has a personal contact in the host country organization for any occurring problems or issues which could influence the expatriate's emotional condition negatively. Hereby,

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<sup>120</sup> cf. Shaffer, et al., Dimension, Determinants and Differences in the Expatriate Adjustment Process, 1999, p.565

<sup>121</sup> cf. Gregersen, H.B., Black, J.S., A Multifaceted Approach to Expatriate retention in International Assignments, 1990, pp. 461-485

<sup>122</sup> cf. Shaffer, M.A., Harrison, D.A., Expatriates' Psychological Withdrawal from International Assignments, 1998, pp. 87-118

organizations can avoid the costs of an early turnover of the employee as well as keep him updated about any news regarding the parent company. The expatriate is obligated to deal with the before defined cultural standards – through the host national contact he is able to gather information about the foreign culture, to explain the unfamiliar behavior of the interaction partner and to pay attention to the own intercultural orientation system and be able to reflect it.

Twenty-three per cent of the participating organizations offer the foreign assigned worker to meet other expatriates. This can be a very helpful support within the first days of being in the country. Not only have other expatriates made the same experiences concerning for example bureaucracy thematic, behaviors or language barriers, but they can also serve as a partner in overcoming the issues, which might arise. If the expatriate meets another foreign assigned worker from his own country, it can even be seen as a connection between homeland and new home country. Nevertheless, as mentioned before the time spent with other expatriates does not have a positive influence on the adjustment. For understanding the culture, it is important to build a relationship with groups of people who grew up in the host country culture. Only they can transmit the cultural standards, norms and values of both national and organizational culture as mentioned in the upper part. Unfortunately, only 20 per cent of the companies try to provide a connection to host country nationals. Especially the first steps of getting to know people are the most difficult.

Ten per cent of the companies continue the intercultural training when the employee has already started his foreign assignment. That low number indicates that the organizations consider the pre-departure intercultural training as sufficient. Nevertheless, the existing organizational or non-organizational culture novelty might demand for more training once the expatriate is in the country. Questions and foreign situations might occur which can be easily solved by a continuing training. Additionally, the cultural toughness (which describes the circumstance that it can be more difficult to adapt to one culture than to another) demands for a continuative training. As described previously, one goal of cross-cultural training is to raise the cultural awareness. Thereby, misunderstandings and inappropriate behavior can be reduced and critical situations avoided. Usually, one does not think consciously about his culture, unless he perceives it to be threatened by some external force or he is put

in a situation where he is in a cultural minority, such as during a foreign assignment. The individual becomes aware of certain assumptions and values of his own culture to be able to understand and appreciate cultural differences between himself and the host nationals. A continuative training is the ideal support for this process.

### **3) General Adjustment**

Considering the overall adaptation to living in the foreign culture, aspects such as housing conditions, health care, and cost of living play a major role. As a recommendation and shown in figure three on page 12 within the organization culture factor, organizations should offer logistical support. Indeed, 87 per cent of the companies offer a relocation service to their sent abroad employees. Through that relocation service, they receive support with moving, upcoming bureaucracy issues in the country or personal support. This allows a much more efficient adjustment in the new environment and gives the employee and his family some room for coping with the new culture. Furthermore, by making use of a relocation service the Human Resource Department is relieved of further tasks, which cost a lot of time.

However, the employee should not only feel comfortable at work but shall be able to continue his live in the most similar way as he has done it in the home country Germany. This includes any type of hobbies or interests in general. Therefore, almost a third (27 per cent) of all firms give out information on what to do during the leisure time. This can include information about sports, music or arts. Again, the phrase work-life balance as described already can be highlighted in this answer. It shall combine work life and private life on the best way by providing the possibility to relax from the working day through sports or other interests. Supplementary, already before the stay abroad the foreign assigned worker receives an information booklet consisting of information outside the subsidiary in the host country.

However, neither the continuative intercultural training for the expatriate himself nor the training for his family/spouse is considered during the residence. Although in the survey, there is no particular question asking for the family/spouse training, it can be assumed that since only ten per cent of the companies offer the continuing training for their employee, the likelihood might be even lower for spouse and family training. One can conclude from this that companies consider preparatory training more helpful and

effective. After all, during the foreign assignment a constitutive training can be helpful and supportive. Taking into account the training guideline in chapter 4.2, the training prior to departure is supposed to be followed immediately by arrival in the host country. Furthermore, types of perception, thinking, valuating and acting, which are considered to be typical or normal for the majority of people of one specific culture, the so-called cultural standards as described earlier in the work become apparent and can easily be explained again through an accompanying training.

Additionally, the U-curve model of adjustment, described earlier in the work supports the statement of a continuative training. Since the cultural shock mostly appears after four to six months of the stay in the new environment, particularly in this time the organization should be prepared for any additional help the employee needs.

Considering the fact that all the methods utilized before the stay abroad were much of a centralized nature, the methods during the stay seem rather localized. The Human Resource Department is still involved in the planning part of all procedures, but the three highest rated answers are in the end delivered by individuals in the particular department or generally in the host country. Especially the handling of the bureaucratic component is restricted to an agency resuming all incurred tasks. This can have advantages referring to the currentness of the delivered methods, which is easier when the employee is already in the country. Disadvantages hereby can be that the Human Resource Department loses part of the control over the procedure and cannot directly evaluate the success of the mentioned cross-cultural training methods.

### 6.2.3 After the Foreign Assignment

Since most of the available lecture mainly covers the period before/during the stay abroad, the author gave only little choice of answers to the participants in the questionnaire. This fact can explain the domination of two answers as to be seen on figure 8.

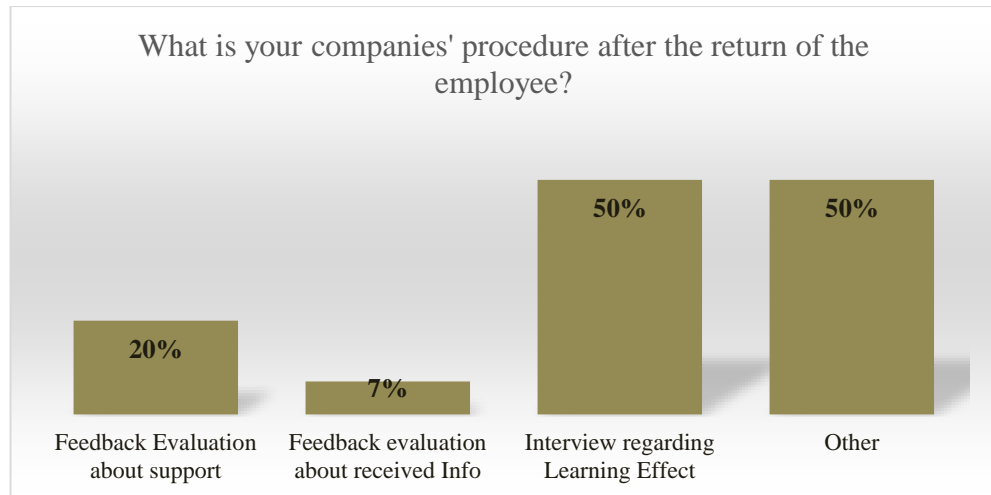


Figure 8: Procedure after the Return of the Employee (Question 5)<sup>123</sup>

One half of the participating companies do an interrogation with their employees, asking about the learning effect. Obviously, reasons for sending employees abroad are not only to pass on existing knowledge to the host country colleagues, but also to gain further expertise on certain topics. Bringing in recently learned topics in the mother company cannot only contribute to promote more skills among colleagues. It can also revitalize the working atmosphere through other points of view the expatriate has gained.

The other half of the participating organizations added some personal responses to the survey. In total, 16 additional answers had been given which were not included in the pre-determined options. Twelve respondents quoted that they conduct a personal feedback interview with their returning employees. Not in all cases, the Human Resource Department is responsible for that, but most of the time a member of the department launches the interview as the answers let assume. Two answers included a return seminar or both return- and restart seminar. Clearly, companies have comprehended how important the support after the foreign assignment is. By offering such seminars, firms make sure that they do not abandon their employee during the first days back in the home country and organization. To receive a good reintegration, which was an additional answer quoted by one firm, can make the start easier and less

<sup>123</sup>Own illustration based on survey conducted through Zoho



bumpy. Taking into account the W-curve model, a re-entry shock is avoidable through reintegration seminars or feedback evaluations. These methods can help the returned sojourner coping with any issues that might arise. One very interesting answer appears to be a unique and new model of foreign assignment: after the apprenticeship or studies, the particular company gives young people the opportunity to go “auf die Walz”.

This is especially supposed to develop the personality and promote a cultural advanced training. The concept derives from a medieval tradition<sup>124</sup>, which gains a special meaning in times of globalization since it becomes increasingly important to understand and comprehend other cultures. Within a two to three months stay in the elected country, the pioneer, as the person taking to the road is called, has to evaluate a topic chosen by him. Furthermore, he can gain cultural competence, develop his personality and bring forward himself and the global operating organization.<sup>125</sup> After his return, the organization conducts a specific evaluation, created in cooperation with the Fraunhofer Institute, a major research organization. The program indicates that the company understood where to start within the area of cross-cultural training: with the young generation in the firm. One can assume that for younger people it is easier to adapt to new surroundings, particularly when they have a task they have elected on their own. For any possible following foreign assignments, they are better prepared and know what to expect within the first days in a new country. An open orientation as one keyword on the organizational culture value list can be applied to that organization, bringing forward and supporting their employees in global thinking.

Twenty per cent of the participants arrange a feedback-evaluation about the support expatriates received during the stay in the host country. The relatively low number leads to the impression that the mere feedback conversation for 80 per cent of the participants is sufficient as an information source. The next question supports that assumption, which asked for a feedback-evaluation of provided information for the expatriate during the stay. Only seven per cent of the firms conduct such an evaluation. However, to evaluate the program each time it is implemented is seen as an important factor within the guideline for cross-cultural training. Furthermore, surveys should be

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<sup>124</sup> Explanation: „Auf die Walz gehen“ means the wandering of a journeyman after his completion of the trade test. He is “set free” by his supervisor and takes to the road. This tradition exists since the 12<sup>th</sup> century and shall mainly help the journeymen to get to know new regions, cultures and obtain new skills in their profession. (Rothe, T., Auf der Walz sein, 2013)

<sup>125</sup> cf. Wittenstein AG, Pioniere auf der Walz, 2013

conducted assessing the expatriate's satisfaction with the training and overall assignment. On this way, the organizations can guarantee to a great percentage that any individual on a foreign assignment will stay throughout the whole time and not return early. Thus, the money organizations invested in such assignments was invested effectively.

One gets the impression that the phase after the stay abroad can be described as decentralized. It seems that control is relinquished to other departments and hence takes some of the burden the Human Resource Department has in daily business operations.<sup>126</sup> This can be an advantage for the efficiency, but it can also cause less consensus of what needs to be done after the return. Obviously, the necessity of a definite return program needed to make sure an employee has a comfortable and good restart in his mother company has not yet become clear. Although organizations offer some arrangements, the methods lack from a particular guideline. Again, supported by the W-curve model of adjustment the urgency for such support is obvious. Although there is no cultural difference as in the situation when an expatriate enters a foreign culture, nevertheless he can experience difficulties during the first days back in his home country due to a lack of current understanding of his homeland. The colleagues and work surrounding might have changed during the time he was away and so did he.

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<sup>126</sup> cf. Brockhaus, Dezentralisation, 2012

## 7 Continuative Research Results

Within the analysis of the formal aspects of adjustment, it was not considered to include the time span of either the preparation or stay abroad. Nevertheless, as a matter of interest and completion of the survey interrogating formal aspects of adjustment, questions regarding the time were included. Thus, one question was created to examine the initiation of the before mentioned procedure of cross-cultural training. The following figure graphically shows the answer focal point:

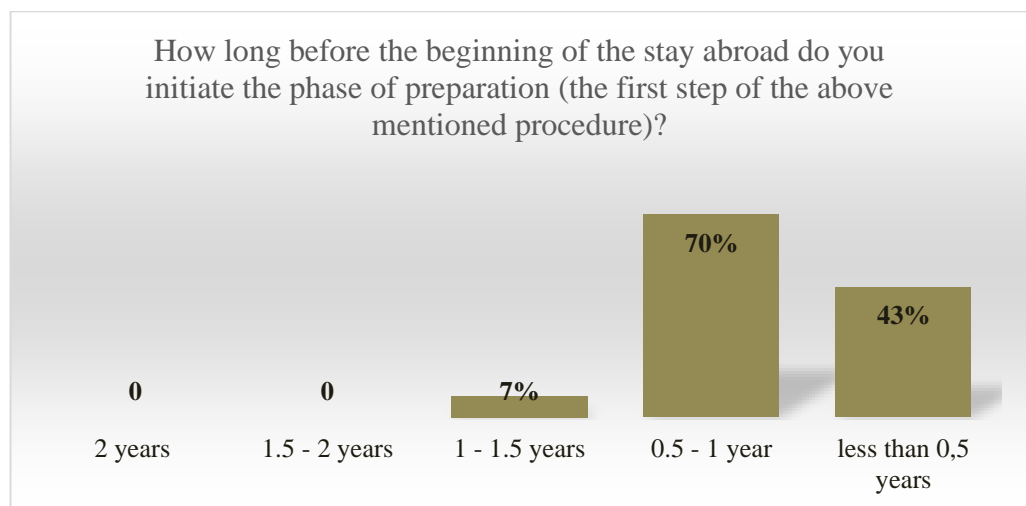


Figure 9: Start of Preparation Phase (Question 3)<sup>127</sup>

Almost 70 per cent of the 30 companies who had answered initiate the phase of preparation 0.5 to one year before the beginning of the stay abroad. However, 43 per cent start less than half a year before and only seven per cent are in the range of one year to 1.5 years beforehand. As shown in the result, prevalently the Human Resource Department coordinates the different processes before the assignment. The time frame of 0.5 to one year leaves enough room for in the first place centralized processes and secondly an accurate employee preparation. A shorter preparation bears the danger of an incomplete briefing. The next chart visualizes the time an employee spends abroad, showing a percentage that is not corresponding as much as in the figure before.

<sup>127</sup> Own illustration based on survey conducted through Zoho

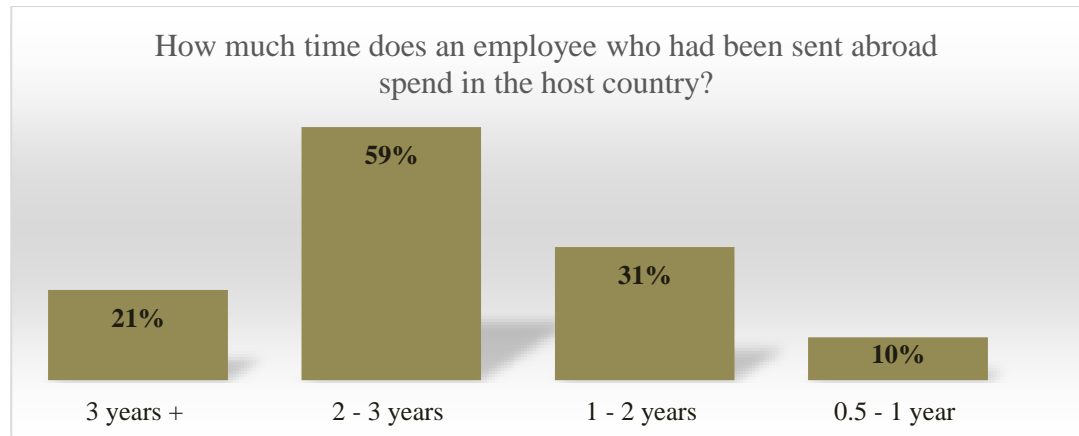


Figure 10: Time an Employee spends abroad (Question 4)<sup>128</sup>

The time an expatriate spends abroad varies greatly – in the majority of the cases, the employee who had been sent abroad stays between two or three years in the host country, followed by one to two years. Only little companies send their employees abroad for six months up to one year. However, as the U-Curve model indicates, it can take an individual up to 46 months and more to accept habits and customs of the new culture and to operate effectively within it. Thus, a period of two to three years of spending in another country increases the likelihood of a complete adjustment to the new surrounding for the individual.

David Rygl and Jonas F. Puck examined the effects of organizational culture on expatriates. In their survey “The Role of the Company Culture for Cultural Adjustment of Expatriates”,<sup>129</sup> they found several important correlations: the identification with the organizational culture is positively correlated to the work and general adjustment. When the individual can identify himself with the company culture, the team spirit makes him recognize several sequences of work and known standards, which affects him on a positive way. Regarding the general adjustment, the authors assume that due to the demographic situation of the expatriates in the survey (between 20 and 30 years old), there are many possibilities to spend time with people outside the working life. Furthermore, having high role clarity and a clear definition of the job can ensure a better adjustment to work. Providing support during the employee’s on-boarding time correlates positively with work adjustment.

<sup>128</sup> Own illustration based on survey conducted through Zoho

<sup>129</sup> cf. Rygl, D., Puck, J.F., Die Rolle der Unternehmenskultur für die kulturelle Anpassung von Entsandten, 2008

## 8 Conclusion and Discussion

In this chapter, a summary of the research as a whole will be presented and recommendations are discussed based on the research findings as well. Furthermore, suggestions for future research are given.

### 8.1 Summary and Recommendations

This research aimed to investigate all formal aspects, meaning the different training methods for international assignments companies in Baden-Württemberg apply. The objective was to find out what methods are applied and if firms consider these methods before, during as well as after the foreign assignment. Moreover, the author attempted to fill the gap between existing literature that shows the preparative training suggestions and a lack of material for the period during and after the stay. Questions were also asked with reference to the time span of preparative training and the period expatriates spend abroad. However, the focus was to discuss the formal aspects, which include questions of “how and when”, and not the time.

Based on the results of this research, the conclusion is that for the state Baden-Württemberg it is a representative result due to the high return rate. The quantitative data research method as well as the contact via email resulted in a high amount of participants as intended. Furthermore, the researcher was separated from the process, which makes it value-free. Based on the research results, the conclusion is as followed: **Before** the foreign assignment, most of the companies agree in their methods of preparing their foreign assigned employees. According to the survey, the existing preparation offers a good cultural background. Most likely companies offer language courses, specific cultural training, and the possibility to meet the new colleagues through a pre-visit, and so on. These methods facilitate the first days in the host country and pave the way for a successful stay abroad.

Nevertheless, some crucial characteristics for the phase **during** the assignment were not considered sufficiently according to the results. By providing a connection to host country nationals for example, the likelihood of adjusting faster during the stay abroad is high for the expatriate. Additionally, continuative training can be helpful for the

existing organizational or non-organizational culture novelty. An individual overwhelmed by a new culture will be unable to perform required work duties effectively and thus, can cause higher costs than expected. Typically, the companies apply methods such as a relocation service, a personal contact in the host country or the possibility to meet colleagues. Responsibility is assigned to other authorities, either externally through an agency helping with relocation or the personal contact/colleagues. Recommendations for the Human Resource Department in Germany are to keep track of all training methods enrolled in the host country. A stronger local support to host country nationals as well as the headquarter itself is recommended. Furthermore, the expatriate's family members should be involved in any type of corporate aid.

When the employee returns in the home country, the program needs an exact evaluation and numerous criteria to evaluate success and/or failure **after** the expatriate time. It is recommended that each time an employee is sent for a foreign assignment the program is analyzed. Surveys to assess the expatriate's satisfaction with the training and the overall assignment are important for other colleagues and employees who have an upcoming stay abroad. Not only can the Human Resource Department of the organization interrogate the expatriate himself, but his family members as well. Through them, the best possible aid can be identified for reintegrating everyone.

German companies, which send their employees abroad, are aware of the necessity of supporting their workers to achieve great results and avoid a failure of the project. Unfortunately, firms do not bail out all possible options in the right modality. A reason for this is that the situation in which the expatriate finds himself is underestimated or not properly analyzed. Nevertheless, and as a summary, companies perform well in their training methods and some even developed new approaches to a foreign assignment, despite the common literature advices.

However, and in contempt of the lack of existing literature about international assignments, there are few recommendations the author considered important to mention. Although the author did not further evaluate the recruitment process in the survey, it is though seen as an essential element in adjustment process and obviously needs to be taken in account. It forms one prerequisite for such assignments, selecting

not only the employee with the best technical skills, but also the one with an compatible personality. In the best case, this chosen employee has already been abroad for a longer time and can estimate what to expect. That is why the methodology of all phases serves best when the Human Resource Department is involved, initiates the phases of training and generates evaluations.

Another recommendation for an overall well working adjustment process is the adjustment model mentioned in the theoretical part that helps to maintain the overview of all factors which need to be considered. Therefore, the first step must be to evaluate the ideal selection mechanism and criteria for the person who will be sent abroad. Then the different in-country adjustment facets should be applied. The survey only asked for work, interaction and general adjustment. Hence, it is not possible to state whether companies consider the facets or not. However, other researchers proved particular facets, such as the individual or job characteristics to be crucial factors for a successful assignment and recommend to them, in case companies do not imply them yet.

Although the U-Curve and W-Curve model might not be applicable to each individual and in the determined period, nevertheless they are important characteristics for any training methods organizations choose to apply and are recommended. When companies for example send out a feedback evaluation about the first weeks in the new country, they can take into account the mental phase the expatriate might find himself in. Thus, the result might differ three months later when the individual feels eventually adjusted. This is also valid for the return phase in which the returned employee can go through a depression again. The cross-cultural guideline serves as another helpful tool for creating a training.

## 8.2 Suggestions for Future Research and Outlook

An international assignment for worldwide operating companies has meanwhile become a rule and is no longer an exception. Research showed that for a successful expatriate time the adjustment process is an essential part. For future research, suggestions are to find out about the actual costs of a foreign assignment. American literature in fact investigated such costs, but as mentioned previously, most of the research goes back to the years 1990's. Barely any material was available that showed which costs companies incur and how high these costs will be. Furthermore, it is not

clear how actively companies send their employees abroad. Obviously and due to the research focus, this thesis did not aim to investigate neither the activity rate nor the costs. Nevertheless, from an economic point of view this can be a benefit to every existing survey with the topic of expatriate and assignments abroad. Additionally, when considering the company culture and interesting aspect can be the impact of a different company culture on the sojourner. Within the scope of this thesis it was assumed that the organizational culture in the parent company was tried to be lived out in the subsidiaries worldwide as well (as it was indicated by the companies on their web pages). Nevertheless, organizational culture is always under the influence of the national culture, which means there can be some bias.

The process of internationalizing companies and collaborations on an international basis proceeds in Baden-Württemberg's companies. Particularly, the automotive sector is faced with a steady in-country pressure and hence, is pushed to seek new opportunities abroad. Nowadays, the process of internationalizing of firms in general is not a mere option anymore, but a strategy to profit from the worldwide competition. As an outlook, the author suggests to consider that migrating common German business practices does not work easily everywhere. In a system such as the Korean one in which family controlled conglomerates, the so-called Chaebols, dominate the economy, the job design, the recruitment process and the leadership style can have large differences<sup>130</sup> compared to Germany.

A suitable strategy for internationalization, which is for example an international mindset established in the organization, most of the time is already given. To be able to grow constantly in foreign markets, the work force is an essential detail for further internationalization. Despite the expertise individuals need for an international assignment, it is necessary for the organization to provide specific culture and country knowledge. A successful expatriate time, meaning all pre-determined goals have been achieved and no early return needed to be implemented can only happen when the differences of cultures are being considered and target-orientated analyzed to complete the stay as well as to bring back newly gained knowledge. Additionally, valuable aspects are the exchange of information and the development of the company due to

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<sup>130</sup> Koen, C., Organizational Culture Research, 2005, Chapter 4



new thoughts and ideas the employee brings back from his stay abroad. A future challenge will be to strike the balance between executing corporate-wide practices and policies and at the same time, taking into account and change practices according to cultural differences<sup>131</sup> as mentioned before.

For the future, it becomes increasingly important to experience new ways of working together, such as in international teams with different cultural backgrounds. When interacting with persons who are on an international assignment themselves, in some cases the co-workers can be expatriates hailing from other parts of the world as well. Therefore, it is not only important to learn the language, but to be able to recognize one's own culture and hence deal with another culture and their standards, values, beliefs and behaviors. The best way to do so is to reason culturally as mentioned before and avoid stereotype thinking or merely memorize rules. On this way, the individual is able to look beyond the visible parts of culture and to explore underlying assumptions, which in the end leads to a complete adjustment.

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<sup>131</sup> Ward, C. et al., *Psychology of Culture Shock*, 2001, p. 171

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### **C. Scripts**

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## Appendix

### Appendix 1: List of Companies

Kreh, O./Očigrija, A., *Die größten Unternehmen in Baden Württemberg*. Retrieved November 13, 2013, from Industrie- und Handelskammern Baden-Württemberg.://www.suedlicher-oberrhein.ihk.de/linkableblob/frihk24/standortpolitik/downloads/2361742/.2./data/Bedeutende\_Unternehmen\_Maerz\_2013\_BW-data.pdf;jsessionid=F93AEBCC4CC0C9489DE94E6D56C34F4E.rep11

### Appendix 2: Companies' Data

#### 1) Automotive Sector

Company	Employees	Sales Volume (Mio € )	Corporations	Europe	North-America	South-America	Asia
<b>ABB</b>	10.000	3600,00	10	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>Alfing Maschinenfabrik</b>	1.250	250,00	3		n/a	n/a	yes
<b>Allgaier</b>	1.761	341,00	12	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>Arburg</b>	2.300	488,00		yes (>100)	yes	yes	yes
<b>Balluff</b>	2.450	300,09	24	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>Berner Group</b>	9.000	1029,00	3	yes	no	no	yes
<b>CeramTec</b>	3.600	420,00	15	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>Daimler</b>	275.087	1140,00		yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>Dürr</b>	8.100	2400,00	10	yes (>23)	yes	yes	yes
<b>EMAG</b>	2.070	473,00	10	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>Ensinger</b>	2.100	350,00	27	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>Festo</b>	16.200	2240,00	3	y (> 61)	yes	yes	yes
<b>Friatec</b>	1.062	172,50	alixaxis group	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>FUCHS</b>	3.795	1819,00	49	yes	yes	yes	yes



Härter	1.500	200,00	6	yes	yes	no	yes
Heller	2.500	592,00		yes	yes	yes	yes
Kern Liebers	6.218	551,00	15	yes	yes	yes	yes
Komet Group	1.700	180,00	20	yes	yes	yes	yes
Läpple	2.160	420,00	15	yes	yes	yes	yes
Leuze	850	131,00	17	yes	yes	yes	yes
M+W Group	7.700	2483,00		yes	yes	yes	yes
Mahle	48.000	6159,00	10	yes (g. >140)	yes	yes	yes
Mapal	4.100	440,00		yes	yes	yes	yes
Marquardt	6.000	650,00		yes	yes	no	yes
Rutronik	1.200	800,00	4	yes	yes	yes	yes
Schuler	5.500	1200,00		yes	yes	yes	yes
Schunk	2.000	270,00		yes	yes	yes	yes
SEW Eurodrive	14.400	2400,00	8	yes	yes	yes	yes
Sick AG	6.300	971,30	50	yes	yes	no	yes
SMP Automotive	3.787	808,00		yes	no	yes	yes
Thyssen Krupp	157.000	3900,00		yes	yes	yes	yes
Valeo	73.300	1180,00		yes	yes	yes	yes
Voith	42.000	5700,00	4	yes	yes	yes	yes
Wittenstein AG	1.685	241,00		yes	yes	yes	yes
Würth	64.000	4900,00	8		n/a	n/a	n/a
ZF Lenksysteme	74.775	17366,00	5	yes	yes	yes	yes
Ziegler	850	154,00	9	yes	no	no	yes

## 2) Medical and Pharmaceutical Sector

Company	Employees	Sales Volume (Mio €)	Corporations	Europe	North-America	South-America	Asia
Uhlmann	1.500	235,00	2	yes	yes	yes	yes
Karl Storz	5.800	1300,00	8	yes	yes	yes	yes
Gambro	8.000		13		n/a	n/a	n/a
Hartmann	10.220	1758,00	4 in Germany	yes	yes	yes	yes
Boehringer Ingelheim	13.104	1033,00	140	yes	yes	yes	yes
Aesculp / B. Braun	45.559	5047,00			n/a	n/a	n/a

## 3) Others

Company	Employees	Sales Volume (Mio €)	Corporations	Europe	North-America	South-America	Asia
Tesat Spacecom	1.300	303,00	EADS Astrium	yes	yes	no	yes
Varta	2.000	150,00	5	yes	yes	no	yes
Diehl Aircabin	3.700	800,00	5	yes (>	yes	no	yes
Homag	5.085	799,00	15	y	yes	yes	yes
Scholz AG	7.200	4700,00		yes	yes	no	yes
Zeiss	24.000	4136,00	13	yes	yes	yes	yes

## 4) Mechanical Engineering Sector (not operating in the Automotive Sector)

Company	Employees	Sales Volume (Mio €)	Corporations	Europe	North-America	South-America	Asia
Optima Packaging	1.700	240,00	7	yes	yes	yes	yes
Kärcher	9.676	1923,00	57	yes	yes	yes	yes
Stihl	3.964	2775,00	37	yes	yes	yes	yes

## 5) Nutrition Sector

Company	Employees	Sales Volume (Mio €)	Corporations	Europe	North-America	South-America	Asia
Wild	2.500	838,00	3	yes	yes	yes	yes
Südzucker	17.900	7900,00	9	yes	yes	yes	yes
Friesland Campina	19.946	1030,00		yes	yes	yes	yes

## 6) Construction and Building Sector

Company	Employees	Sales Volume (Mio €)	Corporations	Europe	North-America	South-America	Asia
Uzin Utz AG	1.000	199,00	7	yes	yes	no	yes
Leonhard Weiss	3.400	870,00		yes	no	no	no
Heidelberg Cement	51.966	14020,00		yes	yes	yes	yes

## 7) Doors and Windows Sector

Company	Employees	Sales Volume (Mio €)	Corporations	Europe	North-America	South-America	Asia
VBH	2.763	746,60		yes	no	yes	yes
Roto	4.371	652,00	6	yes	yes	yes	yes

## 8) Sensors and Electrics Sector

Company	Employees	Sales Volume (Mio €)	Corporations	Europe	North-America	South-America	Asia
metabo	1.700	341,00		yes	yes	no	yes
Endress	10.000	1694,00	100	yes	yes	yes	yes

## 9) Assembly Sector

Company	Employees	Sales Volume (Mio €)	Corporations	Europe	North-America	South-America	Asia
Scholpp	1.005	130,00	3	yes	no	no	yes

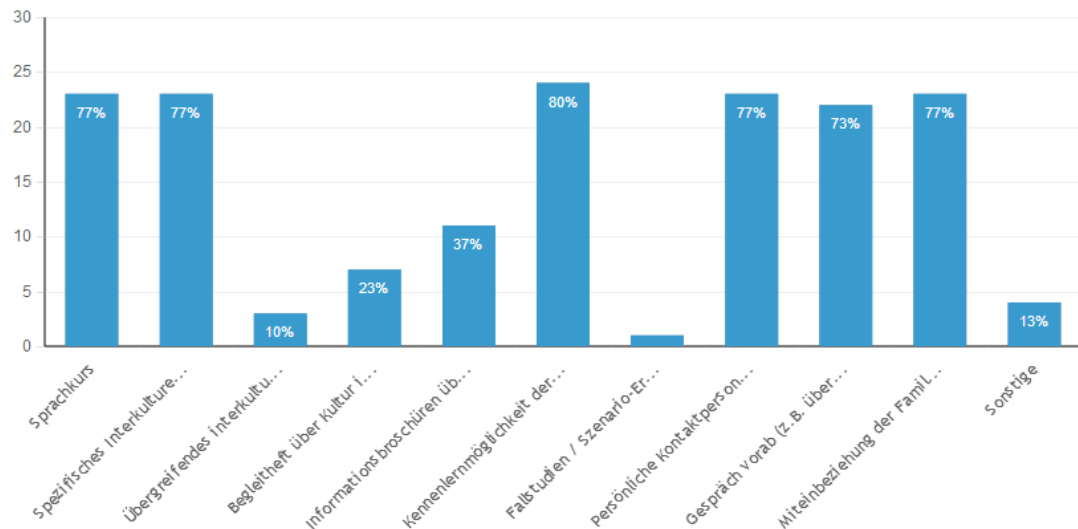
## Appendix 3: Survey Questions and Results

### Question 1:

Which type of preparation do you usually offer to your employees before the stay abroad?

Welche Art von Vorbereitung für einen Auslandsaufenthalt bieten Sie Ihren Mitarbeitern in der Regel?

Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



Welche Art von Vorbereitung für einen Auslandsaufenthalt bieten Sie Ihren Mitarbeitern in der Regel?

Answered: 30 Skipped: 0

	Response Percent	Response Count
Sprachkurs	76.67%	23
Spezifisches Interkulturelles Training (zur Vorbereitung auf eine Kultur)	76.67%	23
Übergreifendes interkulturelles Training (zur Vorbereitung auf mehrere Kulturen)	10.0%	3
Begleitheft über Kultur im Einsatzland (z.B. Normen, Werte,...)	23.33%	7
Informationsbroschüren über Einsatzland (z.B. politisches System, Einkaufen,...)	36.67%	11
Kennenlernmöglichkeit der zukünftigen Kollegen durch Vorab-Besuch	80.0%	24
Fallstudien / Szenario-Erprobung	3.33%	1
Persönliche Kontaktperson im Einsatzland	76.67%	23
Gespräch vorab (z.B. über Erwartungshaltung)	73.33%	22
Miteinbeziehung der Familie/Ehegatten (z.B. ebenfalls Sprachkurs oder interkulturelles Training)	76.67%	23
Sonstige	13.33%	4
<a href="#">Hide Responses</a>		

1 - 4

stark abhängig von Anforderung und Einsatzland  
[View full response of this respondent](#)

---

Für Mitarbeiter, die längere Zeit bzw. regelmäßig im Ausland sind, bieten wir Sicherheitstrainings an.  
[View full response of this respondent](#)

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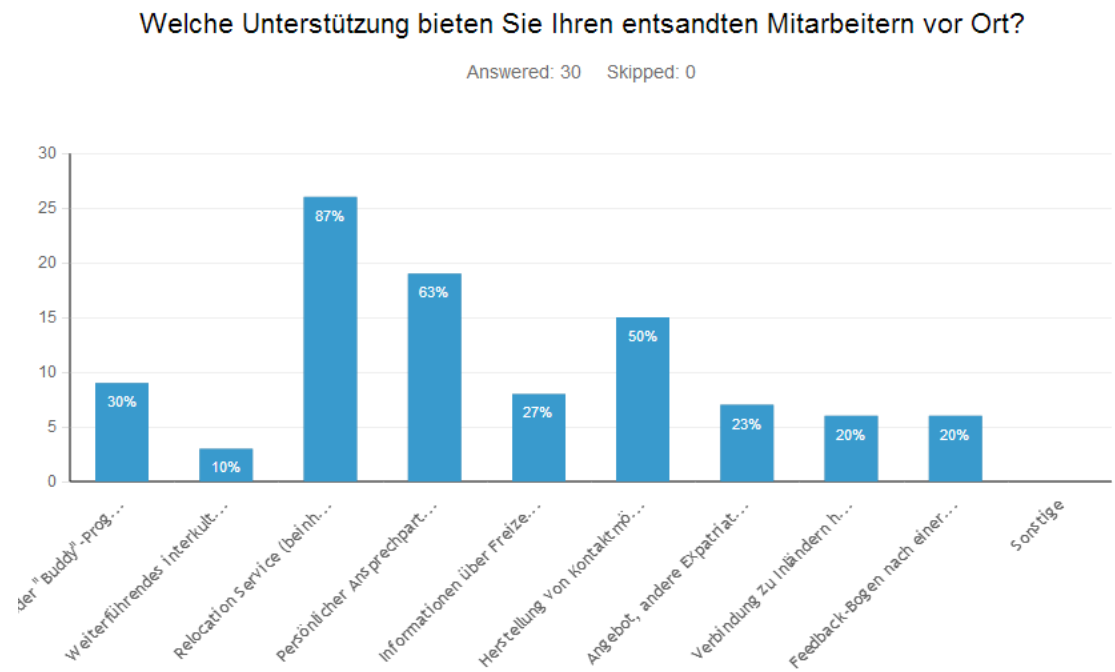
Medizinische Vorbereitung  
[View full response of this respondent](#)

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Infos über Gesundheitssystem  
[View full response of this respondent](#)

## Question 2:

Which support do expatriates receive in the host country?



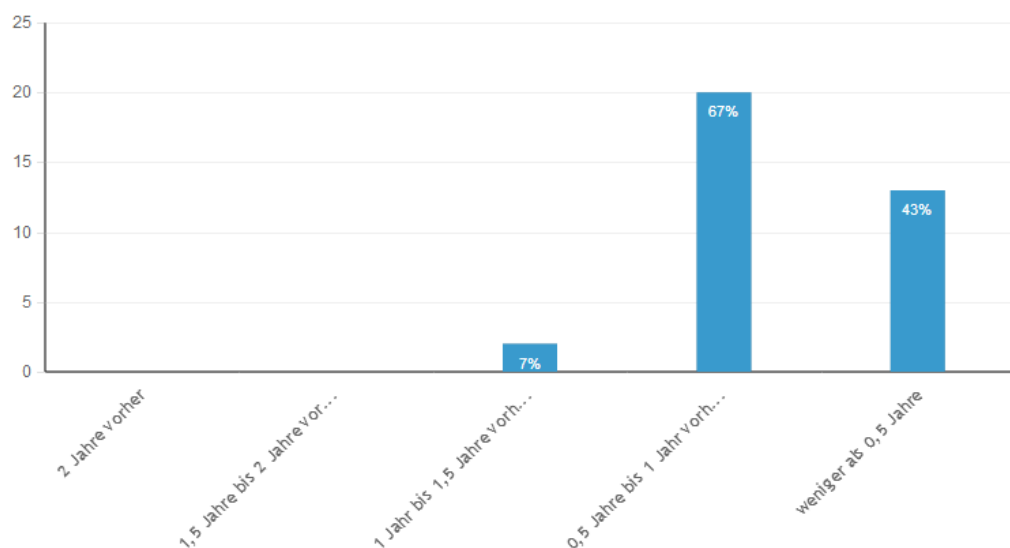
Welche Unterstützung bieten Sie Ihren entsandten Mitarbeitern vor Ort?		
Answered: 30 Skipped: 0		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Mentor- oder "Buddy"-Programm (Person aus der spezifischen Abteilung)	30.0%	9
Weiterführendes interkulturelles Training	10.0%	3
Relocation Service (beinhaltet Umzug, Behördengänge, persönliche Betreuung)	86.67%	26
Persönlicher Ansprechpartner im Einsatzland	63.33%	19
Informationen über Freizeitangebot (Sport, Kunst, Musik, Tanz,...)	26.67%	8
Herstellung von Kontaktmöglichkeiten mit Kollegen aus dem Einsatzland	50.0%	15
Angebot, andere Expatriates zu treffen	23.33%	7
Verbindung zu Inländern herstellen	20.0%	6
Feedback-Bogen nach einer gewissen Zeit im Einsatzland	20.0%	6
Sonstige	0.0%	0

### Question 3

How long before the beginning of the stay abroad do you initiate the phase of preparation (the first step of the above mentioned procedure)?

Wie lange vor dem Start des Auslandsaufenthaltes beginnt in Ihrem Unternehmen die Vorbereitungsphase (der erste Schritt der vorab angegebenen Maßnahmen)?

Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



Wie lange vor dem Start des Auslandsaufenthaltes beginnt in Ihrem Unternehmen die Vorbereitungsphase (der erste Schritt der vorab angegebenen Maßnahmen)?

Answered: 30 Skipped: 0

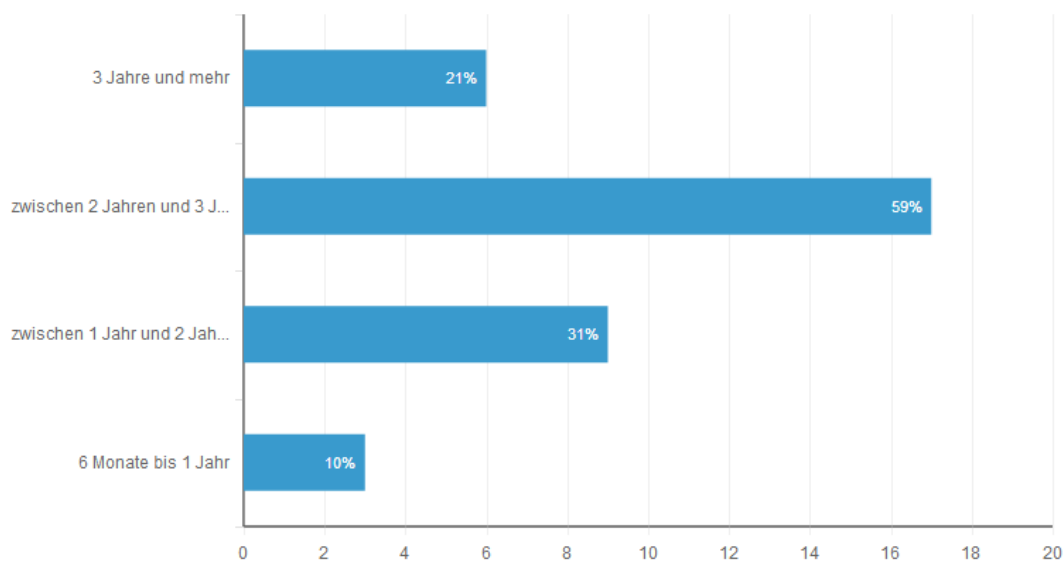
	Response Percent	Response Count
2 Jahre vorher	0.0%	0
1,5 Jahre bis 2 Jahre vorher	0.0%	0
1 Jahr bis 1,5 Jahre vorher	6.67%	2
0,5 Jahre bis 1 Jahr vorher	66.67%	20
weniger als 0,5 Jahre	43.33%	13

#### Question 4:

How much time does an employee who had been sent abroad spend in the host country?

Wie viel Zeit verbringt ein entsandter Mitarbeiter durchschnittlich im Gastland?

Answered: 29 Skipped: 1



Wie viel Zeit verbringt ein entsandter Mitarbeiter durchschnittlich im Gastland?

Answered: 29 Skipped: 1

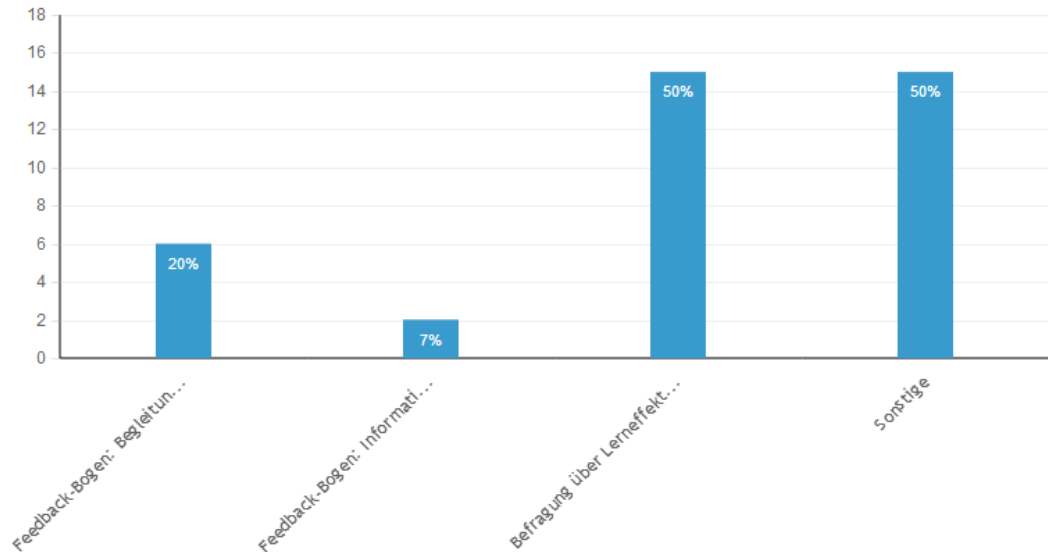
	Response Percent	Response Count
6 Monate bis 1 Jahr	10.34%	3
zwischen 1 Jahr und 2 Jahren	31.03%	9
zwischen 2 Jahren und 3 Jahren	58.62%	17
3 Jahre und mehr	20.69%	6

### Question 5

What is your procedure after the return of the employee?

Wie verfahren Sie nach der Rückkehr des entsandten Mitarbeiters?

Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



Wie verfahren Sie nach der Rückkehr des entsandten Mitarbeiters?

Answered: 30 Skipped: 0

	Response Percent	Response Count
Feedback-Bogen: Begleitung während des Aufenthaltes im Gastland	20.0%	6
Feedback-Bogen: Informationsbeschaffung während des Aufenthaltes im Gastland	6.67%	2
Befragung über Lerneffekt (kann Gelerntes vom Gastland im Heimatland angewendet werden?)	50.0%	15
Sonstige <a href="#">Show 15 Responses</a>	50.0%	15

◀ 1 - 10 ▶

teilweise persönliches Gespräch, abhängig von HR Abteilung

[View full response of this respondent](#)

Für unsere Pioniere, die von der Walz zurückkommen (Infos zur Walz finden Sie auf unserer Internetseite) wurde eine spezifische Evaluation in Zusammenarbeit mit den Fraunhofer ISI ausgearbeitet

[View full response of this respondent](#)

HR seitig keine Befragung, nur innerhalb der Fachbereiche

[View full response of this respondent](#)

Persönliches Gespräch mit Entsandtem und Leiter der Tochtergesellschaft nach Ende des Auslandseinsatzes

[View full response of this respondent](#)



◀ 1 - 10 ▶

Wie erfahren wir wovon? Wir führen nach Rückkehr ein Rückkehrgespräch und es gibt auch Rückkehrseminar zur Unterstützung bei der Wiedereingliederung.

[View full response of this respondent](#)

Rückkehrgespräch, welches die Vorbereitung der Entsendung, den gesamten Aufenthalt und das Rückkehrmanagement zum Inhalt hat

[View full response of this respondent](#)

Feedbackgespräch

[View full response of this respondent](#)

regelmäßige Feedbackgespräche

[View full response of this respondent](#)

Teilstandardisiertes Feedbackinterview zu den Erfahrungen mit den internen und externen Dienstleistern (im Rahmen eines KVP des Entsendeprozesses)

[View full response of this respondent](#)

Gespräche

[View full response of this respondent](#)

◀ 11 - 15 ▶

Return & Resttart-Seminar

[View full response of this respondent](#)

Reintegrationsgespräche

[View full response of this respondent](#)

pers. Gespräch

[View full response of this respondent](#)

Wiedereingliederung des Mitarbeiters unter Berücksichtigung des Know-How aus dem Ausland

[View full response of this respondent](#)

## Appendix 4: Email sent to companies

Sehr geehrtes Human Resource Team,

in meinem letzten Semester im Studiengang Internationale Betriebswirtschaft versuche ich im Rahmen meiner Bachelorthesis herauszufinden, wie Unternehmen in Baden-Württemberg Ihre Mitarbeiter für einen längeren Auslandsaufenthalt vorbereiten. Speziell der Aufenthalt über längere Zeit in einem Ihrer Unternehmen im Ausland bedeutet für die Expatriates sich einer neuen Sprache, Kultur und einer neuen Umgebung zu stellen.

Mein Fragebogen über nur 5 Fragen kostet Sie höchstens 5 Minuten Zeit und ich würde mich über die Beantwortung sehr freuen – vielleicht finden Sie beim Ausfüllen sogar noch Anregungen für Ihr eigenes Expatriate-Vorbereitungsprogramm!  
<https://survey.zohopublic.com/zs/MuDrOe>

Sollten Sie zusätzlich Informationsbroschüren über Ihr Expatriate-Programm haben, wäre ich sehr dankbar, wenn Sie mir dieses zukommen lassen:  
ellen.vogel.88@gmail.com

Herzlichen Dank und eine schöne Woche!

Freundliche Grüße

Ellen Vogel

### **Appendix 5: Reminder Email**

Sehr geehrtes Human Resource Team,

vor Kurzem hatte ich Sie gebeten, an meiner Umfrage teilzunehmen. Sollten Sie dies bereits getan haben, dann betrachten Sie diese Email als gegenstandslos. Falls nicht würde ich Sie gerne nochmals bitten, mir bei meiner Thesis über Auslandsentsendungen zu helfen und diesen kurzen Fragebogen über 5 Fragen zu beantworten:

<https://survey.zohopublic.com/zs/MuDrOe>

Sie bleiben dabei völlig anonym und auf Wunsch sende ich Ihnen die Thesis nach Abgabe gerne zu!

Für Ihre Hilfe dankt Ihnen

Ellen Vogel, Studentin der Internationalen Betriebswirtschaft in Aalen

### **Appendix 6: Company Culture –URL**

Leuze:

<http://www.leuze-electronic.de/de/deutschland/unternehmen/karriere/index.php>

Komet Group:

<http://www.kometgroup.com/navigation-top/komet-group/philosophie.html>

Schunk:

[http://www.de.schunk.com/schunk/schunk\\_websites/career/karriere\\_bei\\_schunk.html?country=DEU&lngCode=DE&lngCode2=DE](http://www.de.schunk.com/schunk/schunk_websites/career/karriere_bei_schunk.html?country=DEU&lngCode=DE&lngCode2=DE)

Härter:

[http://www.haerter.com/unternehmen/werte\\_de.shtml?myLevel=\\_1.2](http://www.haerter.com/unternehmen/werte_de.shtml?myLevel=_1.2)

Balluff:

<http://www.balluff.com/balluff/MDE/de/unternehmen/Balluff-als-Arbeitgeber.jsp>

Allgaier:

<http://www.allgaier.de/de/content/allgaier-werke/nachhaltigkeit>

Ensinger:

<http://www.ensinger-online.com/de/ueber-ensinger/unser-leitbild/>

Läpple:

<http://www.laepple.de/de/unternehmen/strategie.html>

Mapal:

<http://www.mapal.com/karriere/>

Arburg:

<http://www.arburg.com/de/unternehmen/philosophie/>

Homag Group:

[http://www.homag-group.com/Medien/Leitbild\\_deutsch\\_27870.pdf](http://www.homag-group.com/Medien/Leitbild_deutsch_27870.pdf)

Marquardt:

<http://de.marquardt.com/marquardt-deutschland/unternehmensphilosophie.html>

Rutronik:

[http://www.rutronik.com/fileadmin/be\\_user/company/code\\_of\\_conduct/code\\_of\\_conduct\\_brochure\\_de.pdf](http://www.rutronik.com/fileadmin/be_user/company/code_of_conduct/code_of_conduct_brochure_de.pdf)

Sick AG:

[http://www.sick.com/group/DE/home/about\\_sick/portrait/philosophy/Seiten/gfz.aspx](http://www.sick.com/group/DE/home/about_sick/portrait/philosophy/Seiten/gfz.aspx)

Berner Group:

<http://www.berner-group.com/unsere-werte.htm>

Schuler Group:

[http://www.schulergroup.com/major/documents/downloads/download\\_unternehmen/download\\_compliance/Coc\\_Schuler\\_Internet\\_11\\_2012.pdf](http://www.schulergroup.com/major/documents/downloads/download_unternehmen/download_compliance/Coc_Schuler_Internet_11_2012.pdf)

Wittenstein AG:

<http://www.wittenstein.de/philosophie.html>

FUCHS:

[http://www.fuchs-oil.de/fileadmin/fuchs\\_upload/flipping-book/leitbild/index.html](http://www.fuchs-oil.de/fileadmin/fuchs_upload/flipping-book/leitbild/index.html)

Dürr:

<http://www.durr.com/de/karriere/woran-wir-uns-orientieren/>

M+W Group:

[http://www.mwgroup.net/fileadmin/MEDIA/PDF/ABOUT/MWGroup\\_Our\\_Core\\_Values.pdf](http://www.mwgroup.net/fileadmin/MEDIA/PDF/ABOUT/MWGroup_Our_Core_Values.pdf)

ABB:

<http://www.abb.com/integrity>

SEW Eurodrive:

[http://www.sew-eurodrive.de/kfm\\_dokumente/1252994007.pdf](http://www.sew-eurodrive.de/kfm_dokumente/1252994007.pdf)

Festo:

[http://www.festo.com/cms/de\\_corp/13471.htm](http://www.festo.com/cms/de_corp/13471.htm)

Voith:

<http://voith.com/de/coc-german.pdf>

Mahle:

<http://www.jobs.mahle.com/Germany/de/Working-at-MAHLE/Our-culture>

Valeo:

[http://www.valeo.com/cws-content/www.valeo.com/medias//fichiers/engagements/fr/code\\_ethique/CodeofEthics-English-Nov2011.pdf](http://www.valeo.com/cws-content/www.valeo.com/medias//fichiers/engagements/fr/code_ethique/CodeofEthics-English-Nov2011.pdf)

ZF:

[http://www.zf.com/corporate/de/company/organization/corporate\\_principles/corporate\\_principles.html](http://www.zf.com/corporate/de/company/organization/corporate_principles/corporate_principles.html)

ThyssenKrupp:

<http://karriere.thyssenkrupp.com/de/karriere/ihre-zukunft-bei-thyssenkrupp/unser-angebot-an-sie/internationale-einsaetze.html>

Daimler AG:

<http://career.daimler.com/dhr/index.php?ci=981&language=1&DAIMLERHR=38687b53b92b7ddec9441d0c25d85837>

Uhlmann:

<http://www.uhlmann.de/uhlmann-group-pharma-verpackungsmaschinen/unternehmenskultur-vision-mission-grundsaeetze-ziele-qualitaet.html>

Hartmann:

[http://www.hartmann.info/DE/unternehmens\\_und\\_fuehrungskultur.php](http://www.hartmann.info/DE/unternehmens_und_fuehrungskultur.php)

Diehl Aircabin:

<http://www.diehl.com/de/diehl-gruppe/menschen-karriere/arbeiten/leben-am-standort.html>

Stihl:

[http://www.stihl.de/STIHL-als-Arbeitgeber\\_unsere-werte.aspx](http://www.stihl.de/STIHL-als-Arbeitgeber_unsere-werte.aspx)

Wild:

<http://www.wildflavors.com/EMEA-DE/unternehmen/unternehmenskultur/>

Uzin Utz AG:

<http://www.uzin-utz.de/die-gruppe/unsere-werte/>

## Statutory Declaration

I declare that I have developed and written the enclosed Bachelor Thesis completely by myself, and have not used sources or means without declaration in the text. Any thoughts from others or literal quotations are clearly marked. The Bachelor Thesis was not used in the same or in a similar version to achieve an academic grading or is being published elsewhere.

Schwäbisch Gmünd, February 28, 2014

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Ellen Vogel