UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

THE IMPACT OF EXECUTIVE COACHING ON THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL MANAGERS IN CHINA

by

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Statement of Originality

This is to certify that to the best of my knowledge, the content of this thesis is my own work. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or other purpose.

I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work and that all the assistance received in preparing this thesis and sources have been acknowledged.

John Owens McGill IV

Date
Abstract

In an action research case study eleven managers of a UK subsidiary based in China participated in an executive coaching intervention of 6-10 sessions in person and over the telephone. The purpose of the study was to explore the impact of executive coaching on the development and performance of expatriate managers and the host-country national Chinese managers individually and working together as a part of a management team. This study represents the first exploration of executive coaching for international managers of a single organisation, where the participants were a mixture of Western expatriates and non-Western host-country nationals. Qualitative measures were taken and the responses suggest that the international managers found the executive coaching intervention to be valuable, satisfying and a sound investment of the organisation’s time, energy and expense. The findings further support that coaching enhanced leadership development and managerial effectiveness through the building of emotional intelligence capabilities of self-awareness, emotional control, communication strategies, self-reflection and empathy. The executive coaching intervention also resulted in increases in happiness and confidence and decreases in stress. The study further found that executive coaching outcomes and performance could be moderated by the relationship between coach and client and the impact of culture on the coach and the coached managers. The research study suggests that coaches may be able to improve the effectiveness of coaching by developing a greater understanding of the role of the host-country’s culture and the international human resource issues of international assignments. Based on the study here then, executive coaching is recommended for international managers, regardless of cultural origin or host-country location.
Acknowledgements

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Finally, I must acknowledge the two people who literally changed my life for the better over the course of this adventure: Themistos for providing the most profound guidance and unconditional love and strength; and Kylie who has made me smile in a ways I never knew possible.
Dedication

This doctoral thesis is dedicated to my grandparents, Patricia and Frank Owens and John and Marie McGill, because everything good I have ever done in my life, I owe to these four incredible people, who are the greatest role models I have ever had the privilege to know and love.
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<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HCN</td>
<td>Host-country National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRM</td>
<td>Human Resource Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IHRM</td>
<td>International Human Resource Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IM</td>
<td>International Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MNE</td>
<td>Multi-national Enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCN</td>
<td>Parent-country National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRC</td>
<td>People’s Republic of China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMART Goals</td>
<td>Strategic, Measurable, Attractive, Realistic and Time-framed Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCN</td>
<td>Third-country National</td>
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction: Background of the Problem

Multinational enterprises (MNEs) operating in the People’s Republic of China (China) may have a need to utilize an intervention, such as executive coaching, that may improve the performance and development of their international managers (Buckley and Casson, 1998). For the past 30 years, MNEs have accelerated their strategies to mine global markets to increase profits and achieve a competitive advantage (Braun and Warner, 2002). Increasingly, international organisations have turned their attention to the growing economic possibilities in China (Ahlstrom et al., 2001, Dessler, 2006, Farley et al., 2004). China, a formerly closed and virtually impenetrable market for western business has accelerated their own economic ambitions by courting foreign organisations (Warner, 2004). In turn, foreign businesses have increasingly pursued the opportunities afforded by the massive consumer market in China (Tung and Worm, 2001). However, despite China’s economic attractiveness, many MNEs have discovered that the historical, organizational and political characteristics of China, combined with cross-cultural and language differences have proved challenging for foreign businesses and their subsidiaries (Dessler, 2006, Ahlstrom et al., 2001). Since many of the challenges for foreign subsidiaries operating in China stem from human interactions and relationships, strategic human resource management might be seen as the means for ensuring that the MNEs have the best staffing, support and resources to address the challenges in China and achieve success (Braun and Warner, 2002, Farley et al., 2004, Warner, 2004).

However, as will be demonstrated in the thesis, strategic IHRM research remains
underdeveloped in its identification of strategies for improving the performance of subsidiary staff, whether expatriates or local employees, and considering this lacuna, this thesis sees executive coaching as an intervention for executive managers. The thesis here further posits that executive coaching may have the potential of assisting the performance and development of managers and professionals working for MNE subsidiaries in China (Coutu et al., 2009, Lynton and Hogh Thogersen, 2006).

**MNEs in China**

MNEs operating in China must contend with several challenges (Weldon and Vanhonacker, 1999, Sergeant and Frenkel, 1998). The historical, organizational, cultural and political structure of Western culture suggests that it is not always compatible with Chinese conditions (Goodall et al., 2006, Selmer, 2006a, Selmer, 2006b). Historically, the notion of human resource management is relatively new, as China had no such system until after the process of liberalisation commenced in 1978 (Ahlstrom et al., 2001, Bjorkman and Lu, 1999, Farley et al., 2004). China’s traditional system granted workers lifetime employment but restricted promotion and wages, regardless of performance (Braun and Warner, 2002, Dessler, 2006). As such, workers believed organizations would always look after them and managers were limited in how they could motivate or affect employee performance and success (Farley et al., 2004, Fuming, 2006, Gamble, 2003). Although the laws and prevailing corporate beliefs began to change after 1978 as China opened its doors to the global community and opened its doors to Western businesses and concepts, many aspects of the Chinese structure, such as the expectation of long-term employment still persist (Hon Fun and Rowley, 2007, Warner, 2004).
Institutionally, China has operated as separate provinces with different regulations and markets, as well as arbitrary laws with varying degrees of enforcement (Bjorkman and Lu, 1999, Braun and Warner, 2002, Frase, 2007). Culturally, China employs the concept of *guanxi*, a value of relationships and interpersonal connections, which conform to unwritten rules of behaviour and influence (Dessler, 2006, Sergeant and Frenkel, 1998, Shen and Edwards, 2004). Moreover, according to noted cultural researcher Geert Hoefstede, Chinese culture favours a long term cultural preference that is distinct from Western cultures, which may result in various cultural conflicts and misunderstandings (Hofstede, 1993, Hofstede and Bond, 1988). Lastly, China’s political system differs significantly with the political systems of the parent countries that most Western MNEs occupy (Lynton and Hough Thogersen, 2006, Rowley et al., 2004, Shen and Edwards, 2004). Although China has adopted capitalist initiatives, the communist system still persists and affects how many MNEs can operate, as well as staffing MNEs with representatives whose loyalty to the political system supersedes the loyalty to the MNEs (Tung and Worm, 2001, Warner, 2004). The vast and unique challenges that Western MNEs face when operating in China suggest that they may need specific strategies to provide support to staff to navigate through the various political, cultural and economic minefields that arise through international operations.

*The Role of IHRM in China*

Strategic international human resource management (IHRM), which promotes the strategic use of staff to achieve organizational objectives, has the potential of providing one of the means by which MNEs in China might address their challenges (Guest, 1997,
Schuler, 1996, Schuler et al., 1991, Wood, 1999). Operationally, international human resource management mirrors domestic human resource management but with additional layers of complexity (Brewster and Suutari, 2005). In addition to the general human resource areas (planning, staffing, compensation, training, and performance management), IHRM must also manage issues associated with: foreign languages, taxation, relocation, administration, cross-cultural issues and risk factors (Clark et al., 1999, De Cieri et al., 2007, Guest, 1997, Jackson and Schuler, 1995). Moreover, traditional IHRM advocates the matching of staffing strategies (ethnocentric, polycentric, region-centric and geocentric) to organizational forms (international, global, MNE, transnational) using the right mix of staffing (host-country nationals aka HCNs, parent-country nationals aka PCNs, and/or third country nationals aka TCNs) (Laurent, 1986, Miao Zhang, 2003, Morris, 2004, Napier and Vu, 1998, Niederman, 1999, Rowley and Warner, 2007). IHRM research has also typically assumed that MNEs consciously implement coherent HR strategies, whereas the reality may be that many MNEs take a more ad hoc approach. In any event, this thesis contends further research needs to examine the relevance of existing IHRM concepts in China.

Management of Western Expatriates in MNEs in China

In addition to managing local Chinese staff and as part of their strategic plan to manage and understand this growing and complex market, some MNEs may use expatriate employees to represent the MNEs, transfer knowledge, influence operations and act as a liaison between the host and parent company (Selmer, 2002, Selmer, 2004a, Selmer, 2005, Selmer, 2006a, Weinstein, 2006). Expatriate employees may gain
knowledge, skills and attributes for developing global markets, such as fluency in a foreign language, a global mindset, enhanced intercultural skills, enhanced managerial skills, a network of international contacts and enhanced communication and interpersonal skills (Bartlett and Ghoshal, 2003, Bonache et al., 2001, Brewster and Pickard, 1994, Erbacher et al., 2006, Forster, 2000). By utilizing the talents of high-performing expatriates, these MNEs may wish to mobilize a strategic global workforce that transcends the limitations of geographic and cultural distance (Mendenhall and Stahl, 2000, O'Keefe, 2003, Scullion and Brewster, 2001, Scullion and Starkey, 2000, Selmer, 1998). Harzing (2003) suggests that organisations use expatriates for maintaining control over the subsidiary.

Although expatriate employees typically represent a small fraction of a MNEs’ workforce, they incur a cost that is generally second only to the senior executives of the MNEs (Arthur Jr and Bennett Jr, 1995, Bartlett and Ghoshal, 2003, Bonache et al., 2001, Brewster and Pickard, 1994, Brewster and Scullion, 1997, Suutari, 2003). MNEs can often justify these costs because of the contribution of effective expatriate managers to the MNEs’ achievement of global strategic goals (Downes and Thomas, 1999, Edstrom and Gaibraith, 1977, Evans, 1992, Forster, 2000, Harrison and Leitch, 2000). Thus, expatriate employees may represent an integral component of the MNEs’ strategic internationalization plan (Cabrera and Bowen, 2005, Caligiuri and Santo, 2001, Caligiuri and Colakoglu, 2007, Hung-Wen and Ching-Hsiang, 2006, O'Keefe, 2003). However, less research has been focused on how organizations actually manage and improve the performance and development of expatriates. Also, although much of the research regarding expatriates is focused on selection and training, less research has been devoted
to exploring how MNEs support expatriates throughout their international assignment. More research is needed to understand what interventions can help to build and sustain expatriate success.

Performance and Development Challenges of Expatriates in China

Culturally-familiar expatriates and Chinese repatriates still encounter hindrances to their performance and development. Most of the current IHRM research literature focuses on inexperienced and culturally ignorant expatriates, and to a lesser degree, on parent-country repatriates (Selmer, 1999, Selmer, 2004a, Selmer, 2006a). Few studies examine what persistent challenges affect culturally-familiar expatriates who continue to work and live in the host-country or the challenges of host-country repatriates who seek to continue their Western experience in their native country (Selmer, 2006b, Selmer and de Leon, 1997, Shen and Edwards, 2004). Since many of the culturally-familiar expatriates have been selected because of their comfort with Chinese culture, many lack either the technical or managerial expertise that the MNEs typically require (Braun and Warner, 2002, Erbacher et al., 2006, Hon Fun and Rowley, 2007, Hutchings, 2003). Some MNEs presume that technical skills can be trained and managerial skills can be accumulated as needed (Goodall et al., 2006, Sergeant and Frenkel, 1998). Likewise, the Chinese repatriates often find themselves in demand for positions that their technical skills or managerial skills do not match but their cultural skills of Chinese fluency and Western socialization are an ideal match (Lynton and Hogh Thogersen, 2006, Selmer, 2006a, Selmer and Leung, 2003, Sergeant and Frenkel, 1998, Shen and Edwards, 2004). Expatriates in China, like some expatriates in other countries, find themselves assuming
roles and responsibilities that exceed their education or experience, which they must rise to meet to be successful (Gamble, 2003, Hon Fun and Rowley, 2007, Selmer, 2006b, Sergeant and Frenkel, 1998, Warner, 2004).

The Role of Expatriate Failure Generally

A large focus of the research on expatriates concentrates on the factors which contribute to the concept of expatriate failure, traditionally defined as the premature return of expatriates on assignment (Tung, 1981). In order to effectuate their global strategic plans, MNEs need their expatriate employees to ‘succeed’ while overseas. Expatriate success, it could be argued, then is predicated on the satisfaction of company objectives (Hogan & Goodson, 1990), and “expatriate failure” results when the MNEs’ objectives are frustrated (Tung, 1982). This frustration of organizational objectives can manifest itself by a range of possible phenomena: the expatriate’s own or team’s under-performance, the premature return of the expatriate, or the creation of tensions with stakeholders in the foreign country (Honeycutt, et al., 1996). The literature on expatriate failure is vast, but most researchers agree that the primary reasons for expatriate failure are due to the expatriate’s and/or the expatriate’s family’s inability to cope with the foreign environment (Dowling and Welch, 2004, Nankervis et al., 2002, Harzing, 2004). Some research has controversially claimed that between 10-30% of expatriate assignments fail (Harzing, 1995, Forster, 1997). However, the research regarding expatriate failure in China is more dramatic: 40-70% of managers on international assignment ‘fail’ (Goodall et al., 2006, Selmer, 2006b, Selmer et al., 2000). Research seems to indicate that because China is so distinctly different to ‘Western’ societies, the
ability for one or one’s family to adjust culturally becomes more difficult (Selmer, 1998, Selmer, 2004a, Selmer, 2005, Siu et al., 2002, Weinstein, 2006). In order to combat expatriate failure for managers in China, organisations may have to employ and commit to more focused interventions than the cultural training programs generally suggested by the literature. Arguably, the concept of expatriate failure may have to be examined differently in China if the expatriates who are chosen for assignment may be atypical, in that some expatriates may be already culturally familiar with China but possess other performance deficiencies or challenges that may need to be addressed.

Expatriate Failure in China

Some MNEs have responded to the high rate of expatriate failure in China in a number of ways, such as through the more careful selection of expatriate staff (Bjorkman and Lu, 1999, Erbacher et al., 2006). Because of the high probability of failure, MNEs seek to select more “secure” expatriate representatives (Jones, 1997, Lynton and Hogh Thogersen, 2006, Selmer, 1998, Warner, 2004, Ying Chu and Siu, 2004). Expatriate failure in China is largely due to the inability to adjust to the culture and language and one’s willingness to live there (Goodall et al., 2006, Selmer, 2002, Sergeant and Frenkel, 1998, Wang et al., 2007). MNEs have responded to these challenges by sometimes selecting expatriates who have some familiarity and comfort with the Chinese culture, as well as, some proficiency with the Chinese language or languages (Braun and Warner, 2002, Dessler, 2006, Erbacher et al., 2006, Selmer, 1999, Selmer, 2006b). As such, many of the expatriate candidates for Chinese assignments are long-term PCN or TCN expatriates who have resided in China for a while working for other companies,
expatriates who have studied Chinese culture and the language with the ambition of being relocated to China, foreign born Chinese expatriates who have been educated in Western countries and seek to return to China or Chinese repatriates who have left China for Western education and experience and have returned to China with the aim of employment in a Western MNEs (Ahlstrom et al., 2001, Bjorkman and Lu, 1999, Erbacher et al., 2006, Farley et al., 2004, Gamble, 2003, Goodall et al., 2006, Hutchings, 2003, Selmer, 1998, Selmer, 2005, Selmer and de Leon, 1997, Sergeant and Frenkel, 1998, Warner, 2004). By targeting these groups of expatriates and Chinese repatriates, MNEs have attempted to reduce the incidence of expatriate failure and increase the probability of success.

Management of Local Chinese in MNE

Local Chinese staff are critical to fulfilling the majority of the staffing needs of most MNEs operating in China, but they face many barriers to success (Ahlstrom et al., 2001). Staffing can be difficult when MNEs require English proficiency or the same level of technical skills that could be found in a Western subsidiary (Braun and Warner, 2002, Dessler, 2006, Goodall et al., 2006). MNEs might also find themselves in the position of hiring over-qualified professional staff to fulfill lower level positions, creating a role discrepancy that affects employee motivation and organizational retention (Siu et al., 2002, Wang, 2004, Warner, 2004, Weldon and Vanhonacker, 1999). MNEs then may implement extensive training programs to develop operational skills, align organizational practice or improve English and communication skills for Chinese employees (Frase, 2007, Selmer, 2002, Shen and Edwards, 2004). Although the research suggest that
training improves performance and satisfies objectives for Chinese workers, the tight and competitive labour market increases the potential of highly-trained Chinese workers being poached by competing organisations in China (Bjorkman and Lu, 1999, Braun and Warner, 2002, Farley et al., 2004). Local Chinese staff, who work in MNEs, typically at the managerial level, seek to improve their professional development through participation in socialization and promotion opportunities that would give them more exposure to and expertise in Western management practices (Frase, 2007, Warner, 2004, Weldon and Vanhonacker, 1999, Ying Chu and Siu, 2004). Thus, if MNEs wish to promulgate the success of local Chinese, especially at the managerial level, subsidiaries may need to introduce specific developmental interventions that can help motivate staff, embed training, improve communication skills and promote socialization and opportunities for professional development and promotion.

The Need for Interventions for Expatriates and local Chinese in China

Expatriates working in China with local Chinese who are working in Western MNE subsidiaries may need some type of intervention or a range of interventions to address the possible deficiencies in technical, managerial or leadership skills and development that impact performance. Expatriates and local Chinese managers working together collectively are international managers and may comprise the subsidiaries management team. For the purposes of this thesis then, the phrase “international manager” will refer to either an expatriate or HCN manager and “international managers” will refer to expatriates and HCN managers working together. Currently, there is a lack of research regarding how the performance and development of international managers is
managed and improved in the MNE subsidiary. The research suggests that MNEs predominately only provide interventions focused on cross-cultural training for expatriates pre- and during the international assignment (Bond, 1993; Hogan & Goodson, 1990; Nankervis, et al., 2002; Stahl, et al., 2002; Tung, 1982; Dowling and Welch, 2004). However, the research indicates that even the intervention of cross-cultural training is only provided by 10% of MNEs (Dowling and Welch, 2004; Tung, 1982). Moreover, pre and during cross-cultural training may have little value to already culturally-familiar expatriates, as well as, virtually no value to HCNs. Little research has examined how to support the performance and development of international managers beyond cross-cultural training or performance appraisals. Anecdotal evidence suggests that international managers, even when culturally-familiar with the host-country, still face profound challenges and are eager for performance and development opportunities for growth and improvements. Unsupported international managers may experience levels of dissatisfaction that could result in underperformance, or resignation, two common performance failures. Fiduciary responsibilities and business prudence would seem to suggest that MNEs should attempt to safeguard their investments in human capital by attempting to minimize performance failures through the promotion of interventions that can develop abilities to mitigate performance deficiencies and improve performance capabilities.

*Executive Coaching as an Intervention*

Executive coaching has been proven to be an effective intervention for the success of managers in Western MNEs. Executive coaching is the use of current research,
validated knowledge and best practices by a coach who works one-on-one with a professional to achieve meaningful goals through relevant actions (Grant, 2004). From its genesis in sports performance coaching and leadership development programs, organizational coaching has evolved into a viable and proven means to assist employees to rectify problems or take their abilities to new levels (Grant, 2004). Zeus & Skiffington (2003: 64) defined coaching as “designing and facilitating change and continuous improvement. As such, it involves understanding and capitalizing on an individual’s strengths, as well as recognizing and overcoming his or her weaknesses.” Traditionally, coaching in organizations has focused on managers and executives, however, any employee of an organization can benefit from coaching (Zeus & Skiffington, 2000). Coaching generally occurs one-to-one (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003). Coaches can either have an internal role, as a member of the organizations, or an external role, as an independent service provider (Zeus & Skiffington, 2000). Research has validated the merits of coaching for “goal attainment, meta-cognition and mental health” (Grant, 2001:253). Likewise, the coaching research provides strong evidence to support the effectiveness of executive coaching as an intervention for helping employees achieve greater levels of success, and as a profitable return on investment (Kilburg, 1996). Consequently, executive coaching that focuses on professional development of expatriates may improve organizational commitment and foster employee loyalty, a direct contribution to improve work performance (Coutu et al., 2009). Executive coaching has proven to be effective for managerial success and MNEs that have used it understand its benefits.
Executive Coaching for International Managers in China

Executive coaching may provide MNEs with a strategic tool to assist the development and success of international managers in MNEs (Abbott, et al., 2004). Executive coaching has the potential to offer a targeted intervention that addresses both the needs of the MNEs, its subsidiary and the particular needs of expatriates and local Chinese managers (Ng, 2009b). Abbott (2006) found that an executive coaching intervention improved the satisfaction and acculturation of expatriates in El Salvador. Although Abbott’s (2006) research focused solely on expatriates working individually for different companies, his research suggests that a similar coaching intervention could be applied to HCNs and HCNs and expatriates working together in a single organization. Coaching opens up a space where client managers, especially expatriates, can discuss life and personal areas that they wish to address or improve (Grant, 2001). Culturally familiar expatriates in China still may have to navigate the nuances of communication and cultural differences, balance various interpersonal relations, predominately the ones forged with host-country nationals, devise systems to promote healthy living and manage the feeling of how to get the most out of their international assignment for their own personal and professional development (Jones, 1997, Lynton and Hogh Thogersen, 2006, Ng, 2009b). For many expatriates, coaching may provide the means to develop coping mechanisms and support systems that allows them to minimize expatriate and executive derailers that arise from one’s personal life management (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003). Likewise, coaching has been shown to assist the acquisition of various skill sets, such as communication, feedback, networking and public speaking, which all involve cross-cultural challenges for expatriates and local Chinese managers (Coutu et al., 2009, Ng,
By addressing skills such as these, expatriates and local Chinese managers can help to mitigate cross-cultural conflicts and improve their marketing and networking skills with various sake-holders (Erbacher et al., 2006, Goodall et al., 2006, Owen et al., 2007). Moreover, coaching has been shown to promote increases in managerial leadership and team management (Frisch, 2001; Zeus & Skiffington, 2000). In light of the research that suggests that many expatriates and Chinese managers are hired with little leadership and/or managerial or team management experiences, executive coaching can help to fill a gap in identifying needs by helping clients to find resources and creating steps to address and improve any problem areas in performance (Lynton and Hogh Thogersen, 2006, Selmer, 2004a, Selmer, 2006a, Sergeant and Frenkel, 1998, Siu et al., 2002, Weinstein, 2006, Ying Chu and Siu, 2004). Lastly, executive coaching provides a reflective space for managers to develop their self-awareness, consider their career progression and explore blocks and opportunities for cross-cultural adjustment or socialization (Grant, 2001; Frisch, 2001; Zeus & Skiffington, 2000). The realities of business and the stresses of managing international subsidiaries rarely grant managers the time or tools to focus on their professional development or the strategic planning of the organization. Executive coaching, by its very nature, enables client managers to understand themselves better, while also expanding their vision and capabilities (Frisch, 2001; Zeus & Skiffington, 2000). In summary, executive coaching, may provide a targeted means for MNEs to address the deficiencies in each international manager and devise solutions to acquire skills, promote development and increase performance.
Challenges of Executive Coaching as an Intervention in China

Executive coaching may prove difficult to implement, and might, despite its potential benefits, prove potentially detrimental or culturally inappropriate for subsidiary managers in China. Executive coaching may be growing in popularity in the business world and through business practices, but it is a costly intervention that requires managers to devote part of their working time away from their primary work functions (Frisch, 2001; Zeus & Skiffington, 2000). Many large MNEs can bear such an expense, but smaller MNEs may balk at the idea, especially if the decision makers have had little exposure to the coaching process and its benefits. MNEs and managers alike may also be reluctant to devote the time to coaching that is required, without assurances of its effectiveness, guarantees of success or a proven return on investment (Coutu et al., 2009). Also, during tough economics periods, interventions like coaching are traditionally the last to be implemented and the first to be discarded (Coutu et al., 2009). Coaching might also prove to be detrimental to the MNEs because the needs of the coached manager may conflict with the objectives of the MNEs, especially as it relates to career planning (Coutu et al., 2009). Coaching generally raises one’s self-awareness and is forward-focused, asking clients to envision future success and goals (Frisch, 2001; Zeus & Skiffington, 2000). For executives, especially expatriates, this may mean envisioning a life or a career away from the subsidiary organization or even the parent-organization. If conflicting aspirations are realized, the MNEs may in effect be inadvertently funding expatriate failure or executive derailment. The coached clients may realize that they are no longer satisfied in the present roles and seek a way out of the MNEs. A coach’s ethical guidelines bind the coach to assist the coached manager goals, not the MNEs’
Additionally, coaching may be culturally inappropriate because it is derived from Western concepts and practices, which could be culturally at odds with Chinese or Asian cultures (Ng, 2009b). Coaching then may help to perpetuate an ethnocentric mindset in a MNE that may need an ethno-relative intervention to succeed. Also, the coaching language and processes may unfairly benefit the Western managers over the local Chinese managers, giving the Western managers a competitive advantage within the company and creating more team conflict (Ng, 2009b). Another point that should be considered is that coaching fosters independence and attaining one’s own desires, which may conflict with the Chinese cultural values of harmony and humility (Coutu et al., 2009, Hofstede, 1993, Hofstede and Bond, 1988, Ng, 2009b). Similarly, the concept of goal setting and goal attainment may not fit culturally with Chinese values and may be rejected as not part of the Chinese way (Coutu et al., 2009, Hofstede, 1993, Hofstede and Bond, 1988, Ng, 2009b). Lastly, coaching seems to be a form of psychology, which the Chinese culturally devalue and associate with mental illness (Ng, 2007). As such, the local Chinese may be resistant to coaching and its benefits for fear that it targets them as inefficient or some how defective (Ng, 2007). Coaching then would need to gain the trust of all the relevant stakeholders in order to overcome some of its challenges and may have to be packaged in a different way in a Western organisational setting.

**Lack of Research Regarding Executive Coaching for Expatriates**

Executive coaching for subsidiary managers may have several benefits or negatives, however, it is difficult to measure the impact of coaching because few research
studies have examined how coaching is used to assist international staff, especially those in China (Ng, 2009b). In fact, although executive coaching has risen in prominence in many large MNEs in the Western business community, virtually no research has examined the prevalence and impact of coaching Westerners in non-Western subsidiaries, specifically in China (Ng, 2009b). Specifically executive coaching which addresses the skills, development and performance areas of subsidiary managers may be an effective intervention, but few studies have investigated the merits of such a claim. Moreover, despite the purported benefits of executive coaching and the importance of subsidiary managers to the MNEs, virtually no studies have been conducted to show the extent and efficacy of coaching as a strategic intervention for the promotion of expatriate success (Grant, 2003b; Abbott, et al., 2004). Additionally, my research was unable to discover any studies that have compared the impact and results of coaching on two culturally distinct groups operating under a single corporate culture.

**Researcher’s Reflections**

In accordance with the qualitative nature of this thesis, it is important for the researcher to share the motivations for conducting the research.

My interests in the research study here are motivated by my training as an executive coach and my personal experience as an expatriate living in a foreign country. I know first-hand the many challenges that expatriates face in managing their personal and professional lives in a foreign country. My experience living and working in another Western culture is not too dissimilar. I am fascinated and curious as to how expatriates manage and survive in environments radically different that those they are accustomed to.
China and the Chinese culture are all still relatively new to Westerners and present significant challenges for adjustment to the culture.

As an executive coach, I am interested in exploring what tools and mechanisms can help individuals to achieve greater levels of success and happiness. I am also interested in expanding the evidence-based foundation of executive coaching by exploring areas that have yet to be researched. Finally, I am motivated to better understand and highlight the challenges of host-country nationals who are often overlooked in the research literature. As an ethnic minority in my own country, it is important for me to address a variety of voices in the research literature. I believe that executive coaching can make a significant impact in the lives of international managers and MNEs operating globally.

**The Need for Research**

The international human research management literature and research has been virtually silent on what tools or interventions can support the on-going performance needs of international managers (Forster, 1997, Harzing, 2001b). Executive coaching has been proposed here as a flexible tool that has been used to improve the on-going performance of executive managers in domestic organisations (Grant et al., 2010, Kampa-Kokesch, 2002, Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson, 2001, Kilburg, 1997). Executive coaching has been defined as:

…a confidential, individually-tailored engagement designed to meet the needs both of the executive being coached and the organization paying for the service. (Coutu and Kauffman, 2009)
Executive coaching may provide MNEs with a strategic tool to assist the performance management of international managers operating in a host country (Abbott, 2006). Grant (2001 at p.253) has supported the merits of coaching for “goal attainment, meta-cognition and mental health”. Likewise, strong evidence exists to support the effectiveness of executive coaching as an intervention for helping managers acquire skills, improve performance and enhance their personal and professional development (Grant et al., 2010, Grant, 2001a, Grant, 2001b, Grant, 2005b).

**Purpose of the Study**

This study offers a first of its kind exploration of executive coaching in an international environment from the perspectives of HCNs and expatriates working together. This study offers an examination of how a Western MNE operating in China can utilize coaching for their expatriate and local Chinese managers, and what outcomes result from the use of coaching. This study explores the experiences of coached expatriates managers compared with local Chinese managers. By analysing the data from these groups, the study seeks to ascertain the longitudinal impact of a coaching intervention on expatriates, HCNs and the MNE.

This study provides some exploratory data regarding executive coaching and provides organizations with a possible tool to use for the support of international managers. Additionally, the study suggests that executive coaching may be used to support the various stages of performance management. Also, this study explores the question of whether coaching must be adapted culturally for HCNs to achieve the same outcomes and results as expatriates. Lastly, the study presents a methodology for an
executive coaching intervention that can be replicated in other international organisations with expatriates, HCNs or an international management team.

**Research Question and Plan**

The primary research question is: *what is the impact of executive coaching on expatriate managers and local Chinese managers of a Western MNE operating in China?*

Utilizing an exploratory action research and case study methodology, this project studies a coaching intervention followed up with semi-structured interviews and questionnaires with the executive management team of a United Kingdom based multinational operating in the People’s Republic of China (PRC). The project demonstrates how an organization uses executive coaching to manage the performance of its executive managers. Moreover, the project explores what differences exist, if any, between the coaching process and outcomes of expatriate managers versus HCN managers.

The study proposed here explores the executive coaching process of coached expatriates along with the experiences of coached HCNs. By analysing the data from these groups, the study seeks to ascertain the longitudinal impact of a coaching intervention on employee performance and goal-attainment, cross-cultural adjustment and job satisfaction (McGovern et al., 2001). The study also examines how the processes of executive coaching best support the participants, and what cultural barriers, if any, exist.

Furthermore, the study hypothesizes that there will be differences between the impact and value of coaching for the expatriate group versus the HCN group. The study
also hypothesizes that the expatriate group will be more engaged in the coaching than HCNs due to the ‘Western’ cultural influence of the coaching. The study further hypothesizes that the executive coaching process may be more challenging for the HCN participants due to cultural differences. Lastly, the study hypothesizes that both coaching groups will experience a positive and significant difference on measures of job satisfaction, goal attainment, mental health, and well-being.

Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into six chapters following the introduction. The chapters are briefly overviewed below.

Chapter Two presents the IHRM literature as it relates to the development of a comprehensive model of effective performance. The chapter notes that the needs of HCNs and culturally-familiar expatriates have often been ignored by the literature research. Further, the current research has yet to design a model of performance that encompasses the performance and development needs of both expatriates and HCN managers. In Chapter Two a model of effective performance is proposed that is derived from components of other models of performance, which are insufficient on their own because either their target audience is too narrow or they fail to fully characterize the various elements that influence the performance of international managers. The model of performance has five components: (1) MNE Objectives and Performance Criteria, which represents expectations of the MNE that become translated into specific job criteria and goals for the international manager; (2) Performance Moderators, which are supporting or motivating factors that have been identified in the research literature to aid or suppress
international manager performance; (3) Competencies, which are the acquisition of skills and capabilities specific to technical competencies, cross-cultural competencies and leadership competencies; (4) Performance Outcomes, which are the explicit and implicit products of an international manager’s actions at work; and (5) Performance Evaluations, which are measurements of outcomes against the expectations, objectives and criteria of the MNE and international manager.

Chapter Three describes the coaching research literature’s support of executive coaching as an intervention that may assist the performance and development needs of international managers. The chapter begins with a discussion on the relevance, prevalence and acceptance of executive coaching in domestic organisations in predominately Western countries. The chapter posits that international organisations have the same needs as domestic organisations, in addition to some needs unique in the international environment, and as such, executive coaching would be relevant for international organisations. Next the chapter suggests that the process of executive coaching is appropriate and effective for delivering outcomes in domestic organisations. Although the coaching research suggests that the executive coaching process would be as effective for international organisations, additional research may be needed to understand the extent to which culture moderates the effectiveness of the coaching process. The chapter then describes the various outcomes that have been attributed to executive coaching interventions in the literature. The research has found that executive coaching may result in improvements in skills, performance and personal and professional development. Executive coaching has also been shown to improve work and life satisfaction, mental health and reduce depression and possibly anxiety. The chapter
suggests that the outcomes generated by executive coaching would also be found for international managers. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations of coaching, which have been attributed in the research to the relationship with the coach, the organisations level of support for coaching, the coaching client’s acceptance of coaching and the cultural factors which may moderate effectiveness.

Chapter Four presents the research design methodology that formed the structure of the research study. The study was designed as an action research single case study. Participants in the study were eleven executive managers of Rabble, a mixture of which are host-country nationals, third-country nationals and parent-country nationals, as well as, the coaches involved and the company’s HR representatives. The executive managers were engaged in a coaching intervention of 6-10 individual sessions, as well as, a week long coaching induction and leadership program. The first two coaching sessions were conducted face-to-face, as well as, over the telephone. The participants receive pre and post diagnostics, and the coaching intervention was followed up after completion by a semi-structured interview between 1.5-2 hours long. This exploratory research project used a variety of qualitative methodologies to understand how the organization manages the performance of its executive managers in China (Creane, 2002). The methodologies included: A literature review of expatriate and repatriate managers, HR management in China, and evidence-based executive coaching; semi-structure taped interviews (purposive sampling) with executive managers; questionnaires distributed through purposive sampling technique to HR staff and managers who have undergone the coaching intervention; and, internal organizational policies and documents relating to the performance management of managers, career development and coaching services.
In Chapter Five, the results and analysis is described which serves to capture the qualitative experience of the eleven participants. The first section of the chapter presents the profiles of each participant. The second part of the chapter details the various themes and sub-themes generated in relation to the guiding questions of the research study:

1. How do cultural perspectives influence executive coaching for international managers?
2. How does the executive coaching process impact international managers?
3. How does executive coaching affect the goal attainment of international managers?
4. What outcomes result from executive coaching for international managers?
5. How are the outcome measures of executive coaching evaluated for MNEs and international managers?
6. What are the limitations of executive coaching for international managers?

The results of the analysis produced the following outcomes of the executive coaching intervention:

- coaching filled a gap in the professional development of international managers;
- coaching was well received by both expatriates and HCNs and virtually all participants were satisfied with the process and outcomes;
- expatriates focused on achieving personal and professional goals, while HCNs focused predominately on achieving professional goals;
- the relationship between the coach and the participant affected the participants level of engagement in the coaching process;
- executive coaching can be adaptable to the cultural needs of non-Westerners because it attunes itself to whatever the individual needs;
- face-to-face coaching is preferred over telephone coaching in most cases, although both mediums can achieve results;
- international managers primarily use coaching to address leadership challenges around emotional intelligence factors and communication challenges;
- the goals and self-reflections of the participants may expose weaknesses in the organization that need critical attention;
- executive coaching can support all phases of an effective performance management system;
- executive coaching improves performance, conveys skills and drives the development of international managers;
- executive coaching may need to be adapted to the specific cultural values of non-Westerners, especially in regards to language and coaching concepts;
- executive coaches operating in international organizations need to have subject matter knowledge regarding the local culture and the current IHRM issues affecting expatriates and HCNs;
- executive coaching of a management team improves communication, understanding and teamwork between team members;
• executive coaching provides a common language for participants to help them understand each other and devise solution-focused problem solving strategies;

• executive coaching seems to fill the gaps of support that is lacking in subsidiaries.

Chapter Six provides the discussion of the findings in relation to the previous IHRM and coaching research. The chapter argues that all of the findings of the coaching intervention have been supported by previous research literature and are consistent with previous research on executive coaching in domestic organizations and with Abbott’s research focused solely on expatriates. The chapter suggests that executive coaching then is relevant and appropriate for international managers and will produce outcomes that will aid the performance and development of international managers working in China. The chapter then presents several unique findings of the data. In the study presented here, it is found that executive coaching has a profound impact on improving the relationships in the subsidiary through dramatic improvements in the international manager’s emotional intelligence and communication abilities. Furthermore, the data posits the hypothesis that executive coaching could provide a mechanism that can support all five stages of the model of effective performance described in Chapter Two. The chapter then concludes with a discussion on the significance of the findings to the practices and professions of IHRM and executive coaching, followed by the limitations of the study and by recommendations for future research.

Chapter Seven will conclude the thesis and discuss the generalized findings of the research study.
CHAPTER TWO: IHRM LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

International managers are expected to deliver a range of performance outcomes, which generally include: establishing and managing new business subsidiaries and ventures in the host-country; ensuring MNE headquarters achieve adequate control and performance and coordination over the subsidiary managing the development activities of subsidiary staff; and, providing leadership and team management to the subsidiary staff (Hon Fun and Rowley, 2007). In order for international managers to be successful in delivering their performance outcomes they must be able to satisfy all of the dimensions of effective performance while completing the international assignment: adjusting socio-culturally and psychologically to their new foreign environment; acquiring the requisite job skills; improving performance; and, developing capabilities for delivering outcomes (Shaffer et al., 2006). It is well established that a range of personal and situational factors can influence the performance of international managers (Erbacher et al., 2006).

Although most IHRM research has focused on expatriates, a broader focus on the entire international management team of expatriates and HCNs working together promises a more comprehensive understanding of the issues affecting the performance of all managers and ultimately the performance of the subsidiary. Current IHRM research has yet to offer a comprehensive model of international manager performance. MNEs seeking to enhance the performance of their international managers need to consider a range of new performance tools and strategies. This review of the IHRM literature
assesses the research relating to MNE objectives and performance criteria, expatriate and HCN managers, performance failures, interventions for performance failures and performance management and then seeks to develop a more comprehensive model of effective performance for international managers.

**Detailing the problems in IHRM research regarding effective performance**

Given the changing characteristics of international managers and the foreign environments they operate in, a level of complexity exists in regards to managing performance that the IHRM research and literature has failed to adequately address (Tahvanainen, 2000). The expatriate archetype of the culturally-unfamiliar American male on his first overseas assignment has given way to a reality where a wide variety of employees can and do assume management roles in international ventures (Bonache et al., 2001). An expansion of the research beyond the ethnocentric and limited focus on the ‘expatriate archetype’ to one that includes a variety of international manager profiles might address some of the problems inhibiting research into effective international manager performance. This section of the literature review explores the areas where current IHRM research is lacking in regards to the effective performance of international managers. To summarise, this section identifies six key problems:

1. A pre-eminent focus on a particular expatriate manager archetype, to the exclusion of other expatriate manager profiles and HCN and TCN managers.
2. Although the effective performance of the subsidiary is a primary objective for the MNE, the research literature rarely recognizes specific MNE objectives for international managers.

3. A focus on premature return as the primary example of expatriate failure, to the exclusion of other forms of performance failure or under-performance of expatriates and HCN managers.

4. A focus on pre-departure training and selection as the primary interventions for insuring against expatriate failure, to the exclusion of other interventions.

5. A focus on the performance management systems of MNEs for expatriates, rather than on the actual performance, and performance improvement of individual international managers and management teams.

6. The lack of a comprehensive model of effective performance for international managers that might be used to guide improved performance management.

The problems enumerated above highlight the need for more research which moves beyond the ‘expatriate archetype’ and traditional conceptions of ‘expatriate failure’ in particular. The expatriate archetype now accurately represents only a small proportion of the international managers in subsidiaries throughout the world now (Dowling and Welch, 2006). By moving beyond the expatriate archetype, IHRM research will be better equipped to understand and respond to the current challenges faced by many organisations and employees, and facilitate a focus on the development of
more effective interventions, which can better support the overall performance of international managers and teams.

In the following sections, the research literature relating to the performance of international managers is reviewed. The first section explores the literature’s focus on how MNE objectives influence the performance needs of expatriates and HCNs. The second section discusses how IHRM research has narrowly defined and applied the concept of “expatriate failure” as premature return, to the near exclusion of other “performance failures”. The third section describes the literature’s limited exploration of MNE’s performance management systems for expatriates and HCNs, and what interventions currently exist for managing effective individual performance. The final section of the literature review proposes a new model of effective performance for international managers. After reviewing the literature, the potential contributions of executive coaching to the improvement of international manager performance is considered. It is contended that executive coaching might provide an approach that may be more flexible, more robust, more applicable and culturally more adaptable to the effective performance management of international managers in China than other limited approaches advocated in the research and practitioner literature.

**IHRM’s traditional focus on the “expatriate archetype”**

A great deal of the previous research has focused on the “expatriate archetype”: a culturally-unfamiliar Caucasian Western male from the United States with a great deal of experience in the organisation, who is technically sound, and is offered the opportunity to take his family overseas and manage a subsidiary in a foreign environment (Dowling and
Welch, 2004). The research into expatriate demographics would seem to support the existence of the expatriate archetype, but of course, perhaps not its ubiquity (Dowling and Welch, 2004). According to the *Global Relocation Trends: 2002 Survey Report*: 16% of MNC employees were HCNs, 42% of were PCNs and 42% were TCNs; 82% of expatriates (PCNs and TCNs) were male; 65% of expatriates were married with 86% accompanied by a spouse and 59% of expatriates were accompanied by children; while, 70% of expatriates have had no prior international experience (Dowling and Welch, 2006). Although there were as many TCN expatriates as PCN expatriates, the research into TCN specific issues is relatively sparse compared to PCN issues. Also, the characteristics of expatriates in various countries may deviate from the archetype (Hahn, 2006). For example, in China, it has been reported that only 33% of its expatriates are from Western countries, while 66% are from neighbouring Asian countries (Hahn, 2006). The research suggests that although the expatriate archetype may have some relevance in other Western countries or European countries, the expatriate archetype may not describe the average expatriate who fills an international assignment in more culturally challenging countries for Westerners, such as China or India.

Since the 1970s, the field of international human resource management has attracted considerable research interest, with a strong focus on the challenges of Western expatriates and their ability to adjust to a foreign work environment (Shaffer and Harrison, 1998, Tung, 1981b, Tung, 1982, Tung, 1987). More specifically, IHRM research has long focused on the issue of “expatriate failure”, commonly defined as an expatriate’s premature return home (Tung, 1981b, Tung, 1982, Tung, 1987). Research into the issue of “expatriate failure” coupled with the research into cultural adjustment
has resulted in the advocacy of pre-departure cross-cultural training for expatriates and better selection techniques (Bennett et al., 2000, Hutchings, 2005, Bonache, 2001, Tung, 1981b, Tung, 1982, Tung, 1987). Overall, research regarding the management of international staff has supported a number of propositions: that many expatriates find international assignments more challenging than domestic assignments (Selmer, 2004a, Tung, 1982, Tung, 1987); the idea that the challenges of an international posting often results in the expatriates premature return or other deleterious impacts on the organisation (Shaffer and Harrison, 1998); the need for better and more appropriate selection techniques and procedures (Tung, 1981b, Tung, 1982, Tung, 1987); the call for more pre-departure cross-cultural training (Bennett et al., 2000, Black and Mendenhall, 1990, Brewster and Pickard, 1994, Hutchings, 2005, Mendenhall and Stahl, 2000, Treven, 2003); the value of including the expatriate’s family in the decision making and support structures (Arthur Jr and Bennett Jr, 1995, Caligiuri and Cascio, 1998, Forster, 1997, Tung, 1986, Tung, 1987); and, the need for a better understanding of performance and the interventions that might better support that performance (Chiang and Birtch, 2007, Erbacher et al., 2006, Guest, 1997, Harzing, 1995, Hsi-An et al., 2005, Kairmer et al., 2001, Shaffer et al., 2006, Shu-Chi and Jung-Nung, 2005, Tahvanainen, 2000, Tung, 1987, Xiangyang and Margaret, 2005). Thus, the existing IHRM research has provided some useful insights and interventions to assist organisations in supporting the success of particular members of their international staff. However, as the expatriate profile continues to rapidly evolve and extend beyond the expatriate archetype, more research will be needed to address particular and unique challenges faced by other types of international managers.
A number of expatriate profiles diverge significantly from the ‘expatriate archetype’ (Bonache et al., 2001). For example, many expatriate managers have less developed technical skills but possess sophisticated “soft skills”, which “include the ability to handle foreign governments, to build deep networks of relationships, to negotiate and manage across cultures, to develop and coach local managers, and to find creative ways of circumventing underdeveloped market infrastructures” (Hsieh, 1999). More women (Bowen et al., 2007, Caligiuri and Cascio, 1998, Korabik, 1993, Owen et al., 2007, Selmer and Leung, 2003, Tung, 2004) and Third-country nationals (TCNs) (Hahn, 2006) are accepting expatriate manager positions, although there is a dearth of research identifying their particular challenges and needs. Some research has identified, but not fully explored, other expatriate profiles: self-initiated foreign workers (Brewster and Suutari, 2005); minority (such as, African-American) expatriates (Stuart, 2008); short-term assignment expatriates (Hauser, 2004); culturally-familiar expatriates (expatriates who have either lived in, studied, worked in or are descended from the host-country) (Hauser, 2004); localized expatriates (expatriates who intend to permanently relocate to the host-country and are regarded as locals after a number of years) (Hauser, 2004); and, non-American expatriates (Tahvanainen, 2000, Tung, 1981a, Tung, 1982). Likewise, the research on HCN managers is very limited and does not approach the depth or breadth of studies of traditional expatriates.

The general consensus of the limited research into other expatriate profiles and HCNs reveals commonalities with the expatriate archetype in terms of various cultural challenges that impact performance and the need for more support from the MNE; however, the challenges vary amongst international managers and the support needs vary
as well—what may work for one group may not be effective for another. Thus, further research may be needed to explore the various needs of international managers who diverge from the archetype so that MNEs have a better understanding of how to support the performance of their entire international management team.

**Deriving MNE Performance Objectives for International Managers**

*Defining MNE Objectives for International Managers*

In part, the performance objectives demanded of international managers will be related to the objectives of the MNE. The IHRM literature on MNE objectives commonly is limited. Bartlett and Ghoshal (1992) provide some insight into the objectives of MNEs through the concepts of: “local responsiveness”; “global integration”; and, “innovation and a learning organisation”. Edstrom and Galbraith (1977) provide a widely accepted typology that describes the motives for utilizing international transfers to fulfill MNE objectives: “position filling”; “management development”; and, “organisational development”. The motives described by Edstrom and Galbraith (1977) support and expand on the MNE objectives that Bartlett and Ghoshal note and, by inference, the motives may represent MNE objectives in themselves. As noted previously in this literature review, most of the research and discussion regarding MNE objectives has focused more on how the objectives relate to expatriate managers than local managers, exposing a further gap in understanding the performance of all international managers. Additionally, the literature generally fails to identify the performance of the classic management functions involved in the management of an international subsidiary as an MNE objective. Subsidiaries that are
“run smoothly” on a daily basis through effective management are better positioned to accomplish the explicit MNE objectives described by Bartlett and Ghoshal. Bartlett and Ghoshal do not explicitly identify “effective management” as an MNE objective, and nor does Edstrom and Galbraith identify “the effective management of a subsidiary” as a motive for hiring international managers. It would seem that the concept of “effective management of the subsidiary” has either been implied by the researchers or ignored. Effective management of the subsidiary would seem to be such a critical determinant of success that it should be explicitly highlighted as a MNE objective for hiring international managers.

**Bartlett and Ghoshal’s Objectives of MNEs**

**Local Responsiveness**

In pursuing the goal of local responsiveness, organisations seek to adapt their products and practices to the subsidiary’s culture, customs and laws (Schuler, 1996, Schuler et al., 2002). Bonache, et al (2001) observes that ideally a MNE’s use of local managers leads to increased responsiveness to the local/host-country environment, due to their inherent communication skills, cultural familiarity, knowledge of political systems, and network of relationships. However, Bonache, et al (2001: 5) notes the benefits of using expatriate managers:

in specific situations, such as when there is a political risk (when there is a high probability that a political event could alter the prospects of profitability of a given investment) or cultural risk (when there is a great cultural distance between the parent-country and the subsidiary) companies can choose to send an expatriate who will help the central
organisation to understand local conditions and to control subsidiary operations.

Expatriates may also be used to embed the MNE’s culture and practices in local managers through training and mentorship known as localization.

Localization represents the MNEs desire for international managers to staff the subsidiary with as many competent local (HCN) staff as possible. Bhanugopan and Fish (2007:36) define localization as “a process in which local officers increase their competences and consequently improve performance.” When there is a lack of technical skills or management competencies in the host-country, expatriates are imported into the subsidiary to fill skill gaps (Bhanugopan and Fish, 2007, Brewster et al., 2005, Selmer, 2004b). However, expatriates are expensive compared to locals and encounter many challenges (Bhanugopan and Fish, 2007), which may be economically less practical in vulnerable economies, particularly in times of global recession (Siler, 2009). Locals who possess the same skill sets as expatriates might to be preferred, due to their knowledge of the local language, customs, cultures and relationships (Bhanugopan and Fish, 2007). The greater the cultural disparity between the parent and host country, the greater the need for a more localized subsidiary. Selmer’s (2004: C1) research regarding China supports this claim by asserting that “the most frequently cited factor expected to affect the future success of foreign firms in China is the ability to build strong local management teams” (cf. Jones, 1997; The Economist Intelligence Unit, 1997; Worm, Selmer & de Leon, 2001). As such, international managers are sometimes directed to develop and train HCNs to replace expatriates. Selmer (2004) notes that there are few examples of successful localizations, but there are many anecdotal tales of failure. A
particular challenge of localization may be that it is counter-intuitive for most expatriates to train others to take over their jobs.

Although some organisations explicitly include contractual requirements for expatriate managers to localize roles, many expatriates apparently ignore their obligations in an attempt to preserve their jobs (Selmer, 2004). Expatriates may wish to continue in the subsidiary because they hold high-level positions that would not be possible in their home-country, they have adapted well to the host-country environment, and they may be unsure as to what employment opportunities await for them “back home” (Selmer, 2004). Also, as discussed earlier, localization requires considerable time, energy and the skill to train others. Some expatriates may feel that the extra time spent may diminish other aspects of their performance or the expatriates may not feel competent enough to train and develop someone else (Bhanugopan and Fish, 2007, Selmer, 2004b). More research into the concept and use of localization in subsidiaries might reveal the extent of the challenge in MNEs and suggest strategies to promote effective localisation.

The Objective of Global Integration

MNEs can use international managers to coordinate the often complex issues surrounding the logistics of managing subsidiary operations between headquarters (parent-country, regional or other) or other subsidiaries (Edstrom and Gaibraith, 1977). The large scale coordination of the various global units is often necessary to capture the competitive advantages of economies of scale, shared resources and costs, as well as, mutually beneficial levels of production across various business units and localities.
Expatriate managers might have the task of linking the various business units, while navigating the international, cultural, legal and communication challenges that arise. Research has supported the notion that expatriate managers are critical to the effective management and success of these types of complex business forms (Bartlett and Ghoshal, 2003, Chiang and Birtch, 2007, Downes and Thomas, 1999, Edstrom and Gaibraith, 1977, Harzing, 2001a).

The Objective of Innovation and a Learning Organisation

MNEs will often expect their subsidiaries to gather and share information, data and knowledge which may promote innovation and learning throughout the organisation and its business units (Caligiuri and Santo, 2001, Downes and Thomas, 1999, Harrison and Leitch, 2000, Pucik and Katz, 1986). Global knowledge has often been characterized as the element of internationalization that gives an organisation its competitive advantage over local organisations. As Bonache, et al, (2001) illustrates, international organisations can be at a disadvantage in the host-country due to their foreign status. Representation in other countries and cultural settings, although challenging, nevertheless allows the organisation to be exposed to new practices and processes (such as purchasing, product design and marketing) that can enhance innovative capacity and organisational performance (Arthur Jr and Bennett Jr, 1995, Downes and Thomas, 1999, Harrison and Leitch, 2000, Pucik and Katz, 1986, Roberts et al., 1998). Expatriate managers then become a conduit for transferring this knowledge to headquarters and, potentially, throughout the organisation, thereby fostering increased creativity, innovation and organisational success (Caligiuri and Santo, 2001, Downes and Thomas, 1999, Harrison
Arguably though, technological innovations and the growing acceptance of English as the standard international business language may mean that expatriate managers are less crucial to the transfer of knowledge (Caligiuri and Santo, 2001, Downes and Thomas, 1999, Harriso and Leitch, 2000, Pucik and Katz, 1986). On the other hand, Bonache et al, (2001) maintains that the critical knowledge of subsidiary units is tacit knowledge (the implicit understanding of how things work), which can not be codified or transferred easily, and is only amenable to capture and transfer through the work of expatriate managers.

Other MNE Objectives

MNEs typically establish or acquire subsidiaries in order to access resources and/or exploit new markets (Tahvanainen, 2000). International managers are often responsible for ensuring the effective development of the subsidiary. MNEs use managers who will: act as control agents by implementing the company’s policies and procedures, while transmitting company values, and forming beneficial networks; act as adaptive agents by ensuring the company’s products, policies and procedures conforms with the host-country’s culture, policies and regulations; and, act as integration agents, by coordinating the subsidiaries business operations with other business units in the MNE to improve profitability (Edstrom and Gaibraith, 1977). The IHRM research has focused primarily on the motives for hiring expatriates as international managers for subsidiaries. Specific performance objectives may be derived from these motives.

Edstrom and Galbraith (1977) have identified several motives for international assignments, including: position filling (appointing expatriates with skills not available in
the host country labour market), management development (transferring international skills and experience into the individual manager) and organisational development (replicating the organisational culture into the subsidiary and its managers and creating a communication network that links the parent-company to the subsidiary). Edstrom and Galbraith’s (1977) classifications for international transfers and organisational objectives are widely accepted in the IHRM literature (Harzing, 2001).

Position Filling as an MNE Objective

The IHRM research on position filling suggests that it may be the primary reason for using expatriate assignees or managers (Harzing, 2001a, Suutari and Tahvanainen, 2002). Hays (1974) suggests that there are four roles that are often played by expatriate assignees: the “chief executive officer” or subsidiary manager (who oversees or manages an important unit of the subsidiary operation); the “structure reproducer” (who establishes a proven system in the subsidiary that has been previously used in another part of the company); the “trouble-shooter” (who is tasked with analyzing problems in a subsidiary and devising solutions); and, the “operative” (who performs lower level supervisory and functional job tasks).

Management Development as an MNE Objective

Another justification for expatriates, as suggested by the research, is the development of global leaders. Organisations have consistently identified and targeted the need to develop competent managers who can operate and succeed on a global level (Black and Gregersen, 2000, Brewster et al., 2005, Caligiuri and Santo, 2001, Kohonen,
The idea of expatriation as a form of management development generally arises in the research literature in two ways: one idea is that expatriate assignments provide career opportunities for managers with a range of talents; and, the second idea is the concept of the global manager, a highly trained-experienced manager who has the ability and desire to travel throughout the world solving the various global challenges that arise from the internationalization of organisational strategies (Black and Gregersen, 2000, Brewster et al., 2005, Caligiuri and Santo, 2001, Kohonen, 2005, Tung, 2004). The research into repatriation however suggests that the expatriate assignments may not necessarily improve a manager’s career prospects, and that the idea of the global manager is something of a myth in light of the stress of travel logistics and potential lack of familial support and motivation due to the cross-cultural challenges (Black and Gregersen, 2000, Brewster et al., 2005, Caligiuri and Santo, 2001, Kohonen, 2005, Tung, 2004).

Most research suggests that international assignments rarely advance careers within the organisation (Nankervis, et al., 2002; Stahl, et al., 2002; Tung, 1982; Dowling, et al., 1999). Although organisations stress the importance of developing global leaders, few organisations appear able to retain, and effectively exploit the intellectual capital of returning expatriates (Stahl, 2002). Regardless, the international assignment is often initially framed as a means to advance throughout the organisation (Stahl, et al., 2002). Stahl, et al., (2002) argues that companies too often fail to create a long-term strategy that incorporates the expatriate’s return from assignment. It would seem, then, that many organisations fail to appreciate the importance of the employee’s individual career objectives and their potential contribution to the company post-assignment.
Motive of Organisational Development as an MNE Objective

MNEs implement various initiatives and mechanisms in order to manage the subsidiary and share the MNE’s corporate culture with the subsidiary. Organisational control has been defined as having a function to “help to ensure the proper behaviours of people in the organisation” (Harzing, 2001:369 quoting Merchant, 1985:4). Although political risk and cultural risk provide some impetus for control, other factors, such as superimposing organisational values and corporate culture may necessitate the MNE’s influence of subsidiary management. Harzing’s (2001) research on the organisational motives of MNEs using expatriate staff contributes to a greater understanding of how “control” plays a role in organisational objectives. Organisational development can be defined as “the increase of a company’s potential to succeed and to compete in the international market” (Harzing, 2001: 368 citing Pausenberger, 1987). Harzing (2001) then argues that Edstrong and Galbraith’s classification of “organisational development” should more appropriately be labelled “control and coordination” to reflect a more accurate objective.

Harzing’s Theory of Control as an MNE Objective

Harzing (2001) expands on her theory of control by describing how there are two primary forms of organisational control: direct and indirect. Harzing (2001) labels the direct form of control by using the analogy of “bears” and as such, this form of control is an aggressive attempt by the parent-company to use predominately parent-country expatriates to directly dominate and control the management and functions of the
subsidiary. “Bears” serve to replicate the parent-company’s decision making within the subsidiary and place the subsidiary under the parent-company’s direct control and surveillance (Harzing, 2001). This level of control may be more appropriate when political or cultural risks are present. Direct control manifests itself in the subsidiary through various formalized systems dictated and monitored by the parent-company: organisational structure; reporting systems; budgets; performance management systems; and, formal communication (Dowling and Welch, 2004 adapting Marchan, et al, 1996). “Bears” or direct control is generally utilized most when subsidiaries are in their early stages of establishment and growth and when they are dependent on the parent-company for either resources or product delivery. Harzing (2001) also notes that in extreme cases, “bears” could be perceived by the HCNs as a threat.

“Bumble-bees” represent a form of indirect control through socialization (Harzing, 2001). Socialization is the process of adjusting employees to the organisation’s corporate culture through shared values (Bonache et al., 2001). The organisation’s corporate culture and values may in turn be influenced by the country culture of the parent-company. Socialization occurs when managers become familiar with the parent-company’s corporate culture and then transmit the culture through practices, policies and management style to the subsidiary (Harzing, 2001). Often manifesting itself as “the way we do things in this company”, socialization can be implemented in several ways: recruitment and selection of value-similar new staff; training and development in company policies; reward systems and promotions; and, placement (Dowling and Welch, 2006). Parent-country expatriates, third-country expatriates who have spent time in the parent-country and host-country ‘inpatriates’, who have spent time in the parent-company
primarily for socialization, all have the capacity to transfer the parent-culture into the subsidiary (Bonache et al., 2001). “Bumble-bees” seem to play an important role in new subsidiaries and subsidiaries that are independent from the parent-company (Harzing, 2001). The more cultural distance there is from the subsidiary and parent-country, the greater is the need for a link to tie the subsidiary and MNE headquarters together (Harzing, 2001). Some critics of socialization have charged that it may represent a form of multinational imperialism, where the dominant parent-country seeks to subvert the local culture (Dowling and Welch, 2006). Harzing’s (2001) seems to confirm the positive impact of socialization, but no current research has investigated the harm, as imperialism, caused by socialization.

“The Spiders” represent another form of indirect control through the use of informal communication networks. Informal communication networks involve the accumulation and diffusion of knowledge through interpersonal interactions (Dowling and Welch, 2006). Interpersonal interactions are best achieved through the personal networks that are formed between company stakeholders (Harzing, 2001). These networking opportunities may occur at inter-organisation functions, such as training and development, conferences, team-building or company parties. Harzing (2001) found that “spiders” are important in subsidiaries with high levels of local responsiveness and in acquisitions, more so than ‘greenfield’ type organisations.

**Motive of General Management of the Subsidiary as an MNE Objective**

Neither of Edstrom and Galbraith’s (1977) concept of “management development” nor “organisational development” fully encapsulate the general classical
functions of what most managers are hired to do everyday: developing strategy, planning, controlling and monitoring resources, and leading teams and the organisation as a whole. Similarly, Bartlett and Ghoshal do not explicitly identify “general management” as an objective of MNEs. While it might be argued that “general management” is such an obvious objective for any expatriate manager that it can be taken to be implied by Edstrom and Galbraith, Bartlett and Ghoshal and others, it needs to be recognised as a MNE objective expected of expatriate managers.

Expatriate managers are often tasked with running and managing the teams that are related to their functional responsibilities. Team management, under the best of circumstances, can prove to be challenging for even the best of team leaders. In international organisations, the issues become compounded by the differences in cultural work habits, the prior experience of staff in teams, the level of team management experience of the expatriate manager and numerous cultural practices and rituals that may have to be observed when facilitating groups and team members (Smith and Kuth, 2009, Scullion et al., 2007, Rowley and Warner, 2007, De Cieri et al., 2007, Treven, 2006). If the expatriate manager is from a collaborative culture but working in a directive culture, then the expatriate manager may experience resistance from having others share their thoughts and inform their decision making process (Hofstede, 1993, Hofstede and Bond, 1988). The expatriate manager may also feel the stress of being accountable for all the decisions of the group.

Likewise, performance management has been described by some researchers as another form of organisational control, in that performance expectations are primarily
dictated by the parent-company and performance management is the process that ensures that objectives are met: the MNE then controls performance (Dowling and Welch, 2006).

**Summary of MNE Objectives**

From a review of the literature on the use and objectives of international managers by MNEs, expatriates have received a bulk of the research focus and, even then, that focus has been narrowed to understanding the issues of a particular archetype: the culturally in-experienced middle-aged American (or Western) male and his family. The expatriate archetype research and findings have been applied to other expatriate types regardless of whether expatriate’s personal experience warrants the same generalizations. The focus on expatriates in general though has meant that HCNs relationship to MNE objectives has been under-examined in the research literature. Undoubtedly, HCN managers serve critical roles within subsidiaries that advance MNE objectives. A review of the MNE objectives suggests that the reasons for employing expatriates, in many instances, would also apply to qualified HCN managers. As such, there seems to be a strong argument for moving away from the myopic ethnocentrism which seems to dominate the IHRM research so that a more realistic understanding of issues which impact international subsidiaries can be examined. Since HCNs and expatriates both represent a critical components for fulfilling MNE objectives, the study here represents the two groups collectively as “international managers”.

IHRM research literature’s narrow focus on ‘performance failures’

MNE objectives influence the job roles and job analysis, which determine the goals and performance criteria by which international managers are measured. It follows then that the satisfaction of an international manager’s performance criteria should result in outcomes that align with the MNE’s objectives. Conversely, performance failures can occur where international managers fail to produce outcomes that align with performance criteria and MNE performance objectives (Forster, 1997, Harzing, 1995, Tung, 1981b, Tung, 1987). A review of the IHRM literature suggests a greater focus on preventing performance failures than supporting or improving performance successes. The IHRM research and literature identifies and explores, to varying degrees, five broad categories of ‘performance failure’ impacting international managers and foreign subsidiaries of MNEs: premature exit failures (Tung, 1981b, Tung, 1982); under-performance failures (Black and Mendenhall, 1990); relationship building failures (Harzing, 2001); knowledge transfer failures (Forster, 2000); and, staff and management development failures (Harzing, 2001a, Forster, 2000). In this section, each of these dimensions of ‘performance failure’ is reviewed.

Much of the IHRM literature focuses on an expatriate’s premature exit from the subsidiary and return home, commonly referred to as “expatriate failure” (Forster, 1997, Harzing, 1995, Tung, 1981b, Tung, 1987). More recently, under-performance has been added to the definition of “expatriate failure” (Clark et al., 1999, Fang et al., 2008, Forster, 1997, Weinstein, 2006). In practice, it would seem under-performance is more prevalent than premature return, but there is a lack of research regarding its impact or that

Forster (1997) and Harzing (1995) both contend that, while expatriate failure based solely on premature exit is less pervasive than generally presented in research, the very definition of premature exit limits the various possible ways an expatriate may “fail” an international assignment. A major focus of the research on expatriates is on the factors which contribute to premature exit of expatriates on assignment (Tung, 1981). However, expatriate success, it could be argued, is predicated on the satisfaction of company objectives (Hogan & Goodson, 1990), and “expatriate failure” results when the international manager fails to fully achieve those objectives (Tung, 1982). Despite this rather straightforward definition of expatriate success, it would seem that the research and business practices more commonly define expatriate success merely as fulfilling the contractual term of the assignment, with anything less deemed a “failure”. Bennet, et al (2000) liken the issue of premature exit to the tip of the proverbial “ice-berg” that is easily visible above the surface, while a great mass of performance failures lurk underneath.

However, if performance failure is defined more broadly than the lack of assignment completion and the actual performance and professional objectives of the expatriate manager are evaluated, the management of performance failure may be greater and the phenomenon more complex than previously assumed. Presumably then, various factors, in addition to premature return, could potentially frustrate the achievement of the MNEs’ objectives (Black and Porter, 1991, Forster, 1997, Goodall et al., 2006, Harzing, 1995). These factors might include: (1) the expatriate’s own under-performance; (2) the
team’s or subsidiary under-performance; (3) the expatriate leaving the MNE after completion of the international assignment; (4) the failure to adequately develop local staff; (5) or the creation of tensions with stakeholders in the host country (Honeycutt, et al., 1996). Bennet, et al (2000:241), for example, advocates a broader definition of expatriate failure:

of greater concern are those failures that are less apparent but just as costly: delayed productivity and start-up time; disrupted relationships with local nationals both inside and outside the company; damage to company image; lost opportunities; negative impact on successors; poor repatriation integration; and high repatriation turnover.

Premature Exit Failures

The premature exit from assignment represents a frustration of the MNE objective to retain employees for the duration of work agreements or job assignments in order for performance objectives to be met and completed (Black and Porter, 1991, Caligiuri and Santo, 2001, Caligiuri and Cascio, 1998, Forster, 1997, Kraimer et al., 2001, Shaffer et al., 2006). The general definition of “expatriate failure” has been Tung’s (1984): the premature return of an expatriate. The strong focus on “expatriate failure” as premature return may have resulted from the critical role MNEs believe that expatriates play in the delivery of subsidiary objectives, which are then frustrated when an expatriate who can no longer cope in the foreign environment or adjust culturally decides to resign from the MNE or return home (Forster, 1997, Harzing, 1995, Tung, 1981b, Tung, 1987). As such, when an expatriate exits the assignment, either through returning home or transferring to another company, that performance failure can be easily observed and measured.
Additionally, the costs of supporting expatriates and their families are so high, that a premature exit represents a significant financial loss on investment for the MNE (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2004, Erbacher et al., 2006, Forster, 1997, Hutchings, 2005, Kraimer et al., 2001, Tung, 1982, Tung, 1987, Wang and Kanugo, 2004). Despite the IHRM literature’s emphasis on premature exit, some authors, notably Harzing (1995) and Forster (2000) argue that the rate of premature exit has been overstated, that it may not be as damaging as other performance failures, and that assignments that have been fully completed may still be considered performance failures. This section will review the heavily researched areas of the causes of premature return and the controversial reports of high expatriate failure rates through premature return, because the evidence concerning the reasons for premature return provide further guidance as to the expatriate performance goals and the reasons for them not always being achieved.

**Tung’s research into causes of premature exit**

Much of the research that guides the understanding of the causes of premature exit emanates from the research of Tung (1981), which has been supported by over 20 years of research. Tung’s (1981) initial study examines U.S. and Japanese expatriates to explore the issues of selection, training and expatriate failure. Tung (1982) expands her research to identify different causes of expatriate failure for the home countries of several MNEs: the United States of America, Europe and Japan. Tung (1981, 1982, 1986 and 1987) is one of the few researchers to have empirically studied expatriate management. Tung examined eighty American, twenty-nine Western European and thirty-five Japanese MNEs with subsidiaries throughout the world to examine: 1) staffing policies; 2)
selection criteria; 3) pre-departure training; 4) procedures for determining suitability for assignments; and, 5) the success rate and reasons for success (Harzing, 1995). The chart below summarizes the causes of premature return that Tung discovered with respect to MNEs from each region.

### Cause of Premature Exit (in descending order of importance)—Tung (1981)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>US</th>
<th>Western European</th>
<th>Japan</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Inability of the manager’s spouse to adjust to a different physical or cultural environment;</td>
<td>1. Inability of the manager’s spouse to adjust to a different physical or cultural environment;</td>
<td>1. The manager’s inability to cope with the responsibilities posed by the overseas work;</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. The manager’s inability to adapt to a different physical or cultural environment;</td>
<td>2. The manager’s inability to adapt to a different physical or cultural environment;</td>
<td>2. The manager’s inability to adapt to a different physical or cultural environment;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Other family-related problems;</td>
<td>3. The manager’s personality or emotional immaturity;</td>
<td>3. The manager’s personality or emotional immaturity;</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. The manager’s personality or emotional immaturity;</td>
<td>4. The manager’s lack of technical competence for the job assignment;</td>
<td>4. The manager’s lack of technical competence for the job assignment;</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. The manager’s inability to cope with the responsibilities posed by the overseas work;</td>
<td>5. Inability of the manager’s spouse to adjust;</td>
<td>5. Inability of the manager’s spouse to adjust;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The manager’s lack of technical competence; and,</td>
<td>6. Lack of motivation to work overseas; and,</td>
<td>6. Lack of motivation to work overseas; and,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The manager’s lack of motivation to work overseas</td>
<td>7. Other family-related problems</td>
<td>7. Other family-related problems</td>
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</table>

Tung (1981) elaborates on the findings of her research to postulate that American expatriates and their spouses are most affected by the inability to adjust to the different
culture. Western European expatriates however believe that only the spouse’s inability to adjust impacts failure, while all other factors have a marginal impact (Tung, 1981b, Tung, 1986, Tung, 1987). As a result of the Japanese cultural values surrounding commitment to the MNE and the role of the spouse, the inability for the Japanese expatriate or spouse to adjust plays a lesser role in expatriate failure (Tung, 1981b, Tung, 1986, Tung, 1987).

Although Tung’s findings regarding the causes of premature exit are almost thirty years old, current research continues to support the inability of the family to adjust to the new cultural environment as a primary factor in an expatriate’s premature exit. (Dowling and Welch, 2004). According to the Global Relocation Trends: 2008 Survey Report: almost half of the expatriates surveyed were accompanied by children; over 90% of those surveyed attributed family concerns as the reason for either rejection of an international assignment or failure; 27% of expatriates claimed that family concerns prompted their premature return—the top reason for returning; and, “historically over the years of the survey, the top five challenges have been family adjustment, children’s education, partner resistance, difficult location, and partner’s career” (Siler, 2009).

IHRM research often reports high rates of premature exit or return

IHRM research has claimed that between 10-70% of expatriates exit prematurely (Harzing, 1995, Forster, 1997), while other research has claimed that 16-40% exit prematurely (Black and Mendenhall, 1990) and other research claiming 25-40% (Mendenhall and Oddou, 1985). Premature exit generally refers to an expatriate who returns home before the assignment is completed, however the expatriate could also
prematurely exit the organisation and join another organisation in the host-country or another organisation in the parent-country (Dowling & Welch, 2004). The literature rarely differentiates between returning home and resignation and seems to categorise any leaving of the subsidiary as premature exit. The massive variance in these reported failure rates helps to illustrate the lack of consensus on the extent of premature exit. Nevertheless, these figures are used to present a sense of urgency and focus on an issue, which has the potential to catastrophically impact the MNEs personnel and financial investments in the subsidiary. IHRM researchers and practitioners have relied on these figures to support the disproportionate focus on premature return and interventions to counteract premature exit (Forster, 1997, Harzing, 1995).

Harzing’s (1995) research, however, challenges the “high premature return rates” which seem to feature in most research regarding expatriate failure. Harzing (1995) asserts that much of the confusion regarding expatriate failure rates has resulted from: the reiteration of statements with little or no empirical research to support them (Mendenhall and Oddou, 1985); a misapplication and misunderstanding of Tung’s (1981) research, which is empirically researched; and, the reliance on data that is now over thirty years old. Harzing summarizes the various “studies” regarding premature return and concludes that all that can really be known from the research is: American expatriates prematurely exit at a greater rate than Western European and Japanese expatriates (as of 1981); and, the average premature return rate for Western European and British expatriates is no more than 5% (Harzing, 1995). It should also be noted that, although Harzing’s (1995) research discredits much of the reported expatriates’ exit rates previously reported, those figures are still used by researchers, such as Goodall, et al.
(2006) who quotes Mendenhall and Oddou’s figures of 16-40%. Dowling and Welch (2002) note that many MNEs do not even collect information regarding premature exit; thus MNEs can not fully understand the impact of expatriate performance in their own organisations.

Forster (1997) follows up Harzing’s rigorous analysis of the “myths” surrounding high premature exit rate with a study that finds that 8% of UK expatriates return home early from international assignment. Forster’s (1997) research may help confirm Harzing’s (1995) contention that premature exit rates are almost equivalent to domestic turnover rates, although, the negative impact of “failure” may be substantially greater on MNEs, expatriates and their families than domestic turnover.

Although Harzing’s and Forster’s examination of the research regarding premature exit rates is useful, it also fails to recognise that premature exit may indeed be much higher for some expatriates in some contexts, depending on the degree of cultural dissimilarity between the expatriate and the host-country. For example, industry reports and current news reports regarding expatriate failure in China suggest failure rates of 33-80% (Industry Report: Halfpats: the New Expatriates, 2006; Hahn, 2006). Erbacher, et al, (2006) recounts an organisation in China that claims that only 20% of expatriates complete their assignments and premature exit in China is potentially twice that of other countries. Global Relocation Trends: 2008 Survey Report lists China as the top emerging location for expatriates, as well as, the most challenging destination for expatriates and one of four countries with the highest premature exit rates (the others being the United States, The United Kingdom and India). Research shows that, the greater the distance between home and host cultures, the greater the likelihood of premature exit (Hutchings,
Because China is so distinctly different to Western societies, the ability for a Western expatriate and her/his family to adjust culturally becomes even more difficult (Selmer, 1998, Selmer, 2004a, Selmer, 2005, Siu et al., 2002, Weinstein, 2006). Despite the claims of high premature exit rates in China and the trend to post expatriates in China, little research has empirically researched the veracity of those claims, leaving them as vulnerable as the studies Harzing examines.

Forster (1997) argues that the very concept of premature exit is by itself too limiting and does not fully encapsulate the range of factors involved in an expatriate exiting a foreign subsidiary prematurely. For example, what if the expatriate is indeed so successful that all performance goals are accomplished ahead of schedule and the expatriate exits the subsidiary prematurely? Under a strict definition, this scenario would qualify as “failure”. Premature exit may be too generic a concept to fully capture incidences of “failure” in the expatriate work cycle (Forster, 1997, Harzing, 1995, Tung, 1981b, Tung, 1987). As such, additional performance failures need more research attention in the literature so as to better understand the issues affecting the performance of international managers.

**Underperformance Failures**

Black and Mendenhall (1990) note that not all unsuccessful expatriate assignments end with premature exit or return. Black and Mendenhall, citing Copeland and Griggs (1985), claim that nearly 50% of expatriates who complete their expatriate assignment in full still perform at low levels of effectiveness, which can alternatively be described as underperformance. Black and Mendenhall seemingly accept the claim of
50% underperformance at face value and other researchers, like Goodall (2006) continue to include this same claim in their research. It would also seem that this claim has escaped the scrutiny of critical analysis that Harzing (1995) and Forster (1997) have extended to premature exit rates of expatriates. Beyond what Black and Mendenhall cite from Copeland and Griggs, there does not seem to be any other study or research that has measured the prevalence of the underperformance of expatriate managers. The gap in the research regarding underperformance would seem to indicate a missed opportunity to better understand the actual performance measures of expatriate managers. Moreover this lack of research has made it difficult for practitioners to understand which of the various forms of failure represents the most damaging and critical for MNEs. For example: are expatriates who underperform greater “failures” than repatriates who exit within a year of returning from assignment or premature returners? Moreover, if the criteria of “failure” is expanded and supported by the research, would the incidences of “failure” increase dramatically? It would seem then that if “failure” is ultimately the frustration of MNEs objectives, then both success and failure should be tied more directly to whether or not the international manager satisfies the various organisational and performance criteria objectives.

**Relationship Building Failures**

Relationship building failures pertain to the international manager’s inability to satisfy the MNE objective of establishing formal and informal communication networks (Harzing, 2001a, Tahvanainen, 2000). As discussed previously, expatriate managers often act as “spiders”, building and connecting various relationships and networks.
between subsidiaries and stakeholders. Miscommunication and a lack of understanding regarding cultural and business customs can result in interactions that are damaging to business relationships (Selmer, 2006). Anecdotal stories abound regarding cultural mistakes that expatriates have made and caused harm to the company (Selmer, 2006). International managers are expected to have or acquire the requisite skills and knowledge to ensure that relationships are not damaged due to miscommunications (Harzing, 2001a, Tahvanainen, 2000). Some researchers have expanded the definition of “expatriate failure” to account for those instances in which an expatriate’s action damages business relationships (Selmer, 2006). There is little empirical evidence regarding the damage to business relationships caused by expatriates.

Knowledge Transfer Failures

International managers are expected to transmit subsidiary learning back to the parent-company or other subsidiaries so that the MNE can leverage the knowledge and experience of its global network (Arthur Jr and Bennett Jr, 1995, Downes and Thomas, 1999, Forster, 1997, Guest, 1997, Harriso and Leitch, 2000, Hon Fun and Rowley, 2007, Pucik and Katz, 1986, Roberts et al., 1998). Similarly, managers in subsidiaries accumulate a level of “international capital” that can add value to the MNE through the transfer to other business units where the “international capital” can be used or through the development of other manager’s “international capital” (Forster, 2000). Knowledge transfer failure would then manifest itself if the international manager resists acquiring “international capital”, fails to transfer this capital to other business units or fails to acquire and share knowledge gained (Forster, 2000). There is almost no research on this
particular form of failure. Forster (2000) argues that the “international manager” who travels from subsidiary to subsidiary transferring knowledge is a myth due to the extreme hardships placed on the manager and any accompanying family (Forster, 2000). Moreover, some researchers have observed that knowledge transfer may not occur as frequently as desired because few organisations have formal systems for capturing and utilizing acquired global knowledge (Caligiuri and Santo, 2001, Downes and Thomas, 1999, Harriso and Leitch, 2000, Pucik and Katz, 1986). If these performance objectives are not made explicit by the MNE or if the mechanisms to support them are not present, it may not be realistic to expect performance success. Other research has suggested that the internationalization skills obtained by the international manager may have a greater impact on personal and professional advancement than the organisation’s objectives (Seak and Enderwick, 2008).

Staff Development Failures

Staff development failures occurs when an international manager fails to train and develop local staff to take over expatriate roles (Bhanugopan and Fish, 2007). Of particular value to the MNE is the development of local staff to replace expatriate staff where possible. In order for this process of localization to work, expatriate staff must effectively train themselves out of a job, a prospect few may relish (Bhanugopan and Fish, 2007, Brewster et al., 2005, Selmer, 2004b). Anecdotal reports exist of some expatriates who “go native” and wish to stay in the host-country, while not developing local staff, in an attempt to maintain power and standing (Bhanugopan and Fish, 2007, Brewster et al., 2005, Selmer, 2004b). Some MNEs specifically state that localization is
a performance criteria of some international managers, but it is one that is hard to gauge (Bhanugopan and Fish, 2007, Brewster et al., 2005, Selmer, 2004b). Although little research has been conducted regarding localization, the few explorations have given support to the challenges faced by international managers in localizing staff and the few incentives that MNEs use to motivate localization, such as tying performance rewards with successful localizations, although this practice is not considered common.

Suggested Interventions for Performance Failures

In addition to exploring the prevalence of premature exit in MNEs, Tung (1981, 1982, 1986, 1987) also suggests practices for ameliorating the incidence of premature exit. Tung’s research advocates better selection techniques, more support resources and cross-cultural training for expatriates and their families, due to the importance of the spouse and family avoiding the failure of the international assignment (Tung, 1981b, Tung, 1986, Tung, 1987). International managers need support mechanisms to overcome performance failures that threaten to derail individual performance goals and organisational objectives. Performance failures have generally been attributed to the inability of the expatriate and the expatriate’s family to adjust to the “foreign” host-country culture (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2004, Harrison and Shaffer, 2005, Kraimer et al., 2001, Shaffer and Harrison, 1998). The inability to adjust implies a deficiency of knowledge, skills and experiences that impact effectiveness and as such, researchers have investigated what interventions could fill those “cultural gaps” (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2004, Harrison and Shaffer, 2005, Kraimer et al., 2001, Shaffer and Harrison, 1998). As a result of Tung’s research, selection of expatriates and cross-cultural training have
assumed greater significance and more attention in the IHRM research. Although selection and cross-cultural training are primarily focused on ensuring the completion of an assignment, they can also be used to address, to some degree, the other dimensions of failure: underperformance, building relationships, knowledge sharing and developing staff.

Selection Criteria of Expatriates

Expatriate failure has sometimes been described as an error in selection, on the premise that the person, who exits prematurely, does not possess the requisite skills for success. One body of research has identified improved selection criteria as a means to choose candidates with fewer cultural “deficiencies” and a capacity to adjust quicker to foreign environments, with less stress (Arthur Jr and Bennett Jr, 1995, Hutchings, 2005, Selmer, 2004a, Selmer et al., 2009, Tung, 1981b). The research has yet to identify an effective selection formula for choosing candidates who do not experience performance failures, let alone any selection measure that chooses families who are more able to adjust successfully (Arthur Jr and Bennett Jr, 1995, Hutchings, 2005, Selmer, 2004a, Selmer et al., 2009, Tung, 1981b). As such, some researchers have advocated better and more focused selection procedures to produce “better fit” candidates that are less likely to fail (Banai, 1992, Jaime et al., 2001, Selmer, 2004a, Selmer et al., 2009, Shen and Edwards, 2004, Tung, 1981b, Tung, 1982).

According to the academic texts, when selecting expatriate managers, some standard methods are used, such as interviews and psychological assessments (Banai, 1992, Shen and Edwards, 2004, Tung, 1987). Some organisations use other international
managers who are familiar with the environment to help interview potential expatriate managers and sometimes their partners (Caligiuri, 2000, Tung, 1981b). Because the partners of expatriate managers can influence the success of the assignment, some organisations find it valuable to include the partners and possibly even families in the interview process (Dowling and Welch, 2004). Furthermore, some organisations conduct psychological assessments, similar to those used in domestic selection, although there may be specific assessments which target the international parameters of the assignment (Dowling and Welch, 2004). In any event, the literature’s focus on selection methods, while valuable, tells us very little about what criteria actually correlate with expatriate success.

In the selection of expatriate managers, human resource management must consider a variety of performance criteria (Banai, 1992, Erbacher et al., 2006, Hutchings, 2005, Jaime et al., 2001, Tarique et al., 2006, Tung, 1981b, Tung, 1982). From an academic standpoint, the selection criteria that have been identified as maximising the likelihood of success are: a willingness to live in the foreign country; the technical skills for the job; an openness to other cultures; language skills (if appropriate); and, international adaptability (Arthur Jr and Bennett Jr, 1995, Banai, 1992, Bennett et al., 2000, Bonache et al., 2001, Caligiuri and Stroh, 1995, Jaime et al., 2001, Shen and Edwards, 2004). However, the research suggests that, in reality, the selection of expatriates is more ad hoc than the academic selection criteria list suggests (Erbacher et al., 2006, Hutchings, 2005). The selection of international managers generally involves attention to the manager’s technical skills, as well as, possibly considering the subsidiaries legal, political, cultural or socio-economic needs and environment (Banai,
1992, Erbacher et al., 2006, Hutchings, 2005, Jaime et al., 2001, Tarique et al., 2006, Tung, 1981b, Tung, 1982). Moreover, some research describes how a number of organisations essentially remove the human resource management expertise from the selection decision making and many selections are made by line managers who often choose expatriate managers who are most like themselves (Banai, 1992, Erbacher et al., 2006, Hutchings, 2005, Jaime et al., 2001, Tarique et al., 2006, Tung, 1981b, Tung, 1982). Bonache et al, (2001) theorizes that the phenomena of selecting staff similar to one’s own cultural background helps to explain why so many expatriate managers who are chosen are male, and PCNs, as opposed to TCNs. The research literature strongly suggests that international selection of staff may be more arbitrary and less “precise” than domestic selections.

Cross-cultural and Pre-departure Training for International Adjustment

Another body of research suggests pre-departure and post-arrival cross-cultural training as interventions that can improve expatriate effectiveness (Bennett et al., 2000, Black and Gregersen, 2000, Black and Mendenhall, 1990, Treven, 2003). Although the research has supported the use of cross-cultural training as a beneficial intervention, the research also seems to suggest that the training that is typically offered in practice is cursory, short, haphazard and rarely customized to the different types of international managers (Bennett et al., 2000, Black and Gregersen, 2000, Black and Mendenhall, 1990, Treven, 2003). Training for international adjustment is often presented at the beginning of international assignments, with the idea of equipping the international manager with the necessary cross-cultural skill sets that will produce a level of comfort and competence
in the host-country. Strategic training focuses on the implementation of an educational plan that incorporates the company’s objectives with the unique cultural elements of the host country and the employee’s own unique contributions (e.g., Hogan & Goodson, 1990; Dowling et al., 1999; Honeycutt et al., 1996; Tung, 1982). Benefits of cross-cultural training may include improved confidence, competency and communication (Tung, 1982).

In contrast, some critics have challenged the effectiveness of strategic training programs for expatriates. Specifically, these critics have noted that the cost, lack of implementation time and the nature of the assignment render the training ineffectual (e.g., Hogan & Goodson, 1990; Dowling et al., 1999; Honeycutt et al., 1996; Tung, 1982). Some training programs are too short to cover the range of material needed to fully prepare expatriates for assignments where the host country’s culture is significantly different than the expatriate’s parent culture (Bennett et al., 2000, Brewster and Pickard, 1994).

However, proponents of strategic training have noted that some companies, especially Japanese MNEs, have instituted strategic training programs because the pros significantly outweigh the cons (e.g., Hogan & Goodson, 1990; Dowling et al., 1999; Honeycutt et al., 1996; Tung, 1982). Secondly, since many companies wish to begin expatriate assignments as soon as possible, very little time gets allocated for proper training (e.g., Hogan & Goodson, 1990; Dowling et al., 1999; Honeycutt et al., 1996). This contrasts with Japanese companies which sometimes begin their expatriate training a year before their employees begin their assignments (Hogan & Goodson, 1990). Finally, although English dominates the international business community, knowledge of the
language of the host country has aided the personal and professional relationships between expatriates and those they encounter (e.g., Hogan & Goodson, 1990; Dowling et al., 1999; Honeycutt et al., 1996). Furthermore, foreign language proficiency has helped expatriates and their families develop a comfort level in dealing with everyday life in a foreign country, thus reducing stress (Selmer, 2006). Although some criticisms of expatriate training have merit, research and anecdotal information supports the assertion that a multi-dimensional, well-planned and customised strategic training program greatly improves the chances of expatriate success, which, in turn, greatly benefits the company (Black and Mendenhall, 1990).

**Implications of Performance Failures**

Although the research literature on performance failures has focused primarily on the premature departure of expatriates, performance failures are far more wide-ranging. No research has estimated the rates of failures in terms of damaging relationships, or failing to not internationalize or localize. Nor has any research has gauged the rate of “failure” for HCNs. Attempts to address performance failures have been focused mostly on selection and cross-cultural training. The piecemeal approach to addressing performance failure has meant that there lacks a comprehensive model of effective performance for international managers. The research that has been undertaken regarding performance failures and performance management allows for the development of a possible model of effective performance. A comprehensive model of effective performance for international managers might be able to identify the key variables on which interventions might focus.
Towards a comprehensive model of effective performance for international managers

The discussion of performance management in the IHRM literature suffers not only from a lack of consensus regarding what constitutes effective performance management, but also from a lack of focus on the improvement of performance for the individual manager. Much of the limited research that exists on international performance management seems to define performance management from the MNE’s perspective, which is concerned with identifying performance expectations and implementing evaluations of performance (through performance appraisals) (Tahvanainen, 2000). Armstrong (1998 at p. 7) defines international performance management “as a strategic and integrated approach to delivering sustained success to organisations by improving the performance of the people who are working in them and by developing the capabilities of team and individual contributors” (Woods, 2003). International performance management represents the strategic employment of various systems in order to improve the performance of expatriates.

Tahvanainen’s (2000) examination of Nokia represents one of the few detailed examinations of a MNE’s performance management system. In Nokia, Tahvanainen (2000) observes that various groups of expatriate workers are managed in different ways, however the central components of performance management are the same: goal setting, performance evaluation, training and development and performance-related pay. Furthermore, Tahvanainen (2000) observes that, because of Nokia’s large and complex organisational structure, a critical component of performance management at Nokia is
determining who sets the performance expectations for expatriates and who evaluates that performance. Tahvanainen discusses the value of providing expatriates with a variety of tools that could be adapted for particular expatriate jobs and tasks, although there is no mention of any specific tools beyond training and development. Tahvanainen’s (2000) research helps to highlight some of the drawbacks in the performance management of expatriates. Although an exploration of effective performance management systems has value in guiding organisations, the design of a performance management system alone does not fully address the individual performance needs driving effective performance (Mol, et al, 2005).

The limited research on international performance management has focused primarily on understanding the degree to which international organisations apply their domestic appraisal systems to the international context (Bonache et al., 2001, Chiang and Birtch, 2007, Hsi-An et al., 2005, Suutari and Tahvanainen, 2002, Tahvanainen, 2000). Traditionally, in the domestic literature, performance management has encompassed training and development, performance appraisal, compensation and goal-setting (Tahvanainen, 2000). Of those elements, only performance appraisal has been explored to any degree in regards to expatriates (Mendenahll & Oddou, 1991; Schuler & Florkowski, 1994; Gregersen, Hite & Black, 1996). Although there has been much research regarding training for expatriates, the training has generally been limited to and focused on the pre-departure cultural awareness training for culturally unfamiliar expatriates (Arthur Jr and Bennett Jr, 1995, Bennett et al., 2000, Black and Gregersen, 2000, Black and Mendenhall, 1990, Brewster and Pickard, 1994, Forster, 2000, Hutchings, 2005, Mendenhall and Stahl, 2000, Tung, 1981b, Tung, 1982). Training and
development for on-going performance throughout the international assignment has rarely been empirically researched.

However, the richness of the international experience goes beyond on the job performance and much of the competitive advantage generated by international assignments lies in the contextual achievements which are often undervalued, overlooked and rarely supported and seemingly taken for granted (Erbacher et al., 2006, Kraimer et al., 2001, Lindholm, 1999, Schuler et al., 1991, Shu-Chi and Jung-Nung, 2005, Tahvanainen, 2000, Wang et al., 2007). Arguably, it is the contextual objectives which distinguish international performance from domestic performance.

*Developing a Model of Effective Performance for International Managers*

Although some researchers have sought to construct models of performance, no one model has achieved prominence in the field of IHRM (Shaffer et al., 2006, Harrison and Shaffer, 2005). The literature tends to explore international performance management systems from the organisation’s perspective, but typically fails to explicitly identify the resources and interventions which might assist the effective performance of the individual international manager (Tahvanainen, 2000). There is also little consensus on exactly how individual performance should be measured and managed (Shaffer et al., 2006). Research seems to be also lacking in respect to the performance and leadership of international management teams, typically comprising both expatriates and HCNs.

This literature review seeks to understand how international manager performance is measured and improved. Various models of performance have been proposed to illustrate the pathways leading to effective performance and diagramming leverage points
where performance can be improved. Currently, no comprehensive model of international manager performance exists. For the purposes of this literature review, a model of international manager performance has been proposed from the elements of previous performance models. Four models in particular, Shaffer et al (2002), Seak and Enderwick (2008), Kraimer et al (2001), and Greene and Grant (2003), have formed the basis for a derived comprehensive model of effective performance for international managers and each model is briefly explored below. Each of these models is discussed in turn before proposing the model of international manager performance.

**Shaffer’s model of expatriate effectiveness**

Shaffer, et al., (2006 at 109) notes how expatriate effectiveness has been often defined in practice “in terms of accomplishment of assignment objectives, attrition rates or increased revenues”, but academic researchers have traditionally measured effectiveness by focusing on international adjustment (citing Black, 1988; Black, Mendenhall & Oddon, 1991(Selmer, 1998, Selmer, 1999, Selmer, 2004a), job performance (citing Arthur & Bennett, 1997) and withdrawal cognitions (citing Black & Gregersen, 1990; Naumann, 1992; Takeuchi, Yun & Tesluck, 2002). Shaffer, et al., (2006) proposes a model of expatriate effectiveness, which incorporates the three criteria: international adjustment (affective), job performance (behavioural), and withdrawal cognitions (cognitive).
Seak and Enderwick’s model of expatriate effectiveness in China

Seak and Enderwick (2008) have proposed a model of expatriate effectiveness based on New Zealand expatriates working in China. The model consists of: cross-cultural skills (understanding the roles of Confucianism, Guanxi and Face); Cross-cultural communication; Cross-functional skills; and, effective trainers. The researchers assert that expatriate managers must have an awareness of the Chinese culture in order to understand Chinese behaviours (Seak and Enderwick, 2008). Moreover, the lack of skills and knowledge of the local Chinese culture (in relation to HCNs) mandates that expatriate managers need cross-functional skills to fill skills gaps and trainer skills to train, develop and localize the HCNs (Seak and Enderwick, 2008). Effective cross-cultural communication then is a competency which promulgates the other skill-sets (Seak and Enderwick, 2008). The research conducted supported the importance of all
four skill sets, but particularly identified cross-cultural skills as one of the most important skill sets for managing in China, a finding supported by other research (Fan 1995; Black and Gregersen 1999; Ambler and Witzel 2001; Wah 2001; Hutchings 2002, 2003, 2005; Hutchings and Murray 2002, 2003; Fan and Zigang 2004; Branine 2005; Erbacher, D’Netto and Espan˜a 2006; Selmer 2005, 2006). The researchers assert that the four skills that comprise the model are so fundamental that they should determine the selection of international managers and should be supported by extensive training.

Figure 2. Framework for Understanding Expatriate Effectiveness in China

Managing in China

Expatriates

Cross-cultural skills

Cross-functional skills

Effective Trainers

Confucianism
Guanxi
Face

Deficiencies in Chinese Management

CCC=Cross-Cultural Communication

Source: Seak and Enderwick (2008:1300)
Kraimer’s model of support for expatriate performance

Kraimer et al., (2001) examine the roles that various agents of support (the MNE, the subsidiary, the supervisor and the spouse/family) play in an expatriate’s international adjustment, which, in turn, impacts task performance. Kraimer’s research builds on previous research that supports the positive impact of perceived support on job performance (Eisenberger et al., 1986, 1990). Kraimer et al’s (2001) model also describes a definition of expatriate adjustment which includes task performance (specific job performance) and contextual performance (performance relating to the international nature of the business, such as maintaining good relationships and interacting with HCNs).

Figure 3. Hypothesized Model of Support Inputs that Influence Expatriate Adjustment and Job Performance

Source: Kraimer et al (2001)
Greene and Grant’s model of change

Greene and Grant (2003) have devised a model of guiding performance from inception to completion which forms the basic structure of the model of effective performance for international managers. The model by Greene and Grant (2003) states that for effective performance: a goal is set; actions are employed to satisfy the goal; the actions are monitored; and, the actions are evaluated for success or remediation. This model aligns with the basic model of performance management systems highlighted by Tahvanainen’s (2000) study.

Figure 4. Model of Successful Performance

Set a goal

Develop an action plan

Act

Evaluate

Monitor

Change what’s not working
Do more of what works

Success!

Source: Green and Grant (2003:55)
A proposed model of effective performance for international managers

Drawing from these models on performance and effectiveness for expatriates, the proposed model of effective performance for international managers has been used for this thesis as a comprehensive model that highlights the most critical areas of performance as identified by research. The model of effective performance is comprised of five parts: Performance Objectives; Performance Mediators; Competencies; Performance Outcomes; and Performance Evaluations.

The proposed model of effective performance is influenced by previous models of international performance management and international management research, and, as a result is underpinned by the following assumptions:

1. MNEs and international managers must work together collaboratively for the mutual benefit of each (Harzing, 2001a, Tahvanainen, 2000, Tung, 1981b, Tung, 1982);
2. Models of performance management must be applied to expatriate managers and HCN managers who comprise the subsidiary’s international management team (Dowling and Welch, 2004; Nankervis, et al, 2002);
3. The model is designed to support and enhance performance while addressing and ameliorating performance failures (Greene and Grant, 2003);
4. The model acknowledges that in international subsidiaries, far more than domestic organisations, “the personal” impacts “the professional” and vice versa (Shaffer and Harrison, 1998, Shaffer et al., 2006);
5. The model acknowledges the explicit role MNEs have in providing various levels of support for international managers (Kraimer et al., 2001); and

6. The model acknowledges that it must be culturally-flexible and attentive to the role of culture in the setting of objectives, the levels of support, the methods for achieving performance and the evaluation of outcomes so that the benefits of culture can be realized and the cultural resistance lessened (Nankervis, et al, 2002)
Figure 5. Proposed Model of Effective Performance for International Managers

**PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES**
- MNE Objectives
- IM performance criteria and goal-setting
- IM professional development

**PERFORMANCE MEDIATORS**
- Willingness to Relocate
- Training & Development
- Level of Organisational Support
- Relationship to Firm
- Performance Management System
- Family Support
- International adjustment
- Coping Strategies
- Organisational Commitment
- Job Satisfaction
- Psychological Contracts
- Compensation

**PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS**
- Performance Appraisal
- Feedback
- Remediation
- Reward

**PERFORMANCE COMPETENCIES**
- Cross-cultural skills
- Cross-cultural communication
- Cross-functional skills
- Ability to train
- Leadership and Team competencies

**PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES**
- Task
- Contextual
- IM Team
Introduction to Model of Effective Performance

The following sections will explore the individual elements of the model and provide an understanding of how the concepts relate to the model and what the literature has contributed to the understanding of the concepts.

Performance Objectives

The first part of the model focuses on how the subsidiary establishes performance objectives for the international manager. Performance objectives result from a combination of MNE and subsidiary business objectives translated into performance criteria that international managers must satisfy. Performance objectives also include the individual objectives of the international manager, which become part of their professional development goals.

MNE and Subsidiary Objectives

Despite the best of intentions of HR practitioners, many organisations seem to face various challenges in the management of international assignments. For example, in international organisations where the human resource management functions are decentralized, there may be less focus on improving expatriate performance and a lack of clarity concerning who is responsible for implementing expatriate performance and development opportunities (Rowley and Warner, 2007, Treven, 2006, Schuler et al., 2002). Subsidiaries operate, under at least two governance regimes, the parent-country headquarters and the host-country subsidiary management. Headquarters may presume that management of human resource interventions for performance management,
development and teamwork occur at the subsidiary level; while the subsidiary may feel constrained in applying host-country national practices, concepts or ideologies to expatriates from other cultures (Walsh and Zhu, 2007, Goodall et al., 2006, Brewster et al., 2005, Schuler et al., 2002, Brewster and Scullion, 1997, Marginson et al., 1995).

Some organisations, like Motorola, Lufthansa and Ikea have established global training and development facilities which seem to solve the issue of who develops who and how (Dowling & Welch, 2004). Nonetheless, comparatively speaking, few organisations are as large as Motorola, for example, and have the resources, talent and extensive global businesses to justify or implement such a large-scale project. Dowling and Welch (2004), observe that the sophistication of the firm helps to determine the degree to which an organisation creates strategies and executes human resource policies and procedures.

In order to effectively manage and develop expatriates and their teams, it is necessary for someone in the organisation to have a vision of what expatriates do and then the power to implement that vision. Novicevic and Harvey (2001) suggest that parent-country headquarters may assume the role of influencers for strategic human resource management by setting the performance objectives and determining the support mechanisms for performance that the local subsidiaries are tasked with implementing.

International Managers Performance Criteria

International manager’s performance criteria determine the goals against which performance is measured for the manager (Mol, et al, 2005). In an international subsidiary, these goals are influenced by the MNE objectives and the needs of the
subsidiary and tailored to the roles and competencies of the international manager
(Kraimer et al., 2001). Some international managers are given set performance criteria
and some are allowed to negotiate their performance criteria with the MNE, subsidiary or
supervisor (Lindholm, 1999). There is conflicting research regarding whether the criteria
that is given (see Locke & Latham, 1984) versus criteria that is chosen, have a greater
impact on performance, although the findings suggest that managers are more motivated
when they have a hand in defining their roles, responsibilities and targets (see

International Manager’s Professional Development

Professional development of international managers creates a plan for enhancing
the experiences, skills and knowledge (ESK) of the international manager in the context
of career progression. Through professional development, MNEs are able to link the
organisation’s business goals with the specific career goals of the international manager,
increasing the likelihood of achieving performance outcomes. Professional development
recognizes the on-going training and development needs of international managers,
which the literature generally describes as being confined to pre-departure cross-cultural
training for expatriates (Bennett et al., 2000, Cabrera and Bowen, 2005, Caligiuri and
plans assess gaps in the contextual performance of international managers and takes a
proactive stance in addressing those gaps to enhance success and minimize performance
failures. Moreover, the research indicates that many international managers are
consciously attuned to their career progression and a well-constructed professional
development plan would allow for development which enhances career opportunities and advancement within the MNE (Bartlett and Ghoshal, 2003, Brewster and Suutari, 2005, Forster, 2000, Kohonen, 2005, Roberts et al., 1998, Scullion et al., 2007, Selmer et al., 2002, Stahl et al., 2002, Suutari, 2003). Lastly, the professional development plan would allow international managers to have a greater say in determining their own objectives, which align with the larger MNE and subsidiary objectives.

Performance Mediators

The IHRM literature identifies a variety of factors which may improve or impede international manager performance.

Personal and Situational Mediators

Although selection and training is represented in the majority of IHRM research as factors which can drive performance and mitigate performance failures, researchers have explored various other factors which can support and prepare the international manager for success. Erbacher, et al (2006) categorizes and examines the most important factors as derived from previous research on expatriate success under “personal factors” (Perceived Career Path, Willingness to Relocate and Degree of Personal International Orientation) and “situational factors” (Selection Criteria, Training, Role Clarity, Level of Support, Strength of Relationship between the Expatriate and Firm, and Performance Management System). Erbacher, et al (2006) seeks to demonstrate which factors have the greatest impact on the success of expatriates working specifically in China. Interestingly, Erbacher, et al seems to omit familial influences and international
adjustment as potential factors, which is surprising given the status of Tung’s (1982) research and subsequent support for the influence of the family on expatriate failure and the role of international adjustment. Nevertheless, Erbacher, et al contributes to a greater understanding of factors which, in essence, influence performance.


Willingness to Relocate: Willingness to relocate reflects the finding that expatriates who are eager to engage in the international assignment experience greater levels of success than expatriates who are reluctant to accept the assignment (citing Feldman & Thomas, 1992).

Training and Development: Typically IHRM is responsible for managing the training and development needs of the international staff and training has often been cited as a critical factor for the support of expatriates (Bennett et al., 2000, Black and Gregersen, 2000, Black and Mendenhall, 1990, Brewster and Pickard, 1994, Forster, 2000, Mendenhall and Stahl, 2000, Treven, 2003, Ying Chu and Siu, 2004). Effective strategic training has promoted expatriate success and business growth (e.g., Hogan & Goodson, 1990). In order for an organisation to maximize the return on investment (ROI) of its expatriate managers, the organisation should support factors leading to expatriate success. In contrast, expatriate failure will negatively affect organisation’s
business interests. Research has shown that effective training and development dramatically improves the chances of expatriate success (e.g., Hogan & Goodson, 1990; Tung, 1982). However, some critics charge that training for expatriates remains ineffectual at best (e.g., Honeycutt, Ford & Kurtzman, 1996). Nevertheless, research demonstrates that a well-developed and instituted strategic training program contributes to the skill development and performance of expatriates (e.g., Hogan & Goodson, 1990; Tung, 1982; Honeycutt et al., 1996). Therefore organisations with global ambitions are advised to devise a comprehensive strategic training program so its expatriate managers can attain personal and professional success (Tung, 1982).

**Level of Organisational Support:** The level of MNE support from the parent and subsidiary perspective, in regards to life management and familial needs, results in greater levels of expatriate success (citing Davidson & Kinzel, 1995; De Cieri, Dowling & Taylor, 1991). The preparation may involve cross-cultural training, relocation assistance, the provision of services to assist the expatriate, such as tax information, accommodation, benefit packages and interaction with the host-country to establish relationships and familiarity with the foreign environment (Brewster and Scullion, 1997, Brewster and Suutari, 2005, Guest, 1997, Napier and Vu, 1998). The level of preparedness depends on the location of the assignment, the cultural distance between the expatriate and the host-country, the nature of the assignment, the particular experience of the expatriate and the HR policies of the MNE (Bennett et al., 2000, Black and Porter, 1991, Caligiuri and Santo, 2001, Caligiuri and Cascio, 1998, Tung, 1982, Tung, 1987, Tung and Worm, 2001). In addition, the academic strategies for managing the
preparedness of expatriates may not match the reality. Many organisations fail to implement adequate comprehensive or strategic initiatives able to fully prepare an expatriate for the assignment (Schuler, 1996).

**Relationship to the Firm:** The relationship of the firm relates to the length of the time the expatriate has spent in the organisation and the relationships that have been developed there. The stronger the relationship between the expatriate and other key executives, the higher the level of organisational commitment, performance, achieving organisational objectives and trust (citing Gregersen & Black, 1992; Stuttard, 2000). Erbacher’s et al (2006) investigations confirms this factor and indicates that even expatriates who are new to the firm may have already established strong relationships.

**Performance Management System:** Erbacher, et al (2006) notes that performance management is somewhat neglected in both research and practice in IHRM. There is very little consensus on what constitutes effective performance. Aycan (1997) suggest a multi-rater type of performance appraisal; while Tung (1987) recommends different criteria of performance at various points through the posting. Erbacher’s et al (2006) finding suggest that performance management, when applied, does impact expatriate success, but few expatriates feel that their performance has been effectively managed beyond the communication of performance tasks.

**Family Support:** Historically, the spouse and attending family impacts the international manager as either a source of support or as a potential cause of performance
failure (Tung, 1981b, Tung, 1982, Tung, 1986, Tung, 1987). Although a great deal of the research focuses on how the family impacts performance failures, some researchers have noted the benefits of spousal/familial support on the success of international managers (Kraimer et al., 2009). Kraimer et al, (2009:77-78) elaborates on the positive impact of spousal support: “scholars in stress management have consistently highlighted the importance of examining family and/or spousal support as a coping mechanism for individuals undergoing stressful situations related to work” (Brett, 1980; Caplan, 1976; Lu & Cooper, 1995). According to Kraimer et al (2009), the family and spouse especially can offer the manager information, love and affirmation of the manager’s ability to succeed. Kraimer et al, (2009:78) conclude that “the spouse will be vital in fulfilling all three types of social support: aid, affect, and affirmation.” However, a review of the literature finds little investigation into the theories regarding the spouse’s impact and role in driving effective performance (Tung, 1982, Kraimer et al., 2001).

**International Adjustment:** International adjustment, the synthesis of socio-cultural adjustment and psychological adjustment, has been shown to have a positive impact on the effectiveness and performance of expatriates (Selmer, 1999). Psychological adjustment has been defined as experiencing a sense of well-being: the general feeling of happiness with day-to-day activities and the ability to face one’s problems (Selmer, 1999). Socio-cultural adjustment, as defined and empirically tested by Black (1991), is divided into three distinct components of adjustment: general adjustment (the level of comfort with the general living and non-work conditions of a new environment); work adjustment (the level of comfort with meeting the various job related responsibilities and
conditions); and, interaction adjustment (the level of comfort with dealing with host-
country nationals outside of work) (Caligiuri et al., 2001, Hung-Wen and Ching-Hsiang,
notes that psychological adjustment and socio-cultural adjustment are inter-related but
distinct concepts, which have sometimes been confused as the same concept in academic
International adjustment synthesizes the two adjustment concepts into a unifying
definition that posits: “international adjustment includes a sense of well-being
(psychological adjustment) and a feeling that the demands of the unfamiliar environment
can be met (socio-cultural adjustment)” (Selmer, 2002).

Coping Strategies for International Adjustment

Selmer’s research of expatriates and local Chinese in China has also explored how
international adjustment can be modified through the general concepts of uncertainty
reduction, problem-focused coping strategies and symptoms-focused coping strategies.
Uncertainty reduction describes how one becomes more adjusted the more one becomes
familiar with new/foreign work and non-work environments (Selmer, 1999, Selmer,
2002). As familiarity builds awareness, one must then make mental or behavioural
changes to adapt to the new/foreign environment (Selmer, 1999, Selmer, 2002). Black’s
research (1991), as cited by Selmer (2002) describes a variety of measures which may
reduce anxiety and improve socio-cultural adaptation for expatriates. Similarly, Ward and Kennedy (1996) suggests that, by employing “locus of control”, social support and extroversion, expatriates can reduce the anxiety and impact of psychological adjustment (Selmer, 2002).

Selmer (2002) describes how expatriates employ coping strategies to mitigate the challenges of international adjustment. Coping strategies are behavioural or psychological mechanisms that individuals employ to manage and reduce stress and anxiety (Selmer, 1999, Selmer, 2002). Selmer focuses on two types of coping strategies generally described in the literature: “symptom-focused strategies” seek to reduce stress primarily through avoidance and disengagement with stressful situations (see Folkman et al., 1986; Folkman and Lazarus, 1980; Long et al., 1992; Moos, 1981). For example, an expatriate, living in a new culture, who is unfamiliar with the country’s language, may choose to reduce the stress by staying in expatriate enclaves that reduce the need to learn the new language, while avoiding the new language. Alternatively, “problem-focused strategies” seek to reduce the stress by actively approaching and engaging with the stressful situation and making constructive changes (see Folkman et al., 1986; Folkman and Lazarus, 1980; Long et al., 1992; Moos, 1981). For example, an expatriate who is unfamiliar with the new language may seek to engage with the language through immersion courses, thus actively removing the stress of the unfamiliar language. Additionally, Selmer notes that problem-focused strategies are more conducive for international assignments and lead to greater levels of effectiveness for expatriates than symptom-focused coping strategies (Selmer, 1999, Selmer, 2002). Interestingly, Selmer also observes that different cultural elements may influence certain types of expatriates
(Chinese born returning expatriates, for example) to choose certain coping strategies over others (Selmer, 1999, Selmer, 2002). The findings of Selmer’s research are that some culturally familiar expatriates may in fact experience greater levels of discomfort with international adjustment than culturally unfamiliar expatriates (Selmer, 1999, Selmer, 2002). As such, the needs of culturally familiar expatriates should be considered just as important, but different than the needs of the culturally unfamiliar expatriate.

**Job Satisfaction as a Performance Mediator**

Job satisfaction has been defined as an employee’s evaluation of their job and organisation (Shaffer and Harrison, 1998). Job satisfaction refers to the attitude that one has towards various aspect of the job (Shaffer and Harrison, 1998). Employees who are satisfied have a favourable appraisal of their work situation. Some research indicates that there is relationship between job satisfaction and job performance: the more satisfied one is the better one performs the job at hand (Harrison and Shaffer, 2005, Shaffer et al., 2006). However, the relationship between satisfaction and performance is moderate at best (Harrison and Shaffer, 2005). Lack of job satisfaction can impact an organisation in several ways, according to the research: through exiting the organisation or changing work teams; using one’s voice confrontationally or to attract attention; weakening of loyalty (which could result in theft or sabotage); and, neglecting work performance (Harrison and Shaffer, 2005, Shaffer et al., 2006).
Organisational Commitment as a Performance Motivator

Organisational commitment represents an employee’s loyalty to and intention to stay with the organisation (Guest, 1997, Shaffer and Harrison, 1998, Shu-Chi and Jung-Nung, 2005, Wang, 2004). Allen and Meyer (1990) describe three forms of organisational commitment: affective, continuance and normative. Affective commitment represents the emotional attachment to the organisation; continuance commitment describes the cost/benefit analysis an employee considers if the employee is to leave; and normative commitment refers to the employee’s sense of obligation to stay with the organisation (Dowling and Welch, 2004). Research seems to indicate that increased organisational commitment may increase an employee’s motivation, organisational citizenship (altruistic expressions and acts to the benefit of the organisation and co-workers) and job performance (Guest, 1997, Shaffer and Harrison, 1998, Shu-Chi and Jung-Nung, 2005, Wang, 2004).

These concepts take on additional meaning with expatriates. Organisational commitment may help to explain one possible reason an employee accepts an international assignment: when the employee feels emotionally connected (affective commitment) to the organisation and the organisation needs that employee’s services for an assignment. Likewise, continuance commitment may provide motivation, if the expatriate continues in the international assignment, despite the hardships because the posting helps to further their personal ambitions or allows them to maintain a relationship that is established in the locality (Guest, 1997, Shaffer and Harrison, 1998, Shu-Chi and Jung-Nung, 2005, Wang, 2004). The research seems to suggest though that employees with high organisational affective commitment contribute positively to an organisation
because of their feelings of loyalty (Guest, 1997, Shaffer and Harrison, 1998, Shu-Chi and Jung-Nung, 2005, Wang, 2004). On the other hand, the research seems to suggest that expatriates with a high continuance commitment may negatively impact the international assignment if the expatriate begins to value the international assignment to such a degree that the expatriate is unwilling to transfer power or prepare for their own succession (Bhanugopan and Fish, 2007, Selmer, 2004b). Although reducing turnover is often desired by organisations, having succession plans and having new generations of workers ready to contribute to the organisation is a goal for organisations as well, which may conflict with the needs of someone with a high continuance commitment. Personal and organisational loyalties can become tested in such situations. Leadership and team development have the capability to build organisational affective commitment by showing that the organisation is concerned with the professional growth of the expatriate (Shaffer and Harrison, 1998, Suutari, 2003, Wang, 2004). In turn, as expatriates develop skills to effectively influence teams, they show subordinate staff and co-workers that they care, thus helping to extend company-wide loyalty. Lund and Barker’s (2004) study of expatriate managers in China asserts that organisational affective commitment increases as managerial effectiveness improves through organisational and cultural harmony, supportive familial/spousal relationships and, establishing influential hierarchical relationships within the organisation.

**Psychological Contracts as a Performance Moderator**

Psychological contracts are implicit perceptual agreements between employees and the organisation that influence the international manager’s performance in the
organisation (Robinson and Rouseau, 1994; Guzzo, et al, 1994). The research has identified two forms of psychological contracts, transactional contracts and relational contractions. The psychological contract is perceptual, so it is subjected to what is in the minds of the employee and in the minds of the hiring managers (Haslberger and Brewster, 2009). Transactional psychological contracts presume that the organisation will pay salary, not be too oppressive, value the employee and continue employment; and, in exchange, the employee will come to work, perform the job assigned, maintain work relationships and not damage the company (Dowling and Welch, 2004). Relational psychological contracts are long-termed arrangements between the organisation and employee that encompass a broad range of subjective mutual obligations, wherein an employee believes the organisation will look out for the employee’s “best interest” if the employee is a “good worker” (McShane and Travaglione, 2007).

Issues with the psychological contract develop in accordance with the ways the contract is affirmed and maintained as whole; when the contract is deemed violated, the performance of the employee may be affected. The IHRM research has described how performance failures may be attributed to an expatriate’s perception that her/his psychological contract has been violated, predominately in terms of the relational contract. The research suggests that expatriates have an expectation that the organisation will mitigate the risks of international assignments by providing the expatriate with support services. International assignments are deemed risky due the uncertainties of the assignments impact on the expatriate’s own career, family, personal health and relationships (Guest, 1997, Haslberger and Brewster, 2009).
As mentioned previously, a distinguishing feature of IHRM versus its domestic counterpart is that the organisation assumes a greater role in the expatriate’s life and becomes, to a degree, a guardian for the employee (Dowling and Welch, 2004). Expatriates may presume that the organisation will look after them in every conceivable way, trusting, to some degree, their very lives and that of their families with the organisation (Guest, 1997, Haslberger and Brewster, 2009). Arguably, the perceptual relationships established under the psychological contract of an international assignment have more significance than in a domestic organisation, where there is less of a perception that the organisation will look after the employee’s personal interests. The research suggests that cross-cultural training, leadership and team development may indicate to the expatriate that the organisation is maintaining and reinforcing the psychological contract, because those interventions provide the expatriate with the skills to maintain performance. The expatriate may also have expectations based on the relational contract that the MNE will look after the expatriate’s family and the expatriate’s own health.

Thus, the research suggests that under perceived violations of the contract, such as when the expatriate does not feel supported or protected by the organisation, the expatriate may react by exiting the organisation, underperforming or intentionally interfering with MNE objectives (Guest, 1997, Haslberger and Brewster, 2009). The research regarding psychological contracts has tended to focus almost exclusively on their impact on expatriates and not on their impact on HCNs. The research suggests that the relevance of psychological contracts may be affected by one’s own cultural views, since the value, meaning and terms of psychological contracts are determined by one’s
own perceptions, which are cultural influenced. Psychological contracts then may moderate the performance of international managers.

**Compensation as a Performance Mediator**

Compensation may act as a motivator that helps to bind the international manager to the subsidiary. From an organisational perspective, the purpose of compensation is to attract, retain and motivate staff (Fenwick, 2004). Fenwick (2004:308) defines international compensation “as the provision of monetary and non-monetary rewards, including base salary, benefits, prerequisites, long- and short-term incentives, valued by employees in accordance with their relative contributions to MNC performance.” In an effort to retain international managers, some MNEs may also offer an equity stake or some form of partial ownership of the subsidiary (Andrew et al., 2007).

Compensation may also be used to drive performance in an organisation. Nankervis, et al (2002) assert that compensation is used to motivate employee’s future performance, which Kessler and Purcell (1995) note as a goal of strategic HRM.

Fenwick (2004) asserts that there is an underlying assumption that performance can be made more efficient and effective if there is a direct link between effort and reward. One possible explanation of the relationship between performance and compensation and rewards may be the expectancy theory. The expectancy theory describes how effort (the amount of energy expended to accomplish a task) is moderated by three factors: effort-to-performance expectancy; performance-to-outcome expectancy; and, outcome valences.

The motivation to perform can be impacted by adjusting any of the three factors. Compensation is linked with the outcome valences, which refers to the anticipated
satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a particular outcome. As such, if an international manager knows that a particular performance will result in compensation or a reward that is valued strongly then the international manager will expend more effort to ensure the particular outcome. Harzing and Ruysseveldt (2004) note that in some MNEs there may not be the clear link between performance and rewards, which may weaken an international manager’s motivation to perform.

Performance Competencies

Competencies represent specific skill sets that one must possess in order to effectively perform. For the international manager, competencies also become a desired end-product of the performance for global leaders. The more the international manager’s knowledge, skills and experience are developed, the more the international manager can contribute to the building of global knowledge and resources for the MNE.

Cross-cultural skills, cross-communication skills, cross-functional skills and trainers

Seak and Enderwick (2008) have identified four key competencies of international managers working in China that promote effective performance: cross-cultural skills, cross-communication skills, cross-functional skills and the ability to train.

Cross-cultural skills are mental tools related to the specific aspects of the host-countries’ culture, customs and mores. Beyond mere knowledge is the ability to integrate the knowledge with one’s own culture and the ability to adapt to new situations (Bennett et al., 2000). Bennet et al, (2000:241) define the relevant competencies under cross-cultural skills as the ability to:
understand the meaning of culture and how it shapes people’s beliefs, values, assumptions, expectations, and behaviours; understand and apply frameworks for analyzing cross-cultural interactions and develop skills to reconcile differences; acquire important information about the host country and recognize cultural differences between home and host culture; gain practical information about daily life in the host country.

The researchers use China to illustrate the concept of cross-cultural skills by highlighting the need for expatriates to have an awareness of Chinese constructs of Guanxi (strong relationships), face (respect) and Confucianism (harmony), and how these ideas influence behaviour and business (Seak and Enderwick, 2008). Black and Mendenhall (1990) suggest that cross-cultural skills are those skills that will develop international adjustment as previously mentioned.

Cross-communication skills provide the international manager with the ability to effectively interact with members of a different culture. Selmer (2006:352) notes that “communicative ability permits cultural development through interaction with other individuals.” Cross-cultural communication skills may be developing the ability to communicate in the host-country language or the ability to communicate in the parent-country language without miscommunication. Research has supported the positive impact of cross-cultural communication skills on performance (Seak and Enderwick, 2008, Selmer, 2006c). Selmer (2006:352) notes that cross-communication skills occur at in various contexts:

There is a linguistic component (sounds, signs, and grammar), a paralinguistic component (tone, pitch, volume, speed, and affective aspects), an extralinguistic component (nonverbal aspects such as gestures, movements, grimaces, etc.), and a sociolinguistic dimensions (a repertoire of styles appropriate for different circumstances). All these
are mastered as part of one’s native, cultural competence. Coming to an understanding of these dimensions and how they are interrelated explains what is involved in developing competence in a second or third cultural/language context (citing Fantini, 1995).

The literature suggests that cross-functional skills are reflected in the multiple roles that international managers may have to sometimes assume in order to develop the subsidiary (Seak and Enderwick, 2008). Many international subsidiaries are still in their nascent “start-up” phase of development and employ a limited number of international managers to “get things going.” In practice then, many international managers find themselves with multiple roles and performing tasks that may be beyond their technical expertise or primary skill sets. Effective international managers then need to acquire and use a variety of skills to assist the development of the subsidiary.

International managers must also develop the “ability to train” as a result of a reality for many subsidiaries in developing countries: the lack of management and leadership experience of HCNs (Seak and Enderwick, 2008). International managers then need the skills to be able to train, mentor, coach and develop better performance in subsidiary staff (Bennett et al., 2000). As such, international managers need training, mentoring and coaching in how to deliver these skills to subsidiary staff (Ahlstrom et al., 2001).

Leadership and Team Competencies

are generally expected to be leaders of the subsidiary operations. Leadership and team development do not occur in a vacuum, they need active and continuous monitoring and enhancement. Leadership has been defined as “the influencing, enabling and motivating of the others to achieve effectiveness and success in the organisation of which they belong” (McShane & Travaglione, 2007 citing House, et al, 2002). There is no clear guide to what constitutes the attributes of an effective leader. For example, McShane and Travaglione (2007) suggest that there are seven attributes for effective leaders, deemed competencies: emotional intelligence (the ability to respond to the emotional context and subtext of others); integrity (truthfulness in action); drive (desire to compete); motivation (gaining power to help others achieve success); self-confidence (belief in one’s own abilities to achieve outcomes); intelligence (the ability to analyze and problem solve); and, knowledge of the business (understanding the organisational environment and targeting opportunities). Although these leadership competencies may seem attractive, they may only represent only a portion of what a leader needs to be effective and/or they might not be needed all the time for all leadership moments. Moreover, these leadership competencies may themselves be culturally biased in favour of Westerners.

Task and Contextual Performance Outcomes

Some researchers have sought to define expatriate performance as a combination of task and contextual performance, which drive effectiveness (Shaffer et al., 2006; Tahvanainen, 2000; Woods, 2003). “Task performance” refers to the specific technical aspects of work that delineate objectives for job performance (Mol, et al, 2005). “Contextual performance” refers to the more amorphous aspects of performance, such as
“cross-cultural interpersonal qualities; sensitivity to foreign norms, laws, and customs; adaptability to uncertain and unpredictable conditions; and the host location’s integration with other MNE units” (Schuler et al., 2002). Task performance has received a great deal of attention, however contextual performance, which represents critical aspects of the international assignment has not been well researched and has often been ignored as a performance element that is monitored for appraisals and rewards (Tahvanainen, 2000, Kraimer et al., 2001). It would seem then that to support the effectiveness of performance for task related objectives, goal setting as well as goal attainment strategies would be effective, while contextual objectives would require awareness raising, self-reflection and self-efficacy, as well as goal setting and goal attainment (Kraimer et al., 2001, Tahvanainen, 2000).

**International managers and teams**

The performance of executive managers in international organisations, like their domestic counterparts, is often measured and determined by the performance and management of their respective teams. As with most aspects of internationalization in organisations, additional layers of complexity accompany the management of teams and the leadership required to guide and motivate those teams (Roberts et al., 1998, Shaffer et al., 2006, Smith and Kuth, 2009). Similarly, there is a lack of research surrounding how expatriate managers can best lead and manage international teams. Virtually no empirical research has been conducted that explores how organisations use performance management for developing leaders who can manage effective teams in international organisations.
Performance Evaluation

Evaluation is the process of assessing performance and outcomes for effectiveness. In terms of performance, evaluation can occur at many different points throughout the process of satisfying objectives (Bonache et al., 2001, Chiang and Birtch, 2007, Hsi-An et al., 2005, Lindholm, 1999, Suutari and Tahvanainen, 2002, Tahvanainen, 2000). There are three primary purposes for evaluating performance and its outcomes: firstly, to align outcomes with the stated objectives; secondly, to acknowledge, reward and encourage successful performance; and, lastly, to remediate and correct inadequate performance (Bonache et al., 2001, Chiang and Birtch, 2007, Hsi-An et al., 2005, Lindholm, 1999, Suutari and Tahvanainen, 2002, Tahvanainen, 2000). As such, performance evaluation is linked in the model to both performance mediators and performance competencies, because the post-evaluation analysis may determine that the international manager needs additional support mechanisms to improve performance, or the manager needs additional competencies to raise performance.

Feedback, information that shares a perspective on performance, is often used as the tool by which performance and outcomes are evaluated (Dowling and Welch, 2004). Feedback may be delivered by various “raters” informally or formally. Informal feedback may occur at any point throughout the performance process. Formal feedback, is most often convey through some type of performance appraisal, which, depending on the MNE, may occur at different points throughout a year (Tahvanainen, 2000).
Conclusion

This literature review of the IHRM research regarding the performance management of international managers exposes various gaps that need to be addressed in order to achieve professional and personal objectives and outcomes. The primary gaps of research in IHRM have been identified as: a lack of research regarding performance management of non-traditional expatriates and HCNs; additional performance failures beyond premature return; the relationship of the MNE’s objectives to HCNs; the lack of research regarding the cultural impacts of performance management; the lack of research regarding ways to improve the performance of international manager’s on-the-job; and, the lack of any comprehensive model of performance which details the progress of performance in an international subsidiary.

In response to the lack of a comprehensive model of effective performance for international managers, one has been proposed in this thesis, drawing on elements of other established models. The other established models seem to be inadequate because they are either narrowly focused on particular groups or they fail to capture the full breadth of the performance cycle for international managers. The research literature suggests that the performance cycle for international managers includes: performance objectives, performance moderators, competencies, performance outcomes and performance evaluations. The proposed model represents the management of both expatriate and HCN managers, thus representing a true reflection of the management in many subsidiary organisations. The model is also designed to address the gaps in the literature. The model provides a system of performance management with support structures for expatriates and HCNs. The model has a focus on addressing performance
failures beyond ‘expatriate performance’ as the model focuses on addressing underperformance and improving ‘good’ performance. The model also illustrates the flow of performance objectives to performance criteria and goals for both expatriates and HCNs, who are typically ignored in the IHRM research on MNE objectives. As the model acknowledges and supports the role of the international management team, the model is designed to foster cross-cultural communication, awareness, skills and team performance. The model incorporates a visualization of the outcomes and on-the-job needs and performance of international managers in order to replicate real world functionality.

From the research assessed, it would seem that international managers may need additional tools to assist their performance and development throughout their career life-cycle in the MNE. Current tools and interventions, such as cross-cultural training and selection, have either been targeted too directly at new and culturally-unfamiliar managers or have been severely under-utilized, as in the reports of minimal training during international assignments, or have been provided at the start of the international assignment and then abandoned after the manager has “adapted” (Forster, 2000, Goodall et al., 2006, Tung, 1981b, Tung, 1982, Tung, 1987, Tung, 2004).

Executive coaching has been proposed as a tool, which is used successfully in many domestic organisations, to improve performance for executive managers. The process of executive coaching and the one-on-one relationship with the executive coach provides the international manager with a unique tool to address individualized issues of performance, skill acquisition and career development that satisfy personal and organisational objectives. A greater understanding of the role of executive coaching can
help to expose whether executive coaching can indeed make a contribution to the effective performance of international managers.

The model of effective performance, discussed above, illustrates the life-cycle of international managers; therefore, each section highlights critical areas requiring support and intervention or the international manager risks suffering from performance failures. Executive coaching has the capacity to support each of the sections of the model because of its ability to conform to the immediate needs of the coached client. However, no study has explored whether executive coaching can address the critical areas of performance for international managers. The following section presents a literature review of executive coaching to address whether the intervention can address the performance areas highlighted by the model. The research study here presents evidence of executive coaching’s impact on the performance needs of international managers as illustrated by the model of effective performance.
CHAPTER THREE: EXECUTIVE COACHING

Introduction

The review of the IHRM literature identified a number of challenges faced by the MNE’s management of the performance of international managers. In this section, executive coaching is proposed as an intervention that might provide MNEs with the means to assist the performance of international managers and thereby improve the performance of subsidiaries and MNEs more generally.

Executive coaching has developed into a specialized version of coaching that focuses on the professional and personal development of executives or managers in an organization (Peltier, 2001). Coaching has grown, over the past thirty years, to emerge as a relationship-focused consulting enterprise that targets individual change and personal and professional growth (Grant, 2005b). Coaching is the synthesis of a variety of learning techniques, motivational strategies, psychological concepts, philosophical influences, communication skills and performance improvement methodologies (Mike et al., 2006). Currently though, coaching remains a relatively unregulated and diverse profession with virtually no barriers to entry or any set standard of qualifications for practicing coaching (Grant, 2005b). Coaching has continued to grow in popularity as a career and as a service employed by individuals and organizations (James, 2007). Research has shown that coaching can be effective in contributing to goal attainment, mental health, well being and behavioural management (Blaylock, 2008, Bono et al., 2009, Grant, 2005a, Greene and Grant, 2003).
A review of the various literatures relating to executive coaching suggests that: 1) executive coaching is a well-respected and commonly used “helping” intervention in predominately Western domestic organisations; 2) a majority of clients report satisfaction with coaching interventions (Grant, 2005a); 3) despite the variety of different coaches and different coaching styles, executive coaching generally offers an intervention that is individualized and tailored to the needs of the client and delivered through a process guided by a coach that supports communication, learning, change management and reflection/feedback (Kombarakaran et al., 2008); 4) executive coaching has a demonstrative impact on business that results from improvements in interpersonal communications, work skills and leadership competencies (Levenson, 2009); and, 5) the effectiveness of executive coaching is mediated by the relative willingness of executives to engage with coaching and the systemic issues relating to the various organisational factors and the role of culture (Jarvis, 2003).

The executive coaching literature is particularly underdeveloped in regards to issues relating to various organisational factors and the role of culture, which are of particular importance to the effective performance of international managers. Little research has explored how executive coaching impacts international subsidiaries, or how executive coaching assists expatriates and local managers. The literature depicts executive coaching as a primarily Western construct, derived from predominately Western influences and used mostly with Westerners (Grant and Zackon, 2004). Few studies have explored the use and appropriateness of executive coaching with and for non-Westerners.
The research involved in this thesis seeks to provide a greater understanding of the extent to which executive coaching might be an appropriate and potentially useful intervention for improving the effective performance of international managers. The IHRM literature has suggested that international managers: need individual support; face challenges in leadership; must adapt to rapid environmental changes; manage multiple roles in the subsidiary; face cultural barriers; lack the time and support for professional development; require skill building and performance enhancement. Executive coaching then, aligns with the needs of international managers because it delivers: individualized interventions; leadership development; behavioural change; self-awareness, resilience, learning and empathy for managing cultural barriers; and, a focused attention on professional and personal development, skill building and the performance enhancement of individuals.

This review seeks to explore how executive coaching might contribute to the performance of international managers, including their performance, skills, development and acculturation. Moreover, the study investigates whether, despite the known limitations of executive coaching, these interventions can contribute to the achievement of organisational objectives. The literature review of executive coaching is divided into four main sections that consider the reasons for using executive coaching for international managers and the purported effectiveness of executive coaching. The first section, “The Relevance of Executive Coaching”, defines executive coaching and describes its history and influences, while also noting the wide-spread use and acceptance of executive coaching in domestic organisations. This section suggests that if executive coaching is accepted and used in domestic organisations, it can also be used in international
organisations. The second section, “The Process of Executive Coaching”, examines the operational processes of executive coaching that form a structure for delivering results in domestic organisations in order to explore whether these processes can be effectively applied to international managers and MNEs. The third section, “The Outcomes of Executive Coaching”, recounts the various outcomes that have been documented in the executive coaching research literature. The final section, “The Limitations of Executive Coaching”, describes how coaching effectiveness can moderate the lack of organisational support, the relationship between coach and client, the attitudes of the client to coaching, and the influence of cultural values.

The Relevance of Executive Coaching

Executive coaching is a common and accepted intervention used in many domestic organisations to improve the skills, performance and development of individual executives directly and, by extension, the performance of the organisation. Despite its prolific use in domestic organisations, executive coaching is far less common in international organisations. Executive coaching is thought to be successful in domestic organisations because it draws on a number of proven “helping” interventions guided by a coach.

This section considers the relevance of executive coaching by exploring how executive coaching is defined, used and guided by practitioners and clients. This section will conclude with a discussion regarding the lack of attention to the international business context.
Defining Executive Coaching

The literature includes numerous definitions of executive coaching. Taken together, these definitions of executive coaching emphasise certain over-arching themes: individualization, behavioural change, learning, performance improvement, leadership, relationships and development (Bluckert, 2005). These over-arching themes are highlighted in the various definitions which describe executive coaching as:

…a helping relationship formed between a client who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organisation and a consultant who uses a wider variety of behavioural techniques and methods to assist the client to achieve a mutually identified set of goals to improve his or her professional performance and personal satisfaction and consequently to improve the effectiveness of the client’s organisation within a formally defined coaching agreement (Kilburg, 1996).

…a collaborative, individualised relationship between an executive and a coach, the aims of which are to bring about sustained behavioural change and to transform the quality of the executive’s working and personal life (Greene and Grant, 2003).

…coaching is the facilitation of learning and development with the purpose of improving performance and enhancing effective action, goal achievement and personal satisfaction. It invariably involves growth and change, whether that is in perspective, attitude or behaviour (Bluckert, 2005).

…a confidential, individually-tailored engagement designed to meet the needs both of the executive being coached and the organization paying for the service (Coutu and Kauffman, 2009).

Coutu & Kauffman’s (2009) definition is notable because it is one of the few that acknowledges the role of the organization in the executive coaching process. The role of
the organization is a distinguishing aspect of executive coaching and, if the business impact of coaching has relevance, the organization needs to be acknowledged as a participant in the coaching process. For the purposes of this thesis and research Coutu & Kauffman’s definition of executive coaching will be used.

**Forms and Areas of Coaching**

Coaching can take a number of forms (namely: skills, performance and development coaching) and can be used in a variety of areas (such as: life coaching, executive coaching, workplace coaching and business coaching). Each coaching area has different objectives, which may require the use of one or more different coaching forms.

*Forms of Coaching*

The literature describes three main forms of coaching: skills coaching, performance coaching and developmental coaching (Grant, 2005b, Witherspoon and White, 1996). Although these forms are presented as distinct, there is a good deal of overlap between the different forms and they are sometimes used interchangeably, particularly ‘performance’ and ‘developmental’ coaching.

**Skills coaching**

In skills coaching, the emphasis is on assisting an employee to develop a specific skill or skill set. The coaching intervention is tailored to embed the skill within the learner (Jarvis, 2003). The coaching sessions may be limited to a couple of sessions, or whatever is needed to ensure that the learner is competent at the new skill (Jarvis, 2003).
In order to effectuate the coaching, the coach might model the skill behaviours and provide feedback and rehearsal for the learner (Grant, 2005b). Skills coaching may involve skills in, for example, sales skills, communication and presentation skills or negotiation skills. Skiffington and Zeus (2003) assert that all coaching in the behavioural coaching model involves the development of various skills needed for the change process.

**Performance coaching**

With performance coaching, the focus is on improving the effectiveness of the executive or manager (Jarvis, 2003). As such, the coaching initiatives are geared towards helping the executive to identify particular competencies that need to be performed at a higher level (Skiffington and Zeus, 2003). Jarvis (2003:24) describes performance coaching as evolving from the theoretical underpinnings of business and sports psychology and general psychology. The coaching process may involve spending some time establishing clarity around which performance goals would best assist the executive’s work performance (Grant, 2005b). Performance coaching typically lasts longer than skills coaching and may be more strategically linked to addressing issues raised in performance reviews (Creane, 2002). Improving one’s leadership skills may be a performance goal appropriate for this type of coaching. Initially however, coaching for performance was used for underperforming employees and targeted remedial assistance (Creane, 2002). Currently, performance coaching is used to also enhance the skills of top performers in an organization.
Agarwal et al. (2009) hypothesizes that the relationship of coaching on performance in the research suggests that work performance is impacted by job satisfaction, the feeling one has towards work and coaching intensity, and the level of developmental feedback delivered by one’s supervisor. Agarwal et al. (2009 at page 2116) further explains that “individuals who are more satisfied with their jobs will be more motivated to excel, and will therefore exhibit higher performance.” Agarwal et al.’s (2009) research supports the impact of job satisfaction on work performance. Notably, Agarwal’s (2009) research did not explore whether access to executive coaching improves one’s job satisfaction.

Developmental coaching

Developmental coaching proposes a more intimate exploration of an executive’s ability to enhance one’s present and future career (Jarvis, 2003). Developmental coaching involves a deeper analysis of the client’s needs, values and vision in order to understand the client’s strengths and weaknesses (Grant, 2005b). Through developmental coaching, a client can begin to chart a career path and examine what opportunities can currently be exploited to attain future career goals (Agarwal et al., 2009). Also, developmental coaching can help clients to access and build on inner resources through self-reflection in a safe environment (Agarwal et al., 2009).

Examples of coaching benefits include: improved conflict management skills, enhanced presentation skills, developed time management capabilities, improved relationship building, and adapted coping mechanisms (Gonzalez, 2008). Successful coaching occurs when the coach creates an environment that provides support, stimulates
thinking, assists change, deals with paradoxes and provides resources for continued learning and growth (Uyen, 2006). Additionally, the employee must actively participate in the coaching intervention and commit to the process and the work involved in achieving results (Grant, 2003).

Creane (2002) cites the work of Hudson (1999) to characterize developmental coaching as an effective response to the current dynamic business environment, as well as, one’s own ever-changing life and work cycle. Hudson (1999:5) claims that society has been transformed from a “a stable, orderly, steady-state model to an unstable, disorderly, change-driven one” (Creane, 2002). Since coaching prepares one to accept change and make changes, coaching purports to be congruent with the society that Hudson (1999) believes is evolving. Hudson (1999) also suggests that one’s personal and work life is constantly in flux and filled with different transitions that individuals have to navigate. These transitions are periods of change that coaching claims to address.

Agarwal et al. (2009) presents a slightly different conception of developmental coaching. Agarwal et al. (2009) defines developmental coaching from the perspective of the supervisor/manager as coach for a direct report, as a opposed to the definition of developmental coaching as assisting with transitional states. Agarwal et al (2009:2111) elaborates:

> Developmental coaching occurs in the on-going and persistent interaction between a supervisor and employee in which the supervisor provides constructive and developmental feedback, helps subordinates handle difficult problems or situations, and creates opportunities for practicing complex procedures before using them in the work setting in order to improve employees’ performance.
Areas of Coaching

Primarily, coaching seeks to improve skills, performance or development in one or more of the following areas: life areas, business areas, workplace areas and executive areas (Blaylock, 2008, Bono et al., 2009, Creane, 2002, Fairley and Stout, 2004). The literature and anecdotal reports of coaching depict a variety of additional areas that may be sub-categories of the main coaching areas, such as relationship coaching, sales coaching, legacy coaching and career coaching (Stern, 2004). Since executive coaching is addressed throughout this literature review, this section will focus mainly on a brief description of life coaching, business coaching and workplace coaching.

Life Coaching

Life coaching emerged as the first focused area of coaching, dating back to the 1960s (Creane, 2002). Originally life coaching assisted adults with applying problem solving strategies to the development of coping life skills (Creane, 2002). As life coaching evolved, it became a practice whereby an coach works one-on-one with a client to clarify goals, create action plans and implement strategies to attain a more happy and satisfying personal life (Creane, 2002). Grant (2003:254) defines life coaching as: “a collaborative, solution-focused, results-orientated and systematic process in which the coach facilitates the enhancement of life experience and goal attainment in the personal and/or professional of…non-clinical clients.” Life coaching has been used to respond to various life experiences, such as, relationships, spiritual development, retirement, fitness, careers, retirement and wellness to name a few (Jarvis, 2003, Grant, 2005b).
Business Coaching

Although executive coaching is a form of business coaching, the literature seems to differentiate the two. Clegg et al. (2005) differentiates business coaching from life coaching and executive coaching by asserting that business coaching is focused primarily on assisting clients to acquire skills that promote business outcomes, rather than personal or career goals. Moreover, Clegg et al. (2005) states that business coaching is different than training because the coaching is not tied to a curriculum, is specific to the business needs of the client, and occurs in the workplace. This represents a shift from classroom learning to learning that is imbedded in real-life scenarios (Clegg et al., 2005). Clegg et al.’s (2005) research of business coaching in Australia reveals an industry still in its infancy, where business coaching is rarely the dominate coaching service offered by self-identified business coaches.

Business coaching typically sets goals around developing the entire business organization and works one to one with key stakeholders and influencers within the organization who can help to effectuate those necessary changes (Clegg et al., 2005). Business coaching has been applied to large, medium and solo managed businesses, wherein individuals and teams/groups are coached (Jarvis, 2003). The literature suggests a strong business need for business coaching due to the lack of management training for many small-to medium business managers (Porter, 2000). In order for businesses to thrive, they must be well-managed with competent people who interact with their co-workers and their clients (Hill, 1998). Increasingly, the people within businesses are as responsible for the businesses success as the products that the businesses produce and sell (Hill, 1998). In light of the rapidly changing conditions of the world and technology,
people in business must accrue highly developed communication, interpersonal, self-awareness, self-knowledge and problem-solving skills (Porter, 2000). Business coaching then focuses on helping business stakeholders to identify the needs of the business and design a coaching intervention around those needs (Clegg et al., 2005). Business coaching has numerous strategic benefits for the business and interpersonal benefits for the individuals who are actively coached and their colleagues (Clegg et al., 2005). Strategic business coaching benefits may include: streamlining policies and procedures; promoting accountability; improving customer service; increasing awareness of resources; broadening the scope of ideas and solutions; and, motivating and sustaining momentum (Clegg et al., 2005, Hill, 1998, Porter, 2000). Likewise, interpersonal business coaching benefits may involve: coordinating personal and career objectives; improving concentration, relaxation, confidence and decision making; tapping into creativity and mining potential; coping with change and transitions; and, removing fears and performance anxieties, while eliminating unhealthy work stressors (Clegg et al., 2005, Hill, 1998, Porter, 2000).

Workplace Coaching

Workplace coaching is defined as coaching that occurs in organizations between non-executive staff (Grant, 2005b, Grant et al., 2009). Workplace coaching is then similar, if not, identical to the developmental type of coaching that Agarwal references, where the supervisor is responsible for using coaching skills to help subordinates grow (Agarwal et al., 2009). Grant (2005) describes the use of “corridor coaching” by
supervisors as a means of delivering quick, impromptu coaching to staff (Stoltz and Major, 1995).

Agarwal et al. (2009) notes that workplace coaching that involves developmental coaching from supervisors is vulnerable to a lack of organizational support of coaching, as well as, the supervisor-coach’s own resistance to coaching because it distracts from other work responsibilities (Whitmore, 2003). Agarwal et al (2009:2113) then asserts that workplace coaching can be beneficial for both the organization and employee if it is linked to interventions which create a supportive environment (Whitmore, 2003).

Life, Business and Workplace Coaching’s Relationship to Executive Coaching

Executive coaching then is an amalgamation of life, business and workplace coaching. Grant, et al. (2010) claims that executive coaching is essentially developmental coaching with skills and performance coaching interwoven throughout. Executive coaching is primarily conducted with external providers who also provide a wide-range of complimentary services, such as training and consulting (Grant et al., 2010, Kampa-Kokesch, 2002, Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson, 2001, Kilburg, 1997). The services offered by external executive coaches may include life-coaching for work-life balance, business consultancy, manager-as-coach training, leadership development and executive coaching and, as such, the services cross into the various domains of life, business and workplace coaching.

One of the defining characteristics of executive coaching from life, business and workplace coaching is the relationship of the organisation as another partner in the coaching triad of the external coach, executive and organisation. In executive coaching,
the organisation pays for an external service, but the relationship is maintained confidentially between the external coach and the manager-employee. The literature is silent regarding how organisations fulfill their objectives through executive coaching when the coaching agenda is focused on the unique and individual needs and agenda of the manager-employee?

Some areas of research have not been fully explored in the coaching research and literature of executive coaching. Less research has explored the organisation’s role in executive coaching and impact of the coaching engagement on the organisation as a whole. There has also been little research into how executive coaching benefits and impacts a management team that has been collectively coached. Moreover, there is little research into how executive coaching affects international managers or their teams.

Influences of Executive Coaching

Although executive coaching is often described in the literature as a relatively young profession, executive coaching is heavily influenced by various other “helping” interventions or methodologies that have been well established as professions with evidence to support their claims of effectiveness. Executive coaching’s association with other “helping” interventions helps to communicate the benefits and possible outcomes of executive coaching, although the association conversely confuses the general public who may view executive coaching as a “repackaging” of a more familiar helping intervention. It is important to have an understanding of the various influencers of executive coaching, as well as their commonalities and their differences with executive coaching. The general helping interventions identified by the literature as influential to the development
of executive coaching are: organizational consulting; leadership development; mentoring; sports psychology; adult learning; training; and, therapy.

Organizational consulting and coaching

Researchers have debated coaching’s relationship to organizational consulting (Skiffington and Zeus, 2003, Zeus and Skiffington, 2003a). Some researches have categorized coaching as a re-branded version of organizational consulting, which sometimes may involve a one-to-one relationship focused on enhancing performance; while others have classified coaching as a fully independent and unique practice that merely incorporates aspects of organizational coaching (Peltier, 2001, Skiffington and Zeus, 2003, Zeus and Skiffington, 2003a). Zeus and Skiffington have suggested that, although coaching shares some similarities with organizational consulting, coaching provides services in ways that are distinct. Zeus and Skiffington, (2003:16) note, “in one sense, all coaches are consultants, whereas few consultants are coaches.” Organizational consultants and coaches can both: solve problems through goal setting, facilitate teamwork and workshops; support organizational change; and, provide an intervention for an employee (Blaylock, 2008, Bono et al., 2009, Abbott et al., 2006a). However, coaches typically differ from organisational consultants, because coaches: lack a specific industry expertise; use a variety of high-level communication skills and tools to achieve outcomes; operate through relationships with coaching clients; focus on the individual’s, as opposed to an organizational problem; provide specific interventions tailored to the individual employee; and, assist the coaching client in exploring future opportunities and

Leadership Development and coaching

In addition to organizational consulting, Creane (2002) notes how the leadership development movement has impacted coaching. The leadership development movement arose during the 1970s and 1980s as organizations attempted to move from a hierarchical leadership to leadership that was more egalitarian and team focused (Clinton and Laurence, 2006, Kevin, 2004). During this shift, organizations sought to empower its executives and managers to become more self-reliant and self-directed so that they could more easily manage the ever-changing economic conditions (Clinton and Laurence, 2006, Kevin, 2004). The growth of technological advancements and global interactions has forced organizations and their leaders to be more responsive to rapidly changing environments, opportunities and consumers (Jarvis, 2003). Leaders then would need to acquire the requisite skills that would allow them to act strategically and quickly. In essence, Creane (2002) argues that organizations became learning institutions and needed learning leaders. Coaching then becomes an instrument, with a plethora of tools to help leaders in organizations to continue to develop requisite skills for driving organizational success (Kevin, 2004).

Mentoring and coaching

Because they share some key competencies, coaching is often confused with mentoring, yet there are distinct differences between the two “helping” activities (Jarvis,
Various definitions of mentoring exist. For example, Shea (1996) defines mentoring as “one who offers knowledge, insight, perspective or wisdom that is especially useful to the other person”; while Rolfe-Flett (1996) defines mentoring as “a career friend, knowledgeable about your field who advises and encourages.” Clutterbuck (2001) suggests that, despite the many definitions of mentoring, there is a common understanding of its purpose: “when an older, more experienced individual passes down his knowledge of how the task was done and how to operate in the commercial world.” As one-to-one helping relationships, coaching and mentoring share the tools of communication, listening and feedback (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003). Moreover, mentoring and coaching both involve: the need to establish a trusting relationship; the goal for improved performance; the knowledge of how organizations work; the exposure to role models; the guidance for career development; and, the use of highly developed interpersonal and communication skills (Greene and Grant, 2003, Jarvis, 2003, Peltier, 2001, Zeus and Skiffington, 2003b).

The history of mentoring begins with its origins in Greek mythology when Mentor, a friend of Odysseus, assumed the responsibilities for educating Odysseus’ son (Jarvis, 2003). Mentoring in today’s business world echoes the relationship described in its classical origins. Generally, mentoring in an organizations take place when a senior member uses her or his expertise, wisdom and advice to guide or influence the career path of a junior member (Peltier, 2001). Organizations may seek to formalize the mentoring process and many develop formal mentoring programs, with internal or external mentors, as a way to help improve talent and increase the organizational knowledge and resources (Greene and Grant, 2003, Jarvis, 2003, Peltier, 2001, Zeus and
Mentoring evolved from a hierarchical relationship between a wise expert and a promising novice, to become in the modern sense, a collaborative learning alliance between colleagues (Peltier, 2001, Zeus and Skiffington, 2003b). Mentoring within organizations may have helped to open the doors to the idea of one-to-one relationships designed to assist executive and management growth, development and change (Clinton and Laurence, 2006, Abbott et al., 2006a, Kevin, 2004, Mike et al., 2006, Mike et al., 2007). As such, mentoring may have helped pave the way for coaching.

Nonetheless, mentoring and coaching are distinct because: mentors are generally considered experts in their particular field or industry within the organization and coaches need not be experts; mentors freely give their advice and share their opinions regarding goals and strategies, as opposed to coaches who seek to draw out that information from the client; and, mentors generally have a great degree of influence over the career of the person they mentor, whereas, the coach is generally not in a position to influence others and often works in an external capacity to the organization (Jarvis, 2003, Zeus and Skiffington, 2003b). As with many of the influences of coaching, mentoring can be viewed as contributing many of its more generalized aspects and good practices to coaching and its growth (Creane, 2002, Jarvis, 2003).

Sports Psychology and coaching

Coaching has also benefited from the field of sports psychology. Sports psychology is used by athletic coaches and other sports personnel to attempt to help athletes to achieve their potential in their particular sport, while ideally translating that into “winning” (Creane, 2002). Sports psychology utilizes a variety of motivational,
cognitive behavioural techniques and assessments to change behaviour and improve performance (Whitmore, 1996). Sports psychology and athletic coaching may, at times, be more directive and more imposing of an agenda than coaching (Whitmore, 1996, Whitmore, 2003). Similarly, athletics sometimes presents skill sets that may be transferred into other areas that coaches can explore, like mental toughness (Gordon, 2007, Gucciardi et al., 2009). Mental toughness is the concept of persistence and focus that some athletes use in order to overcome challenges and succeed against seemingly overwhelming obstacles (Gordon, 2007, Gucciardi et al., 2009). Some research has explored the degree to which executives can acquire mental toughness in business (Gordon, 2007, Gucciardi et al., 2009).

**Training and coaching**

Coaching is often compared to training in organizations. Organizational training is the process of teaching or reinforcing a set of skills for employees (Kevin, 2004, Mendenhall and Stahl, 2000). Organizational training is quite common in organizations, although some research suggests that only 8% to 12% of those who are trained translate their skills into measurable performance improvements or business results (Zeus and Skiffington, 2003b). Like coaching, training employs a number of adult learning techniques and communication techniques to educate and inform the client. However, coaching and training are unalike in several ways: training is usually a preset program that clients follow, while coaching is tailored to individual needs; training is often assigned and coaching is generally voluntary; training rarely provides feedback, while coaching often involves continuous feedback; and, training is indicative of a hierarchical
style of top down management, whereas coaching is a more egalitarian and collaborative process (Abbott and Rosinski, 2007, Abbott et al., 2006). Coaching and training nonetheless may compliment each other, in that coaching may be used to help embed training, while monitoring and developing new skills (Abbott and Rosinski, 2007, Abbott et al., 2006).

Therapy and coaching

Therapy and coaching share many features, but significant differences remain. Besides sharing some theories of psychological development, structure and motivation, coaching and psychological therapy both seek to: involve listening and reflection; recognise weaknesses and strengths; use client centered strategies; employ assessments; and, raise awareness regarding values and self-destructive patterns (Grant, 2007a). On the other hand, coaching and psychological therapy are different in several ways: therapy focuses on dysfunction and dysfunctional people, while coaching presumes that most people are functional and capable; therapy is past focused, dwelling on past feelings and what occurred in the past, while coaching is present and future-focused, channelling feelings into actions and using past behaviours as a guide for what can be presently accomplished; therapy measures progress, while coaching prompts performance; and, therapy creates a distance between the therapist and client, which restricts the therapists ability to self-share and give advice, while coaching encourages a more collaborative relationship between the coach and client, allowing the coach to share similar experiences and give advice and guidance as it is warranted (Coutu and Kauffman, 2009, Coutu et al., 2009).
Grant (2007) challenges the general distinctions separating therapy and coaching by noting that several researchers have made claims of coaching occupying spaces previously reserved for therapy:

For example, it has been proposed that coaching is developmental rather than goal focused (Kilburg, 2000), should incorporate the past as well as the present (Kemp, 2005), should focus on emotions rather than actions (Schlegelmich & Fresco, 2005), and should prioritise the delivery of expert skills-based knowledge rather than focusing on self-directed learning (Fox, 1983).

Moreover, Grant (2009) suggests that the perception of coaching clients as being mentally “healthy” may be misunderstood as research conducted at the University of Sydney on coaching clients reveal that between 25% and 50% “have clinically significant levels of anxiety, stress or depression” (Coutu and Kauffman, 2009, Coutu et al., 2009). Grant’s research suggests that many coaches, lacking in qualifications in therapy and counseling, are most likely coaching clients who may benefit more from therapy than coaching, and that coaching is most likely being used as a form of therapy for populations suffering from some form of mental pathology (Coutu and Kauffman, 2009, Coutu et al., 2009, Grant, 2007a).

**Patterns of Use for Executive Coaching**

Research has explored the phenomenal growth of executive coaching over the last 10 years and its pattern of use in organizations. In 2001, there were an estimated 15,000 coaches worldwide (Orenstein, 2006) but that number doubled to 30,000 estimated coaches by 2007 (Bono et al., 2009) generating an estimated billion dollars worldwide (Bono et al., 2009, Orenstein, 2006). An estimated 93% of U.S.-based Global 1000
companies and 65% of the Global 1000 outside the U.S. use executive coaching (Bono et al., 2009, Peterson, 1996). The American Management Association (2008) reports that 46% of North American companies use executive coaching for executives, while only 27% of managers, 13% of supervisors and 5% of other employees receive executive coaching (Bono et al., 2009). Of those who do use executive coaching, 98.5% (International Coach Federation, 1998) feel it is valuable, and 86% of those coached and 74% of other stakeholders are satisfied with the coaching (Bono et al., 2009). The CIPD (2004) reports that 99% of respondents agree that “coaching can deliver tangible benefits to both individuals and organisations”; 96% agree that “coaching is an effective way to promote learning in organisations”; and, 92% agree that “when coaching is managed effectively it can have a positive impact of an organisation’s bottom line” (Jarvis, 2003).

The literature also describes the historical use of executive coaching as a means to manage underperforming executives, derailing executives and executives who were being set up for termination (Bono et al., 2009, Coutu and Kauffman, 2009, Jarvis, 2003). However, as the business community has adopted the notion that employees are a competitive advantage in a time where knowledge is a commodity, executive coaching is used more for growing positive talent management than remedial performance (Bono et al., 2009, Coutu and Kauffman, 2009, Jarvis, 2003). Jarvis (2003) reports that, according to the 2004 CIPD report, 30% of respondents used coaching to address underperformance, while 78% reported being hired to improve performance.

Coutu and Kauffman (2009) report data that asserts that 48% of the time, executive coaches are hired to develop the capabilities of a high-potential manager or facilitate a transition into a new role. Only 12% of the time are coaches hired to address
derailing executives (Coutu and Kauffman, 2009). Derailment is defined as “failure to deliver on performance objectives with negative impacts on current or future employment” (Levenson, 2009).

Executive Coaching Research Less Focused on Expatriates and Non-Westerners

In reviewing the literature of primary coaching areas (executive, life, workplace and business) some noticeable gaps in the literature becomes apparent. Foremost, it would appear that much of the use, research, and education regarding coaching occurs in predominately Western contexts. There are few studies that have explored how well coaching might work in non-Western environments (Peterson, 2007, Rosinski, 2003).

Executive coaching seems to be primarily limited to domestic organizations, while international human resource management research suggests that international subsidiaries and their local staff, with their complex set of challenges, may benefit from the coaching outcomes, which executives in domestic organizations report. There also seems to be a gap in the literature regarding the impact of executive coaching on expatriates who must operate and succeed in foreign environments, which only a couple of studies have explored in detail (Abbott and Rosinski, 2007, Abbott et al., 2006b, Peterson, 2007, Rosinski, 2003). Abbott’s (2006) study suggests that executive coaching is beneficial and relevant to expatriates. Expatriates in international organisations are valued executives managing the international subsidiary and its departments, but unlike their domestic counterparts, expatriate managers do not seem to have executive coaching as readily accessible. Grant’s (2004) survey reveals that “coaches primarily work with
clients on a local (68% of clients) and national level (72.9% of clients) rather than internationally (2.0% of clients).”

Although there is very little research on the application of executive coaching to non-Westerners, some literature have described various experiences in applying coaching to executives in Brazil, China India, Japan and the Middle East (Passmore, 2009). The literature suggest that the effectiveness and use of executive coaching is present for non-Westerners in each of the country contexts, while emphasizing that the culture of the country modifies how executive coaching is explained, justified, processed and accepted (Passmore, 2009).

The coaching research literature has yet to examine why executive coaching is underused and under-researched in the international context. The coaching literature also has seemed to fail to explore the effectiveness of coaching with local HCNs or its value to expatriates in different phases of their expatriate assignments. Moreover, the coaching literature has yet to study how coaching assists expatriates and HCNs working together as part of a management team. The research study here seeks to add to the body of literature for executive coaching by examining these relatively unexplored areas in the practice of executive coaching.

Summary of the Relevance of Executive Coaching

In summary, executive coaching for domestic organisations is a widely used “helping” intervention that draws from a variety of known and effective helping interventions. Although executive coaching is heavily referenced, many of its claims lack a vigorous evidentiary validation. Nevertheless, executive coaching appears to fit
many international organization’s aspirations to positively grow and develop their talent and as such, has been widely used and, according to the users, can be immensely useful and beneficial. Executive coaching then would appear, on its face, to be an appropriate intervention for international managers to use for improving their skills, development and performance. However, there exists a lack of research in the literature which explores the efficacy and challenges associated with using executive coaching for international managers. The research study presented here seeks to examine a research study project that attempts to evaluate the impact of executive coaching on expatriates and HCNs working together in a MNE in a foreign country.

The Process of Executive Coaching

The process of executive coaching is central to its effectiveness. Grant (2005:3) highlights that: “a coach with highly developed applied coaching skills can deliver excellent outcomes purely through facilitating a process rather than delivering expert knowledge.” In executive coaching, the “process” delivers outcomes (Grant, 2005b). This section will explore the literature and research around executive coaching and the theories and methodologies that support sustained change and developmental learning outcomes, which form the key elements of the process. The executive coaching process, which represents the general processes used by coaches operating in domestic organisations to achieve outcomes, is also applicable to the international context, with some caveats mostly related to the role of culture. This section examines the process that is central to coaching in domestic managerial settings and considers the applicability of the process for international managers and MNEs.
As Liljenstrand and Nebeker (2008) note, there are generally 5 dimensions to the coaching process:

(a) setting the foundation by defining the context, establishing the contract, and building a working alliance; (b) assessing the individual; (c) strategizing the engagement and developing a plan based on assessment feedback and goals; (d) implementing the plan and, in some cases; (e) evaluating the intervention and reassessing the initial target areas.

In the following sections this literature review will briefly explore each of the 5 parts of the coaching process

_The structure of the coaching process_

**Setting the Foundation**

Coaches are tasked with setting a foundation when working with clients to establish a trusting relationship that focuses on the objectives of the organization and the individual needs of the coaching executive. In order to establish a trusting relationship, coaches generally begin by making a formal contract with their clients which may explain how coaching can be of value, reiterates that coaching is not therapy, discusses appropriate boundaries and confidentiality and establishes the ethical guidelines that will guide the coaching; and, as such, the coaching contract helps to communicate a realistic representation of coaching and to assure the client that the coach will perform in a professional manner (Liljenstrand and Nebeker, 2008). The trusting relationship is cemented by confidentiality clauses and ethical practices which allow executives the freedom to discuss their goals and challenges without fear of reprisal (Coutu et al., 2009).
The research suggests that a critical component of a successful coaching relationship is to establish a best “fit” between the coach and executive (Coutu and Kauffman, 2009). Natale and Diamante (2005) suggests that the best “fit” can be established when: the coach manages the executive’s resistance to coaching by explaining its meaning and relevance to their performance and the organisation; the coach can establish professional credibility in the requisite subject matters of coaching and business; and, the coach’s ability to adapt the coaching process to the specific needs and style of the executive.

The coaching process generally occurs during individualized coaching sessions, which are strategic results-focused business meetings between the coach and executive. The coaching sessions are typically constructed to be time-sensitive and complimentary to the executive’s everyday business life (Stern, 2004). Coaching sessions can be structured in a variety of ways, as best fits the needs of the client and the availability of the coach (Stern, 2004). Almost 60% of coaching sessions are thirty minutes to an hour (Grant and Zackson, 2004). Grant and Zackson (2004) reveal that 63% of coaching is conducted over the phone, while 34% occurs face-to-face. The majority of face-to-face coaching sessions occur in the executive’s office (Bono et al., 2009), thus enabling the often busy client to attend to work matters while accommodating the coaching. Coaching sessions may last for a couple of weeks or many months, with current research reporting that 48% of coaching contracts are between 7-12 months, which represents the dominant time-frame of the coaching assignments (Coutu and Kauffman, 2009). The literature describes how coaches are wary of clients developing a dependency on their services (Wellner, 2006). Although 40% of coaches have reported an overly dependent client,
only 8% of coaches report a coaching contract that extends beyond 19 months (Coutu and Kauffman, 2009). The coaching process is generally designed to help a client to independently make choices and decisions that attain goals when the coach is no longer around, so life-long dependency, which is ethically questionable, becomes unnecessary (Wellner, 2006).

The challenge of establishing the best fit between coach and executive may take on an added layer of complexity in international organisations where a dearth of executive coaches may narrow the available pool of “best fit” coaches (Abbott, 2006). Moreover, there may be less opportunities for the coach and executive to establish a strong and trust relationship. In the international context, telephone coaching may be necessary but may impede relationship building, which takes on extra significance in relationships with cultural barriers (Passmore, 2009, Tulpa and Bresser, 2009). Likewise, if the coaching is taking place in cultures that are resistant to “helping” interventions, then more effort may need to be expended in building the relationship. Lastly, as culture and knowledge of international challenges would seem to be relevant, the executive coach may need to demonstrate some type of subject matter expertise in order to build and sustain the relationship. Thus the coach/executive relationship would assume a greater level of complexity in the international context than the domestic one.

In summary, the coaching research and literature has attempted to capture how coaches use the coaching process to establish trusting relationships that compliment the working style of the executive, but the literature and research has yet to fully explore which particular elements of the process are applicable to international managers and MNES.
Assessing the individual

Coaches assess, to varying degrees, the clients and their situations and environments in order to have a better understanding of the context that the client is operating in. The assessments may comprise the pre-coaching diagnostic work a coach performs in order to prepare for the coaching engagement (Jarvis, 2003). Coaches may use informal assessments (such as interviewing and shadowing) or formal assessments (such as 360 degree multi-rater or assessment tests) in order to form a greater understanding of the client’s needs, challenges and strengths (Coutu and Kauffman, 2009). Pre-coaching diagnostics may also help to determine a baseline that can then be measured post-coaching to quantify and qualify any areas of growth, improvement or change (Allsworth and Griffin, 2005).

There does not seem to be much research that explores the impact or effectiveness of pre-coaching diagnostic work or assessments on the coaching process and its outcomes, although there is much research that validates the individual assessment tools used by coaches (Allsworth and Griffin, 2005). Bono’s et al (2009) study, to determine whether a coach’s psychological background and training impacts the coaching process, seems to find little difference between the effectiveness of psychologically-trained coaches versus non-psychologically-trained coaches. Bono et al (2009) finds that a coach’s background and training do predict “how he or she will conduct coaching, who he or she will coach, what assessments and tools he or she may choose, and how he or she will evaluate coaching effectiveness.” For example, Bono et al (2009) finds that psychologically-trained coaches are more likely to use instruments, tools and methods
which are supported by stronger empirical validity than non-psychological coaches. The current research that exists does indicate that psychological coaches use formal assessments more than non-psychological coaches (Bono et al., 2009), while 77% of coaches use the 360 degree multi-rater tool and only 39% of coaches use psychometric tools (Coutu and Kauffman, 2009). According to survey conducted by Coutu and Kauffman (2009), 86% of coaches use interviewing as tool to gather information regarding the coaching client. The pre-diagnostic work and assessments are used to mainly expand the awareness of the coach and client so that the client can more accurately target areas that goals and strategies can be formed around.

The coaching literature and research has focused primarily on the use of assessments for coaching clients in domestic environments, but few studies have explored the applicability of assessments on international managers. The assessments used in executive coaching are analogous and sometimes interchangeable with the psychological and personality tests used in the selection of job applicants. The research suggests that many psychological and personality tests have been developed in the United States and may be culturally biases and not as reliable or valid when applied to non-American cultures (Dowling and Welch, 2004). The study here seeks to better understand whether assessments have the same value for international organizations as their domestic counterparts.

**Strategizing the engagement**

In coaching, the coach uses various methods, models and techniques as part of a strategy to assist the client in achieving specific goals (Grant, 2005a, Grant and
Goals lie at the heart of coaching and the main thrust of the coaching process is to engage the coach and client in a series of action-orientated conversations that result in beneficial outcomes for the executive and the organisation (Grant, 2005a, Grant and Cavanagh, 2004, Grant and Zackon, 2004). The methods, models and techniques that the coach uses derive from a host of sources, some grounded in previously established empirical research and others that have only anecdotal validity (Peltier, 2001). The literature and research surrounding goals and goal attainment and the various methods, models and techniques that coaches use to guide goal attainment is vast and beyond the scope of this literature review (Peltier, 2001).

However, there does seem to be a gap in the coaching literature and research in regards to exploring what particular methods, models and techniques best support particular goals (Bono et al., 2009). As mentioned previously though, Bono et al’s (2009) survey of coaches reveals that there are essentially two models that coaches uses to address the goals of executive clients: the reflective model and the interventionist model. These two models address four over-arching goals that impact executives: personal growth goals and development goals (reflective), and business competencies goals and behavioural change goals (interventionist)—all other goals can be sub-grouped under these over-arching goals (Bono et al., 2009).

This categorization of goals and supporting models allows for a better understanding of which particular models, methods and techniques can be used and when, how and for what purpose they are to be used. It should be noted that the goals and corresponding models are not rigidly composed, but there is fluidity between them as some behavioural change may need some tools of reflection and some development may
need specific business competencies (Grant and Zackon, 2004). As Grant and Zackon (2004) note, “coaching sessions and indeed whole coaching engagements” will tend to be either focused on an executive’s challenges with skills, performance and development and, as such, the coaching sessions will fall into either a reflexive model or an interventionist model.

While the models Bono et al (2009) identifies seem on point, there does seem to be a gap in the identification of over-arching goals. Adaptation is identified in the literature as an over-arching goal of executives because it confers the ability to accept the unknown and adjust quickly when things change, which is a defining characteristic of the current business environment for many organisations (Oades et al., 2005). The goal of adaptation is one that seems to borrow from both the reflexive model and the interventionist model because executives will be unsure whether the future change will require development or behavioural changes (Oades et al., 2005). As such, adaptation represents the hybrid over-arching goal for executives who must deal with rapidly changing environmental circumstances. Likewise, adaptation is vital to the success of international managers, where the concept is also referred to as “acculturation” (Abbott, 2006).

**Implementing the plan**

After specific goals are established and clarified, the executive client devises an action plan which is “a delineation, in behaviourally specific or cognitively specific terms, of what the executive needs to do and when” (Natale and Diamante, 2005). Action plans may be as varied as the number of coaches that promote their construction and
there is virtually no literature or research that explores the impact or effectiveness of any specific type of action plan versus another on coaching outcomes. Action plans may focus on the overall development of the coaching client and describe key indicators of success and objectives, and/or the action plan may be a weekly chart of tasks or “homework” that the coaching client completes before the next coaching session (Natale and Diamante, 2005, Skiffington and Zeus, 2003). Skiffington and Zeus (2003) note that there are several factors that can mitigate the effectiveness of an action plan: the knowledge, skills and abilities of the coaching client to complete the actions; the amount of time required to fulfil the actions; the constraints on the individual and organisation; and, the impact of the actions on others in the workplace or in the coaching client’s personal life.

Evaluating the Intervention

Within coaching, the intervention is generally evaluated on two levels: one level focuses on providing the executive with immediate feedback on their performance and achievements throughout the coaching intervention and action plan, while the other level focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of the coaching intervention overall for its business impact on the organisation. The first level of evaluation is concerned with assisting executives in building their self-awareness and self-reflection skills. The second level establishes the business case and validation of executive coaching. However, feedback can be gathered through a variety of sources and used at either level or both levels depending on the needs of the coach, executive or organisation. Both levels are explored below.
Evaluating the Executive’s Performance of the Action Plan

Coaches provide feedback in a number of different circumstances and there are several tools and techniques to provide feedback (Natale and Diamante, 2005, Skiffington and Zeus, 2003, Zeus and Skiffington, 2003b, Zeus and Skiffington, 2003a). Feedback is critical information that lets a client understand how they are doing and what changes, if any, still need to be made (Gregory et al., 2008). Coaches often will use feedback as part of the coaching process to follow up with the client regarding the progress through action steps and goal attainment (Bono et al., 2009). Feedback provides direction and encouragement and can often in itself motivate others. The research into feedback for coaching focuses mainly on the multi-rater feedback that clients receive and less on the efficacy of feedback from the coach to the client.

Although feedback as part of the coaching process is well advocated and taught, it is not often researched, which creates a gap in understanding best practices. There is also limited research into how feedback affects executives in the international context. Abbott (2006) suggests that feedback helps to build increased self-awareness and self-reflection which assists expatriates in understanding and assimilating cultural differences, while maintaining one’s own identity. Passmore (2009) suggests that non-Western managers experience increased levels of self-awareness and self-reflection which assists their communication and relationship building skills within and between cultures. As such, feedback may be critical in the performance and development of international managers working together and managing teams.
Evaluating the Effectiveness of Coaching for Business Impact

The executive coaching research when evaluating the effectiveness of coaching has trailed behind its own growth and prominence in the industry (Levenson, 2009). The literature suggests that coaching gains acceptance and importance to organisations where it can demonstrate its effectiveness and business impact (Levenson, 2009). Peterson (2009) interprets the data collected by Coutu and Kauffman (2009) to surmise that only 70% of coaches provide a qualitative evaluation of the effectiveness of coaching, while less than 33% may provide a quantitative evaluation of behavioural effectiveness and less than 25% provide any quantitative evaluation on the business impact of the coaching.

Bush (2009) claims that only 10% of organisations perform a post-evaluation assessment of executive coaching. According to Levenson (2009) the primary evaluation tool used by organisations and coaches is a 360 multi-rater by direct reports, peers, and supervisors. The 360 multi-rater though only measures behaviour change, which Levenson (2009) asserts may only be tangentially associated with financial or strategic impacts on the business. The research seems to imply that there are two categories of measurement for executive coaching: the effectiveness for the individual executive and the business impact on the organisation. Satisfaction of one of the measurements would offer evidence of executive coaching’s return on investment (ROI), while satisfaction of both measurements offers the most compelling evidence supporting the outcomes and efficacy of executive coaching (Levenson, 2009).

As evidenced by current practices, many organizations measure the effectiveness of coaching using a mixture of metrics and qualitative data (Jarvis, 2003). Some surveys claim that executive coaching produced a 529% return on investment along with
numerous intangible benefits (Jarvis, 2003). Organizations may examine the sales and production of an executive pre and post coaching (the impact on business performance indicators), the changes in the team’s performance pre and post coaching (the achievement of objectives set in the start of the coaching assignment), the introduction of new initiatives, staff turnover rates or improved retention of key staff, and improved appraisal/performance ratings (Jarvis, 2003). From a qualitative analysis, businesses can gather feedback on the performance of the coach, employee attitude/climate surveys, individual and line manager satisfaction with coaching, comparison on pre and post 360 degree multi-rater feedback ratings and any other anecdotal examples of success (Jarvis, 2003). Levenson (2009) counters that many of the common measurements of effectiveness fail to adequately identify coaching as the predominate cause of success.

Levenson (2009) adopts a stricter evaluation of the effectiveness of executive coaching that focuses on the measurable business impact on the organisation. Indeed, Levenson (2009:104) wonders, “if coaching improves leadership behaviours, but those behaviours are not the critical factor impacting business performance, then what is the point of the coaching?” Levenson (2009) notes that previous research has primarily examined measurable outcomes relating to leadership behaviours, perceived effectiveness and “hard” performance measures, or observable outcomes that relate directly to the executives job duties. For Levenson, (2009) the business case for executive coaching can only be determined by showing a clear and direct impact on the business, and in order to determine this, it must be shown that: there are specific actions that the executive is solely responsible for, and, that if performed correctly will positively impact the business and if performed incorrectly, will negatively impact the business; in the absence of
coaching, the executive would have performed the actions incorrectly; and, in the presence of coaching, the executive would have performed the actions correctly. Levenson (2009) essentially argues that coaching impacts business if, but for executive coaching, the outcomes that positively impact the business would not have occurred. Levenson’s research highlights the challenges that executive coaching faces in establishing a compelling case of business impact, although measurable outcomes and impact on the individual has its own value that many organisations can recognise.

As there are so few studies on the use of executive coaching on international managers, there are currently no studies that have evaluated the effectiveness of an executive coaching intervention on international managers. Arguably though, an evaluation of the outcomes of international managers may be able to show a more direct impact on their subsidiary organisation than their domestic counterparts because international managers typically have greater influence and are more directly responsible for larger parts of the subsidiary than domestic managers. Also, international managers may experience greater gaps in their performance, skills and development abilities due to the complexity of international assignments and business, which may make any gains more prominent and influential in the subsidiary.

However, the evaluations of the effectiveness of executive coaching intervention may be limited by cultural values. For example, some evaluations of the performance and outcomes of international managers may be constrained though, as compared to domestic managers, if the international manager is located in countries that are reticent to provide measurable feedback, such as in countries where “saving face” has cultural
weight. The study here seeks to examine the outcomes generated by executive coaching in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention in an international environment.

Summary of the Process of Executive Coaching

In summary, the process of executive coaching is vital to the success of coaching and the achievement of coaching outcomes. The research and literature supports the idea that the coaching process should establish a trusting relationship that focuses on the individual needs of the executive client. Moreover, the coaching process is a structured, results-orientated series of conversations designed to understand and clarify goals that can be then transformed into actions that the coaching client completes. The research finds that coaching is tailored to focus on the needs of the individual executive, which is developed best within a trusting relationship with an experienced coach. Moreover the research finds that the well-structured coaching engagements focused on goal-achievement, supported with clear models and a well-designed action plan yield the greatest results. Finally, the research finds that, while formal assessments are not critical to a successful coaching engagement or necessary for establishing executive coaching’s business impact, feedback within the coaching engagement is critical for establishing and building an executive’s self-awareness and self-reflection capabilities.

However, there are several gaps in the literature regarding the processes of executive coaching and its relationship to international managers. For example, it is unknown how culture impacts the forming of trusting relationships between a coach and executive who come from different culture backgrounds. In the Western context, coaching focuses on the needs of the individual, while some cultures place far less value
on individual needs and instead focus on community or familial needs. It is unknown how coaching bridges this difference. Additionally, it is unknown whether the delivery of coaching is appropriate in all circumstances. Executive coaching is often conducted in the Western business world over the telephone, but few studies have explored whether telephone coaching is widely used in the international context, or whether telephone coaching is effective or culturally appropriate. Similarly, executive coaching tends to be goal focused and focused on doing, while some cultures are more concerned with being—yet the research is primarily concerned with the achievement of specific goals.

Likewise, psychological assessments, which are often used and widely accepted in Western cultures may be rejected in other cultures because they are viewed as negatively stigmatizing, and feedback may be misunderstood and result in a loss of face. Because the process of executive coaching is channelled through a relationship between the coach and executive, the process is subject to the cultural miscues and challenges that affect all people from different cultures who interact together.

The research study here uses the general process common to most coaching engagements to explore and understand how the effectiveness of the process in a different culture context (here China), while comparing the impact of the coaching engagement on two distinct cultures (expatriates and HCNs). In the coaching intervention that formed the basis of this study, all five of the dimensions of the coaching process were incorporated and followed. Additionally, the coaches attempted to form a trusting relationship, and coaching sessions occurred face-to-face and by telephone to compare the two methods. In the study here, the executives were assessed formally and informally and provided with feedback and feedback strategies. Each coach used various models to
motivate behavioural change and all the executives were given individualized action plans to achieve their specific goals. Moreover, the thesis here serves as an evaluation of the coaching engagement’s effectiveness. Thus, the study here seeks to understand and validate the executive coaching process in the international context and provide some data that will begin to address the gaps in the literature regarding the executive coaching process and international managers. Generating a better and clearer understanding of the coaching process may provide more targeted and meaningful assistance to international managers who currently, as a whole, have lacked the resources of executive coaching. More exploration of the whether a clearer model of executive coaching intervention can assist international managers would benefit both coaching and organisational development.

Outcomes of Executive Coaching

Executive Coaching has been claimed to produce measurable outcomes that improve the overall performance, skills and development of executives and their organisations (Grant et al., 2010). The executive coaching literature is replete with claims of the impact and effectiveness of executive coaching, while there is a paucity of empirically validated research to support the many claims of executive coaching (Grant, 2005b). Nevertheless, the research that exists provides a compelling argument for the use and effectiveness of executive coaching in the professional development, performance improvement and skill building of executives and managers (Grant, 2008a). Moreover, executive coaching has demonstrated an impact on acculturation, life management and organisational commitment--outcomes which support the executive performance and the
attainment of organisational objectives (Grant, 2008a). The executive coaching outcomes that are supported by empirical evidence map onto the needs and challenges of international managers, whose outcomes from executive coaching has scarcely been attended to in the research and literature (Abbott and Rosinski, 2007, Abbott et al., 2006).

Executive coaching represents a considerable return on investment and has an impact on an organisation’s success and fiduciary interests (Peterson and Kraiger, 2004). Although executive coaching produces tangible outcomes, other factors may make it challenging for researchers and practitioners to gauge the full impact of executive coaching (Levenson, 2009). Although clear methods for calculating ROI and business impact would increase the business case for executive coaching in international organisations, the lack of clear and strong methods for calculating ROI or business impact has not seemed to impact the use of executive coaching in domestic organisations.

This section will explore the literature and research as it relates to the outcomes of executive coaching, as well as the research that explores measuring executive coaching outcomes.

*Executive Coaching’s Relationship to Goals and Objectives*

The executive coaching literature claims to assist the attainment of goals for executive managers in domestic organisations (Kombarakaran et al., 2008). Executive coaching is employed by organisations as a means to assist the satisfaction of organisational objectives through the individual outcomes of executive managers (Bartlett and Ghoshal, 2000, Bartlett and Ghoshal, 2003). Many of the organisational
objectives then become specific and discrete performance criteria that executive managers and their direct reports need to satisfy (Kraimer et al., 2001).

In organisations, performance criteria represent specific goals that individuals must perform in order to produce expected outcomes. Executive coaching has been shown to assist the satisfaction of goals (Grant et al., 2010). Various aspects of goal achievement have been validated to some degree in studies of goal striving (Grant, 2007b), goal attainment (Green et al., 2005, Spence and Grant, 2007) and goal commitment (Spence and Grant, 2007) in life coaching studies. The satisfaction of goals in life coaching suggests that the results would correspond to executive coaching. Kombarakaran et al.’s (2008:86) study concurs, finding that with executive coaching:

Executives reported that coaching assisted them in balancing and prioritizing their work. They were better able to define performance goals (88%) and business objectives with direct reports (80%). Coaching provided insight into the business drivers of decisions and their impact on others (76%).

Elliot (2005) however notes that goal focused coaching may be damaging in some cases, such as executives suffering from burnout, for example. However, there has been little empirical analysis of the deleterious impacts of goal focused coaching on goal achievement.

The executive coaching claims of goal achievement for personal and professional objectives in the domestic environment may also be applicable for international managers, a group often overlooked in the executive coaching research. The complexities of international assignments can result in organisational objectives that are less clear and goals that are frustrated by various competing personal and professional
challenges (Bartlett and Ghoshal, 2000, Bartlett and Ghoshal, 2003). The research study here seeks then to examine whether executive coaching can assist international managers, similar to domestic managers, in achieving goal outcomes that satisfy organisational and personal objectives.

*Executive Coaching’s Relationship to Psychological Health*

The executive coaching research purports to deliver a variety of additional psychological outcomes that result from goal attainment, namely: enhancing well-being (personal and at work) and reducing depression, anxiety and stress (Grant et al., 2010, Grant, 2001b, Grant, 2003, Grant, 2007b, Green et al., 2007, Green et al., 2005, Palmer and Gyllensten, 2008, Spence et al., 2008, Spence and Grant, 2005, Spence and Grant, 2007). The coaching research has found that coaching can have a positive impact on the psychological health of the coached client, even if improving psychological health is not an intended goal (Grant, 2007a, Grant, 2007b). Improvements in the psychological health of coached clients have been observed in executive, workplace and life coaching programs (Grant et al., 2010, Grant, 2001b, Grant, 2003, Grant, 2007b, Green et al., 2007, Green et al., 2005, Palmer and Gyllensten, 2008, Spence et al., 2008, Spence and Grant, 2005, Spence and Grant, 2007).

Well-being, both personally and at work, has been found to be associated with goal attainment (Grant, 2007b, Grant et al., 2009, Heaney et al., 1993, Kozlowski and Ilgen, 2006, Spence and Grant, 2005, Spence and Grant, 2007). Well-being describes the sense of happiness, satisfaction and contentment one feels personally; whereas, workplace well-being describes one’s sense of satisfaction at work. Green, et al. (2005)
examines a life-coaching program that results in significant increases of well-being. Green, et al. (2005) notes that coached clients with the greatest levels of well-being, also exhibited enhancements in several key characteristics of quality-of-life measures: self-acceptance (positive attitude towards self); positive relation with others (warm, trusting relationships); autonomy (self-determination and independence); environmental mastery (competence in managing the environment); purpose in life (sense of direction and goals); and personal growth (feeling of continuous development).

Similarly, Grant (2008) examines coaching’s impact of goal striving on executive managers and found that workplace well-being is enhanced, especially when the goals are valued personally. Grant’s (2008) findings support Sheldon and Houser-Marko’s (2001) previous research that finds that the process of setting and following through on self-concordant goals that align with personal values enhances self-efficacy and well-being. Moreover, Grant (2008) discovers that an executive coaching intervention results in greater levels of self-acceptance and self-confidence in the executive managers, which in turn, enhances workplace well-being. The findings regarding well-being, personally and at work, suggest that executive coaching’s impact on goal attainment may influence job satisfaction as described by the IHRM literature and research.

In Grant’s (2008) study of executive coaching, he also examines the impact of the coaching intervention on depression, anxiety and stress. Grant (2008) finds that while the coaching intervention did result in reducing depression and stress, the intervention seemed to have no significant impact on anxiety. Spence and Grant (2005) make a similar find in a life-coaching intervention that shows to have little impact on the mental health of the coached clients. The researchers argue in both studies that one explanation
for the inconsistent findings of coaching’s relationship to depression, anxiety and stress is
the theory that coaching is primarily meant for populations presenting with low levels of
psychological distress, as coaching is not counselling therapy for persons with mental
pathologies. Grant and Spence (2005) report that volunteers for free coaching studies
have been screened for psychological distress, and the researchers have found that
anywhere between a quarter (25%) to a half (52%) of the respondents are assessed to
have levels of psychological distress that precludes them from participating in the
research studies. Grant and Spence (2005) then recommend that coached clients should
be carefully screened for pre-existing mental pathologies prior to a coaching intervention,
in order to determine whether the client would benefit from clinical assistance.

The findings that executive coaching may enhance well-being (personal and at
work), and possibly reduce depression, anxiety and stress may have particular relevance
and applicability to international managers. IHRM research has found that higher levels
of personal and job satisfaction positively enhance work performance (Shaffer and
Harrison, 1998). International managers have been found to experience high levels of
stress at work and in their personal lives as a result of the cultural differences and work
pressures in international subsidiaries (Erbacher et al., 2006, Shaffer and Harrison, 1998,
Shaffer et al., 2006). The coaching research suggests that executive coaching may assist
international managers in enhancing their feelings of job and life satisfaction, as well as,
reducing their feelings of stress.
Executive Coaching’s Relationship to Improving Performance

The executive coaching research claims to assist executives and their organisations, in maintaining and improving performance. Executive coaching is used in organisations to help underperforming executives to improve their performance and to help high-performing executives to achieve greater levels of performance (Grant and Spence, 2008). Performance in organisations is often moderated by the executive’s own self-awareness or knowledge regarding her or his current level of performance, the executive’s motivation to improve performance, the executive’s belief in her or his ability to improve performance, and the executive’s access to resources and solutions that might facilitate performance improvement (Agarwal et al., 2009). Executive coaching then is used to enact behavioural changes to create greater levels of performance. As the executives’ performance increases, so then does the performance of the organisation (Levenson, 2009). The executive coaching research provides strong evidence that executive coaching can help executives improve performance primarily by affecting the factors that moderate performance (Levenson, 2009).

The executive coaching research and literature provides some support for impacting an executive’s deficient performance and improving underperformance. Underperformance is often cited as one of the prevailing characteristics that can “derail” an executive and result in termination or disciplinary action (Levenson, 2009). Coutu and Kauffman’s (2009) survey of executive coaching reports that over 86% of coaches have addressed a “derailing” behaviour in their coaching engagements; and, around 12% of coaches are contracted predominately to address derailing behaviour. Kombarankaran et al.’s (2008) empirical study found that executive coaching assisted executives in better
adapting to the work environment, which resulted in 78% of executives experiencing greater levels of productivity and 75% of executives having more job satisfaction. Similarly, an earlier study by Olivero, Bane and Kopelman (1997) found that executive coaching increased the productivity of public service managers (Grant and Spence, 2008). Bowles, Cunningham, De La Rosa and Picano (2007) found that coaching improved the performance goals of U.S. Army recruiters, although the increase was greater for middle managers than executive managers. Perkins (2009) found that executive coaching helped to improve the effectiveness of meetings conducted by a coached executive leader (Levenson, 2009). Barrett (2007) however, found that while executive coaching helped to decrease burnout, it failed to improve productivity (Grant and Spence, 2008). Levenson’s (2009) research though continues to support the positive behavioural changes that result from executive coaching engagements, which impact both the executive and organisation, while noting that there are many factors which may complicate an understanding of the exact impact on the organisation as a whole.

Agarwal et al (2009) describes how executive coaching impacts performance by illustrating how it can help to improve work team effectiveness, as defined by Hackman (2003):

> According to Hackman (2003) work team effectiveness is a function of three performance processes; effort expended by team members; the match between the task, situation, and performance strategies employed by team members; and the level of knowledge and skills possessed by the team (Agarwal et al., 2009).

Agarwal et al (2009) then claims that coaching can address the performance process described by Hackman in various ways. Executive coaching can provide a safe space for
improving skills (Edmondson, 1999); facilitate open discussion of errors through feedback (Edmondson, 1999); reduce environmental ambiguity (Johlke and Dunham, 2001); accentuate self-confidence (Agarwal et al., 2009, Kombarakaran et al., 2008); and, enhance self-efficacy (Evers et al., 2006, Bandura, 1977). Moreover, executive coaching has been effective in reducing procrastination (Palmer and Gyllensten, 2008) and stress (Berriman, 2007, Grant, 2007b, Grant, 2008b, Grant et al., 2009, Gyllensten and Palmer, 2006, Palmer and Gyllensten, 2008, Spence and Grant, 2005), although Gyllensten and Palmer (2006) have also shown that executive coaching may increase stress in executives. Levenson (2009) also observes that executive coaching may not be the best intervention in all cases, for example, there may be some team work challenges that training or team building could address as effectively as coaching. Overall, the research and literature seems to strongly suggest that executive coaching can assist executives in increasing their performance above current levels and reducing the influence of factors that impede performance gains.

The executive coaching performance outcomes, predominately in reference to domestic executives, would seem applicable to international executives as well. For reasons detailed extensively earlier in the literature review, international managers are affected by a variety of performance related challenges which often result in underperformance and the lack of time to investigate improving the efficiency of performance (Forster, 1997, Forster, 2000, Harzing, 2001a, Harzing, 2001b). Moreover, international managers often have greater levels of managerial responsibility than their domestic counterparts and thus may have more extensive and onerous performance targets (Abbott and Rosinski, 2007, Abbott et al., 2006). The complexity of the
international assignment adds performance moderators that do not seem to be present in domestic organisations, such as international adaptation, family support and cross-cultural training (Forster, 1997, Forster, 2000, Harzing, 2001a, Harzing, 2001b). Abbott et al, (2006) provides one of the few studies that suggests that executive coaching improves the performance of expatriate managers. As international managers face pressures and performance demands, interventions, such as executive coaching, hold significant potential.

Executive Coaching’s Relationship to Managerial Skills and Competencies

Executive coaching produces outcomes that build the managerial and functional skills and competencies of executives. Organisations use executive coaching to assist executives in identifying skills and capabilities to acquire and strengthen (Bono et al., 2009). Executives may also need to “unlearn” counter-productive skills and replace them with productive skills (Webb, 2006). The executive coach may have to work with the executive to lessen resistance to learning new skills and to help executives practice and develop new learned skills and capabilities (Levenson, 2009). In building skills and capabilities, executive coaching then acts as substitute or adjunct to skills training (Ladyshewsky, 2007). Coutu and Kauffman (2009) found that over 94% of coaches have engaged in building the capabilities of high-potential executives and over 28% of coaches (the majority) are hired exclusively for this purpose.

Coaching has the ability to help executives to build a wide range of skills and competencies. Kombarakaran, et al (2008) claims that executive coaching can build people skills and management, relationship skills and communication and dialogue skills.
Libri (2006) asserts that executive coaching assisted with the development of sales skills. Ladyshewsky (2007) and Miller (2007) explore how coaching can work in concert with training to strengthen and embed behavioural change. Levenson’s (2008) research supports how executive coaching can assist in building feedback skills, influencing skills, empathy skills, anger management and listening skills. Additionally, despite the growing number of studies validating the success of coaching skills, there are few studies that have examined the long term maintenance of new skills or behaviour changes acquired during coaching.

The executive coaching research literature that describes the skills and competencies outcomes may also be applicable for international managers. International managers often assume multiple roles in subsidiaries that are new to them and thus need new training especially in the building of new skill sets (Tung, 1981b, Tung, 1982, Tung, 1987). Often though, one of the major challenges confronting international managers is the lack of time and limited resources to develop the requisite skills (Tahvanainen, 2000). International managers may also have to learn new languages and cross-cultural skills (Selmer, 2004a, Selmer, 2006b, Selmer, 2006c). The research on executive coaching suggests that it may assist international managers to build various skills sets, including emotional intelligence, communication skills and people management skills which would benefit the organisation and the individual.

Executive Coaching’s Relationship to Professional Development

Executive professional development predominately involves leadership, team and career development (Brewster and Suutari, 2005). The executive coaching research has
explored career development (Bono et al., 2009, McCauley and Hezlett, 2002) and team development (Agarwal et al., 2009, Hackman, 2003), but the bulk of research has explored leadership development (Czigan, 2008, Diedrich, 1996, Feggetter, 2007, Grant, 2005a, Jones, 1997, Jones and Spooner, 2006, Kampa-Kokesch, 2002, Kiel et al., 1996, Kombarakaran et al., 2008). Kombarakaran et al. (2008) believes that the executive coaching increases the confidence of executives in regards to their leadership ability; and, the executives report increases in awareness and better results managing direct reports and customers.

Elliot (2005) though suggests that executive coaching for leadership development is a specialist skill set of coaching and relies on the expert knowledge of the coach, as well as the coach’s ability to facilitate development. Further Elliot (2005) notes that much of what he terms as “generalist coaching” focuses on goal-setting which is associated with transactional leadership, while transformational leadership, which focuses on achieving one’s potential is often overlooked. The executive coaching research does not seem to focus on transformational leadership, as illustrated by Elliot, which represents a gap in the literature. Transformational leadership is particularly useful for organisations in unstable environments where the flexibility and adaptability of the executives and organisation are competitive advantages (Elliott, 2005, Jones and Spooner, 2006). Moreover, the executive coaching research has not focused exclusively on what Elliot (2005) describes as the specialist field of “leadership coaching” to understand its effectiveness versus the more “generalist coaching”.

The coaching research has identified improvements in emotional intelligence as observed outcomes of executive coaching (David, 2005, Sullivan, 2006). Emotional intelligence has been defined as:

- the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion;
- the ability to access and/or access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought;
- the ability to understand emotions and emotional knowledge;
- and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer and Salovey, 1997).

Emotional intelligence has been found to improve leadership development and management capabilities (Goleman, 1996, Goleman, 1998). Sullivan (2006) and Chapman (2005) both found that executive coaching can be used to develop emotional intelligence competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social skills, which are components of effective leadership. Blatner (2007) found that emotional intelligence competencies can be used to facilitate team cohesiveness as well.

**Executive Coaching’s Relationship to Acculturation**

International managers would benefit from the very limited, yet still relevant, research regarding executive coaching for expatriates. Abbott et al (2006) has conducted a coaching intervention for expatriates and found that coaching improves performance and increase satisfaction. Abbott et al’s (2006) research is the only action-research project, save for the one proposed with this study, to explore executive coaching’s impact on an aspect of international managers. Notably though, Abbott’s research excludes the impact on local managers who generally comprise the members of the executive international managerial team. Abbott et al (2006) supports his theoretical conception of
executive coaching for expatriates on general theories underpinning coaching previously mentioned (cognitive behavioural, adult learning, psychoanalytic, client-centred), as well as, the research into cultural differences, with a particular focus on Hofstede’s (1997, 2001) and Rosinki’s (2003) research and theories.

Abbott et al (2006) argues that a primary difference between domestic coaching and expatriate coaching is the need for acculturation in international assignments:

acculturation refers to the ongoing changes and outcomes that occur as an individual experiences the process of interacting in and adapting to a different cultural environment (Berry, 1997:12).

Acculturation, according to Abbott et al, (2006) may also be known as cultural adaptation. Acculturation applies to expatriates adapting to the host country culture or to host country managers adapting to a foreign work culture or colleagues, and would apply to the process experienced by international managers collectively.


**Limitations of Executive Coaching**

Executive coaching, though widely touted in predominately Western organisations, is not a panacea nor is it effective in all circumstances. Although executive coaching is associated with positive outcomes, those outcomes can be
moderated by a lack of organisational support and the executive’s mental health and attitudes towards coaching. The executive coaching research has yet to fully provide empirical evidence to substantiate the literature and anecdotal claims of the factors that moderate executive coaching outcomes, although the limitations of coaching engagements are often explored in research studies. This section will briefly explore the factors that limit the effective outcomes in executive coaching.

**Relationship to the Coach**

The executive coaching literature seems to emphasize the significance of the relationship between to the coach and the coached client (Grant et al., 2010, Gyllensten and Palmer, 2006, Wycherley and Cox, 2008). The research finds that a strong and trusting relationship between coach and client contributes to the successful achievement of coaching outcomes (Gyllensten and Palmer, 2006). Conversely, if the relationship between the coach and client lacks trust or is a “poor fit” then the executive coaching intervention may be less effective. Wycherley and Cox (2008) argue that even “chemistry” between a coach and a client may not be enough to ensure the proper fit between the coach’s abilities and the client’s needs. It seems then that the literature suggests that a successful coaching relationship involves a degree of trust and matching of coaching competencies (Marshall, 2007). However, the research suggests that organisations that hire coaches may not necessarily invest a great deal of effort in providing the managers with the “best fit” of coaches, and as such, coaching relationships may not be productive (Wycherley and Cox, 2008).
When coaching international managers, the quality of the relationship between the coach and client may be even more salient than coaching in domestic organisations. Abbot (2006) describes the relationship between the coach and client as critical to the success of his expatriate coaching intervention. The literature suggest though that the relationships in international environments may be vulnerable to the influences of culture, cultural conflicts or miscommunications in the coaching conversations between the coach and client, the coach’s degree of knowledge regarding cultural orientations and international management issues (Abbott, 2006). Wycherley and Cox (2008) describe how the research on mentoring and culture offers two contradicting views of the influence of culture. One on hand, some research supports matching individuals with mentors from similar cultural backgrounds, while other research supports matching mentors with individuals from different cultural backgrounds (Wycherley and Cox, 2008). Organisations may find themselves struggling between advocating racial preference against cultural diversity. For coaches of international managers, this issue may be inevitable with international management teams that may represent several cultures and a limited supply of available and culturally aware coaches. Wycherley and Cox (2008) suggest that coaches may be able to overcome the challenges of inter-cultural coaching if the coach has sufficient training in building rapport and communicating value. This suggestion seems to be supported by practitioners in the field of coaching as well (Gallo, 2009).

In order for coaches to be effective with clients and form productive relationships, the research argues that coaches need to posses certain competencies.
Chapman (2005) summarizes Grant’s (2003) descriptions of a range of meta-competencies that coaches need to have:

*Rational intelligence* (the ability to conceptualize and reason from first principles; to get to the heart of an issue and adopt a “metaview”), *systems intelligence* (an understanding of how business functions; how family systems work; how human systems function, adapt and change; and the ability to create change in complex systems) and *emotional intelligence* (the awareness of self and others; cognitive and emotional flexibility and using emotions to set and reach goals) (Chapman, 2005).

Grant’s meta-competencies may be further enhanced by adding *cultural intelligence* (an awareness of other cultures and the management of organisational cultures) (Passmore and Law, 2009). The research implies that a combination of these four coaching meta-competencies may help to strengthen relationships between coaches and international managers in order to enhance the coaching intervention.

**Lack of Organisational Support of Coaching**

Despite the wide gains in popularity and use, executive coaching may still not be fully embraced by organisations for a variety of reasons. Although many human resource and talent managers have embraced coaching, not all organizations are so quick to do so (Agarwal et al., 2009). Generally, organizational support characterizes the extent to which the philosophy of the coaching program persists throughout the company (Jarvis, 2003). With support, it becomes easier for coaches to collect data, evaluate the success of the program, and encourage the coachee to identify partners for success or maintain the changes (McGovern, et al, 2001). Despite the apparent benefits, research shows that sometimes organizational support remains lacking (McGovern, et al, 2001). Several
reasons exist why there is not wide-spread organizational support: some companies engage coaching as a “quick fix” for an isolated employee issue; some “jump on the bandwagon” of coaching without understanding what results would be most beneficial; some members of the organization who do not receive the coaching feel threatened by executive coachee’s forward development (Abrahamson, 1996; Lindbom, 2007).

Nonetheless, there is a proliferation of solutions which can build organizational support. Initially, coaches can endeavour to communicate the need for organizational support prior to commencing the coaching assignment and thus achieve “buy-in” from the organization (Jarvis, 2003). Also, the coach can conduct educational seminars with other staff members regarding the benefits of executive coaching on the organization as a whole (Agarwal et al., 2009). Moreover, the coach can try to coach “top down” which involves beginning the coaching with the most senior management and then each level below (McGovern, et al, 2001). Through promotion then, the coach builds a support network for the coachee, while setting in motion the actions for organizational change.

The lack of organisational support would seem to impact the outcomes of executive coaching for international managers as well. The international human resource management literature and research has long documented the lack of organisational support for training and cultural intervention, despite the vast number of studies supporting its effectiveness and need (Tung, 1981b, Tung, 1986, Tung, 2004). Currently, executive coaching is growing in domestic organisations, while being virtually ignored in international subsidiaries which may imply a lack of knowledge, understanding or acceptance of executive coaching for international managers. Executive coaching may be viewed as a luxury of time and expense that few international subsidiaries can afford.
For international organisations, executive coaching may need to show a greater impact on the organisation’s development and success, and the executive, in order to gain the requisite organisational support.

The Lack of Executive Commitment

Executive coaching outcomes result when executives who are motivated and ready to make behavioural changes (Jarvis, 2003, Marshall, 2007). Outcomes may also be affected by executives who are suffering from mental health pathologies and should be receiving counselling instead of coaching (Grant, 2007b). Coaching outcomes will become frustrated if the executive is: in the middle of a family or personal crisis; resistant to coaching, and lacks self-insight; engages in inappropriate behaviours; sees coaching as a quick-fix; or is leaving the company or retiring (Jarvis, 2003). Agarwal et al (2009) asserts that coaching is frustrated when the executive views coaching as an obstacle which distracts from day-to-day activities. As time pressure and work increases, so does the executive’s focus on business rather than focusing on relationships and professional development (Green, 2001, 2006; Agarwal et al, 2009). Moreover, some executives may resent executive coaching if they perceive it as a tool that organisations use to be more demanding (Applebaum, et al, 2000) and it increases their stress and anxiety (Agarwal et al., 2009). Lastly, Grant (2007, 2008) observes that a significant portion of individuals who present themselves for coaching may have mental health pathologies that remain undetected because so few coaches have the skills and knowledge to recognize and test for psychological problems.
Currently there is little research that has explored the readiness to change or the psychological “health” of international managers to understand their resistance to coaching. International managers may resist coaching based on their cultural beliefs (Marshall, 2007). Also, as previously discussed, time and work pressures are increased exponentially in international subsidiaries where cultural issues compound the challenges (Goldberg, 2005). As these pressures increase, the executive may be less inclined to participate in any activity that is not directly related to business activities (Goldberg, 2005). International executives may also resist executive coaching if they feel that the coach does not understand the cultural or business climate.

Coaching's limitation with Chinese culture

One glaring weakness in the coaching research literature is an examination of the influence of cultural orientations and cultural values on coaching. Coaching and executive coaching are uniquely Western constructs which represent and promote Western values (Ng, 2009a). Coaching’s prominence throughout the world is predominately focused on its presence in North America, the United Kingdom and Australia, all predominately native-English speaking countries (Tulpa and Bresser, 2009). Researchers have rarely explored whether coaching’s Western bias moderates its effectiveness with non-Westerners (Tulpa and Bresser, 2009).

Coaching may conflict with non-Western cultures, particularly the Chinese culture (Ng, 2009a). Ng (2009) describes five differences between Western values and Chinese values: (a) Westerners value individual aspirations and goal attainment, whereas the Chinese value family and society over one’s personal needs; (b) Westerners value
relationships apart from and independent of the family, while the Chinese trust their family over others; (c) Westerners value scientific truths, and the Chinese value Confucian ethics; (d) Westerners value equality, while the Chinese value hierarchy; and, (e) Westerners value confrontation, competition and aggressive performance, whereas the Chinese value harmony between others, saving ‘face’ and humbleness.

Ng’s (2009) description of the differences between Westerners and the Chinese supports and illustrates coaching’s Western bias and highlights potential conflicts between coaching and Chinese culture. Coaching is described in the research as focusing on the attainment of personalized goals of individuals (Grant et al., 2010); coaching is predicated on a relationship of trust between a coach and the client (Abbott, 2006); coaching is characterized as a partnership between coach and client on a journey of discovery in the client’s best interest conducted through non-directive conversations; and, coaching is focused on performance driven outcomes and managed by a coach whose role is to guide, challenge and provide the client with truthful and sometimes confronting feedback. Gallo (2009), a practicing coach in China, echoes Ng’s characterizations by warning Western coaches about Chinese clients who are slow to trust coaches, view coaching as a remedial tool and are more likely to want the coach to direct them and give specific advice.

Although the coaching literature does seem to suggest that the values of coaching and Chinese may conflict, Ng (2009) believes that coaching has value for the Chinese when the coaching process is framed in accordance with existing Chinese values. It seems then that coaching may be culturally appropriate when it aligns with complimentary Chinese values, instead of focusing on the values that conflict. For
example, Ng (2009) notes that Chinese values include being people-orientated, living to
one’s potential, learning from others, pursuing truths, examining oneself, practicing new
skills, and emphasizing personal and social aspirations simultaneously. The literature
then seems to suggest that coaching may conflict with the values of non-Westerners if the
coach lacks the knowledge, experience or skill to align the cultural values with congruent
coaching values.

Peterson (2007) argues that: the role of culture is over-stated and that culture does
not convey much about the individual; a strong company culture may dominate over a
country culture; and many senior executives are more alike, despite their cultural
backgrounds, than unalike. Moreover, Peterson (2007) asserts that, although knowledge
of different cultures is vital, coaches may waste their time and their clients by constantly
trying to adopt their coaching style to the particular culture. Instead Peterson (2007)
arouses, there are five universal conditions, which he calls “The Development Pipeline”,
that guide the development of anyone, anywhere in the world: insight (understanding the
areas to focus on to be more effective); motivation (degree to which one is willing to
invest time and energy to develop); capabilities (possessing the skills and knowledge
needed); and, real-world practice (ability to apply capabilities at work); accountability
(internal and external measurements of change and appropriate and meaningful
consequences for changes) (Hicks and Peterson, 1999). Peterson (2007) stresses that the
five conditions are then customized to the individual executive, but the conditions are
only fully realized when all five conditions are active and supported. Although
Peterson and Hick’s (1999) “Development Pipeline” has yet to be empirically validated,
Palmer and Arnold (2009) have applied the methodology successfully to their coaching in the Middle East.

In regards to coaching international managers, the literature seems to advocate an understanding of cultural orientations and the influence of culture, as well as, a need for tools and methodologies that are not culturally biased, or tools that involve a culturally neutral coaching process. Thus, coaching internationally may indeed represent a distinct speciality of coaching requiring expert knowledge, experiences and appropriate tools.

Conclusion

Executive coaching has much to offer but the shortcomings in existing practice include a lack of attention to process and cultural issues. The research study here provides a great opportunity to both extend existing research in executive coaching and to improve performance for international managers, particularly in relation to leadership development and emotional intelligence. Executive coaching has been primarily applied to managers in domestic organisations, but the research strongly suggests that executive coaching may be as relevant and applicable to international managers, as long as the issues with cultural values are considered and incorporated into the coaching intervention.

From a review of the literature, it would appear that executive coaching may be able to support the performance and development needs of international managers as detailed in the model of effective performance in Chapter Two. The coaching research suggests that coaching can improve goal attainment, which would support the satisfaction of MNE objectives and international manager’s performance criteria aspirations.
Executive coaching may also enhance the support factors identified as performance moderators. Specifically, executive coaching has been found to satisfy personal goals, improve happiness and mental health and reduce depression at home and at work. Moreover, executive coaching was found to enhance acculturation, which would assist HCNs to socialize to the subsidiary and assist expatriates to adapt to the host-country.

The research also supports executive coaching’s claim to build work skills, improve performance and address performance deficiencies, anchor training initiatives and develop the leadership, emotional intelligence and communication capacities of international managers. Executive coaching may support work outcomes by aligning with the international manager’s work schedule and maintaining focus on job tasks. Lastly, executive coaching has been shown to provide clients with continuous feedback on performance, goal-setting, behaviours and evaluating outcomes. For the international manager, the executive coaching process would complete the loop of performance management by raising self-awareness and encouraging self-reflection on performance.

The limitations of coaching that have been identified in the research literature suggest that coaches who wish to work with international managers should improve their own knowledge base regarding cross-cultural issues, the various cultures of the clients, as well as the coaches on cultural background and how it relates to other cultures. The relationship between the coach and client is essential in coaching international managers, and so coaches may have to invest more time in developing a trusting relationship. Finally, coaches may need to ensure that the client is culturally ready for coaching, as well as psychologically ready for coaching and that the organisation has the capacity and interest to support the international manager during and after the coaching intervention.
CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter discusses the intervention and qualitative research methodology used to conduct this study, the instruments involved in data collection, and the process by which data was analyzed. The research questions underlying this study are reviewed, followed by a description of the research design, and the selection and engagement of participants. Next, this chapter describes the intervention that was employed, the instruments used and the process by which data was collected and analyzed. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethical issues and limitations of the methodology.

Research Questions

This study is designed to address the impact of an executive coaching intervention on the performance management of an international management team working in a foreign subsidiary of a MNE, and the following sub-questions that comprise the model of performance management:

1. How does executive coaching affect the goal attainment of international managers?
2. How do cultural perspectives influence executive coaching for international managers?
3. How does the executive coaching process impact international managers?
4. What outcomes result from executive coaching for international managers?
5. How are outcome measures of executive coaching evaluated for MNEs and international managers?

6. What are the limitations of executive coaching for international managers?

The study utilized an action research methodology. The research study consisted of an executive coaching intervention that supported a leadership and communication training module. The coaching intervention and follow up interviews formed the basis of a case study of an international subsidiary and its executive management team.

**Research Design**

*Introduction*

The research primarily concerns conducting and observing a coaching intervention amongst an international executive management team within a MNE subsidiary using an experimental action research case study design (Yin, 2003). Executive coaching is still a relatively new professional practice and research area. Only a handful of studies have explored executive coaching’s role in an international context (Grant, 2001). Currently, there are no empirical studies which have examined the impact of coaching on an executive international management team. Abbott’s (2006) research study examines the individual case studies of 15 expatriate managers in different organisations; while the study here focused on a single case study of one organisation while exploring the impact of executive coaching on expatriates and HCNs working together as the management team for all three offices in China. Although experimental quantitative studies often represent the ‘gold standard’ of scientific research, qualitative studies can explore the richness of the human experience in novel research areas (Abbott,
Qualitative methods, such as an action research case study, can assist in gaining a greater understanding of how an intervention such as executive coaching might be used in a relatively novel organizational context such as the subsidiary of an international organization.
Figure 6. Model of Research Design

1. Performance Dimensions of the Model of Effective Performance for International Managers

- International managers face multiple performance challenges
- MNEs provide little support for performance challenges
- Executive coaching assists with performance challenges in domestic organizations
- Executive coaching can assist with performance challenges for international managers
- Culture moderates the effectiveness of executive coaching

2. Efficacy of Executive Coaching Process and Outcomes in an International Environment: China

- UK based MNE operating in China with 11 participating executive managers.
- Data gathered pre and post intervention.
**Action Research**

Action research is a process of inquiry and action designed to enact change in its subjects. Action research is both an accepted and valid methodology and a change intervention itself (Lewin, 1946, Lewin, 1947). Originally developed by Kurt Lewin (1946, 1947), action research has been used to enact organizational change in real-life scenarios through a conceptual framework, in this case, executive coaching. Action research is a participative process in which the researcher and participants collaborate on diagnosing problems, formulating an intervention, enacting an action plan and evaluating results in order to attain and stabilize intended consequences (McShane et al., 2010). The general elements of action research align with the processes of executive coaching (both action research and coaching utilize issue/goal identification, action planning and evaluation/reflection), and as such, executive coaching has been proposed as a natural fit and compliment to investigative study and organizational change that action research promotes (Abbott and Grant, 2005; Abbott, 2006).

Action research is the primary research methodology in one of the few empirical studies to examine executive coaching’s role in international business (Abbott, 2006). In Abbott’s (2006) doctoral dissertation he uses an action research case study methodology to explore the impact of executive coaching on fifteen expatriates, working for different companies while living in El Salvador. In Abbott’s study, Abbott is both the researcher and the executive coach, coaching each participant in the study. Abbott reframes each individual executive coaching intervention as separate action research case study. Abbott’s participation as the coach/researcher provides him with the opportunity for
reflective insight into how the executive coaching process is actually impacting clients and enables him to modify and improve the processes based on the gathered data.

Abbott’s (2006:89) reframing of executive coaching as action research describes a methodology that he calls ‘coaching research’, while proposing:

> [t]hat executive coaches working from an evidence-base in the pragmatic tradition are not only consumers of research, but are action researchers – whether they currently carry such a formal tag or not (Abbott & Grant, 2005).…The pragmatic approach builds on existing knowledge with new ideas that are created through synthesis with other ideas from different systems and knowledge bases. A pragmatic coaching approach connects clients with fresh ideas that may facilitate creative synthesis. The new ideas can then be spread by coaching (and also by research reporting) into other systems with new clients.

Moreover, Abbott describes how neither action research nor executive coaching prescribe any particular strategy as the research and intervention is tailored to the specific needs of the participants. Action research, Abbott notes, generally employs qualitative methods, although it can draw on and generate quantitative data. Additionally, Abbott argues that action research is appropriate when attempting to understand complex systems, such as the complex relationships of business, personal and community in an international context.

Action research is sometimes criticized for a perceived lack of scientific rigor and for its general focus on problems and the negative issues of phenomena (Aguinis, 1993). Aguinis (1993) however argues that action research employs a scientific method in fact-finding and problem-solving, with the only notable difference being the researcher’s active role in the action research process. Abbott (2006) maintains that executive coaching interventions may not necessarily lend themselves to traditional research studies.
as random assignments and control groups may be difficult, as well as potentially impractical, to secure. Alternatively, some critics of action research suggest that the method is flawed because of its focus on “curing” a “pathology”, framing the action researcher as a physician who seeks to fix a sick patient (Abbott, 2006). Under this frame, the individual participants may resist interventions and “as a result, data collection can generate scepticism, and feedback to community members may be met with concern, fear, or high anxiety among participants. Motivation through fear is not very sustainable” (Boyd and Bright, 2007). Although Boyd (2007) raises legitimate concerns, action research can be used to engage resistance and propose solutions as part of the action research process, as such there may be value in organizations learning how to best communicate and manage the issues of “problems” with employees.

The study here uses a design methodology that builds on Abbott’s (2006) use of action research case studies. Like Abbott’s study, the study here explores the use of executive coaching in the international context with the primary researcher also acting as one of the executives coaches involved in the study. Unlike Abbott’s study though, the study here focused on developing an intervention for a single organization and its entire executive management team in the international subsidiary. Traditionally, action research involves groups, while Abbott focused on individuals. The study here is more aligned with the traditional uses of action research as it examines an international management team and the impact of coaching on each individual, the team collectively and the subsidiary as a whole. The complexity of the research here is further deepened by the comparison of two distinct groups: expatriate managers and host country managers who collectively form the international management team. Action research is chosen as
the primary research methodology because it aligns with executive coaching and because it is appropriate for exploring novel and complex research phenomena. The study here followed the general precepts of action research, problem identification, data gathering and preliminary diagnosis, action planning, action and evaluation/reflection, which comprised the initial phase of an ongoing study of the value and impact of executive coaching within the organisation. Owing to time and scope constraints the research reported and undertaken here for this study is restricted to the initial phase.

Case Study

Utilizing a case study methodology, the research examines the attitudes and perceptions of international managers in order to explore the role of executive coaching within a foreign subsidiary of a MNE (Creane, 2002). Case studies allow the observations of behaviour that occurs outside the control of the researcher (Carlson, 2000). Using this retrospective study, the data depends on the memory of the participants to recollect their thoughts and feelings towards the issues presented (Carlson, 2000). Carlson (2000) cautions against drawing conclusions too strongly from the retrospective case study because recollections can be misleading and biased. Kilburg (2004) notes the lack of research that details exactly what coaches do in their interventions. Importantly, an action research case study can provide reflections and evaluations of the process of coaching and its modifications throughout a coaching intervention, adding to the current body of literature (Kilburg, 2004).

In the case study research design, multiple case studies generally yield more comparison data of real-life behaviour and phenomena (Yin, 2003). Case studies can be
supported by qualitative or quantitative evidence, although qualitative data may generate
a richer understanding of the case subject. Multiple case studies also allow for multiple
perspectives and a replication of the design method. The evidence gathered from case
studies can generate generalized theories for further testing, although the extent to which
findings from one case can be generalized to the wider population is debatable (Stake,
2000, Yin, 2003). Abbott notes:

[...] nevertheless, generalization is possible from single and multiple case study designs. It is done through analytic or
naturalistic generalization (Stake, 2000; Yin, 2003). In such an approach there is a responsibility placed on the
readers to determine whether or not results from the case study or studies can be applied to their specific context.
The researcher’s task is to make the reports sufficiently rich and insightful to allow readers to make these judgments.

Case studies are often criticized because of their subjectivity and the potential for
bias of the interviewers or the researcher (Lowman, 2005). Lowman (2005) for example,
notes that self-reports in case studies are biased because people tend to present a positive
argument by advocating for rigorous evidence reporting that captures the participants’
actual thoughts without any filters.

The study here uses a single case study design to understand how executive
coaching impacts a subsidiary and its relationships to others, namely: an international
management team, expatriate managers, host-country national managers, and the parent
MNE. Because current research indicates a lack of focus on executive coaching in the
international context, and the researcher’s own investigations revealed little actual
evidence of MNE subsidiaries using executive coaching in China for their management
teams, an action research case study design was chosen to examine the specific phenomena of executive coaching. The data derived from the study here may not be applicable to organisations in different contexts. Nevertheless, the case here may represent a “limit case” of how progressive organizations can support the performance of international managers. As such, other MNEs may wish to emulate aspects of the intervention here in developing more successful employee practices. Thus, the research can form a starting point to guide the dialogue and further research of pertinent issues regarding the use of executive coaching on the performance of international managers working in foreign subsidiaries of MNEs.

**Phenomenology**

Case studies that use a qualitative analysis are able to explore the phenomenological perspective of the participants. By exploring the phenomenological perspective of the participants, we can better understand the thoughts, feelings and emotions that contribute to one’s decision making. Creane (2003) states the “the phenomenological perspective values the meanings that individuals attribute to their lived experience, and it envisions reality as complex and multi-faceted.” In the case study here, a phenomenological inquiry is used to guide the interview questions, more so than as a direct research methodology.
Research Design Overview

This exploratory action research project used a variety of qualitative methods to explore the impact of executive coaching on an international executive management team (Creane, 2002; Yin, 2003):

- A literature review of studies pertaining to the performance of expatriate and host-country managers, international performance management, and executive coaching;
- An action research leadership performance intervention that consisted of a leadership and communication training program with follow-up executive coaching sessions;
- Semi-structure taped interviews with all the individual executive coaching participants;
- Questionnaires and measurements distributed pre- and post intervention to participants regarding mental health, satisfaction, cross-cultural adjustment and leadership;
- Review of internal organizational policies and documents relating to the subsidiary’s business objectives and human resource policies.

Study Procedures

Selection of Organization

The research conducted here attempts to explore the impact of executive coaching on an international management team of a Western MNE subsidiary in China. In order for the research to proceed, a suitable organization needed to be identified. Initially, the
research proposal was shared with the Australian China Business Council (ACBC). ACBC then offered to email to everyone on their mailing list the research proposal, which consisted of over 1500 representatives and 700 businesses. Although several organizations responded to the research proposal, few met the parameters of the study, primarily because they lacked a large enough group of expatriates to study.

Eventually an organization responded that did, in fact, have a number of expatriates working at the executive management level along with several local Chinese managers. Ms. Guuy, a human resources consultant presented an organization for the research study: Rabble (name changed for confidentiality purposes). Ms. Guuy was familiar with executive coaching and was looking for an intervention to assist the management team of the Rabble China subsidiary. Coincidentally, Ms. Guuy was completing a Masters of Coaching degree at the University Sydney.

Ms. Guuy’s description of Rabble seemed to make it a good fit for the study. Rabble was a British MNE which provided specialized consulting and advocacy services to other organizations. Rabble had opened several offices throughout the world in order to tailor their services to the specific country and regional needs and thus grow their business. Rabble had an existing China subsidiary managed by one country manager in Beijing with offices in Shanghai and Guangzhou as well. Rabble China was experiencing rapid growth in business and talent, which was causing some strain amongst the executive management team, most of whom had limited managerial experience and minimal management or leadership training. The executive management team consisted of seven expatriates, one of whom was an American-born Chinese woman fluent in Mandarin and Cantonese with family still in China and four Chinese host country nationals.
This group of managers, with one exception, was quite experienced with Chinese culture, language and living and working in China. However, many of the managers were new to management and as a group, they expressed to their human resource department that there were seeking leadership, team management and communication training. The interactions with the subsidiary managers made it clear that even though many were comfortable working and living in China, still some cross-cultural issues persisted. Also, many of the issues that are commonly identified in the literature as good human resource management practices seemed to be present and were examinable. Furthermore, the opportunity to coach both groups facilitated a potentially valuable comparison of Western expatriates and local Chinese reactions to coaching. Thus the study was able to focus on how coaching might assist the performance, development and cross-cultural dexterity of relatively culturally-familiar Western expatriates, as well as the performance, development and socialization of the local Chinese staff. Prior research had indicated that these areas had been rarely explored and were ripe for examination and study.

Selection of Participants

The research issues of the present study focused on the experiences of executive managers who received six to ten executive coaching sessions. The participants were limited to the executive management team and each participant had individual responsibilities for growing the business and managing staff. In accordance with the research protocols, participation in the coaching was entirely voluntary.
Although the study originally sought to have participants who were culturally unfamiliar with China, all the participants were familiar with working in China, as well as being functionally fluent, save for one. All of the participants, save for that one, had spent several years living in China or Hong Kong, and could be regarded as ‘culturally familiar’ - a group which has rarely been the subject of research. Likewise the performance and development of host country nationals is virtually unexplored in the literature.

Selection of Coaches

The coaching was conducted by three coaches for the eleven participants. Ms. Guuy, the Rabble representative who initiated contact for the project, also participated as a coach and assigned the participants to the three coaches based on her knowledge of the participants’ personalities; this was an attempt to secure the best possible fit. Although Ms. Guuy was familiar with the participants, she did not work in the China offices and she was engaged in the company primarily as an external consultant on business and human resource management.

The senior coach coached the China country manager while the other two coaches (Ms. Guuy and myself) divided the remaining ten participants. All the coaches had received post-graduate level training with the Coaching Psychology Unit of the University of Sydney. The coaches had been selected to minimize variability in coaching methods and all used a solution-focused, cognitive-behavioural coaching approach that had been taught in the Unit. As a safety protocol and in accordance with objectivity, the coaches all engaged in supervision where issues, challenges and self-reflections were
discussed as a means to maintain good-practice and ethical management. To ensure equal access to the data from each of the participants, I was the sole interviewer for each participant, allowing me the opportunity to ask questions within their comfort zone so that confidentiality could be maintained at the discretion of the participants.

**Leadership Performance Intervention**

An action research coaching project was tailored to the needs of Rabble. In a series of meetings with the Rabble representative, the China country manager, the researcher and an experienced coach and leadership consultant, an action research project was developed that would deliver an intensive week-long leadership and communication training module followed by six to ten individualized coaching sessions. The first two coaching sessions would occur on-site with the three coaches (including the researcher) involved and then subsequent sessions would be conducted by the telephone. There was no set agenda prescribed for the coaching sessions, although all the participants had received their annual performance reviews so each was aware of areas that were targeted for performance improvements. Follow up interviews with the participants were conducted nine months after the first coaching sessions to gauge the impact of coaching and record any reflections on the process of coaching.

**Reflections of Coach/Researcher**

When conducting a qualitative study, the researcher bears a responsibility to explain their interest in the research subject matter and design to identify whether the
researcher’s background can affect the interpretation of the study’s results (Creane, 2002).

My interests in expatriate coaching are borne from my own experience as an expatriate from the United States, living, studying and working in Australia. Prior to moving to Australia, I was living in San Francisco and working as a Dean of Students at a technical and business college. With that position I was able to help students develop successful strategies for improving their academic performance so that they could continue in their program. Although I found that position incredibly rewarding, I wanted to return to the corporate world in a role that motivated organisational change.

I first became exposed to coaching by a friend who was interested in providing a financial options workshop for the students at my college. I was intrigued by the confidence, strategic planning skills and goal-focused approaches the coach demonstrated in the meetings I had with her. I began to feel that coaching would play into my own strengths and background as someone who devised solutions to various challenges. A quick search on-line revealed the Masters of Human Resource Management and Coaching program at the University of Sydney. Having recently experienced the vibrant culture of Sydney, I felt that it was a place I could move to and begin study. A reorganisation at the college presented me with the opportunity to career shift and country shift.

The Masters in HRM and Coaching Psychology at the University of Sydney is the only program of its kind in the world. The program evenly combines subjects in the Economics and Business Faculty with the Psychology Faculty. In my Economics and Business Faculty I became exposed to the concepts of expatriate workers and the role
they play in International HRM and entrepreneurship. Over the years I had become passionate about international travel and working in new cultures. I was intrigued by the importance of expatriate workers, but mystified at the lack of support that they often appear to receive from their organisations. As an expatriate myself, I could relate to challenges faced by these expatriate workers.

While I was being exposed to the issues affecting expatriate workers, I was also being trained to be a business focused coach through the classes in the Coaching Psychology Unit. These classes changed my life because I found a discipline that I truly loved. Because the coaching training was evidence-based, I found it to be credible and effective. Also, the academic rigor of producing research papers based on the coaching concepts inspired me to want to build upon the collected research. It was while writing these papers that I began to merge the challenges of expatriates with the solution-focused aspects of the coaching methodology that we were learning.

I felt that coaching was a perfect fit for driving expatriate success. Coaching involves a confidential trusting relationship between a coach and client. Coaches use various tools to help clients achieve their goals, overcome obstacles, develop their career, navigate conflict and thrive in uncertainty. It seemed to me that if expatriates worked with a coach, then they would have a partnership that would help them out of the cross-cultural miasma that threatens the careers of many expatriates. Moreover, there are few research papers addressing the issues of coaching expatriates and few individuals who are working with expatriates predominately. I began to formulate the idea that expatriate coaching was a specialized area of coaching that required some subject-matter
knowledge of the unique challenges that face expatriates and how a coach could focus solutions for those challenges.

I finished my Masters with an independent research project that was a case study of one Australian firm and I examined how that firm supported its expatriates and whether coaching was used to support expatriates. My findings were consistent with the literature - the company provided little cross-cultural training, most of its support was in the form of providing relocation services. I formed the view that an actual examination of coaching expatriates in progress and an assessment of the results of those interventions was needed. I chose China as an appropriate international context because of its rising prominence in international business, its proximity to Australia and its culture, which is dramatically different to Western, Anglo cultures.

Data Collection

Questionnaires and Measures

Questionnaires and measures were used pre- and post-coaching to provide baseline and objective measurements of change following the action research intervention for the coaching conversations primarily. The questionnaires and measures were used to add to the qualitative story and to provide the participants with self-knowledge and the coaches with a context of the participant and less so for their quantitative significance due to the small sample size. The questionnaires and measures were chosen to examine the level of international adaptation of the expatriates, the participants’ sense of work satisfactions and levels of depression, anxiety and stress, and the leadership competencies of the participants. The focus of the questionnaires and measures were incorporated with
the interviews to reflect the experience of the participants and their awareness of their growth and change. A review of the instruments and measurements follows.

**International Questionnaire (Hofstede, 1994)**

International orientation was measured using the International Questionnaire developed by Hofstede (1994). The International Questionnaire is a 25 item questionnaire that gathers demographic and cultural information while assessing cultural orientations.

**The Workplace Wellbeing Index (Page, 2006)**

Workplace Wellbeing was assessed using the Workplace Wellbeing Index (WWI) developed by Page (2006). The WWI is scored by rating agreement or disagreement with 16 statements customized to the characteristics of the case study organisation, Rabble, using a 10-point scale (1=completely dissatisfied to 10=completely satisfied). The WWI has been tested for validity and used by Grant and Spence (2006) in their empirical executive coaching research.

**Socio-cultural Adjustment Scale (Black & Stephens, 1989)**

The Socio-cultural Adjustment (SCA) designed by Black and Stephens (1989) is a 14-item measurement of acculturation that is often used for expatriates to gauge comfort in a foreign location. The SCA contains a 7-point scale (1=very strongly unadjusted to 7=very strongly adjusted).
Self-Leadership Questionnaire (Houghton & Neck, 2002)

The Self-Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ) developed by Houghton and Neck (2002) is a 35-item measurement of self-reported leadership capabilities used in organisations. The SLQ operates on a 5-point scale, from (1=not at all accurate to 5=completely accurate).

Depression Anxiety & Stress Scale (DASS-21) (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995)

Psychopathology was measured using the Depression, Stress and Anxiety Scale 21 (DASS-21) a 21-item measurement on a 4-point scale, which has been well validated as a clinical instrument. DASS-21 is designed to be used with both clinical and non-clinical populations and is thus appropriate for coaching (Grant, 2008).

General Health Questionnaire 12

The General Health Questionnaire 12 is a 12-item measurement on a 4-point scale. The measure assesses the severity of mental health of the past weeks and is commonly used and validated instrument throughout the world.

Performance Data

Performance data regarding the outcomes generated as a result of the coaching intervention was derived from the participants’ self-reports and observations of other participants as described in the interview process.
Participant Interview Process

Interview questions are used as the primary qualitative method to gauge the perceptions, experiences and thoughts of the participants (Creane, 2003). By investigating the perspectives of the participants, in their own words, the researcher can help illustrate a more comprehensive picture of the phenomena under analysis. The interviews can be conducted in a variety of ways, such as a structured or semi-structured conversation or through questionnaires. Structured interviews delineate a set of specific possible responses to specific questions. In contrast, semi-structured interviews allow for open-ended responses and follow up questions as part of the interview process. Semi-structured interviews generally may allow for a deeper exploration of recurrent themes, while structured interviews provide less of an opportunity for the research to influence the participant’s recollections.

For the purpose of this research, structured and semi-structured interviews were conducted in person. Each interview was scheduled to take no longer than two hours to complete. The research questions focused on the themes of business objectives, acculturation, performance outcomes, leadership, mental health and the process of coaching. The interview questions were piloted with the other coaches in the study to get their feedback on the clarity of the statements. A semi-structured open-ended interview script was created and shared with the organization’s human resource representative prior to the interviews with the participants.

Interviews were conducted by the research at the offices of the participants in China approximately six months after the start of the coaching intervention. At the beginning of each interview, the participants read and signed the Ethics Participation and
Consent forms. Prior to the interviews, questions regarding the interview process were asked and answered, in order to assure the participants that all conversations would remain confidential.

The interview guide formed the structure of the conversations and open-ended questions to elicit responses, thoughts and experiences were asked. Follow-up questions may have changed depending on the interviews and the course of the conversations, as they allowed the participants to share as much as they were willing on the various themes or their own specific views.

Interviews were digitally recorded using a digital recorder so that the researcher could focus on the narratives and be fully present for the conversations. Digital recordings were transcribed by a professional transcriber, and the digital copies were stored and will be destroyed according to the ethical guidelines of the University. All interviews were conducted after receiving approval from the Human Ethics Committee of the University of Sydney.

Participant-Researcher Observations

As a coach/researcher, I kept a journal of my experiences from the perspectives of the coach, an observer of the organisational processes and an expatriate working in a foreign city. The uniqueness of my own experience helped my own sense of empathy and understanding of the various challenges faced by the international managers. These reflections facilitated a deeper insight into the perspectives of the research subjects and helped to inform my own practice of coaching.
**Participant Data Analysis Procedures**

**Questionnaire Analysis**

When employing descriptive data collection, data can be analysed using the measures of central tendency. In the measure of central tendency a summary statistic is used to describe the best representation of distribution. The three ways to measure this is by using the mode, the median and the mean. The summary statistic was determined by codifying the Likert scales with a specific number with 1 being assigned to the most negative response and 5 being assigned to the most positive response. This analysis provided an understanding of the most frequently cited responses and average responses, which can be added to the descriptive story of impact and use of executive coaching.

**Inductive Analysis**

After the interviews were transcribed, I used inductive analysis to analyse the data. Through the process of inductive analysis, I was able to explore the dominant themes in the data (Creane, 2002; Patton, 1990). I analyzed the data by attributing the responses of each participant to the three research questions posed above. I then made notes of the responses that provoked additional themes or future research ideas. Through the process of data reduction, I focused on analyzing each interview separately before moving on to the next (Creane, 2002; Patton, 1990).

Using Creane’s (2002) analysis of coaching transcripts as a guide, I then began to identify and number key words and phrases that recurred throughout the interview or appeared to hold special meaning for the participant. I then examined the key words to
note any units of meaning that highlighted particular themes or patterns. From those themes and patterns I was able to identify major and minor themes.

**Limitations of the Methodology**

There were several limitations to the methodology used here. First, some of the participants who were interviewed were also the coaching clients of the coach/researcher/interviewer and so they may not have felt comfortable fully expressing their thoughts around the coaching process for fear of offending the coach/interviewer or causing him to lose face. Secondly, the participants may have felt compelled to participate in the coaching because of the work environment and enthusiasm of the China country manager and as such, some may not have been fully engaged. Thirdly, although the three coaches did attend Chinese language training prior to engaging in the coaching, the coaches were generally rather unfamiliar with the cultural norms and expectations of the host country nationals. Fourthly, neither the human resource department, the parent company in the United Kingdom nor any subordinates reporting to the executive managers were interviewed as it was it determined by the China Country Manager that the study should only focus on the individuals being coached until he could assess the overall impact of the action research and coaching intervention. Despite these limitations, the study represents an exploratory research study that can contribute to improved coaching processes and future action research studies.
CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

The results of the current study are presented in this chapter. The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section of the chapter presents profiles of the parent organization, the Chinese subsidiary and each of the eleven coaching participants. The profile descriptions for the parent and subsidiary organizations are derived from the organizational information and participant interviews regarding structure, culture and objectives.

Sections two to four of the chapter present the next level results of the study. A total of eleven participant interviews constitute the core primary data for this study, which is analysed to yield answers to the research questions and sub-questions. Sections two to four are organized around the themes and sub-themes emerging from the interviews. The themes presented are organized around the guiding questions of the study:

How do cultural perspectives influence executive coaching for international managers?

How does the executive coaching process impact international managers?

How does executive coaching affect the goal attainment of international managers?

What outcomes result from executive coaching for international managers?
How are outcome measures of executive coaching evaluated for MNEs and international managers?

What are the limitations of executive coaching for international managers?

The themes were generated from an analysis of the responses to the various interview questions. In total, 23 themes emerged that summarized the participants’ experiences with the coaching intervention:

- coaching may reinforce a positive organizational culture;
- coaching claims to manage expatriate adjustment to the culture;
- coaching claims to help some expatriates understand their Chinese colleagues better;
- coaching may help some local Chinese to understand Western thinking;
- coaching claims to raise one’s own cultural awareness;
- coaching can experience cultural resistance;
- coaching might have the capacity to adapt to different cultural systems;
- coaching can accommodate an executive’s work schedule;
- coaching can create safe spaces for self-discovery and insight;
- coaching can contribute to the achievement of personal and work-related goals;
- coaching may improve physical and mental health;
- coaching might support personal and familial fulfillment;
- coaching can promote conscious and strategic communication skills;
coaching can provide training and role-playing for skill acquisition;
coaching can help address deficiencies in performance;
coaching may help to develop leadership competencies;
coaching can produce observable positive changes in behavior;
coaching may result in satisfied clients;
coaching can enhance intention to stay and company loyalty;
coaching may compliment service industry organizations;
coaching can justify the organizational investment;
coaching may garner positive feedback from others;
and, coaching’s effectiveness may be moderated by various factors.

The data from the participants’ interviews and participant-researcher's observations provides the evidence for each theme. The chapter concludes with a review and synthesis of the major and sub themes.

Section 1: Participant Profiles

Parent Company Profile

Rabble is a UK based MNE that specializes in the protection of the intellectual property of other organizations. Rabble has over 15 offices located throughout the world, with the headquarters in London and several offices throughout mainland China. Rabble established its business structure and model in Europe primarily and then began partnerships with individuals in other countries. Those partnerships grew into business
units that replicated the UK business structure, while adapting it to the individual needs and practices of each local culture. English is the mandatory language of communication in all the offices throughout the world. Rabble staffs its offices with primarily local staff (HCN), while the executive leadership of the offices is a mixture of expatriates and HCNs. Most of the expatriates are selected from existing expatriates in the country and few are sent from the UK office. Each country subsidiary is managed by its own human resource department that conforms to local laws and practices, while all offices are guided by a human resource strategy that originates in the UK office, with the input of the various Country Managers. Prior to the project established here, Rabble has never provided executive coaching, leadership training or any type of expatriate training or cross-cultural awareness training.

China Subsidiary Profile

Rabble China is a subsidiary of Rabble UK established in 1993. Initially Rabble China consisted of a single employee who investigated how to apply Rabble’s business products to the Chinese market. As the market in China was deemed fruitful, Rabble China quickly grew by combining contacts generated by the UK office and the local Chinese staff who were the only ones who could legally advocate legal cases in China. Initially Rabble China was established in Beijing and then grew to include Shanghai and Guangzhou. Following a change of leadership, equity partnerships have been established with the top management staff in China Rabble. Currently there are seven equity partners, four expatriates and three HCNs. All of China Rabble’s employees are required to conduct all business in English. The vast majority of China Rabble’s clients are
international organizations who are seeking the protection and monetization of their intellectual property interests in China. Previously Rabble China had to outsource its litigation work to other Chinese law firms but has since created its own in-house litigation department, managed by a Chinese local in order to litigate cases. Rabble China currently has over 150 employees, ten of whom are expatriates and the rest HCNs. During the first 12 years of Rabble China’s existence, expatriate staff was mainly hired if they could communicate in Chinese and had some experience with the legal industry, although this was not a prerequisite. HCNs were hired predominately on their English skills and proficiency. As Rabble China has established itself in China and grown, and China’s profile had grown internationally, more hires have occurred that match the requisite skills needed for particular jobs and candidates in the market. Technically Rabble China is a consultancy firm and not an actual law firm. As such, the wages at Rabble China are less than at a comparable law firm, although the billable hour targets are also less. Rabble China claims to offer its employees a better work environment that compensates for the lower pay. One interviewee remarked that when employees from Rabble China are poached, it is virtually always by another international company (generally a client) and not by a Chinese organization. Previously Rabble China did not offer any type of management training or additional education, although it would compensate employees for language classes if requested.
Coaching Participant Profiles

Niang

Niang is a mid-40s Chinese female who works as the office manager for the Shanghai office and the manager for one of the main business groups of Rabble. Niang is also an equity partner of Rabble. Niang has worked at Rabble for eight years after previously working for the Chinese government and as an English teacher for four years. Niang speaks Mandarin Chinese and English fluently and has traveled to many Western countries for work and holidays. Niang stated that she joined Rabble because they pursued her relentlessly and accommodated her needs and because it was an opportunity to use her English skills, which she enjoyed. Niang is married and has a teenage son. Although Niang had no prior experience with executive coaching, Niang has participated in some people management and communication training at previous jobs and in university. She had experiences with mentoring at her previous job, which she described as being more “directive” than collaborative. Niang expressed that she is interested in using the coaching to: improve the retention of her staff; increase her leadership skills; time-management of various priorities; and, grow the business. Niang expressed her coaching goals as:

To make my team feel, make my group feel that I cared by giving them opportunities, giving them attention and giving them solution focussed suggestions. More importantly it’s not just suggestions, that we [are] doing that.
Sun

Sun is a mid-40s Chinese male who is the principal manager of the litigation team at Rabble, who is based in the Beijing office but manages each of the city litigation teams in Shanghai and Guangzhou. Sun is an equity partner of Rabble. Sun has worked at Rabble for the past ten years after previously working for the Chinese government for ten years. Sun was educated principally in China, except for one year of study in the UK. Although Sun is fluent in Mandarin and English, his English speaking skills are less developed than the other Chinese managers. Sun joined Rabble because of the opportunities to specialize in a particular area of law and the growing prominence of intellectual property in China. Sun was also eager to utilize his English skills and felt that a Western organization would allow him more opportunities to grow and learn. Sun feels that the nature of work that he manages creates particular challenges due to the degree of knowledge required regarding legal cases, while managing the complexities of the Chinese system. Previously, Sun had no experience with coaching and considered it a “very new concept.” Sun’s coaching goals focused on being able to incorporate some of the coaching conversation style into his every day management style. Sun expressed his coaching goals as:

I think just how to get more advice and experience in terms of how to communicate and mange with the people and how to deal with the problem

Yao

Yao is a mid-40s Chinese female based in Shanghai who manages and oversees the commercial litigation areas of Rabble in China. Yao is an equity partner in Rabble,
after working in the company for eight years. After Yao finished her law degree, she worked for the Chinese Government for seven years and then moved to Australia to attain a masters degree. She lived in Australia for three years, including a year of working at an Australia law firm and has traveled to many countries for work and holiday. Yao and her husband both are fluent in English, as well as their teenage son, their only child. Because of her experience working in the Australia law firm, Yao was anxious to duplicate that experience in China and sought out Rabble, who she had worked with while in Australia. Yao felt that Rabble would allow her a greater degree of freedom and creativity than a Chinese organization, and she would be able to continue to use her English skills. Yao originated her particular practice group in Rabble China and has grown it beyond any of the corresponding practice groups in the rest of Rabble’s worldwide operations. For Yao, her practice group, although rewarding, also brings additional challenges due to its complexity and uniqueness. Yao was interested in using coaching to help manager her anxiety, build confidence and communicate better with others.

Fang

Fang is an early 30s Chinese-male based in the Shanghai office who manages the litigation team in that office and reports directly to Sun in the Beijing office. Fang is also one of the company’s primary litigators. Fang has worked at Rabble for a total of three and a half years over a five year period. Fang received his law degree in China and then achieved a Master’s degree in London for a year. Fang is fluent in Mandarin Chinese and English. Fang has traveled extensively throughout the world, as that is one of his passions. While in London, Fang was recruited by Rabble and sent to the Shanghai
office, because he wanted to return home to be with his family, a wife and baby daughter. After two years in the Shanghai office, Fang was recruited by a head-hunter and joined a large law firm in Hong Kong where he worked for a year. After a year, Fang contacted Rabble and was offered the opportunity to return to the Shanghai office of Rabble with a larger salary and a management position. Fang wished to return to Rabble because of the more relaxed work atmosphere, the proximity to his immediate family and the numerous opportunities to grow and try cases. Previously, Fang had never managed a team and received no management training in any capacity. Fang’s greatest challenges revolve around managing and training his junior staff. Fang’s primary goal for coaching was to increase his leadership skills and create a more functional team.

Logan

Logan is a late 30s male based in Beijing who is the country manager for China and responsible for the management of Rabble China’s three main offices in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. Logan is a partner in Rabble China. Logan has a UK passport, where his family is from, although he was raised in New Zealand, Australia and China. Logan graduated university in New Zealand with degrees in law and Chinese. Ten years previously, while attending a Christmas party in London, Logan ran into a friend working at Rabble who introduced him to the owner of the company who hired him after a ten minute interview to work in the China offices in Beijing. Logan was anxious to return to China so he accepted the offer, even though there was no particular job title or specified duties. According to Logan, the company was interested in mainly having someone who could speak English and Chinese and had the desire to live in
China. Currently Logan is the third longest serving member of the Rabble China management team. Logan lives with his long-time partner and their young daughter. Logan has been country manager of over 150 employees for four years and had previously never had any management training or experience. Logan’s greatest challenges are managing the various offices and personalities while trying to continually grow the business. Logan’s particular coaching goals focused on managing specific direct reports, including many of the management team.

Hank

Hank is a late 30s British male based in the Guangzhou office and is the acting deputy country manager of the China offices, reporting directly to Logan. Hank is a partner in Rabble China. In addition to managing the China offices when Logan is out of the country, Hank also manages special projects and formerly ran the investigation units in the three offices. Hank was born in Thailand to British parents and spent most of his early life in the UK, where he studied Chinese at university. Currently Hank is enrolled in a MBA program. Hank was hired to work at Rabble because of his fluency in Chinese (he also has conversational fluency in Thai). Hank joined Rabble in 1995 and is the longest serving employee at Rabble China. While living in London, Hank had responded to an advertisement from Rabble, and he was hired to get acquainted with the business for two months in London and then posted to the Hong Kong office before being transferred to the Beijing office. Hank is married to a Thai woman who does not speak Chinese and their daughter, who Hank adopted. According to Hank, his wife does not love living in China but she tolerates it. Hank commutes on a monthly basis to spend time with his
family. Hank’s challenges are managing his work, academic and familial commitments. Hank’s coaching goals focused on getting honest feedback on how he “sounded” to others and raising his awareness around his “blind spots”.

Scott

Scott is an early 30s British male who works in the Beijing office as the client manager for Rabble’s largest client. Scott was recently promoted into the position and is managing a team of seven, although he has no previous managerial experience. Scott has an undergraduate degree in law and took time off to travel before going to law school. Scott’s travels brought him to Japan, where he stayed to learn Japanese and then he moved to Beijing to study the language. While living in Beijing, Scott was working at a British market research company and was contacted by a head-hunting company employed by Rabble. Rabble was interested in Scott because of his fluency in Chinese and his legal background, although he never formally went to law school. Scott has been with Rabble since 2004. Scott lives in Beijing with his Chinese-born girlfriend who speaks conversational English, although she is far from fluent. Scott’s challenges are managing his team and finding time for his personal interests. Scott’s coaching goals focused on improving his management skills, improving his health and managing challenging team members.

Charles

Charles is a late 30s Irish male who works in the Beijing office as a senior manager for client services and marketing. Charles was educated primarily in Ireland
where he completed his undergraduate degrees and received a diploma of law. Charles then worked in Ireland and Germany for five years, after which he accepted a scholarship to study Chinese in Beijing for a year. Following his experiences in China, Charles sought permanent employment and reached out to Rabble who interviewed him when a position became available. Charles joined Rabble in 2003 and is fluent in English, Chinese, German, French and Gaelic. At the time of the coaching, Charles had just entered into a relationship with a Chinese woman who is fluent in English. Charles’ challenges stem from his recent performance appraisal which noted several communication issues, particularly a loud and abrasive manner that conflicted with some colleagues. Charles’ coaching goals focused on developing a work-life balance, improving his communication skills and improving his health.

Kate

Kate is a late 30s American female who works in the Shanghai office as a senior manager and consultant. Kate is the second longest serving employee at Rabble China, having started in 1997. Because of Kate’s vast experience she works in several of the business practices in conjunction with the managers of each department. Kate is a equity partner in Rabble. Kate received her undergraduate education in the United States with a major in Chinese studies. Kate has considerable experience traveling throughout the world and is fluent in English and Chinese, but is conversationally fluent in French, Russian, Turkish and Korean. After five years working at Rabble in the Beijing office, Kate left the company to pursue a MBA at a top international school. While in the program, Kate maintained some contact with her clients from Rabble (with their
permission) and was rehired back to Rabble following her graduation from the MBA program. When Kate returned to Rabble she was place in the Shanghai office where she is the only non-Chinese staff member. Kate is single and without children. Kate identified her challenges as moderating her conversational tone with colleagues who viewed her as abrasive at times and replicating the social life she had previously enjoyed in Beijing. Kate’s goals focused on improving her health and managing her anxiety and stress.

Jean

Jean is a late 20s British born Chinese female who works as a commercial manager in the Beijing office reporting to Yao. Jean has been with Rabble for the past year and a half. Jean was educated primarily the UK where she graduated with a degree in law. Following graduation, Jean moved to Hong Kong where her mother’s family is from and she practiced intellectual property law there. After working in Hong Kong for two years, Jean moved to Beijing to learn Mandarin Chinese and after a year of study, she found employment with Rabble. Jean was happy to find an atmosphere at Rabble that allowed her to apply her training and experience with intellectual property while working in a more relaxed environment with greater opportunities for advancement. Jean is fluent in English, Cantonese and now Mandarin, although less so than the other two languages. Jean considers herself to be more of an expatriate than a HCN because of her background and language skills. Although Jean is single, Jean has many family members living still in Hong Kong. Jean is one of only two Western born and educated Chinese staff working in Rabble. Jean’s challenges relate to her dual insider/outsider status within the firm and
socially as well as the expectations to bring in new clients. Jean’s goals focused on
improving her presentation and networking skills so she could feel more confident
attracting clients.

Alex

Alex is an early 40s German born male who works in the Guangzhou office as the
senior manager for patents. Alex has worked at Rabble International since 1999 with a
year posting in Munich and four years in Poland and since 2004 he has worked at Rabble
China. Alex is an equity partner in Rabble, which was a condition of his transfer to the
China offices. Alex has no children and maintains a long-distance relationship with a
partner in Europe who has been learning Chinese for the past three years. Alex is fluent
in English, German, Serbian Croatian and Hungarian. Alex has a very basic level of
proficiency with Chinese, which he uses sparingly. Alex noted that Rabble has never
pressured him to learn Chinese and he did not feel it hindered his job performance.
Although Alex has traveled extensively throughout the world, he considers Australia the
closest to “home”, having spent 17 years there, including working in a law firm. Alex is
currently a PhD candidate while continuing to work at Rabble. Alex is a self-described
workaholic and feels his greatest challenges are reducing the effort he puts into work,
which he feels is not compensated, noticed or appreciated, and being “understood”.
Alex’s coaching goals focused on expanding his awareness on what he could to improve
the overall organization.
Participant Summaries:

- 4 of the 11 are HCNS (Fang, Niang, Sun and Yao)
- 6 of the 11 are expatriates (Logan, Hank, Scott, Charles, Kate and Alex)
- 1 of the 11 is a hybrid of Chinese and expatriate (Jean)
- 7 of the 11 are equity partners in Rabble (Niang, Sun, Yao, Logan, Hank, Kate and Alex)
- 3 of the 11 have quit Rabble and then returned to the company (Niang, Fang and Kate)
- 10 of the 11 have worked, lived or studied outside of their parent country, with Linda being the sole exception. All 11 have traveled throughout to Western and Eastern countries
- 10 of the 11 are fluent in English and Chinese, except for Alex who is not fluent in Chinese to any degree
- 2 of the 11 are currently in post-graduate courses while working at Rabble (Hank pursuing a MBA and Alex pursuing a PhD)
- 5 of the 11 are married (Fang, Niang, Sun, Yao and Hank); 6 of the 11 have children (Fang, Niang, Sun, Yao, Logan and Hank); 2 of the 11 are single without any partners (Jean and Kate)
- 7 of the 11 were hired within China (Fang, Niang, Sun, Yao, Kate, Jean and Scott); 3 were hired in the UK specifically to be transferred to China (Logan, Hank and Charles); Only Alex worked at other Rabble offices outside of China before requesting to be transferred to the China offices
- All 11 have worked or lived in China for 5 or more years
- None of the 11 had any management training prior to joining Rabble
- 1 of the 11 had team management experience prior to joining Rabble (Sun)

Section 2: Emergence of Themes

*How do cultural perspectives influence executive coaching for international managers?*

**Coaching may reinforce a positive organizational culture**

Four of the eleven remarked how the coaching intervention reinforced the company culture and values. Scott felt that the coaching program was a further example of Rabble’s unique culture, because few other organizations in China (public or private) would provide such a program to their employees. Scott was impressed by Rabble and remarked how few other companies offered coaching to its staff.

So it’s further evidence that they’re investing in their people. So that’s a great thing, and especially when you mention it to friends who don’t work for Rabble, but may work for a similar sized kind of company doing similar kind of work, and you realise they don’t get any of these kind of opportunities [Scott].

Yao shared her thoughts on how coaching had also impacted the culture of Rabble China.

I think I really - how do you say - especially for Rabble China, I’m a part of the culture. And we’ve been trying to strengthen that kind of culture through - I mean this coaching will help in a way because we say we pursue - we enjoy life and we enjoy the work [Yao].

Niang believed that the coaching helped to bridge the various cultures at Rabble.

I think there should be because the coaching is helpful for you to overcome, you know the blocks with people. So
that’s definitely helpful to reducing the misunderstanding between UK, British and Chinese and the different cultures. So I think that’s the same. It helps. It bridged the communication I think. The coaching in another way it is effective, efficient, or effective communication. So that helps in bringing people closer [Niang].

Kate believed that coaching could positively impact the culture at Rabble.

For the company it’s been absolutely brilliant. I really think it was a way to unify the management in a way we hadn't been unified before and it's a really good way to convey Rabble values. [Kate].

According to the participants, the executive coaching intervention helped to

deepen the organizational culture of Rabble.

Coaching claims to manage expatriate adjustment to the culture

Three out of the seven expatriates commented that the coaching specifically assisted them as expatriates. Hank felt that the coaching helped him as an expatriate because “it’s helped me in all areas of my life.” Scott too felt that the coaching helped him as an expatriate, as well as helping those who were not expatriates.

I think it’s a general principle. Getting the most out of living in China. I think what’s happened is we planted the seed. There are problems with living in China. There are issues, as I mentioned before. It’s very difficult to plan an exciting weekend, or feel like you’re living here. And if the coaching allows you to do anything, it can address those issues, and actually make it more bearable and more enjoyable [Scott].

Alex noted a direct relationship between coaching and his cultural adjustment to China because he had identified aspects of Chinese culture that bothered him.

Learning that things are much more indefinite in this culture. To give an example, that 12:00 can mean 11:45
until 12:30. Realising that things are more approximate here, and they’re not as absolute as what I’d like them to be. That was the biggest learning that I had to adjust, and something I have to fight against because my role is to make sure we are more absolute [Alex].

According to the participants, the coaching helped them as expatriates to manage the stresses of their daily lives, maximize the experience of living internationally and deal with the stresses that result from different cultural customs.

**Coaching claims to help some expatriates understand their Chinese colleagues better.**

Five of the seven expatriates felt that coaching assisted them as expatriates by helping them to understand and manage the cultural differences in others. Hank observed that because of the coaching conversations, he tried to “understand people” better, which could be applied to his Chinese colleagues, as well as everyone else. Scott thought that the coaching process helped him to better relate to his Chinese colleagues.

If I was working with purely British people, there was no language boundaries, there was no real cultural boundaries, and working with them should be intuitively centred, the need for coaching maybe not needed as much. This is what I’m thinking. But with the Chinese way, there’s so many variables that are difficult to read, because of the culture, because of the language. Having coaching, a set of principles, or a method for coaching I think helps and takes out a lot of the variables because there’s a general best practice of how to get the most out of people, how to work with people [Scott].

Alex asserted that he felt that the coaching helped him to understand different cultures better.

So I guess culture does impact on your receptiveness to coaching and the impact of coaching, because it helps I...
guess align different cultures, or [at least] make them understand the differences [Alex].

Kate thought she gained a greater insight in the Chinese way of thinking. Kate, for example, described how she had previously thought that Yao was uncaring but when she saw her commitment to adopt better ways of communicating and leadership, it changed her perception of her.

I had an impression that she just couldn't be bothered. She really didn't take the time to work through things and to see her struggling like that and just trying to adopt a system that was so obviously foreign to everything she'd done before, fantastic [Kate].

Coaching may help some local Chinese to understand Western thinking

Fang noted that because of the coaching she did relate more to the corresponding foreign culture. Fang and Sun believe that the coaching helped them to better understand and relate the Western way of thinking and communicating, which is radically different than in China.

Fang wished to understand Western culture better.

It helped me adjust to more Western thinking. I've told you the coaching, intervention provided a good platform to communication and sometimes it helped me to understand why the [supervisors] a Western expatriate, is thinking this way [Fang].

Even though many of the expatriates had extensive experience living in China, the majority still found that there were differences that they had not fully understood or processed until the coaching. Likewise, even though the Chinese managers had all
previous experience in Western contexts, there were still aspects of Western culture that perplexed them and which they were interested in understanding further.

**Coaching claims to raise one’s own cultural awareness**

Four of the seven expatriates found that the coaching intervention caused them to reflect on their own cultural perceptions and experiences. Charles also focused on how the feedback that results from coaching assisted him in better understanding others, which helped him as an expatriate in China.

> I think one of the things I have learned or acknowledged since doing the coaching is that it is actually really, really important to get feedback, whether it be personal issues or work related issues. I think it is very easy to cocoon oneself in whatever it is you are doing [Charles].

Charles also discovered that his communication challenges affected his relationships to others, and by addressing those he would understand and be understood by other cultures better.

> I think what I learned in the coaching was that my communication style was an issue. It didn’t really to my mind matter from which person, from which cultural background was the recipient of my communication [Charles].

Coaching helped Alex to better deal with the cultural difference and feel more at peace.

> I’ve had more understanding for the way that the Chinese culture works, but I haven’t necessarily relented from my goals because that's part of my role. Just made me more aware, and obviously implementing, when I feel that it's not necessarily my way. My way is not the only way [Alex].
Jean believed the coaching conversations helped her to be able to better manage her emotions with her Chinese colleagues and brainstorm solutions to cultural problems.

[Coaching] just gives you a different perspective and different options, because often I might say, it really annoys me that Chinese people - or the culture - is so one-dimensional. Why don’t people just think a little bit more? Something like that, to take that as an example. Coaching might - in my case, it taught me to see it from the other person’s perspective [Jean].

Kate believed the coaching intervention with the team gave her an insight into her Chinese colleagues that she was not previously aware of.

The whole thing you see the eagerness, you see that it's not that they’re just trying to be difficult. It’s not that they don't want to be good managers and it's not that they don't want to have these types of relationships with the people that they manage. It’s that they simply don’t know how to do it [Kate].

Alex, however, was able to perceive a benefit in the cultural awareness but he was not willing to attribute that solely to coaching: “No, I think it’s made me aware generally of people’s sensitivities and that would include of course anything which arises through culture, but I don’t think it specifically addressed issues in relation to Chinese culture.”

Coaching can experience cultural resistance

Coaching may not be a natural fit for Chinese culture

Three of the eleven expressed a feeling that coaching was unnatural to Chinese culture. Sun observed that, generally the focus on relationships and communication is ignored in Chinese culture.

I do consider that look at Chinese staff and Chinese company and Chinese culture that tend to not pay attention
to the communication and coaching staff in the foreign company. They just tend to pay more attention to the working side and pushing people to do work, do much work and earn much money but tend to didn’t realise there are a lot of other things, coaching and culture and communication that would also increase your efficiency, and that would be benefit for your work [Sun].

Kate asserted that some of the coaching phraseology and style are not as effective for her Chinese colleagues because the expressions have no resonance in Chinese culture.

Some of the coaching things that [my coach] was teaching, they never say that in Chinese. I can say it and get away with it because I'm a foreigner. They don't expect predictable things from me. But the whole thing is the thinking, the process and the way that they go about it, it's changed and that's been hugely beneficial [Kate].

Fundamentally though, Logan believed that there was an incompatibility between coaching and Chinese culture that needed to be resolved.

Chinese people come from a – their starting point, their central point of reference is family and everything is resolved and dealt with by the family and that is still absolutely the case today. Coaching comes from a completely different approach. It’s very individual based. It’s very much about society and how you relate to society and in a way it contradicts the way Chinese people view themselves and view the way that they should resolve the issues that they have and within society and I think I remember [my coach] saying that coaching may lead to people having fundamental changes in the way they view things and again that’s a very western way of looking at it because that assumes that that change is directed very much around the individual and their ability to sort of define their individuality [Logan].

Kate felt that the coaching style was not one that existed in Chinese culture because the relationships at work between senior and junior staff were quite different
than Western culture. Kate assessed that coaching was something unique to her Chinese colleagues and would convey concepts that many had rarely used or explored.

Especially for Chinese nationals there would be no way that they would be ever exposed to this type of thinking. Especially the older people, they never, ever got anything like this in college or in any class that they've taken and it's not something that you would ever talk about. They don't learn how to do these things and, in fact, just to teach co-operative behaviour, let along management, or how to manage properly or how to teach people properly and to view a manager as somebody who could be approached for the people who worked with them is completely new. They definitely never got that [Kate].

Coaching may encounter resistance from the local Chinese

Logan tried to explain the resistance of the HCNs to coaching by comparing it to a Chinese medicine healer who walks into a Western corporate boardroom and starts talking about the benefits of Chinese medicine. Logan followed up with an illustration of his point.

If you imagine, you have to sort of really imagine a Chinese person going into an American organisation with a Chinese accent and sort of telling people about – let’s say a Chinese traditional medicine person goes into a company and starts telling people about acupuncture and about eating fungus and herbs and all these other things. They’d be considered a whacko and that would be the starting point, is okay I’ve got to put up with this. I’ll listen because somebody's told me I have to but this is whacky. That’s kind of the starting point, yeah? How much work would you have to do to get people in the US to respect and listen and be open to what is being discussed? Probably quite a lot. You’d probably have to present a lot of information and show them in a local context how that works before they’ll then be really open to what it is you’re putting forward and in a kind of way that’s probably kind of how they’re looking at it [Logan].
Coaching might have the capacity to adapt to different cultural systems

Four of the eleven participants felt that coaching was congruent with the Chinese culture. Hank felt that because the Chinese people he observed would ask for “advice without feeling embarrassed to do so” that they would be receptive to coaching because “they don’t necessarily bring a lot of sort of pride or prejudice. You can sit them down and talk to them and they want to have a conversation.”

Fang agreed that coaching was compatible with Chinese culture because coaching is just a “tool” that can be applied in a variety of circumstances.

Chinese culture it's also big, coaching is also a kind of tool coaching is also a kind of tool to achieve ultimate achievement of this organisation. So it depends on who uses these coaches. It's a tool. It's not a rule, a universal - it's just a tool which can be applied by different organisations. Depends on who is using that. It's tools. A knife can be a weapon, can be a murder weapon or can be a good tool [Fang].

Yao positioned coaching as something that did not generally fit with Chinese culture, but coaching had much to offer to the Chinese.

I felt the coaching was a more desirable thing from a Chinese cultural perspective. One is because we traditionally treat coaching as something undesirable to do. But actually it is doing your mind good. It is not something that - you need to reduce those anxieties so it goes to a level. That’s the first thing. The second is because of the way that Chinese people communicate. Sometimes it is not to encourage and always criticising. Yes, so from those two perspectives I think that this coaching from a Chinese cultural perspective would be even more valuable [Yao].

Charles believed that the coaching may have been challenging for his Chinese colleagues because coaching “is a Western concept and too direct and enquiring,” but he
still thought it was so valuable that he wished that even more Chinese colleagues had participated in the program. Charles went on to explain his reasoning for wanting to see more Chinese colleagues involved.

Well I work for an international company and we have international clients. I think the skills that you learn in coaching are universal in a sense that they in theory should apply to everybody. The benefits of coaching should apply to everybody. I think during the coaching process, once the local colleagues have an opportunity to go through the process and start to feel comfortable with the process and understand that it’s not a threat that is something that they will find beneficial and help them in their own personal career development and in their communication with people like me. That’s a good thing [Charles].

Yao found that the praising of positive acts, which is rarely done in China, has enormous benefits to the local Chinese staff who seemed to respond well.

Also especially I think that theory taught was very useful to the Chinese culture. One of the reasons I mentioned is we tend to criticise and make people less confident, which is sometimes - I personally feel is not right [Yao].

*How does the executive coaching process impact international managers?*

**Coaching can accommodate an executive’s work schedule**

**Coaching may conform to the client’s agenda**

Most of the coaching sessions were between one and two hours long and this was acceptable to all eleven participants. Coaching was integrated into the work day. The average was around one and a half hours. Hank was fine with the time, which he said was flexible, but he was concerned that, because he was not fully prepared each session, the coaching may have been “probably less purposeful than they could have been.”
Charles agreed that the length of time was adequate, and he enjoyed the two to three week spaces in between coaching sessions. Logan thought the hour and half he spent was perfect for his schedule.

I thought it was about right actually. Any longer and it would get sort of tedious or difficult and any shorter, you don’t really feel like you can get stuck into the conversation [Logan].

Yao commented that the continuing coaching sessions reinforced the concepts, which helped her to understand them.

Because basically ever other week having one hour’s coaching with her through the phone. I think this is quite a useful strengthening process [Yao].

Coaching can offer a finite number of sessions to address specific goals

The coaching intervention was originally scheduled for eight coaching sessions. The number of coaching sessions per participant ranged from five to twelve, as some participants chose to extend their coaching beyond the original eight sessions. Three of the five HCNs ended their sessions prior to the original plan of eight sessions. The HCNs who ended early claimed that their workloads became too unmanageable to include the coaching. Of the two remaining HCNs, Yao and Niang, only one (Yao) continued coaching beyond the end of the coaching project. Yao continued the coaching because she was still trying to manage her anxiety and other challenges.

I feel that it is - I know that if you only learn it for a week you cannot - you may forget or not to really practice so much. I feel that it is the continued emphasis and by your practices and by somebody telling you, sharing your experiences and gaining suggestions and how you can
improve further and listen to what you achieve that is very useful [Yao].

Niang completed the entire original eight sessions but decided to not continue the coaching further. Niang claimed she decided to not continue the coaching because she needed a break and she wanted to apply what she learned.

I pick up something from previous country I need to practice that. To realise that I applied the skills and I choose more than receiving the coaching all the time. Not sure if I really apply it at work or not. Also because I haven’t applied it to life at all [Niang].

All of the expatriates completed all of the original number of coaching sessions although it required patience and persistence on behalf the coaches. Six of the seven expatriates (including Jean) opted to immediately continue their coaching past the end date. The remaining expatriate, Logan, stated he wished to continue coaching but only with a coach located in China. After completing his original sessions, Hank reflected on the experience and felt like he wanted to continue coaching but in a more focused way.

I think I would like to do more because I didn’t learn how to get the best out of it or I could have done more, I think, to get more out of it. So I’d want to ask the coach to help me identify some more specific areas and so I can actually see myself progressing and I can then say really I can sort of take myself further from here. I know what tools I need for this particular ritual [Hank].

Charles also felt that he had not maximised the coaching opportunity to his regret.

Maybe it would have been better if I had allowed myself to keep it structured and given myself the time to prioritise it better than maybe I did initially because I think overall it was valuable. While I think I tended to, I didn’t probably elevate it to the priority I should have done maybe to get the best value out of it [Charles].
Alex sought to continue the coaching because of the mentoring aspects of coaching.

It forms an important part of mentoring and the person who’s my coach [also been] before then my mentor. So it’s just developed into something different, a more productive, more results-orientated mentoring perhaps [Alex].

Jean wished to have coaching every six months as part of a check-up, while Logan believed he needed a coach within China who could relate to his issues. Logan was not interested in continuing his coaching sessions.

Because I understood that coaching is not meant to be this ongoing thing. That it’s you learning things and then figuring out yourself how to put those in place and I used the coaching to address, like I said some very specific issues and conversations and I was able to do that during those six sessions and I felt it was finished where I wanted it to [Logan].

Scott opted to continue with his coaching because he felt that he relapsed too much from the progress that he had made and wanted to keep working with someone that would help him stay on task.

And it’d be good to reality-test them with [the coach] and establish a wider link as somebody who’s got a lot more experience and help me identify why it is that I’m not moving forward as fast as I could [Scott].

Logan felt that he would take up coaching again but he would “like it to be in China,” and he would like it to be face to face.

Coaching may be effective using various media

Although all eleven stated that the coaching could be accomplished over the telephone, not everyone was satisfied with the medium. Niang did not find the telephone
to be very effective and would have preferred face-to-face coaching sessions. Niang said that “telephone coaching is not very effective. Telephone interrupted the flow of the day; took more concentration.”

Because of the work and because of the kind of work always has to have the priority of your time. So you were, or I, I don’t know everybody does, but I didn’t take any pride and especially when it was on the phone, it was very easy to skip [Niang].

Yao however, stated that the telephone worked for her and she did not “feel that is any sort of big gap that I have to meet the person in person.”

However, because the coaches did begin with two face-to-face sessions first, the participants all felt they has established some bond. Most thought that the telephone sessions would not have worked without the initial face-to-face. Sun stated he had no problem with the phone, although his coach thought he was harder to understand over the telephone because his English was the most challenging. Fang also had no problems with the phone, although he recorded the least number of coaching sessions.

Five of the remaining seven expatriates were satisfied with the telephone and did not report any major challenges, except agreeing that some face-to-face meetings are necessary.

I mean, it’s never going to be as good, I think, as one-on-one face-to-face. And I think with tele-coaching it’s easier to postpone, move around calls. But no, I don’t see it being an issue, because a lot of what you’re doing is talking about issues, and in fact for many people not actually having to sit face to face may make them open up and talk about issues that they wouldn’t normally. So I don’t see it as a problem [Scott].
Kate believed that because her coach was familiar with Rabble and the various personalities on the executive team, it was not a “problem” to have the coaching sessions over the phone, although she would have preferred more face to face meetings. Also, Kate felt that she would have wanted her coach to be in the country for face to face meetings, “if she hadn’t known Rabble.”

Logan, the country manager, however did not like the telephone medium. He felt it limited him and represented the distance between his coach and fully understanding the issues that are prevalent in China. Logan would have preferred face-to-face meetings in China.

Very tough on the phone would be my first point. Very hard to open up when you’re on the phone [Logan].

Hank also felt that the telephone “was not ideal” because he missed out on ”all the other things that come with face-to-face meetings.” Jean did not mind the telephone conversations, although she thought that “face to face might have been slightly better.”

Coaching can create safe spaces for self-discovery and insight
Coaching may give clients opportunities for the safe expression of ideas

All of eleven of the participants enjoyed the structured conversations that formed the coaching intervention. Some participants specifically mentioned the benefits of the coaching conversations on their freedom of expression and exploration of ideas. Hank felt comfortable in the coaching conversations and enjoyed the opportunity to have someone listening to him and working on his problems for a change.

It was, for me, like a normal conversation. But a very intense conversation in that not - I mean intense in a good
way, in that I felt the coach was really listening. It’s not very often that you have an occasion where somebody is 100 per cent listening to you and focusing on you. Particularly in the workplace, you’ve got to look after other people and no-one’s looking after you, more or less. So it’s a kind of indulgent feeling, but also very nice [Hank].

For Charles, the coaching style was different that what he was used to but it was effective because it caused him to reflect on things he had previously ignored.

So from that point of view I think it was positive because I think it was a certain amount of awareness going on there that I hadn’t experienced before. I thought it was very constructive [Charles].

Jean enjoyed the improvisational nature of the coaching conversations and style because she could address current challenges and then work with the coach to tackle immediate problems.

But I liked that style, because I thought that it was a lot more comfortable. It was less structured and I think it addressed the concerns that I wanted to talk about more than what was necessarily on a set agenda, which gave - I think - both of us less pressure to think, we’ve got to tick these things off and actually to address the issues that were either bothering me or something that I wanted to talk about for another reason [Jean].

Scott appreciated just having the ability to discuss issues without judgement or worry about reprisal.

It’s refreshing, I think, coaching, having somebody just to talk to outside of work, outside of your group of friends, to just talk about you, and you know somebody’s there who’s just trying to help you and ask you the right questions to ask of yourself [Scott].

Kate enjoyed the conversational aspect, which she described as “incredibly open and ranging.”
It was much more personal rather than focused within the company, but getting to that probably took three conversations because I'm always all over the place. I'd talk about this problem and that problem. I'm very open about how I deal with my problems and talking through it was a good process for me [Kate].

Logan however felt that the open conversation style did not force him to focus on business objectives.

I felt that because it was a completely open book, I could raise whatever I want. I probably didn’t raise the things that I should have from a business point of view I guess so I’m looking at it from a Rabble point of view where we want where the organisation will benefit from having people address issues that will help the organisation. Those didn’t necessarily get brought up in the one-on-one sessions because they didn’t have to get brought up, so they weren’t necessarily – there was no sort of addressing of those questions I guess [Logan].

Coaching can build self-awareness

Four of the eleven participants highlighted the impact of their self-awareness increasing as a result of the coaching. Alex felt that increased self-awareness was the biggest benefit: “Not to interrupt people as often; to give people a chance to express their ideas to maybe learn that even thought I might have the right solution at the point I introduce it needs to be carefully timed.” Hank believes that the self-awareness he developed through coaching gave him more emotional control.

I think the things that I really learned and I think have stayed with me is just patience and more self-awareness. So listening to my thoughts when someone’s speaking to me and being able to control those rather than reacting with my first reaction and then being misunderstood or causing a reaction in turn [Hank].
Charles explored blind spots that were exposed to him during the coaching.

I think in my case I remember one of the issues that was raised was how I used to postpone certain decision making processes and so on and never really understanding why I did that, but then during the coaching it was basically asked to kind of reflect on that a bit. I found that very useful, but something that I probably wouldn’t have been able to do myself [Charles].

Charles also described how the feedback he received while practicing his conversational skills impacted his self-awareness.

I think in order to gain an understanding, to get awareness in terms of communication and so on, it is very important to get feedback on how you are perceived by others and I was given that in a structured way or given an awareness of how to understand the perception of others through this in a structured way [Charles].

Because of the coaching, Scott developed an awareness that impacted his thoughts and feelings.

I’m definitely far more aware now I think of my own feelings, my own achievements, my own failings. I guess the goal setting needs, looking to see that – just general thought processes, where we are, where we’d like to be, and how we’re going to get there [Scott].

Coaching might build trust through the relationship with the coach

Most of the participants felt that their coach was competent and they were able to establish some bonds of trust and respect. Charles felt that the confidential nature of the coaching sessions deepened his experience and increased his respect for Rabble.

That offered a platform for feedback that was confidential and wasn’t necessarily shared with management. That has given me the ability I suppose through some of the things that were raised in the training to just improve overall my
awareness of myself and my surroundings and that the impact of how I do things in my surroundings, whether that be people or places or whatever [Charles].

Alex believed that establishing trust was paramount to a successful coaching relationship.

For me the key thing about coaching is I must admire the person and I must trust them, and trust I think is the important element. You can admire a lot of people that you don't trust. I admire Bill Clinton [Alex].

All seven of the expatriates claimed to have a good relationship and high level of trust with their coaches. Scott described his relationship with his coach as “satisfying.” Logan thought his coach “performed extremely well” but he was not fully satisfied by the experience because he thought more could have been achieved if the coach had lived in China and understood the issues more.

I think, first of all the coaching has to understand more about the issues here. Secondly, I think the coaches need to be in situ and really see how the formulas and the recommendations and whatever else actually apply and pan out because there will be things that arise that they didn’t expect and then they need to be able to actually see those results to then engage with the person they’re coaching to help them understand well that happened because, so that person is not frustrated by the fact that didn’t happen the way it was supposed to [Logan].

Logan continued to provide an example of how coaches, not situated in the country are at a disadvantage with HCNs and expatriates.

A good example is how does it mean for you to get feedback from the Chinese staff? How difficult has the coaching process been with those Chinese people? You probably had to call upon other things to try and get their involvement and engagement in certain things. That’s an example, if you’d be here and you understood more about
China and Chinese, it probably would have been quite different [Logan].

Niang however expressed that her coaching could have been more effective if she had a stronger degree of trust with her coach.

I think it first you need to trust the coach. You need to really think he can help you and his ideas are, his advice works. Then if you do have that trust, everytime you have a problem that you feel you want some help with you can ask. And secondly you must have easy access to that person. When you have a situation first you’re willing to talk to him or consult him and secondly you can have access to him in a relatively easy way [Niang].

Logan believed that because coaching is “foreign” to the Chinese that establishing trust becomes even more paramount in forging the relationship between coach and client.

Fang described being affected by the fact that his coach was a Westerner.

I realised my coach was a Westerner. So the way the language and the thinking process went, is part Western. In the Chinese language to speak some - it's the culture difference. Simply because in Chinese we do not speak in that manner. I just mentioned it's the difference in culture. We do not think as such things, straight forward, but they all try to use another way to achieve that same target [Fang].

Niang would have preferred to have had a Western and Chinese coach.

I think it, what I would like is a combination. I had a coach from westerner and I had another coach by a very good Chinese coach because that way you can completely communicate. In fact the first coach I had, was not called coach [Niang].

Yao also was fine with having a Western coach because she was familiar with her coach. Fang however did not feel that having a Chinese coach would have changed his experience with coaching.
I think it doesn't matter. I think it would be the same. Because the people of our levels can understand it's only a matter of language, the habit or the manner of communication. The key points are the same. No matter what language it is [Fang].

How does executive coaching affect the goal attainment of international managers?

Coaching can contribute to the achievement of personal and work-related goals

All 11 of the participants claimed that the coaching assisted them in reaching specific goals that they had developed with their individual coaches. Two expatriates of the eleven focused primarily on goals of self-awareness. One of the expatriates focused developing skills for that for a specific part of her job duties. All four HCNs and two expatriates wished to improve their management skills and relationships with their direct reports. Two of the expatriates split their goals between personal goals and work related goals.

Coaching may achieve goals of self-awareness and self-assessment

Two of the participants formed specific goals around raising their own self-awareness regarding their own actions and that of others. Hank had formed a goal around raising his awareness to be more cognizant of how he sounded to others and his blind spots. He was surprised when the coaching revealed elements of his personality that he was unaware of and the implications of those aspects of his self.

Like [my coach] said whenever she says something good to me, praising me, I always seem to sort of try to bat it back or downplay it or reject it. I wasn’t aware that I was doing that. Again, these are not things that anyone else can fix. Just by telling you, you can be aware of it. By showing me
that that’s not just a kind of being modest. It actually can be destructive. To question why I did it and then for me to understand that not everyone’s like that and for me to understand that the instinct behind it is sort of almost like pain [Hank].

Charles developed goals around improving his awareness so that he could better understand why he thought and acted in particular ways. Also, Charles had received a performance appraisal that noted that his communication style with colleagues needed adjusting because it was perceived as too abrasive. With the coaching, Charles was able to reach some of his goals.

All in all I think I did manage to implement some of the things. Certainly the awareness was important because generally now I tend to think twice about, because I send a lot of emails, I tend to look at it in a different way before I send it now just to see what the impact is [Charles].

Coaching might achieve work competency goals

One of the participants constructed a specific goal around a competency that she needed for her job performance that she was, previous to coaching, unsure of how to acquire. Jean’s goals related to her performance fears of marketing to clients and “overcoming the fear of networking situations.” Jean had, what she described as, “cocktail party fear,” where she felt anxiety about approaching people at work-party functions and informing strangers of the benefits and services at Rabble, in order to attract clients. As a result of the coaching, Jean believed she made significant strides in achieving her goals of overcoming her fears.

I feel like I’ve come a long way with that. [My coach] and I used to role play on the phone cocktail party scenarios, and I would go up to her as a potential client with a drink in her
hand and I’d talk through how I would introduce myself, how I would get to find out a bit more about what that company does and whether there’s anywhere [Rabble] could fit in, that kind of thing. So we’d play through those scenarios on the phone [Jean].

Coaching may achieve goals of effective management

Six of the participants claimed that coaching assisted them in achieving their goal of being a more effective manager. Fang constructed goals around learning how to coach his team members and increasing his team members’ workplace well-being. Fang believed that following the coaching he was able to coach his team better by replicating the coaching conversation style that was used in his sessions.

I've tried to have several quality conversations with my team members, and the basic feedback is good. They like this kind of conversation. They did change some manners in a short time period [Fang].

Yao faced challenges around her feelings of anxiety when it came to justifying her particular work group and when she wanted to confront instances of inequality that she perceived between HCNs and expatriates. Yao formed goals around being able to manage her emotional state and communicating effectively with others without being perceived as abrasive. For Yao, the coaching assisted her in putting the things that were causing her anxiety in the “big picture” and directing her efforts to what she could control. Sun’s goals had him seeking “more advice and experience in terms of how to communicated and manage” his work group. Sun felt that he was able to achieve his coaching goals.

I think the communication is more effective now and when I talk to people I just try to encourage the other party by
asking questions and make communication more effective and also more useful for other party [Sun].

Logan’s goals revolved around “focussing on very specific conversations and issues related to people” on his management team, who were participants in the coaching intervention. Logan felt that he was “very” successful in achieving his goals.

There are people who have received the coaching who have become much more easy – and in a way I guess we have a common language now, so when things reach a point where we need to really resolve an issue, we’re able to refer to some common language solution. Let’s think about the solution and that makes it much easier [Logan].

Alex sought goals that would improve the overall organisation and minimize his conflicts with others.

There were some specific goals, not to interrupt people as often; to give people a chance to express their ideas; to maybe learn that even though I might have the right solution at the point I introduce it needs to be very carefully timed; those sort of aspects, because I’m somebody who thinks very quickly and I immediately dismiss a number of options and go straight to this one.

Coaching might achieve work/life balance goals

Two of the participants formed specific goals around creating more work/life balance in their lives. Scott split his goals between personal ones, like improving his fitness, quitting smoking, pursuing hobbies and getting outdoors, and work goals, such as growing his leadership skills and managing difficult team members. Scott felt that with the coaching he was able to address all of his goals, but he found that everything was not as sustainable as he wanted it to be.
Kate’s goals mainly involved wanting to manage her life better and having “a smooth pay off in terms of actually having a life.” Kate wanted more time in her personal life to improve relationships and her health and fitness but felt that she had been working too much to have time for herself. In order for Kate to have more personal time, she had to reduce her work commitments, which she also established as a goal.

I am getting rid of a lot of work. It's nice. I have now more people that I believe will get the right resources from Rabble. I have been able to transfer a lot of work. I'm very close to being able to get rid of a substantial portion of my work, giving it to somebody else. Not just several bits of it but to several people, getting them involved and bringing them up in terms of the company and giving them more responsibility. Close to it [Kate].

*What outcomes result from executive coaching for international managers?*

**Coaching may improve physical and mental health**

Coaching has the capacity to improve physical fitness

Four out of the eleven participants created goals around their personal health and fitness. Scott and Charles wished to developed gym routines; Kate wanted to manage her weight better and Logan wanted to compete in a triathlon. All four were able to reach their goals to some degree, but felt that they would sacrifice their physical fitness goals when work pressures mounted.

Coaching can improve mental health

Eight of the eleven noted an increase in their feelings of happiness and a decrease in their feelings of anxiety, depression and stress after the coaching. Three of the
participants wanted to manage their increased levels of anxiety that had built up prior to coaching. Each was experiencing stress, anxiety and mild forms of depression as a result of their work pressures and personal lives. One of the three, an HCN, was stressed because she felt she was unable to demonstrate her effectiveness to the company. The other two, both expatriates, were both affected by issues in their personal lives and a feeling of loneliness and disconnect from loved ones and family members. Each felt that the coaching allowed them to reflect and address the various issues which were contributing to the anxiety and stress. Hank assessed his mental health as low due to his frustrations with being able to “persuade people and lack of ability to get things done.” However, after the coaching, Hank used the insights that he discovered with his coach to address the issues that were affecting his mental health. By addressing those issues, Hank believed that his mental health improved. Likewise Hank felt that his sense of well-being in the workplace had increased after the coaching because he was able to identify stressors and “realise that there’s something I can deal with. I should be able to control it.”

Kate was “incredibly stressed” and “close to depression” because of the amount of work she was expected to complete. Kate noted that although the coaching helped to lessen her anxiety and stress, her feelings of depression started to grow worse.

> I think that was just because of the fact that the coaching was helping me get back on and deal with the period of recovering from the burnout and getting the systems in place so I wouldn’t get burned out again or close to that edge again. That was part of it [Kate].

For Kate, the coaching was essential in managing her feelings of depression around work.
Coaching made me then happier with Rabble over a period of four months, five months. It then caused me to reassess things and once you all of a sudden reassess and you look at what's important to yourself then you're happier with your situation I think [Kate].

Charles acknowledged that prior to the coaching he was dealing with a great deal of stress that was impacting his life, but he was not dealing with it. As a result of the coaching sessions, Charles gained an awareness of his mental health and sought therapeutic assistance outside of the coaching intervention.

There was a certain point in the coaching where feedback was given that it appeared that I appeared to be down and so on and up until that point I hadn’t really, I think around that time that was acknowledged by my parents. The fact that I got it as well from an independent source led me to believe that I was in a situation that I needed to get outside advice on, like medical advice on. That basically led to a situation where I actually went to a medical doctor and asked for some professional advice and that led to a schedule where I was able to address that [Charles].

After the coaching, Yao felt happier at work and believed that she had lessened the anxiety, depression and stress that she had felt previously because people perceived her differently.

But after the coaching I think people are changing - everybody was feeling dramatically the differences of how they perceive the same and as well for me - I personally feel very much relaxed [Yao].

Yao attributed some of the change to what she learned to manage her stress. Logan noted that because of the coaching he was feeling “happier” because he was “better about letting things go and just understanding that you can’t control stuff.”

Well the only issue really was anxiety and stress before the coaching around individuals. Individuals made me anxious and caused me to stress. The coaching that I did was very
much specifically targeted at those individuals and I would say I’ve seen significant improvements in reduced anxiety and stress levels around those individuals [Logan].

Alex felt like he had high levels of stress, but no issues of anxiety or depression.

He shared that he thought that his high levels of stress decreased as a result of the coaching and the techniques he learned.

Some of the techniques we used, like focusing out or panning out and trying to see the big picture. Saying okay, where are we now? What's the real impact of it? Do I really need to be stressing so much about it? Putting things in context I think has been helpful with that.

The other thing is seeing from other people's perspective. That's been very helpful to reduce my stress and say well wait a moment, why am I stressing over this? Is it something that necessarily needs to be dealt with this way?

Thirdly I think seeing from other people's perspective has allowed me to align my timelines, to make sure that I create situations of less stress, when I can [Alex].

Scott recounted feeling “a general malaise” and trouble sleeping because he felt like his personal life was unfulfilled. After the coaching he felt less anxious and his well-being at work increased.

Definitely more sense of satisfaction, of doing a good job. At work, I think I’m much happier at work. That’s the key thing, I think, I definitely have a greater sense of happiness at work, because I don’t feel stressed and I’m passing on the work, which is good on so many different levels. On the personal side, maybe I haven’t tackled it in the same way because they’re different [Scott].

Coaching might support personal and familial fulfillment

Coaching claims to support the achievement of work/life balance
Six of the seven expatriates added some personal goals throughout the intervention, in addition to work goals. Only one of the four HCNs added any personal goals to their stated goals. Hank, Scott, Charles and Kate all constructed goals focused on their personal lives, as well as work goals. All four felt they had achieved a measure of success in attaining some of their personal goals. Scott and Charles became involved in hobbies that they had long coveted. Alex specifically noted that he focused primarily on work to the exclusion of his personal life, which was partially attributed to lack of Chinese communication skills. Logan believed that the coaching helped to promote Rabble as a company that cares about work/life balance.

So I think for me, it helps to get other people in the organisation to understand how important it is that we talk to each other, that we understand each other, that we listen and I think that helps to permeate through the organisation and ultimately, hopefully, it results in more and more people actually living the culture and the lifestyle that we want them to [Logan].

Charles described how he was stressed out because of his long working hours and that affected his sense of well-being in the workplace: “I was very dissatisfied with my work. I was very disenchanted, I was very disillusioned. I was very stressed and I was very anxious.” For Charles it was a revelation when he discovered he could use the coaching to address issues in his personal life, as well as, at work.

Originally I thought the coaching was very much work focused and then realised that it was actually involved in what was going on outside of work as well. So that sort of brought the importance of a balanced lifestyle as a theme, not maybe a direct theme, but an indirect theme that was asked about during the sessions [Charles].
Focusing on creating a balance between work and his personal life allowed Charles to make some dramatic challenges as a result of the coaching. Niang and Yao discussed the pressures of being a female executive, where they were expected to outperform men and expatriates and still be home for their families. Niang wished that she could take a holiday like the expatriates, but she was afraid to make that one of her coaching goals because she could not imagine being away from the office for extended periods of time. Niang had the desire to achieve a better work/life balance but would not make a goal around her needs.

I think I need a holiday. I need a holiday. Expats have holidays every two months. I haven’t had a holiday for a year. I think Expats… they take their personal lives more importantly. So I do observe it’s different, is if I can sacrifice a bit of work and the holidays, I would sacrifice my holidays. The Expats will sacrifice work and I think their view is correct. Why are you working? What are you working for? But the best thing is to keep a good balance, but you can’t keep a good balance. You have to sacrifice one end, then some people will sacrifice on this end, some people on the other end and I think that’s the difference [Niang].

Niang felt that this was related to the Chinese tendency to always sacrifice personal needs for work and the benefits of work for the family. The Chinese, she says, are more hard working. Yao however did create a goal to be home in time for dinner with her family so she refrained from any evening work function that was not absolutely essential to business. Neither Fang nor Sun discussed any life goals or personal goals.

Coaching may support familial relationships
Eight out of the eleven participants commented that they attempted to use the coaching conversation techniques at home, predominately with their children and/or partners/spouses. Niang believed that she applied the coaching concepts at home but unconsciously.

To my son, yes but I think that’s only from natural reasons, not consciously. Not consciously. I don’t do it consciously, I didn’t even realise. I did it because they are too close to you and you never both to think you need to use coaching skills [Niang].

The participants felt that the coaching conversation format created a non-threatening communication style that improved relationships at work, so it could be helpful at home. Few recounted whether the use of the coaching communication style at home was effective. Hank observed that he was more patient at home with his family and that, because of the coaching, he was more aware of not being “lazy” at home with his communication skills. His wife noticed the changes as well.

I think I’ve learnt that that’s actually really important as well, the same things that have made mistakes in the workplace happening in personal life as well. So instead of reacting to something that maybe even deliberately provoked, when you have a relationship and sometimes you really deliberately provoke each other. I’ve been able to step out of those and avoid conflicts. I think we’ve had fewer of those sort of petty arguments that usually come up. My daughter, I’m obviously listening more to my daughter [Hank].

Charles also believed that the coaching helped to change how he managed his personal relationship with his girlfriend.

I think in my present relationship I have been a bit more open in terms of what I want and more honest, whereas before I was not aware of the importance of doing that and
I think it is positive. So I am kind of exploring that further [Charles].

Sun attempted to use it with his family to create a more positive atmosphere.

Sometimes a little better when dealing with my daughter and my wife. I just try to do things always from a positive point of view rather than negative point of view. So always mainly I deal with problem with my wife and with my daughter and always consider a different angle to deal with that [Sun].

Coaching can promote conscious and strategic communication skills

All eleven participants described a marked change in their communication skills as a result of the coaching intervention. Some of them described how prior to the coaching, their communication style was directive (Niang, Sun, Alex and Charles), and after the coaching they developed a more collaborative style.

Coaching may promote collaboration through communication

Four of the participants described how the coaching intervention assisted their collaboration with their colleagues. Kate described using the “ask, not tell” approach and how this style of communication has empowered their staff.

I have a big sign in my office but basically only I can see it. It's been on my computer and it says ‘ask, don't tell’. I'm on the phone with people and I find myself rephrasing my statement all of a sudden into a question [Kate].

Kate discovered that using the “ask, not tell” approach yielded more information for herself.

You learn a lot more. People are much more willing to tell you when they feel like they're confiding in you and you
ask the question in an open ended way. I'm much more willing to give the power to the other person in the conversation because ultimately I can get more information [Kate].

Yao noted that she had begun to focus more on listening and soliciting information from a wider range of sources.

Yes and asking questions rather than just tell them what you want to say. I can see a lot of differences by doing the planning and the aim and by keeping asking questions rather than just telling other bodies what to do. So I’m feeling that’s - especially quite useful for me [Yao].

As a result of the coaching conversations and training, the participants felt they had developed a better rapport with each other. Hank noted that the coaching had given the management team additional skills.

So again, with the organisation, I think it’s helped a great deal in the way that we, as senior managers who have received the coaching, communicate with each other. I think it’s helped a lot. We are, I think more honest and more considerate in the way we communicate [Hank].

Fang noted that before the coaching his communication style was “straight forward” and abrupt. Fang only told his team members what he thought but did not solicit their input. After the coaching though, Fang’s style changed.

My communication style has been improved by for example I would try to explore their details. Explore what they think of and tried to let them suggest what the solution is. I allow more time - I use more time to listen to other parties opinions [Fang].

Yao believed that the coaching had helped her to plan her conversations better and that is what caused the difference from her pre-coaching communications.

Just preparation and always have a set - especially for difficult conversations, do preparation and state clearly the
aim and control the conversation and leading the conversation [Yao].

Scott noted that his communication style prior to the coaching was good but not focused. Scott’s communication style changed following the coaching intervention in a number of ways.

So another example is if I’m asked to comment, I’d rather them do the talking, and ask them what they think and invest some time in getting their feedback, instead of me just coming and saying, You should do this, bang. Talk to them and then let them reach the same kind of – I think it’s about the journey, and I may know what might be the right answer, or what I feel it is, but help them reach that by asking them the questions … so that’s been very useful, … how then to reach decisions on their own, to learn how to reach them on their own [Scott].

Coaching may promote self-confidence through communication

Two of the participants described how their confidence improved following the change in their communication skills. Jean felt that the coaching had helped her to become more confident in using her communication skills to convey her intentions when she had to delegate work.

I think I am feeling more confident that, as long as you communicate correctly, it should come back right. There must be something broken down somewhere along the line if you say one thing and it comes back different. It’s like Chinese whispers. Something’s wrong [Jean].

Logan described his communication style before coaching as close and personality drive but “not direct’ and “non-confrontational.” Logan felt that after the coaching, his communication style was similar with the positive aspects and he started to address issues he had previously ignored.
I’d just say [I am] better at confronting issues in a healthy way and listening a little bit more and more better at reaching solutions, at finding solutions and communicating [Logan].

Logan credited the change in his behaviour to the tools he developed in his coaching sessions.

Given me a set of triggers if you like or things that I can refer to when I’m in a difficult situation to remind myself okay, so that formula, I don’t know what you call it but it’s given me a number of triggers that when you’re in that crisis point or in a difficult conversation you can refer to [Logan].

Coaching can promote problem solving through communication

One of the participants described how coaching assisted her problem solving skills. Niang noted that her communication was now more premeditated and planned, that she designed her conversations as a result of the coaching and training. Niang’s communication style also became more “solution-focused”:

So everybody was proposing the problems, so you just feel, you want to stop the conversation and then you will think let’s [be] solution focus. To change the tone to change the situation by yes, these are the problems, but we have to solve the problems [Niang].

Coaching can provide training and role-playing for skill acquisition

One of the participants related how the coaching process allowed her to acquire and practice a desired skill, so that the coaching sessions resembled training sessions with feedback. Jean specifically built her goals around improving her presentation, public speaking and networking skills. Jean had never been responsible for attracting clients or marketing in her previous assignments, but that was a major component of her position at
Rabble. Jean’s inexperience with public speaking caused her feelings of unease. Working with her coach, Jean was able to practice her speeches and refine her presentations so that she would be better prepared and feel more confidence. Jean had several occasions to implement her new skills and discovered that she was an effective speaker because she was able to secure new clients for the company. The coaching sessions allowed Jean to prepare for her public speaking presentations.

I found it really helped, talking to [my coach] through - during our coaching sessions about how to talk to slides and how to - how many slides to use, whether we should use more slides or less slides. More talking or less talking, more words on the slides or less words on the slides, and to compare the different styles of different speakers as well [Jean].

Coaching can help address deficiencies in performance

Two of the participants were able to use the coaching intervention to repair communication deficiencies that had been identified in performance appraisals. Charles noted that prior to the coaching he had received performance feedback which described his communication style as “a bit confrontational and that was to do with the language I used.” Charles had received a performance appraisal that had negative comments regarding his communication style with colleagues. After the coaching Charles changed his behaviour and began to feel that he could communicate without alienating others. Charles began to adjust his written communications.

I tend to think about things, certainly my email communication, I tend to think about if I am disappointed in something, I tend to phrase things, approach my language differently to what I used to. I was quite emotive before. When it was pointed out to me I used the coaching,
the feedback I got from coaching to help me in my written communication style but in a way that I was able to ask well this is how I write something and this is how I say something [Charles].

Yao assessed that her communication skills prior to the coaching intervention were “not that much good.” Yao had previously received a negative performance appraisal regarding her communications with her direct reports. Yao had noted that one of her “weaknesses” was that she “talks too much and not listen to others.” Yao believed that she had made concerted changes after the coaching.

I really communicate what I really mean by not telling too much and asking and by the way that I convey the conversation. I listen to not only what they say and try to - I would say the hidden messages behind words. So that’s I think very useful [yao].

Coaching may help to develops leadership competencies

Coaching can shows that organizations are committed to professional development

Ten out of the eleven participants believed that the provision of coaching indicated Rabble’s commitment to their professional growth. Charles thought that “it showed commitment on the part of the company to the development of their employees.” Sun too felt that Rabble demonstrated its commitment to being a learning organisation.

I think that’s good because that would represent Rabble as one to help their staff learn new concept and how to deal with the people and communication will affect you. This was always needed for any company as a learning environment as an improving environment so I think it’s good things [Sun].

Kate stated that it was “absolutely brilliant” for Rabble to provide coaching because it gave the executives skills that were needed.
To take people and say this is what we want to do and not just do it from a management perspective which tends to be very goal focused, but to do it from a viewpoint of coaching and supporting the people who are teaching you, we're all better listeners. I thought it was fantastic [Kate].

Coaching can develop conscientious leaders

Two of the participants described experiences that resonate with conscientious awareness. Kate also believed that she managed the performance appraisal system of her direct reports differently than before she experienced the coaching.

Appraisals I gave. I did them in a different way. What was shocking to me was to discover two of my mid level managers were feeling significant stress and it's not linked to me because the stress and stuff that they were feeling was not linked to the work I was giving them, thank God or I would have felt very guilty. But because of the coaching I handled it differently than I probably would have originally [Kate].

Coaching may develop empathetic leaders

Two of the participants shared how the coaching intervention assisted their empathetic understanding of others. Niang stated that before the coaching her leadership style was “tough and reasonable” because she felt: “It’s like if they’re doing the job well, I think they are paid to do a good job. They are not paid to do a bad job.” But after the coaching, Niang felt differently.

But after I did compare to decisions before coaching and I have, I become more sincere. I convinced myself or I’m unconsciously aware that they are doing their job, good job. They should be appreciated. So if the well done I said before is just in mouth, and the well done I said now is from my heart [Niang].
Niang attributed the change in her style to a growing feeling of empathy for others. Alex commented that his leadership style before the coaching intervention was “somewhat abrupt sometimes, quite domineering.” Alex noticed a considerable change because of the coaching.

More conscious of the impact that my actions have, particularly actually on peers. With junior colleagues I always try to be quite conscious of it because they really can’t disagree or fight against it, but I’ve been much more aware of peers and how they interact. It’s just being more sensitive. I guess I’ve been happy we’ve been getting more feedback from peers and that’s the way it’s been received [Alex].

Although Alex understood what he needed to do to maintain a better leadership style, he still found it to be a struggle.

Coaching may develop collaborative leaders

Three of the participants described how the coaching intervention helped them to try and involve more of their direct reports in decision making. Jean believed that her leadership style tended to be a bit “domineering” because she would often direct people to do things her particular way. After the coaching, Jean saw her style change and she was more conscious regarding how she interacted with others and managed relationships.

Another thing that relates to that is that I feel like I’m gaining - although I’m not absolutely there yet - but gaining trust, in terms of when you delegate work, I feel like it involves actually a surprising amount of trust in not only that person’s ability to do it but your ability to delegate it accurately and to make sure that you’re instructions on where you foresee the project going being communicated effectively [Jean].
Fang believed that before the coaching, he was “a mild leader”. Fang would not push his members too hard to achieve goals and he would often direct them by saying “you should do this, you should do that.”

After the coaching, Fang’s style changed.

Before the coaching I told them what they should do and after then coaching I tried to let them tell me what they should do [Fang].

Fang focused on how to be a more compassionate leader and focused his coaching on trying to rehabilitate under-performing team members instead of dismissing them. Fang reported that the coaching helped him to approaching things in a more strategic manner: “always thinking of the wanted achievement or the purpose before doing something substantial.” Fang consciously tried to implement more management ideas, such as team building for his workgroup. Scott also tried to manage one particular team member who constantly challenges his authority. He also sought to develop better systems of organisation so that he would have more time for his team. Scott’s efforts observed by Logan who gave him even more responsibility. Scott described his leadership style pre-coaching as “raw” because he felt he was “probably misdirecting it in ways that were not suitable.” Scott modified his leadership and management behaviours because of the coaching intervention.

I’ve definitely gone from an authoritarian kind of tell people what to do management, to more of a collaborative – and involve them more, that’s most definitely. Getting them to take more ownership for their work and their decisions [Scott].

Coaching might develop strategic leaders
Three of the participants reflected on how coaching had helped them become more strategic. Sun believed that his leadership style prior to coaching was “flexible.” After coaching, Sun thought that his leadership style was “still a little bit flexible but have more communication and more encouraging style.” Sun felt that the coaching directly influenced this change.

When I deal with the people, I just consider what I need to use some what I learn from this coaching session and make the communication management more effective [Sun].

Kate discovered that the coaching provided her with different options that she could use while managing others, which was useful in a company that had a “Chinese style” and “Western style”.

Coaching's given me a different way, something that wasn't normal for me. I tend to be, because in China, because of the way China is in terms of Chinese nationals and how you manage them, I tend to be much more directive. In learning how to be less directive, it's made me happier to deal with some of the instability because it's a framework and stepping into it. Does that make sense?

Coaching can develop productive leaders

This leadership also extended to the executive team as they began to have more focused and productive meetings.

I think that it has certainly helped the management of the business in coming together and being able to speak more openly and understand each other more. So if I look at the last management meeting we had where we had to address some very difficult issues and we had to make the issues personal in order to get them resolved, I think the quality in our ability to get to the point and address those issues has markedly improved on the pre-coaching period [Logan].
Coaching may develop wise leaders

Hank described how his leadership style before the coaching intervention was “inconsistent and not very patient and rather subjective.” After the coaching, Hank noticed a change.

I’m no superhero now. But more - I think more balanced, less likely to necessarily believe what somebody says when they come to see me and less likely to react rashly and less likely to want to step in, but rather that try to see where they may be misunderstanding or whether their problem might actually exist with somebody else, instead of actually fixing it [Hank].

Hank attributed the change in his leadership style to his new awareness of the roles of emotion and communication in managing relationships.

Ten out of the eleven participants noticed a change in their leadership style before and after the coaching intervention. Yao believed that her leadership skills had stayed the same, but as previously mentioned, she felt her communication skills changed dramatically. Niang, Fang, Logan and Sun reported the greatest differences between their past performance and their current performance. Some noted an increase in the ability to trust their team; while others sought to create more inclusive environments and more team-building type opportunities. Moreover, it was easier help their team members address performance gaps. Sun, Logan and Scott incorporated research into effective team leadership as part of their goals. Niang and Yao developed more inviting atmospheres and rewarded their team members with special work trips or career experiences to inspire commitment. Six out of the eleven were also concerned with the
lack of skills for their junior staff and wanted to implement programs to improve their skills and improve performance.

*How are outcome measures of executive coaching evaluated for MNEs and international managers?*

Coaching can produce observable positive changes in behaviour

Coaching might cause clients to change their own behaviour

Some participants noticed changes in themselves that resulted from the coaching.

Alex mentioned feeling “more aware of the thoughts of others and the perspective of others.” Hank described his increased self-awareness, which has also helped him to be “more aware of not getting sucked into people’s problems in that sort of triangular dependency.” Others mentioned the increase in patience and listening more to others. Because of the changes the participants perceived in them, many of tried to apply the communication concepts and ideas to their familial relationships. Jean believed that, because of the coaching, she had “a little more forethought…which in turn changes my attitude to a situation or the way I deal with it.” Fang felt that he spent “more time to listen to other parties’ opinions.” Kate described being “less arrogant” in interpreting people and spending more time to find out other people’s “point of view.”

Niang observed that after the coaching she was more conscious in her communications and more caring of others.

First is I design my conversations before you have the conversation. Secondly I start to value people, every people and I used to only value good people. Or important people but now I feel every person has value and also the more you value them, the more value they have. The more
you value them the better they will get. So I think that is the change in my perspective to people and to the way I deal with people [Niang].

Sun discovered that he had better communication techniques.

I just feel I have some definite more idea when I communicate with other people, my colleagues and my managers, I just have little more options and different ideas with dealing with the problems and so keep that talking little more useful and more helpful for both parties, so that’s a very good start for me [Sun].

Logan thought he had become a better listener.

I think with more patience when other people are speaking. The feelings, I mean one of the things that we did a lot of work on both in the group sessions and the individual coaching was about recognising when those feelings, when you have feelings and addressing them straight away and being able to use those feelings to articulate what it is that you need to, and I think that has been really really valuable when talking to people and dealing with issues around the business [Logan].

Alex commented that he became more empathetic with his colleagues.

I guess it's the ability to empathise with others that might be involved in conversations with you, or interact with you. I guess it teaches empathy or the ability to empathise [Alex].

Coaching may cause observable changes in others

Some participants described the changes they observed in the other participants, such as greater sensitivity to each other and subordinates. Niang, Logan and Kate remarked that in some participants the changes after the coaching were short-lived and people reverted to their old habits. Niang had felt that Logan, the country manager, had become more focused on being “solution-focused” and on using solutions-oriented
terminology. Logan believed that some made superficial changes to fit in with everyone else and once the spotlight was off the initial coaching project, then it was no longer necessary to maintain the façade. Hank noticed that his colleagues who participated in the coaching program possessed “more careful communication, better use of language, more consideration, better listening.” Fang believed that, because of the coaching conversations with his team member, their “performance has become better.” Charles believed that the coaching helped his direct manager, Logan, become more aware and attentive to his needs than previously. Jean recounted how she had observed changes in some colleagues who participated in the coaching intervention.

I know for a fact, and I’ve seen it in action, certain other colleagues that have either tried to re-have conversations and framing them in a certain way, having thought about what they’re learning from the coaching. One colleague for example has had a noticeable difference - not something they’ve told me about but just something that I’ve observed for myself - in the way that that person communicates with their subordinates. Certainly it’s much more personable approach and a much friendlier approach than before [Jean].

Niang noticed definite changes in her colleagues who had been coached but she wondered whether the person would continue with the changes.

I told you before one of the conversations I had with Alex and we had a very difficult conversation and he was letting out his air by speaking very loudly and very demanding way. I was just silent because what he was, do you know what I say, when he was letting out, it’s like a chimney. And then he suddenly realised speaking like that is not solution focussed. So then he said, can I start the conversation again? That was not long after a coach session. So he’s socially incompetent. So that’s an example of coaching is impacting people. But long and long, by and by, let me think if he really changes [Niang]?
Logan was able to gauge changes from in his staff from before and compare it to after the coaching.

I’ve seen just a significant improvement in the say they – their confidence in the way that they address issues, so as an example, I had a conversation with somebody before the coaching regarding their banding as a partner and it was a very, very difficult discussion that led nowhere.

I had the same discussion a year later and it was just a very easy simple discussion that they understood [Logan].

Kate recognized changes in her Chinese colleagues.

I think some of the Chinese nationals didn't adapt the coaching methods to their own personal style and the people who were more successful in adapting that did [Kate].

Coaching may result in satisfied clients

Clients claim to be satisfied with coaching

As a result of the various benefits to themselves and others, virtually all 11 of the participants said they were satisfied with the coaching. They were asked to scale their level of satisfaction from 1—not satisfied at all to 5—very satisfied and the average assessment was 4.5. Logan was able to summarize the value of the coaching from his report to headquarters.

They’ve all been very curious to know what my feeling was, what the value of it I saw in the coaching and I’ve been asked formally and informally to comment and provide feedback to headquarters and my feedback has been very positive and I said you know, that it’s been an excellent start and that we should look to institutionalise coaching more into our business and make it more of a regular organised thing but obviously make sure that we
learn from China, that we do it properly, that we get it right [Logan].

Clients might find coaching enjoyable

Additionally, all eleven participants found the coaching to be enjoyable. Some found it enjoyable because of the insight; some noted the change in themselves and others; some like the opportunity to focus on their own issues and take a break from “regular” work; and, some enjoyed the relationship with the coach. Hank found the experience enjoyable because he “enjoyed the style and learning and getting the insights.” However, Hank did not find stepping outside of comfort zones that enjoyable, but he added that “in the end, that’s fulfilling. It’s not fun. But it’s fulfilling.” Jean enjoyed the coaching because she connected with her coach and she felt that the experience was “very personal.” Others also observed that the coaching sessions could be intrusive and “intense and tiring”. Others felt that the coaching added to their anxiety because they did not prepare for the coaching sessions or complete their homework. Niang however stated that even though she enjoyed the coaching, she would have enjoyed it better if it was in Chinese because then she would not have gotten so tired and would have understood it better. Logan found the experience enjoyable because of the enthusiasm and positive energy of the coaches. Scott acknowledged that the experience was enjoyable, although “nobody wants to admit to their failings, their faults.”

**Coaching can enhance intention to stay and company loyalty**

Coaching may show how organizations value and care for employees
Three of the eleven stated explicitly that they felt that the coaching demonstrated Rabble’s care and concern for its employees. Niang believed that the coaching program demonstrates that Rabble cares about its employees.

Well I feel Rabble is caring about people to make them better people. For caring is the most suitable word [Niang].

Jean felt that Rabble emphasized that it “really values its people” by providing coaching to the staff. Fang believed that by providing coaching, Rabble was showing its value of the executive management staff and the people they manage.

Through the coaching training or coaching you can realise the firm’s considered value of the senior management people and for senior management people to bring more commitment from their team members [Fang].

Coaching might enhance a client’s intention to remain with the organization

Four of the eleven participants felt that the provision of coaching may assist to some degree in retaining their services to Rabble. Charles believed that the coaching service was so unique that it separated Rabble for any other company and made it more likely for him to not want to join another company in China. Hank too believed that the coaching affected his feelings of staying with Rabble, although he noted that it takes an “accumulation of things” when deciding to stay with a company.

[Coaching is] certainly one of the things that’s made me feel that Rabble has a different approach to people that I really like and encourage me also to have a different approach to people [Hank].

Logan affirmed that the coaching experience affected his feelings of staying with Rabble China.
Because I am more prepared to understand the complexities of the issues that frustrate me and more patient in trying to resolve those [Logan].

Kate offered that the coaching did affect her feelings of staying with the company because it gave her a new sense of respect for her manager, Logan and for the China offices, more so than Rabble international.

I do feel that it was incredibly useful and it made me a better person as well as being a better manager and so I had gratitude and happiness at all of a sudden having specific techniques applicable, very focused techniques to become a better person as well as a better manager. It made me extremely happy [Kate].

However, most of the participants, including Charles noted that coaching alone would not be enough to retain their services. Since seven of the eleven were equity partners, this was cited as a greater incentive to remain with the organization. Jiang stated that it would take an offer of double her salary before she would even consider leaving Rabble. Fang, had left Rabble for a year and then had been offered double his salary to return to Rabble, which he accepted because of the unique Rabble culture.

Moreover, all of the expatriates, except for Jean (the Chinese expatriate) acknowledged that at some point they would leave Rabble China. Most asserted that they would leave because they would want to return to their families in their home countries. Logan and Hank remarked that even though they both have lived in China for extensive periods, they were not Chinese and would always feel like an outsider to some degree. However, all stated even though they knew they would leave China at some point, none had concrete plans for leaving. All seven stated that in China they had a better quality of life (more money, better homes, better restaurants and household help), luxuries that may
not be sustainable in their home countries. Also, in China, they had more work opportunities and freedom because there was less competition. Furthermore, three of the seven of the participants worried about their employability outside of China, since many had spent virtually their entire working career focused on the region. Logan, the country manager, acknowledged that he had not even begun any type of succession planning for his own role or any of the other expatriates’ roles. As a result of their concerns regarding leaving China at some point, four of the seven expatriates used some of their coaching sessions to reflect on their future and what life would be like post-Rabble. None of the HCNs expressed any intention to leave Rabble in the foreseeable future.

Coaching may compliment service industry organizations

Coaching can aligned with business needs

Kate believed that the coaching was so profound that everyone who participated began recommending it to others.

[Coaching] was so useful that we all were completely unified at the management level and when we met in Macau we talked about it and we all recommended it to everybody outside of China in Rabble. Probably the only time we’ve ever been completely unified [Kate].

Logan found that the coaching perfectly complimented the nature of the business at Rabble and the coaching had changed the company’s culture.

We’re better people. In the service industry, where it’s all about people and communication I think, that’s the valuable – but again, the improvements aren’t consistent. In some cases, that value is a lot greater than in other cases where the changes or the improvements are probably more artificial, superficial than permanent [Logan].
Alex noted that coaching is valuable because it “gives tools to deal with complex relationship problems.” Yao felt the overall value was related to “improving the quality of the conversations.” Hank attributed the value of coaching to the increases in his self-awareness, which he describes as “the most valuable things I could have had.” For Hank, technical skills and professional training are less effective without the self-awareness that allows one “to get to grips with [one’s] strengths or weaknesses.” Niang learned through coaching that “you have to design your conversation before you have the conversation.” Sun thought that the coaching helped with managing difficult people. Alex believed the coaching had “a positive impact on business.” Scott believe the greatest benefit was “Having someone to talk to, you can’t put a value on that. Just having someone to talk to is in itself very, very good.” Jean attributed the value of coaching to being able to view issues from multiple perspectives, discuss options and choose a path.

I think directly the perspective to look at things from different angles and to see certain - whether it be just different ways or looking at it at a problem or at an incident, and gauging your reaction in a different way because of it, or also adopting different possible ways of dealing with it. So a more proactive kind of thing [Jean].

Coaching can enhance work skills

Participants felt that coaching had direct relevance to their jobs. Hank observed that, because his work involved client services, coaching was relevant because of how it impacts relationships.

Well we’re entirely people based. So I would say it’s fundamental. I don’t need to understand engineering or mathematics or computers. I just need to assess people I
work with and the people we work for and the people we
deal with [Hank].

Jean likewise noted that the coaching was instrumental to her job because it
allowed her to improve specific performance measures, marketing and presentations, that
she had previously felt inhibited by.

Like I said, for me, because - even simple things like the
improvement in the public speaking and the improvement
in the marketing - that is, because it’s a big part of my job,
and being comfortable doing those activities is very
important to my enjoyment of my job, in turn it’s obviously
very important [Jean].

Fang attributed the value of coaching to its ability to help him better coach his
team members.

The direct benefit for me for the coaching is I found a way
that has normally 100 per cent is a safer way to proceeding
with a quality conversation with the people. Sometimes it's
a bit difficult to find a starting point, but the coaching let
me have a way to proceed with the talk safely and smoothly
- it's most direct [Fang].

Sun appreciated that the coaching helped him to develop multiple perspectives.

Directly from the advice and different angles in dealing
with communication and just when I talk about that with
managers, I can always consider alternate and feel more
constructive in the management [Sun].

Logan asserted that the coaching had helped him to discuss issues that impact
complex systems, like a multinational in China.

What really helped me was talking during my coaching
sessions about just the complexities of managing a large
organisation and how to accept those complexities and not
try to fit them all in to some organised system. So the
complex systems aspect of that coaching was quite helpful
in a country like this where it is so complex, I found that
very useful [Logan].
Kate believed that the coaching was vital to the work at Rabble because coaching improves communications.

It's how we socialise together that sets the company apart. Socialising is just critical to Rabble and socialising is 90 per cent conversation and only 10 per cent really what you're drinking. Anything that allows us to have better conversations is brilliant. I would say for the organisation, it's been absolutely brilliant. For managers it's been very good [Kate].

Coaching might transmit new skills that benefit work performance

Participants were also able to see the relevance of the various coaching skills such as listening, purposeful questioning, constructive feedback and “ask, not tell”, which they could apply outside of the coaching relationship to improve their relationships with others. Alex remarked that he felt that the coaching skills were of greater importance than the individual coaching sessions he had.

In terms of Rabble, make a more satisfactory at work now that I’m getting more out of my team, and if my individual team members are getting more out of work because they’re being managed with a far more positive, friendly environment, you know, the way that I now interact with them, far more positive than I think it was before, that was all out of coaching and coaching principles. I’m seeing other people often take on more responsibility, but just enjoying it more, enjoying more work [Scott].

Coaching can justify the organizational investment

Nevertheless, virtually all commented on their perceptions of coaching’s benefit to Rabble. Alex felt that there were smoother interactions at work and more productive management meetings that were quicker and more efficient. For Hank the benefits
involved “self-awareness, patience and being able to read emotions of myself and others.” Niang and Logan noted how participants were more likely to shift the conversations from problem-focused discussions to solution-focused approaches, a specific coaching technique that they all learned. These solution-focused discussions yielded more constructive results such as a change in the management structure, a commitment to sustaining the momentum of the project and a desire to share the program and benefits with subordinate staff and the other offices in Rabble. Rabble UK, the headquarters, was so impressed by the results at Rabble China that they requested to receive the same training and coaching support.

> I thought it was a very positive investment in the sense that I think what we learn through coaching is something that we can use to have a better understanding of others and to create more constructive dialogues in the working place which I think over time will just make things easier and relieve stress and some of those cultural issues that we discussed earlier on [Charles].

**Coaching may garner positive feedback from others**

Some described how they had received feedback from others who had noticed specific changes that occurred after and throughout the coaching. Niang and Yao noted that they were approached more by staff who had previously kept their distance. Niang was particularly concerned with her perception by others before the coaching and after making some changes, she felt that people perceived her in a more positive light. Alex stated that he received feedback from the other participants who noticed that he was using specific coaching techniques in conversations and meetings.
A number of other people have taken the coaching sessions who’ve noticed and said: I’ve seen you apply that [Alex].

Hank was told that he seemed to be “more patient” and that his wife noticed differences in his behaviour. Fang was told by one his team members that he felt that Fang was more engaged in the conversations. Also, Fang received feedback that his managers noticed that he was “taking part in more management functions.” Jean received feedback from her presentations that confirmed the impact of the coaching on her performance.

I was given quite positive feedback on the talks. In terms of the networking, it wasn’t positive feedback but we got some work, so I assume the networking went reasonably well. I definitely think that cocktail party thing was a lot to do with the coaching - all the talks that [my coach] and I had had about how to overcome that fear [Jean].

Yao related how she has received feedback that she seems to be more relaxed.

Yes I feel from that perspective they say relaxed, yes I am relaxed. What I think they are trying to see is because as I told you I feel myself I am the best I try to always make sure that we are doing a good job. That we are providing good services to clients and previously people have had feedback that I control too much. I control too much [Yao].

As the country manager, Logan was able to access the feedback for all the participants and believed that the coaching had a profound impact.

Well the feedback I’ve had and it’s both for me clearly perceptible is that people have clearly benefited from it. In some cases, I’ve seen really significant personality changes. In others, I’ve seen incremental changes. In some cases, I’ve seen immediate change but then reverting back to old ways, so it’s been quite different. I have seen with the individuals who received the coaching change on different levels, it has been positive [Logan].
Scott received feedback from colleagues in another office who participated in the coaching program.

There’ve been a couple of co-workers in Shanghai, I think I’ve been far more open and honest with them in terms of this is what I’m doing, and because it’s coaching, and this is why I’m doing it. And they’ve responded, and they’ve commented on seeing that response. And they’re much happier with our relationship, which is good [Scott].

**What are the limitations of executive coaching for international managers?**

Coaching’s effectiveness may be moderated by various factors

Coaching’s outcomes can be undermined by stress

Four out of the eleven participants specifically described how the benefits of coaching could be undermined in stressful moments. Alex, Charles, Kate and Yao each sought to use the coaching sessions in part to modify their communication and relationship skills, which some people in the company had branded as abrasive. Each of them noted significant progress in changing their behaviour except when stressed out.

I’ve succeeded most of the time, so that has had a positive interaction. But when it fails you just totally lapse into your old habits. That's the danger - or the challenge, let's put it this way. Put it positively. I think it's a challenge [Alex].

Coaching’s outcomes can be compromised by work prioritization

Most of the participants felt that the time constraints and scheduled meetings impacted on their work schedules and as a result, they were not fully engaged in every coaching session. Jean also felt that it was difficult to maintain a consistent coaching schedule because of her various work commitments.
I wouldn’t say it was unpleasant but sometimes I found it quite difficult to keep to a schedule. As in work, something would come up and have to reschedule. I’d feel bad about rescheduling. It happened a couple of times. I had to reschedule two or three times [Jean].

Fang also believed that the schedule of coaching sessions sometimes conflicted with this work schedule.

But both of us are very busy, we cannot make it randomly happen. So that’s the problem. It’s not the very pleasant part of the coaching [Fang].

Fang noted that coaching is limited by the individual’s own acceptance of change. Fang tried to use a more coaching conversational style with a direct report who resisted the conversation.

If they have some problems, it’s a fundamental problem, coaching cannot change the fundamental problem [Fang].

Coaching may be undermined by the distance between coach and client

The participants gave various responses to how the coaching could have been improved for each. Niang felt that it would have been more helpful to have the coaching delivered by a Chinese coach and in Chinese. Alex would have preferred if more senior people had been coached and if it had happened earlier in his career at Rabble. Logan would have preferred the coaching to have been in China as well (although in English) because he wanted someone who had a better understanding of how China “works” in order to offer more directed coaching. Logan believed that the coaching would have been improved if the coaches were located in China and all the coaching sessions were held face to face.
By the coach having a greater understanding of China. By having the Chinese staff actually have the same impact as well because I think it was very much geared towards English speaking ex-patriots and I think having more opportunity up front to set some specific goals and objectives. When I say more sort of business, more framework around what it is we’re trying to get out of that session, so it’s not so much open, I think I mentioned it before [Logan].

Coaching can be undermined by resistant clients

Logan’s assessment was that the coaching needed to be modified a bit to focus more on establishing the relationships with the Chinese coaches before starting the coaching process.

There needed to be a lot more lead in and communication about what exactly was going on and how it would help and things like that [Logan].

Logan also was aware that some people being coached were somewhat resistant to the process.

The only issue I had is just that one or two people being coached were a little bit sceptical, a little bit dogmatic and that made at certain times made it quite difficult [Logan].

Logan offered a perspective arguing that coaching needed to be adapted to the complexities of China.

Well the issue that I have with the coaching is that I understand it has to be quite formulaic in the way that you attack certain conversations and issues and the reality is when you’re here in China dealing with all of the stuff going on in this foreign country, it’s very removed from that process or from that formula if you like and to kind of bring them together requires more than sitting on a telephone, talking it through on the telephone and maybe in theory and maybe in a society or culture where everything
is very much disciplined and has been organised and refined through hundreds of years of social evolution, those formulas and those theories work very well. They can probably be applied quite easy but they don’t work so well in a place that has such a complex – it doesn’t work as easily to just run through as it does for a complex place like this [Logan].

Coaching may be undermined by clients who fail to complete their ‘homework’

Hank thought that coaching would have had a greater impact if he had done more of the exercises, “so that some of those kind of ideas and techniques sink in even better.” Scott believed that the coaching would have been more effective if he had committed himself to writing down more of his goals and plans during the coaching conversations.

Coaching might be an uncommon concept in international organizations

Eight out of the eleven participants had no prior knowledge of coaching or executive coaching. Yao did not initially trust the idea of coaching because she associated coaching with psychology, which had negative connotations in Chinese culture because it generally indicated that people were unwell.

To be frank I don’t know much of the coaching that comes up in that sense. In China it’s when you say you’re going to a psychologist and getting this kinds of - release your anxiety, that’s traditionally it will be taken very negatively. You have some kind of mental problem then you go do it. It’s very - it’s not a concept usually to be very much taken by - from the Chinese tradition. Everybody was afraid of going to doctors just to release their anxiety, or to go to a clinic - I mean a psychologist for this kind of thing. So it’s a new thing from the Chinese perspective, yes [Yao].
Kate was open to the coaching because she previously been exposed to the concepts of coaching in her MBA program, along with concepts in organizational development and management, but she said she thought it would be “more directed” and was surprised to discover “all the ways to phrase it so the person comes up with the solution themselves.” Jean was open to coaching because she had experienced something similar to group training at her previous job, but had never had one-on-one coaching. Charles had heard of coaching as well and thought it was a “wishy-washy” type of pseudo-science. After Charles spoke to a couple of people who had received coaching, he believed “it seemed maybe something I should explore.” None of the other participants had any experience or knowledge of coaching or coaching concepts.

Charles and Fang were unaware of the scientific background of coaching but believed that the science behind coaching gave it credibility. Charles felt that the scientific basis helped him to trust the coach.

You were having to confide to a certain extent to somebody who okay you had met him once or twice, but they are essentially a stranger, but then after a while you realise that these people have studied, there is a scientific basis for what they do. That science for want of a better word has had an application in how I conduct myself, both within work and outside work which I thought was interesting and valuable [Charles].

Fang felt that the scientific basis gave coaching some credibility.

[Coaching] provides a very scientific and useful way to coach - to let you learn how to coach - and being coached [Fang].

Fang remarked that Chinese culture does not use science the say way as Western culture.
I'll tell you, for Chinese culture before the Western - before they adopt the Western culture, the social science of this nature, they did not basically based on statistics or figures or interviews, they should be there, just to guess and they just make a presumption. They did not have many facts to support. I think the social science for the natural science it's all the same, it's universal. But for social science, the weak point of a traditional Chinese culture or the Chinese social science is we lack factual support [Fang].

The scientific basis of coaching helped Fang and Charles to overcome their initial lack of trust in coaching.

**Synthesis of Themes**

The research question that formed the basis of this study was “What is the impact of executive coaching on the performance management of international managers working in China?” The study’s sub-questions:

1. How do cultural perspectives influence executive coaching for international managers?
2. How does the executive coaching process impact international managers?
3. How does executive coaching affect the goal attainment of international managers?
4. What outcomes result from executive coaching for international managers?
5. How are the outcome measures of executive coaching evaluated for MNEs and international managers?
6. What are the limitations of executive coaching for international managers?
Examination of the six sub-questions allowed for the themes and sub-themes to be identified. The synthesis that follows arranges the themes in accordance with the six sub-questions.

*How do cultural perspectives influence executive coaching for international managers?*

Five of the themes support the role of culture in executive coaching. In this study, culture refers to the organization’s culture (formal and informal ways of doing business and the company’s values) and the cultures of national origin (predominately the British culture, or generically ‘Western culture’ of the organisation and the Chinese culture where the subsidiary is located).

For the participants, the provision of coaching proved to be another example of the unique and forward thinking company culture that attracted many to Rabble. The participants noted that few other companies in China had even used anything like coaching for their employees. The participants also believed that the coaching would strengthen relationships in the company, thereby strengthening the corporate culture at Rabble China.

According to the participants, expatriates still face some challenges while living in a foreign country. Even though all but one was fluent in Chinese and all had lived in China for at least three years, the participants still felt like outsiders in the country. Also, the expatriates had chosen to live internationally because they wanted certain life experiences. The participants discovered that sometimes it was challenging to feel comfortable in China and have the experiences they wanted because of work, environmental or cultural pressures. The participants felt that coaching gave them the
space and opportunity to confront any challenges that had arisen and to revisit their hopes and wishes while living internationally.

The participants described that coaching had helped expatriates from Western cultures better understand their Chinese colleagues and vice-versa. For some participants, coaching gave them a platform to acknowledge differences and consciously devise a plan or system to respond to those differences. Participants realized that they could change or adapt to other cultures, when and if needed. In sum, coaching provided them with the opportunity to more directly confront cultural differences.

Because of the reflexive nature of coaching and the opportunities to explore strengths and weaknesses, participants were better able to assess their own beliefs about culture and individuals from other cultures. Participants discovered that they were learning new things about their own cultural perceptions, as much as they were learning more about different cultures.

According to the participants, Chinese culture seems to be at odds with coaching, which is perceived as a very Western concept. The Chinese culture neither has the same values or language that makes coaching easily transferable to the Chinese. The Chinese participants all resisted the coaching to some degree, far more than the expatriates. The participants suggest that for coaching to be effective in other cultures, it may need to acknowledge and manage the cultural differences and find a way to bridge the differences. Participants here suggested that building a stronger relationship of trust may overcome the resistance.

Despite the cultural resistance, the Chinese participants discovered that there is value in the coaching concepts, techniques, skills and discussions and can work with the
Chinese culture. Participants felt that the coaching would work even better with Chinese culture if it was adapted to reflect more Chinese values. All of the Chinese participants found the coaching valuable. According to the participants then, coaching is a flexible enough tool to be adapted to different cultural contexts, including non-Western cultures.

_How does the executive coaching process impact international managers?_

The participants noted that the executive coaching process complimented and worked with their work schedules, so that it could be a minimal intrusion. According to the participants, the coaching sessions were the right length of time to discuss challenges and form solutions. Most of the participants completed the number of coaching sessions and most decided to continue coaching beyond the initial eight sessions so they could manage specific goals. The only participants who decided to not continue any more coaching were the Chinese participants. The participants were all able to continuing their coaching sessions over the phone, even though many would have preferred face-to-face sessions. For international managers, it seems that, absent a strong relationship between the coach and client, face-to-face coaching would yield greater levels of commitment and trust.

According to the participants, coaching creates a safe environment for clients to discuss whatever issues or challenges that they are currently encountering. That freedom to discuss challenging issues allows coaching clients to target the most pressing issues without fear of reprisal. As part of the coaching process, clients self-reflect and expand their awareness of their own thoughts, behaviours, emotions and actions and their impact on others. Because of the personal nature of the discussions and the need for honest
reflection, the relationship with the coach is paramount. Participants felt that had to trust
the coach and through the trust in the coach, they could trust the process of coaching.
Some of the Chinese participants would have preferred to have had a Chinese coach
mainly so that the foreign Western concepts could have been translated to their Chinese
counterpart for better understanding. Some of the expatriate participants had wished that
their coaches had more knowledge of Chinese culture and the complexities of operating
in the Chinese business world. The participants suggest that some subject matter
knowledge of the business and country culture would have deepened the value of the
coaching and the coach.

*How does executive coaching affect the objectives of international managers?*

According to the participants, all of them were able to use the coaching to
accomplish specific goals that they had set at the beginning of their coaching
engagements. All of the goals were self-generated, although some participants chose to
create goals to remedy issues that were raised in their performance appraisals, mostly
focusing on their communication skills. Some participants formed goals focusing on
understanding themselves better and their impact on their colleagues. Other participants
wanted to become better leaders and managers for their teams, since most of the
participants had never had any formal management or leadership training. One of the
participants formed a goal around developing a specific skill set for work to help her
manage her anxiety. Three other participants focused on achieving a work/life balance
and split their time addressing personal issues. The Chinese participants (including the
Chinese expatriate) mainly chose work related goals, while the expatriates seemed to
choose work and personal goals. The Chinese participants may not have fully understood that they could have worked on personal goals in their sessions or, in accordance with their cultural values, they may not have been comfortable using work time to manage personal issues.

**What outcomes result from executive coaching for international managers?**

Some of the participants reported increases in their physical activity as a result of addressing goals they had set, although most mentioned that they would let lose the focus of their physical activity when work pressures rose or made it more challenging to access the environment needed for physical activity. According to the participants, coaching results in higher levels of happiness and decreased levels of anxiety, stress and depression. Participants described how coaching had given them the tools to manage some of the issues affecting their well-being. Also, coaching allowed them to directly address issues which were contributing to the anxiety, stress or depression and when those issues were addressed and attended to, the anxiety, stress or depression decreased or lessened. Some participants mentioned that the coaching intervention itself contributed to their feelings of anxiety because they felt under-prepared at times for the coaching engagements or they felt the coaching goals were adding to their workload. Overall, the participants suggest that coaching results in greater feelings of satisfaction as progress is made in one’s life.

According to the participants, the benefits and skills they had learned in their coaching sessions were applicable and to some degree transferable to their personal lives. The expatriate participants all attempted and found higher levels of happiness and
satisfaction in their personal lives because of the coaching. All the participants with partners and/or children attempted to use the coaching communication skills with their families in an attempt to strengthen the relationships that they had witnessed occurring in the workplace. The empathy participants developed at work also had value at home. Participants who were more satisfied in their personal and home lives were better able to manage work stresses.

According to the participants, the coaching intervention resulted in dramatic increases in their communication skills and relationships with colleagues. Prior to the coaching the participants used a more directive and authoritative style, particularly the Chinese managers. After the coaching intervention, the participants reported higher levels of collaboration between the senior management team and in their own work groups. Coaching gave the participants tools to manage difficult conversations, motivate others, reframe their thoughts, build rapport and develop empathy with others. The participants felt more confident because of the coaching and were able to approach situations they had previously ignored or been intimidated by. The participants also found that their communication skills were having a positive impact on their direct reports and everyone seemed to be happier because of the more inclusive and respectful communication style. As a result of their increased communication skills, the participants were able to solve many problems on their own, without the coaching needing to be present.

One participant in particular discovered that coaching supports the building, practicing and learning of new skill sets. The participant was able to role-play her new skills and receive feedback. As a result of the coaching, the participant had greater levels
of confidence and she was able to attract clients to the organisation, which was her desired outcome.

Some of the participants had been informed that their communication style was generating conflicts in the office place. In the coaching intervention, these particular participants realized that their pre-coaching communication was detrimental to their own interests and their relationships with others. Each addressed their “weakness” and formed goals to “fix the problem”. All the participants were successful to some degree in addressing and modifying their communication patterns, although all of them reported regressing to their old patterns in times of stress. Notably, all of these participants choose to continue their coaching intervention beyond the initial eight sessions because each recognized that they needed more time to address their communication deficiency and create a permanent change in performance.

According to the participants, coaching dramatically improves leadership capabilities. By providing coaching, an organisation demonstrates that it is concerned with and committed to having better leaders. The country manager who implemented the coaching was thought to be a more visionary and progressive leader for bringing coaching into the company. Prior to the coaching, most of the participants had not focused on their own leadership or management skills, because they lacked formal training. The leadership style prior to coaching was predominately telling their direct reports what they wanted done. Moreover, the participants did not fully trust the capabilities of their staff, so they would spend a large part of their work time doing or micro-managing the work of their direct reports. As a result of the coaching, the leadership and management styles of virtually all the participants changed. Because of
the coaching the participants began consulting more with their staff and empowering their staff to operate without as much direct supervision. If the staff had gaps in their training, the participants implemented better training procedures. The participants discovered that they were more relaxed and had more time to focus on their own work. The participants also found that their direct reports seemed more satisfied and began taking on more work and responsibility. The participants found it easier to discuss challenging performance issues with their staff and collaboratively devise solutions. The Chinese participants felt that they were perceived as better and more caring leaders because of the coaching, and the expatriate participants felt they were more organised at work and thus had more time for their personal pursuits.

What is the value of executive coaching to MNEs and international managers?

According to the participants, they noticed immediate changes in their own behaviour, as well as noticing changes in the behaviours of their colleagues. For the participants, observing actual changes helped to confirm the relevance and effectiveness of coaching. For some participants, observing the changes in others positively changed their perceptions of their colleagues and helped to build stronger relationships and more teamwork. The changes in behaviour also positively impacted the work performance and improved relationships with clients of the company.

The participants also reported that they found the experience of coaching enjoyable and they thought it was a worthwhile investment of time, money and resources. All of the participants were satisfied with the results of the coaching and they believed that coaching had value for them personally and for the company as a whole.
According to the participants, the provision of coaching indicated that they were working for a progressive and caring organisation that was concerned with equipping the participants with tools for success. All of the participants were grateful for the coaching and most felt privileged to be a part of the coaching intervention. For the participants, coaching represented another strong reminder of the forward thinking manner of the organisation and its uniqueness in the China business world. For some participants, the provision of coaching strengthened their desire to remain with the company. However for all of the expatriate participants, they had to reconcile the knowledge that they would most likely not be able to live in China indefinitely. Coaching though provided the expatriate participants with the opportunity and space to discuss post-China plans, which helped them to manage some of their stress and anxiety that they experienced when thinking about how to deal with their “next steps”.

Some of the participants observed that coaching was especially relevant to their work performance because the majority of their work involved communication and relationships with their clients. It was also observed that the company culture was built around socializing and thus, communication and relationships as well. Coaching, the participants noted, is especially useful in increasing and deepening communication skills, which result in better and stronger relationships. For these participants, the language of coaching was the language of work and the congruence of the two increased their feelings of trust in the process and experience. Coaching then added or strengthened skills that were directly part of the competencies needed for the organisation.

According to the participants, the various outcomes that resulted from the intervention were invaluable. Participants noticed immediate and dramatic changes in the
business environment. Participants felt that everyone was happier and more collegial; management meetings were more productive and teams were more cohesive. Participants also agreed that everyone had become more “solution-focused” and less “problem-centred” which lead to more productive ideas and creativity. Participants also noted that the coaching saved them from burn out and other counter-productive work behaviours, which in turn, saved the company from having to replace staff.

The participants reported receiving feedback from others who noticed their changes in behaviour and noticed their improved work performance. The feedback from others helped to validate the value and impact of the coaching intervention. The feedback extended to headquarters in the UK who were so impressed by the results in the China office, a plan was devised to roll the coaching intervention out to the entire international organisation.

What are the limitations of executive coaching for international managers?

According to the participants, the effectiveness of coaching and the success of the participants could be affected by stress, work commitments, unreceptive mindsets, disconnect between coach and client, and the prevailing cultural environment where the coaching intervention took place. For the participants, the lack of trust in either the process or the coach greatly impacted the level of engagement for the coaching. Likewise, the greatest factor that moderated the success was the countervailing work pressures. Many of the participants attempted to use coaching to reduce their work pressures so they could have more time for coaching and their coaching goals, but would
often defer to the immediacy of work demands over the coaching, which may have been viewed as a luxury but not a necessity to work performance.
CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION

Introduction

The study here examined the role of executive coaching on the performance of international managers working for a Western subsidiary in China from the perspectives of the participants. Despite IHRM research into expatriate issues, the focus on the ongoing management of performance has largely been ignored, as have the issues and challenges for HCNs. Likewise, coaching research has documented the growth and effectiveness of executive coaching in domestic organizations but few researchers have examined executive coaching’s impact on international organizations and international managers, particularly managers from a non-Western culture. The present study offers the first examination of an action research executive coaching intervention for expatriate and HCN managers working internationally. The study here extended the body of literature in IHRM and coaching in several ways: (a) it compared two distinct cultural groups in an international environment, (b) it provided an exploratory analysis of executive coaching, (c) it addressed the experience of executive coaching from the perspective of the participants, rather than coaches, and (d) it examined the influence of executive coaching on an international management team responsible for the management of the entire China operations in three major cities.

This chapter examines and discusses the findings of the study. The results are presented as they relate to the themes previously identified. The findings are then discussed so as to better understand the influence of the study on IHRM, the leadership and communication outcomes and the effective performance of international managers.
This section concludes with a discussion of the study’s limitations and the recommendations for future research, and then a final summary of the discussion.

**Study Themes and Prior Literature**

*Contributions of executive coaching to organizational culture*

In the IHRM literature, research suggested that international managers who have a strong relationship to the organization are likely to develop greater levels of organizational commitment, performance and trust (Erbacher et al., 2006). For some of the participants, the coaching intervention helped to underscore the uniqueness of the company’s culture. The participants suggested that coaching was a forward-thinking, progressive concept and reinforced the forward-thinking, progressive culture of the company. For these participants, the coaching intervention helped to strengthen their relationship to the firm because the participants interpreted the offer of coaching by the organisation as an “investment” in its people. As both expatriates and HCN participants viewed the coaching as an extension and furthering of the company’s culture, the positive impression extended beyond expatriates to include all international managers, including HCNs. Moreover, the participants were so impressed with the results of the coaching, that they desired to see the coaching intervention extended throughout the entire global organization.

Coaching’s impact on the organizational culture is further supported in the coaching literature by Peterson (2007) who suggests that the organizational culture may dominate individual country cultures. Although many of the participants in this study were aware of the cultural differences between the HCNs and expatriates, they seemed
committed to supporting and strengthening the “Rabble culture” that many cited as a primary reason for their company loyalty. The coaching intervention employed a unified process that was delivered to all participants allowing them to share a common language around coaching concepts. These concepts and the coaching language were used by both expatriates and HCNs, and seemed to give the HCNs a mechanism to communicate more effectively with their expatriate colleagues. The study then suggests that when coaching is employed with a company’s management team, coaching concepts can become viewed as an extension of the company’s culture, as well as, an integral part of the company’s culture and language.

*Contributions of executive coaching to cross-cultural adjustment*

In the IHRM literature, a great deal of research has examined the critical need for expatriates to adjust to the host culture (Shaffer and Harrison, 1998, Tung, 1981a, Tung, 1987), the challenges of expatriate adjustment (Selmer, 2002, Selmer, 2006a, Shaffer and Harrison, 1998, Tung, 1981a, Tung, 1987) and interventions, such as expatriate training and selection to promote successful adjustment to the host culture (Selmer, 2002, Selmer, 2006a, Shaffer and Harrison, 1998, Tung, 1981a, Tung, 1981b, Tung, 1982, Tung, 1987). Moreover, the IHRM literature has focused most of its examinations of expatriate issues on the expatriate archetype of the novice American male Westerner who has to adjust to the new foreign subsidiary culture or “fail” and return home prematurely (Tung, 1981a, Tung, 1981b, Tung, 1982, Tung, 1986, Tung, 1987, Tung, 1994, Tung, 1996, Tung and Worm, 2001). The participants in the study here diverged from the expatriate archetype, as all seven expatriates had been living in China for at least three years and all of the
expatriates, save for one, were fluent in Chinese. None of the expatriate participants were provided with any cultural training prior or during their employment at Rabble, nor did any express a need for cultural training as most felt they understood the culture quite well. Most of the expatriates felt comfortable in the Chinese culture and had formed deep relationships with Chinese locals. Nevertheless, virtually all the expatriate participants cited instances where their “otherness” as outsiders and foreigners in China impacted their communication, relationships and sense of belonging in China. Additionally the coaching intervention assisted some expatriates in better understanding how their Chinese colleagues processed and managed non-traditional Chinese forms of communication and management. There has been less research in the IHRM literature on these issues of the ongoing cultural challenges and interventions for expatriates who do not fit the archetype. The study here suggests that cultural adjustment issues persist throughout the tenure of the expatriate assignment and continue to challenge even “experienced” expatriates. The study here also suggests that the company seems to have emphasized the selection of already “adjusted” expatriates over novice expatriates, while providing no cultural training. The coaching intervention allowed most of the expatriate participants to better articulate cross-cultural challenges and develop solutions for those challenges.

In contrast, the IHRM literature seems to offer some support for the adjustment of the HCN managers to the foreign work culture, represented by Rabble’s dominant Western management style. The literature discusses the role of ‘localization’, the training of HCNs by expatriates to assume expatriate roles, and ‘socialization’, the identification with the parent company’s culture. Both concepts involve an adaptation by the HCNs to a culture foreign to their own. In the study here, the coaching was used as a medium to
transfer Western leadership and communication skills to the Chinese HCN managers, as well as deepening their connection to the more Western-influenced company culture. The coaching intervention was viewed as uniquely ‘Western’ by the expatriates and local Chinese.

However, the Western influence of the coaching intervention did not seem to deter the Chinese managers, because virtually all of the Chinese HCN managers mentioned that one of their motivating factors for joining Rabble was the ‘Western’ company culture and the opportunity to exercise their English language skills, which are viewed as a commodity in China. The coaching intervention seemed to be aligned with the values expressed by the Chinese HCNs to be exposed to and learn from Western practices, which allowed for more autonomy and creativity. By participating in the coaching interventions, along with their Western colleagues, the Chinese HCNs felt they were better able to understand the value of a different management practice and motivational tool. It would seem then that the coaching intervention provided the Chinese HCNs with a greater understanding of Western practices as well as their expatriate colleagues.

Abbott (2006) examined the role of executive coaching in the acculturation of expatriates and repatriates. Abbott found that expatriates and repatriates were able to use the executive coaching intervention to better adjust to the culture, better manage conflicts between HCNs and form a greater understanding of the foreign culture that they were operating in. Because Abbott’s study also included repatriates, HCNs who were returning to their home country after a period of time abroad, Abbott was also able to examine how non-Westerners utilized coaching to re-adjust to their own culture.
Abbott’s study was limited in that it focused on separate case studies of individuals in completely separate organisations. The study here echoes Abbott’s research by providing coaching to expatriates, while also expanding the research to examine a particular management team of expatriates and HCNs who all received executive coaching. Most of the participants in the study here noted that through the executive coaching, they were better able to understand their other colleagues and they were better able to reconcile how cultural differences impact decision-making and communication. The study here suggests that executive coaching may improve the communication of multi-cultural teams.

*The cultural adaptability of executive coaching*

In the IHRM literature and research, it has been well documented that some cultures are resistant to ‘Western’ management practices and concepts, such as performance appraisals, feedback and goal-setting (Harzing, 2001a, Harzing, 1995). Many Western organizations, seeking to implement their management practices in foreign countries, have discovered that inherent cultural resistance may be mitigated by adapting the management practices to the particular values of the foreign country (Dooley, 1997, Harrison and Shaffer, 2005, Schneider and Somers, 2006). In these instances the management practices may become unique to the specific country or region. In the study here, several of the expatriates, who consider themselves quite familiar with the Chinese culture, wondered whether the coaching intervention would be well-received by their Chinese colleagues because of its radical departure from the “Chinese” way of management and communication and because of its association with psychological
counselling, which is viewed in Chinese culture as managing pathologies. Similarly, the Chinese HCNs noted that the coaching intervention required them to perform and communicate in ways that differed from their cultural upbrining. However, the Chinese colleagues were able to assess the value of the differences and all of them noted that some of the Western practices allowed them to better support and motivate their staff and communicate with each other. By finding value in the coaching intervention, the Chinese staff seemed to be able to overcome much of their initial resistance. Arguably though, the Chinese participants were more resistant to aspects of the coaching intervention when compared to their expatriate colleagues. The Chinese participants focused on fewer goals, scheduled fewer coaching sessions and discontinued the coaching after the initial sessions more often than the expatriates. It would seem then that the expatriates found greater value in, and were more comfortable with, the coaching intervention than the Chinese participants.

The Chinese participants seemed to view the coaching intervention as an optional tool to be used as needed. However, none of the Chinese participants felt that the coaching intervention was culturally inappropriate, which seemed to conflict from the perceptions of their expatriate colleagues. Moreover, the Chinese participants seemed to believe that because the coaching intervention was individually focused and the relationship with the coaching was one-on-one, the coaching concepts and methods could be adapted to their own individual styles and cultural predispositions. Likewise, some expatriates noted that if they wised to emulate the “coaching” style of communication with their HCN direct reports, they would have to modify it depending on the person and circumstance. It would seem then that the coaching intervention, like other Western
management concepts and practices, may have to be adapted to the cultural environment, particularly in acquainting non-Westerners with the coaching concepts and gaining their acceptance of the methodology. However, the executive coaching intervention may have an advantage over other Western management practices because of its potential flexibility and adaptability to the individual needs and personalities of the person being coached, regardless of the cultural background.

The literature and research of executive coaching also supports the theme that executive coaching is sufficiently adaptable to accommodate various forms of cultural resistance. Abbott’s (2005) research explores “solution-focused” coaching for Western and South American expatriates and repatriates. The Western concept of coaching has also been used successfully by various coaches in China, Japan, Russian, the Middle East, Brazil and India (Passmore, 2009). Coaches from these countries note that the coaching process, when used with non-Westerners, should be adapted to the various cultural elements that dominate the culture (Passmore, 2009). Moreover, the coaches argue that Western coaches need to have an understanding of the various country cultural elements (Passmore, 2009).

Here, the coaches spent some time prior to the coaching intervention with the participants, in order to establish a feeling of comfort and the building of a trusting relationship, which is valued in the Chinese culture. Although some participants attributed the success of the coaching intervention to the relationship developed and trust with the coach, other participants remarked that they felt that more time was needed to deepen the bonds of trust. The issue of trust was of particular importance to one of the Chinese HCNs who felt that she did not fully know or trust her Western coach and she
would have preferred to have had a Chinese coach. Likewise, one of the expatriate participants remarked that he felt that his coach was not sufficiently knowledgeable about Chinese culture or business operations in China to coach him through those specific challenges, so the coaching sessions were limited to other discussions. The study thus strongly suggests that although the coaching process itself is relatively adaptable to culture, the determining factor for successful adaptation may be the relationship of the coach to the client and the level of cultural knowledge the coach brings to the coaching relationship, particularly with non-Western clients.

**Contributions of executive coaching to the management of work tasks**

Executive coaching’s claim to have the ability to be integrated with an international manager’s job performance seems to be supported by several concepts in IHRM literature and research: job satisfaction, the psychological contract and task performance (Shaffer and Harrison, 1998, Shaffer et al., 2006, Tahvanainen, 2000). In the IHRM literature, it is often noted that the international subsidiaries are highly pressurized, complex and constantly changing; and, in these environments, time is a precious commodity and little can be wasted (Shaffer and Harrison, 1998, Shaffer et al., 2006, Tahvanainen, 2000). Organisations and individuals are typically resistant to practices which may impede work-flow and time-management.

For the duration of this project, the coaching intervention was provided for six to ten sessions for an average of an hour and a half each, occurring every two to three weeks, on average. The coaching was initially offered as two face-to-face sessions, with subsequent follow up telephone sessions, scheduled as work meetings during the day at
the time and date of the participants’ choosing. Most of the participants were satisfied with the logistical elements of the coaching program as it was integrated with a normal working day. From an IHRM research perspective, the integration of coaching with the working day provided a level of job satisfaction, because it was not overly disruptive and complemented the issues and challenges affecting the participants. Participants used the coaching intervention to address work related issues and thus attempted to reduce potential or existing work stressors.

Job satisfaction has been shown to increase work performance. Likewise, the executive coaching intervention did not seem to overly disrupt the regular task performance of the participants, and for many of the participants, the coaching intervention led to higher levels of task performance. The IHRM research supports task performance as a critical element for achieving specific organisational objectives (Shaffer and Harrison, 1998, Shaffer et al., 2006, Tahvanainen, 2000).

Lastly, the executive coaching intervention may have contributed to a more robust psychological contract between the participants and the organisation, because the participants generally believed they were provided with a supportive mechanism that positively impacted their job performance. Most of the participants viewed the coaching intervention as a bonus and not as a burden, and no participant reported that the coaching intervention had a negative impact on their work performance.

Despite the overall feelings of satisfaction with the logistical elements of the coaching intervention, some participants did express their frustrations with aspects of the process. Some of the participants felt that the coaching sessions over the telephone were less effective than the face-to-face coaching conversations. Some of the participants,
mostly the expatriates, mentioned that they felt that their work commitments took precedence over their commitment to the planned coaching sessions or the particular coaching assignments or “homework” that the participants had designed. Some participants then described a feeling of anxiety when approaching the coaching session because they felt unprepared. However, it would seem that these feelings were focused on the coaching intervention itself, and not on their actual work performance or feelings of job satisfaction.

The Chinese participants were less engaged with the coaching process in comparison to their expatriate counterparts. Only one of the Chinese participants chose to continue the coaching beyond the initial scope of the intervention, compared to all of the expatriates who either immediately continued their coaching or intended to continue coaching. Also, the Chinese participants noted that the some of the terminology and concepts of the coaching intervention were not as immediately clear and understandable to them. The Chinese participants felt that they needed more time to understand and reinforce the foreign concepts. As such, many of the Chinese participants commented that the coaching was challenging because it required them to exercise more mental concentration and focus to operate in English and operate with new concepts, while constructing and following through on action plans.

In the coaching literature and research, the executive coaching process is an integral aspect for the effectiveness of the coaching intervention. Although there is little research that identifies which particular process of coaching is most effective, the research does suggest that most executive coaching is conducted in the same logistical manner as the study here (Grant, 2008b). This study then seems to support and confirm
the idea that executive coaching generally conforms with the individual needs of the client and compliments the client’s working environment.

Nonetheless, in the study here, some participants highlighted some logistical challenges that the coaching research has not hitherto explored. Some participants were not entirely satisfied with the telephone coaching, which seems to conflict with the industry standard that seems to be moving towards more coaching by telephone. One of the Chinese participants was especially dissatisfied with the telephone coaching because of her challenges with the language and because she felt it was easier for her to reschedule telephone meetings. One of the expatriate participants was also bothered by the telephone coaching because it separated the coach from the operational context of the business in China. Other participants mentioned that they could tolerate the telephone coaching only because of the relationship they had formed with the coach during the pre-coaching sessions and initial two coaching sessions. Also, almost all of the participants noted that they preferred the face-to-face sessions over the telephone sessions. In the study here, the telephone coaching was utilized because it was financially prohibitive to keep the coaches in China for the entire course of the coaching intervention. Also, the telephone coaching was used to compare face-to-face coaching effectiveness because some organisations operating in a foreign country may want to have coaching but not have local coaches available. Research on the relative effectiveness of telephone coaching and face-to-face coaching is virtually non-existent (Grant, 2008b, Wisniewski and Ben-Porath, 2005). This study seems to suggest that telephone coaching may be effective in most cases where there has been prior face-to-face communications and the coaching client trusts the coach (Tulpa and Bresser, 2009). The study also seems to
suggest that in cultures where the degree of cultural distance is as great as it is between China and ‘Western’ cultures, face-to-face coaching would provide significantly greater value to the client. Also the study suggests that specific coaching phrases may need to be translated into the local language. Alternatively, a Western coach who is unfamiliar with the language, may need to partner with an interpreter or a coach fluent in the local language primarily.

Contributions of trust for executive coaching relationships

The claim that through the executive coaching process, international managers may be able to access a ‘safe’ space to discuss individual work and/or personal issues has some support in the IHRM research and literature that focuses on managing stress and coping strategies for expatriates. Selmer’s (2002) research identifies “problem-solving” coping strategies whereby the expatriate directly confronts stressful challenges and makes constructive changes. In the study here, the coaching process utilized an ethical standard of confidentiality between the coach and participants to allow the participant the opportunity to communicate challenges and goals without fear of reprisal or organisational interference. Several participants commented on the freedom that the coaching intervention provided them, as well as the rare opportunity to discuss their own short-comings without any judgement. Participants in the study then were able to discuss stressful situations and devise solution-focused strategies with the guidance of the coach. Although the IHRM research around coping strategies seems to focus primarily on expatriates, it would seem that in the study here, the Chinese HCNs felt equally comfortable discussing stressful challenges and seeking assistance on devising solution-
focused strategies. The executive coaching intervention then would seem to provide the international manager with a specific mechanism that is designed for addressing and managing stressful situations.

The coaching research and literature has also noted the importance of establishing a safe space, protected by confidentiality (subject to relevant laws), for coaching clients to discuss personal and professional challenges (Grant, 2008b). The coaching research has helped to support the theory that a trusting relationship is essential for delivering successful coaching outcomes (Wycherley and Cox, 2008). As mentioned previously, the study here seems to support the existing research as the coaches explained the confidential and ethical boundaries to the participants before and during the coaching conversations.

**Contributions of executive coaching to goal attainment**

The IHRM literature has shown that goal attainment is an important aspect of performance management and appraisal, and goals that are most effective when they are SMART (Bennett et al., 2000, Bono et al., 2009, Forster, 2000, Hsi-An et al., 2005). The research has also supports goal setting as a form of motivation for employees (Bennett et al., 2000, Bono et al., 2009, Forster, 2000, Hsi-An et al., 2005). Moreover the HRM research has supported executive coaching for the achievement of goals in domestic and international organizations (Bennett et al., 2000, Bono et al., 2009, Forster, 2000, Hsi-An et al., 2005). In the study here, the participants continued the support of using executive coaching for specific goal attainment for personal and professional goals. All the participants in the study articulated goals and reached their goals with varying levels of
completion. As many of the goals articulated were related to concepts and ideas of organisational management and communication that arose during the coaching intervention, it may be argued that, but for coaching, the participants may not have pursued achieving those particular goals.

In the study here, the expatriate participants seemed to focus on both personal and professional goals. The expatriate participants focused on professional goals that were focused mostly around their communication and management skills. Since most of the expatriate participants had received little to no prior experience in management training, it seems that the coaching intervention was used to fill the gaps of their management education. The expatriate participants also seemed to equally focus their goal attainment on personal goals mostly around getting more personal fulfilment outside of work and preparing for their career progression and post-China plans. Although almost all the expatriate participants had verbally expressed feeling like they had adjusted to the Chinese culture, most of them acknowledge a discomfort with the management of their personal lives and a desire to enhance relationships in their personal lives. It seems that for many of the expatriate participants, living in China had created gaps between people (for example, connecting to partners, connecting to other expatriate friends, connecting to family back home or connecting to sporting team-mates) that the expatriates used coaching to help bridge. The study here then helps to support the research surrounding expatriates, which has suggested that personal issues take on prominence when living in a foreign country for many expatriates. Organisations have traditionally been ill-equipped for assisting expatriates in managing their personal issues, despite the research which suggests that the personal issues are the greatest cause of expatriate performance failures.
The study here helps to validate executive coaching as a tool that can be used by organisations to enable expatriates to address personal and professional challenges while at work.

In contrast, the Chinese participants focused their goal attainment almost exclusively on professional goals around communication, management and their desire to be perceived as a fair leader, while focusing little of their attention on personal goals. The Chinese participants’ focus on professional goals seems to be consistent with the IHRM research around the cultural values of the Chinese as developed and advanced by Hofstede and others (Hofstede, 1993, Hofstede and Bond, 1988). Hofstede (1988) noted particular Chinese values around the focus on the family and less on the individual. In the study here, the Chinese participants became more concerned about the performance of their work “family” over their own individual challenges, and virtually none of the Chinese participants formed goals for anything outside of work. One of the Chinese participants mentioned wanting to go on a holiday like the expatriates do regularly, but she could not imagine leaving work that long that she refused to make a goal of planning a holiday. The goals the Chinese participants were focused on were related to better understanding and using the new ‘Western’ concepts of management and communication that they were exposed to in the coaching intervention. Although their management experience was still relatively minimal, as a group, the Chinese participants had more experience in management than their expatriate colleagues, however most of their management experience occurred working for Chinese companies before joining Rabble. The coaching intervention offered the Chinese participants their first opportunity to learn and apply a new management style in work. The study suggests then that the Chinese
participants formed goals that helped them to better socialize towards the ‘Western’
culture, which as noted previously, was a significant impetus for their joining the MNE
subsidiary.

When examining both groups, expatriates and Chinese participants, it would seem
that each group formed goals that sought to compensate for the distances created by their
cultural environment. The expatriates seemed to seek to create a stronger sense of home
and belonging outside of work because they felt like outsiders in China; while the
Chinese seemed to seek to emulate their expatriate colleagues in order to create a more
collaborative work atmosphere, because they felt like outsiders in the Western style of
management that pervaded the company. The study here helps to highlight the
persistence of cultural dissonance in MNE subsidiaries that impact performance,
communications and relationships for international managers. The study also suggests
that executive coaching may be used by international managers to identify gaps, which
they seem to do subconsciously, and create strategies that create a type of cultural
harmony.

The coaching research supports the idea that individuals can attain goals faster
using the mechanism of executive coaching (Grant, 2007a, Grant, 2006, Grant and
Cavanagh, 2007, Shu-Chi and Jung-Nung, 2005, Spence et al., 2008, Spence and Grant,
2005, Spence and Grant, 2007). As the study here suggests and as mentioned previously,
all the participants were able to achieve their specific goals to some degree. Some
participants achieved more of their goals than others and some participants constructed
more goals than others. It seems that the expatriate participants formed two to three
times the number of goals than their Chinese counterparts. There is virtually no prior
research that has examined a comparison between similarly situated coaching clients from divergent cultural backgrounds such as in the study here that helps to explain fully differences between the volume and attention to goal setting and goal attainment between the expatriates and Chinese participants. However, the study suggests that because the expatriates could more easily relate to the concepts in the executive coaching intervention, they found it easier to implement work goals and strategies, and when told they could focus their goals on anything, work or private, they more readily incorporated personal goals because the issues in their personal lives were prominent and impacting their work performance. On the other hand, it seems that the Chinese participants either did not fully understand that they could use the coaching to address personal issues, even though this was explained to them the same as expatriates. The study here then seems to confirm that executive coaching does indeed assist international managers, both expatriates and HCNs in attaining goals, while expatriates from Western cultures may experience greater levels of goal attainment.

Contributions of executive coaching to life management

As discussed previously, the IHRM literature and research into expatriate performance failures has highlighted the increase in mental and physical health problems and difficulties in adjusting to the foreign culture by the expatriate and accompany family members (Forster, 1997, Hofstede, 1993, Siu et al., 2002). The research suggests that one of the differences between international and domestic organisations is the degree to which the international organisation has to get involved in the personal lives of expatriates (Tung, 1981a, Tung, 1981b, Tung, 1986, Tung, 1987). Most of the IHRM
literature documents the various additional support services that are offered to expatriates, including cross-cultural training, relocation packages, payment of school or housing costs and assistance with taxes (Tung, 1981a, Tung, 1981b, Tung, 1986, Tung, 1987). The IHRM literature has been more muted as to how international organisations assist persistent cultural challenges or on-going personal stressors beyond an initial training program. The IHRM literature also little guidance as to how organisations might manage personal issues for HCNs.

In the study here, many of the participants noted increased levels of stress that were affecting them prior to the coaching intervention. Expatriates and HCNs alike seemed to be experiencing high levels of stress. The participants were not provided with any form of counselling or assistance with the management of their staff by the organization, prior to the coaching intervention. From the interviews it seemed that the stresses came from the managers who were each managing major parts of the business, but with little training in how to manage effectively. The Chinese participants, particularly the two females, noted the additional pressure of wanting to be home for their family commitments, while feeling overwhelmed by the volume of work. The expatriates mentioned also feeling the stress of having a social life outside of work. Three of the participants were starting to approach critical levels of stress that was impacting their job performance. One of the participants suffering from extreme stress used the coaching sessions to build the courage to approach a professional counsellor to help manage issues beyond the scope of the coaching intervention. Virtually all of the participants reported that, following the coaching intervention and the implementation of their goals and strategies, their stress levels decreased and their mental health improved. Likewise,
almost all of the participants attributed the changes directly to the coaching intervention. The study here suggests that an executive coaching intervention may assist some international managers in accessing resources to manage their stress and improve their mental health in organisations that do not provide any or limited services for stress management.

In the coaching research and literature, researchers have also documented how executive coaching has resulted in improvements in the client’s mental health and decreases in levels of stress as a result of the coaching intervention (Berriman, 2007, Grant, 2007b, Grant, 2008b, Grant et al., 2009, Osman-Gani and Rockstuhl, 2008, Palmer and Gyllensten, 2008). Changes in the client’s physical body have also been documented as an outcome of the executive coaching intervention (Spence and Grant, 2005). The study here is consistent with the previous coaching research regarding the outcomes of improving mental health and decreasing stress for coaching clients. However, an issue that the coaching literature does not explore fully is the degree to which coaching itself may impact stress. One of the Chinese participants remarked that she felt somewhat more anxious because of the coaching because she started to worry more about what her staff thought of her leadership, communication and management skills. To manage her anxiety though she formed goals around communicating her care and concern for her staff, which she found beneficial. Generally though, it seems that the study here strongly suggests that executive coaching may be used by international organisations to address and resolve on-going issues of stress impacting managers’ personal and professional lives.
Interestingly, in the study, half of the expatriates and none of the local Chinese also focused on improving their physical health. The participants commented that the expatriates tended to seek more social venues after work, which generally focused to discussions at a bar or pub, which one expatriate remarked as a continuation of the British parent culture permeating the subsidiary. The Chinese staff tended to go home after work and socialize less at bars because drinking alcohol was less a part of their cultural custom. As a result of the cultural norm of socializing with work colleagues after work, some participants reported feeling sluggish prior to the coaching intervention. The expatriate participants described setting goals on their physical health, partially because of the focus on the pub and dinners for socializing affected their diet and ability to exercise. Some of the expatriate participants reported feeling that they were in better shape as a result of the coaching intervention and they had shifted their after work socialization to pursuing more hobbies away from work. The study here then suggests that executive coaching may help to address physical manifestations of ill health that impact performance and happiness.

In another note of interest, almost all of the participants in relationships with partners or who had children (or both) reported trying to use their new communication and “coaching” skills with their families. For these participants, the value of the coaching intervention seemed to transcend the workplace and they were anxious to see if they demonstrated greater levels of empathy, listening and communication with their loved ones. The study here suggests then that executive coaching may transcend the working environment because clients find coaching so useful and valuable, that they wish to share it with the people they love and care for the most in the world.
Contributions of executive coaching to skills, performance and development capacities

In the IHRM literature and research, some researchers have attempted to qualify the competencies that expatriates need to perform their job roles and work cooperatively in cross-cultural teams (Harzing, 2001a, Harzing, 2001b, Harzing, 1995). Typically the IHRM research identifies training as the most common form of competency acquisition (Tung, 1981a, Tung, 1987, Tung, 1994, Tung, 1996). Training, in the IHRM literature, generally references cross-cultural issues predominately for culturally unfamiliar expatriates (Tung, 1981a, Tung, 1987, Tung, 1994, Tung, 1996).

The study here showcased an organisation that diverged from the proto-typical IHRM research around competency acquisition through training. The participants noted that the organisation provided no formal training program for any particular competency, and no cross-cultural training for any employees. In the organisation here, the training operated ad-hoc and generally focused on lower level company functions. Nevertheless, the participants all mentioned various competency deficiencies in the organisation that were impacting performance. The participants cited deficiencies in English writing skills, leadership skill, team management, conflict resolution, public speaking and presentation, and communication predominately. Prior to the coaching intervention, these competencies identified by the participants were not developed and performance was impacted. Most of the participants used the coaching sessions to address their work-related deficiencies and improve their performance. The participants, as a result of the coaching intervention: practiced and improved communication skills; remedied underperformance highlighted in performance appraisals; and, developed leadership and team management capabilities. The study suggests then that executive coaching may be
used by some organisations as a substitute for traditional training because of coaching’s focus on the individual needs of the participants.

The claims of executive coaching improving the skills, performance and development of international managers seems to be supported by this study (Grant, 2008b, Grant et al., 2010). A more salient issue might be: how permanent are the gains or changes that result from a coaching intervention? The coaching research is quite limited when it comes to longitudinal studies regarding the permanency of executive coaching outcomes (Grant et al., 2009, Grant et al., 2010). The few studies that exist do suggest that coaching outcomes may persist for at least a year and a half beyond the intervention (Grant et al., 2009, Grant et al., 2010). In the study here, some participants felt as if some other participants had only made temporary changes, and under pressure, reverted back to their old ways of communication and management. The study suggests that some behavioural changes may persist beyond the coaching intervention, whereas some behavioural changes may only last as long as the coaching intervention.

 Contributions of outcome measurements to executive coaching

In the IHRM literature and research on performance management, a criterion for determining success of the performance management system is the measurement of performance indicators through feedback, whether observed or self-reported (Bonache et al., 2001, Fuming, 2006, Kincaid and Gordick, 2003, Tahvanainen, 2000). Multi-source feedback has been shown to provide a broader view of performance and achievement within organisations (Day, 2000, Hon Fun and Rowley, 2007). In the study here, the participants both received feedback regarding the positive changes attributed to the
coaching intervention, and observed changes in their coached colleagues that flowed from the coaching sessions. Some participants described how their observations of the performance improvements in others motivated their own commitment to the coaching process. Also, because the participants were all coached, they were equipped with a common language and experience of coaching which seems to have raised their awareness of the impact of coaching on their colleagues’ actions. The study suggests that observation of positive changes in one’s self and others reinforces and deepens the belief that executive coaching is effective. Moreover, the study suggests that by expanding the coaching throughout the organisation, the individual achievements of others may improve levels of motivation and colleagues may be able to provide better feedback on each other’s performance.

Executive coaching interventions have been measured using self-reports, customized surveys, 360 degree multi-raters and observations (Jarvis, 2003). The various instruments used to capture the outcomes have also been used to describe executive coaching’s return on investment, to some degree (Levenson, 2009). In the study here, the participants almost uniformly agreed that the coaching intervention was a worthwhile expenditure of time, money and energy that provided immediate direct and indirect benefits to the individual participants and the organisation as a whole. The study suggests that the organizational investment in executive coaching is validated by the outcomes reported and observed by participants.
Contributions of executive coaching to job satisfaction and organizational commitment

In the IHRM literature, job satisfaction has been linked to improvements in performance (Shaffer and Harrison, 1998, Stephanie and Steve, 2004, Wang et al., 2007). Job satisfaction is derived from a variety of factors with individual meaning for each employee (Shaffer and Harrison, 1998, Stephanie and Steve, 2004, Wang et al., 2007). In the study here, the participants described their improved feelings of workplace well-being because of the coaching intervention and the outcomes achieved. Most participants commented on a new found confidence which resulted from the accomplishments achieved as a result of the coaching.

Moreover, the participants described feeling more committed to the organisation because of the company’s employment of coaching and the recognition that coaching is rarely offered in other organisations in China. The participants expressed an affective commitment supported by the literature where they experienced a sense of loyalty to Rabble because the provision of coaching seemed to express a valuation of the participant’s contribution to the organisation. Also, the study suggests that continuance commitment was strengthened because the participants felt that Rabble offered advantages and opportunities, like executive coaching, that would be lacking elsewhere.

In a domestic organisation, increased job satisfaction and organisational commitment may predict a greater intention to stay with the organization and reduced turnover; however, in an international organisation, those factors may not be enough if the challenges with cross-cultural adjustment are too great (Shaffer and Harrison, 1998, Stephanie and Steve, 2004, Wang et al., 2007). In the study here, although none of the participants expressed an intention to exit the organisation immediately, all of the
expatriate participants described leaving China at some point in their careers. For the expatriate participants, it seemed as if their increased job satisfaction and organisational commitment were strong enough to prevent them from leaving Rabble for another company in China, but not strong enough to overcome the “outsider” perspective which made them feel as if they could never fully be a part of Chinese society. These revelations motivated some of the participants to focus some of their coaching sessions and self-reflections on strategizing their career path post-China. The study suggests that although an executive coaching intervention may influence one’s intention to stay with a particular organisation, it may not prevent expatriates from leaving the host-country.

In the coaching literature and research, the issue of whether coaching influences one’s intention to stay with a company is a controversial topic that has not received much empirical attention. The coaching literature has long acknowledged that some clients may discover that they wish to work elsewhere and they may use the coaching sessions to transition out of the organisation that has arranged the coaching for them (Grant et al., 2010). Employees wanting to leave the company represent one of the ethical conundrums that coaches face because their commitment and pledge of confidentiality is to the individual client, although the company pays for the service (Grant et al., 2010). In the study here, several of the participants expressed some level of dissatisfaction with the organisation and focused on goals on addressing some challenges in the organisation, while simultaneously exploring post-China plans. The study suggests that in some cases, executive coaching may in fact exacerbate existing conflicts between employees and management that may result in resignations.
Limitations of executive coaching

Coaching effectiveness is moderated by various factors. In the study here, the participants’ outcomes and success were moderated primarily by: work and personal stressors and the cultural and physical distances between the participant and coach (Abbott, 2006). In the study here, the participants discovered that it was difficult for them to complete action plans or maintain a regular meeting schedule for coaching sessions because of various work related “emergencies”, a persistent reality of international subsidiaries. In the high pressure work atmosphere that the participants were operating in, the presence of executive coaching seemed to serve as a hindrance for some, as much as a help. Some participants avoided the coaching sessions until they could find a “quiet” time for meeting. Paradoxically, some participants focused their coaching on how to manage “emergencies” more efficiently so as to remove the constant feeling of pressure.

In the study here, most of the participants who engaged in avoidance were the Chinese participants who had expressed some unease with both the coaching language and the telephone coaching. The participants seem to suggest that, more than anything, the lack of face-to-face meetings on-site had the greatest effect on the participants’ ability to engage in the coaching process. If the coach had been on-site throughout the entire coaching engagement, the participants would have been less inclined to cancel meetings, and the coach and participant would have had the opportunity to build a stronger rapport and deeper levels of trust, critical factors in the Chinese culture. The study then suggests that an executive coaching intervention is vulnerable to stress and a perceived distance
between the coach and client, which may be exacerbated by the lack of face-to-face interactions.

**Interpretation of Results**

*Prominence of the International Manager and Management Teams*

The participants in the study here are an atypical representation of the staff of an international subsidiary as generally depicted in IHRM research and literature. The bulk of the research on the staffing of international organizations mostly focuses on the issues of expatriate failure with recently relocated Western expatriates. For these expatriates, better selection strategies and cross-cultural training are usually proposed to mitigate risks of expatriate failure. Although this depiction does represent a reality for many organizations, many others operate under a completely different paradigm. In the organization used for this study, the expatriates had not been recently relocated, they had been living and working in China for several years and all but one was fluent in Chinese. This group of culturally-familiar expatriates has rarely been studied, as it seems the assumption is that once expatriates become culturally adjusted, their challenges largely disappear. The study here suggests that, since expatriates will always be considered “outsiders”, the cultural challenges persist beyond the initial adjustment phase. Expatriates may face cultural challenges of varying degrees throughout their careers in the host country. For these expatriates, a persistent issue is how can their performance be supported and improved in a dynamic, fast-moving, high-pressured, results-driven and complex environment. The IHRM literature has been virtually silent on how to assist the ongoing performance of culturally-familiar expatriates.
In IHRM research the focus is generally on the issues of the expatriate, to the exclusion of the local managers. Rabble has a management team comprised of both expatriates and local Chinese. As MNEs increasingly move into developing countries like China and India, the MNEs may find themselves, like Rabble, having to integrate the practices of the parent country with the local talent and developing a hybrid management structure comprised of locals and expatriates. The study here supports the theory that local HCNs experience challenges similar to their expatriate counterparts because they too must balance their personal lives while adjusting to the foreign environment of an organization that adopts the culture of the parent company. The IHRM research has offered few suggestions beyond skills training in relation to the issue of how best to support and improve the performance of local HCNs.

Lastly, IHRM has typically only examined expatriates as individuals working in the subsidiary, while largely ignoring the management and support of international management teams. The study here underlines the fact that subsidiary managers do not work ‘in a vacuum’, they almost all work in and manage cross-cultural teams. It seems as if the emphasis on team management, communication and team-building, which is rather prominent in domestic organizations, is underdeveloped in international organizations, despite the critical role that management teams play in the success of the organizations. The study here provided a snapshot of a cross-cultural management team comprised of expatriates and local HCNs who had been working together for several years, and yet they were able to make new discoveries and develop a greater understanding of each other as a result of the coaching intervention. This suggests that without some form of intervention, whether coaching or otherwise, some management
teams may be missing out on experiences which could deepen and expand mutual understanding and cooperation.

International managers and their teams continue to need support and opportunities to address challenges and strategize solutions. In this study, the executive coaching intervention seemed to fill a gap in the organization’s needs by providing the team with a shared language, experience and tool that benefited them individually and as a team.

Improving Relationships in International Subsidiaries

In reflecting on the goals nominated by the participants and the outcomes generated, it is apparent that the key focus of the international managers collectively was on improving relationships personally and professionally. The international management team, as stewards of the subsidiary, was interested in improving the interpersonal relationships between each other and throughout the various offices. Both the expatriates and local HCNs were also interested in improving the relationships with their individual team members that they supervised, as well as, improving the relationships with their family and friends. Certainly relationships are paramount in all organizations, whether domestic or international, yet it appears that the complexities that arise from the pressure of a cross-cultural environment may strain relationships more often than in domestic organizations and thus the need to repair or improve relationships may be greater in international organizations. The executive coaching process is centered on the relationship between a coach and a client, and this relationship may become a model that the international manager learns to replicate in other relationships. In the study here, the participants seemed to focus on improving their leadership skills around factors
commonly associated with emotional intelligence (such as self-reflection, awareness, self-efficacy and empathy) and communication (listening, feedback and managing challenging communications) to address and improve relationships.

The Role of Emotional Intelligence

In the study here, the participants used their coaching sessions to address leadership and management issues, with the focus on a number of factors that central to the development of greater emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1996). One of the revelations of the study was the lack of formal management experience on the management team. Most of the management team was hired for either a specific technical area of expertise or their ability to communicate and feel comfortable living and working in China. As the business grew in China, teams were formed around the managers with expert knowledge, which the senior managers became responsible for. Most of the management team had been given leadership opportunities without any prior training or knowledge regarding effective management or leadership. The coaching intervention for the management team provided an opportunity to discuss and develop leadership and management capabilities, especially in motivating direct reports and managing difficult staff. The management team was also interested in projecting a positive and supportive image to their direct reports. In order for the management team to achieve its objectives for better management, the individual managers had to improve their own capabilities of self-reflection and self-awareness, so they could better understand their effect on others and measure their own strengths and weaknesses, and empathy towards others, so that they could better understand the needs and perspectives
of their colleagues. The management then, in effect, sought to improve their leadership development through factors now associated with ‘emotional intelligence’: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management and relationship management (Goleman, 1996).

It would seem that the lack of managerial and leadership abilities in the international teams of subsidiaries in developing countries like China, may not be atypical. Because of the language and cultural complexities in China, many businesses may discover that an established cultural familiarity is paramount to managerial skills or even technical skills. Organizations may reason, as Rabble did here, that technical skills can be more easily taught, than cultural familiarity. Western organisations then may not want to risk sending culturally-unfamiliar expatriates to China, where the cultural differences are so vast. It is interesting that the organization had not previously implemented any type of management or leadership program, but the Country Manager sought out the coaching intervention because he was aware his management team needed more support as the company continued to grow.

The IHRM literature seems to paint a picture of MNEs with sophisticated IHRM practices and programs designed to achieve specific organizational objectives for each of their subsidiaries. The study here highlighted a successful and growing organization that had no strategic IHRM plan and had hitherto paid little attention to the personal or professional development of its staff beyond the performance appraisal system. Through the coaching intervention, the participants were able to learn more about the role emotional intelligence plays in effective leadership and management, while using the coaching sessions to better develop emotional intelligence capabilities for themselves.
The coaching process in itself involves the use of emotional intelligence capabilities, such as self-awareness, empathy, self-control, adaptability and optimism, which may add to the development of these skills. The executive coaching intervention then was able to highlight and fill a gap in the MNE’s HR management, as well as provide support for the performance management of the international managers. The issues around emotional intelligence seem to be under-explored in the international context, when compared with domestic Western organizations. Likewise, there are questions of whether the issues of emotional intelligence are as applicable to HCNs in non-Western countries, as in Western countries. It seems in the study here that some aspects of emotional intelligence may not be “natural” in the Chinese cultural context, yet the Chinese participants were open to and interested in acquiring and applying these capabilities.

The Role of Communication

In addition to developing leadership and management abilities through improvements in emotional intelligence, the participants focused on improving their relationships through enhanced communication skills in order to better understand each other, give feedback, motivate each other, problem solve and conduct difficult conversations more effectively. In an international subsidiary, communication can become especially complex due to the cultural differences and challenges, as well as the lack of education and training on communication strategies. In the study here, the participants discovered that they had previously not developed any systems for managing feedback or motivating others. Some participants had been admonished for employing a harsh communication style and few felt comfortable about confronting challenging
behavior. However, when the managers participated in the coaching intervention, they were exposed to the ways their coach managed feedback, motivation, confrontations and listening. Some participants began to mirror the “coaching” style of communication with their direct reports and found the results promising and conducive to the better achievement of work goals. Again, the study highlights a deficiency in the competencies of the managers that the executive coaching helped to both identify and correct with varying degrees of success.

Because of the improvements in emotional intelligence, it seems that the participants also became more receptive to the new forms of communication employed by the other participants, which helped to reduce conflict and led to more productive team meetings. This combination of emotional intelligence and communication also seemed to help overcome some of the cultural challenges and miscommunications because the participants learned that many misunderstandings were not due to lack of care but due to lack of knowledge and experience. After the coaching intervention, the participants seemed to have more patience and compassion for each other and were able to interpret negative behaviors in others less as personal attacks. It would seem then that in the ongoing management of performance, executive coaching may have a role in the continual improvement of emotional intelligence and communication strategies for the development and maintenance of mutually beneficial relationships. The participants here also noted that the outcomes of executive coaching were especially beneficial because they complimented the client service orientation of the company’s core business, which involves high-level and precise communications and the building and sustaining of client relationships. Executive coaching then may have more resonance with certain industries
and professions than others, although this particular issue has not been fully explored in
the literature or research.

Performance Management and Executive Coaching

In Chapter 2 a model for international managers was proposed for guiding and
supporting the effective management of performance. After reviewing the results of the
executive coaching intervention, it would appear that executive coaching may offer a
natural compliment to the model, allowing each stage of the process to be supported by
an executive coaching intervention.

In the first stage of the model, Performance Objectives represent goals of the
organization and the individual manager that must be satisfied for organizational success.
The study here confirms and supports executive coaching’s claim to assist international
managers in goal attainment. Executive coaching then could be offered during the first
stage to help international managers to clarify goals and develop action plans around
organizational objectives. The study here suggests that executive coaching may help the
international managers to achieve organizational goals faster than if they did not
participate in the coaching, which might expedite projects and save organizations time
and money.

In the second stage of the model, Performance Mediators are factors which may
improve or impede personal and professional performance. Executive coaching here
serves several potential functions: providing an additional performance mediator (like
training) that may improve performance; being used in conjunction with other
performance mediators to boost performance (as with development and family support);
and contributing directly to other performance mediators (such as job satisfaction, level of organization support and organizational commitment). In the study here, it was evident that the organization had offered little support to enhance the performance of its international managers prior to the coaching intervention. It is apparent that executive coaching may enhance performance and substitute for other interventions that may be lacking in organizations.

The executive coaching intervention also allowed some participants to address personal issues that were impacting their work performance and general motivation; few international organizations provide adequate support for employees to manage such personal issues. Executive coaching conducted by a coach with training in IHRM issues may also be used to help raise the awareness of the participant and the organization around the issues of performance mediators and the need for various levels of support relative to the individual and the business context.

In the third stage of the model, “Performance Competencies” represent skill sets that are vital for international managers to effectively manage subsidiaries. Executive coaching has long claimed to assist the skill and competency development of clients. In the organization profiled here, the international managers seemed to possess under-developed skill sets or were lacking them entirely. Executive coaching was shown to assist international managers in acquiring various skill sets, including communication and presentation skills, leadership and management skills, coaching skills, emotional intelligence capabilities and cross-cultural awareness and communication skills. The executive coaching intervention again was able to address a need in the organization.
Moreover, the participants were able to acquire self-efficacy skills which will assist them in acquiring additional skills as needed after the coaching intervention.

In the fourth stage of the model, “Performance Outcomes” are the products of individual and team efforts. In the study, the executive coaching process was designed to compliment the daily working operations, while responding to the individual needs of each international manager. The executive coaching intervention also allowed the participants the opportunity to target deficient areas of work performance and devise strategies for improving performance and address what was not working well. Moreover, the executive coaching intervention resulted in outcomes which directly and indirectly contributed to the international manager’s work performance. Some outcomes, such as improvements to team problem solving strategies were unexpected boons to the subsidiary and led to additional avenues of team performance enhancement and collaboration.

In the fifth and final stage of the model, “Performance Evaluations” are the instruments by which performance is measured and evaluated for the international manager in the organization. The organization studied here already had a performance appraisal system but lacked a method or tool to support the suggested improvements for under-performance or to support raising good performance. The participants also felt hampered by the challenges of providing feedback in the cross-cultural environment. The coaching intervention provided a mechanism to address under-performance and improve good performance. Also, the executive coaching intervention provided communication strategies for effective delivery of feedback and challenging
conversations, as well as, modeling effective behaviors through the coach/client relationship.

Summary

The study here suggests that organizations may be ill-prepared to provide the adequate level of support for the performance management of international managers. One of the challenges facing subsidiaries is that each manager has different needs and thus requires different forms of support. Executive coaching may offer a solution for organizations because of its flexibility to be used as a tool for self-reflection, learning, behavioural change and problem-solving that can address challenges at the various levels of performance management. The individualized process of executive coaching responds to the direct and immediate needs of the international manager and assists the manager in addressing particular strengths and weaknesses. Enhanced by its ability to work in conjunction with other tools, executive coaching provides a continual model of effective and solution-focused behaviors. Executive coaching may also be used to perform a needs analysis of the organization by encouraging conversations which address the problems and issues that may be affecting other employees. Although executive coaching can be used as a tool to begin to address employees’ needs, it should not be seen as a panacea for an organization’s neglect of the needs of its employees.

Significance for the International HRM Function

The research here contributes to the international human resource (IHRM) profession in two ways: first, the research validates the benefits of applying a strategic
intervention to assist expatriate and host-country workers and secondly, the research helps to support the effectiveness of international managers to achieve company objectives. The study suggests that executive coaching provides a potentially useful tool that international human resource managers may use for achieving personal, professional and subsidiary success. Furthermore, the study demonstrates the need for MNEs to support subsidiary managers and presents a methodology for assisting the performance management of international managers.

By applying the awareness raising, goal-setting concepts, solution-focused methodologies and action plans to the challenges faced by subsidiary managers in international ventures, executive coaching can clearly contribute to the capacity of international managers to improve their performance. Subsidiary success depends on the effective management of capable managers under the strategic direction of the parent-corporation. Subsidiary success can often be derailed through the mismanaged selection of poor fit subsidiary managers, expatriate and local, and/or inattentiveness to the various cross-cultural, socialization, performance and development needs of subsidiary staff. Specifically, subsidiary staff must feel safe and comfortable, be supported by the MNEs, in developing the skills they lack, have the tools to improve performance in their work areas, and develop their professional and personal competencies.

One of the primary differences between domestic and international human resource management is the degree to which the IHR manager must address the needs of its managers. Executive coaching may assist the organisation to provide an intervention that allows its subsidiary managers to address life issues as well as work issues. Executive coaching which focuses on personal life management issues encourages
success by creating tools for achieving success in non-work life areas which have a reciprocal effect on work areas (e.g. Takeuchi et al, 2002). Takeuchi et al. (2002) suggests that expatriates who experience satisfaction in their non-work life areas, including daily domestic life and social interactions, alternately experience greater satisfaction at work.

Moreover, coaching seems to promote self-efficacy, an indicator of cultural adjustment (Hecanova-Alampay et al, 2002). Self-efficacy refers to the confidence derived from goal attainment (Hecanova-Alampay et al, 2002). Research has shown that self-efficacy positively correlates with cultural adjustment (Hecanova-Alampay et al, 2002). International managers with greater levels of self-efficacy are optimistic about new challenges, overcome barriers to success and interact with the new foreign culture more positively (Hecanova-Alampay et al, 2002). Since an executive coaching program provides an easily understandable step process of goal attainment, an executive can continually set and achieve different life and work goals, which in turn promote greater feelings of self-efficacy.

MNEs face the challenge of measuring the value of employee interventions; coaching is no exception. Coaching’s value can be demonstrated through measurement of the increase in sales, attainment of MNE objectives, customer feedback, reduced turnover, and team performance; as well as, through qualitative data including the views of the coach, the client, stakeholders, and the fulfillment of organisational objectives and professional goals.

This research study also implies that HCNs should be included in the examinations of international organisations, instead of the focus on expatriates from
predominately Western countries. By ignoring the role and needs of HCNs and only addressing expatriates, the IHRM research and literature is doing a disservice to the organisational structure of the subsidiary, which will typically include significant numbers of HCN managers as well as expatriates. The study here suggests that HCNs face challenges just as daunting as their expatriate colleagues and that greater advances can be achieved when all managers are treated equally and provided with equal levels of support, depending on their individual needs. By providing executive coaching to the management group as a whole, the team members gained a greater understanding of each other’s needs and developed a common working language around the coaching concepts which lead to increased problem-solving strategies.

The research study here will also provide subsidiaries with information to overcome the challenge of garnering MNE support for a executive coaching intervention. Generally, organisational support determines the extent to which the philosophy of the coaching program permeates throughout the company (Jarvis, 2003). With support, it becomes easier for coaches to collect data, evaluate the success of the program, and encourage clients to identify partners for success or maintain the changes (McGovern, et al, 2001). Despite the apparent benefits, research shows that sometimes organisational support is lacking (McGovern, et al, 2001). Several reasons exist for a lack of widespread organisational support: some companies engage coaching as a “quick fix” for an isolated employee issue; some “jump on the bandwagon” of coaching without understanding what results would be most beneficial; and, some members of the organisation who do not receive the coaching feel threatened by executive coachee’s achievements and outcomes (e.g. McGovern, et al, 2001; Skiffington & Zeus, 2003).
Nonetheless, there is a range of strategies which can help build organisation support for coaching. Initially, coaches can endeavour to communicate the need for organisation support prior to commencing the coaching assignment and thus achieve “buy-in” from the MNEs (Jarvis, 2003). Also, the coach can conduct educational seminars with other staff members regarding the benefits of executive coaching for the organisation as a whole (Zeus & Skiffington, 2000). Moreover, the coach can try to coach “top down” which involves beginning the coaching with the most senior management and then each level below (McGovern, et al, 2001). Through promotion, the coach builds a support network for the coachee, while setting in motion the actions for organisational change. With a successful coaching program that attains measurable and visible results, strategic international human resource management initiatives might be better recognised and more readily entrenched.

**Significance for Coaching Psychology Practice**

The research conducted here, suggesting that coaching positively impacts the performance and development of subsidiary managers, adds to the growing body of research on the practice and benefits of coaching.

Firstly, the research here contributes to the academic literature supporting coaching. This research evidence adds to the evidence-based research that is being gathered amongst coaching professionals to help substantiate coaching as a profession. Despite its phenomenal growth and cultural impact, coaching has yet to achieve the level of a recognized and well-respected profession (Grant, 2004). An evidence-based practice would confer the “…shared common body of knowledge” that Grant (2004:48) identifies
as a prerequisite to transforming the coaching industry into a profession. Specifically, executive coaching would begin to develop a consistent ideology, generate evidentiary support for its methodologies and establish a universal language of coaching concepts and terminology (e.g. Wolf, 2000). Additionally, executive coaching might be able to foster a common global language regarding its practice, allowing coaching practitioners to all use the same best evidence available (e.g. Cooper, 2003). In summary, executive coaching action research has the capacity to offer a more robust research foundation for its practice.

Secondly, the research here demonstrates the degree to which, and ways in which, coaching can specifically help expatriate managers and HCNs. Coaching can manage life areas, acquire skills, improve performance and promote professional development. One argument for the lack of coaching for international managers may be the lack of knowledge around how coaching can specifically impact MNE objectives. The research here makes a contribution to addressing this deficiency.

Thirdly, the research helps to raise the awareness of the coaching profession to the issues of cultural bias in coaching. Coaching derives primarily from Western concepts and thinking. Although the cultural character of coaching may be appropriate for Westerners, the coaching profession needs to examine whether those concepts and tools are best for non-Western clients? In providing coaching to non-Westerners, what aspects of the coaching relationship and experience might be compromised? How can coaching be modified to be more culturally sensitive to clients from different cultures? Rosiniski (2003) argues that coaching may benefit from a greater understanding of cultural frameworks that can be integrated into the coaching dialogue, thus incorporating many
cultural views. Moreover, the coaching intervention documented here may help to show that coaching can be appropriate for cross-cultural interventions in giving clients the opportunity to work one-on-one privately, tailoring the coaching to their own needs. The research here does not answer all these questions, but it provides some guidance for making coaching more culturally sensitive and appropriate for all cultures and suggests how can it be modified to be more effective in cross-cultural contexts.

Fourthly, the research here can contribute to an examination of coaching’s impact on cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates and the socialization of host-country nationals. Cross-cultural adjustment and socialization are processes of learning, psychology, habit and self-awareness. For expatriates and host-country nationals, it is necessary that they discover the most effective ways to understand, navigate and succeed in the different foreign environments that they find themselves in. Cross-cultural training is often used to assist workers to become more adjusted and socialized to the new foreign environments and behaviours, but the research on training shows that training is often not that effective and without some type of follow up, the training rarely becomes embedded. The research here suggests coaching as an additional means to complement cross-cultural and socialization training in order to ensure greater levels of success, competency, comfort and transformation.

Fifthly, the research adds to the knowledge around the effectiveness and use of phone coaching as it compares to face-to-face coaching. With phone coaching, the coach loses the ability to read the non-verbal communications of the client, a valuable information tool for coaches in conducting coaching sessions. Also, phone appointments are more easily cancelled and postponed than face-to-face meetings, which may allow
clients who are challenged by the coaching process to practice avoidance behaviours. Typically, coaches recognize that coaching can be confronting for some clients, so it is not good practice to avoid the coaching sessions. However, with phone coaching, it is easier for a client to have an assistant inform the coach that the client was ‘rushed into a meeting’ for example. Nevertheless, it might not be possible for coaches of international managers to be physically present, so what measures are needed to ensure optimal success for the coaching session? The research here begins to explore the appropriateness of telephone coaching for delivering an executive coaching intervention for international managers, particularly non-native English speakers.

Finally, the research here helps to make the argument that coaching for international managers is a distinct practice of coaching, like executive coaching, and requires distinct skills, including cross-cultural awareness and international human resource management knowledge, in order to foster greater levels of success. The research indicates that although coaches need not be subject matter experts in the various fields and industries of their clients, the more they do know, the more they attend to particular areas that are relevant to their clients. Furthermore, at the very least, executive coaches should have some knowledge about business management and operations. The research here suggests that because international managers are executives, with the added pressures that attend an international assignment, the coaches for these managers should have business knowledge, cross-cultural knowledge and knowledge about the particular challenges of subsidiary managers. If the coaches have their awareness raised about the various issues affecting expatriate and host-country national managers, they can help their clients to achieve the improved levels of awareness. With that awareness, clients
can have a greater understanding of motivations, challenges and possible solutions for issues that impact or are heightened by the international nature of their work and experiences. The research here then suggests that coaches who work with international managers educate themselves around the various issues which may impact their clients, thus offering a more holistic coaching experience.

**Delimitations and Limitations**

The study here is limited by several issues. The study focused solely on a single case study of eleven senior managers in one international subsidiary in China. Because of the limited ‘sample size’, the results and findings can not be easily generalized. However, as this study is one of the first of its kind in the research literature, the study offers an important start to understanding the various issues and outcomes of an executive coaching program in China.

The study is also limited by the executive coaching process that was initiated by three coaches who have all received the same form of training. The results and outcomes may have differed according to the various competencies of each coach. In the study here, the coaches did have different backgrounds in respect to their knowledge of cross-cultural issues, which may have affected the relationships between coaches/clients. The training background of the coaches in the study here was at a Masters level and above and thus may represent the experiences of coaches who have achieved the highest levels of formal education regarding coaching, although not necessarily the most experience. The different experience levels of the coaches may be another variable that affects the results here.
The study here may have also been limited, owing to the hybrid coaching mediums of face-to-face and telephone coaching, which some participants noted as a challenge. Although the dual delivery style was able to offer a comparison of preference, the style may have affected the outcomes.

Similarly the challenges of communication between the Western coaches and the local Chinese may have impacted both the conversations during the coaching sessions and the subsequent follow up interviews. In a cross-cultural context there is the possibility that some meaning may be lost, especially as none of the coaches spoke Chinese and the interviews were conducted solely in English.

The study here also provides a qualitative representation of the coaching process and its outcomes from the perspective of the participants, which may limit the objective analysis of the intervention. Moreover the participants were purposefully selected and matched by the Country Manager, which may have affected the relationships with the coaches and the generalizability of the study.

Creane’s (2002) examination of a coaching intervention asserts that qualitative research studies must be able provide trustworthy results, which this study satisfies. Creane (2002) cited Lincoln & Guba’s (1985) four criteria for establishing trustworthiness of qualitative studies: (1) credibility, (2) transferability, (3) dependability, and (4) conformability. The present study sought to establish credibility by the faithful transcription of recorded interviews. Transferability was attempted by providing a deep and extensive description of the participants’ thoughts and views regarding the coaching process and the operations of the subsidiary. Transferability is the idea that the results can be applied to other populations (Creane, 2002). The results here suggest that they
can be transferred to the other organizations generally and to Western organizations in China specifically. Creane (2002) cites a challenge in satisfying the exact definitions of dependability and conformability by conducting a formal audit of the data reduction and resulting findings, which she was unable to do. However, her findings were reviewed by her faculty department, which offered a measure of validity (Creane, 2002). Here the study’s results were reviewed by the study’s supervisors, who offer a measure of conformability and dependability.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The study here explored how an executive coaching intervention affected an international management team working for a Western subsidiary in China. The study was the first of its kind in providing an action research coaching intervention to two distinct cultural groups operating in a single organization in a host-country. Although this exploratory study generated notable outcomes and results, more research is needed to deepen the understanding of the phenomena of executive coaching in international organizations with expatriates and HCNs working together.

The participants noted that the cultural and physical distance between the participants and coaches may have affected their relationships and feelings of trust. Further research will want to explore the specific role of trust in the coach/client relationship and how this can be strengthened and improved. Also, the coaches possessed various levels of cultural and IHRM knowledge, so future research will need to explore the degree to which cultural and IHRM knowledge affects the relationships between coach/client. Comparison studies may also be conducted between coaching
conducted between a Chinese coach and a Western coach, to identify the degree to which culture may impact the relationships between coach/client. Moreover, as the participants were paired with the coach without self-matching, a study should be established to compare self-matching versus assignment to better understand the degree to which matching influences the relationships of coach/client.

The study here utilized coaches with a particular background and training in executive coaching. Future research should involve coaches from various backgrounds to better understand the role training and experience in delivering outcomes from coaching. More information is needed regarding the specific processes of coaches and exactly what they do to achieve specific results, so that there is a better understanding of the most effective techniques in real world scenarios.

Future research should also better understand the organizational structures and histories of international subsidiaries in developing countries. Previous research has focused mostly on MNE subsidiaries operating in Europe, with far less emphasis on China and India, two growing economic ‘powerhouses’. Currently, there is not enough information to know the degree to which the organization here is typical of Western MNE subsidiaries in China.

The research here has begun to explore the cultural issues influencing executive coaching. More research is needed to better understand how the language of coaching and the values of the culture and individual moderate the effectiveness of coaching.
Conclusions

This study has introduced an area that has been overlooked in MNEs: the application of executive coaching as a performance intervention to assist the performance and career development of its international managers. Coaching helps to develop the individual strengths of employees and guide their development. When coaching is combined with organizational objectives, a powerful synthesis occurs, which can benefit the individual employee and the organization. Organizations want to have committed managers who strive to succeed in the subsidiary, and who can transfer their knowledge back to the broader organization. Expatriates and HCNs choose international organizations to develop their careers while gaining new skills and experiencing new challenges. However, the complexity of international organizations can prove challenging to managers. Coaching offers strategies for overcoming many of these challenges. Organizations which are committed to developing successful, loyal managers and employees, may want to consider offering coaching services to specifically guide assignees throughout all the stages of the expatriate experience.

The research study made several significant findings:

- coaching filled a gap in the professional development of international managers;
- coaching was well received by both expatriates and HCNs and virtually all participants were satisfied with the process and outcomes;
- expatriates focused on achieving personal and professional goals, while HCNs focused predominately on achieving professional goals;
the relationship between the coach and the participant affected the participants level of engagement in the coaching process;

executive coaching can be adaptable to the cultural needs of non-Westerners because it attunes itself to whatever the individual needs;

face-to-face coaching is preferred over telephone coaching in most cases, although both mediums can achieve results;

international managers primarily use coaching to address leadership challenges around emotional intelligence factors and communication challenges;

the goals and self-reflections of the participants may expose weaknesses in the organization that need critical attention;

executive coaching can support all phases of an effective performance management system;

executive coaching improves performance, conveys skills and drives the development of international managers;

executive coaching may need to be adapted to the specific cultural values of non-Westerners, especially in regards to language and coaching concepts;

executive coaches operating in international organizations need to have subject matter knowledge regarding the local culture and the current IHRM issues affecting expatriates and HCNs;
• executive coaching of a management team improves communication, understanding and teamwork between team members;
• executive coaching provides a common language for participants to help them understand each other and devise solution-focused problem solving strategies;
• executive coaching seems to fill the gaps of support that is lacking in subsidiaries.

The limitations of IHRM’s current capacity to assist international managers has long been documented in the form of high levels of expatriate failure and subsidiary underperformance. Given that executive coaching has now reached a level of maturity which appears to suggest that it is more than the latest management fad, the time may be right for MNEs to more seriously consider executive coaching as a new tool for the improved performance management of expatriates and local managers alike (Abbott, 2006).
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS

Executive coaching holds a great deal of promise for international managers. International managers live and work in a complex, dynamic, ever-changing and unpredictable environment that challenges them personally and professionally. For many international managers, they must contend within the irony of generally having more pressures and more responsibilities than their domestic counterparts, while receiving virtually no additional performance and development support.

Much of the previous research regarding the support for international managers has focused narrowly on perhaps the most vulnerable of international managers, the culturally-unfamiliar expatriate. There is little doubt that those expatriates need both attention and support. Even though the research suggests that, for all the call to arms to help “newbie” expatriates, few organisations truly invested in developing comprehensive cross-cultural training programs. Just as perplexing, the performance and development needs of virtually all other types of international worker is ignored in the scholarship and company practices. International managers, like their domestic counterparts, need ongoing performance and development support in order to gain new skills, overcome performance deficiencies and continue contributing to the organisation. International managers have the added challenges of performing their expected job roles in a foreign environment, with a foreign culture and sometimes contending with foreign languages. The added pressures on international managers have the potential in accelerating burnout or some aspect of poor performance. MNEs who are eager to reap the benefits of the international global markets can add value to their subsidiary operations by helping to
relieve some of the burden on international managers and equipping them with additional tools to manage and improve their performance, while enjoying more satisfaction at work and at home.

Executive coaching has been proposed as a tool that can assist MNEs in supporting the performance and development needs of international managers. Executive coaching has demonstrated its effectiveness in assisting the performance and development needs of Western managers in developed countries, namely the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia. Executive coaching is a helping relationship between a coach and a manager, where the coach helps to guide the manager’s goals to learn and grow. Despite its acceptance and use for domestic organisations, executive coaching has yet to be as ubiquitous in the subsidiaries of MNEs. The resistance to implementing coaching internationally may be because of the lack of knowledge around the needs of international managers, the inexperience of coaches with regards to cross-cultural issues, the belief that executive coaching is a luxury that time-poor international managers can barely afford, or the cultural resistance to anything that seems like a remedial intervention. Because coaching is less prevalent in international organisations, the data concerning the effectiveness of executive coaching is sparse. The current data and research supports the theory that executive coaching has the capacity to generate the same outcomes internationally as domestically. Moreover, executive coaching benefits from entering global organisations because that allows coaches to apply, test and refine the executive coaching process in a cross-cultural context.

The findings in the research study here strongly suggest that international managers do in fact want to learn more about the cultures of their colleagues, develop
new skills and capabilities to better manage their teams, experience new concepts that challenge their own understanding of themselves, and feel better about the work they do and the life they live. The research study here also finds that executive coaching does assist international managers in achieving all of those goals and aspirations to some degree or another. The executive coaching intervention is well-received, popular, considered valuable and has a profound impact on the individual participants and the organisation as a whole. The participants of the executive coaching intervention were so impressed by the outcomes generated that they lobbied for the entire MNE to spread the coaching intervention throughout the entire organisation.

For the participants the strength of the executive coaching intervention is its ability to assist the international managers to have better and mutually beneficial relationships, which they find especially helpful for the service industry that they operated in. The participants were challenged by the coaching intervention and as expected, the cultural elements moderated the effectiveness of the intervention. The participants were able to recognize the strengths of coaching, while noting that it still needed to consider cultural differences and the complexities of international work, as well as, China’s own unique business environment.

The study here added to the body of knowledge for coaching and international management. The coaching profession can recognize that their services are needed in international markets, while accepting that working with international managers will meaning learning more about the relationship of coaching to learning and behavioural change and by developing new tools and methodologies that are more culturally harmonious with non-Western managers and environments. International human
resource managers can likewise appreciate that there are in fact tools to assist international managers who are quite eager for assistance and have the capacity to use new tools without sacrificing productivity.

Ultimately, the research here reveals that international managers need support and executive coaching provides that support. The executive coaching intervention will generate successful outcomes for international managers and MNEs, provided: (1) the coaching improves their subject matter knowledge of culture and international management issues; (2) the MNE supports the coaching intervention and values the outcomes; (3) the international managers approach the coaching intervention with mindsets that are eager, curious, open and mentally healthy; (4) the coach is able to build a strong trusting relationship; and, (6) the coaching intervention is spread throughout the organisation so that there is continuous support, understanding and communication from all participants.
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SHAFFER, M. A., HARRISON, D. A., GREGERSEN, H., BLACK, J. S. & FERZANDI,


**APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRES**

**INTERNATIONAL QUESTIONNAIRE (VSM 94)**

Please think of an ideal job, disregarding your present job, if you have one.

*In choosing an ideal job, how important would it be to you to ...* (please check one answer in each line across):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Of utmost importance</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Of moderate importance</th>
<th>Of little importance</th>
<th>Of little or no importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. have sufficient time for you personal or family life</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. have good physical working conditions (good ventilation and lighting, adequate)</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. have a good working relationship with your direct superior</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. have security of employment</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. work with people who cooperate well with one another</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. be consulted by your direct superior in his/her decisions</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. have an opportunity for advancement to higher level jobs</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. have an element of variety and adventure in the job</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
In your private life, how important is each of the following to you? (please check one answer in each line across):

1 = of utmost importance
2 = very important
3 = of moderate importance
4 = of little importance
5 = of very little or no importance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9</th>
<th>Personal steadiness and stability</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Thrift</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Persistence (perseverance)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Respect for tradition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13 How often do you feel nervous or tense at work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14 How frequently, in your experience, are subordinates afraid to express disagreement with their superiors?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? (please circle one answer in each line across):

1 = strongly agree
2 = agree
3 = undecided
4 = disagree
5 = strongly disagree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>undecided</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Most people can be trusted</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>One can be a good manager without having precise answers to most questions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>An organization structure in which certain subordinates have two bosses should</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Competition between employees usually does more harm than</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>A company's or organization's rules should not be broken--not even when the</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>When people have failed in life it is often their own fault</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some information about yourself (for statistical purposes):

21 | Are you male or female? |
---|------------------------|

22 | How old are you? (write the age range only) |
---|---------------------------------------------|
1. Under 20
2. 20-24
3. 25-29
4. 30-34
5. 35-39
6. 40-49
7. 50-59
8. 60 or over
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>How many years of formal school education (or their equivalent) did you complete (starting with primary school)?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10 years or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>11 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>12 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>13 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>14 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>15 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>16 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>17 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>18 years or over</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>If you have or have had a paid job, what kind of job is it / was it? (Check the box that applies)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>No paid job (includes full-time students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Unskilled or semi-skilled manual worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Generally trained office worker or secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Vocationally trained craftsperson, technician, information, nurse, artist or equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Academically trained professional or equivalent (but not a manager of people)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Manager of one or more subordinates (non-managers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Manager of one or more managers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>What is your nationality?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What was your nationality at birth (if different)?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Geert Hofstede. Used for research purposes only.
Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. Do not spend too much time on any question. It is very important to rate yourself accurately.

If a question does not seem to apply to you at this time, for any reason – for example, because you haven’t done much coaching to date, then check the “Neutral or Does Not Apply At Present” box.

### Socio-cultural Adjustment Scale (EXPATRIATES ONLY)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living conditions in general</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing conditions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cost of living</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entertainment/recreation facilities and opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health care facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Socializing with host nationals</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Interacting with host nationals on a day-to-day basis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interacting with host nationals outside of work</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Speaking with host nationals</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Specific job responsibilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Performance standards and expectations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisory responsibilities</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Please consider the last four weeks and answer the following questions by selecting and circling one of the four answer options.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Been able to concentrate on what you’re doing</td>
<td>Better than usual</td>
<td>Same as usual</td>
<td>Less than usual</td>
<td>Much less than usual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Lost much sleep over worry</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>No more than usual</td>
<td>Rather more than usual</td>
<td>Much more than usual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Felt you were playing a useful part in things</td>
<td>More so than usual</td>
<td>Same as usual</td>
<td>Less useful than usual</td>
<td>Much less useful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Felt capable of making decisions about things</td>
<td>More so than usual</td>
<td>Same as usual</td>
<td>Less useful than usual</td>
<td>Much less useful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Felt constantly under strain</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>No more than usual</td>
<td>Rather more than usual</td>
<td>Much more than usual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Felt you couldn’t overcome</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>No more</td>
<td>Rather more</td>
<td>Much more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your difficulties</td>
<td>than usual</td>
<td>than usual</td>
<td>than usual</td>
<td>than usual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
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<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Been able to enjoy your normal day-to-day activities</td>
<td>More so than usual</td>
<td>Same as usual</td>
<td>Less useful than usual</td>
<td>Much less useful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Been able to face up to your problems</td>
<td>More so than usual</td>
<td>Same as usual</td>
<td>Less useful than usual</td>
<td>Much less useful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Been feeling unhappy and depressed</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>No more than usual</td>
<td>Rather more than usual</td>
<td>Much more than usual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Been losing confidence in yourself</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>No more than usual</td>
<td>Rather more than usual</td>
<td>Much more than usual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Been thinking of yourself as a worthless person.</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>No more than usual</td>
<td>Rather more than usual</td>
<td>Much more than usual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Been feeling reasonably happy, all things considered</td>
<td>More so than usual</td>
<td>About the same as usual</td>
<td>Less so than usual</td>
<td>Much less than usual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please read each statement and circle a number 0, 1, 2 or 3 which indicates how much the statement applied to you over the past week. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any statement.

*The rating scale is as follows:*

- **0** = Did not apply to me at all
- **1** = Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time
- **2** = Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time
- **3** = Applied to me very much, or most of the time

All information is confidential

**DASS 21**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I found it hard to wind down</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I was aware of dryness of my mouth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I couldn’t seem to experience any positive feeling at all</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I experienced breathing difficulty (eg, excessively rapid breathing, breathlessness in the absence of physical exertion)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I found it difficult to work up the initiative to do things</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>I tended to over-react to situations</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>I experienced trembling (eg, in the hands)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>I felt that I was using a lot of nervous energy</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I was worried about situations in which I might panic and make a fool of myself</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I felt that I had nothing to look forward to</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I found myself getting agitated</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I found it difficult to relax</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I felt down-hearted and blue</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I was intolerant of anything that kept me from getting on with what I was doing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I felt I was close to panic</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I was unable to become enthusiastic about anything</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I felt I wasn't worth much as a person</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>I felt that I was rather touchy</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I was aware of the action of my heart in the absence of physical exertion (eg, sense of heart rate increase, heart missing a beat)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>I felt scared without any good reason</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>I felt that life was meaningless</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. Do not spend too much time on any question. It is very important to rate yourself accurately.

**Workplace Well-being Index**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Scale (0-10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with your job as a whole?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with how much responsibility you have at Rouse?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with how meaningful your work is?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with your independence at Rouse?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you that your work allows you to use your abilities and knowledge?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with the sense of achievement your work gives you?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with being valued as a person at Rouse?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with the recognition you receive for good work?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with your level of influence in Rouse?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with your pay at Rouse?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with your job security?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with the convenience of your work hours?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with your working conditions?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with your supervisors at Rouse?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with your co-workers?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with your promotional opportunities at Rouse?</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### REVISED SELF LEADERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE

Please check the number that indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. Please make only one check per statement:

1 = Not at all accurate  
2 = Somewhat accurate  
3 = A little accurate  
4 = Mostly accurate  
5 = Completely accurate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I use my imagination to picture myself performing well on important tasks.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I establish specific goals for my own performance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sometimes I find I’m talking to myself (out loud or in my head) to help me deal with difficult problems I face.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>When I do an assignment especially well, I like to treat myself to something or activity I especially enjoy.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I think about my own beliefs and assumptions whenever I encounter a difficult situation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I tend to get down on myself in my mind when I have performed poorly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I make a point to keep track of how well I am doing at work.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Kathryn Page (2006), “Workplace Wellbeing Index”. Used for research purposes only.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Options</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I focus my thinking on the pleasant rather than the unpleasant aspects of my job activities.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I use written notes to remind myself of what I need to accomplish.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I visualize myself successfully performing a task before I do it.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I consciously have goals in mind for my work efforts.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Sometimes I talk to myself (out loud or in my head) to work through difficult situations.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>When I do something well, I reward myself with a special event such as a good dinner, movie, shopping trip, etc.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I try to mentally evaluate the accuracy of my own beliefs about situations that I am having problems with.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I tend to be tough on myself in my thinking when I have not done well on a task.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I usually am aware of how well I’m doing as I perform an activity.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I try to surround myself with objects and people that bring out my desirable behaviours.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>I use concrete reminders (e.g. notes and lists) to help me focus on things I need to accomplish.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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</table>
Please check the number that indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. Please make only one check per statement:

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<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Not at all accurate</th>
<th>Somewhat accurate</th>
<th>A little accurate</th>
<th>Mostly accurate</th>
<th>Completely accurate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Sometimes I picture in my mind a successful performance before I actually do a task.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>I work toward specific goals I have set for myself.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>When I’m in difficult situations I will sometimes talk to myself (out loud or in my head) to help me get through it.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>When I have successfully completed a task, I often reward myself with something I like.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>I openly articulate and evaluate my own assumptions when I have a disagreement with someone else.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>I feel guilt when I perform a task poorly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>I pay attention to how well I’m doing in my work.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>When I have a choice, I try to do my work in ways that I enjoy rather than just trying to get it over with.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>I purposefully visualize myself overcoming the challenges I face.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>I think about the goals that I intend to achieve in the future.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>I think about and evaluate the beliefs and assumptions I hold.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>I sometimes openly express displeasure with myself when I have not done well.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>I keep track of my progress on projects I’m working on.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>I seek out activities in my work that I enjoy doing.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>I often mentally rehearse the way I plan to deal with a challenge before I actually face the challenge.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>I write specific goals for my own performance.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>I find my own favorite ways to get things done.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE


1. General Questions: Background information (everyone)
   a. Personal: Tell me about yourself.
      i. Education
      ii. Where have you lived, travelled and worked
      iii. Previous experience working with other cultures.
      iv. How would you rate your skills in communicating in other language (Chinese to English or English to Chinese—scale of 1-5)
      v. Family size
      vi. Position—General Job duties?
      vii. How long at this present position? How long in the company?
      viii. Number of people managing?
      ix. What are your responsibilities in relation to the people you manage?

   b. General thoughts regarding repatriation
   c. General thoughts regarding retention and advancement
   d. Familiarity with coaching concepts

2. General Questions for expats:
   a. What prompted you to pursue the international assignment or joining this organisation?
   b. How does the international assignment fit into your career plans with your company?
   c. What has been the most challenging aspect so far of the international assignment?
   d. What has been the most rewarding aspect so far of the international assignment?
   e. What were the company’s international objectives, if any, that the company expressed to you?
   f. What services have been provided for you and/or your family to assist your success before, during and after your international assignment?
   g. What are your thoughts or feelings about these services? Have they met your needs?
   h. What concerns, if any, do you have about your career once you finish (or now that you’ve finished) your international assignment?
i. What are your experiences with coaching in your company?
j. What are your thoughts or feelings regarding the idea of your company providing you with coaching services to manage and develop your career within the organization?
k. How is your culture different than the host culture?
l. How is the organizational culture different than your own culture?

3. General Questions for Chinese locals:
   a. What prompted you to join (an English speaking, foreign??) organisation?
b. How does working for this company fit into your overall career plans?
c. What has been the most challenging aspect so far of working for this company?
d. What has been the most rewarding aspect so far of working with this company?
e. What were the company’s international objectives, if any, that the company expressed to you?
f. What services have been provided for you to help you adjust to this company?
g. What are your thoughts or feelings about these services? Have they met your needs?
h. What are your experiences with coaching in your company?
i. What are your thoughts or feelings regarding the idea of your company providing you with coaching services to manage and develop your career within the organization?
j. How is your culture different than the parent culture?
k. How is the organizational culture different than your own?

4. What is the impact of coaching on the individual, others and the organization?
   a. For each of the parts, what impact has coaching had? Tell me about a situation where that particular impact occurred?
      i. What has been the impact of the coaching on you?
      ii. On your co-workers, your direct reports, your manager and those in your social network?
   b. Has anything in your life or life-style changed as a result of coaching? What? (In the lives of others and the organization?)
   c. What personal impact has coaching had on you, that is, on how you think and feel? (How you think others feel and think about you and how the organization now thinks and feels about you?)
   d. What were your expectations about the coaching experience and how were they met and not met?

5. What is the value of coaching to/for the individual, others and the organization?
   a. For each of the parts, what benefits, direct and indirect have been gained as a result of the coaching?
   b. For each of the parts, what has been lost as a result of the coaching?
   c. What is the value of coaching to you? What gives it that value?
   d. How does coaching compare with other interventions you have experienced?
   e. After the prescribed coaching sessions ended, did you want to continue the coaching? Why or why not?
To what degree were you satisfied with the coaching? Do you feel this was a worthwhile investment of your time and energy and the organizations time and expense?

6. What is the relationship of culture on the impact and value of coaching for the individual, others, organization and the coaching process?
   a. What role did culture play in the impact of the coaching? To what degree was the coaching culturally appropriate? What aspects of parent and host cultures were impacted by the coaching?
   b. How did the coaching impact culture?
   c. What role did culture play in the valuing of the coaching? How do coaching and its process align with the cultural values, beliefs and orientations of the parent and host cultures?
   d. How does the coaching align with the organizational parent and local operations culture?
   e. To what degree is the relationship of culture to coaching relevant/important/desired?

7. Areas of assessment
   a. How would you describe your leadership style and skills before the coaching intervention? Examples? How would you describe your leadership style and skills after the coaching intervention? Examples? To what degree has coaching affected your leadership style and skills? How so?
   b. How would you describe your communication skills before the coaching intervention? Examples? How would you describe your communication skills after the coaching intervention? Examples? To what degree has coaching affected your communication skills? How so?
   c. How would you describe your cultural adjustment before the coaching intervention? Examples? How would you describe your cultural adjustment after the coaching intervention? Examples? To what degree has coaching affected your cultural adjustment? How so?
   d. How would you describe your mental health (in relation to depression, anxiety and stress) before the coaching intervention? Examples? How would you describe your mental health after the coaching intervention? Examples? To what degree has coaching affected your mental health? How so?
   e. How would you describe your feelings of well-being in the workplace before the coaching intervention? Examples? How would you describe your feelings of well-being after the coaching intervention? Examples? To what degree has coaching affected your well-being? How so?
   f. What changes have you observed in yourself? What changes have you observed in others who participated in the program? What feedback have you been given from your co-workers, direct reports, parent office management and in your personal lives?
APPENDIX C: SAMPLE INTERVIEW

JM: Okay. Has the coaching affected your feelings of staying with the company, staying with Rabble?

Logan: Yes because I am more prepared to understand the complexities of the issues that frustrate me and more patient in trying to resolve those.

JM: Okay. The next set of questions is about the process of the coaching that you went through, not the content. We’ll get to that in a second. What are your thoughts on the style of the coaching that you received and how the conversations occurred and those would be more or less the one-on-one conversations that you had? What are your thoughts on that?

JM: Very tough on the phone would be my first point. Very hard to open up when you’re on the phone. The second point would be that I felt that because it was a completely open book, I could raise whatever I want. I probably didn’t raise the things that I should have from a business point of view I guess so I’m looking at it from a Rabble point of view where we want where the organisation will benefit from having people address issues that will help the organisation. Those didn’t necessarily get brought up in the one-on-one sessions because they didn’t have to get brought up, so they weren’t
necessarily – there was no sort of addressing of those questions I guess.

JM: Okay. What about the length of time for each of the sessions? How long were your sessions generally?

Logan: An hour and a half.

JM: How did you feel about that?

Logan: I thought it was about right actually. Any longer and it would get sort of tedious or difficult and any shorter, you don’t really feel like you can get stuck into the conversation.

JM: Okay and the number of sessions? How many sessions did you have?

Logan: Six.

JM: And how did you feel about that number?

Logan: To be honest, again it links back to the issues that were discussed. I probably didn’t get the most out of it I could have because I don’t know, I don’t know why I didn’t.

JM: Okay. The performance of your coach.

Logan: I thought the performance of my coach was – how am I supposed to sort of respond to that?

JM: What are your thoughts on how your coach performed, or...?

Logan: I thought my coach performed extremely well but again the coach probably was dealing with issues that weren’t necessarily coaching
issues. They may have been more personal issues or issues that didn’t – that couldn’t be resolved in six sessions.

JM: Okay. You did mention this, I’ll just ask again about the tele-coaching, the fact that it happened over the telephone, so you did mention that. You thought it was tough. Do you have any other thoughts about the fact that the coaching occurred over the telephone?

Logan: Well the issue that I have with the coaching is, and it relates to both questions, is that I understand it has to be quite formulaic in the way that you attack certain conversations and issues and the reality is when you’re here in China dealing with all of the stuff going on in this foreign country, it’s very removed from that process or from that formula if you like and to kind of bring them together requires more than sitting on a telephone, talking it through on the telephone and maybe in theory and maybe in a society or culture where everything is very much disciplined and has been organised and refined through hundreds of years of social evolution, those formulas and those theories work very well. They can probably be applied quite easy but they don’t work so well in a place that has such a complex – it doesn’t work as easily to just run through as it does for a complex place like this.
Okay. This is an interesting line of thought that you’re going with here. Do you mind if we explain this a little bit more? Can you go a little bit more because it seems what you’re saying is that...

I’ll give you an example.

Okay.

Law, you know. Law is a very, the concept is very basic. Right and wrong and it’s based around a set of laws and a set of regulations and a set of ways that people behave. You can dump that on a country like the UK or Australia which has over hundreds of years been able to refine and evaluate and resolve and deal with all those issues and so now it will all make sense and you say to somebody you will flip your lights on and turn right at the red lights and you will stop at a stop sign, it just all makes sense. It’s all quite straightforward.

So if you’re teaching somebody how to drive a car in Australia, you could do it over the telephone. They would get it and everybody around them, because the whole society, the whole institution, it’s all worked out how they relate to each other and how they all work and co-operate under that system, so of course everybody around you gets it as well and if you don’t do something, for example stop at a light and turn, people will let you know you haven’t done something the right way and I see the same when English lawyers come, let’s
say to China and there’s an expectation that society works the same way but it doesn’t.

It is far more fluid and complex, especially as an ex-pat and so things don’t happen the way you expect and unforeseen challenges will arise and things will emerge that probably mean that you have to attack things differently.

JM: Okay and how then did that – because you’re...

Logan: So what that means is you really need more time to understand. I think, first of all the coaching has to understand more about the issues here. Secondly, I think the coaches need to be in situ and really see how the formulas and the recommendations and whatever else actually apply and pan out because there will be things that arise that they didn’t expect and then they need to be able to actually see those results to then engage with the person they’re coaching to help them understand well that happened because, so that person is not frustrated by the fact that didn’t happen the way it was supposed to.

JM: Okay, alright. I have a clearer picture of what you’re talking about, okay.

Logan: A good example is how does it mean for you to get feedback from the Chinese staff? How difficult has the coaching process been with those Chinese people? You probably had to call upon other things to try and get their involvement and engagement in certain things.
That’s an example, if you’d be here and you understood more about China and Chinese, it probably would have been quite different.

JM: Sure. Okay. Just moving off of that, earlier you mentioned some of the challenges of living and working in China. Has the coaching helped you with those challenges? What impact has the coaching had on those challenges?

Logan: When you say the coaching, of me or people?

JM: The coaching that you received.

Logan: It hasn’t had that big an impact on the challenges that I just talked about because I didn’t really address those issues in the coaching.

JM: Okay, some of my questions are about culture because it’s one of the things that I’m looking at and you’ve been talking about it in various different ways but there’s some specific questions here. Challenge might be for you to identify the culture that you associate with but if you were to articulate a culture, if you were to say this is my culture, is there one that you would...

Logan: Well I would challenge you to say – I don’t think there is a culture that everybody belongs to.

JM: Well you know, for example like even though I’ve lived in Australia for the past four years, I’m still of the American culture and then maybe I could also say African-American culture as well. So if someone were to ask me these questions, I would probably come from that perspective.
Logan: I’m sorry to ask you this but what I don’t understand is what is American culture? Because a Mexican would probably have a very different view to an Afro-American to a wealthy Irish businessman. What is English culture? Now it’s Indian, the number one favourite dish in England is Indian but it’s Indian culture so I don’t understand what...

JM: Yeah, those are the difficulties in...

Logan: Nobody knows what a culture is anymore because we’re such a...

JM: Hodge potch of various different things.

Logan: So I mean, I don’t know. My culture is international but obviously with western Christian sort of roots.
APPENDIX D: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT

Research Project

Title: A study of the use of evidence-based EXECUTIVE coaching as AN INTERVENTION FOR THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT of western EXPATRIATE MANAGERS WORKING IN China

(1) What is the study about?
As a member of the senior executive staff, you have recently completed a Communication Skills Workshop and eight (8) sessions executive coaching program implemented by Rabble & Co and are a potential candidate for this research project.

The focus of the study is to explore the impact of coaching the executive management level of a Western Multi-national Corporation operating in The People’s Republic of China.

(2) Who is carrying out the study?

The study is being conducted by Richard Hall, Anthony Grant and John McGill will form the basis for the degree of Doctorate of Philosophy of Economics at The University of Sydney under the supervision of Richard Hall and Anthony Grant.

(3) What does the study involve?

The study will consist of a single session of interviews and a series of questionnaires to be conducted at the offices of Rabble in China.

(4) How much time will the study take?

The study will consist of a single session of interviews 1-2 hours in length regarding the issues of coaching and a series of questionnaires (3-6) that take approximately 25-45 minutes to complete.

(5) Can I withdraw from the study?

Being in this study is completely voluntary - you are not under any obligation to consent and - if you do consent - you can withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with the University of Sydney or Rabble & Co.
You may stop the interview at any time if you do not wish to continue, the audio recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study.

(6) Will anyone else know the results?

All aspects of the study, including results, will be strictly confidential and only the researchers will have access to information on participants, except as required by law. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

(7) Will the study benefit me?

The interviews and the questionnaires may provide some reflective insight, which you may find beneficial. However, this study will not confer any other benefit to you.

(8) Can I tell other people about the study?

You may inform anyone that you wish as to the nature of the study, the content of the study and your experiences in the study.

(9) What if I require further information?

When you have read this information, Richard Hall will discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact Dr Richard Hall (Associate Professor) +61 2 9351 5621, John McGill (PhD Candidate) +61 2 9036 5489 of the Discipline of Work and Organisational Studies or Dr Anthony Grant (Associate Lecturer and Director) of the Coaching Psychology Unit +61 2 9036 5489.

(10) What if I have a complaint or concerns?

Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact the Manager, Ethics Administration, University of Sydney on +61 (2) 9351 4811 (Telephone); +61 (2) 9351 6706 (Facsimile) or gbriody@usyd.edu.au (Email).

This information sheet is for you to keep
APPENDIX E: RECRUITMENT LETTER

Project Title: A study of the use of evidence-based EXECUTIVE coaching as AN INTERVENTION FOR THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT of western EXPATRIATE MANAGERS WORKING IN China

RESEARCH STUDY RECRUITMENT LETTER

In order to develop global leaders, organizations utilize expatriate managers, high performing executive talent who relocate from one country to another to effectuate change, performance and growth. However, issues arise as to what interventions organizations utilize to manage the performance of expatriates. Specifically, evidence-based executive coaching has been offered as a possible intervention for the performance management of expatriates. Due to the paucity of research regarding the use of coaching for the performance management of expatriates, the research study proposed fulfills a vital role in establishing the extent and efficacy of coaching as a strategic intervention.

You are invited to take part in a study exploring the use of evidence-based executive coaching as a strategy for facilitating the career performance management of western expatriate managers working in China or other Asian countries. Through this research, we hope to demonstrate how organizations can use coaching to support, manage and improve the performance of their expatriate staff. This survey will be completely anonymous, and identities of individual participants will be fully protected. Participation is completely voluntary – you are under no obligation to consent. However, your views however will be extremely important in understanding what role, if any, coaching has in retaining returning expatriate managers, and we would like to encourage you to be involved.

If you volunteer to participate in the research, you will be asked to complete a series of questionnaires taking approximately 25-45 minutes. Also, if you volunteer to participate in the research, you will be interviewed for approximately 1-2 hours. Each interview will be recorded and professionally transcribed for analysis by the researchers. All aspects of the study, including results, will be strictly confidential and only the researchers will have access to information on individual participants. A report of the study will be submitted for examination, but individual participants will not be identifiable.

We hope that you will be willing to participate in this project. If you have any questions about the project, you are most welcome to contact either of the researchers as follows:

Dr Richard Hall
Associate Professor in Work and Organisational Studies
Dr. Anthony Grant  
Associate Lecturer and Director of the Coaching Psychology Unit at the University of Sydney

John McGill  
PhD Candidate, Master of Human Resource Management and Coaching

Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact the Manager, Ethics Administration, University of Sydney on +61 (2) 9351 4811 (Telephone); +61 (2) 9351 6706 (Facsimile) or gbriody@usyd.edu.au (Email).

This information sheet is for you to keep
APPENDIX F: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I, ..........................................................[PRINT NAME], give consent to my participation in the research project

TITLE: A STUDY OF THE USE OF EVIDENCE-BASED EXECUTIVE COACHING AS AN INTERVENTION FOR THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT OF WESTERN EXPATRIATE MANAGERS WORKING IN CHINA

In giving my consent I acknowledge that:

1. The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.

2. I have read the Participant Information Statement and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researcher/s.

3. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without affecting my relationship with the researcher(s) or the University of Sydney or Rouse & Co. now or in the future.

4. I understand that my involvement is strictly confidential and no information about me will be used in any way that reveals my identity.

5. I understand that being in this study is completely voluntary – I am not under any obligation to consent.

6. I understand that I can stop the interview at any time if I do not wish to continue, the audio/video recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study.
7. I consent to:

i) Audio-taping  YES ☐  NO ☐
ii) Questionnaires  YES ☐  NO ☐

Signed:

Name:

Date: