Thesis for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Antecedents and Consequences of Repatriates' Job Engagement

by

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해외파견 귀환자 직무열의의 선행요인과 결과

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요　약

본 논문은 해외파견 귀환자 연구에 있어서 매우 개별적 개념으로 나타나지만, 실제 상당히 중첩되는 이론적 기반을 가지고 있는 직무열의와 이직의도간의 관계를 규명하고자 하였다. 해외파견자의 귀환 자체 뿐 아니라 이후 해외 파견 중 축적한 지식과 경험의 활용은 국제 비즈니스가 직면한 현실적인 과제이기 때문에 해외파견 근로자의 이직 문제에 대한 관심이 고조되었다. 특히, 인적자원관리 분야의 학계는 귀환자와 관련한 이슈 중에서도 직무 열의와 관련한 개념들에 집중 해 오고 있다. 이와 관련한 기존 연구들은 파견 근무 중 그들로 하여금 이직을 이행하거나 또는 이직을 고려하게끔 촉발시키는 요인들을 밝혀왔다. 본 연구는 미국에서 파견근무를 수행하였던 종사자 221 명의 데이터를 활용하여 해외파견귀환자 직무열의의 선행요인과 결과변수간 관계를 규명하고자 하였다. 직무열의와 관련한 변수들 간의 관계를 살펴보고, 나아가 직무열의의 매개적 역할을 확인하였다. 선행변수는 개인, 관리 및 기능, 조직 수준으로 나누어

살펴보았고, 다수준회귀분석을 통해 가설을 검증하였다. 그 결과 특정 선행 변수(일터와 관련된 개인수준의 지각 및 몰입, 팀 지향성, 스킬의 적용)가 직무열의에 영향을 미치는 것으로 나타났으며, 또한 직무열의의 종속변수인 직무 만족과 이직의도 둘 다에 유의한 영향력을 갖는 것으로 보였다. 뿐만 아니라, 이러한 선행변수와 종속변수 간 직무 열의가 매개 변수로 효과가 있다는 것을 알 수 있었다. 이러한 결과는 해외파견 귀환자 연구와 인적자원관리 실무에 있어 시사점을 가질 뿐 아니라 후속 연구에도 다양한 방향을 제시할 수 있다. 향후 연구에서는 낮은 직무열의의 부정적인 효과와 관련한 HR 관리 관행들을 탐색하고, 어떻게 다국적 조직이 해외파견 근로자가 귀환 직후 보이는 높은 이직률, 지식과 스킬의 낮은 활용 등에 적용 가능한 새로운 전략과 관련한 실증 연구가 이루어져야 할 것이다.

INTRODUCTION

In the ever expanding global business environment, a multinational corporation's (MNC) success is often dependent upon global leaders with enhanced understanding, knowledge and experience within the increasingly complex international arena. One of the methods pursued by MNCs to develop global leaders is through the use of international assignments. Managers, executives and specialists within their fields are often sent abroad to hone management skills, develop intercultural understanding, increase the knowledge base of the MNC, and cultivate knowledge of international business (Lazarova & Caligiuri, 2001; Reiche, 2012). Based on this understanding, repatriates then are individuals who have completed an international assignment, and should be considered a valuable resource for the firm. This is due to the nature of knowledge and experience that the repatriate has developed throughout the assignment, thus providing them with a greater understanding of international issues than their domestic counterparts. Their insight into company perceptions abroad, overseas operations and the minutiae of details not readily apparent at home make this resource even more valuable in developing corporate strategies including training programs (Furuya et al., 2009; Lazarova & Caligiuri, 2001). Additionally, repatriates acquire firsthand knowledge about cultures and specific detailed information about the market within which they were assigned. This knowledge enables them to better identify, and respond to global opportunities and threats.

However, despite the value provided by repatriates through knowledge and experience, it has been noted that MNCs have often not capitalized on their investments in this area of human resources. While many will talk about the strategic value and importance of repatriates and the necessity of planning the process of repatriation, neither short-term nor long-term objectives are being realized (Black et al., 1999). Perhaps even more importantly is that most MNCs believe they are not getting a good return on the time and money invested in their international assignments (Lazarova & Caligiuri, 2001).

Likewise, repatriates themselves feel they are not being adequately compensated or valued for their personal investment in their international assignments. Black et al (1999) found that about 70% of repatriates believe the international assignment had a negative impact on their careers. Amazingly enough, it has been found that 20-25% of repatriates in the U.S. leave their organizations within the first year of returning from their international assignment (Black & Gregersen, 1991; Black et al., 1999). Black et al. (1999) also found that upwards of 50% of repatriates leave within the first three years, which is twice the turnover rate of domestic managers without international experience. This extremely high turnover rate signifies a huge loss in terms of the financial investment for the MNC as well as in terms of both knowledge and experience. Black et al. (1992) note that a three-year assignment costs the organization approximately $1 million not including indirect costs, knowledge, relationships and skills lost when a repatriate leaves for another company. More recently the Brookfield Global Relocation (2010) Trends Report showed that average annual turnover for all employees was 13 percent, yet in those same firms 38 per cent of their repatriates quit within the first year of returning to their home country. MNCs that wish to capitalize on the international experience and knowledge developed and acquired by their expatriates, repatriate retention remains a very serious concern (Kraimer et al, 2012).

High turnover rates can also create a hesitancy or resistance among other employees to agree to an international assignment, thus causing potential issues with the organization's strategy and its implementation abroad. This may then require additional incentives to be provided further increasing the cost to organizations without a guarantee of a return on investment due to the high rate of turnover. Some authors have noted that it is up to Human Resource managers and corporate strategists to better ensure the expatriate of future career expectations and trajectories. Viewing the process as a complete process as opposed to individual parts has often been cited as a method to help reduce uncertainty and match expectations with reality through the entire international assignment and return (Yan et al, 2002).

The adjustment process for repatriates is often denoted as the main cause for the high rates of turnover. The process often creates negative feelings towards the company as repatriates feel undervalued, underused, and not provided with adequate assistance in adapting back to the home country and work (Hurn, 1999). Many repatriates have also stated that their expectations upon return were much higher than the actual reality and this disconnect is mentioned as a reason for leaving the current employer (Kramer et al., 2013; Lee & Liu, 2007; Santosh & Muthiah, 2012). The lack of recognition of their time abroad, the knowledge and skills acquired or newfound management abilities consistently arise in discussions based on the discontent among repatriates.

One other factor that relates directly to the gap between repatriate's expectations and reality is the idea of reverse culture shock. As an expatriate, there is an expectation to encounter new and unfamiliar issues and environments as opposed to when returning home to their previous lifestyles. Many researchers have identified multiple issues in this regard as while abroad repatriates tend to fantasize and aggrandize their homes, thus enhancing or glorifying it to unsustainable levels, while abroad. In addition, changes that have occurred within the organization, among colleagues, friends often lead to increased levels of anxiety, disillusionment and frustration as symptoms of reverse culture shock (De Cieri et al., 2009; Kraimer et al., 2013).

While repatriates themselves have demonstrated several factors leading to their turnover once they have completed their international assignment it is important to also look at helping MNCs reduce this loss of human capital and determine what can be done to improve retention. Previous studies have identified a variety of strategies that can be employed by organizations to achieve higher retention rates (Abueva, 2000; Black et al., 1992; Nery-Kjerfve & McLean, 2012; Trudel, 2009). Some strategies include mentor programs, career path planning including the international assignment, planning ahead in determining appropriate job content and level upon repatriation, applying new skills acquired by the repatriate abroad, enhanced communication, and assisting with the entire process of repatriation. Consultation and proper strategic planning with respect to the repatriate prior to return will allow MNCs to suitably identify skills acquired, expectations and also to allow the repatriate to better balance reality with their own personal beliefs. By creating communication paths both the MNC and repatriate will be on the same page, and a balance of expectations and reality should be achieved thus lessening the ill effects brought about by a lack of knowledge and the unknown.

Research Question/Focus

As can be seen when looking at international business and discussing the challenges faced by managers, one of the main issues often mentioned is the need for highly skilled, experienced and knowledgeable managers/leaders. Gaining the skills to lead and help an organization grow is often found through taking part in international assignments, developing cultural understanding of a foreign market and being able to apply these skills to the benefit of the home organization. However, one problem that consistently arises is the high turnover rate of these potential managers as they leave their organization shortly after repatriation. Many of the characteristics of previous studies suggest low levels of repatriate job engagement with the organization leading us to ask, why is the turnover rate so high, and what can an organization do to retain these employees? What are the specific areas identified as antecedents to turnover and how can they be addressed by an organization to further entrench their human resources as a competitive advantage in the global environment? Finally, what separates general employees from repatriates in terms of job engagement in the workplace? By determining the differences in factors of job engagement and their impacts on intention to leave, what strategies can be implemented to enhance overall engagement in the workplace?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Turnover

In the era of globalization, as barriers to trade have come down a mad rush ensued for companies to move into previously blocked markets. This expansion allowed for the flows of trade to increase and the subsequent invigoration of foreign markets in terms of both financial and technological growth. However, throughout all of this and perhaps as a resulting factor the issue of turnover has continued to plague organizations as they struggle to retain an important competitive advantage, human resources. Over time, the literature on turnover has evolved and provided greater insight into the interaction of specific factors that can reduce turnover or, similarly, enhance retention. The results of turnover have consistently been shown through reduced morale, lower productivity, increased direct and indirect costs, loss of knowledge and experience, and the requirement to re-invest time and energy into new employees (Hinkin & Tracey, 2008).

Employee turnover is often described as employees who have left, are planning to leave, or will leave their current employment (Grobler et al, 2006). In addition, other researchers have suggested that turnover is represented by a complete cycle in that it encompasses not only an employee leaving, but also the organization’s filling of the vacancy created (Price, 1989). Further it is demonstrated that turnover can be broken down into significant groupings, that of voluntary turnover and that of involuntary turnover.

Involuntary turnover occurs when an employee is let go due to layoffs, corporate restructuring, downsizing, or other factors that are outside the employee's control in which decision is made for the employee instead of by the employee. More often than not, when discussing turnover, the focus is on the concept of voluntary turnover, instances when the employee makes the choice to depart the employment of the organization for whatever reason. These classifications by their very nature are general and often the real reason for turnover can be ambiguous and difficult to determine by researchers. Campion (1991) suggests that interviewers may not want to put the organization in a negative light, nor can the veracity of answers during an exit interview be guaranteed as the true reason for turnover.

Employee turnover has been and will continue to be a constant and extremely important management issue for organizations (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). Turnover literature has a long and well-built history (Cotton & Tuttle, 1986; Steel & Lounsbury, 2009) with research conducted as early as 1912, continuing up to now and more than likely into the future. Employee turnover is a very popular social phenomenon; however, most researchers agree that there is no single model that is versatile enough to explain every turnover scenario (Morrell et al., 2001). The most often cited reason for this issue is the lack of integration between the turnover studies (Steel & Lounsbury, 2009), whack, though high in volume, are also diverse in content.

Turnover Antecedents

Throughout the research on turnover, over time a set of 'core' models has developed in the literature (e.g. Lee & Mitchell, 1994; Mobley, 1977; Porter & Steers, 1973). Through these, and other similar models, the underlying base is relatively consistent in the most general terms. Turnover models typically stream turnover antecedents into one of three groupings: 1) individual employee; 2) work-related; and 3) economic. There have been some efforts by some scholars (e.g. Hom & Kinicki, 2001) that have tried to incorporate all three disciplines.

Personality traits and individual circumstances of a personal nature comprise a significant number of variables that can spur turnover (Steel & Lounsbury, 2009). Muchinksy and Tuttle (1979) found that family responsibilities in an individual's life including, but not limited to, marital status, age, and children create pressure that has been positively related to turnover. Additionally, personality traits of employees based on things like a high achievement orientation, aggression, and independence have also been found to have a positive correlation with turnover (Porter & Steers, 1973). Steel (2002) continued in this vein and determined that an individual's positive self-evaluation in terms of employability and self-worth can forestall an active job search for alternative places of employment (Booth & Hamer, 2007).

A vast amount of turnover literature provides a commonality in finding that job dissatisfaction is positively and directly related to turnover (Hom & Griffeth, 1991; Hom & Kinicki, 2001; Mitchell, et al., 2001; Porter & Steers, 1973). However, contrary to that, Mobley (1977) provided a significant challenge in refuting the belief that these two variables are directly related proposing that there are instead intermediary-based linkages between job dissatisfaction and the final decision to quit. Mobley's Employee Turnover Decision Model provides a series of steps taken post-job dissatisfaction, for instance, thinking of quitting, intending to search for alternative employment options, actual job search, evaluating and comparing viability of alternatives, intending to quit or stay, and turnover or retention. This model leads to the understanding that the dissatisfaction-turnover relationship is one displaying a high degree of complexity and not as simple as originally believed or often presented. The model also provides some degree of applicability for incidents involving impulsive behavior whereby individuals may not follow the steps exactly but instead withdraw from an organization in an impetuous manner.

Mobley's model is often referred to as being fairly limited in the areas to which it can be applied, and in response to this Lee and Mitchell (2004) devised one that was much more inclusive. Lee and Mitchell's model refers primarily to critical events or shocks that lead an employee to reevaluate their current status and possibly quit. Examples of these shocks include such things as job offers from outside the company, missed promotions, downsizing, and modifications in autonomy among other issues including family-based issues. Critical events or shocks associated with social and cognitive circumstances prompt the beginning of the turnover process where an individual proceeds down one of three paths. 1) The shock to the system is followed by a comparison of past to present which leads to a decision to stay or leave; 2) the shock to the system leading to a reevaluation of organizational commitment; and 3) the shock to the system leading to an evaluation of the probability of commitment to another organization. A fourth decision path is not initiated by a critical events or shock, but is instead triggered by one's continually evolving, casual and potentially random reevaluation of their commitment to an organization.

The concept of job embeddedness is often used by researchers (e.g. Mitchell et al., 2001) to potentially explain turnover patterns. Job embeddedness consists of three components: links, fit and sacrifice. With respect to links, it is suggested that employees who are loosely bound, whether it be professionally or personally, to their job and the organization are more prone to turnover. Mitchell et al. (2001) concluded that poor job compatibility or fit, for instance with discrepancies between personal values and career goals, can reinforce the intention to quit. The final component, sacrifice, denotes the notion that employees who do not foresee their departure to result in a considerable loss are relatively more inclined to leave an organization (Mitchell et al., 2001). Hom and Kinicki (2001) suggest a similar idea to sacrifice in that, if the costs of turnover for the employee are relatively greater than the benefits of quitting, then the intention to leave will be reduced. In a similar vein, Bratton & Gold (2003) identify some factors causing high staff turnover to be:

- The job not matching new employee's expectations,
- A lack of attention from managers,
- A lack of training,
- Lack of autonomy,
- Lack of challenge and variety within work,
- Disappointment with promotion and development opportunities,

- Disappointment with standards of management, including unapproachable, uncaring and distant behavior, and a failure to consult.

The aspects of turnover discussed thus far depict the turnover process from a psychological perspective. However, there is also a considerable amount of research that analyzes turnover from an economic viewpoint (Carsten & Spector, 1987; March & Simon, 1958; Muchinsky & Morrow, 1980; Price, 1975; Price & Mueller, 1981). March and Simon (1958) claim that economic factors are the most accurate determinates of turnover. Muchinksy and Morrow (1980) present a model that supports such a contention as it suggests specific economic factors (e.g. national, regional and occupational employment rates) play significant roles in mediating the relationship between individual and work-related variables and turnover. As an example, when jobs are relatively available in the market, it is anticipated that the connection between individual and work-related factors, and turnover will be stronger than when job prospects are limited (Muchinsky & Morrow, 1980).

Similarly, some scholars have further proceeded to support Muchinsky and Morrow's (1980) philosophy. Carsten and Spector (1987) found that the correlation between job satisfaction and turnover will strengthen during times of economic prosperity and weaken during periods of economic hardship. More recently, Booth and Hamer (2007) adopted an economic perspective in their look into labor turnover in the retail industry. They identified economic variables for labor supply and demand in regional markets as uncontrollable determinants of turnover.

In economic terms, several factors have been identified, with some degree of regularity, displaying a significant relationship with turnover. These factors include:

- Salary
- Benefits package
- Career advancement
- Training and Development
- Performance Management

Gerber (1998) suggests that there is boundless speculation among academics about the real influence of money as a motivator. Money generally ceases to be a motivator if a person has sufficient funds and thus may not be attracted to the organization or retention. In its simplest form, compensation refers to the payment that employees receive in exchange for services rendered. 'Payment' in this context refers to all forms of monetary compensation received by an employee, including salary, wage, financial and nonfinancial benefits. However, for employees who need money, the levels of the above-mentioned payments could serve as motivating factors. The aim of compensation in general is to attract competent employees, to retain them, and to motivate them to achieve the aims and objectives of the organization (Gerber 1998). Similarly, Tetty (2005) identified dissatisfaction with salary as a key factor undermining the commitment of academics to their institutions and careers, and consequently their decision or intent to leave. Therefore, this suggests that employers need to be cognizant of the incentives offered and that if working conditions are not improved then exit may become an employee's option. These employees will be on the lookout for another job that is going to better their financial situations. In a very similar situation, Rampur (2009) found that employees flock to companies who offer more benefits. Benefits can demonstrate to employees that a company is supportive, fair, and looking out for employee welfare. There is evidence to suggest that stable benefits are at the top of the list of reasons why employees choose to stay with their employer or to join a company in the first place (Lockhead & Stephens, 2004).

Career advancement options may affect turnover through several different streams such as the current level of career attainment, upward mobility, and future prospects of career advancement in an organization (Zhao & Zhou, 2008). The organization has a responsibility to ensure that career management of employees exists in the organization and opportunities such as promotion and training should be made available. Job status may also play an important role in reducing turnover. As a result, organizations should use it as a career reward and incentive to retain qualified employees (Zhao and Zhou, 2008).

Different types of training may also play an important role in developing and maintaining high involvement work processes (Vandenberg et al., 1999). It is extremely important for an organization to provide developmental opportunities for individual employees in order to enhance their skills and improve their chances of moving up the corporate ladder. A lack of training, development, and career opportunities constitute some of the major reasons for voluntary turnover (Phillips, 1990).

It also is imperative for any organization to manage the performance of its employees effectively to keep employees who are making significant contributions. Sherman et al.,

(2001) found that more than half of employees surveyed said they believe their companies routinely tolerate poor performance and managers often underestimate how much employees resent the presence of underperformers within their group, which may help to explain why good people are leaving an organization. This suggests that there is a need for organizations to deal with low performers as a way to reduce the potential of losing high performing employees. In this same viewpoint, it has been noted that skilled employees should be remunerated accordingly. For example, Griffeth & Hom (2001) refer to the significance of payments based on employee performance, whereby employees receive pay raises for increasing the wealth of knowledge in a professional or technical area, or for expanding their breadth of knowledge in multiple jobs (corresponding to several stages in a continuous process technology or manufacturing assembly). This further illuminates the ongoing concern that performance needs to be appropriately appraised and further rewarded in order to create a stake in high performing employees with the organization.

Consequences of Turnover

The consequences or resulting impacts of turnover identified in the main body of research are analyzed at two separate levels: 1) organizational; and 2) individual. Academics have, over a long period attempted to expound on how turnover affects organizations at both the social and economic levels. Despite this continual focus, literature on the consequences of turnover is not nearly as developed as the literature focusing on the determinants (Dalton & Todor, 1979). Muchinsky and Morrow (1980) identified this imbalance early on and noted that little real scholarly attention has been paid to the consequences of turnover.

However, there still has been some light shed in this area and we can see that the negative outcomes of turnover are generally studied more in the literature (Mobley, 1982). Examples of this include employee absence, replacement and training costs, reduced productivity and output, and disruption to business operations (Dalton & Todor, 1979). The departure of talented employees has also been identified in the literature as a significant turnover cost (Dalton & Todor, 1979; Mobley, 1982). Abelson & Baysinger (1984) extend on the last issue by noting that dysfunctional turnover constitutes the loss of a valued employee that subsequently results in lowered organizational effectiveness. Turnover can also provide some negative implications from an organizational and social perspective. As an example, disruptions to internal communications (Mobley, 1982) and severed personal ties within work groups (Muchinksy & Morrow, 1980) are possible adverse outcomes of voluntary turnover.

There exists a sort of consensus for the need to prevent employee turnover from solely being viewed from a negative perspective (Abelson & Baysinger, 1984; Dalton & Todor, 1979; Mobley, 1982; Muchinsky & Morrow, 1980). Empirical studies have suggested that turnover can be beneficial to organizations as, for example, Grusky (1960) implied that the mobility of employees introduces “new blood” to the organization, adding that this can vitalize the organization and help it adapt to constantly changing demands and pressures. Mobley (1982) supports this stance, proposing that turnover can give way to an infusion of new knowledge and ideas to the workplace. Abelson and Baysinger (1984) revealed a conceptual model of optimal turnover, which postulates that organizations can achieve an optimum level of turnover if management considers a range of variables including individual, organizational and environmental attributes, costs of retention and turnover, and HRM policy. Variables such as these bear significant impact on an organization's capacity to retrieve functional outcomes from employee turnover.

Employee Retention

To effectively retain workers, employers must know what factors motivate their employees to stay in the field and what factors cause them to leave (Michal et al. 2001). It is always important to keep skilled employees in any organization in order to improve the kind of service that is provided to the relevant customers. There has been a great deal of research that has been conducted to find why employees stay in an organization. Often, small things such as company picnics, consolation for a death in the family, recognition for special occasions such as birthdays, and a common 'pat on the back' for a job well done go a long way in increasing employee commitment to an organization (LeCrone, 2006).

Employee retention refers to the ability of an organization to keep valuable employees using various methods or strategies such as offering competitive pay or benefits, appropriate recruitment and selection, good management and leadership, along with the availability of training and development opportunities. As people continue to want to work for an organization, then it is considered able to manage employee retention. Employee retention is a systematic effort by employers to develop and foster an environment that encourages current employees to invest themselves in the organization by having policies and practices in place that address their diverse needs (Purcell, 2005)

It is extremely important to keep key people within an organization. The best organizations design, implement, and leverage systems that detect potential concerns displayed by dissatisfied employees and, therefore, organizations should try to stay ahead of their competitors in retaining employees by learning how to focus on key employee satisfaction indices and dissatisfiers (Harkins, 1998). It is imperative for an organization to develop retention plans, including relationship building with the key staff. With this in mind, one of the most important factors in an organization is the ability to retain its experienced skilled employees. High employee turnover may impact the organizational due to the development of a high vacancy rate, which then contributes to lowering the overall efficiency of the organization. Runy (2005), suggests that in order to develop greater staff retention, organizations need to develop environments in which their employees want to work. In this vein, a few key points have been suggested by various researchers in this field. To begin with, employees should be cooperative and supportive of one another. They should be willing to work as a team for the benefit of their organization, as the net benefit of a group provides more than the sum of the individuals. Nel et al,. (2001) state that “groups and teamwork allow for greater participation and increased performance, and ultimately influence the motivation and satisfaction of employees”. Further, Nel et al., (2001) provide that cultural diversity, like change, needs to be managed if its positive influences, such as the attraction and the retention of the best skills, are to be harnessed. According to Luthans, (1995), there is empirical research evidence indicating that participants in communication networks are generally more satisfied with their jobs, are more committed to their organizations, and are better performers than those who are not involved in the communication process.

Secondly, employees need to know what is expected of them, have their roles clearly defined, before they will step up and take responsibility for their own actions. By creating a culture of responsibility, an organization can improve morale and productivity while simultaneously boosting recruitment and retention. Doug (2006) stipulates that as corporate culture becomes more positive and productive; employee turnover, recruiting expenses, and training costs decrease, and those changes, in turn, positively contribute to the workload attitude of committed and productive employees. Doug (2006) further opines that corporate culture nurturing enthusiastic, productive employees becomes in itself a recruiting tool, due to the phenomenon of word of mouth spreading through both current and prospective employees.

Thirdly, the employer should try all means to recruit qualified staff and attempt to accommodate their individual needs. The organization must take care of its employees by actions or overt planning, a way of promoting a balance between work and family life. Robbins (2003) suggests that recent studies point to the fact that employees want jobs that give them flexibility in their work schedules so they can better manage work and life imbalances. In this view, according to Luecke (2002), people have many reasons for staying with a company that include things like job security, performance recognition, flexible hours, sense of belonging, or a work culture that recognizes the need for a strong work-life balance.

The best companies around the world go out of their way to attract and recruit employees who they determine will make a meaningful contribution. Companies that strive to hire employees who will provide the greatest value can achieve a competitive edge over their competitors. According to Thompson, et al., (2006), " The quality of an organization's people is always an essential ingredient of successful strategy execution – knowledgeable, engaged employees are a company's best source of creative ideas for the nuts-and-bolts operating improvements that lead to operating excellence". The attraction and retention of employees are mutual complements and, if both are done well, the result is excellent human capital. According to Luecke (2002), "If your human assets were measurably superior, other companies would notice and try to lure them away with higher pay, more authority, and more appealing work situations – perhaps the same inducements you used to recruit them". Therefore, this reasoning provides the concern that retention is a challenge faced by organizations throughout the world. A common belief is that if employees are content, the potential of them leaving an organization becomes limited (Luecke, 2002)

An organization's practices exist as another factor that can influence employees to stay. To put it very simply, if employees are not satisfied, the potential of leaving increases. Thus, the culture of an organization may affect the attraction, retention or turnover of employees for the organization. Organizational culture represents a system or existence of shared meaning held by its members that distinguish or separate the organization from others. Various organizations, therefore, have different organizational cultures and the acknowledgement that organizational cultures have common properties does not mean, however, that subcultures do not exist within any given culture. In general, large organizations have a dominant culture and numerous sets of subcultures. An organization may enhance its image through culture, for example, by providing high quality services and investing in its employees, which could lead to the development of its human resources as a competitive advantage. Robbins (2003) also states that organizational culture is concerned with the perception of its employees of the characteristics of an organization. Employees belonging to various cultural groups and differences amongst the workers should serve as an inspiration rather than being divisive. According to Robbins (2003), the challenge for organizations is to make themselves more accommodating to diversity by addressing different lifestyles, family needs, and work styles. Organizations should not focus on treating everyone in identical fashion. By recognizing that employees are different and by responding to their individual or group needs, an employer may potentially enhance their ability to retain staff and promote greater productivity. As long as employees are open with one another and respect each other, they may share their knowledge and function well in ways that lead to possible benefits for customers.

Lack of support, particularly from supervisors, has often been found to decrease an employee's ability to cope with stressful jobs and in turn increases the likelihood that they will leave (Michal et al., 2001). According to Griffeth and Hom (2001), some researchers have pointed to bad supervision as a prime determinant of turnover. Pursuant to this, it is crucial for an organization to develop its personnel, primarily managers, in order to improve leadership skills. It is suggested that having a supervisor who is supportive and competent is a significant factor in employee retention.

Once employees are empowered and given authority to participate in the decision-making process in their field of work, they can become motivated and improves their desire to continue working for the organization. Griffeth & Hom (2001) also found that turnover studies in particular, have established that satisfaction with supervision, although not identifying any specific behaviors, promotes job retention. However, other factors may promote employee satisfaction such as pay, co-workers, working conditions, and others of a similar nature. Buhler (2002) identified certain factors that influence job satisfaction, such as compensation, recognition, relationships with other members of an organization (especially peers and direct supervisors), training opportunities, and job challenge. Luthans (1995) further suggests that a high job satisfaction does not by itself lower turnover, although it certainly is a factor. Alternatively, if there is considerable job dissatisfaction, a high rate of turnover is likely to result. Other factors, including organizational commitment, play key roles when it comes to the relationship between satisfaction and turnover. The specific needs of an employee plus the incentives that serve as motivation could positively influence them to stay, with this being especially true when there is a perceived lack of employment opportunities.

An organization should endeavor to find ways in helping employees successfully manage their home and work commitments, and in doing so many retention problems can be avoided (Luecke, 2002). Research has shown that flexible work-schedules lead to greater work-life balance and also has the benefit of offsetting work stress (Pearce & Mawson, 2009). Therefore, forward thinking organizations often focus on attempting to provide their employees with the opportunity to work flexible hours.

Expatriation/International Assignment

Due to the changes in trade barriers and the constant expansion of markets around the globe, it is no longer sufficient to simply be successful in your home market. Instead, global pressures require companies to expand and look outside their own borders to establish operations, acquire new information and to make a foray into the unknown. The pressure to remain competitive while expanding and establishing an organization has come to rely on the use of expatriation and expatriates as part of international management strategy in particular.

Expatriation is generally referred to as the process of sending managers to another country to oversee the operations or assist in the management of a subsidiary of a multinational organization (Black et al, 1999). Prior to departure, however, the process should include extensive periods of training and preparation to assist the managers in becoming more familiar with cultural differences, and to reduce the negative impacts of culture shock (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1986). Upon successful completion of the international assignment, expatriates return home whereupon they begin the process of repatriation. Bearing in mind that companies spend a huge amount of money on their expatriates, on average the financial costs are two to three times higher than having the same employee maintain employment in the home country, a successful repatriation process becomes even more paramount (Black and Gregersen 1999).

Expatriate literature (i.e. Oddou & Mendenhall, 1991; Tung, 1988) suggests that because of the higher level of performance that has to be achieved outside of the home environment, which usually includes interacting with a different culture and possibly a different language, the requirements when selecting an employee are more complex than those for a domestic assignment. Another challenge encountered is the lack of knowledge about an employee's performance during an international assignment. Further, high performing employees in the domestic environment are not guaranteed to be high performing in the foreign environment. Additionally, when assigning an employee to a project, there is often significant time pressure within the organization, which does not lend itself to the selection of the best employee for the project.

Organizations also need to consider the aspect of the family situation of the employees since it tends to be a factor in their decision to accept or reject an international assignment. Family complications including spousal work visas, children's education and extracurricular activities become important concerns for a potential expatriate (Harvey, 1985). Cultural differences between the host and the home country are also significant factors when it comes to selecting the right employee. Depending on the country and the international assignment there can be vast gaps in understandings, norms and values that become a challenge to bridge for an expatriate (Brewster, 1993). Finally yet importantly, the employees that are chosen for the assignment have to be willing to spend time in places that are unfamiliar and potentially personally dangerous.

Avoiding failures of managers who are assigned from their parent organizations to host-companies is important in today's increasingly challenging global business environment

(Aycan, 1997). As mentioned, expatriate assignments are costly for multinational companies. However, besides costs of expatriations, such as cross-cultural training, remuneration packages and relocation costs for the whole family, the costs of an expatriate assignment failure pose a threat to multi-national companies (Black & Gregersen, 1991; Naumann, 1992). Bhagat & Prien (1996) suggested that expatriate failure might have negative consequences not only for the expatriate and the parent company, but also for host country nationals, and that the financial costs of such failure might exceed the costs for remuneration and travel costs of the expatriate.

The majority of past research on expatriate failure was based on the general assumption that early return to the home country of an expatriate due to their inability to function effectively during the assignment was expatriate failure (Tung, 1981). Similarly, Hill (1998) and Mendenhall & Oddou (1985) defined expatriate failure as the premature end to an assignment. Biscoe (1995) suggested that early return or dismissal were mainly caused by poor performance of the expatriate in the foreign assignment, personal dissatisfaction of the expatriate with the experience, inability of the expatriate to adjust to the unfamiliar host-country environment, and the expatriate not being accepted by the host-country subordinates and peers.

Foster and Johnsen (1996) suggested that an improved selection of expatriates, organizational support of expatriates and their families, and training of expatriates would increase the ability of the expatriate to live and work in an unfamiliar host-country environment. The general definition of expatriate failure as the premature end of the foreign assignment due to the inability to adjust to an unfamiliar host-country environment (Hill, 1998; Mendenhall and Oddou, 1985; Tung, 1981), has resulted in research being focused on selection (Borg, 1988; Borg & Harzing, 1995; Forster and Johnsen, 1996; Harvey, 1985; Teagarden and Gordon, 1995), of expatriates possessing the ability to adjust, and training (Brewster, 1988; Forster & Johnsen, 1996; Tung, 1982), of expatriates that facilitates their adjustment to a foreign environment. Some studies included accounting for the adjustment of spouses (Julius, 1992) if they accompany the expatriate to the foreign location. A large number of past discussions in literature linked the ability of the expatriate to adjust to the host-country primarily to skills dealing with awareness of cross-cultural differences (Adler, 1997; Black et al, 1991; Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Hofstede, 1980; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2005).

International human resource practitioners have emphasized selecting and training expatriates before the assignment, focusing on their ability to adjust to host-country specific environments (Caligiuri, 1997). In the pre-expatriation stage candidates had to be trained on awareness of cultural differences as broadly presented and discussed (e.g. by Hofstede, 1980; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2005). Many multi-national companies have offered cross-cultural training that was meant to facilitate adjustment by developing the expatriate's awareness of norms and behaviors that were appropriate and inappropriate in the specific host country (Black & Mendenhall, 1990).

In relation to the cross-cultural skills of the expatriate impacts job performance, Black et al., (1991) strongly recommended pre-departure training to prepare expatriates better for challenges they faced overseas. Pre-departure cultural training has helped expatriates develop realistic expectations of living and working in the host country (Black &

Mendenhall, 1990). While on the one hand pre-departure cross-cultural training helps the expatriate overcome uncertainties, on the other hand it allows the potential to create stereotypes that might lead to inaccurate evaluations of situations (Adler, 1997). Selmer (2002) identified that the method of the training was more critical than the time devoted to it. In Glick (1992) about one third of the respondents (host employees) whose superiors (expatriate) had culture training (area studies) were less satisfied with their superior's leadership style, which suggests that the way the training was presented plays an important role.

Expatriate studies have focused originally on the failures of an expatriate during an assignment, then moved to the antecedents of failure, and finally to the provision of strategies and programs to better prepare expatriates to go abroad. Many organizations have put in place policies and procedures to better prepare employees for an international assignment and to enhance the overall chance for success. However, little attention has been paid in this regard to the last phase of the international assignment as the issues of repatriation and repatriation turnover have come to the forefront for many global organizations.

Repatriation

As MNCs continue to expand and barriers to international commerce continue to come down, it is imperative for organizations to maximize their human resources and maintain a well-trained and continual growth of global leaders. One identified method to develop these leaders is through international assignments, as it has proven to be a very worthwhile training ground in terms of experience and knowledge acquired by both the employee and the organization. However, due to the enormous investment, high rates of premature returns, and potential for failure, scholars have spent a considerable amount of time trying to understand, analyze, and improve the expatriation process.

Most expatriation research that has been done is concentrated within five main areas: development of the selection process of employees for international assignment success (Miller et al., 1986; Tung, 1981; Zeira & Banai, 1985); cross-cultural training to facilitate adjustment into the foreign environment (Black et al. , 1999; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1986); evaluation of managers during assignments (Oddou & Mendenhall, 1991; Tung, 1988); role of family and its effect on international assignments (Harvey, 1985; Stephens & Black, 1991); and adjustment challenges for expatriates (Brewster, 1993; Stroh et al., 1994).

The concept of repatriation only came to significant scholarly attention in early 2000, shortly after Black (1999) had continued to demonstrate the high turnover rates and difficulties firms were having in retaining their employees upon completion of international assignments. Repatriation and difficulties encountered upon reentry to the home environment had previously been ignored as the period of transition back to one's home country, to a familiar environment, seemed likely to be more of a comfort than a problem. However, even as this problem was continuously overlooked, Black (1999), among others, started noting the existence of high turnover rates shortly upon return. This confused many scholars who asked themselves why would there be problems when returning to a home environment where no cultural barriers exist and to a lifestyle that should be of second nature. The readjustment process should be something that is simple and allow the employee to very easily to slide back into old patterns; a belief that was assumed and is still held by many executives today.

The crux of the matter is the assumption that, since these individuals are returning home – that is, to a familiar way of life –, they should have no trouble adapting to either the corporate or the home environments. However, experience has shown that repatriation is anything but simple (Adler, 1986:198).

It has been shown that over time, HR managers have become more aware of the problems encountered by repatriates and their families, although it has not yet necessarily translated into increased assistance. While recognizing the importance of the issue, many MNCs have demonstrated a reticence to devote portions of their limited resources to combating the issue of repatriate adjustment (Hurn, 1999). Hurn (1999) has stressed the importance of clear repatriation policies and emphasized the advantages of retaining employees upon return from international assignments. HR departments have spent considerable time and effort in pre-expatriation training programs, cultural adaptation support, and information overload concerning the host country. Expectation theory or beliefs are such that it is assumed the target nation will be different, the culture will not be the same, and many expatriates are prepared for certain degrees of hardship before even embarking on the assignment. This same process prior to repatriation is absent in the vast majority of HR departments, and it is simply assumed that the return will be easy and effortless. Recently, ideas such as appointing mentors, debriefing repatriates, and enhancing communication flows will assist greatly in alleviating the concerns of the repatriate and easing the transition back into the home country.

The particular practice of communicating information about the repatriation process prior to return has become a focus of some academic research (Gomez-Mejia & Balkin, 2012; Oddou et al., 2009). They found that a lack of information regarding the process directly affects repatriate adjustment in a very negative manner, in addition to lowering repatriate satisfaction levels. Some other studies have found that repatriation was in actuality more difficult on the employee than the initial stage of the expatriate assignment (Adler & Ghadar, 1989). They further discovered that the perceptions of reentry behavior were extremely divergent when comparing home country managers and repatriates. Finally, repatriates also displayed low levels of satisfaction upon return due to the fact that newly acquired skills, or the enhancement of their skills in general, were neither recognized nor utilized after reintegration with the home company.

This phenomenon of reverse culture shock is often explained in the following contexts: 1) different expectations – expect to have difficulties when going abroad but not expecting difficulties upon return; 2) host vs. home perceptions of behavior – when abroad behavior is often understood or accepted as different from the local, but at home expectation is all members behave in the same manner; (3) change – change is again expected and dealt with when going abroad, but change is unexpected upon return. Black, (1992) found that when, they display accurate expectation levels upon return, repatriates perform at a higher level than those whose expectations were not met (either positively or negatively). An important source of work adjustment problems, among others, found in this study was the lack of clear policies and planning in the repatriation process. To date one of the most important or principal measure related to repatriation and adjustment is the concept of reducing uncertainty. Throughout the international assignment process, the attempt to reduce uncertainty is heavily placed at the beginning with little to no thought about the end. Through uncertainty reduction, it is theorized that then expectations can be more accurately met and an easier transition back into the home workplace can occur (Black & Mendenhall, 1990). This is of course essential for repatriates as they have been away for a long enough time that changes will have occurred within the organization, whether they are policies, personnel or other associated issues, but which will take time to become reacquainted with and pose the potential problem of enhancing uncertainty, thereby potentially affecting expectations. In 1989, more than two decades ago, Harvey (1989) noted that MNCs in the U.S. had not developed an adequate awareness of the importance of repatriation programs. Over time, there has been an increase in the number of studies related to this topic, although the same factors continue to be identified as problematic in retaining repatriates. Awareness is a good first step, but without the action and implementation of programs and policies, repatriation is still troubled by problems discovered decades ago.

Repatriate Turnover

The experience and knowledge acquired by a repatriate while on assignment can be of extremely high value and essential for an organization to maintain a competitive edge in foreign markets. The local market knowledge, perceptions, and the management skills of the repatriate all represent significant advantages of the specific personnel used for assignments, and their potential loss to a competitor can be a devastating blow both financially and on a human resource level for the organization. As has been shown in previous studies, MNCs in large part have been failing to leverage these human resource assets as they are unable to retain a significant portion of repatriates after return. Many issues related to repatriate turnover have been identified to varying degrees by scholars including: lack of promotion opportunities, disappointment in job tasks, loss of status and autonomy, lack of career planning, lack of support from colleagues, and low satisfaction with the process of repatriation itself. Stroh (1995) found that the three major predictors of turnover for repatriates were: 1) whether the organization valued foreign assignments; 2) whether career planning was available; and 3) whether there was upheaval or significant changes within the organization. All three factors displayed significant levels of turnover, at a much higher rate than for domestic employees.

These results suggest once again that the idea of planning and consultation could possibly lower turnover and potentially open up the process of finding innovative ways to utilize newly acquired skills and put into practice the experience and knowledge gained while abroad. When the corporate culture does not necessarily value the international assignment, it has a negative effect upon those employees who return after time abroad and increases the potential for turnover. Adler (1997) and Hurn (1999) found similar issues in terms of the feelings and satisfaction levels among repatriates upon return who expressed high levels of disappointment in their treatment upon return, whether it was lack of promotions, being ‘warehoused’, or not having a set position for them to assume upon return. These factors lead to an increase in anxiety and uncertainty, and often cause the repatriates to look elsewhere to someone else who can provide them with specific answers or jobs that reflect the skills acquired while abroad. They further related this disconnection with expectations again, leading to anger, disappointment, and a feeling of being haphazardly treated, thus pushing the repatriate to look elsewhere and explore other options.

Recently scholars have been working towards envisioning the entire assignment as a full and complete process or cycle. Repatriation planning should begin well before the assignment actually starts and should continue long after the repatriate has returned to the home country. A thorough analysis of the strategic functions to be performed during and after the assignment needs to be identified and the focus of development throughout the entire process. This would enable the repatriate to utilize new skills and knowledge acquired while abroad and to maintain a high degree of involvement for both the organization and the repatriate in their work relationship. The lack of strategic vision for the organization is often cited as one reason repatriates are not adequately valued for their experience abroad, which limits the effectiveness and application of their new found skills and knowledge, leading into a further estrangement of this potentially valuable resource. Yan et al (2002) view the process as holistic in nature and should encompass career development, psychological contract, and agency theories to develop a model of the international assignment. This allows for a better understanding of the alignment, or non-alignment, of expectations and issues of the process itself. Aligning the strategic vision of both parties to the process will allow for a melding of purpose and potential strengthening of the bonds of employment. This bond was further affirmed by Lazarova & Caligiuri (2001) as they found that repatriates who felt the organization was concerned about their well-being were more likely to stay with that company after repatriation.

They further determined that repatriation support practices were positively correlated with the perception of organizational support, which is directly linked to a repatriates' desire to leave or stay. Repatriates surveyed responded that the two most important factors related to turnover were appreciation of global experience and career planning. Knowing that people respect what you have done and that there is a plan and path for the future goes a long way in reducing uncertainty and providing perceived value for a repatriate. Lazarova & Caligiuri (2001) were also one of the first to find support for the idea of a 'boundaryless career' in terms of repatriates and the fact that turnover was not related to company loyalty or organizational commitment. They found that often employees use international assignments to upgrade their skills, knowledge and experience and in turn leverage those into a better position at a different organization in terms of their own personal career paths and goals. Thus, the concept of enhancing repatriation practices may support retention but may not relate to loyalty over the long run.

Engagement Theory

The complex and dynamic global environment of today requires multinational organizations to manage a global workforce in order to achieve sustainable growth. Managing this workforce is challenging -- it has enhanced mobility, diversity, and is not bound by geographic or cultural boundaries (Schuler, Jackson, & Tarique, 2011; Scullion, Collings, & Caligiuri, 2010; Stahl et al., 2012). As a result of these challenges many human resource practitioners (HR leaders and HR consultants), and academics have been exploring the important area referred to as ''global talent management''(Collings &

Mellahi, 2009; Garavan, Carbery, & Rock, 2012; Schuler, et al., 2011; Scullion, et al., 2010; Stahl, et al., 2012; Vaiman, Scullion, & Collings, 2012).

Within the myriad of research in global talent management there has been some discussion around the notion of talent shortages (Manpower Group Talent Shortage Survey, 2011), and the impact of talent shortages on human resource management practices in multinational organizations (Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Farndale, Scullion, & Sparrow, 2010; Scullion, et al., 2010; Stahl, et al., 2012). Interestingly to note is that the topic of global talent management is prevalent in times of economic prosperity as well as in times of economic uncertainty and economic and financial recession (Tarique & Schuler, 2010). There is substantial evidence that shows that even in poor economic conditions, many organizations worldwide have difficulty filling talent shortages across a wide range of positions (McCauley & Wakefield, 2006). The recent Manpower Talent Shortage Survey (2011, p. 2) notes:

> "Despite the continuing caution exercised by many companies amid ongoing economic uncertainty, a substantial portion of employers in the U.S. and worldwide identify a lack of available skilled talent as a continuing drag on business performance….."

A recent study by Heidrick & Struggles (Strategic Talent Management. The emergence of a new discipline, 2012) notes:

> "The cumulative impact of global demographic trends, combined with on-going economic uncertainty and aggravated by a critical skills

shortage creates a powerful talent triple whammy facing business. In response, forward-looking companies are bringing talent, particularly leadership talent, to the top of the agenda and are assigning responsibility for aligning business and talent imperatives to a senior talent executive. We are beginning to see the steady emergence of a new discipline of Strategic Talent Management, led by a Head of Talent or a similarly titled role."

According to PricewaterhouseCoopers (2011), the millennial generation of potential workers, make up approximately 25% of the workforce in the Unites States and account for over half of the population in India. The report further predicts that by 2020, millennials will form 50% of the global workforce. Hence, it is important to understand the work related characteristics of this group that include:

- Low loyalty (and engagement levels) towards employers;
- Most likely to voluntary leave when economic conditions improve;
- Consider learning and development as the most essential benefit from employers;
- Look for a good work/life balance;
- Prefer to communicate electronically at work rather than face to face;
- Career progression is important;
- Attracted to organizations that focus on corporate social responsibility;
- Strong interest in working overseas; and,
- Comfortable working with older generations;

One of the key challenges that many organizations struggle with is identifying the reasons why talented employees leave, taking with them essential skills, competencies, and experiences. Job satisfaction and work passion do play an important role as identified over the course of decades of research. However, there still exist only vague notions and a dearth of quantitative analyses on antecedents to turnover as well as effective strategies to retain employees. However, some potentially effective retention strategies of note include:

- *Talent Engagement*. This is a huge area of research that suggests employees who are more engaged with their work and organization are likely to exhibit greater job satisfaction, a positive opinion of their employer, greater customer loyalty, and high levels of performance, while also being less likely to voluntarily leave (e.g., Lockwood, 2007).
- *Career Development*. Organizations that provide career planning to talented employees are more likely to see a low level of voluntary turnover. When employees have a good understanding of their career path and the assurance that their organization values their development, they can be more connected to their work and organization
- *Training*. Provide work or job specific training (relative to general training) that provides skills that are less transferable to other organization.

There does appear to be some confusion concerning the definition of employee engagement due to the number of consulting firms and HR practitioners working in this area. However, researchers and opinion leaders provide us with a basic definition of employee engagement, which is as follows: an increased emotional and intellectual connection that an employee has to their employer, supervisor, and coworkers that result in an increased output of effort (Gibbons, 2006).

Over the past few years, the human resource professionals around the world have considered employee engagement a key focus areas. “For the first time in the history of management, it is the human mind that is the primary creator of value. The quality of people and their engagement will be critical factors in corporate vitality and survival”, (Ulrich, 2004, p. 1). This statement reflects the recent focus by human resource professionals and management on employee engagement and its connection to sustainability and profitability.

This new focus on employee engagement is driven by a labor shortage, which has resulted in the need to attract and retain employees while continuing to improve performance and profitability. “Hiring top talent is one thing; keeping talent and getting its full engagement is another thing. Talent is mobile, and fully 58% of Canadian employees in Canada are open to move to other organizations” (Ulrich, 2004, p. 2). Employers able to engage employees are more likely to retain those same employees, while simultaneously increasing output. “Organizations must capture a bigger portion of the employee mindshare,” (Ulrich, 2004, p. 2). The term mindshare describes the extent to which the employee is engaged and provides output. It is this output and performance that will become increasingly important as the labor shortage continues.

Some human resource specialists consider employee disengagement a significant contributor to poor corporate performance and profitability. “Lack of engagement is endemic and is causing large and small organizations all over the world to incur excess costs, under-perform on critical tasks, and create widespread customer dissatisfaction" (Rampersad, 2008, p.1). Extra costs and underperformance resulting from poor employee engagement negatively affects organizations and, over the long term, decreases profitability and, as a result, sustainability.

The *Gallup Management Journal* survey conducted in 2005 (as cited in Rampersad, 2008) found "of all U.S. workers 18 or older, about 19.2 million or roughly 14% are actively disengaged. Gallup estimates that the lower productivity of disengaged workers cost the U.S. economy about $300 billion" (p. 12). This information is important because it connects the disengagement of workers with low productivity, and relates low productivity to negative economic implications. In turn, it is the productivity of the individual that affects the productivity of the organization, as well as the overall financial performance and sustainability of the organization.

While increased participation and information are important, they will not necessarily, on their own, result in meaningful work and, therefore, employee engagement. Other factors are involved; "the work itself needs to offer opportunities for autonomy, influence, and intrinsic rewards" (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 144). This information reflects the importance for employees to have some influence over and autonomy in their work, while having an internal feeling of reward and personal satisfaction.

When employees are offered opportunity for autonomy, they are given some flexibility in decision-making and creation of their work. Although autonomy is not directly connected to the creation of work, it implies that employees have expanded flexibility within their work. With flexibility comes the ability to increase personal decision-making regarding work and this flexibility creates opportunity for increasing personal meaning in one's work.

Influence and intrinsic rewards are other factors that can influence the ability to create meaningful work (Bolman & Deal, 2003). It is this ability to influence the design of one's work that can create meaningful work for that individual. Increasing an employee's opportunities for influence can result in meaningful work. Further, when an employee has influence over their work, they can feel a sense of personal satisfaction in that work; this can also be described as being meaningful. Intrinsic rewards, such as personal satisfaction and strong self-efficacy, are also components of meaningful work (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Making work meaningful is an important aspect of improving performance and employee engagement.

Wheatley (2006) connected creativity, innovation, and engagement to what interests and brings meaning to people. Wheatley believed that by watching how people spend their time and listening to what they talk about, we can begin to understand what is important to them. Foremost among life's teachings is the recognition that human creativity and commitment are our greatest resources. As soon as people become interested in an issue, their creativity is engaged. If we want people to be innovative, leaders must engage them in meaningful issues. The simplest way to discover what is meaningful is to notice what people talk about and where they spend their energy (Wheatley, 2007). Wheatley said engaging individuals in issues important to them builds engagement. This provides us with some insight into the nexus between providing meaningful work and opportunities to invoke engagement.

Wheatley (2006) said it is important in the employer–employee relationship for employees to be able to co-create their work. “It’s the fact that people need to be creatively involved in how their work gets done. We’re seeing people exercising their inalienable freedom to create for themselves” (Wheatley, 2006, p. 87). Wheatley believed people support what they create, and stated meaningful work is directly connected to those who create and perform it. Engaged employees find their work meaningful, and the work is meaningful because they, in part, have created it.

The elements of meaningful work as outlined by Bolman and Deal (2003) and Wheatley (2006) include the ability to have autonomy, and to have intrinsic rewards to co-create one’s work, to influence the structure and design of one’s work. Meaningful work occurs from these elements. More importantly, meaningful work can result in employee engagement.

Summary

It is important for managers to have an understanding of why people would leave the organization and it is equally important to identify those factors that attract people to organizations (Amos et al., 2008). According to Lambert et al., (2001), in their study they found that job satisfaction has the largest direct effect on turnover intent. Along with this it has also been noted that training and development also contribute to employee retention and turnover. Pursuant to this idea, it is believed that employees who are given opportunities for training may remain within the organization in order to utilize their new skills. However, it should be noted that some employers have shown concern that if their employees are well trained, they may leave the organization for better jobs elsewhere. It is also important to recall that employees who lack either organizational or professional commitment, who are unhappy in their jobs, and who experience excessive burnout and stress while also not receiving adequate social support are likely to contemplate leaving the organization (Michal et al., 2001). Employees who feel committed to their organizations are less likely to quit than those who are not (Sikorska-Simmons, 2005). In the end, recruitment may be one way of building intellectual capital, but it is of little use to an organization if it cannot retain key employees and experiences high turnover. This suggests organizations should focus on creating an environment conducive to boosting the morale of their employees. Any organization that does not pay specific attention to enhancing its human resources attraction and retention strategy will be constantly faced with the challenge of losing valuable employees.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

There are a few potential theories with which to further mold this dissertation including the following: cognitive dissonance as a psychological factor separating expectations from reality; human capital theory identifying the value of human resources as a competitive advantage and the lengths to which this should be cultivated and managed; organizational learning would allow for insight into the strategic management processes of HR in acquiring, adapting and implementing the knowledge and experience gained by the repatriate; and absorptive capacity would work well with the boundaryless career model as it would identify the increase and application new skills and knowledge in moving to a different company as a step forward in the personal career path. These strategies, among others, all have their values, and depending on which path this dissertation takes in its final version will help to identify which theoretical lens is the most ideal for the analyses.

Resource Based View

However, in overall terms, the resource based view (RBV) of the firm can provide a substantial theoretical basis for the study. This theory focuses on the analysis of a firm's internal environment; more specifically, it explores the value-creating potential of internal resources (Boxall & Purcell, 2011). This focus strays from the traditional approach of determining the effect of external factors on a firm's competitive advantage and, while important, it is equally necessary to recognize the influence that internal resources have on a firm's competitive advantage.

Human resources cannot be excluded from the notion that a firm's internal resources can be sources of competitive advantage. Within this theoretical construct, employees are regarded as important resources whose knowledge, skills, and abilities are highly valuable. An assumption made by RBV is that all human resources are strategically valuable (Boxall & Purcell, 2011). In reality, however, not every single employee injects 'core competencies' into a firm and subsequently helps create a competitive advantage (Boxall & Purcell, 2011).

For human resources to be potential sources of a competitive advantage they must meet specific criteria. Barney (1995) noted that to provide a sustainable competitive advantage, resources must be rare, valuable, inimitable, and non-substitutable. Collectively, human resources who meet these criteria will constitute a highly skilled motivated workforce that is highly productive (Wright et al., 2001). Generally, firms will manage their strategically valuable human resources differently from other groups of employees (Lepak & Snell, 1999). Boxall and Purcell (2011) proposed that organizations heavily invest in developing employees who hold critical knowledge and skills. This is primarily due to the argument that human capital is neither widely accessible nor easily imitated (Boxall & Purcell, 2011). The RBV provides the cornerstone for understanding the value of a firm's human resources and reiterates the need to focus on and improve retention strategies.

Employees are often placed into categories based on the three main factors of ability, valuen and contribution. Accordingly, it is impractical to assume that organizations want to retain every single employee, which is especially true in regards to poor performers (Griffeth & Hom, 2001). The turnover of unmotivated employees who lack the ability and skills and do not adequately contribute to the success of the organization can be a desirable outcome (Wagar & Rondeau, 2006). However, when we apply this theoretical underpinning to repatriates, we are generally focusing on key employees who are typically depicted as employees with scarce skills and good performance records (Boxall & Purcell, 2011). Essentially, as Ordiorne (1985) denoted, the focus will be on the retention of high quality employees known as 'stars' and solid citizens (Ordiorne, 1985).

Ordiorne (1985) categorized the performance of employees into the following groups; stars, solid citizens, marginal performers, and chronic under-achievers. In the context of RBV, stars and solid citizens are more likely to be representative of sources of competitive advantage. They are perceived as highly advanced personnel who foster creativity and acquire technical expertise, while marginal performers and chronic under-achievers struggle to positively impact regular business outcomes. The underlying message that can be derived from Ordiorne's (1985) study is that not all employees contribute equal value to a firm. The impact resulting from a star employee leaving would be much greater than that made by the departure of a chronic-under achiever. Marginal performers and chronic under-achievers lack the ability and motivation to make valuable contributions to the firm and hence their exit will have fewer adverse outcomes for employers. Griffeth and Hom (2001) suggest that the departure of these employees will have a functional impact on the firm; on the other hand, the departure of stars and solid citizens could result in adverse consequences for the firm due to the loss of specialized skills and experience.

Social Exchange Theory

Given the limited research on job engagement, there has been little in the way of model or theory development. However, there are two streams of research that provide models of employee engagement. In his qualitative study on the psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work, Kahn (1990) interviewed summer camp counselors and organizational members of an architecture firm about their moments of engagement and disengagement at work. Kahn (1990) found that there were three psychological conditions associated with engagement or disengagement at work: meaningfulness, safety, and availability. In other words, workers were more engaged at work in situations that offered them more psychological meaningfulness and psychological safety, and when they were more psychologically available.

In the only study to empirically test Kahn's (1990) model, May et al. (2004) found that meaningfulness, safety, and availability were significantly related to engagement. They also found that job enrichment and role fit were positive predictors of meaningfulness; rewarding co-worker and supportive supervisor relations were positive predictors of safety while adherence to co-worker norms and self-consciousness were negative predictors; and resources available was a positive predictor of psychological availability while participation in outside activities was a negative predictor. The other model of engagement comes from the burnout literature, which describes job engagement as the positive antithesis of burnout, noting that burnout involves the erosion of engagement with one's job (Maslach et al., 2001). According to Maslach et al. (2001), six areas of work-life lead to burnout and engagement: workload, control, rewards and recognition, community and social support, perceived fairness, and values. They argue that job engagement is associated with a sustainable workload, feelings of choice and control, appropriate recognition and reward, a supportive work community, fairness and justice, and meaningful and valued work. Like burnout, engagement is expected to mediate the link between these six work-life factors and various work outcomes. Although both Kahn's (1990) and Maslach et al.'s (2001) models indicate the psychological conditions or antecedents that are necessary for engagement, they do not fully explain why individuals will respond to these conditions with varying degrees of engagement. A stronger theoretical rationale for explaining employee engagement can be found in social exchange theory (SET).

SET argues that obligations are generated through a series of interactions between parties who are in a state of reciprocal interdependence. A basic tenet of SET is that relationships evolve over time into trusting, loyal, and mutual commitments as long as the parties abide by certain “rules” of exchange (Cropanzano and Mictchell, 2005). Rules of exchange usually involve reciprocity or repayment rules such that the actions of one party lead to a response or actions by the other party. For example, when individuals receive economic and socio-emotional resources from their organization, they feel obliged to respond in kind and repay the organization (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). This is consistent with Robinson et al.’s (2004) description of engagement as a two-way relationship between the employer and employee. One way for individuals to repay their organization is through their level of engagement. That is, employees will choose to engage themselves to varying degrees and in response to the resources they receive from their organization. Bringing oneself more fully into one’s work roles and devoting greater amounts of cognitive, emotional, and physical resources is a very profound way for individuals to respond to an organization’s actions. It is more difficult for employees to vary their levels of job performance given that performance is often evaluated and used as the basis for compensation and other administrative decisions. Thus, employees are more likely to exchange their engagement for resources and benefits provided by their organization. In summary, SET provides a theoretical foundation to explain why employees choose to become more or less engaged in their work and organization. The conditions of engagement in both Kahn's (1990) and Maslach et al.'s (2001) model can be considered economic and socio-emotional exchange resources within SET. Thus, the amount of cognitive, emotional, and physical resources that an individual is prepared to devote in the performance of one's work roles is contingent on the economic and socio-emotional resources received from the organization.

Organizational Learning and Absorptive Capacity

The concept of organizational learning or the ability of an organization to acquire new knowledge and be able to learn is a major reason behind the choice of foreign direct investment. Many researchers have identified the lack of knowledge as being a large impediment to internationalization and thus have identified knowledge acquisition as a paramount factor in organizational expansion and global success (Argyris and Schon, 1978; Carlson 1966; Cohen and Levinthal; 1990, Dodgson, 1993; Naldi and Zahra, 2007; Prahalad & Hamel, 1994). As rapid global expansion occurs, organizations have become more and more concerned with efficiency, increasing competitive advantage, innovation, and overall effectiveness. Due to factors such as structure, technology, culture, and the environment, organizational learning is influenced and affected depending on its receptivity. According to Dodgson (1993), a 'learning organization' intentionally and with purpose builds structures and develops strategies to maximize learning potential and to enhance overall learning of an organization. Organizations have become increasingly concerned with the concept of change and flexibility as a way to manage issues and to pursue further advantages in the corporate world. As learning is dynamic, there is an emphasis on the constant and ever continuing nature of organizational change. There has always been a focus on individual change through learning new concepts and growth of self. However, it has become more apparent that as an organization is a sum of individuals it is just as important to learn for the organization as it is for an individual. This may take the form of processes and structures put in place for organizational learning to be pursued and to facilitate change. Organizational learning becomes important when discussing Absorptive Capacity as it is based on the firm's ability to learn. An organization can only increase its absorptive capacity through learning, thus organizational learning becomes the first stage for firms to expand their knowledge base.

Cohen and Levinthal (1990) discuss the cognitive structures of organizations and individuals and conclude that organizations need prior-related knowledge, generally through R&D activities to evaluate new knowledge. The focus is on explaining how absorptive capacity works through communication channels between the external environment and the organization, and among sub-units (Todorova and Durisin, 2003). This includes and implies that the first step is the identification of new knowledge and that it is useful in some manner towards the organization.

Essentially, the ability to learn, or to absorb external knowledge, depends to a great extent on the ability to identify and evaluate new external knowledge. The importance of recognizing the value of new knowledge requires that researchers and practitioners use this component as a first building capability in the dynamic capability of absorptive capacity. Zahra and George (2002) use the concept of acquisition and focus mainly on speed, intensity, and effort to gather knowledge to expand this concept of simply identifying new knowledge. Zahra and George (2002: 189) in a redefinition of absorptive capacity state, “the intensity and speed of a firm’s efforts to identify and gather knowledge can determine the quality of a firm’s acquisition capabilities”.

The second point in absorptive capacity theory refers to the assimilation of new knowledge. The analysis, process, interpretation, and understanding of the information gathered from external sources all contribute to the firm’s learning process and set the stage for further use of the information. Again, Zahra and George (2002) put forward this stage of comprehension as promoting assimilation of knowledge that allows firms to process and build upon externally generated knowledge. The following stage for Zahra and George is known as the transformation stage; however, I have included it with the final third stage with the application or exploitation of knowledge.

The third step, as identified by Cohen and Levinthal, is the application of this knowledge. Here Zahra and George (2002) split the stage into two parts: the transformation and exploitation stages. The first of these stages denotes the importance of changing the gained information, adding it to prior knowledge or simply looking at the information from a different perspective. This allows for unique or creative knowledge building to occur and for even more opportunities to arise. The fourth stage, or according to Cohen and Levinthal the third stage, is exploitation or application, which is the enactment or building of new processes or functions that reflect the acquired knowledge. Zahra and George (2002) continue on to discuss the splitting of absorptive capacity into two separate sections. That being potential and realized absorptive capacity depending on which stage in the process of the theory is being examined. Potential absorptive capacity would be related to the first two stages, whereas realized absorptive capacity would reflect absorptive capacity increases through transformation and exploitation.

Essentially absorptive capacity is the ability of an organization to identify, acquire, and implement new knowledge, thereby enhancing their overall base of understanding. Repatriates, as a vessel of knowledge, provide this function through international assignments in acquiring new knowledge, bringing it back with them either explicitly or tacitly, and, through their experiences and new skill-sets, start the process of applying it to be better understood and utilized by the home organization. Their addition to the overall knowledge pool enhances the organization's overall absorptive capacity and contributes to its growth as a competitive advantage.

Identification of Gaps

Through the above we have seen that a myriad of issues still exist in terms of the repatriation process, turnover, satisfaction and the factors that can significantly affect the retention of repatriates. One of the main problems, or limitations, of a majority of these studies is that respondents remained employed by the company for which they performed the international assignment. Thus, the concept of turnover was potential and perceptual as opposed to being an actual determinant. Therefore, while repatriates talked about things they did not like or that affected them negatively, none of the factors actually led them to leave, thus establishing a huge gap in the current research. Further, while practices are often suggested in the conceptual research by academics, very few corporations have either put them into practice or been responsive to methods of analysis to determine their actual effects. The vast majority of quantitative research has focused on repatriates as the sample, and those repatriates being employees who did not actually leave their employ upon return. Further, a large limitation in the research also exists in terms of comparing best practices of HR processes in terms of repatriation.

Thus, the main research questions this dissertation will focus on are: (1) What are the best practices for organizations in terms of retaining repatriates? Managing the expectations and formulating strategies, policies and specific measures should enhance the retention rates of large organization but as of yet has been unproven and relatively untested. Does the concept of job engagement pertain to a greater effect for repatriates than general employees and might this provide an insight into enhancing retention? (2)When discussing the programs for HR departments, is the personal focus more important than the organizational focus as, for example, personal career planning versus organizational process planning? Finally, (3) to what degree can HR departments reduce uncertainty and engage the repatriate throughout the process to better enable the repatriate's home reintegration?

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

The development of the framework is based on the merging of international business concepts in repatriation studies and models of engagement relating to turnover in the area of human resource management. The factors that have been perceived in both the HR and IB literature have flowed primarily into three main categories: the individual, the managerial or functional unit, and the organization itself. These three groups represent the three main forces that, through the conceptual studies and qualitative analyses, have been discussed and brought forth as antecedents to job engagement and lead to turnover and lower levels of job satisfaction. Below the factors and their components have been listed to better illustrate the conceptual framework of this study.

Factors

Individual

- Workplace Recognition
- Perceived Involvement

Managerial/Functional Unit

- Team Orientation/Co-worker Support and Involvement
- Two-way Communication

Organizational

- Work/Life Balance
- Application of Experience/Skills

Mediating

- Job Engagement

Dependent Variables – Consequences

- Intention to Leave
- Job Satisfaction

Moving from the listing above and upon a thorough review of the literature, we find multiple studies from both streams that identify these factors as relevant, and also suggests questions or aspects of the factors that need to be addressed. Outlined below in tables are the factors for each grouping as well as the items that will be used in a survey to test any impact that exists.

Table 1

Antecedents and Consequences of Job Engagement

Individual		
Workplace Recognition		
Factors/Questions	**IB**	**HR**
Job Security Freedom and Opportunities Praise More challenging work Respect from co-workers	Morgan et al, 2004; Zhao & Zhou, 2008; Adler, 1997; Hurn, 1999	Amenumey & Lockwood, 2008; Maslach et al, 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2008;
Perceived Involvement		
Factors/Questions	**IB**	**HR**
Opportunity Skills/Experience Valued by Superiors Skills/Experience Valued by Co-workers Ability to enact change	Kumaraswamy & Chitale, 2012; Bonache, 2008; Stroh, 1995	Rees et al, 2013; Shuck et al, 2011
Managerial/Functional Unit		
Team Orientation/Co-worker Support and Involvement		
Factors/Questions	**IB**	**HR**

Team Interaction Strong Relationships Valuing of Experience/Skills Team Cohesion/Encouragement	De Cieri et al, 2009; Stroh et al, 2000	Amenumey & Lockwood, 2008; Maslach et al, 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Saks, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004
Two-way Communication		
Factors/Questions	**IB**	**HR**
Task Clarification Goal setting Clarity Feedback Consistent Updates	Kumaraswamy & Chitale, 2012; Bonache, 2008; Vidal et al, 2010	CIPD, 2006; Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Robinson et al, 2004; Wellins et al, 2005
Organizational		
Work/Life Balance		
Factors/Questions	**IB**	**HR**
Personal Work-Time Flexibility Maternity/Paternity Leave Vacation Encouragement Existing Policies	De Cieri et al, 2009; LeCrone, 2006; Harvey 1985; Michal et al, 2001	Crawford et al, 2010; Rich et al, 2010
Application of Experience/Skills		
Factors/Questions	**IB**	**HR**
Uses skills effectively Values varied experience Shares new knowledge/skills	Adler & Ghadar, 1989; Black et al, 1999; Stroh, 1995	Kraimer et la, 2011; Nahrgang et al, 2011
Dependent/Mediating		
Job Engagement		

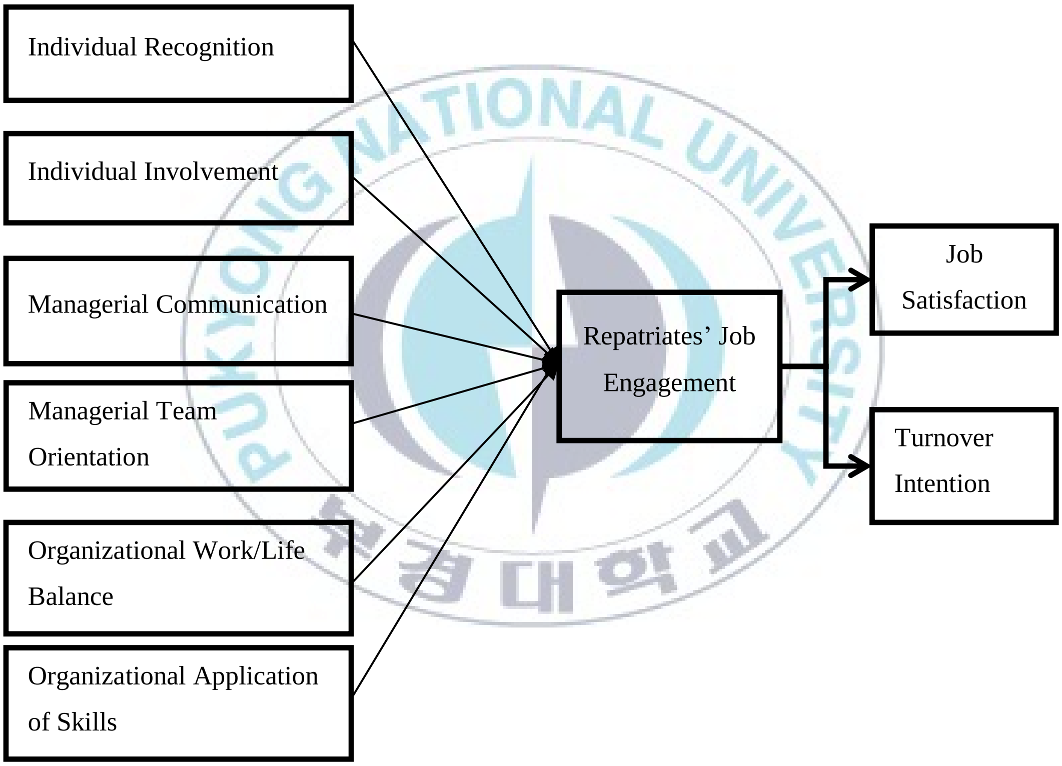
Involvement in Work Lose track of time Highly engaged in job activity Involved in Org activities Enjoy being a member Strive to put forth effort	Furuya et al, 2009 Stroh et al, 2000; Alnaqbi, 2011; Lee & Liu, 2007	Saks, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003; Meyer et al, 1993; Mowday et al, 1979
Dependent Factors		
Turnover Intention		
Factors/Questions	**IB**	**HR**
Actively looking Frequency of search thought Future plan to look (in years)	Kraimer et al, 2012; Vidal et al, 2008; Lee & Liu, 2007; Liu, 2005; Valentine et al, 2011; Alnaqbi, 2011; Lazarova & Cerdin, 2007;	Saks, 2006; Kahn, 1992; Shuck et al, 2011
Job Satisfaction		
Factors/Questions	**IB**	**HR**
Work enjoyment Dislike of activity Meets expectations	Valentine et al, 2011; Vidal et al, 2007; Furuya et al, 2009; Morgan et al, 2004; Samad & Yusuf, 2012	Saks, 2006; Cammann et al, 1979; Kahn, 1992; Shuck et al, 2011

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

The framework as shown above is developed from the perspective of the individual employee and the grouping of variables is identified through previous literature to the same effect. Throughout the literature review, three groupings of factors were consistently noted: individual, managerial and organizational. Individual factors from each groupings have been identified from the literature and will be outlined below as to the impact upon job satisfaction and turnover intention. The development of the hypotheses will be undertaken through a three-step approach, divided below into three separate sections.

Figure 1

Research Model



The first section outlines the antecedents to engagement and their potential impacts. The second section focuses on the relationship between engagement and this study's independent variables. Finally, the third section suggests that job engagement may play a role as a mediating factor in this study.

Section 1: Antecedents of Engagement

Individual Factors

The first grouping identified in the literature is the perceptions and expectations of the individual. These issues relate to the individual's personal issues or perspective regarding the relationship to the job being done and the intrinsic factors that are inherent in every position. The individual grouping contains two separate factors that have consistently been discussed in both conceptual and qualitative research as important considerations in any study on job satisfaction and turnover intention.

Recognition

The job you perform and the many facets of its make-up generate a psychological meaningfulness to an employee's self-in-role performance (Kahn, 1990). Concepts such as task and skill variety in day-to-day work can generate a psychological connection enhancement to one's place of work and create a favorable outlook extending to higher levels of performance (Saks, 2006). Hackman and Oldham (1980) created an early version of a job characteristics model, which included other factors, such as significance, along with variety. This model was further extended by May et al (2004) who found that job enrichment was positively associated with meaningfulness, which in turn mediated the relationship between enrichment and job engagement. From a similar perspective, burnout theory (Maslach et al, 2001) also found a significant relationship between job enrichment and engagement. Bonache, (2008) found significance between tasks performed, challenge, and significance with the overall job satisfaction of repatriates.

Job characteristics are often reflected as a representation of the recognition of an organization or an employee's capabilities. Repatriates often cite the lack of recognition for work done abroad as a significant factor leading to lower job satisfaction (Hurn, 1999; Zhao & Zhou, 2008). The perceptive belief of compensation levels are also referred to by repatriates as an issue leading to dissatisfaction. The sense of appropriate recognition or compensation for services or duties performed relates directly to expectations of employees, and thus when expectations are not met there is a similar trend in engagement levels (Kahn, 1990). Similarly, Maslach et al, 2001 uncovered the realization that a lack of rewards and recognition can lead to burnout and similarly the appropriateness of rewards and recognition is an important facet of job engagement. Rewards and recognition received by employees from their organization spur a feeling of obligation to the organization, which usually comes in the form of higher levels of job engagement. This leads to the first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: At the individual level, recognition will be positively associated with job engagement.

Perceived Involvement

The concept of involvement with an organization is a further example of the psychological connection an employee has with their job and organization. Having opportunities to become more involved in different facets, along with the opportunity to share valued skills and experience, generates a greater level of job engagement and sense of belonging. There is a suggestion that working conditions relate to the perceived connection to both one's job and organization. This perception is based on a multitude of factors primarily stemming from the change in working conditions upon the repatriate's return (Bonache, 2008). While still relevant in general HR theory, the concepts of autonomy, supervision, flexibility, and decision-making constitute important considerations for an employee's psychological connection to be either reduced or enhanced (Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). For repatriates this becomes even more important as a single factor leading to job engagement, as generally higher levels of autonomy and flexibility allowed during international assignment are welcomed and invigorating. Upon return, however, controls are tightened and a loss of autonomy generates an overall higher level of dissatisfaction (Griffeth & Hom, 2001). This connection, or lack of, to an organization generates a favorable outlook towards the organization and in turn creates a sense of well-being for the employee (Poon, 2013). Affectively committed employees show a greater level of commitment to their organization, thus displaying higher levels of job engagement. This, in turn, also relates to higher levels of satisfaction due to this commitment and suggests a greater willingness to invest time and effort into their duties (Poon, 2010). Affective commitment to an organization is also identified in Hofstede's cultural variables in a mindset among primarily Asian nations as identification of work is generally through organizations as opposed to more 'western' ideas of duties. Further, some studies have suggested that employees who believe they have the ability to enact change in company policies and directives display a higher level of job engagement. Engagement studies have often pointed to levels of involvements as significant factors in discretionary effort, turnover and job satisfaction relationships. The greater the perceived involvement of an employee, the more likely they are to show higher levels of job engagement, and in turn potentially higher performance levels and satisfaction. Thus, this leads to:

Hypothesis 2: At the individual level, perceived involvement will be positively associated with job engagement.

Managerial Factors

The second grouping belongs to the interaction between the individual and their managers/supervisors at work. These factors suggest that ideas like communication, support, and others relate to an employee's level of job engagement and also affect the satisfaction levels and turnover intention. Returning from a rather autonomous work environment during the international environment, or at least where managerial directives are a bit more lax, can cause an increase in anxiety and satisfaction concerns upon return.

Team Orientation

When individuals explore careers outside their home countries, they typically leave behind their extended family and friendship network. Developing and retaining meaningful relationships with the work team or group in the home organization is receiving increased recognition as an important factor for repatriate success (Benson and Pattie, 2009; Mezias and Scandura, 2005). It is sometimes difficult for home office employees and expatriates to establish and maintain relationships, and this lack of interaction may lead to lower performance and retention problems (Kraimer and Wayne, 2004). Working in different time zones, loss of personal contacts a,nd divergent goals can all lead to weakened connectivity. Home advocates may feel less responsible for expatriates' success than home office employees' success, and, therefore, put less effort in to utilizing repatriates' international skills (Gregersen and Black, 1996). Recent research suggests that having someone looking out for the interest of the repatriate plays an important role in their success (Benson and Pattie, 2009). Organizations may help repatriates by providing mentors and re-entry sponsors and assisting in the reintegration and development of relationships with the work team.

Relationships with co-workers can strengthen an employee's bond to the organization and enhance the satisfaction simply in the act of going to work. By relying on others, and being part of a well- oiled work team, repatriates can improve their re-integration into the workplace and potentially enhance their own satisfaction through mutual understanding, recognition, and relationships. With this in mind, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 3: At the managerial level, team orientation will be positively associated with job engagement.

Managerial Communication

Kahn (1990) found that supportive and trusting interpersonal relationships as well as supportive management promoted psychological safety. Supportive environments allow members to experiment and try new things and even fail without fear of consequences (Kahn, 1990). In their empirical test of Kahn's model, May et al. (2004) also found that supportive supervisor relations were positively related to psychological safety. Social support is also one of the conditions in the Maslach et al. (2001) model; and a study by

Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) found that a measure of job resources that includes support from colleagues predicted job engagement. A lack of social support has also consistently been found to be related to burnout (Maslach et al., 2001).

When employees believe that their organization is concerned about them and cares about their well-being, they are likely to respond by attempting to fulfill their obligations to the organization by becoming more engaged. In addition, because employees tend to view their supervisor's orientation toward them as indicative of the organization's support (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002), communication is also likely to be an important predictor of employee job engagement. In fact, a lack of support and communication from supervisors has been found to be an especially important factor linked to burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). In addition, first-line supervisors are believed to be especially important for building job engagement and to be the root of employee disengagement (Bates, 2004; Frank et al., 2004).

Having frequent and fluent communication during the international mission between the domestic company and the expatriates is considered a relevant factor to improve their adjustment to work after the repatriation (Harvey, 1982). Benefits of the communication system include updating the employee on the politics, hierarchical, labour, and strategic organizational changes that occur in the domestic company during the duration of expatriation (Cagney, 1975). Communication should also include information exchange regarding the date of the repatriation and the characteristics of the job that will be occupied by the employees after the repatriation (Adler, 1981). A company that maintains this type of communication allows expatriates to feel that their needs are being considered by their organizations and, therefore, their adjustments after repatriation improve (Tung, 1988). Empirically, some studies have observed that a good communication system reduces turnover rates after repatriation (Lazarova and Caligiuri, 2001). This brings us to our fourth hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: At the managerial level, communication will be positively associated with job engagement.

Organizational Factors

The final grouping belongs to the interaction between the individual and their organization. These factors suggest that ideas like work/life balance, career growth, and perceived organization support impact satisfaction levels and turnover intention. The psychological connection between an individual and their organization is built upon their belief that the organization cares and will look after the employee during their time at work. This extends to welfare, future growth, and other associated issues that generate a connection between the employee and the organization.

Work/Life Balance

More evidence concerning the influence of control over work in flexibility outcomes for the individual and the organization comes from studies that examine the influence of work hours, the type of flexibility, and the degree of control employees have on outcomes such as stress and work/life conflict. A cross-company analysis of the relationship between work hours, commitment, and stress and burnout challenged the common business assumption that long work hours are an indicator of greater employee commitment. To the contrary, the study found no correlation between work hours and commitment, but did find a strong negative correlation between increased work hours and increased levels of stress and burnout (Richman & Civian, 2001). Whether a person's specific work schedule is a good fit has been shown to be a better predictor of psychological distress and quality of life than the objective number of work hours (either full time or reduced hours) (Barnett, Gareis, & Brennan, 1999). Flexible schedules, part-time work, and job sharing reduce stress, improve morale, and increase employees' sense of competence at home only when they also have a greater sense of control over their time or when work overload is reduced (Kelloway & Gottlieb, 1998). Using the above rationale, we can hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 5: At the organizational level, work/life balance will be positively associated with job engagement.

Application of Experience/Skills

The degree of transfer of global management competencies coincident with repatriation has a significant influence upon affective and behavioral outcomes, such as job motivation and performance. During the international assignment, individuals assimilate foreign culture and behavioral routines, while their home countries' families and friends simultaneously change themselves during this time (Suutari and Brewster, 2003). Moreover, individuals generate expectations regarding the return to their nation based on their home-country situation as it was before they were expatriated (Pickard, 1999). This makes some of them declare that 'repatriation should be considered as another foreign assignment' (Black et al., 1999). According to Gomez-Mejıa and Balkin (1983), Johnston (1991) and Linehan and Scullion (2002), individuals also experience personal changes in attitudes and behavior and this can alter their previous social lives and friendships. General adjustment could also be generated by the changes the employee suffers after the repatriation regarding the weather conditions, transport system, economic and housing conditions (Black et al., 1999).

Consistent with Bandura's (1986) conceptualization of social cognitive theory and the consequences of self-efficacy, we argue that the successful transfer of previously acquired competencies to a new position will increase self-efficacy, in turn leading to heightened levels of job motivation. Bandura (1977) refers to this as ''performance accomplishment'' and proposes that, among the four sources of information that individuals use in making self-efficacy assessments, it is the strongest. Although not in a repatriation context, Gist and Mitchell (1992) found that the ability to successfully transfer knowledge could lead to increased self-efficacy. In turn, Evans and Tribble (1986) found that self-efficacy is related to intent to stay in the organization, suggesting positive motivation and affect toward the organization. Thus, our final hypothesis for the antecedents of engagement is:

Hypothesis 6: At the organizational level, application of skills and experience will be positively associated with job engagement.

In summary, the first section examines the relationship between the six antecedents of engagement and suggests that these three groupings of constructs and their associated factors will significantly and positively affect job engagement.

Section 2: Consequences of Engagement

In this section, the study will focus on the second half of the research model by looking into engagement as a factor and postulating outcomes signified by the two dependent variables chosen in this study. That is to say, while Section 1 looked into the antecedents to job engagement, this section focuses on the consequences of job engagement and points to potential positive and negative outcomes of an engaged (or unengaged) repatriate.

Job Engagement

Employee engagement has become a widely used and popular term (Robinson et al., 2004). However, most of what has been written about employee engagement can be found in practitioner journals where it has its basis in practice rather than theory and empirical research. As noted by Robinson et al. (2004), there has been surprisingly little academic and empirical research on a topic that has become so popular. As a result, employee engagement has the appearance of being somewhat faddish, or what some might call, “old wine in a new bottle.” To make matters worse, employee engagement has been defined in many different ways, and the definitions and measures often sound like other better known and established constructs like organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior (Robinson et al., 2004). Most often it has been defined as emotional and intellectual commitment to the organization (Baumruk, 2004; Richman, 2006; Shaw, 2005) or the amount of discretionary effort exhibited by employees in their jobs (Frank et al., 2004).

In the academic literature, a number of definitions have been provided. Kahn (1990, p. 694) defines personal engagement as “the harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances.” Personal disengagement refers to “the uncoupling of selves from work roles; in disengagement, people withdraw and defend themselves physically, cognitively, or emotionally during role performances” (p. 694). Thus, according to Kahn (1990, 1992), engagement means to be psychologically present when occupying and performing an organizational role. Rothbard (2001, p. 656) also defines engagement as psychological presence, but goes further to state that it involves two critical components: attention and absorption. Attention refers to “cognitive availability and the amount of time one spends thinking about a role,” while absorption “means being engrossed in a role and refers to the intensity of one’s focus on a role.”

Burnout researchers define job engagement as the opposite or positive antithesis of burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). According to Maslach et al. (2001), job engagement is characterized by energy, involvement, and efficacy, the direct opposite of the three burnout dimensions of exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy. Research on burnout and job engagement has found that the core dimensions of burnout (exhaustion and cynicism) and engagement (vigor and dedication) are opposites of each other (Gonzalez-Roma et al., 2006). Schaufeli et al. (2002, p. 74) define job engagement “as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption.” They further state that job engagement is not a momentary and specific state, but rather, it is “a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or behavior" (p. 74). In the academic literature, job engagement is said to be related to, but distinct from, other constructs in organizational behavior. For example, Robinson et al. (2004, p. 8) state that:

> …engagement contains many of the elements of both commitment and OCB, but is by no means a perfect match with either. In addition, neither commitment nor OCB reflect sufficiently two aspects of engagement – its two-way nature, and the extent to which engaged employees are expected to have an element of business awareness.

Organizational commitment also differs from job engagement in that it refers to a person's attitude and attachment towards their organization. Job engagement is not an attitude; it is the degree to which an individual is attentive and absorbed in the performance of their roles. And while OCB involves voluntary and informal behaviors that can help co-workers and the organization, the focus of job engagement is one's formal role performance rather than extra-role and voluntary behavior. Job engagement also differs from job involvement. According to May et al. (2004), job involvement is the result of a cognitive judgment about the need satisfying abilities of the job and is tied to one's self-image. Job engagement has to do with how individuals employ themselves in the performance of their job. Furthermore, job engagement involves the active use of emotions and behaviors in addition to cognitions. May et al. (2004, p. 12) also suggest that "engagement may be thought of as an antecedent to job involvement in that individuals who experience deep engagement in their roles should come to identify with their jobs." In summary, although the definition and meaning of job engagement in the practitioner literature often overlaps with other constructs, in the academic literature it has been defined as a distinct and unique construct that consists of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components that are associated with individual role performance. Furthermore, job engagement is distinguishable from several related constructs, most notably organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, and job involvement.

According to SET, when both parties abide by the exchange rules, the result will be a more trusting and loyal relationship and mutual commitments (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Thus, individuals who continue to engage themselves do so because of the continuation of favorable reciprocal exchanges. As a result, individuals who are more engaged are likely to be in more trusting and high-quality relationships with their employer and will, therefore, be more likely to report more positive attitudes and intentions toward the organization. In addition, there is some empirical research that has reported relationships between job engagement and work outcomes. For example, job engagement has been found to be positively related to organizational commitment and negatively related to intention to quit, and is believed to also be related to job performance and extra-role behavior (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Sonnentag, 2003). Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) found that job engagement was negatively related to turnover intention and mediated the relationship between job resources and turnover intention.

The driving force behind the popularity of employee engagement is that it has positive consequences for organizations. As indicated earlier, there is a general belief that there is a connection between employee engagement and business results (Harter et al., 2002). However, job engagement is an individual-level construct and if it does lead to business results, it must first impact individual-level outcomes. Along these lines, there is reason to expect employee engagement to be related to individuals' attitudes, intentions, and behaviors. Therefore, it is predicted that job engagement will be related to the work outcomes job satisfaction and turnover intention leading us to the next two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 7: Job engagement will be positively associated with job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 8: Job engagement will be negatively associated with turnover intention.

In summary, Section 2 comprises the second half of the model in suggesting that job engagement will significantly affect two separate outcomes. Based on the supporting arguments and previous research, engagement is predicted to be related to work-related consequences.

Section 3: Engagement as a Mediating Variable

This section provides the last point to be considered in this study, as given that the antecedents are expected to predict engagement and engagement is expected to predicted turnover and job satisfaction, it is entirely possible that engagement mediates the relationship between the antecedents and the consequences.

Engagement as a Mediator

Although neither Kahn (1990) nor May et al. (2004) included outcomes in their studies, Kahn (1992) proposed that engagement leads to both individual outcomes (i.e. quality of people's work and their own experiences of doing that work), as well as organizational-level outcomes (i.e. the growth and productivity of organizations). Furthermore, the Maslach et al. (2001) model treats engagement as a mediating variable for the relationship between the six work conditions and work various outcomes and, like burnout, should be related to outcomes such as increased withdrawal, lower performance, job satisfaction, and commitment (Maslach et al., 2001).

There are a number of reasons to expect job engagement to be related to work outcomes. For starters, the experience of job engagement has been described as a fulfilling, positive work-related experience and state of mind (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Sonnentag, 2003) and has been found to be related to good health and positive work affect (Sonnentag, 2003). These positive experiences and emotions are likely to result in positive work outcomes. As noted by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), engaged employees likely have a greater attachment to their organization and a lower tendency to leave their organization.

Finally, given that the antecedents are expected to predict job engagement and engagement predicts the outcomes, it is possible that job engagement mediates the relationship between the antecedents and the consequences. This is consistent with the Maslach et al. (2001) model and is all the more likely given that most of the antecedents (e.g. job characteristics, communication, application of skills) have been associated with various work outcomes.

Furthermore, several studies have found that job engagement mediates the relationship between antecedent variables and outcomes (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Sonnentag, 2003). Therefore, the final hypothesis of this study is the following:

Hypothesis 9: Job engagement will mediate the relationship between the antecedents and consequences.

Figure 2

Engagement as a Mediating Variable

METHODOLOGY

Philosophy and Justification

The overriding purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between individual, managerial and organizational factors, engagement theory, and the job satisfaction and turnover intention of repatriates. Recent studies focused on repatriate job engagement theory have begun to be pursued and while still relatively new in the academic arena, job engagement is oft cited by HR practitioners as a reason for both positive and negative outcomes including turnover, satisfaction, revenue, and discretionary effort.

Theoretical Framework

Repatriates represent a very important resource in terms of knowledge, experience, and ability for organizations in their efforts to establish and maintain competitive advantages in international markets and operations. By building upon three main antecedent constructs and determining the relationship of job engagement as a mediating variable in anticipating turnover, companies can anticipate some of the overriding concerns and move towards retaining these valuable knowledge resources. The research focused on these areas based on the conceptual model and the development of a questionnaire was done using this model as its background. The study was conducted using several statistical methods based upon the returned data including descriptive analysis, exploratory factor analysis, and multiple regression analysis using SPSS version 20. Finally, in order to demonstrate a sound basis for potential generalization of the results and to make the sample representative, an overall goal of more than 200 valid responses was essential for this study.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions and other prompts for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. A questionnaire can be identified as a formalized framework consisting of a set of questions and scales designed to generate primary raw data. Questionnaire construction involves taking established sets of scale measurements and formatting them into a complete instrument for communicating with and collecting raw data from respondents (Hair *et al*., 2003, p. 244).

Questionnaires have advantages over some other types of surveys in that they are more cost effective, do not require as much effort from the questioner as do verbal or telephone surveys, and often have standardized answers that make it simple to interpret data (Hair. *et al*., 2003, p. 256). The main function of a questionnaire is to capture people's thoughts and feelings about different issues or objectives. However, such standardized answers may also frustrate users. Questionnaires are limited by the fact that respondents must be able to read, understand, and be able to respond to the questions. Thus, for some demographic groups, conducting a survey by questionnaire may not be practical. As a type of survey, questionnaires also have many of the same problems relating to question construction and wording that exist in other types of opinion polls. The questionnaire in this study was organized in six thematic parts (Appendix 1). All ordinal scales used in this study were based on 5-point Likert scales (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree).

The first part of the survey was comprised of personal validation for the study while also including personal opinions on the overall topic itself. This included some generalizations with respect to the repatriation process, organizational involvement, and enjoyment of their international experience among other similar questions. The main purpose of this section was to ensure the validity of the respondent (as in fact a repatriate), and to potentially analyze groups or identifiers at a later stage.

The second section was focused on the individual level as identified in previous literature. The primary focus of this section was focused around the recognition and perceived involvement factors that were tested based on multiple items coming from the validated measurement scales from Morgan et al, (2004) and Bonache, (2008). The issues of recognition are found throughout repatriate literature as a defining factor for repatriates upon their return. The lack of recognition is often identified as leading to disengagement for an employee, and upon return from a lengthy international assignment, is recognized as an expectation that often is not met, thus leading to lower satisfaction levels and increasing turnover intention.

The third section was formed around the management level and concentrated on the area of communication and team orientation. The concept of communication is cited as a way to further engage and enhance the employment experience leading to greater effort and interest. As identified by Bonache, 2008, communication, or lack thereof, can lead to confusion, fear, and self-preservation taking place in an employee's mind, thus necessitating the discovery of an 'escape route'. In addition, the concept of team helps to reintegrate the repatriate back into the home work force and provides a degree of comfort and involvement as outlined by De Cieri et al, 2009.

The fourth section was built around the organizational level and the issues identified from previous research in this area. The primary factors to be drawn from this level are the concept of work/life balance and application of skills and experience (Crawford et al, 2010; Kraimer et al, 2011). These are primarily important for repatriates as rebalancing or readjusting upon return remains a significant challenge. While additionally, one of the reasons for expatriation often is skill development, and the lack of application upon return creates a potential disconnect for the repatriate.

The fifth section relates to the mediating variable and the dependent in this study. Using job engagement as a mediating variable allows for the model to undertake a testing of engagement theory as it relates to the three previous constructs. Job satisfaction and turnover intention are used in both IB and HR theory research as defining concerns for MNEs. Thus these constructs, Engagement (Saks, 2006), Job Satisfaction (Valentine et al, 2011) and Turnover Intention (Shuck et al, 2011) were used to complete the conceptual framework of the overall picture to be focused on in this study.

The sixth section considered the socio-demographics and relates to industry-based information and other classification based questions.

Survey Method

Survey research methods tend to be the mainstay of marketing research in general and are normally associated with descriptive and causal research situations (Hair *et al.*, 2003). Survey techniques are based upon the use of structured questionnaires given to a sample of a population (Mazzocchi, 2008). Hair *et al*. (2003) identify the survey method as having several advantages, such as the ability to accommodate large sample sizes and distinguish small differences, the increased generalizability of results, the convenience of managing and recording questions and answers, the capability of using statistical analysis and the ability to tap into factors and relationships not directly measurable. The disadvantages of the survey method also obviously exist, such as the difficulties of questionnaire designs, the limits to the in-depth detail of data structures, the lack of control over timeliness, possible low response rates, difficulties in determining whether respondents are responding truthfully, misinterpretation of data results and inappropriate use of data analysis procedures (Hair *et al*., 2003).

Hair *et al*. (2003) identify four main types of survey method: person-administered survey, telephone interviews, self-administered surveys and online surveys. The person-administered survey is distinguished by the presence of a trained interviewer who asks questions and records the subject's answers. A person-administered survey includes in-home interviews, executive interviews, mall-intercept interviews and purchase-intercept interviews.

Telephone interviews have become a major source of marketing information; this is because, compared to face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews are less costly, faster and offer much easier access to large numbers of respondents. There are two ways of conducting telephone interviews: traditional telephone interviews, which involve phoning a sample of respondents and asking them a series of questions, and computer-assisted telephone interviews, which use a computerized questionnaire administered to respondents over the telephone.

A self-administered survey is a data collection technique in which the respondent reads the survey questions and records his or her own responses without the presence of a trained interviewer (Hair *et al.,* 2003). The advantages of the self-administered survey include low cost and less interviewer bias. There are two main forms of self-administered surveys: mail surveys and drop-off surveys.

Online survey methods have been totally revolutionized as people have increasingly accepted the "new economy", internet technology, and telecommunications, and decision makers' and researchers' new demands for faster data acquisition, retrieval, and the reporting of results in real time (Hair *et al*., 2003).

TABLE 2

Demographic Information

Demographics	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Gender		
Male	136	61.5
Female	85	38.5
Age		
16 to 19	3	1.4
20 to 24	21	9.5
25 to 34	82	41.6
35 to 44	61	27.6
45 to 54	20	9.0
55 to 64	21	9.5
65 or over	3	1.4
Job Description		
Individual Contributor	23	10.4
Team Leader	31	14.0
Manager	55	24.9
Senior Manager	31	14.0
Regional Manager	18	8.1
Vice-President	14	6.3
C-Level	24	10.9
Partner	4	1.8
Owner	3	1.4
Volunteer	1	0.5
Intern	3	1.4
Other	14	6.3

The primary methodology for this study was a quantitative survey assessed at major multinational corporations headquartered in the United States. As there is a good base of operations abroad from major MNCs there, the pool of repatriates provided a substantial sample size to be tested. The final questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

The first step undertaken was interviews with HR personnel and three repatriates to see if the factors being tested are worth considering in their experience and to determine any other important missing factors. Based on their feedback, modifications were made and in the second stage, a pilot test of the survey was conducted on a group of thirty foreign professors in South Korea in order to display the workings of the framework and to determine if statistical implications exist and are potentially valid. Finally, upon this review, the final survey was discussed with an online market research firm, Qualtrics, LLC, with the additions of attention filters and additional demographic questions to better organize the sample. The market research firm then contacted potential respondents and conducted the survey through their online mechanism.

RESULTS

The aim of this section is to present the empirical results from the study. The results are presented in association with the main themes identified in the research and are concerned with presenting the overall statistical analysis.

Sample

A total of 254 complete responses were returned over a 3 week period from Qualtrics, LLC. Qualtrics, LLC is a private research software company located in the United States. It currently boasts more than 1.8 million registered users, spans more than 75 countries and has over 250,000 active projects at any point in time. Qualtrics, LLC is considered a premier online survey platform and has been used extensively in academic research. The responses received then underwent a more thorough level of screening to remove any straightlining in responses and to further limit any outliers from the group. A final total of 221 responses were deemed appropriate for further statistical analysis.

As shown in Table 2, the sample was skewed towards male respondents with 61.5 percent (136 respondents). In addition, in terms of age the largest group was in the 25-34 range representing 41.6% of the sample or 92 respondents. Following that was the 35-44 age group representing 27.6 percent. Most of the respondents came from organizations with greater than 100 employees (79.6%), and this is common among international organizations as generally size reflects ability to expand abroad to a certain degree.

Slightly over one quarter of the respondents reported an organization size of greater than 1000 employees. Appendix B contains more information that outlines the major industries and titles of the respondents from the study. As can be seen, no overwhelming industry is represented as rather a fairly diverse grouping is evident. The largest industry shown here is the Technology, Internet & Electronics industry with 28 respondents or 12.7% of the overall sample.

This also is the case with respect to job descriptions of the respondents with the largest group being Manager level representing 24.6% of the respondents (n=55). In addition, the vast majority of respondents, 161, reported an assignment length of 1 year or less (73.8%). Finally, to further analyze potential conflicts in responses, respondents were asked for the location of their international assignment. The largest group spent their assignment in the U.K. with 41 respondents (18.6%), followed by China with 36 (16.3%) and Japan with 29 (13.1%).

Non-Response Bias

We tested the responses for non-response bias by testing via t-test for significant differences between the early 25% of respondents and the late 25% of respondents across key variables with no significant differences being observed. Further, based on Lindner, Murphy and Briers (2001) we coded 'days to respond' as a regression variable for handling non-response error. Lindner et al (2001) point out that if the regression model is not significant then we can make the assumption that non-respondents do not differ from respondents. Thus, based on both findings we conclude that non-response bias is not a pressing issue in this research.

Measures

In this study, scale reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha (coefficient alpha) coefficient on SPSS, giving a measure of how well a set of manifest indicators measure the scale (De Vellis, 2003 p.47 cited in Hair *et al*., 2006, p.128). The coefficient value can range from 0 to 1, and, in most cases, a value of less than .6 would typically indicate marginal to low (unsatisfactory) internal consistency (Hair *et al*., 2003, p.397). Nunally, 1978, (cited in Hair *et al*., 2006, p.137) recommends an alpha value of .7 while Robin, Shaver, and Wrightman (1991 cited in Hair *et al*., 2006, p. 137) suggest that a value of .6 is acceptable for exploratory research. However, De Vellis (2003, p.95, cited in Hair *et al*., 2006, p.138) notes that it is not unusual to find scales with lower reliability coefficients.

Variables were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, were all adapted from previous studies and tested for reliability and validity. Table 3 depicts the number of items used for each variable and the alpha value for each construct.

Table 3

Reliability Analysis

Variable	# of Items	Chronbach's Alpha (α)
Recognition	3	0.73
Involvement	3	0.77
Communication	4	0.79
Team Orientation	2	0.77
Work/Life Balance	4	0.72
Application of Skills	2	0.74
Job Engagement	6	0.84
Job Satisfaction	5	0.83
Turnover Intention	3	0.83

Individual Level

The individual level construct for this study was focused on the concept of recognition and perceived involvement in the workplace. This construct suggests that upon return from an assignment, repatriates desire recognition of their time and effort as well as the acquired knowledge and skills that come from an international assignment. Additionally, the perceived involvement of a repatriate upon their return is an important factor in stemming turnover and increasing satisfaction as an employee.

Managerial Level

The construct for the managerial level was arranged based on an adaptation of Bonache, (2008) communication based factor as well as team orientation as developed by De Cieri et al, (2009). The level and frequency of communication often relates to a repatriate's readjustment back into the workplace and allows for a greater sense of belonging. In addition to this is the concept of team and group interaction that has been identified as a significant factor for repatriate reintegration.

Organizational Level

The organizational level construct chosen in this study addressed the concept of work/life balance and application of skills/experience. As identified and adapted from Crawford et al, 2010 and Kraimer et al, 2011, the issues of rebalancing and reassociating with the home work group and life outside takes a significant amount of time to become resettled. Further, the lack of organizational recognition and usage of skills acquired while abroad has consistently been discussed as a primary reason for repatriate dissatisfaction.

Job Engagement

The mediating variable chosen and one of the main focuses of this study was the concept of job engagement as adapted from Saks, 2006. Overall, this 6-item scale was used to assess a repatriates overall job engagement to his/her job and organization and determine its viability as an indicator of turnover intention. The reliability estimate using Chronbach's alpha for this variable was 0.84.

Job Satisfaction

The first dependent variable used in this study is job satisfaction, which consists of a 5-item scale adapted from Valentine et al, 2011. Job satisfaction is often used as a measure to predict an employee's general outlook of the organization as well as a propensity for discretionary effort. This is also used as an outcome of engagement studies in suggesting that the greater the engagement the greater the job satisfaction.

Turnover Intention

The second dependent variable used in this study is a repatriate's intent to leave the organization. Turnover intention has been used in many studies and has been shown the have a strong relationship to actual turnover, a commonly observed phenomenon in engagement research. Turnover intention is a 3-item scale that was adapted from Shuck et al, 2011, and displays an internal reliability alpha of 0.83.

Control Variables

Six main control variables were used in this study in order to control for factors influencing job engagement and the dependent variables. The first control used was gender as in past research there have been significant differences in international assignment issues in this area. Due to the nature of the sample being repatriates and the fact that the core premise suggests that their international assignment changed the way or provides a difference in how they perceive certain issues upon return home, the controls are by necessity related to this factor. The second control was based on the length of assignment as generally there is a belief that the longer the assignment the more difficulty in repatriation. The third control was based on assignment region and was coded using dummy variables to allow for a focus on each region. The fourth control variable was the tenure at the organization, which was estimate by length of time. The fifth control is job description and was based on the title of the repatriate. The final and sixth control was organization size, which was measured by number of employees.

Common Method Bias

We asked respondents to assess perceptually both dependent and independent variables, and thus we were aware of suffering from the possible presence of common method bias. To remedy this limitation, we have extensively reviewed the extant literature on similar topics (e.g., CSR, corporate social performance, corporate citizenship and ethics) and sought to uncover the items already validated by previous studies. All variables were diversely examined by using several individual items and the items measuring dependent and independent variables were not similar in content.

Table 4

Factor Analysis

	Component								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
ENG2	0.83	-0.20	-0.03	-0.22	-0.22	-0.15	0.10	0.15	0.26
ENG1	0.80	-0.05	0.00	0.01	0.08	-0.03	-0.20	0.08	0.03
ENG3	0.77	-0.08	-0.04	0.02	0.04	0.13	-0.13	0.00	0.08
ENG4	0.73	0.12	-0.10	-0.18	-0.08	0.28	0.02	-0.07	-0.10
ENG6	0.64	0.12	0.19	0.08	-0.03	-0.12	0.19	0.04	-0.12
ENG5	0.53	0.21	0.01	0.25	-0.01	-0.15	0.23	-0.18	-0.11
WLB2	-0.03	0.95	-0.12	0.03	-0.07	-0.08	-0.07	-0.01	0.06
WLB3	-0.19	0.83	0.10	-0.15	-0.06	0.16	0.07	0.04	0.03
WLB1	-0.05	0.80	-0.14	-0.16	0.04	0.07	0.01	0.23	0.00
WLB4	0.11	0.69	0.21	0.11	-0.05	-0.14	-0.18	-0.01	0.05
IPI3	-0.13	0.00	0.84	0.10	-0.12	-0.05	0.11	-0.02	-0.01
IPI2	0.10	-0.04	0.79	-0.19	0.10	0.10	0.01	0.05	0.08
IPI4	-0.06	-0.08	0.64	0.31	0.02	0.04	-0.17	0.04	-0.01
JSAT2	0.34	0.27	0.38	0.92	0.18	0.06	-0.04	-0.15	0.02
JSAT5	0.00	-0.17	0.04	0.86	0.03	0.01	-0.11	0.12	-0.05
JSAT4	-0.18	-0.09	0.04	0.71	-0.16	0.29	0.05	-0.15	0.19
JSAT1	-0.21	0.29	0.01	0.68	-0.02	-0.12	0.01	0.15	0.03
JSAT3	0.31	-0.03	0.02	0.61	-0.02	0.01	0.10	-0.09	-0.41
TURN2	-0.08	-0.01	0.00	0.00	0.92	-0.07	-0.06	0.02	0.15
TURN1	-0.08	0.01	0.00	-0.14	0.91	-0.09	0.05	-0.06	0.18
TURN3	0.03	-0.16	-0.01	0.03	0.78	0.05	0.01	0.01	-0.16
ICR2	0.00	-0.09	0.29	-0.03	-0.15	0.83	-0.10	-0.02	0.12
ICR1	0.01	0.04	0.00	0.02	0.01	0.75	0.13	0.01	0.13
ICR4	0.07	0.06	-0.24	0.24	0.05	0.61	-0.09	0.13	-0.10
MTC1	-0.15	-0.06	0.07	-0.06	-0.04	-0.06	0.75	0.01	-0.03
MTC4	0.03	-0.06	-0.10	-0.04	0.03	0.02	0.72	0.14	0.03
MTC2	0.16	0.20	-0.11	0.23	0.14	0.12	0.70	-0.17	0.16
MTC3	0.09	0.13	-0.02	0.03	-0.04	0.04	0.55	0.08	0.11
MTO1	0.12	0.12	0.02	0.15	-0.02	-0.08	-0.09	0.91	0.12
MTO2	-0.04	0.02	0.31	-0.05	0.09	0.15	0.21	0.57	-0.25
OAS1	0.19	0.12	0.04	0.18	0.18	0.16	0.00	0.06	0.82
OAS2	0.18	-0.07	0.07	0.17	0.08	0.02	0.26	0.06	0.72
Eigenvalues	11.87	2.83	1.79	1.63	1.34	1.23	1.15	1.08	1.03
% of	36.7	6.1	3.9	3.5	2.9	2.7	2.5	2.3	2.2
Cumulative	36.7	42.8	46.7	50.2	53.1	55.8	58.3	60.6	62.8

Following Podsakoff et al. (2003: 889), who suggest "One of the most widely used techniques that has been used by researchers to address the issue of common method bias is what has come to be called Harman's one-factor (or single-factor) test". We have entered all variables measured subjectively by the respondents into the technique. The unrotated principal components factor analysis reveals the presence of three factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0, rather than a single factor. The three factors together accounted for 54% of the total variance; with the first factor not accounting for a majority of the total variance (40.4%). Podsakoff et al. (2003) explain that we need to suspect the presence of a substantial amount of common method in the case where (1) a single factor emerges from the factor analysis or (2) one general factor accounts for the majority of the covariance among the measures. The explanations given by the previous literature and the results clearly verify that common method bias in this research is negligible.

Data Analysis

Table 4 outlines the factor analysis on the items to determine their fitness for further analysis. A total of 9 factors were evident from the analysis as they all have eigenvalues above 1.0. This is a common criterion in a factor analysis in determining which factors should be included for further study.

Hair, Anderson and Tatham (1987: 20) point out, "OLS regression analysis is a statistical technique that can be used to analyse the relationship between a single dependent (criterion) variable and several independent (predictor) variables. The objective of multiple regression analysis is to use several independent variables whose values are known to predict the single dependent value the researcher wishes to know". Prior to assessing the model through regression, the variables were checked in order to determine any potential multicollinearity issues. The variance inflation factor (VIF) was used to assess multicollinearity concerns and the VIF scores ranged between 1.12 and 2.51. While multicollinearity does exist, VIF scores of less than 10 suggest that there will be no significant influence upon the stability of the parameter (Hair et. al, 2006).

Table 6 shows the results of the regression analyses. As can be seen all of the models tested were significant as demonstrated by their F statistic. The majority of controls show no significance in their relationship with job engagement except for Region 3, which displays a negative significance.

Antecedents to Engagement

In order to test the hypotheses for the antecedents of employee engagement, multiple regression analyses were conducted in which job engagement was regressed simultaneously on all six of the antecedent variables. As shown in Table 6, model 1, the results indicate that the antecedent variables explained a significant amount of the variance in job engagement (R^2=0.60, $p<0.001$).

Four of the six independent variables show significant positive relationships with job engagement thus suggesting engagement is an important factor to be considered. We find support for Hypotheses 1 (Recognition, $p<0.01$), 2 (Perceived Involvement, $p<0.05$), 3 (Team Orientation, $p<0.05$) and 6 (Organization Application of Skills, $p<0.001$). Managerial Communication and Work/Life Balance were found to be unsupported hypotheses in this study.

Table 5

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Among Study Variables

	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
1. Description	4.46	2.89																								
2. Assignment Length	2.73	1.43	0.03																							
3. Tenure	3.85	1.42	0.09	0.10																						
4. Organization Size	6.85	2.09	-0.01	0.15*	0.09																					
5. Region1 China	0.16	0.37	0.03	0.06	-0.03	0.04																				
6. Region2 Japan	0.13	0.34	-0.09	-0.15*	0.02	-0.02	-0.17*																			
7. Region3 South Korea	0.03	0.16	0.02	-0.04	-0.10	0.09	-0.07	-0.06																		
8. Region4 SE Asia	0.07	0.25	0.01	0.06	0.09	0.06	-0.11	-0.10	-0.04																	
9. Region5 U.K.	0.19	0.39	0.12	-0.04	-0.17**	0.03	-0.21**	-0.18**	-0.08	-0.12																
10. Region6 W. Europe	0.12	0.32	-0.04	0.06	0.18**	0.01	-0.16*	-0.14*	-0.06	-0.09	-0.17**															
11. Region7 E. Europe	0.04	0.18	0.07	0.00	-0.01	-0.02	-0.08	-0.07	-0.03	-0.05	-0.09	-0.07														
12. Region8 C. America	0.06	0.24	-0.08	-0.03	0.02	-0.05	-0.11	-0.09	-0.04	-0.06	-0.11	-0.09	-0.04													
13. Region9 S. America	0.08	0.27	-0.02	-0.12	-0.07	-0.16*	-0.12	-0.11	-0.04	-0.07	-0.13*	-0.10	-0.05	-0.07												
14. Region10 N. America	0.08	0.27	-0.02	0.14*	0.06	0.03	-0.12	-0.11	-0.04	-0.07	-0.13*	-0.10	-0.05	-0.07	-0.08											
15. Region11 Africa	0.02	0.13	0.02	-0.06	-0.12	-0.15*	-0.06	-0.05	-0.02	-0.03	-0.06	-0.05	-0.02	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03										
16. Region12 Middle East	0.04	0.19	-0.01	0.11	0.11	0.07	-0.09	-0.08	-0.03	-0.05	-0.09	-0.07	-0.04	-0.05	-0.05	-0.05	-0.02									
17. Recognition	4.15	0.58	0.08	-0.01	0.16*	0.12	0.01	0.09	-0.02	0.06	-0.08	-0.04	0.08	-0.05	0.01	0.01	-0.11	-0.00								
18. Involvement	4.23	0.58	-0.01	-0.01	0.07	0.01	0.05	0.03	-0.09	0.12	-0.07	0.06	0.07	-0.15*	0.00	-0.02	-0.03	-0.01	0.52**							
19. Communication	4.09	0.59	-0.02	-0.02	-0.04	0.08	0.06	0.09	-0.06	0.04	-0.06	-0.06	0.09	-0.16*	-0.01	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.55**	0.59**						
20. Team Orientation	4.09	0.61	-0.07	-0.01	0.04	-0.04	0.03	-0.04	-0.02	0.12	-0.04	-0.06	-0.03	-0.08	0.04	0.04	0.01	0.10	0.46**	0.51**	0.56**					
21. Appl. of Skills	4.21	0.64	-0.08	-0.03	0.08	-0.04	-0.01	0.07	-0.05	0.11	-0.08	0.04	0.05	-0.12	0.01	-0.05	0.03	0.00	0.46**	0.49**	0.56**	0.44**				
22. Work/Life Balance	3.96	0.69	-0.11	-0.12	-0.10	0.06	0.07	0.08	-0.03	0.10	-0.05	-0.06	-0.03	-0.13*	-0.02	0.06	0.02	-0.05	0.42**	0.42**	0.56**	0.52**	0.48**			
23. Turnover Intention	1.95	0.80	0.03	0.09	-0.17**	-0.15*	-0.01	-0.08	0.04	-0.02	0.08	-0.05	0.01	0.10	-0.00	0.02	0.05	-0.10	-0.43**	-0.37**	-0.43**	-0.40**	-0.48**	0-.35**		
24. Job Engagement	4.15	0.57	-0.08	-0.07	0.11	0.03	0.07	0.02	-.017**	0.02	-0.04	0.02	-0.00	-0.05	0.08	-0.10	-0.03	0.07	0.53**	0.54**	0.53**	0.52**	0.65**	0.45**	-0.55**	
25. Job Satisfaction	4.10	0.62	-0.01	-0.08	0.11	0.10	0.01	0.09	-0.04	0.04	-0.05	0.01	0.02	-0.17*	0.01	-0.03	-0.01	0.09	0.55**	0.52**	0.60**	0.49**	0.58**	0.46**	-0.66**	0.68**

N=221
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 6
Multiple Regression Analysis Results

	Model 1 Job Engagement	**Model 2** Job Satisfaction	**Model 3** Turnover Intention	**Model 4** Job Satisfaction	**Model 5** Turnover Intention
Control Variables					
Job Description	-0.09	0.04	-0.02	0.02	-0.00
Assignment Length	-0.10	-0.06	0.09	-0.08	0.12†
Tenure	0.11	0.04	-0.09	0.06	-0.11†
Org Size	0.05	0.06	-0.13*	0.08	-0.15*
Region1 – China	0.08	-0.03	-0.01	-0.02	-0.05
Region2 – Japan	0.01	0.04	-0.06	0.02	-0.08
Region3 – S. Korea	-0.16*	0.04	-0.03	-0.01	0.03
Region4 – SE Asia	0.03	-0.01	0.01	-0.04	0.05
Region5 – U.K.	-0.04	-0.01	0.04	0.02	0.03
Region6 – W. Europe	0.01	0.02	-0.07	0.01	-0.03
Region7 – E. Europe	0.01	-0.01	0.01	-0.03	0.04
Region8 – C. America	-0.06	-0.07	0.01	-0.06	0.03
Region9 – S. America	0.09	-0.00	-0.01	0.02	-0.00
Region10 – N. America	-0.09	0.02	-0.03	-0.03	0.03
Region11 – Africa	-0.01	0.02	0.00	0.01	0.02
Region12 – Middle East	0.07	0.06	-0.07	0.07	-0.07
Independent Variables					
Recognition	0.17**	0.12†	-0.07	0.18**	-0.13†
Involvement	0.13*	0.04	0.03	0.09	-0.01
Communication	0.04	0.19**	-0.08	0.21**	-0.09
Team Orientation	0.15*	0.05	-0.11	0.11	-0.15†
Application of Skills	0.41***	0.12†	-0.15†	0.27***	-0.28***
Work Life Balance	0.03	0.02	-0.02	0.03	-0.02
Job Engagement	-	0.37***	-0.30***	-	-
R^2	0.60	0.59	0.41	0.54	0.37
Adjusted R^2	0.56	0.55	0.34	0.49	0.31
ΔR^2		0.05	0.04		
F	14.29***	13.10***	6.19***	11.02***	5.88***

Notes: Standardized Regression Coefficients are Reported
N=221
† p<0.1*p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

Consequences of Engagement

To test the hypotheses for the consequences of employee engagement, multiple regression analyses were conducted in which each of the outcomes was regressed on job engagement. As can be seen from Models 2 & 3, engagement measures a significant amount of job satisfaction (R^2=0.59, p<0.001) and a significant amount with turnover intention (R^2=0.41, p<0.001). These results, which display a strong positive association with job satisfaction and a strong negative relationship with turnover intention, suggest that hypotheses 7 and 8 are both supported.

Engagement as a Mediating Variable

Testing for mediation as a primary function of this study was undertaken through the use of multiple regression models. According to Baron and Kenny (1986) three separate conditions must be met to establish mediation. First, the independent variable(s) (the antecedents of job engagement) must be related to the mediator (job engagement). Second, the mediator (job engagement) must be related to the dependent variable(s) (the consequences of job engagement). Third, a significant relationship between the independent variable(s) (antecedents of job engagement) and a dependent variable(s) (consequences of job engagement) will be reduced (partial mediation) or no longer be significant (full mediation) when controlling for the mediator (job engagement).

In order to test for a mediation model in which engagement mediates the relationship between the set of antecedents and the two consequences, additional regression analyses were conducted in which the consequences were regressed on the antecedents alone and then again with the engagement measures as shown in Table 6 (Models 4 & 5). For job satisfaction, we find three antecedents are significant in both models (with engagement and without) but with a significant drop in the prediction power. The significance levels displayed show a drop in individual recognition and organization application of skills, thus suggesting a potential mediation impact. Similarly, in turnover intention we see a drop out of significance for recognition and team orientation, and a reduction for organization application of skills. These changes provide base support for Hypothesis 9 and suggest that engagement is a mediating variable.

Table 7

Sobel Test for Mediation

			Job Satisfaction	Turnover Intention
	β	S(a)	z-value	z-value
Recognition	0.17	0.06	2.44**	-2.17*
Involvement	0.13	0.06	1.97*	-1.82†
Team Orientation	0.14	0.06	2.24*	-2.03*
Communication	0.04	0.07	NS	NS
Work/Life Balance	0.02	0.05	NS	NS
Application of Skills	0.37	0.05	4.12***	-3.11**
Job engagement –Mediating Variable			β = 0.404 S(b)=0.078	β = -0.424 S(b)=0.121
† p<0.1*p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001				

However, to further ensure the validity of this assertion we conducted a Sobel (1982) test to verify the existence of mediation in our model. The Sobel test reveals whether a mediator variable significantly carries the influence of an independent variable to a dependent variable; i.e., whether the indirect effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable through the mediator variable is significant. The results of the Sobel test are shown in Table 7.

DISCUSSION

The findings in this study can be summarized by suggesting that job engagement is a significant factor for repatriates and the factors leading to job engagement range across three different levels of the employee-employer relationship. The three constructs identified by this study (individual, managerial, organizational) all presented important and significant relationships to job engagement for repatriates. While most studies have focused on solely one construct, this study envisioned a multi-level analysis to determine which antecedents could enhance, or detract, from a repatriate's job engagement. Further, the empirical establishment of job engagement as a mediating factor in this study is significant in affirming its role in the field of international business and in developing strategy to retain employees. Specifically in this study the concept of an organization applying the skills and experience of the repatriate is an extremely important factor in demonstrating commitment to the repatriate and valuing the time and effort spent abroad. This is a consistent theme in repatriate literature and as many repatriates tend to suggest to human resources or in interviews that they feel undervalued upon return and there needs to be specific organizational value placed on their experience gained while abroad. In concert with recognition, which is also a powerful force behind repatriate job engagement, recognition goes a long way towards understanding the mental commitment undertaken during an international assignment and the desire for it to be recognized upon return. This confirms previous studies that found that repatriates thought themselves unappreciated for their commitment in time, energy, and the duration of their assignment was essentially wasted within this organization. By linking recognition to job engagement we see that repatriates who found themselves appreciated for their experience, expertise, and ability became much more engaged in their work and developed greater job satisfaction. This also leads to a direct relationship with turnover as the greater the job engagement the lower potential turnover. These two factors, while similar in nature, suggest that the international assignment is one that needs to be valued and appreciated both by the co-workers of the repatriate and through organizational steps in ensuring the experience and skills acquired are applied upon return.

The other two significant factors are also important in understanding the perceptual focus of the repatriate upon return. The perceived involvement and team orientation suggest both an individual level and managerial level concern relating to job engagement. Perceived involvement leads to the suggestion that it is very important to reintegrate and get the repatriate involved in activities and issues as quickly as possible. This can be accomplished not necessarily through an over burdening in work load, but rather through involvement in activities, perhaps debriefing and sharing his/her experience abroad and any valuable lessons that could be attributed to making international ventures a success for the organization. When coupled with team orientation and the need for managers to guarantee work functions in cohesive teams with regular opportunities for team building and sharing of ideas, the potential for re-engaging the repatriate becomes significantly higher.

This study found that job engagement is a significant factor, essentially as an independent factor itself in determining turnover intention and job satisfaction for repatriates. This further invigorates current research into job engagement studies and suggests a stronger need for organizations to pay closer attention to engaging their workforce. This becomes especially important when considering the time, investment, and knowledge put into and uncovered by repatriates throughout their entire international assignment. The re-engagement of repatriates is extremely important if companies wish to pursue organizational learning paths and enhance the absorptive capacity of their organizations in pursuit of further advances abroad.

CONCLUSION

Engagement continues to appear in headlines and the media as practitioners of human resource strategy and business strategists identify it as an extremely important factor in increasing competitive advantage for firms. Very few empirical studies, however, have focused on engagement itself as a concept and the features that actually determine job engagement in the workplace and its net effects. Recently, however, a few studies have been testing the waters to verify or quantify the existence of job engagement as well as to display its characteristics academically, as opposed to simply as a concept. Coupling this with the continued existence of high repatriate turnover and the common belief that repatriates are prone to high levels of disengagement due to the absence from the home workplace and other factors creates a vast gap in the literature.

This study established a strong link between job engagement, and job satisfaction and turnover intention for repatriates, which suggests job engagement is a very important factor in helping international organizations in pursuit of knowledge retention and climbing the experiential ladder. It is without a doubt the knowledge and experience of the international assignee that contributes to future success for the organization. This can be through training future expatriates, lending a hand in organizational strategy, and helping to implement new ideas and concepts based on the knowledge and experience acquired while abroad. When these highly valuable resources leave an organization upon return that sacred resource or treasure trove of knowledge and experience goes along with them, leaving the organization with simply a very expensive lost investment and lacking the associated ability to replicate the experience. Further, when repatriates leave an organization upon return it also serves as a warning sign for future expatriates and thus may generate significant reluctance upon the part of these employees to undertake international assignments.

Further, this affirms other conceptual studies that suggest that the repatriation of employees from abroad is part of the overall process of an international assignment, as their turnover suggests an overall failed attempt. By addressing repatriation as part of the whole process, organizations can build better mechanisms to properly re-engage employees upon return, retain their knowledge and experience, and essentially increase the pace of growth internationally. By recognizing the experience of repatriates, an organization can provide personal value and a sense of affectation, enhancing job engagement and reducing the high cost of turnover both financially and in many other ways.

Theoretical Implications

The theoretical implications of this study lie in the provision of a test of integration between HR theory and IB repatriate theory. The focus of merging the two streams of literature and providing job engagement as a mediating variable allows for further testing of job engagement as a factor in intention to leave, which also suggests potential avenues for future theoretical development in determining job engagement factors for repatriates themselves. This lends to the still new, but budding, library of research on the repatriate turnover problem and potentially entrenches job engagement in academic circles as more than simply an HR belief, but rather a serious concern to be researched and analyzed in much more detail than it has been to date. The indirect linkage to turnover is an important theoretical development as we can see that while no direct link is apparent in this study, job engagement becomes important in mediating the relationship between recognition and potentially other factors.

Managerial Implications

This study suggests some practical aspects of job engagement for repatriates, and also for general employees, allowing HR practitioners the ability to better understand some of the reasons for turnover. With HR taking on a bigger role in organizations and the race for talent in full swing, this will give an edge to those on the leading edge in retaining experience and knowledge. This should relate to overall profitability and organizational success as evidenced through other research relating to human capital. By including HR in the international business strategy of firms, proper planning can take place for the international assignment, including pre-departure training, expatriate work and finally, but not excluding, repatriate readjustment and reintegration into the firm. This last step is extremely important and often simply assumed by those who either have not had a similar or equivalent experience, or just believe the return home should be simple, easy, and without reservation. Including repatriation as part of the international assignment process will help both the employee and management assess needs, concerns, and reintegration throughout the entire process and potentially can enhance the entire value of the assignment through greater involvement and focus. International business can no longer be separated by instances, but rather needs to involve multiple entities focused on providing the greatest resources possible for the firm to enhance its competitiveness and focus on expanding its provided advantages.

Limitations

This study suffers from some limitations, primarily with relation to size and focus. The sample size of 221 respondents, while adequate, could serve to be much larger in order to gain a better grasp on generalizability and response comparisons. Secondly, the identified factors were somewhat limited in nature; while addressing major concerns, the study did not cover all concerns a repatriate may have, or which may affect job engagement at an organization. These limitations do cause some concerns in terms of generally applying the results of this study, but yet, do open the possibility to further analysis of any of the three construct levels in the future.

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APPENDIX A – SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Employee Engagement Survey

Thank you for taking a few moments to answer this academic survey based on engagement for repatriates. The survey should take less than 10 minutes to complete. All answers will be strictly confidential and used only for academic research purposes. There are 6 separate sections and your opinions are highly valued. Thank you.

Individual Characteristics Strongly Disagree =1, Disagree=2, Neither =3, Agree =4, Strongly Agree =5					
I am satisfied with my overall job security	1	2	3	4	5
I am provided more freedom and opportunities as recognition for my work	1	2	3	4	5
I am often praised for my accomplishments	1	2	3	4	5
I am given more challenging work in recognition of my abilities	1	2	3	4	5
My compensation reflects my duties and accomplishments	1	2	3	4	5
There are many opportunities available to me to get involved in my organization	1	2	3	4	5
My superiors value my international skill-set and experience	1	2	3	4	5
My coworkers value my international skill-set and experience	1	2	3	4	5
My international experience is valued and I am able to enact change in my organization	1	2	3	4	5
Managerial Characteristics Strongly Disagree =1, Disagree=2, Neither =3, Agree =4, Strongly Agree =5					
Management clearly articulates organizational goals	1	2	3	4	5
My supervisor/manager provides regular performance reviews and feedback	1	2	3	4	5
My supervisor/manager provides me with regular	1	2	3	4	5

updates about ongoing projects					
You and your coworkers meet often to discuss both work and personal issues	1	2	3	4	5
You and your coworkers currently have a strong relationship	1	2	3	4	5
Your coworkers respect your experience, opinions, ideas and skills	1	2	3	4	5
You and your coworkers work well together and create a positive work environment	1	2	3	4	5
Organizational Characteristics Strongly Disagree =1, Disagree=2, Neither =3, Agree =4, Strongly Agree =5					
I am able to maintain an appropriate balance between work and personal time	1	2	3	4	5
My organization encourages employees to take full maternity/paternity leave	1	2	3	4	5
My organization encourages employees to make use of their allotted vacation time	1	2	3	4	5
My organization provides programs, policies and benefits to enhance the welfare of its employees	1	2	3	4	5
My organization makes good use of my knowledge and skills	1	2	3	4	5
My organization values a variety of skills and experience	1	2	3	4	5
My organization encourages the sharing and dissemination of newly acquired skills and knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
Engagement Characteristics Strongly Disagree =1, Disagree=2, Neither =3, Agree =4, Strongly Agree =5					
I really throw myself into my job	1	2	3	4	5
Sometimes I am so into my job that I lose track of time	1	2	3	4	5
I am highly engaged in my current job	1	2	3	4	5
Being a member of this organization makes me proud	1	2	3	4	5
I strive to work as hard as possible for this organization	1	2	3	4	5
Job Satisfaction Strongly Disagree =1, Disagree=2, Neither =3, Agree =4, Strongly Agree =5					
All in all I am satisfied with my job	1	2	3	4	5

I would recommend this job to a friend	1	2	3	4	5
This job measures up to my expectations	1	2	3	4	5
I will be working for this organization for at least the next year	1	2	3	4	5
If I have my way I will be working for this organization for as long as possible	1	2	3	4	5
Turnover Intention Strongly Disagree =1, Disagree=2, Neither =3, Agree =4, Strongly Agree =5					
I am currently looking for a new job	1	2	3	4	5
I frequently think of quitting my job	1	2	3	4	5
In general I do not like my job	1	2	3	4	5

The following questions are demographic related and are used to simply provide characteristics of the sample. Please choose (circle) that which most closely represents you in case there is not an exact match.

What is your Gender?	Male	Female
What is your age?	16 to 19 20 to 24 25 to 34	35 to 44 45 to 54 55 to 64 65 or over
How long have you worked for your current organization?	0-1 year 1-2 years 2-5 years	5-7 years 7-10 years Over 10 years
How long did you work abroad for your organization?	Less than 3 months 3-6 months 6 months to 1 year	1 to 2 years 2 to 5 years More than 5 years
In what region were you located?	Northeast Asia (China/Japan/Korea) Southeast Asia Western Europe Eastern Europe	Central America South America North America Africa Other
How many employees work in your organization?	1 to 9 10 to 19 20-49 50-99	100-249 250-499 500-999 1000 or more
In what industry (main focus) does your organization operate?		
What is your current occupation?		

Thank you for your time and answers.

APPENDIX B – SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Industry Information

Demographics	Frequency	Percentage
Organization Size		
1-9	12	5.5
10-19	8	3.6
20-49	8	3.6
50-99	17	7.7
100-249	36	16.3
250-499	42	19.0
500-999	36	16.3
1000 or more	62	28.1
Industry		
Advertising & Marketing	6	2.7
Agriculture	4	1.8
Airlines & Aerospace (including Defense)	2	.9
Automotive	3	1.4
Business Support & Logistics	21	9.5
Construction, Machinery, and Homes	17	7.7
Education	16	7.2
Entertainment & Leisure	10	4.5
Finance & Financial Services	21	9.5
Food & Beverages	4	1.8
Government	9	4.1
Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals	11	5.0
Insurance	6	2.7
Manufacturing	22	10.0
Nonprofit	12	5.4
Retail & Consumer Durables	11	5.0
Real Estate	6	2.7
Telecommunications, Technology, Internet & Electronics	28	12.7
Utilities, Energy, and Extraction	12	5.4

International Assignment Information

Demographics	Frequency	Percentage
Assignment Length		
Less than 3 months	52	23.5
3-6 months	55	24.9
6 months to 1 year	56	25.3
1-2 years	31	14.0
2-5 years	13	5.9
More than 5 years	14	6.3
Assignment Region		
China	36	16.3
Japan	29	13.1
South Korea	6	2.7
Southeast Asia	15	6.8
U.K	41	18.6
Western Europe	26	11.8
Eastern Europe	8	3.6
Central America	13	5.9
South America	17	7.7
North America	17	7.7
Africa	4	1.8
Middle East	9	4.1