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The intercultural adaptation of expatriate spouses and children

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Chapter 8

The Determinants of Intercultural Adaptation Among Expatriate Children

- 8.1 Introduction**
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This chapter examines the determinants of intercultural adaptation among expatriate children. This chapter starts with an introduction to the process that expatriate children may go through while adapting to a host country. Then, the theoretical model of this research is presented, accompanied by a discussion of the determinants from which respective hypotheses are formulated. The method used in conducting the present study is then described and followed by the results. This chapter ends with a discussion of conclusions drawn and implications of the present study.

We would like to express our special thanks to Iris Haaksma for her contributions in completing this chapter.

Our special thanks also presented to Jan Jaap Verolme, the director of EXPATPLUS, for helping us in distributing the questionnaires worldwide (see Appendix F for the address of EXPATPLUS).

8.1 Introduction

*“Never wanted to come here, want to go back
Hate speaking English here, want to go back
Hate all the homework, want to go back
Miss all my friends there, want to go back
Don’t like the people here, want to go back
I hate Holland, want to go back”*

Alexandra Johansson, a 12-year-old Norwegian girl wrote the poem above (Schaetti, 1998). She spent a period of her life in the Netherlands because her father had accepted an expatriate position there. But, why was there so much anger and disappointment in her poem? It is very loud and clear that she did not enjoy her stay in Holland. Is there any way in which we could help her and many other expatriate children to adapt effectively in a foreign country? This is what the present study is all about. We aimed to examine some of the determinants that contribute to intercultural adaptation of expatriate children.

About 80% of expatriates are married and more than 70% of them have children. Most of them bring their spouses and children along with them during their international business assignments. Just as it holds for expatriate spouses, expatriate children also have to go through changes and processes of adaptation in the new environment. Unlike expatriate spouses, expatriate children have the chance to meet many other expatriate and local children at school. However, the contacts with other children at school are not enough for expatriate children to adapt and adjust effectively to the host country. There may be less contact with the local people and local culture if expatriate children attend international schools in the host country. Moreover, expatriate children may miss their friends in the home country or the friends that they made in the previous host country as Alexandra’s poem clearly demonstrates.

We know that regardless of expatriate children’s feelings about the international relocation, most of them have to follow their parents in the relocation. For some, it will not be the first time that they are relocated to another country and quite some children move a few times until their teenage years are over. McCraig (1994) argues in her article that expatriate children should be allowed to participate in the decision-making concerning the relocation. Moving to a different environment with a different culture is not easy. In packing their belongings, expatriate children may sometimes have to leave behind items, which they are very fond of. They also have to say good-bye to their friends. Every time they move to a new place, they have to start all over again; unpacking their belongings and collecting new ones, getting used to with new schools, new teachers, new systems, and making new friends. In addition,

they may have to find new hobbies and forms of entertainment in the new country.

The process of starting a new life in a new place may not be that easy for some expatriate children. Expatriate children may face various problems while adapting to the foreign country. Feelings of uncertainty and loss of identity are commonly reported among expatriate children. Feelings of uncertainty may be more acute at the point of prior relocation and also during the first few months of the relocation. An expatriate child may feel uncertain about the new place and house, new schools and teachers, and they may feel most strongly about new friends. It is a highly uncertain period for most expatriate children. Many questions may arise in their minds. Will they be able to enjoy their life in the foreign country? Will their life be better, the same or worse? It should be noted that for those who have to learn the host country's language because of the unavailability of international schools in the host country will take a few months before they are able to speak the new language and feel comfortable at school. Forster (1997) based on reports by expatriate spouses four months after the relocation, showed that children indeed experienced substantial problems either with adapting to the new schools or making new friends. Expatriate children may feel isolated if they are not able to make new friends in the host country. Lack of contacts with other children (either expatriate or local) in the host country may prohibit the development of the children. Furman and Burhmester (1985) found that friendship among those in the same age group is important for the development of teenagers. It is obvious that it is difficult for expatriate children to maintain long-term relationships. A study by Vernberg (1990) showed that children who followed their parents and had moved a few times while abroad had fewer friends than the children who did not.

Expatriate children may experience loss of their own cultural identity due to relocation to different foreign countries. Feelings of attachment to the home country and its cultures and values may be less since expatriate children are exposed to many different host countries. Expatriate children experience relocation to be most stressful at the ages of 3 to 5, and 14 to 16 (Gaylord, 1979). Furthermore, those who are 3 to 5 years old particularly experience emotional difficulties and those between the ages of 14 to 16 primarily feel social frustration because of relocation. Expatriate children who are going through puberty may face difficult problems. They may lose control of their life if they are exposed to too many emotional problems (Stuart, 1992). Eating problems such as anorexia may be one way for the teenagers to express this loss of control (McCraig, 1994).

A study by De Leon and McPartlin (1995) showed that international companies did not fully recognize the problems that expatriate children face while adapting to the host country. In the selection process for international

assignments, the majority of international companies solely focused on expatriates and neglected the other family members (Black et al., 1992). This is difficult to understand since the well-being of expatriate children may influence expatriates' work performance (Caligiuri et al., 1998) and chances of successful completion of the international business assignments. If expatriate children are unhappy and not satisfied with their life in the host country, this will be a matter of concern to expatriates themselves who feel responsible for the well-being of their family. This may in turn lead to a loss of concentration at work or even to the decision to resign from the international assignment (Fukuda & Chu, 1994). Indeed, Yurkiewicz and Rosen (1995) showed that if expatriate child/children were against the international relocation, in many cases, expatriates made the decision to quit from the international assignment.

Despite all the complex situations that expatriate children may face while adapting to a host country, an international relocation may also prove to be an enriching experience for them. Expatriate children have the chance to see other countries, to meet new people, to get to know and to learn new cultures, values, and languages that will all contribute to their intellectual and social development. The present research focused on the determinants that facilitate intercultural adaptation of expatriate children, which in turn will contribute to the success and meaningfulness of the international relocation to expatriate children, their parents, and also the international companies.

8.1.1 Intercultural adaptation of expatriate children

In its most general sense, adaptation refers to changes that take place in individuals or groups in response to environmental demands. Again, departed from the expatriate spouses' model, we refer to the distinction between psychological and socio-cultural adjustment (Searle & Ward, 1990). Psychological adaptation refers to internal psychological outcomes such as mental health and personal satisfaction. Socio-cultural adjustment refers to external psychological outcomes that link individuals to their new context such as the ability to deal with daily problems, particularly in the areas of family life, work and school (see Segall et al., 1999).

In the present study, general and psychological health was used as an indicator of psychological adaptation among expatriate children. In addition, socio-cultural adjustment and satisfaction with the living conditions was used as a second indicator of adaptation.

8.2 Theoretical Model and Hypotheses

Scientific research on intercultural adaptation of expatriate children is scarce. As far as we know, the empirical study by De Leon and McPartlin (1995) was

Figure 8.1 presents a theoretical model of the determinants of intercultural adaptation among expatriate children. The present study departed from a theoretical model (Figure 8.1) derived from the model of Expatriate's Family Adjustment proposed by Caligiuri, Hyland and Joshi (1998) and a model suggested by Parker and McEvoy (1993). This theoretical model is largely similar to the model presented in Chapter 4 for expatriate spouses, whereby 'attachment style' was added as a fourth group of independent variables. As a result, the model consists of five main components:

- a. Expatriate family characteristics, i.e., cohesion, adaptability and communication
- b. The multicultural effectiveness of expatriate children (personality characteristics)
- c. The attachment style of expatriate children
- d. Expatriates' work life (support given by the international companies to expatriate children and expatriates' work satisfaction)
- e. Expatriate children's intercultural adjustment

Each component will be discussed below.

8.2.1 Family Characteristics

Again, as in our model for expatriate spouses, the family dimensions of cohesion, adaptability, and communication (see for e.g., Caligiuri et al., 1998; Forster, 1997) were included.

8.2.1.1 Family cohesion

Family cohesion refers to the amount of emotional bonding between family members. As stated earlier, De Cieri, Dowling and Taylor (1991) showed that the relationship between expatriate spouses and their children became closer through the expatriation period as they had endured trials and tribulations together. The level of emotional bonding within the family may impact the members' ability to develop relationships beyond the boundaries of the family unit, for example, a child's ability to establish and maintain friendships with other children (Caligiuri et al., 1998). In the present study, the prediction was that the amount of cohesion in the expatriate family is positively related to the intercultural adaptation of expatriate children. As such, our first hypothesis reads as follows:

Hypothesis 1: The amount of cohesion among expatriate family members is positively related to intercultural adaptation of expatriate children.

8.2.1.2 Family adaptability

Family adaptability refers to the ability of a family system to change its power structure, role relationships, and relationship rules in response to situational and developmental stress. According to Caligiuri et al. (1998), the ability of a family to adapt is critical both in response to stress from within the family and in response to stress from the external environment. Expatriate children may have problems adapting to new schools or friends. Remember that according to family system theory, the better the family is able to change its power structure, roles, and relationship rules in response to situational and developmental stress, the better the family members will adapt to new circumstances (Olson *et al.*, 1984). The expectation was therefore that the adaptability of the expatriate family is positively related to the intercultural adaptation of expatriate children, which results in the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: The adaptability among expatriate family members is positively related to the intercultural adaptation of expatriate children.

8.2.1.3 Family communication

A healthy level of family communication is evidenced by the ability of a family to address and resolve concerns within the family. It refers to a family's ability to resolve conflicts by mutual recognition of different opinions and their ability to negotiate issues of contention (Caligiuri et al., 1998). Healthy communication will probably not only affect expatriate spouses positively, expatriate children may also benefit from recognition of different opinions and the ability to negotiate issues of contention. In sum, the prediction of the present study was that the quality of communication among expatriate family members is positively related to the intercultural adaptation of expatriate children, which leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: The quality of communication among expatriate family members is positively related to the intercultural adaptation of expatriate children.

8.2.2 Personality Characteristics of Expatriate Children

Next, the model assumes that personality of expatriate children influences their intercultural adaptation. The assumption was that a number of intercultural traits are related to successful adaptation of expatriate children: Cultural Empathy, Open-mindedness, Emotional Stability, Flexibility and Social Initiative (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000, 2001) (see Chapter 4.2 for a complete discussion of the five intercultural traits).

The five intercultural traits have never been studied in relation to the adaptation of expatriate children. Nevertheless, there was no reason to assume that traits that are related to the ability to establish contacts within a new culture, to maintain a high level of psychological well-being, and to perform successfully among expatriates and expatriate spouses differ from those among expatriate children. Therefore, the prediction was that the five traits would be positively related to the intercultural adaptation of expatriate children. Hence, the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: Cultural Empathy, Open-mindedness, Emotional Stability, Flexibility and Social Initiative are positively related to the intercultural adaptation of expatriate children.

8.2.3 The Attachment Styles of Expatriate Children

The third determinant of intercultural adaptation studied in the present study is the attachment style of expatriate children. There are four different attachment styles: secure attachment style, dismissive-avoidant attachment style, preoccupied attachment style, and fearful-avoidant attachment style (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

A child's attachment style can be referred to as the security in the mother-child relationship (Baron & Byrne, 1997). According to Bowlby's (1977) theory, children internalize experiences with caretakers in such a way that early attachment relations come to form a prototype for later relationships outside the family. In the first few years of his/her life, a child directly learns from his/her mother of how future relationships with other people can be developed. Furthermore, a positive influence is passed to a child whenever the child builds a strong sense of trust and can confidently count on his/her mother. Bowlby (1982) revealed three attachment styles of a baby, namely secure, avoidant, and ambivalent. The first two styles respectively, teach a baby to trust and care for other persons (secure) and to distrust and avoid other people (avoidant) meanwhile an ambivalent attachment style is a combination of the two attachment styles. Of these three attachment styles, according to Shaver and Brennan (1992), solely a person with the secure attachment style can build fully involved and satisfying long-term relationship.

Bartholomew (1990) formulated a model that is related to the adult's attachment style. He argued that a person develops attachment styles during childhood and then remain relatively stable throughout a person's lifetime. Bartholomew (*ibid*) distinguished between four attachment patterns that vary on two dimensions, namely, positive and negative patterns of one-self, and positive and negative patterns of others. Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) later named

the dimensions as secure attachment style, dismissive-avoidant attachment style, preoccupied attachment style, and fearful-avoidant ambivalent attachment style. People with a *secure attachment style* indicate a sense of worthiness (lovability) plus an expectation that other people are generally accepting and responsive. They are self-confident and have no doubts/misgiving feelings towards others. Findings show that secure persons perceive themselves in a positive and coherent way, possess good problem solving skills, tend to view stressful situations optimistically, and believe that others will help them in time of need. These qualities enable them to confront stress with a sense of mastery, to choose effective coping strategies, and to make use of social support in stressful situations (Mikulincer & Florian, 1998). People with the *dismissive-avoidant attachment style* indicate a sense of love-worthiness combined with a negative disposition toward other people. Such people protect themselves against disappointment by avoiding close relationships and maintaining a sense of independence and invulnerability. Third, individuals with a *preoccupied attachment style* indicate a sense of unworthiness (unlovability) combined with a positive evaluation of others. This combination of characteristics leads individuals to strive for self-acceptance by gaining the acceptance of others. The final attachment style is the *fearful-avoidant attachment style* that indicates a sense of unworthiness (unlovability) combined with an expectation that others will be negatively disposed (untrustworthy and rejecting). People with dismissive-avoidant and fearful-avoidant attachment styles establish little contact with other people since they have little trust in others and do not manage to integrate with other people. In a foreign country with a new culture and environment, such people may not easily make contact with other expatriates and local people, which is essential in developing new relationships in a host country. With respect to expatriate children, we therefore expected that expatriate children with a dismissive-avoidant attachment style, a preoccupied attachment style, or a fearful-avoidant attachment style would be less successful in adapting to the host country than expatriate children with a secure attachment style. The next hypothesis can be formulated as follows:

Hypothesis 5: A dismissive-avoidant attachment style, preoccupied attachment style, and fearful-avoidant attachment style are negatively related to the intercultural adaptation whereas a secure attachment style is positively related to the intercultural adaptation of expatriate children.

8.2.4 Expatriates' Work Characteristics

Work-family conflict can be examined by using the Spillover theory. According to the Spillover theory, satisfaction at work positively influences family life while dissatisfaction at work influences family life negatively (Evans &

Bartolomé, 1984). Negative feelings such as stress and problems at work are transferred into the family (Paffen, 1994). Work-family conflict can interfere with one's ability to perform family and parental roles (Bohn & Viveros-Long, 1981). Small and Riley (1990) found that difficulties with balancing work and family demands influenced leisure activities, home management, and parent-child relationships.

Again, in the present study, two aspects of expatriates' work life were considered: expatriates' work satisfaction and the support that the expatriate spouses and children receive from the international company prior to and during the expatriation period.

8.2.4.1 Expatriates' Work Satisfaction

In the present study, we examined how the expatriates' work life in terms of work satisfaction may affect the intercultural adaptation of expatriate children. Work-family conflict represents various ways in which the intersection between jobs and family life is a source of difficulty for workers and family members (Hughes et al., 1992).

With respect to the expatriate family, expatriate children may observe and feel differences in the working family member's behaviour. For example, an expatriate child who used to get enough attention in the home country may feel isolated if the parent spends a lot of time away from home. Expatriate children may also overhear their parents talking and expatriates may from time to time talk about their work in the host country enthusiastically or in negative ways to their children. In the present study, it was assumed that expatriates' work satisfaction influences children's intercultural adaptation to the host country. Thus, our hypothesis can be formulated as follows:

Hypothesis 6: Expatriate children's intercultural adaptation is positively related to the expatriates' work satisfaction.

8.2.4.2 Support received from international companies

In the present study we focused on support received from the company. Help and support from the company may contribute to intercultural adaptation of expatriate children in order to adapt and adjust effectively to the new surroundings. De Cieri et al. (1991) found that company assistance with the relocation was a strong predictor of psychological adjustment of an expatriate's spouse to relocation, particularly in the early stages of the expatriation. There was no reason to assume that support received from the international companies, which proved to be positively related to expatriate spouses' adaptation, will

differ where expatriate children are concerned. Therefore, in the present study, we predict that support received from the company is positively related to intercultural adaptation of expatriate children:

Hypothesis 7: Support received from the company is positively related to expatriate children's intercultural adaptation.

8.3 Method

8.3.1 Procedure

In a cross-sectional study, expatriate children were surveyed according to the model variables. Our target respondents were expatriate children of ages between 8 and 18 years old. The first version of the questionnaire (see Appendix D) was in Dutch. One thousand questionnaires were distributed via EXPATPLUS, a company with its headquarters in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. EXPATPLUS produces a worldwide-distributed magazine for Dutch expatriates, which is also called EXPATPLUS. The questionnaires were inserted into the magazines and were distributed world wide through various Dutch international companies together with invitation letters which requested Dutch expatriates to approach their children to fill in the questionnaires. In addition, three Dutch International Schools in Singapore, Lagos, and Paris participated in the present study. We also contacted a number of Dutch International Schools all over the world. In total 80 completed questionnaires were returned. Finally, we contacted Nederland Aardolie Maatschappij (NAM), a sister company of Shell International in Assen, the Netherlands and 14 questionnaires were sent to expatriate children of their employees who had repatriated. This group was asked to refer to their previous experiences living in a host country. Five completed questionnaires were returned.

An English version of the questionnaire (see Appendix E) was distributed among students of The Maartens College, an international school in Groningen, the Netherlands that agreed to participate in the research. Letters were sent to about 100 parents inviting them to participate and asking their permission to let their children fill in the questionnaires. Twenty-two parents responded and questionnaires were sent. Out of these, 15 completed questionnaires were returned. In addition, through personal contacts in Hong Kong and Surrey (United Kingdom), 50 questionnaires were distributed and 4 completed questionnaires were returned. Another 50 questionnaires were also distributed via an expatriate organization in Paris.

In total 1136 questionnaires were sent out and 104 completed questionnaires were returned and were usable for the analysis (9.15 % response

rate). The response rate is rather low and in most cases lower than in other international studies (e.g., Black & Gegerson, 1991; Tung, 1981; Chapter 5 of this thesis). There are a number of reasons for this low response rate. First, the nature of the questionnaires inquiring about the lives of the children may have made some parents and expatriate children reluctant to participate in the study. They may be unwilling to disclose intimate information about their lives to others. Second, we limited our target group to expatriate children aged between 8 and 18 years old.

8.3.2 Participants

The sample of the present study consisted of expatriate children, both currently expatriating or repatriated, residing all over the world. Of the 104 completed questionnaires, 87% of the respondents filled in the Dutch version whereas 13% completed the English version. Out of 104 respondents, 40.4% were boys and 59.6% were girls. The age of the respondents varied from 8 to 18 years old. 60.6% of the respondents were in the range of age thirteen to eighteen years old and 39.3% are younger than 13 years old. The respondents were originally from 21 different countries, the majority of which were from the Netherlands (64.4%), followed by Germany (5.8%), Switzerland (4.8%) and Belgium (1.9%). At the time of the study, the respondents were living in 37 different countries ranging from the Netherlands (13.5%), Singapore (13.5%), France (12.5%), Australia (2.9%), South Africa (1.0%), Brazil (1.0%) to Malaysia (1.0%) and the rest (54.6%).

With respect to the size of the family, 3.0% of the respondents came from one-child families, 94% of them had one to three siblings and 3.0% had four or more siblings. On average, the respondents had been living abroad for 3.27 years ($SD=3.7$). 68.3% had been living in the host country from 0.5 to 3 years, while 19.1% of them had spent 4 to 7 years in the host country, 4.0% had lived 8 to 11 years and 8.0% had lived 12 to 15 years. Of the respondents, 24.0% stated that they had been involved in the decision to move abroad and 30.0% felt that their parents had actually considered their opinion regarding the decision. Of the respondents, 46.0% stated that they had visited the host country prior to relocation and most of them (73.7%) were able to understand and speak the host country's language.

8.3.3 Instrument

The questionnaire which was designed consisted of the following sections: demographic information; Family Inventories (family cohesion, adaptability and communication); the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire; Attachment Styles; support from the Company; and expatriates' work satisfaction. The last

two sections assessed respondents' intercultural adaptation. Indicators of general and psychological health, and socio-cultural adjustment and satisfaction with the living conditions were then included. The questionnaire was adjusted so that it would be child friendly. Where necessary, items were rephrased and adapted so that the young respondents could easily understand them.

The paragraphs below will discuss all the instruments used in the present study.

8.3.3.1 Demographic information

In the first section of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to provide personal information such as their gender and age. The respondents were also asked about the country in which they were born, the country they were living in at the moment and the duration of residence, the countries where they had lived before, and the total number of years of expatriation. In addition, they were also asked about the presence of other expatriate children from their home country and other foreigners in their neighbourhood and whether they had visited the host country prior to relocation. Next, questions regarding the family were asked: the number of siblings, whether they had been involved in the decision to move abroad, and whether they felt that their parents had considered their opinion regarding the decision. Finally, the respondents were asked to provide information on their ability to understand and speak the local language.

8.3.3.2 Family Inventories

The scales for family cohesion, adaptability and communication were drawn from Family Inventories, which were developed by Olson, McCubbin et al. (1992, permission granted). For the purpose of the present study, only the items that were applicable to expatriate children in a host country were selected. Family cohesion was defined as the emotional bonding that family members share with each other. The construct was measured by 9 items on a 5-point answering scale ranging from [1] strongly disagree to [5] strongly agree. Examples of the items are "We support each other during difficult times" (+) and "We consult each other before we make decisions" (+) ($\alpha = .87$). Family adaptability refers to the extent to which the family system is flexible and able to change. The respondents were asked to answer nine items regarding their family adaptability on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from [1] strongly disagree to [5] strongly agree. Sample items are "We compromise when problems arise" (+) and "Things go well in the family" (+) ($\alpha = .75$). Family communication was measured by 8 items on a 5-point answering scale ranging from [1] strongly disagree to [5] strongly agree. Examples of the items include "I find it easy to discuss problems with my family members" (+) and "I am happy about how we make decisions and resolve conflicts" (+) ($\alpha = .81$).

8.3.3.3 Personality

The Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) was developed by Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2000) as a multidimensional instrument to measure multicultural effectiveness of expatriates. Participants could give their answers on a 5-point scale, ranging from [1] not at all applicable to [5] totally applicable. These dimensions are Cultural Empathy (18 items, $\alpha = .71$), Open-mindedness (18 items, $\alpha = .72$), Social Initiative (17 items, $\alpha = .67$), Emotional Stability (20 items, $\alpha = .76$), and Flexibility (18 items, $\alpha = .70$). Scale scores were obtained by taking the unweighted mean of the item scores, after first recoding the items that were mirrored. In case of missing values, the personal mean over the remaining scale items was computed, provided at least half of the items were answered. Examples of items from the Cultural Empathy dimension are “Tries to understand other people’s behaviour” (+) and “Finds it hard to guess what others feel” (-). Examples of items from the Open-mindedness dimension are “Is interested in other cultures” (+) and “Likes to look for new ways of doing things” (+). “Takes initiatives to do things” (+) and “Finds it difficult to make contacts” (-) are two examples of the items from the Social Initiative dimension. Examples of items from the Emotional Stability dimension are “Is not easily hurt” (+) and “Is often nervous” (-) and finally, two examples of items from the Flexibility scale are “Changes easily from one activity to another” (+) and “Doesn’t like surprises” (-).

8.3.3.4 The Attachment Styles

Expatriate children’s attachment style that concerns the relationships that expatriate children have with other people was measured by a 24-item scale which was developed by Van Oudenhoven, Kassenberg and Van der Wal (1999). The attachment style scale has four different components: Secure attachment style, Dismissive-avoidant attachment style, Preoccupied attachment style, and Fearful-avoidant attachment style. Secure attachment was measured by seven items such as “I trust other children” (+) ($\alpha = .77$). Second, Dismissive-avoidant attachment was measured by six items (e.g., “I’d rather go my own way” (-)). The reliability of this scale was modest ($\alpha = .63$). Finally, the scales for Preoccupied attachment style (five items, e.g., “I think that I like others more than they like me” (+)) and the Fearful-avoidant attachment style (five items, e.g., “I would like to be honest to others, but I am afraid that they will disclose what I have told them to people” (-)) appeared to be strongly interrelated ($r = .60$, $p < .01$). In factor analysis, both components contributed to a major part of one component (78.4%). It was therefore decided to combine these two components into one dimension that will be referred to as Ambivalent attachment style (Bowlby, 1982). The resulting scales was highly reliable (11

items, $\alpha = .87$). Participants could answer on a five-point scale, ranging from [1] I totally disagree to [5] I totally agree.

8.3.3.5 Expatriates' Work Satisfaction

An additional (10-item) scale was developed whose aim was to measure the expatriates' work satisfaction from their children's point of view. Examples of these items are, "My dad/mom complains about his/her colleagues at work and/or the work situation" (-) and "My dad/mom enjoys his/her work" (+). A 5-point scale was used, ranging from [1] strongly disagree to [5] strongly agree. The reliability of this scale was moderate ($\alpha = .67$).

8.3.3.6 Support from the Company

For the purpose of the present study, a scale was developed aimed at measuring the support that expatriate children received from the company before and during the expatriation period. Participants were asked to evaluate the support given to them on a 5-point Likert-type scale [1] strongly disagree to [5] strongly agree. Examples of the items are "The company gave us information (books, brochures etc.) about this country" (+) and "The company my dad/mom works for arranged a course for us to learn about this country" (+). The internal consistency of this scale was acceptable ($\alpha = .73$).

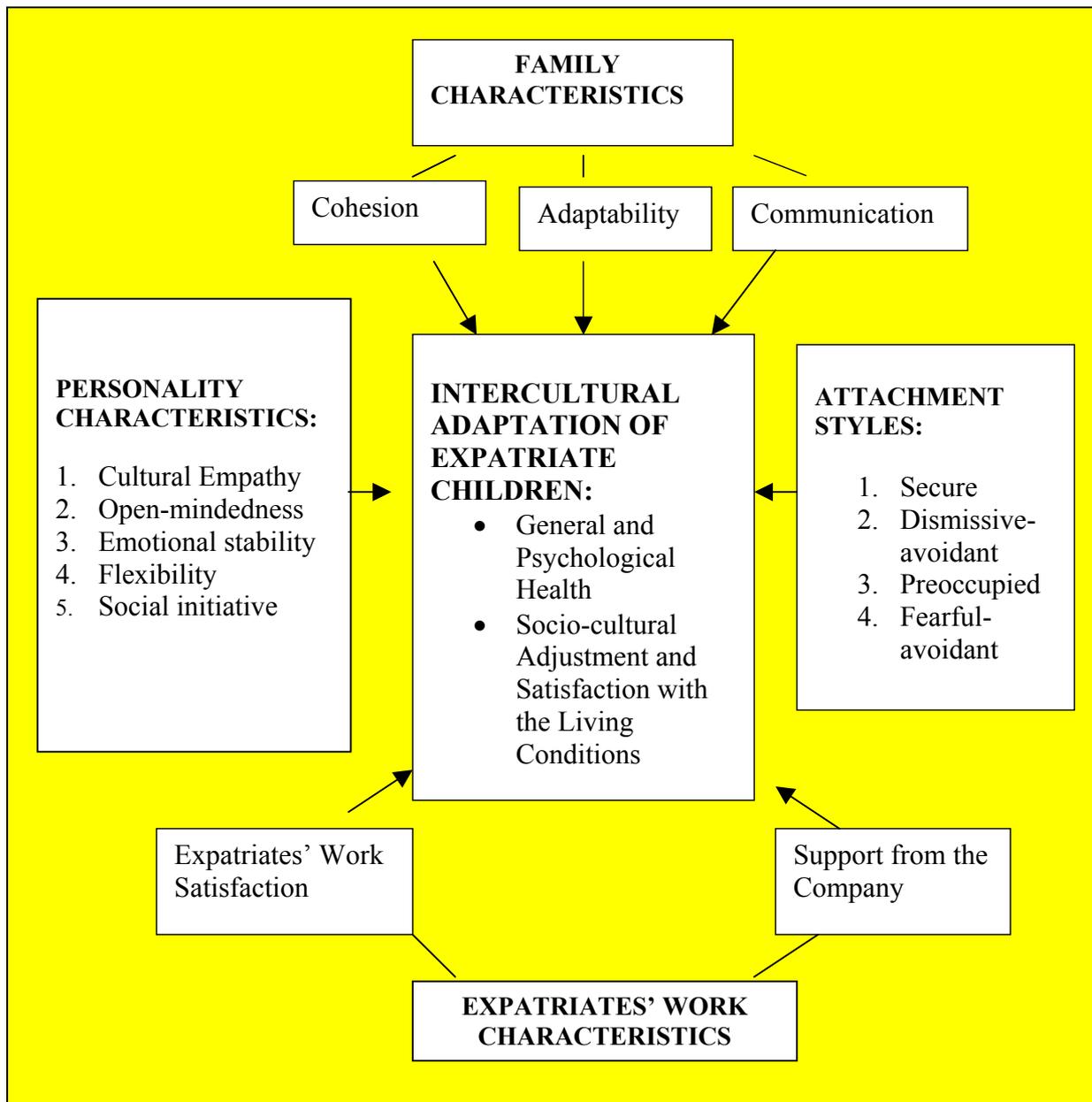
8.3.3.7 Intercultural Adaptation

Two scales were used to measure intercultural adaptation among expatriate children. The two scales are general and psychological health, and socio-cultural adjustment and satisfaction with the living conditions.

First, we used three of the six COOP WONCA function cards to measure general and psychological health of expatriate children (Nelson et al., 1990). There is one question on each card and every question asks about different aspects of general and psychological health. An example of the question is "How did you feel for the past two weeks?". There are five choices of answers, ranging from bad to excellent and an illustration accompanies each answer is illustrated (see Figure 8.2). Factor analysis revealed that three different COOP WONCA cards constituted one component, and it was expedient to classify the outcome under Health Status. The reliability estimate for this scale was acceptable ($\alpha = .71$).

the first that presented a model on expatriate children's adjustment. They studied the factors that contribute to the adjustment of expatriate children in Hong Kong (see Chapter 3.3.1 for a complete discussion of the study). In the present research, family characteristics, expatriate children's multicultural personality, expatriate children's attachment style, and expatriates' work characteristics will be studied as determinants of intercultural adaptation among expatriate children.

Figure 8.1
Determinants of intercultural adaptation among expatriate children



Sources: Expatriate's Family Adjustment Model proposed by Caligiuri, Hyland, and Joshi (1998), and Intercultural Adjustment Model suggested by Parker and McEvoy (1993).

Figure 8.2
An example of a COOP WONCA function card

1. How did you feel for the last two weeks?

Bad	Moderate	Good	Very good	Excellent
 <input type="checkbox"/>	 <input type="checkbox"/>	 <input type="checkbox"/>	 <input type="checkbox"/>	 <input type="checkbox"/>

Second, in order to measure socio-cultural adjustment and satisfaction with the living conditions, 8 items were used. These were drawn from Black's (1988) study on expatriates' and expatriate spouses' adjustment. The items were modified to reflect the actual circumstances of the expatriate children. Expatriate children were asked to rate their socio-cultural adjustment on a 7-point Likert-type scale from [1] not adjusted at all to [7] completely adjusted. Examples of the items are "How satisfied are you with the health care (hospitals, dentists, doctors)?" and "How satisfied are you with the food in your host country?". In addition to Black's (1988) Socio-cultural adjustment scale, we also used De Leon and McPartlin's (1995) scale. De Leon and McPartlin used the following indicators, social satisfaction, school satisfaction, and general satisfaction in order to measure intercultural adaptation among expatriate children. Examples of items are "How satisfied are you about the friends you have here?" (social satisfaction); "How satisfied are you about the teachers in your school?" (school satisfaction); "How satisfied are you about life in the country that you now live in?" (general satisfaction). Furthermore, we added 4 more items, for example, "How satisfied are you with your hobbies?" and "How satisfied are you with the attitude of local people towards you?". Because all the scales are highly related, we decided to join them as one dimension and name it as Socio-cultural adjustment and satisfaction with the living conditions. The reliability estimate for this scale was acceptable ($\alpha = .74$).

8.4 Results

In this section, we present the empirical results of the present study. First, we were interested in the correlations between the independent variables. Then, we showed the relationships between intercultural adaptation of expatriate children and family characteristics, personality characteristics, attachment styles, and expatriate work characteristics. Stepwise regression was used in order to

examine which independent variables show the strongest link with the intercultural adaptation of expatriate children. Finally, we also looked at the relationships between intercultural adaptation of expatriate children and the data obtained from the demographic section of the questionnaire.

8.4.1 Correlations between the variables

Table 8.1 presents the correlations between all the variables of the present study. It shows that the three family characteristics were significantly interrelated and that they were highly related to the secure attachment style of expatriate children and expatriates' work satisfaction, but unrelated to support from the company. Only two dimensions of the MPQ scales were significantly related to the three family characteristics: Open-mindedness correlated significantly with Family Cohesion, and Social Initiative with Family Adaptation. With respect to the attachment styles, the Secure Attachment Style was highly related to all MPQ-scales except Emotional Stability. The Dismissive-Avoidant Attachment Style showed significant negative correlations with Social Initiative and Flexibility. The Ambivalent Attachment Style was highly and negatively related to all MPQ-scales except Culture Empathy. Support from Company did not show any significant correlations with the other variables. Expatriates' Work Satisfaction showed a positive correlation with Open-mindedness and a negative correlation with the Ambivalent Attachment Style.

Table 8.1 Correlations Between the Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1) Family Adaptability	1.00													
2) Family Cohesion	.59**													
3) Family Communication	.63**	.50**												
4) Cultural Empathy	.04	.21*	-.04											
5) Open-mindedness	.19*	.34**	.15	.35**										
6) Social Initiative	.17*	.11	.09	.29**	.31**									
7) Emotional Stability	-.01	.02	.08	-.06	.17**	.23*								
8) Flexibility	.03	-.05	.04	-.06	.25*	.35**	.19*							
9) Secure Attachment Style	.41**	.37**	.35**	.21**	.17*	.24**	-.10	.20*						
10) Dismissive-avoidant Attachment Style	-.15	-.18*	-.02	-.17*	-.13	-.31**	-.03	-.28**	-.34**					
11) Ambivalent Attachment Style	-.18*	-.24*	-.24*	-.04	-.22*	-.31**	-.51**	-.33**	-.28**	.47**				
12) Support from Company	.15	.01	.03	-.04	-.06	-.04	.08	.01	-.10	-.01	.02			
13) Expatriates' Work Satisfaction	.55**	.42**	.50**	-.07	.18*	.08	.02	-.16	.23*	-.02	-.26**	.02		
14) Health Status	.24**	.29*	.32**	.01	.23*	.27**	.37**	.21*	.27**	-.23*	-.50**	.13	.27**	
15) Socio-cultural Adjustment and Satisfaction with the Living Conditions	.16	.21*	.09	.14	.20*	.29**	.27**	.17*	.19*	-.18*	-.44**	.14	.31**	.56**

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

8.4.2 Family Characteristics and Expatriate Children's Intercultural Adaptation

The first relationship that we were interested in was the relationship between the three different family characteristics and the two indicators of expatriate children's intercultural adaptation (Health status and Socio-cultural adjustment and satisfaction with the living conditions). Significant raw correlations of all three family characteristics with Health status and between Family cohesion and Socio-cultural adjustment were found. Hierarchical regression analysis was performed in order to examine the predictive value of the three family characteristics against the two indicators of intercultural adaptation. As Table 8.2 reveals, both Health status and Socio-cultural adjustment and satisfaction with the living conditions were significantly predicted by family cohesion. There may be a problem of collinearity because family characteristics are interrelated. Nevertheless, the relative strength of each dimension as a predictor of adaptation equaled the relative strength of the raw correlations.

Table 8.2
Results from Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Intercultural Adaptation According to Family Characteristics

	Health status		Socio-cultural adjustment and satisfaction with the living conditions	
	β	r	β	r
Family Adaptability	-.06	.24*	.06	.16
Family Cohesion	.26**	.29**	.38*	.21*
Family Communication	.19	.32**	-.21	.09
	R = .37		R = .31	
	R ² = .14		R ² = .10	

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (1-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (1-tailed)

8.4.3 Personality and Expatriate Children's Intercultural Adaptation

The second hypothesis concerned the relationship between personality characteristics of expatriate children and the two indicators of intercultural adaptation. Table 8.3 shows that Open-mindedness, Social Initiative, Emotional Stability and Flexibility were positively related to both Health status and Socio-cultural adjustment and satisfaction with the living conditions. Hierarchical regression analysis was performed to examine the independent predictive value of the MPQ scales against the two indicators of intercultural adaptation. The results of regression analysis as shown in Table 8.3 reveal that Emotional

Stability appeared to be an independent predictor of both indicators of intercultural adaptation. Beta-weights for the other four dimensions of personality failed to reach significance level. Again, there may be a problem of collinearity because MPQ scales are interrelated. Nevertheless, the relative strength of each dimension as a predictor of adaptation equaled the relative strength of the raw correlations.

Table 8.3
Results from Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Intercultural Adaptation According to Personality

	Health status		Socio-cultural adjustment and satisfaction with the living conditions	
	β	r	β	r
Cultural Empathy	-.04	.01	.07	.14
Open-mindedness	.13	.23**	.07	.20*
Social Initiative	.13	.27**	.15	.28**
Emotional Stability	.32**	.37**	.22**	.27**
Flexibility	.09	.21*	.07	.17*
	R = .46		R = .37	
	R ² = .21		R ² = .14	

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (1-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (1-tailed)

8.4.4 Attachment Styles and Expatriate Children's Intercultural Adaptation

As Table 8.4 shows, the Secure Attachment Style correlated positively with both indicators of intercultural adaptation. The Dismissive-avoidant Attachment Style and the Ambivalent Attachment Style were negatively correlated with both indicators of expatriate children's intercultural adaptation. Again, hierarchical regression analysis was performed to examine the independent predictive value of the three dimensions of attachment style. The Ambivalent Attachment Style appeared as the only significant predictor of intercultural adaptation of expatriate children. Both the Secure and Dismissive-avoidant Attachment Styles showed insignificant beta weights.

Table 8.4
Results from Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Intercultural Adaptation on Attachment Styles

Attachment Styles	Health status		Socio-cultural adjustment and satisfaction with the living conditions	
	β	r	β	R
Secure	.15	.27**	.12	.19*
Dismissive-avoidant	.06	-.23**	.04	-.18*
Ambivalent	-.48**	-.50**	-.42**	-.44**
	R = .52		R = .45	
	R ² = .27		R ² = .21	

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (1-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (1-tailed)

8.4.5 Expatriates' Work Characteristics and Expatriate Children's Intercultural Adaptation

The final relationship that we examined concerned the relationship between aspects of expatriate work life and intercultural adaptation of expatriate children. Table 8.5 reveals that Support from Company was unrelated to both indicators of intercultural adaptation. Expatriates' Work Satisfaction was positively related to both indicators of intercultural adaptation. Hierarchical regression analysis confirmed this pattern of findings.

Table 8.5
Results from Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Intercultural Adaptation According to Expatriates' Work Characteristics

	Health status		Socio-cultural adjustment and satisfaction with the living conditions	
	β	r	β	r
Support from Company	.13	.13	.15	.14
Expatriates' Work Satisfaction	.26*	.27**	.22*	.31**
	R = .29		R = .34	
	R ² = .08		R ² = .11	

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (1-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (1-tailed)

8.4.6 Family Characteristics, Personality Characteristics, Attachment Styles, Expatriates' Work Characteristics and Intercultural Adaptation

In the previous sections, support was provided for the predictive value of family characteristics, personality characteristics, attachment style and expatriates' work characteristics. Next, we performed stepwise regression analysis on all model variables. The significant independent variables from previous regression analyses (family characteristics, personality characteristics, attachment styles, and work characteristics) were regressed on the two indicators of intercultural adaptation. Table 8.6 shows the results from this analysis. The Ambivalent attachment style, Family communication and Emotional Stability appeared to be the most significant predictors of expatriate children's general and psychological health. Table 8.6 also indicates that expatriate children's Socio-cultural adjustment and satisfaction with the living conditions was best predicted by the Ambivalent attachment style and Emotional Stability variables.

Table 8.6
Results from Stepwise Regression of Well-being on All Model Variables

Step		Health status		
		β	R	R ²
1	Ambivalent Attachment Style	-.46**	.46	.22
2	Ambivalent Attachment Style	-.40**		
	Family Communication	.26**	.53	.28
3	Ambivalent Attachment Style	-.30**		
	Family Communication	.26**		
	Emotional Stability	.21**	.56	.31

*p < .05, **p < .01

Results from Stepwise Regression of Socio-cultural Adjustment and Satisfaction with the Living Conditions on All Model Variables

Step		Socio-cultural adjustment and satisfaction with the living conditions		
		β	R	R ²
1	Ambivalent Attachment Style	-.36**	.36	.13
2	Ambivalent Attachment Style	-.26**		
	Emotional Stability	.23**	.42	.17

*p < .05, **p < .01

8.4.7 Demographics vis-à-vis Expatriate Children's Intercultural Adaptation

Finally, we were interested in the relationship between a number of demographic characteristics and our indicators of intercultural adaptation. MANOVA were performed in order to examine the effect of the demographic characteristics on intercultural adaptation of expatriate children.

Command of the local language was found to have a multivariate significant effect on expatriate children's intercultural adaptation, $F(2, 92) = 3.13$, $p < .05$. At the univariate level, the command of the local language only showed a significant effect on Socio-cultural adjustment and satisfaction with the living conditions, $F(1, 93) = 5.96$, $p < .05$, indicating that expatriate children who were able to speak the local language showed the highest Socio-cultural adjustment and satisfaction with the living conditions in the host country ($M = 4.00$ versus $M = 3.66$).

Next, no multivariate effect of participation in the decision to relocate was found. This demographic characteristic did not show any multivariate significant level effect. Univariate, a significant effect was found for Health status, $F(1, 88) = 4.14$, $p < .05$. Expatriate children who were involved in the decision to relocate showed a higher level of general and psychological health than children who were not involved in the decision ($M = 4.22$ versus $M = 3.81$). Again, this finding should be treated with caution because of the insignificant multivariate result.

We were also interested to the effect of whether the expatriate children felt that their parents had considered their opinion regarding the relocation on the indicators of intercultural adaptation. No significant multivariate effect was found. At the univariate level, a significant effect of this demographic characteristic on Health status was found, $F(4, 83) = 2.50$, $p < .05$. Again, expatriate children indicated a higher level of general and psychological health when their parents listened to their opinion regarding the relocation ($M = 4.25$) than when their parents did not ($M = 3.55$). However, this finding should be considered with caution because of the insignificant multivariate result.

With respect to biographical characteristics, having sibling(s) had significant effects on expatriate children's intercultural adaptation, $F(2, 92) = 2.11$, $p < .05$. At the univariate level, having sibling(s), $F(1, 93) = 3.33$, $p < .05$ showed significant effects only on Socio-cultural adjustment and satisfaction with the living conditions in the host country. Expatriate children displayed a higher level of Socio-cultural adjustment and satisfaction with the living conditions in the host country when having siblings ($M = 4.13$) compared to those who did not have siblings ($M = 3.90$).

The existence of other expatriate children from the same home country in the neighbourhood, and other expatriates in the neighbourhood both showed no significant effects on the two indicators of intercultural adaptation. However, both variables showed strong and negative correlations with the Preoccupied Ambivalent Style and the Fearful-avoidant Attachment Styles ($r = -.27$, $p < .01$; $r = -.24$, $p < .05$, respectively). The results suggest that expatriate children scored lower on the Preoccupied Ambivalent and Fearful Ambivalent Styles if they were surrounded by other expatriate children from the same home country and other expatriates in their neighbourhood.

Finally, both multivariate and univariate analyses showed no effect of total number of years of expatriation and having visited the host country prior to relocation on the two indicators of intercultural adaptation. A strong positive correlation was found between having visited the host country prior to relocation and the command of local language ($r = .28$, $p < .01$). Interestingly, total number of years of expatriation was negatively related to the ability to speak the local language ($r = -.26$, $p < .01$) regardless the countries and the number of countries they had been.

Table 8.7 summarizes the major findings of the present study.

Table 8.7

Major findings on Expatriate Children's Intercultural Adaptation (from the Hierarchical Regression Analysis and MANOVA)

	General and psychological health	Socio-cultural adjustment and satisfaction with the living conditions
1. Family Cohesion	X	X
2. Family Adaptability		
3. Family Communication		
4. Cultural Empathy		
5. Open-mindedness		
6. Social Initiative		
7. Emotional Stability	X	X
8. Flexibility		
9. Secure Attachment Style		
10. Dismissive-avoidant Attachment Style		
11. Ambivalent Attachment Style	X	
12. Support from Company		
13. Expatriates' Work Satisfaction	X	X
14. Command of local language		X
15. Participation in decision to relocate	X	
16. Whether expatriate children felt that their parents really considered their opinions	X	
17. Having siblings		X

X – Significant relationship

8.5 Discussions

8.5.1 Discussions of the findings

The results of the present study first showed a relation between family characteristics and intercultural adaptation of expatriate children. Hierarchical regression analysis revealed that family cohesion was the strongest predictor of both Health status and Socio-cultural adjustment and satisfaction with the living conditions in the host country. As being stated by Caligiuri et al. (1998), family cohesion does not only impact family members' bonding but also it may impact expatriate children's ability to establish and maintain friendships with other children in the host country. Thus, expatriate children with a high amount of cohesion among their family members and friends show a high level of intercultural adaptation. In addition, family communication appeared to be the second strongest factor contributing to expatriate children's general and psychological health. Olson et al. (1984) described family communication as being able to solve disagreement among family members, being able to solve conflict while considering different opinions of family members, and being able to discuss the cause of disagreement among family members. An expatriate child who lives in a family with all the three criteria mentioned by Olson et al. (1984) above will show a positive sign of general and psychological health. Family adaptability also was found related to expatriate children's general health. Parents who are sensitive to their children's extra needs in the host country and try to solve hard times that their children are facing promote children's general and psychological health. Therefore, we can conclude that a high amount of cohesion, a healthy and high quality of communication and adaptability among expatriate family members will contribute to a higher level of intercultural adaptation among expatriate children.

Expatriate children's personality characteristics were also found to play an important role in the process of adapting to the new environment in the host country. The results of the present study show that Social Initiative and Emotional Stability were significantly correlated with the two indicators of intercultural adaptation, which is consistent with the findings of Van Oudenhoven and Van der Zee (2001) and Mol et al. (2001). In a study among foreign students they also found that Social Initiative and Emotional Stability are important predictors of multicultural effectiveness. Open-mindedness, however, only showed a significant correlation with general and psychological health. Social Initiative and Emotional Stability can be viewed as coping mechanisms. Expatriate children high on these dimensions seem to have developed coping mechanisms in order to adapt to the new environment. Cultural Empathy and Flexibility appeared to be unrelated to indicators of intercultural adaptation. Perhaps this is because expatriate children who attend international schools are not widely exposed to local cultures and local people. Thus, it seems less important for expatriate children who study in international schools to be open and flexible to the new culture.

In addition, the present study examined the relationship between attachment styles of expatriate children and their intercultural adaptation. In all cases, as compared to family, personality and expatriates' work characteristics, attachment styles appeared to be the strongest determinants of expatriate children's intercultural adaptation. The most important predictor appeared to be the Ambivalent Attachment Style that was negatively related to both general and psychological health of expatriate children, and their socio-cultural adjustment and satisfaction with the living conditions. This indicates that expatriate children with an Ambivalent Attachment Style (i.e., preoccupied and fearful-avoidant attachment styles) are less inclined to achieve successful adaptation. Expatriate children who are less preoccupied with themselves and less fearful will be more active in establishing relations with other people, either among the expatriate children or local children. An important question that arises is whether expatriate children's attachment styles are influenced by the international relocation. Raising children may be different in the host country compared to the home country. Undoubtedly, family serves as the main stabilizing factor among expatriate children. Expatriate children know that every time they move to a different host country, their parents, as well as their brothers and sisters will always move with them. This creates highly secure feelings for expatriate children. The results of the present study show that the presence of siblings contribute to the high level of Socio-cultural adjustment and satisfaction with the living conditions since siblings provide a form of support. Moreover, having siblings means that expatriate children always have someone to carry out activities with and they will feel happier and less lonely living in the foreign country. Expatriate children become less dependent on their parents and this may affect their attachment styles. The fact that friends come and go in expatriate children's lives may inhibit feelings of trust towards others. This is important since the present findings suggest that the Ambivalent Attachment Style is a strong determinant of expatriate children's intercultural adaptation. Future studies are recommended to examine the influence of expatriation on the attachment styles of expatriate children. The present data for example, suggest that expatriate children scored low on the preoccupied ambivalent and fearful ambivalent styles if they were surrounded by other expatriate children from the same home country and other expatriates in their neighborhood.

The results of the present study show a highly significant relation between expatriates' work satisfaction and the two indicators of intercultural adaptation. Sensing the frustrations or happiness of their parents' working situation may influence expatriate children's attitudes towards the host country. We can also argue that expatriate parents who are satisfied and happy with their working situation in the host country will be more strongly inclined to encourage their children to enjoy and participate in activities in the host country. This finding seems to extend Spillover theory (Aldous, 1969; Crouter, 1984; Piotrowski,

1979) whereby the working situation of parents exerts an effect on their children. No significant relationship between support from company and expatriate children's intercultural adaptation was found. A possible explanation is that expatriate children have no direct contact with the international companies. Expatriate children may not be aware of the fact that the international companies are responsible for organizing activities such as family gatherings, sport activities, and dinners that they attend. Moreover, they do not depend directly on international companies when problems arise; they turn to their parents or friends or someone they can trust instead.

Interestingly, it was found that expatriate children scored low on the preoccupied ambivalent and fearful ambivalent styles if there were other expatriate children from the same home country and other expatriates in their neighborhood. This may be because expatriate children can relate to other expatriate children as friends that have the same background and lifestyles as they have. Moreover, expatriate children with friends from their own home country and other countries may believe that they can rely on each other for help and support and feel that they are not the only one who face problems of adapting to the new environment in the host country. Expatriate children who have visited the host country prior to the relocation showed a higher ability to speak the local language than those who did not. Expatriate children who have visited the host country may have strong interests in different aspects of the host country and they are highly motivated to learn the local language in order to understand more about the host country. A possible explanation for the result of a negative relationship between total number of years of expatriation and command of local language is that expatriate children who have been expatriated for a quite number of years and who have lived in several host countries may show less initiative to learn the local languages. They know beforehand that they will not stay long in a particular host country and the next relocation will come sooner or later. Moreover, many expatriate children attend international schools where English is the medium of instruction and subsequently they are less exposed to local people and local languages.

8.5.2 Limitations of the present study and suggestion

Inevitably the present study has a number of limitations. The most significant limitation of the present study was the small number of respondents. Even though in total 1136 questionnaires were sent only 104 completed questionnaires were returned (9.15% response rate). In addition, 87% of the respondents of the present study were children from the Netherlands, which result in a rather homogenous sample. Future research is encouraged to include samples with a higher level of cultural diversity. Another important limitation of the study was its cross-sectional design. It is impossible to draw any conclusions with respect to cause and effect. No longitudinal study and a comparison study of relationships between Hofstede's cultural dimensions and expatriate children's

intercultural adaptation were carried out since we did not have enough power (in terms of the number of respondents) to generate the results.

Future work can also overcome limitation of the present thesis in terms of the number of respondents. In order to receive more responses from samples, especially among expatriate children, we suggest that some kind of motivations to complete the questionnaires should be offered. Motivations such as presents or lucky draw should be carried out. We would also like to suggest future research to carry out longitudinal studies on expatriate children's intercultural adaptation. Studies also should be motivated in the area of relationships between Hofstede's cultural dimensions and expatriate children's intercultural adaptation.

8.5.3 Practical Implications

How can expatriate children, expatriate parents and company benefit from the results of the present study?

Out of three family characteristics, family cohesion and communication showed significant relationship with expatriate children's general health and Socio-cultural adjustment and satisfaction with the living conditions. Expatriate families facing problems may be encouraged to attend family therapy and/or family counselling in order to increase the amount of family cohesion and to improve the communication among family members. Moreover, the present data suggest that expatriate children have to be actively involved in the decision to go abroad and parents should be encouraged to really listen to their children.

The results of the present study indicated that expatriate children's personality characteristics and attachment styles were important predictors of their intercultural adaptation, which indicates that the most important determinants of intercultural adaptation seem to lie in the individual him/herself. The MPQ may be used as a predictor of multicultural effectiveness of expatriate children. Besides involving expatriates and their spouses in the selection process, expatriate children may also be involved. In addition to the MPQ, indicators of attachment may be included. The results of such diagnostic tools may provide information to the family and company in order to make final decisions about accepting or rejecting the international relocation offer. Moreover, both parents and the company will have early information about how their children are likely to adapt to the host country. The results of the present study suggested that expatriate children with an ambivalent attachment style are most vulnerable to problems affecting general health and socio-cultural adjustment. Emotional Stability was also found to be a major determinant of expatriate children's general health and Socio-cultural adjustment. Thus, counseling and therapy can be provided beforehand to expatriate children-to-be

who are found to have a strong of ambivalent attachment style and low emotional stability.

To conclude, our research shows a number of determinants of intercultural adaptation of expatriate children in the host country. The suggestions above can give new pointers to the international companies in upgrading their policy regarding international relocation of their staff. It is clear that expatriate children play an important role in the success of expatriates' international business assignments. We strongly suggest that parents and companies pay more attention to the children's needs while adapting to the new situation so as to make the international relocation experience as valuable as it can be to the children, expatriates, and also to the international companies.

