

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

According to Cooper and Schindler (2003) the summary is a brief statement of essential findings. Findings state facts, conclusions represent inferences drawn from the findings. Recommendations, on the other hand, are usually a few ideas about corrective actions. In academic research, the recommendations are often suggestions for future study that would broaden or test understanding of the subject area. In applied research the recommendations will usually be for managerial action rather than research action. The writer may offer several alternatives with justification.

This chapter will start with preamble, after which a brief discussion of the most important research findings will be presented. Finally the chapter will conclude with recommendations based on the research findings and identification for future research.

5.1 PREAMBLE

Most organisations in today's global arena recognize the need for global leaders for operating successfully outside the domestic market and to this end companies are investing large amount of resources on development and building a pool of global leaders to leverage on the employees' skills and experience acquired overseas, however, it's often found that such employees with global exposure are very mobile and retaining them is a great challenge organizations face today.

Based on the review of literature a theoretical model was developed to verify the possible relationship between repatriates adjustment, job satisfaction and organizational commitment with the outcome variable namely repatriates turnover intention. A questionnaire survey elicited responses from 309 repatriated software professionals and the findings of the study is presented in the following section.

5.2 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study are as follows.

5.2.1 Demographic Profile

The gender profile of the repatriated professionals in IT industry was that 60 per cent of the respondents are male and 40 per cent are female. This is very interesting because it shows a commendable percentage of female respondents going on international assignment.

When looking at age groups of respondents it was found that 80 per cent of the respondents are below the age of 40 years. This result shows that Indian IT sector provides good amount of opportunities for youngsters to go on international assignment.

Education plays an important role in a knowledge based industry like IT, and it was found that majority of the respondents hold bachelors degree since they are absorbed immediately after their bachelor's degree.

On the marital status it was found that the majority of respondents are married, with 70 per cent being married, but of this married respondents only 32 per cent were staying with their family on international assignment. The family circumstances and duration of stay could be the reasons for going alone.

When looking at total experience of the respondents it was found that 62 per cent of the respondents had less than 10 years of experience which is not surprising considering the young workforce. The study also shows that 57 per cent of the respondents have less than 5 years of experience in the present organisation. Normally the company may decide to send an employee who is having the relevant competency, skill sets and expertise rather than deciding on seniority basis alone.

When looking at demographics related to overseas assignment it was observed that 74 per cent of the respondents had less than 6 years of total experience abroad. Most of the respondents had one to two overseas visits. In addition, with regard to duration of the most recent international assignment, duration of overseas stay of 81 per cent of the respondents lasted only for a period of one to three years. It should be kept in mind that the duration of an international assignment can also influence the repatriates' adjustment. This research found that majority of repatriates had come back from US and UK in the last three years. Since this study is focused on IT sector the destination for majority of the expatriates is naturally developed countries which are the major markets for Indian IT companies.

On demographics related to after return features the study reveals an interesting finding with regard to promotion after overseas assignment wherein majority of the respondents have had no promotion after international assignment. This can be a major factor for dissatisfaction among the returning employees and increasing the turnover intention.

5.4.2 Repatriates Turnover Intention

The study reveals that there exists 'above average turnover intention' among repatriated software professionals in all the companies selected for study.

Consistent with the expectations, findings of the study reveal that there is a strong positive association between repatriates adjustment, job satisfaction and organisational commitment and it confirms the established findings (Lee 2007, Joseph & Ang 2003).

Further, the result of the study show that repatriates adjustment, job satisfaction and organisational commitment are inversely related to the turnover intention but organisational commitment was not found significant. Further, the results reveal that repatriates job satisfaction was the strongest predictor of turnover intention and repatriates adjustment was the second most important predictor of repatriated professional's turnover intention.

The underlying result posits that that organisational commitment impact on turnover intention does not exist, however one of the sub-constructs of commitment namely affective commitment was found to have a significant negative influence on turnover intention, but continuance and normative commitment was not found to be significant on repatriates turnover intentions, suggesting that employees may remain with the MNC only if they feel that the company values and supports them, rather than because of a greater sense of company loyalty. The detail discussion of these findings is presented below.

5.4.3 Repatriates Adjustment

The results of the study indicate that repatriation adjustment is inversely related to the turnover intention and it was found to be the second most important predictor of repatriates turnover intention (job satisfaction being the most important predictor). Contrary to the findings by Whitman (1999) who found that repatriation adjustment did not have a statistically significant relationship to turnover intention in an U.S. context, this study suggested that adjustment is an important and statistically

significant predictor of repatriated professional turnover intention, which indicates that if the returning software professionals face difficulties adjusting back to home organization/country they are might think of changing their job. The repatriates who perceived a higher level of repatriation adjustment have a lower intent to leave hence smooth transition back into the organization increase retention.

The study further reveals that socio-cultural adjustment and work-adjustment sub-constructs were significant predictors of repatriated software professionals' turnover intention.

5.4.3.1 Socio-cultural adjustment

The result on socio-cultural adjustment sub-construct reveals that it has a significant inverse relationship with repatriates turnover intention, thus further cementing the concept that socio-cultural adjustment is a very important variable in repatriates adjustment. The results provide in-depth descriptions of the experience of returning home, becoming disillusioned with home, and then either staying on or retuning to the host country. The result shows that the prior preparation, professional plan, support system and company policies all have implicit impact of success of repatriation experience. The more an expatriate becomes adjusted to the host country the more difficult is his repatriation process.

The study reveals that among the important facets of socio-cultural adjustment are lifestyle adjustment, social support (relationships), re-entry orientation and providing assistance with relocation. The results indicated that there was a significant influence of lifestyle adjustment and social support activities on repatriated software professionals' turnover intention. Probably the reason for this could be more involvement with host culture and on return the employees experience much change in lifestyle resulting in difficulty. The

loss of lifestyle, loss of friends was a big influencer in employee adjustment and intention to leave indicating for the fact that the social groups of the returning employees have shifted and it was difficult to connect with their friends and family which mirror the earlier findings (Black et al 1992a, Wang 1997, Jassawalla & Sashittal 2009). Another important factor which greatly influences the repatriates adjustment is the help he/she receives while returning back. The re-entry orientation and assistance with relocation helps the returning employee to absorb the re-entry cultural shock and settle down in the home country.

5.4.3.2 Work-adjustment factor

The study revealed the importance of work adjustment in lowering the turnover intention. Factors like role clarity, authority and mentoring had a strong impact on repatriates turnover intention which mirrors the findings of Lazarova & Caligiuri (2001), Mukata Kulkarni et al (2010). This furthers the knowledge on repatriates turnover intention specific to software professional employees in IT industry, who like everybody else want role clarity and authority. In terms of daily functioning after repatriation it was found from the study that authority and autonomy are important considerations in repatriates work adjustment and turnover intention. Lack of authority on return from international assignment can result in increased turnover intention. Further, it was found that job clarity reduces work uncertainty, which in turn helps in adjustment. In addition the study revealed the importance of mentoring program, which strongly impacts the repatriates turnover intention. This mirrors the findings made by Black (1992), Jassawalla et al (2004), Bossard & Peterson (2005). A mentor facilitates in the formation of accurate expectations. By having a mentor who partners with an employee during their employment transition, offers guidance and is constantly in touch with the repatriate will minimize loss of visibility (out of mind out of sight) and employee will have easier time coming home. Companies need to link

managers with the international assignee and managers must be assigned with the responsibility of finding positions in the organisation which best suits the skills the returning expatriate have gained overseas.

5.4.4 Repatriates Job Satisfaction

The results revealed that repatriates job satisfaction was the strongest predictor of turnover intention for Indian repatriates, contrary to some of the earlier findings of Lum et al (1998), Kammeyer et al (2005) who concluded that commitment has a more important effect on intent to leave.

The result further revealed a significant inverse relationship between repatriates job satisfaction and turnover intention, which indicates that higher the job satisfaction of a person the lower is his intention to quit the job.

Repatriates job satisfaction was examined on the basis of four sub-constructs namely, career management, financial component, skill and knowledge utilization and repatriates expectations.

5.4.4.1 Career management

In line with earlier studies it was identified that career management has a strong influence of repatriated software professionals job satisfaction. The results reveal that career management has a significant inverse relation to turnover intention, and further most of the repatriates revealed (Mean = 2.84 on a scale of 5) that they are not happy with career management. Majority of the repatriates expressed the opinion that career growth has not been as expected due to which dissatisfaction creeps in. This result mirrors the earlier findings (Yeaton & Hall 2008, Stahl et al 2009). More importantly most of

the expatriates return to their old jobs or to lateral available positions when they return. The reabsorption sharply discounts their newly gained experiences and personal sacrifices, leading to greater job dissatisfaction. Therefore, companies must have a robust career plan for returning employees because in the perception of the repatriates one of the costs of working internationally seemed to be lack of career development.

Many of the returning expatriates expressed the opinion that better designation level of fulfillment and achievement that keeps people happy is very critical and most of the repatriates did not mind a marginal drop but not a sharp differentiation in compensation. Therefore, to curb the high turnover of repatriates it's very critical for companies to engage in developing a career growth path for its employees, and keep its returning employee happy.

5.4.4.2 Financial component

Equally important in improving the job satisfaction level and reducing the turnover intention among the returning employees is the financial component. The results reveal that financial component has a significant inverse relation on repatriates turnover intention, thus further cementing the concept of payment as integral to repatriates' levels of satisfaction. The result revealed (Mean = 2.62 on a scale of 5) clearly indicating that most repatriates feel that their organization has not lived up to its obligations with regard to pay and hence they are less satisfied.

Further it was found that financial counseling is important to both employees going abroad and for those returning to the home organization; however, the study revealed that in the majority of the companies under study, very little financial counseling was offered because majority of the

respondents often felt that returning to the home organization leads to reduction in their financial position and drastic change in the lifestyle, and hence, employees might think of switching the company if he/she gets a better offer externally.

5.4.4.3 Skill and knowledge utilization

The result on skill and knowledge utilization reveals that it has a significant relationship with repatriates turnover intention, thus further cementing the concept that it is very important variable in repatriates job satisfaction. Very importantly the result reveal that most of the returning employees are using their skills and abilities in their work and contributing fully in their organization but however could become disillusioned if opportunities to advance their career are not available within the organization. Further most of the returning employees have expressed the importance of repatriated employee's ability to use skills and knowledge gained internationally will result in increased professional satisfaction on return from international assignment and reduced turnover intention. In addition, most of the repatriates expressed the opinion that they might look for a change in the job profile with a hope of better match between their newly acquired skill and job which mirrors the findings made by Oddou et al (2009).

5.4.4.4 Work expectations

The result shows repatriates work expectations has not facilitated in reducing turnover intention. Work expectations with regard to autonomy have not resulted in reducing the turnover intention. Most of the repatriates expressed a sense of loss of freedom resulting in increased turnover intention. Also other reason could be the high marketability of their skills and offer of a

dream job which made the returning expatriates to actively consider other career options with headhunters even though some of their expectation were meet.

Thus in general it is found that the respondents believed that acknowledgment of the international experience in the form career progress and skill utilization were the two most important elements in an MNC's repatriation system and lack of these was likely to generate unfavorable attitudes toward the company and result in higher intentions to leave the organization.

5.4.5 Repatriates Organisational Commitment

Although repatriates organisational commitment was negatively related to turnover intention, it was found not to be significant. This is contrary to the general expectation that repatriates organisational commitment has influence on repatriate's turnover intention. The result supports the opinion that organisational commitment is less relevant to Indian IT industry. The findings are indicative of the fact that today's knowledge workers are loyal to one's own career path as opposed to the organization and manage their careers across a variety of organizations without much sense of company loyalty to the organisation they are employed and this findings are in line with earlier findings of Torka & Schyns (2010). In addition, the changing nature of employment relationships and the impact of current business environment characterized by mergers, layoffs, resent restructuring, downsizing, outsourcing and exciting opportunities in terms of great market demand for skill and knowledge of repatriated employee has put additional strain on repatriates commitment level. Further, this finding makes intuitive sense in today's environment of "boundary less" careers and "boundary-less" organizations where global careerists choose where to work as much as for

whom more and more employees are tuned to day to day work experiences and are less focused to macro variables.

The result also confirms the earlier studies on knowledge worker by Reed (1996), Frenkel & Korezgyński (2002) where it was stated that as organisations move towards adopting flat structure, neither employees nor management expect long-term relationship. In addition the occupational commitment is more important to knowledge worker than the organisational commitment (Reed 1996, Frenkel & Korezgyński 2002). It is normally seen that many returning expatriates are self-directing and flexible, open to accept external job offers with the aim of steering their careers towards better opportunities while focusing on their professional development and sustained career growth and ready to change employers whenever that change would land them at a better position with another organization which mirrors the findings of Bossard & Peterson (2005), Lazarova & Tarique (2005).

5.4.5.1 Affective commitment

The result revealed a significant inverse relationship between affective organizational commitment and turnover intention and this was an important and surprising finding in this study, not because of the uniqueness of finding this well- established relationship but the context of its existence, amongst the repatriated software professionals. The result indicated that repatriated employee feel a strong identification with the work itself, and thus may feel a stronger attachment to their profession than to the firm in which they are employed. This level of self-identification with work suggests that dissatisfaction with the job may be more likely to spur them to move elsewhere.

The results of this study provide preliminary evidence that knowledge workers are committed to their employing organizations albeit in a

more nuanced manner than that is generally acknowledged. The traditional mechanisms of securing commitment from employees using pay and offers of job security are certainly not appropriate for managing contemporary knowledge workers. MNCs need to have mechanisms in place which will value and support the returning employee.

5.4.5.2 Continuance commitment

The result revealed that continuance commitment was not found to be significant on repatriate's turnover intentions. Therefore factors such as need commitment (continuance commitment) do not matter much for the IT repatriates clearly indicating that knowledge workers skills are in great demand and if the returning expatriates perceive that they do not stand to gain much by staying back with the organization and cost of leaving is not high and it's not too much trouble to go somewhere else they take the first opportunity to venture out to other companies. So the negative insignificant influence of continuance commitment on turnover intentions of repatriates has to be taken care of by company management with increase in the intrinsic return and planning of the employee's career path.

5.4.5.3 Normative commitment

The result revealed that normative commitment was not found to be significant on repatriates turnover intentions. Therefore it was also found that obligation to remain (normative commitment) do not matter much for the IT repatriates clearly indicating there is no 'moral' obligation to stay and be loyal to one's organisation, but their commitment and dedication towards work and responsibilities does not reduce.

5.4.6 Job Satisfaction and Organisational Commitment

The findings of the study show that job satisfaction is positively related to organisational commitment and it confirms the established findings (Wong et al 2001, Schwepker 2001, Namasivayama & Zhaob 2007, Al-Hussami 2008, Yang 2009, Lane et al 2010). Further the study also investigated the former empirical study which advocated that the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention is mediated by organisational commitment. Consistent with the expectations the results of the study show that organisational commitment is inversely related to turnover intention (Griffeth et al 2000). On the contrary, the weak relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention is the earlier research is not supported in these findings. The pattern, which emerges from these particular findings, states implicitly that organisational commitment is mediating the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention. Further, this study was able to produce a direct link between job satisfaction and turnover intention which also confirms earlier studies (Gomolski 2000).

5.4.7 Demographic Characteristics and Work Unit Characteristics

This study also investigated whether or not the differences in gender, age, marital status, tenure with the organization, length of most current assignment, number of overseas assignments and year of return affects repatriates' intent to leave the organization.

The result from the analysis of variance in Table 4.16 revealed that there was no significant difference between gender and repatriates turnover intention. Further, with regard to repatriates adjustment, job satisfaction and organizational commitment the result did not reveal any significant difference between men and women repatriated professionals. The findings are in accordance with the earlier studies (Jinnett & Alexander 1999, Griffeth et al

2000) where they conclude that women and men have similar quit ratio. Likewise, in a study done by Weisberg & Kirschenbaum (1993) it was found that while women had a higher turnover rate than men, no gender differences were found in intentions to leave the organization.

When looking at age groups of respondents the results from analysis of variance reveal that intention to leave the organization varies among different age group which is consistent with earlier studies (Wai & Robinson 1998, Weil & Kimball 1995). Likewise there was significant difference in repatriates adjustment and organizational commitment among respondents of different age groups. However the results revealed that job satisfaction of respondents does not vary among respondents of different age groups.

With regard to educational qualification the result from analysis of variance reveal no significant influence on repatriates turnover intention. Likewise, the analysis with regard to marital status of the respondents revealed that mean difference between marital status and intention to leave is not significant which implies that respondents with different marital status seem to perceive in similar ways with regard to the attribute – intention to leave on the international assignment.

With regard to experience with the present organization the result reveal that increased experience with the organization shows to be strongly related to propensity to remain. However this assumption does not hold good in our study because the result from the analysis of variance output showed the F value is 0.686 and significant value is 0.504. Since it is >0.05 this shows that the attribute – intention to leave is perceived similarly among respondents with different experiences.

Length of most current overseas assignment was found to be statistically significant ($P < .05$). The result is consistent with earlier studies (Lazarova & Caligiuri 2001) where it was found that length of international assignment results in increased/decreased repatriate retention rate. Also in a study done (Black et al 1992a) they have claimed that time away from the home culture is correlated with repatriates expectations and influence his/her intention to stay/leave.

The result reveals that number of overseas visits was found to be statistically significant ($P < .05$), which implies that turnover intention of the respondents varies along with number of overseas visit.

5.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The study reinforces the findings of earlier results and also enriches the knowledge on the subject with additional findings and thus helps the organisations to know and focus on factors they need to address for retention of repatriated professionals

Companies must 'continuously work' towards addressing the issue of repatriated knowledge worker, further, companies need to have retention plan customized for each returning employee as each of them have a different issue.

Companies can play a major role in making expatriate repatriation a success through policies, training and other support mechanisms. They can ensure that the unique experience that such expatriate bring back with them is best utilized.

In order to enhance the repatriates adjustment and lower the turnover intention companies should respond proactively and provide for

‘debriefing session’, along with ‘integration training’ which will assist in reintegration and a better understanding of the reality and prepare the returning employees to deal with reverse cultural shock.

Companies under study should address the work expectations of returning employee by developing a sound expatriate policy which provides clear information about job placement after return from international assignment and reduces anxiety.

Further, companies can adopt onsite career center which provides employees with resources and customized guidance to help them re-integrate with their job on return from international assignment.

Companies should offer the returning employee a progressive career path and ensure that there is no career derailment, and perceived underemployment. The international assignees should perceive a link between their assignment and a long-term career growth, which is beneficial in improving repatriates job satisfaction and reduced turnover intention.

Companies should focus on repatriates’ career aspirations, perceived career prospects, job embeddedness and develop very strong policy outlined for career growth which helps one to carve a niche in the platform of his/her own interest and further accommodate their professional ambitions.

Companies should develop a transparent career growth plan and well defined ‘career map/mobility maps, a view of the typical career paths for various roles in the company.

Also important is the fact that roles of the repatriates must not be too rigid and this flexibility should help returning employee to adjust their priorities.

Companies should take steps to place the returning employees in challenging job which uses the skills and knowledge acquired by their repatriated employees and provide a lot of opportunities for sharing, learning and development by creating 'internal forums'. Further, companies should create a platform that encourages returning employee to 'exchange and excel' through open talk and knowledge sharing sessions aimed at increasing learning and development.

Further in order to enhance affective commitment companies should ensure that returning employees feel minimum perceptions of job deprivation and minimum identity loss this will enhance affective commitment. In addition, recognizing repatriates international knowledge, placing them in challenging job and ensuring adequate skill utilization also enhances affective commitment.

Likewise the influence of continuance commitment on turnover intentions can be taken care by management with increase in the intrinsic return and planning of the repatriate's career path. In addition the normative commitment of the returning employee can be fostered by better understanding of the particular needs of executives in relation to the repatriation process.

5.6 SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

A major contribution of the present study to the theoretical world has come from the explanatory power of job satisfaction towards turnover intention as observed from the findings. This study provides scope for future research in area of repatriates commitment to test if repatriated employees in IT sector are more committed to the occupation than to the organisation in the Indian context. Further, the study should try to investigate the precursors to occupational commitment and turnover intention. This would provide

remedies to reduce mobility and job shifting of knowledge worker in the organisation.

Further the scope of this research study may be enhanced by studying repatriated professional actual turnover vis-à-vis the turnover intention.

In addition future study on repatriates can include inpatriate assignees, frequent flyer, commuter assignee and self-initiated assignee and study their turnover intention and actual turnover.

Further the scope of this research study may be enhanced by incorporating diverse range of both manufacturing and service-oriented industries separately and analyze to what extent similarity or otherwise

Likewise, further research can be done where data is collected from repatriates in knowledge industry who were a failure on the international assignment and made to come back to the home country before completing the job assignment.

5.5 CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that ‘repatriates adjustment’ and ‘job satisfaction’ are inversely related to the turnover intention. Corporations cannot thus shy away from developing repatriation policies. They need to strive to promote debriefing sessions and training opportunities to ease the impact of reverse cultural shock among repatriates and their families. They need to provide repatriates a chance to use their experience, also provide recognition, position choices upon return, career support and provide clear information about job placement possibilities. Corporations need to strive to create a career path for employees in order to accommodate their newly

acquired knowledge and skills and their professional ambitions. These mechanisms, however, need to take in to consideration the cultural context of each corporation and of their employees.

Further, the result shows an initial preliminary evidence of presence of commitment among knowledge workers thus it reiterates the fact that much more needs to be done by corporations with regard to improving the repatriates organisational commitment by developing a global vision and corporate work culture that encourages people through effective people management.