

Repatriate Adjustment Among the Academics in Sri Lanka

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Abstract -problem among the academics, where the academics find difficulties in adjusting back to the local context after the international academic assignments. Although this is a pertinent issue, in the extant body of literature investigations are lacking. This paper aims to investigate the factors affecting the repatriation adjustment among the academics in the Sri Lankan context. In addition, this paper investigates whether the proactive personality of academics moderate the impact of the factors affecting repatriation adjustment. For this purpose, 120 academic repatriates have been considered from the Sri Lankan universities. Structural equation modelling has been used to test the hypotheses through AMOS statistical package. Findings of the study suggests adjustment of the academic repatriates to the local context is affected by the individual factors, organizational factors and other factors. Further, personality moderates the impact of these factors on repatriation adjustment. This suggests that, presence of proactive personality facilitate academics to perceive the individual factors, organizational factors and other factors in a favorable manner which would smooth their adjustment process in the local context. The findings provide significant insights for the university administrators to facilitate smooth adjustment of academics to the local context after their foreign assignments. The originality of this paper is on its contribution to the literature by examining the repatriation model of Black et al. that has not been thoroughly analyzed before as a whole. Further, the extension introduced for the model through incorporating personality as a moderator provides a significant contribution to better explain repatriate adjustment phenomenon among the repatriate academics.

Keywords—component, formatting, style, styling, insert (Repatriation, adjustment, repatriated academics, university)

I. INTRODUCTION

Repatriation can be considered as a transition from a host country to one's home country after living overseas for a significant period [1],[27]. In the process of repatriation adjustment, repatriates attempt to reduce uncertainty and achieve a degree of fit with the different aspects of the home or organization context [6],[26]. Despite the importance of managing repatriation, it is identified that high percentage of repatriates who return from the foreign assignments find difficulties and remain with low motivation and low performance [5],[49]. Upon repatriation, repatriates find the home context as unfamiliar [1], [29]. Literature points out that repatriates encounter certain difficulties when they return back to their home country [40].

Academics are given opportunities to engage in foreign assignments based on teaching and research for a specific time period in overseas [25]. They are given leave with pay during their stay overseas [25]. This is a common practice in the academia in Sri Lanka as well. In order to obtain higher world rankings for Sri Lankan universities, and to make the Sri Lanka the knowledge hub in Asia, Sri Lankan government invest more on the development of human capital in academia [23],[45]. However, upon return to their home university, academics in Sri Lanka encounter adjustment issues [25]. The survey of [25] involving 63 Sri Lankan academic repatriates revealed that repatriation adjustment is a significant issue among the academic repatriates in Sri Lanka. Academics upon return feel less fit to the university [25]. During their foreign assignments' academics engage in teaching and research [20]. Academic expatriates live and work in new cultural and organizational settings; they adopt new cultural and organizational values and norms to perform well

[42] [43]. However, during the process of repatriation academic repatriates may establish unrealistic repatriation expectation and experience reverse cultural shock which creates academic repatriates to feel uncomfortable and mismatch with their home context [25].

Although repatriation adjustment issue among the academics is significant, it has not yet been sufficiently discussed in the extant literature [54] [20] [25]. Particularly, this lacuna exists in the Sri Lankan context [25]. [23] emphasized that there is a higher need for enhancing the understanding of the repatriation issues. In response to this present study investigates the factors affecting the repatriation adjustment process among academic repatriates. In addition to the factors which are already present in the model proposed by [7], this study extends the model by incorporating repatriate's personality as a moderating factor which has an impact for individual's adjustment in the repatriation process. Such an investigation is demanded in the extant literature where [25] highlighting the unique findings of their study regarding adjustment of repatriate academic, demands that further studies need to be carried out to find how individual factors such as personality would influence the adjustment process of repatriates.

II LITERATURE REVIEW

Academic repatriates

Expatriate academics are defined as professors and non-professorial staff who are part of the research and teaching profession' [30]. They have been employed in an educational institution outside of their country of origin for five years or less and intend to live in that country at least until the end of their working contract [44]. However, [25] identified academic repatriates as academics who had been attached to a foreign university or academic institution for more than one year, had been involved in academic activities and, at the survey date, had returned within the past two years.

Repatriation adjustment

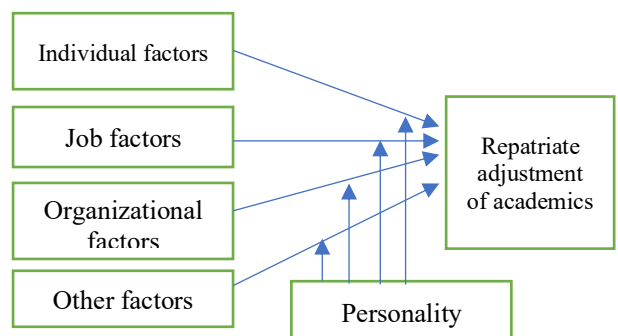
Repatriation is considered as an intra-organizational transition [46] and the developments of conscious and unconscious anticipations about the new setting [31, , p. 336]. Repatriation adjustment is the experience of reintegrating their earlier accustomed environment having stayed in different surroundings for a considerable period [1],[27]. Certain studies refer repatriation adjustment to the process of attitude and behavior modification in

which the experience of the individual is adapted to match the accepted behavior of the host culture [4]. Also, it is defined as the degree of a person's psychological comfort with various aspects of a host country [5]. Work of adjustment theorists of relocation [37] and expatriation [8] provides the theoretical underpinning for repatriation".

Factors affecting repatriation adjustment

There are four main factors which influence individual's repatriation adjustment process. Individual factors, job factors, organizational factors and other factors [7] as cited in [52]. In the repatriation adjustment process individual factors facilitate to understand the new situation. Characteristics relating to individuals and their foreign assignment comes under these individual factors. Particularly, factors such as self-efficacy, social capacity and perceptual capacity help individuals to understand and adjust according to the new situation [52]. Effect of job factors comes from four main factors. Mainly from the clarity of the tasks to be performed after repatriation, level of freedom or the autonomy in their job after repatriation, to what extent the organization values their international exposure after returning back to the home country and the expected promotions in the job after repatriation [52],[22],[40] [11]. Organizational factors also determine the level of repatriation adjustment and the key factors under that are repatriation policy, compensation and the training provided upon repatriation [52]. Impact of these factors are empirically validated by several [7],[9],[11]. Apart from the individual, job and organizational factors there are some other important factors which would impact the adjustment in the repatriation process. Particularly, spouse adjustment, housing condition and the social status matter in fitting to the environment in the home country [52].

III MODEL OF THE RESEARCH



III DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The data was analysed using the structural equation modeling approach to examine the model and test the hypothesized relationships with AMOS. Goodness of measures was performed to test the validity of measurement instruments, and a structural model was analysed to empirically establish the relationships between the constructs and test the model fit of the hypotheses. Construct validity, convergent validity and discriminant validity was assessed and assured in the present study to ensure the goodness of measures. Cronbach's alpha was tested to ensure the reliability of the measures.

The overall structural model was assessed for the model fit, and it produced the following value indices. Some researchers [39] allow values as high as 5 to consider a model adequate fit [34]. Therefore, the structural model in the present study indicated a moderate level of fit.

TABLE 1: GOF INDICES FOR THE STRUCTURAL MODEL

Incremental Fit		Parsimony-Adjusted measures				
CMIN/DF	GF I	RMSEA	IFI	TL I	CF I	PRATIO
5.635	.669	.126	.703	.774	.702	.938

Source: Survey data

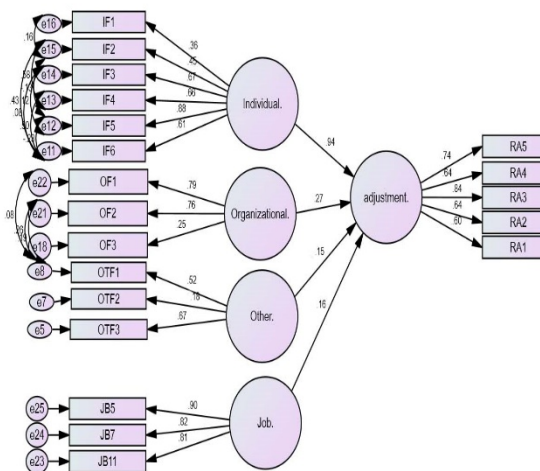


Figure 1 Structural model for the direct relationships

Source: Survey data

TABLE 1: HYPOTHESES (H1-H4)

Hypotheses	Beta Value	P value	Decision
Individual factors have a positive impact on repatriation adjustment of academic repatriates (H1)	0.94	.000	Supported
Job factors has a positive impact on repatriation adjustment of academic repatriates. (H2)	0.16	0.214	Not Supported
Organizational factors have a positive impact on repatriation adjustment of academic repatriates. (H3)	0.27	0.000	Supported
Other factors have a positive impact on repatriation adjustment of academic repatriates. (H4)	0.15	0.000	Supported

TABLE 2 HYPOTHESES (H5-H8)

Hypothesis for moderator effect	Beta Value	P value	Decision
Personality of academics moderates the impact of individual factors for repatriation adjustment of academics (H5)	0.32	0.000	Supported
Personality of academics moderates the impact of job factors for repatriation adjustment of academics(H6)	0.09	0.143	Not Supported
	0.15	0.021	Supported

Personality of academics moderates the impact of organizational factors for repatriation adjustment of academics (H7)	0.34	0.000	Supported
H8: Personality of academics moderates the impact of other factors for repatriation adjustment of academics. (H8)			

Source: Survey data

Findings of the present study relating to the impact of individual factors on repatriation adjustment confirms previous empirical evidence [52],[7],[9],[21],[49]. As confirmed by previous studies in the repatriation adjustment process, individual factors facilitate to understand the new situation. Particularly, factors such as self-efficacy, social capacity and perceptual capacity help individuals to understand and adjust according to the new situation [52]. Thus, the finding of the present study suggests that academics with favorable individual factors such as high self-efficacy, high perceptual and social capacity would enable them to better understand the local situation upon their return and would make the adjustment process much smoother.

Impact of the organizational factors on repatriation adjustment is also empirically validated by several scholars [7],[9],[11]. It is identified that organizational factors such as repatriation policy, compensation and the training provided upon repatriation determine the level of repatriation adjustment [52]. Thus, the finding in the present study suggests that academic's expectations about the compensation and training that they would receive upon their return would facilitate in adjusting for the local situation upon return.

Finding of the present study related to the impact of other factors on repatriation adjustment also confirms previous empirical findings. It is identified that other factors such as spouse adjustment, housing condition and the social status matter in fitting to the environment in the home country [52],[7],[9]. Thus, in the context of the repatriate academics, the other factors influence in adjusting to the local context.

However, impact of the job factors on academic's repatriate adjustment was not supported

in the present study. Although previous empirical evidence confirms that job factors have an impact on the employee's repatriation adjustment [52],[22],[40],[11], it can be said that in this context of academics the impact of job factors is not influencing for their adjustment to the local context. This finding can be attributed to the nature of the job of the academics where, throughout their career they enjoy a very high level of independence and autonomy [31]. Thus, it can be interpreted that academics do not have to worry about the influence of the job characteristics upon their return. Further, as stated by [52], these factors would vary depending on the context particularly in non US context. Since the present study investigates the factors affecting the repatriation adjustment of academics in Sri Lankan context, job factors may not have any impact for repatriation adjustment due to the contextual differences.

A unique finding of the present study is the moderating effect of personality on the repatriation adjustment. Although personality has not been investigated as a moderator of repatriate adjustment, it is stated in the literature that certain individual characteristics such as personality may result in better repatriation adjustment [16]. Thus, according to the findings of the present study it can be identified that proactive personality may strengthen the impact of individual, organizational and other factors on the repatriate adjustment. Based on the findings of the present study it can be reasoned out that proactive personality would enhance the individual factors such as self-confidence, perceptual capacity which is required for better adjustment to the local context. Further, based on the findings it can be reasoned out that proactive personality would make the repatriates to perceive organizational factors such as university policies in a favorable manner which makes their adjustment process smoother. Moreover, personality enable repatriates to perceive other factors such as spouse adjustment and social status in a more favorable manner, thus making the adjustment to the local context much easier.

However, according to the findings, personality does not moderate the impact of job factors on repatriate adjustment. This suggests that having a proactive personality would not have any influence on strengthening the impact of job factors on their adjustment. This can be reasoned out based on the nature of the job of academics explained above and the contextual differences.

IV LIMITATIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The results of the study must be interpreted in light of its limitations. Since the present study is a cross-sectional study, findings must be interpreted cautiously as repatriation adjustment varies as time passes. In order to overcome such limitations, it is suggested for future researchers to consider a longitudinal study. Further, a significant finding of the present study is the moderating role of personality in repatriation adjustment process of academics. However, further investigations are required to understand why job factors do not have any impact on the repatriation adjustment of academics. It is suggested to conduct a qualitative study to understand how proactive personality moderates the repatriation adjustment and why the personality do not moderate the impact of job factors on repatriation adjustment of academics.

This study contributes to the extant body of literature in several ways. First, present study extended the repatriation model proposed by [7] by introducing personality as a moderator. As stated by [52] and [47] the model proposed by [7] should not be considered as it is and introducing any moderators to it would enhance the predictive validity of the model. Thereby study provided a better understanding on how the impact of individual, job, organizational and other factors would vary when repatriates have positive personality. Secondly, this study contributes by investigating the repatriation adjustment process as it is identified that there is a lacuna in studies which investigates how academics adjust when they return back to their home country upon completion of foreign assignments on research and teaching [25]. Thirdly, this study addressed one of the main limitations of the initial model proposed by [7]. As emphasized by [52] this model is not that valid for non-US contexts, and further research is demanded in non US context. Since the present study investigated the repatriate adjustment model in Sri Lanka, the findings of the present study contribute to enlighten the understanding on what factors impact for the repatriation adjustment in non-US context. The findings of the present study has significant managerial implications. Particularly, for the university administrators to facilitate for a smooth adjustment for academics upon their return after a foreign assignment. The study shed light on shaping academic's individual factors upon return so that they would understand the local environment

much better. Thus, university administrators need to enhance the individual factors of academics such as self-efficacy and social capacity. In addition, university administrators need to focus on redesigning the university policies, promotion systems and shaping the academic's personality to facilitate the adjustment process upon return after a foreign assignment. Further, the study provides significant insights for university administrators, heads of faculties and departments to provide more opportunity for academics to balance out their personal life and family life upon return. So that academic repatriates would perceive spouse adjustment, housing conditions in a more favorable manner which make the adjustment process smoother. Further, promoting positive personality and shaping them is much essential as it influence the way the academics perceive the influence of individual, organizational and other factors.

V CONCLUSION

The findings of the study shed lights on the factors affecting the repatriation process of the academics. Accordingly, it can be concluded that adjustment to the local context upon return after a foreign assignment is affected by the individual factors, organizational factors and other factors. Further, these factors are moderated by the proactive personality of the academic repatriates. Which suggests the presence of proactive personality would facilitate academics to perceive the individual factors, organizational factors and other factors in a favorable manner which would smooth the adjustment process. However, the presence of proactive personality would not have any impact on perceiving the influence of job factors in a favorable or unfavorable manner which in return would not have any impact to make the repatriation adjustment process smooth. This paper suggests the need for rethinking and demands further investigations why the personality would not have any influence for the impact of job factors on the repatriation adjustment process. The findings of this study are much significant as the factors affecting repatriation adjustment of academics have not been sufficiently investigated, even though adjusting back to the local context after a foreign assignment is a pertinent issue among the repatriated academics in Sri Lanka. This study has significant managerial implications particularly, for the university administrators in redesigning the university policies, promotion systems and shaping the academic's personality to facilitate the

adjustment process upon return after a foreign assignment.

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