



**A Study of Anglo Expatriate Managers' Learning, Knowledge Acquisition, and Adjustment in Multi-National Companies in China**

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**A Study of Anglo Expatriate Managers' Learning, Knowledge Acquisition,  
and Adjustment in Multinational Companies in China**

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4 A Study of Anglo Expatriate Managers' Learning, Knowledge Acquisition, and Adjustment  
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6 in Multi-National Companies in China  
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13 ABSTRACT  
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15 This study investigates Anglo expatriate managers learning, knowledge acquisition, and  
16 adjustment to the host culture when working within Anglo multi-national companies  
17 operating in China. A structural equation model based on data from 121 expatriate managers  
18 reveal that Anglo managers adjust more effectively when their learning styles are congruent  
19 with the demands of the host culture. Their levels of accumulated managerial tacit knowledge  
20 and adaptive flexibility were also associated with their learning styles which in turn led to  
21 more effective adjustment to the host culture. Implications for theory, global manager  
22 development, and expatriate management are provided.  
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## INTRODUCTION

Growing influx of foreign investment in emerging markets drives increasing demand for global managers with the capabilities required to manage in culturally, economically and institutionally diverse locations (Li & Scullion, 2010). Multinational corporations (MNCs) have known for some time that it is imperative to attract, develop, and retain managers who can live and work effectively outside of their own national borders for periods that often span several years (Caligiuri, 2000). However, recruiting candidates remains a significant challenge because few employees willingly accept international mobility (Mol, Born, Willemssen, Henk & Derous, 2009) and many that do, return early for various reasons including difficulties in adapting to host cultures (Stroh, Black, Mendenhall & Gregersen, 2005). These problems are exacerbated by an increasing need for expatriate managers. For example, recent studies have revealed that there are more than 65,000 MNCs with over 850,000 foreign subsidiaries operating globally (Colakoglu & Caligiuri, 2008) and numbers are expected to continue to grow steadily (UNCTAD, 2012). Clearly this shift to a global outlook for many MNCs is contingent on having an adequate number of global managers to staff the anticipated growth. There is also an increasing need to use expatriate managers relocated overseas in leadership positions in order to impact future success of MNCs (Harvey & Moeller, 2009).

The utility of expatriate managers in emerging markets is inevitable because of the strategic roles these managers play and the severe shortage of local talent within these economies (Lenartowicz & Johnson, 2007). The impact of successful international assignments is also known to be beneficial for both organisational success and individual career progression (Dickmann & Doherty, 2008). For example, organizations led by CEOs with international experience perform better financially (Carpenter Sanders, & Gregersen, 2001) and the managers themselves attest living and working abroad to be the most powerful

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3 experience in developing their career capital (Dickmann & Doherty, 2008). However,  
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5 managing international assignments is both challenging and complex for organisations  
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7 (Shaffer, Harrison, Gregersen, Black, & Ferzandi, 2006) and despite several decades of  
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9 research, there is still widespread evidence that expatriate managers in MNCs perform poorly  
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11 overseas and their inability to function effectively can be detrimental to a MNCs global  
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13 business (Johnson, Lenartowicz & Apud, 2006; Harvey & Moeller, 2009). The causes of  
14  
15 failure are numerous and complex (Cole, 2011) but a key factor identified in the literature is a  
16  
17 lack of cultural knowledge on the part of international managers (Lenartowicz, Johnson &  
18  
19 Konopaske, 2014). This can be costly for an MNC in terms of both direct costs (Vogel & van  
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21 Vuuren, 2008), and the indirect costs of reduced productivity, damaged relationships and lost  
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23 opportunities that can be more costly in the long term (Dowling, Festing & Engle, 2013). A  
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25 high risk of repatriate turnover has also been reported (Furuya, Stevens, Bird, Oddou &  
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27 Mendenhall, 2009) which suggests that MNCs may not always be able to capitalise on  
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29 benefits of international assignments once the assignee repatriates. The factors that determine  
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31 whether employees with international assignment experience choose to remain with their  
32  
33 organisations are unclear. Understanding this phenomenon is becoming a priority for MNCs  
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35 (Reiche, Kraimer, & Harzing, 2011) because a key motive is not only to accomplish a  
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37 specific task during the assignment, but also to contribute to the long-term development of  
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39 both individual talent and the larger organisation (Takeuchi, Tesluk, Yun, & Lepak, 2005).  
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45 For these reasons, international HR practitioners and management researchers alike  
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47 are interested in evaluating international assignments and understanding how to best predict  
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49 individuals who can live and work successfully in cross national settings (Caligiuri, 2000)  
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51 and subsequently be retained by the organisation. Previous research indicates considerable  
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53 variation in criteria used to evaluate the success of expatriate assignments. Three common  
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55 criteria are: cross cultural adjustment; performance on the global assignment; and completion  
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3 of the assignment (Caligiuri, 2000). Cross cultural adjustment has been argued to be the  
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5 antecedent of both performance and completion of the assignment (Furuya et al., 2009).  
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7 Given that these are both important for MNCs, a better understanding of the factors which  
8  
9 impact cross cultural adjustment is necessary. Organizational interventions for enhancing  
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11 cross cultural adjustment range from didactic training programs to intensive cultural  
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13 experiences gained from international assignments (Caligiuri, 2006). The latter are aimed at  
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15 cultivating individuals to think more globally by exposing them to the challenges of living  
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17 and working in a foreign environment (Leung, Maddux, Galinsky, & Chiu, 2008) and the  
18  
19 topic has an established pedigree in the international human resource management research  
20  
21 literature (Lazarova, 2006).  
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25 Cultural knowledge in emerging markets has been argued to have a special nature in  
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27 that it is highly tacit (Lenartowicz et. al., 2014) and fast-changing and its acquisition will  
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29 depend on intensive socialized activities and experiences in the host culture (Li & Scullion,  
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31 2010). Expatriation success will hinge on how well expatriate managers learn from their  
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33 experiences (Ng, Dyne, & Ang, 2009) and the knowledge acquired is deemed to be an  
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35 underestimated strategic outcome in the study of expatriate adjustment (Hocking, Brown, &  
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37 Harzing, 2004). However, few studies have researched management learning and knowledge  
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39 acquisition in the context of cross-cultural adjustment (Yamazaki, 2005). This is despite  
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41 assertions that: different learning strategies may be required for effective adaptation in  
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43 various host cultures (Yamazaki & Kayes, 2007); tacit knowledge is known to be one factor  
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45 that distinguishes successful managers from others (Armstrong & Mahmud, 2008); culture is  
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47 believed to shape peoples' preferred modes of learning (Yamazaki, 2010) and is argued to be  
48  
49 one of the most powerful socialisation agents that impact on individuals styles of learning  
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51 (De Vita, 2001; Lenartowicz et al., 2014). Given the dearth of globally successful  
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53 professionals, it is important for organizations to more fully understand how managers learn  
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3 and develop as a function of their international experiences. This study seeks to examine in  
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5 detail how expatriate adjustment to a host culture and the acquisition of managerial tacit  
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7 knowledge are influenced by different approaches to learning. It does this through the lens of  
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9 experiential learning theory.  
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## 11 THEORY DEVELOPMENT AND HYPOTHESES

### 14 Expatriate Adjustment

16 Expatriate adjustment to international assignments involves significant changes to the  
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18 work that individuals perform and requires them to deal with unfamiliar norms that often lead  
19  
20 to expatriates returning home prematurely (McGinley, 2008). The range of failure of  
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22 expatriate managers, typically between 20 and 40%, is known to lead to high direct and  
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24 indirect costs for MNCs (Dowling et al., 2013). Further costs of an implicit nature occur  
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26 when expatriate managers remain in their overseas assignments whilst underperforming,  
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28 leading to damage of an organization's reputation, relationships and performance (Harzing,  
29  
30 1995). These issues are of particular concern to MNCs because damage to reputation in key  
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32 strategic foreign markets detrimentally affects prospects of developing international business  
33  
34 relationships (Athanassiou & Nigh, 2000). There are also considerable costs for managers  
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36 themselves, including loss of self-esteem, self-confidence, and reputation (Dowling et al.,  
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38 2013). Given increasing needs for expatriate managers in developing countries where the  
39  
40 economic and cultural distance will be greater than in developed countries, problems with  
41  
42 adapting to the host culture are likely to be even more significant (Aycan, et. al., 2000;  
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44 Haslberger, 2005). More research is therefore needed to enhance our understanding of the  
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46 reasons for expatriate failure (Reiche et al., 2011), particularly in non-western contexts such  
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48 as China (Selmer, 2006).  
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54 Previous research has revealed a multitude of reasons for expatriate failure but the one  
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56 that has historically been identified as the primary reason is related to expatriates' inability to  
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3 adjust to foreign environments. (Black, Mendenhall, & Oddou, 1991; Okpara & Kabongo,  
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5 2011; Shaffer, Harrison, & Gilley, 1999; Takeuchi, et. al, 2005;). The adjustment model  
6  
7 proposed by Black, Mendenhall, and Oddou (1991) is regarded as the most influential  
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9 treatment of expatriate experiences and represents a context-specific reflection of the  
10  
11 stressor-stress-strain sequence (Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Harrison, Shaffer, & Luk, 2005).  
12  
13 Research on expatriate adjustment based on this model has generally focused on 3 facets:  
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15 general/cultural adjustment related to comfort associated with general living conditions;  
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17 interaction adjustment related to comfort associated with interacting with host country  
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19 nationals; and work adjustment related to comfort associated with the assignment of job or  
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21 tasks.  
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25 In a meta-analytic study, Hechanova, Beehr, & Christiansen (2003) sought to  
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27 determine a range of variables that predict the development of expatriate adjustment across  
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29 all three facets. Self-efficacy, frequency of interaction with host nationals, and family support  
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31 consistently predicted all three types of adjustment. Bhaskar-Shrinivas et. al., (2005) further  
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33 extended theory by demonstrating that adjustment has reliable implications for psychological  
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35 strains and bottom line outcomes including task and relationship-based outcomes. They  
36  
37 concluded that whilst expatriate adjustment is sensitive to many stressors, we do now have a  
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39 much clearer knowledge about temporal patterns, inputs to, and outputs from adjustment.  
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41 Armed with that knowledge, they suggest that researchers should now focus on contextual  
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43 variables that might mitigate or exacerbate adjustment problems for the steadily increasing  
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45 number of individuals sent on international assignments. This is because following three  
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47 decades of research and prescription there is still widespread evidence that a significant  
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49 number of managers in MNCs perform poorly overseas (Cornelius & Debner, 2011). Lack of  
50  
51 cultural knowledge is cited as a frequent source of failure (Lenartowicz et al., 2014).  
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55 Although knowledge is believed to be a product of learning from experience (Nonaka &  
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3 Takeuchi, 1995), there is a dearth of research on the learning context and how cultural  
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5 knowledge is created and diffused in MNCs. This is a primary purpose of the present research.  
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8 Whilst it is commonly held that expatriate managers engage in extensive learning  
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10 during their overseas assignments (Osland, Bird, Mendenhall & Osland, 2006) there is scant  
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12 empirical research on what they have learned or on what factors may affect their learning  
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14 (Furuya et. al., 2009). Undoubtedly, international assignments provide an ideal opportunity  
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16 for expatriates to learn and develop the necessary skills for adapting to challenging new  
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18 environments (Farh, Bartol, Shapiro, & Shin, 2010). However, newcomers find themselves in  
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20 unfamiliar territory and they must adapt by accessing a wide range of knowledge about the  
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22 local culture and language, the local business setting, and the local interpersonal  
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24 communication networks (Hocking, Brown, & Harzing, 2007). Recent studies (e.g.  
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26 Lenartowicz et al, 2014; Maertz, Hassan, & Magnusson, 2009) have highlighted the  
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28 importance of experiential learning theories for developing and exhibiting culturally  
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30 appropriate behaviours in order to fit with the host culture. Learning is a critical process of  
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32 human adaptation and leads to acquisition of new knowledge and development of skills  
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34 through interaction with the immediate environment (Boyatzis & Kolb, 1995). Success of  
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36 intercultural adjustment has also been linked to person-environment fit (Armstrong & Cools,  
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38 2009). In the context of learning, the fit between an individual's learning style and the work  
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40 context has been shown to positively influence the accumulation of managerial tacit  
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42 knowledge (Armstrong & Mahmud, 2008), and cultural intelligence in global leaders (Li,  
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44 Mobley, & Kelly, 2013). A recent examination of expatriate adjustment (Yamazaki, 2010)  
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46 highlighted the importance of Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory (ELT), deemed by  
47  
48 others to be an appropriate theoretical lens through which to examine how cultural  
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50 knowledge is acquired (Fowler & Blohm, 2004; Yamazaki & Kayes, 2004).  
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### Experiential Learning Theory (ELT)

ELT defines learning as ‘the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience’ (Kolb, 1984, p41). The theory builds on the foundational work of other prominent scholars such as Jung (1923), Dewey (1938), Lewin (1951) who gave experience a central role in their theories of human learning. ELT remains one of the most pervasive theories about how managers learn from experience (Li et al., 2013) and represents ‘a dynamic, holistic model of the process of learning from experience and a multi-linear model of adult development’ (Kolb & Kolb, 2009, p43). The theory is based on a learning cycle driven by the resolution of two dialectically related modes of grasping experience (Concrete Experience versus Abstract Conceptualization ) and two dialectically related modes of transforming experience (Reflective Observation versus Active Experimentation ). Experiential learning is ‘a process of constructing knowledge that involves a creative tension among these four learning modes that is responsive to cultural demands’ (Kolb and Kolb, 2009. P44).

Figure 1 about here

Figure 1 depicts Kolb’s (1984) four-stage cycle which is a recursive process that is responsive to the leaning situation. Concrete experiences (CE) are the basis for reflections and observations (RO) on those experiences. Those reflections are assimilated into abstract concepts (AC) leading to development of new theory from which new implications for action can be drawn. These implications and new theories are then tested through active experimentation (AE). This stage both completes the cycle of learning and ensures it begins afresh by assisting the creation of new experiences (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). When grasping new experiences, learners with a strong preference for CE rely on the tangible and immediately felt qualities of the experience, whereas those with a strong preference for AC rely on

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3 conceptual interpretation and symbolic representation of the experience. When transforming  
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5 new experiences, learners with a strong preference for RO transform through internal  
6  
7 processing whereas those with a strong preference for AE transform through actual  
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9 manipulation of the external world.  
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11 Possession of all four abilities indicated by the four poles of the model is critical for  
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13 effective learning but in reality, few individuals are equally strong on CE, RO, AC and AE.  
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15 Most people develop strengths in one or two of these due to their environment, past  
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17 experiences, and their hereditary equipment (Kolb, 1984). This led to the development of  
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19 learning styles to explain these phenomena. The two distinct dimensions of grasping (AC-CE)  
20  
21 and transforming (AE-RO) experience are orthogonal and form four quadrants that lead to  
22  
23 different learning styles depending on the learner's preference for employing different phases  
24  
25 of the learning cycle (Figure 1). The diverging learning style specializes in CE (feeling) and  
26  
27 RO (reflecting), while the converging learning style specializes in AC (thinking) and AE  
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29 (acting). The assimilating learning style specializes in AC and RO, whereas the  
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31 accommodating learning style specializes in CE and AE.  
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36 *Cultural influences on learning styles.* Interests in studying management in  
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38 non-Anglo cultures has increased rapidly in recent decades (Dorfman, Javidan, Hanges,  
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40 Dastmalchian, & House, 2012) and the most common research approach has been to explain  
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42 cross-cultural differences in terms of differences in cultural values. Cultural values are likely  
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44 to be internalised by managers who grow up in a particular culture and these values will  
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46 influence their behaviour in ways that may not be conscious (Fu & Yukl, 2000). Cultural  
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48 norms specify acceptable forms of behaviour and may be formalised as social laws limiting  
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50 the use of power. When managers engage in overseas assignments they are likely to have to  
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52 modify their behaviour to conform to social norms about acceptable behaviour in the host  
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54 culture, even if they have not yet internalised those norms (Yukl, 2013). In a project spanning  
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3 over 20 years, the Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness (GLOBE)  
4 project investigated the complex effects of culture on management/leadership and  
5 organizational effectiveness (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004). This led to  
6 Dorfman et al (2012) classifying over 60 countries into ten clusters (Anglo; Eastern Europe;  
7 Latin America; Latin Europe; Confucian Asia; Nordic Europe; Sub-Saharan Africa; Southern  
8 Asia; Germanic Europe; and the middle East). These societal clusters accurately reflected  
9 differences in nine cultural value dimensions (Dorfman, Hanges, & Brodbeck, 2004; Gupta,  
10 Hanges & Dorfman, 2002), including some not identified in earlier research by Hofstede  
11 (1993). The present study is focused on the Anglo (UK, Ireland, USA, Canada, Australia,  
12 New Zealand, South Africa - White) and Confucian cultures (China, Hong Kong, Japan,  
13 Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan) with management samples drawn from UK, Ireland, USA,  
14 Canada, Australia, and New Zealand to represent the Anglo cluster and mainland China to  
15 represent the Confucian cluster.  
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32 Culture also has an important influence on how people learn (Hayes & Allinson, 1988;  
33 Lee & Li, 2008). Styles of learning result from the interplay between the person and the  
34 environment (Kolb, 1984). Previous research has shown that learning styles are influenced by  
35 culture of birth and residence (Joy & Kolb, 2007, cited in Kolb & Kolb, 2009, p46) as well as  
36 other factors such as personality type, educational specialisation, professional career, current  
37 job, and adaptive competencies (Kolb, 1984). With regard to cultural differences in learning  
38 styles, previous evidence has revealed that the *diverging* learning style (where managers  
39 prefer to grasp new experiences by relying on the tangible and immediately felt qualities of  
40 the experience (CE) and transform those experiences through internal processing (RO)) tends  
41 to dominate in Confucian cultures (Yamazaki & Kayes, 2007). People with diverging  
42 learning styles have strong potential to understand what behaviours are appropriate in  
43 different cultural contexts (Phillion, 2002). However, because they are less inclined to take  
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actions they may not be as proficient in applying these behaviours (Li et. al., 2013). Conversely, the *converging* style of learning (where managers prefer to grasp new experiences by relying on conceptual interpretation and symbolic representation of the experience (AC), and transform those experiences through actual manipulation of the external world (AE)) tends to dominate in Anglo cultures. Other comparative studies of Confucian and Anglo societies have also demonstrated that learning styles are distinguishable in these ways across the two cultures (Pratt, 1991; Yamazaki, 2005). However, whilst diverging and converging learning styles tend to dominate Confucian and Anglo cultures respectively; learning styles can also vary within cultures due to a combination of disposition, personality type, educational specialization, career choice, current job role and tasks (Kolb & Kolb, 2009). According to ELT, incongruence between an individual's style of learning and the norms of the learning environment may undermine her/his feelings of belonging, resulting in maladjustment (Kolb, 1984). Conversely, when peoples learning styles are matched with their work environment, they tend to learn more quickly (Dunn & Griggs, 2003), retain information for longer (Pask, 1976) experience increased satisfaction with the learning process (Hudak, 1985) and accumulate higher levels of tacit knowledge (Armstrong & Mahmud, 2008). A fit between an individual's learning style and the work environment is therefore likely to lead to better adjustment. We therefore put forward the following congruence hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 1a: Anglo expatriate managers' AC-CE learning dimension is negatively related to their adjustment in China.*

*Hypothesis 1b: Anglo expatriate managers' AE-RO learning dimension is negatively related to their adjustment in China.*

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3 Whilst different learning styles tend to dominate particular cultures, individuals'  
4 learning styles will converge within cultures through their socialisation experiences in order  
5 to more closely match environmental demands (De Vita, 2001). Several empirical studies  
6 have supported this assertion (Auyeung & Sands, 1996; Yamazaki & Kayes, 2007; Yuen  
7 & Lee, 1994). From this evidence it is expected that expatriates' learning styles will evolve  
8 according to the degree of change of learning orientation that is demanded by the host  
9 country (Yamazaki & Kayes, 2004). Furthermore, the longer the exposure of the  
10 environmental demands, the greater the tendency for a person to specialize even more in the  
11 learning style that is matched with such demands (Kolb, 1984). On the basis that learning  
12 styles will evolve over time according to the degree of change of learning orientation that is  
13 demanded by the local environment (Kolb & Kolb, 2009), it can be postulated that the length  
14 of time that Anglo expatriate managers have engaged in international assignments in China  
15 will be positively related to a shift in their learning orientations towards those favoured by the  
16 host country (e.g. diverging). Thus, we hypothesise the following:

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34 *Hypothesis 2a: The length of Anglo expatriate managers' time in position in*  
35 *China is negatively related to their AC-CE learning dimension.*

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*Hypothesis 2b: The length of Anglo expatriate managers' time in position in*  
*China is negatively related to their AE-RO learning dimension.*

#### Tacit Knowledge in Management

Tacit knowledge is believed to be a product of learning from experience that affects performance in real-world settings (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). It is recognised as an essential element of expertise and has been shown to be important for success of individuals (Nestor-Baker, 1999) and for competitive advantage in organisations (Prahalad & Hamel, 1990). Previous authors (e.g. Simon, 1973; Baumard, 1999) attribute the origin of the construct to the science philosopher Polanyi who captured the meaning of tacit knowledge in

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2  
3 his famous quote “we can know more than we can tell” (1966, p4). Managerial tacit  
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5 knowledge is believed to be generated in the intimacy of lived personal experience (Baumard,  
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7 1999), guides actions and decisions without being in our field of consciousness (Anderson,  
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9 1983) and is believed to be an essential factor that distinguishes successful managers from  
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11 others (Armstrong & Mahmud, 2008; Wagner & Sternberg, 1987).  
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14 A substantial amount of research has been undertaken into the nature of tacit  
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16 knowledge in a variety of professions such as nursing (Herbig, Bussing & Ewart, 2001),  
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18 education (Nestor-Baker & Hoy, 2001), medicine (Cimino, 1999), and management  
19  
20 (Armstrong & Mahmud, 2008) that have provided a valuable insight into its importance.  
21  
22 However, one body of research into the nature of tacit knowledge is particularly noteworthy  
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24 (e.g., Sternberg, et. al., 2000; Sternberg & Wagner, 1993; Wagner & Sternberg, 1985, 1987)  
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26 because it provides a sound methodological basis from which tacit knowledge can be studied.  
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29 Wagner and Sternberg’s (1985) study of the role of tacit knowledge in management  
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31 demonstrated significant variations in both level and content of tacit knowledge between  
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33 groups of managers. These variations were attributed to the fact that managers pass through  
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35 their experiences differently, at different points in time, and in different contexts. Wagner  
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37 (1987) argued that tacit knowledge is particularly important for managerial performance and  
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39 success and broke the construct down into three categories: (1) maximising self-performance  
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41 and productivity (*managing self*); (2) working with and directing others (*managing others*);  
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43 (3) establishing and enhancing self-reputation (*managing task*). Managing self, others, and  
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45 task defines the scope of tacit knowledge based on the context of a given situation.  
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49 The three categories of managing self, others, and task have become the core feature  
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51 in the development of the Tacit Knowledge Inventory for Managers (Forsythe, et. al., 1998).  
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53 This instrument uses the critical incident technique to measures tacit knowledge based on a  
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55 sequence of scenarios. Each scenario depicts a work-related situation and this is followed by  
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3 a series of items that are relevant to handling that situation. Respondents are expected to read  
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5 these items and then to rate the quality of each item on a 7-point scale. This process is  
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7 repeated for all scenarios and situations. These scenarios are designed to elicit different  
8  
9 responses from different individuals. Experts are expected to respond differently from  
10  
11 novices due to the content and organization of their tacit knowledge (Wagner, Sujana,  
12  
13 Sternberg, & Raashotte, 1999). Scoring of the tacit knowledge inventory relies on  
14  
15 comparisons of respondent scores for each item with the aggregate score of an expert group.  
16  
17 This technique is often referred to as the 'expert-novice comparison' (Wagner & Sternberg,  
18  
19 1985). Empirical research has consistently shown that the inventory is able to predict  
20  
21 performance success in managers (Armstrong & Mahmud, 2008; Sternberg & Wagner, 1993;  
22  
23 Wagner & Sternberg, 1987).

24  
25  
26  
27 According to Sternberg et al., (2000), tacit knowledge may well lead to a performance  
28  
29 advantage for some because 'it is likely that some individuals will fail to acquire it' (pp.117).  
30  
31 Whilst studies have consistently demonstrated differences in level and content of tacit  
32  
33 knowledge between expert and novice groups (Wagner et al., 1999; Tan & Libby, 1997;  
34  
35 Nestor-Baker, 1999), few have accounted for why or how these differences occur. We are  
36  
37 informed, however, that differences can be attributed to the context of the learning  
38  
39 environment and differences in the way individuals prefer to engage in the learning process  
40  
41 (Sternberg et al., 2000).

42  
43  
44  
45 Peoples national culture (Yamazaki, 2005; Yamazaki & Kayes, 2004), work  
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47 environment (Choo, 1998) and individual learning styles (Armstrong & Mahmud, 2008; Kolb  
48  
49 & Kolb, 2005) have all been shown to influence the acquisition of tacit knowledge. When  
50  
51 peoples learning styles are matched with their work environment, it has been demonstrated  
52  
53 that they achieve significantly more learning outcomes in an educational context (Dunn &  
54  
55 Griggs, 2003) and higher levels of managerial tacit knowledge in a management context  
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(Armstrong & Mahmud, 2008). Conversely, a mismatch between learning style and work context is likely to impede the process of learning and knowledge acquisition.

Elaborating further on this person-culture congruence theory, individuals with a strong orientation toward the converging learning style would rather deal with technical tasks and problems than with social and interpersonal issues (Kolb, 1984). This style is more suited to Yamazaki's (2005) definition of a low context culture (e.g. Anglo) in which explicit verbal messages and communication styles of a logical form are placed with high importance. Communication patterns of low-context cultures also focus less on interpersonal relationships and more on rationally detached analyses (Yamazaki, 2005). This is opposite to the diverging learning style associated with a preference for working in groups to gather information, listening with an open mind, and receiving personalised feedback (Kolb, 1984). This style is more suited to Yamazaki's (2005) definition of a high context culture (e.g. Confucian) where surrounding situations, external physical environments, and non-verbal behaviours are all important for its members to determine the meanings of messages conveyed in communication. Covert clues in these contexts make differences to the members and are used to search for a real meaning beyond verbal messages (Yamazaki, 2005). Effective communications in high-context cultures require its members to become sensitive to immediate environments through feelings. Yamazaki (2005) further contends that in high context cultures people: rely on tangible and immediately felt qualities of the experience (CE) rather than conceptual interpretation and symbolic representation of the experience (AC) to acquire tacit knowledge that serves to distinguish covert cues for effective communication and successful interpersonal relationships; and rely on internal processing (RO) rather than through manipulation of the external world (AE) for transforming experiences (Fridland, 2002; Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Yamazaki, 2005). This leads us to the following hypothesis:

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3 *Hypothesis 3a: Anglo expatriate managers' AC-CE learning dimension is*  
4 *negatively related to their levels of accumulated managerial tacit knowledge when*  
5 *working in China.*  
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10 *Hypothesis 3b: Anglo expatriate managers' AE-RO learning dimension is*  
11 *negatively related to their levels of accumulated managerial tacit knowledge when*  
12 *working in China.*  
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16 Managerial tacit knowledge is a product of learning from experience and is important  
17  
18 for managerial performance and success (Armstrong & Mahmud, 2008; Sternberg et al.,  
19  
20 2000). From the preceding discussions, it can be postulated that levels of managerial tacit  
21  
22 knowledge accumulated in the host culture will positively influence their adjustment to  
23  
24 international assignments in the host culture, which leads to the following hypothesis:  
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27 *Hypothesis 4. Anglo expatriate managers' levels of accumulated managerial tacit*  
28 *knowledge are positively related to their adjustment in China.*  
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### 32 Adaptive Flexibility

33

34 Kolb (1984) hypothesised that learning styles are determined by the interplay  
35  
36 between people and their environments. As a consequence learning styles have been shown to  
37  
38 differ from one culture to another (Yamazaki, 2005), and expatriate managers' learning styles  
39  
40 have been shown to change over a period of time in response to cultural demands (Yamazaki  
41  
42 & Kayes, 2007). Propensity for changes of this nature, however, will depend on the extent to  
43  
44 which individuals are able to learn to adapt to changing circumstances over time – otherwise  
45  
46 known as 'adaptive flexibility' (Boyatzis & Kolb, 1993; Kolb, 1984). Adaptive flexibility and  
47  
48 the mobility it provides are the primary vehicles of individual self-development (Kolb, 1984).  
49  
50 Kolb (1984) conducted several empirical studies about the relationship between adaptive  
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52 flexibility and self-development. His research revealed a significant positive relationship  
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54 between adaptive flexibility as measured by the Adaptive Style Inventory (ASI) and the level  
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3 of ego development measured using Loevinger's sentence completion instrument (Loevinger,  
4 1976, cited in Kolb, 1984) and also between adaptive flexibility and the level of self-direction  
5 as measured in a self-assessment workshop (deCharms, 1968, cited in Kolb, 1984). Kolb  
6  
7 (1984) concluded that those with higher levels of adaptive flexibility are more self-directed  
8 and display that directedness through a wide variation in their active behaviour in different  
9 situations.  
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16 Flexibility of a person's learning style is related to the degree to which one integrates  
17 the dual dialectics of the learning process – abstraction/experience(AC-CE) and  
18 action/reflection(AE-OR) (Kolb, 1984). Kolb (1984) hypothesised that individuals with  
19 balanced learning profiles on these dimensions will be more sophisticated (adaptively flexible)  
20 learners than those with specialised learning styles. Mainemelis, Boyatzis, and Kolb (2002)  
21 provided empirical evidence of this and concluded that 'the more balanced individuals are on  
22 the dual dialectics of learning, the more they will show adaptive flexibility' (p3). Adaptive  
23 flexibility then, refers to the degree to which one changes learning style to manage competing  
24 demands and deal with environmental complexity. It can be postulated that as Anglo  
25 expatriate managers shift their learning orientations from *Converging* (AC and AE) toward  
26 *Diverging* (CE and RO) as demanded by Confucian culture, they will become more balanced  
27 learners and therefore demonstrate higher levels of adaptive flexibility. Furthermore,  
28 Yamazaki and Kayes (2007) proposed that expatriate managers develop greater adaptive  
29 flexibility to adjust to a new culture, and adaptive flexibility is a key component of successful  
30 cross-cultural adjustment. International assignments are full of challenges and uncertainties,  
31 especially in a host country with significant diversities. The complex and ever-changing  
32 global environment requires expatriate managers to be flexible (Okpara & Kabongo, 2011).  
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34 As a consequence, expatriate managers will need to develop their levels of adaptive  
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flexibility in order to achieve successful expatriation. This leads us to the following hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 5. The length of Anglo expatriate managers' time in position in China is positively related to their levels of adaptive flexibility.*

*Hypothesis 6. Anglo expatriate managers with greater levels of adaptive flexibility adjust better to their international assignments in China.*

#### The Hypothesized Research Model

From the foregoing discussion the hypothesized causal relationships are illustrated in the research model shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 about here

#### METHOD

##### Procedure

The Chinese government's directory of MNCs in China was used to guide identification and selection of research sites. Twenty-eight Anglo MNCs with subsidiaries in China were visited. Care was taken to ensure that the culture and policies of all participating organisations were such that selection procedures led to the recruitment of expatriate managers with a similar composition (e.g. cultural background) and operating procedures actively encouraged these managers to interact with host nationals from both their workplace and their local communities. Eighteen of the original twenty-eight MNCs were chosen to take part in the study. In every case, a senior manager undertook the responsibility for distributing and collecting the survey instruments. To obtain a homogenous sample, these senior managers were careful to only distribute survey instruments to Anglo expatriate managers who had been transferred to China for long-term international assignments. Managers engaging in short business trips and managers of Chinese ethnic origin were excluded from the survey. Care was also taken to ensure that all subjects were working in a managerial

context, performing functions and duties that were involving them in managing human and financial or materials oriented organizational resources. Data collection was conducted over a 16 week period and was concentrated primarily in Beijing and Shanghai. Whilst this was a cross-sectional study, we were careful to ensure our sample comprised managers with different levels of assignment tenure in order to examine the effect of overseas work experience in China on expatriate managers' learning and development.

### Participants

Two hundred Anglo expatriate managers were available for study. Each received a research pack containing a covering letter, survey instrument, and a return envelope. Completed questionnaires were received from 121 managers representing a response rate of 60.5%. Participants were drawn from six IT companies (37%); eight manufacturing companies (36%); three finance companies (15%); and one logistics company (12%). Table 1 illustrates the demographic characteristics of study participants. It is recognised that cultural differences can affect the nature of samples taken from different industry sectors. One-way analysis of variance revealed that there were no significant differences between the scores obtained for expatriate adjustment (general adjustment:  $F=2.10$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p>.05$ ; socialization adjustment:  $F=2.34$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p>.05$ ; work adjustment:  $F=2.02$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p>.05$ ), learning style (ACE:  $F=2.28$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p>.05$ ; AE-RO:  $F=2.49$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p>.05$ ), adaptive flexibility (CEAF:  $F=2.54$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p>.05$ ; ROAF:  $F=2.11$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p>.05$ ; ACAF:  $F=1.63$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p>.05$ ; AEAf:  $F=1.87$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p>.05$ ), or managerial tacit knowledge (managing self:  $F=.49$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p>.05$ ; managing others:  $F=.58$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p>.05$ ) from groups of managers drawn from these four sectors. The effect sizes were assessed by means of the  $d$  statistic, an index of how many standard deviations two groups differ by. In all cases effect sizes fell short of Cohen's (1992) threshold for the smallest effect size ( $d > 0.2$ ).

Table 1 about here

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3 A fundamental requirement of the Tacit Knowledge Inventory for Managers used in  
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5 the study is that a group of expert expatriate managers are needed to create a profile against  
6  
7 which expatriate managers can be compared. The scoring system for the instrument requires  
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9 scores from the expatriate managers to be compared against the profile scores of this expert  
10  
11 group. Subjects with scores close to the scores of the expert profile are deemed to have a  
12  
13 higher level of managerial tacit knowledge.  
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15  
16 *Criteria for Selecting the Expert Group.* Previous studies of tacit knowledge have  
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18 identified expert managers as those who are senior, highly successful and very experienced  
19  
20 managers (e.g. Armstrong & Mahmud, 2008; Wagner & Sternberg, 1987). Our selection  
21  
22 criteria build on those previous studies. Our expert group consisted of 25 highly successful  
23  
24 global managers assigned in China. We considered only those who operated in the same work  
25  
26 context as the participants being studied and comply with the following strict criteria: they  
27  
28 must have very high status in Anglo MNCs' subsidiaries in China; they must have had a  
29  
30 significant length of service at a senior position; they must have been assigned in China for  
31  
32 more than 5 years. Managers in our expert group held the title of Chief Executive Officer  
33  
34 (CEO); Chief Operations Officer (COO); Chief Financial Officer (CFO); Chief Information  
35  
36 Officer (CIO); Human Resource Director (HRD); Operations Director (OD); or Marketing  
37  
38 Director (MD). The mean expert age was 44 years (84% male). Nationality and ethnicity of  
39  
40 the expert managers were: 40% UK (white); 32% USA (white); 20% Canada (white); and 8%  
41  
42 Australia (white). Most of the expert group had a Master degree. Their length of service at a  
43  
44 senior position ranged from 8 to 19 years (average of 13 years). Their experience of other  
45  
46 international assignments ranged from 2 to 7 years (average of 4). Lengths of international  
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48 assignment experience in China ranged from 6 to 20 years (average of 8).  
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52 Measures

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56 Dependent Variables  
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3       *Expatriate adjustment.* We adopted the scale developed by Black & Stephens (1989)  
4 which uses 14 item statements to measure managers' self-estimated level of adjustment.  
5  
6 Respondents indicated how well adjusted they were to their respective host locations in China  
7  
8 on a scale ranging from 1 = 'not adjusted very well' to 5 = 'very well adjusted'. This  
9  
10 instrument has been consistently validated (Shaffer et al., 1999) and has been found to be  
11  
12 structurally equivalent with a good fit when applied to culturally dissimilar samples (Selmer,  
13  
14 2006). The three sub-scales of general adjustment (sample item: 'living conditions in  
15  
16 general'), interaction adjustment (sample item: 'interacting with host nationals on a day-to-  
17  
18 day basis), and work adjustment (sample item: 'performance standards and expectations')  
19  
20 have consistently demonstrated high internal reliability (Selmer, 2006). Reliability of the  
21  
22 three dimensions in the present study was: alpha = 0.89; alpha = 0.81; and alpha = 0.90  
23  
24 respectively.  
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29       *Tacit Knowledge.* Sternberg et al's (2000) Tacit Knowledge Inventory for Managers  
30 (61 items) was administered to all participants in order to determine their levels of  
31  
32 accumulated managerial tacit knowledge.  
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36       The critical incident technique is used to measure tacit knowledge based on a  
37  
38 sequence of scenarios designed to elicit different responses from different individuals.  
39  
40 Scenarios are based on work-related situations, each followed by a series of items that are  
41  
42 relevant to handling that situation. Respondents briefly scan all of the items and then rate the  
43  
44 quality of each item on a 7-point scale for all scenarios and situations. Instructions to  
45  
46 respondents stressed that there were no "correct" answers, only different ways to respond to  
47  
48 each situation. Expert managers are expected to respond differently from novices due to the  
49  
50 content and organization of their tacit knowledge (Wagner et al., 1999). The mean ratings for  
51  
52 each item in the instrument are calculated for the expert group in order to form an expert  
53  
54 manager profile. Then, participant's scores on the tacit knowledge inventory are derived by  
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3 subtracting their answer for each item from the expert manager profile for that item. This  
4  
5 generates difference scores between the participants and the expert profile (Wagner and  
6  
7 Sternberg, 1990) with lower scores representing higher levels of managerial tacit knowledge.  
8  
9 This technique is often referred to as the 'expert-novice comparison' (Wagner & Sternberg,  
10  
11 1985). A detailed account of the scoring method for the tacit knowledge inventory can be  
12  
13 found in a recent article by Armstrong & Mahmud (2008).  
14  
15

16 Internal reliability of the tacit knowledge inventory in the present study was:  
17  
18 managing self:  $\alpha = 0.85$ ; managing others:  $\alpha = 0.88$ .  
19

#### 20 21 Independent Variables

22  
23 *Time in position.* Since expatriate adjustment is a process over time (Black et al., 1991)  
24  
25 participants were asked to indicate how long they have been living in China for their current  
26  
27 international assignment (months).  
28

29  
30 *Learning Style.* Kolb's (1999) Learning Style Inventory-3 (LSI-3) (12 items) was  
31  
32 employed to examine individuals' learning styles. This is one of the most frequently used  
33  
34 instruments to assess learning styles (Yamazak & Kayes, 2007) and has been widely used to  
35  
36 examine learning in cross-cultural settings (Yamazaki, 2005). Learning styles measured by  
37  
38 the LSI-3 (Kolb, 1999) are determined on the basis of the two non-ipsative dimensional  
39  
40 scores and not the four ipsative scale scores. Previous studies have demonstrated strong test-  
41  
42 retest reliabilities with coefficients for the two learning dimensions reaching 0.90 to 0.95  
43  
44 (Yamazaki & Kayes, 2007) and high internal consistencies:  $\alpha = 0.72$  to  $0.79$ . Internal  
45  
46 reliability figures in the present study were:  $\alpha = 0.74$  (AC-CE) and  $\alpha = 0.72$  (AE-RO).  
47  
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49  
50 *Adaptive Flexibility.* Boyatzis and Kolb's (1993) Adaptive Style Inventory (ASI) was  
51  
52 used to measure the extent to which participants' learning styles change depending on the  
53  
54 demands of different situations - referred to as adaptive flexibility. The ASI uses a 48-item,  
55  
56 paired comparison method to rank learning preferences for the four learning modes in eight  
57  
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3 personalized learning contexts. Respondents are asked to think of personal examples for each  
4  
5 of eight situations which describe four learning contexts (two situations per context): acting  
6  
7 (e.g. 'When I start to do something new'; 'When I try to complete a task on time'), deciding  
8  
9 (e.g. 'When deciding between two alternatives'; 'When evaluating an opportunity'), thinking  
10  
11 (e.g. 'When developing an idea'; 'When systematically analysing something'), valuing (e.g.  
12  
13 'When I consider my feelings'; 'When I try to see the world as another person sees it'). For  
14  
15 each of these eight situations, respondents are provided with six paired sentences, which  
16  
17 compare each learning mode with the other three. For example, RO = 'I observe the situation',  
18  
19 AE 'I try out different ways of doing things', CE = 'I rely on my feelings to guide me' and  
20  
21 AC = 'I set priorities'. Respondents are asked to choose from each pair the sentence that is  
22  
23 most like what they would actually do in that situation. Precise details of the scoring regime  
24  
25 for the ASI can be found in earlier articles by Mainemelis, Boyatzis and Kolb (2002) and  
26  
27 Boyatzis and Kolb (1993). The ASI yields an adaptive profile for the four different learning  
28  
29 style environments and an average adaptive profile across all four situations. Internal  
30  
31 reliability of the ASI in the present study was:  $\alpha = 0.79$ .

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36 *Control variables.* Previous research indicates that expatriate demographics (i.e.,  
37  
38 nationality, age, gender, education level, job position, previous overseas experience) are  
39  
40 likely to be associated with expatriate learning and adjustment (e.g., Bhaskar-Shrinivas et. al.,  
41  
42 2005; Yamazaki & Kayes, 2007). Hence, we control for these factors in this research. As an  
43  
44 example, we controlled for whether expatriate managers had previous overseas experience. A  
45  
46 dummy variable with a value of '1' indicates that the expatriate manager had previous  
47  
48 overseas experience, and a value of '0' indicates no previous experience.

## 51 52 ANALYSIS

53  
54 The present research took measures to minimize the potential risk of common method  
55  
56 bias. First, when designing the survey we followed suggestions by previous researchers such  
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3 as conducting on-site interviews and a pilot study to avoid item ambiguity, providing clear  
4  
5 instructions about completing the questionnaire, and offering confidentiality and anonymity  
6  
7 to the respondents (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Second, the scoring of  
8  
9 the tacit knowledge inventory for managers was based on expert-novice comparison and as a  
10  
11 result, it was obtained from different sources compared to other variables in the present  
12  
13 research. Moreover, the LSI-3 and the ASI have been designed to be theoretically  
14  
15 commensurate while methodologically diverse in order to reduce spurious common method  
16  
17 variance among them (Mainemelis et al., 2002). Third, we conducted Harman's one-factor  
18  
19 test in which all the variables in our research were simultaneously entered into an exploratory  
20  
21 factor analysis (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Five factors were extracted, accounting for 71.3% of  
22  
23 the variance, with factor one accounting for 18.1% of the variance. No single factor emerged  
24  
25 that accounted for most of the variance. Fourth, we subjected the two learning dimensions,  
26  
27 adaptive flexibility, and expatriate adjustment to confirmatory factor analyses. Model fit was  
28  
29 assessed using the following indices suggested by Hu and Bentler (1999): (a) chi-square  
30  
31 goodness-of-fit to degrees of freedom ratio ( $\chi^2/df$ ), (b) Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), (c) root-  
32  
33 mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA), (d) goodness of fit index (GFI) (Byrne, 2001),  
34  
35 (e) adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) (Byrne, 2001), and (f) comparative fit index (CFI).  
36  
37 Satisfactory model fit is indicated by TLI, GFI, and CFI values close to 0.95, AGFI value  
38  
39 close to 0.90, RMSEA value no higher than 0.08, and  $\chi^2/df$  value no greater than 2 (Hu &  
40  
41 Bentler, 1999). The fit of the four-factor model ( $\chi^2/df = 5.58$ ,  $p < .01$ ; RMSEA = .07, CFI  
42  
43 = .89, GFI = .88, TLI = .89) was better than that of the one-factor model ( $\chi^2/df = 13.71$ ,  $p$   
44  
45  $< .01$ ; RMSEA = .93, CFI = .37, GFI = .46, TLI = .37). Therefore, we concluded that  
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47 common method bias was not a significant concern in the research.  
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54 A structural equation model was used to test the proposed hypotheses, which allowed  
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56 for the simultaneous evaluation of all hypothesized relationships and also provided an  
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3 assessment of the model's overall fit with the observed data. We evaluated our results by  
4 employing AMOS 16.0 analytical software and applying a two-step procedure recommended  
5 by Anderson and Gerbing (1988): first, validating the measurement model and second, fitting  
6 the structure model. Using the covariance matrix as input, parameters were estimated using  
7 maximum likelihood estimation. Before testing the hypothesized model, the measurement  
8 model for each construct was tested. The KMO values of all constructs in the study are  
9 greater than 0.60, which indicate that they are acceptable for factor analysis. Confirmatory  
10 factor analyses for each construct were then conducted. The items in each research scale were  
11 fed into the measurement model. The convergent and discriminant validity of each  
12 measurement construct was established and the final factors for each construct that will be  
13 brought in the structure model were identified. Table 2 presents the model fit statistics of all  
14 measurement models and each indicator's loading factor.

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Table 2 about here

Given the acceptable fit of our measurement model, we next assessed the hypothesized structural model. In the structure model of this study, there are 5 latent variables consisting of 12 observed variables (Figure 3). The hypothesized 12-factor structural model provides a relatively good fit to the data ( $\chi^2/df = 1.61$ ,  $p < .01$ ; RMSEA = .07, CFI = .94, GFI = .91, TLI = .92). Although the hypothesized structural model approached all fit indices, the modification indices indicated that a direct path from managerial tacit knowledge associated with managing-self to work adjustment was warranted. Given this path is consistent with past research (Sternberg et al., 2000), we included it and re-ran our model. This model fits the data better ( $\chi^2/df = 1.51$ ,  $p < .01$ ; RMSEA = .06, CFI = .96, GFI = .92, TLI = .93), and was thus retained for hypotheses testing. Subsequently, the standardized regression path coefficients for each of the model's 6 hypothesized relationships were examined. Testing results with significance levels are also presented in Figure 3.

1  
2  
3 Table 3 about here

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5 Figure 3 about here

## 6 7 RESULTS

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9 Table 4 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlations of the measured  
10 variables. We first considered demographic characteristics as part of our data analyses.  
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12 Statistical analyses using independent-samples *t* tests revealed that female Anglo expatriate  
13 managers ( $n = 16$ ) had stronger learning preferences for CE over AC when working in China  
14 ( $t = 4.07, p < .01$ ) than did male Anglo managers ( $n = 105$ ). The effect size ( $d = 0.4$ ) exceeds  
15 Cohen's (1992) threshold for the smallest effect size ( $d > 0.2$ ). Results also revealed that  
16 Anglo expatriate managers who had been in China longer were more concrete and less  
17 abstract ( $t = 8.39, p < .01; d = 0.9$ ), more reflective and less active ( $t = 3.53, p < .05; d = 0.4$ ),  
18 and exhibited greater levels of adaptive flexibility ( $t = 5.71, p < .01; d = 0.6$ ) if they have  
19 previous experience of overseas assignments ( $n = 42$ ). The effect size for the AC-CE learning  
20 dimension exceeds Cohen's criteria for large effect ( $d > 0.8$ ). These managers also adjusted to  
21 their work in China significantly more effectively than those with no prior international  
22 assignment experiences ( $t = 6.52, p < .01; d = 0.9$ ). Finally, one-way analysis of variance  
23 revealed a statistically significant difference ( $F = 16.839, df = 2, p < .01; d = 0.6$ ) between the  
24 three groups of managers (senior, middle, junior) with regard to managerial tacit knowledge.  
25 Post-hoc comparisons using Duncan's multiple range tests revealed that: senior managers  
26 accumulated significantly higher levels of managerial tacit knowledge than either the junior  
27 or the middle level managers; middle managers accumulated significantly higher levels of  
28 managerial tacit knowledge than junior level managers.  
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51 Table 3 about here

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53 In order to examine our framework of expatriate learning for success, we first  
54 examined the antecedents to expatriates' learning styles during their international assignment.  
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3 The results of the structural equation modeling analysis, as shown in figure 3, indicated that  
4 the length of Anglo expatriate managers' time in position in China was significantly  
5 negatively related to their two learning dimensions (AC-CE:  $\beta = -.38$ ,  $p < .001$ ; AE-RO:  $\beta = -$   
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The results of the structural equation modeling analysis, as shown in figure 3, indicated that the length of Anglo expatriate managers' time in position in China was significantly negatively related to their two learning dimensions (AC-CE:  $\beta = -.38$ ,  $p < .001$ ; AE-RO:  $\beta = -.55$ ,  $p < .001$ ) indicating that those with longer time in position are more diverging in their learning style. Thus hypotheses 2a and 2b were supported. We further examined the possibility of a transition in learning styles by dividing the sample of 121 Anglo expatriate managers into four groups based on the duration of their assignment in China: 0-1 year ( $n = 22$ ); 1-3 years ( $n = 42$ ); 3-5 years ( $n = 36$ ); greater than 5 years ( $n = 21$ ). Figure 4 shows clear differences in learning styles for the four groups. As we have shown in figure 4, each of the four groups is positioned according to their two learning dimensions' (AC-CE, AE-RO) mean score: first group (10.18, 15.27); second group (6.76, 13.10); third group (6.44, 8.06); and fourth group (6.57, 6.76). As the three arrows in the diagram indicate, there is a possibility that the orientation of Anglo expatriate managers' learning styles shift from abstract conceptualization toward concrete experience in their preference for grasping new experiences, and from active experimentation toward reflective observation in their preference for transforming new experiences as a result of acculturation. However, these observations need to be treated with some caution because the possible temporal effects on learning style and adaptability alluded to here are not based on longitudinal data. This is discussed in more detail in our limitations section.

Figure 4 about here

We then examined the antecedent to the development of adaptive flexibility. As shown in figure 3, results showed that support was found for the relationship between time in position and adaptive flexibility ( $\beta = .31$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Thus Hypothesis 5 was supported. Next, we examined how expatriates' learning styles impacted upon managerial tacit knowledge. Results revealed that Anglo expatriate managers' learning styles significantly influenced their

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3 accumulation of managerial tacit knowledge during their international assignments (AC-CE:  
4  $\beta = .32, p < .01$ ; AE-RO:  $\beta = .14, p < .05$ ). Thus Hypotheses 3a and 3b were supported. We also  
5  
6 compared Anglo expatriate managers' levels of accumulated managerial tacit knowledge  
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8 according to their learning styles using one-way analysis of variance. Results indicated that  
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10 those with diverging learning styles had accumulated significantly higher levels of  
11  
12 managerial tacit knowledge than those with assimilating, converging or accommodating  
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14 learning styles ( $F = 8.644, df = 3, p < .001; d = 0.4$ ).  
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19 Finally, we examined how expatriate learning and managerial tacit knowledge helped  
20  
21 model the variance in the dependent variable of expatriate adjustment. Results showed that  
22  
23 support was found for the relationship with the two learning dimensions (AC-CE:  $\beta = -.52,$   
24  $p < .001$ ; AE-RO:  $\beta = -.47, p < .001$ ), adaptive flexibility ( $\beta = .27, p < .001$ ) and expatriate  
25  
26 adjustment, thereby lending direct support for hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 6. Results showed that  
27  
28 the relationship between managerial tacit knowledge and expatriate adjustment was not  
29  
30 supported ( $\beta = -.11, p > .05$ ). Hypothesis 4 was therefore refuted. However, based on results  
31  
32 from the covariance, the relationship between managerial tacit knowledge associated with  
33  
34 managing-self and expatriate work adjustment was significant (Covariance =  $.22, p < .001$ ).  
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38 A summary of the results of our hypotheses testing is also provided in Figure 3.  
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#### 40 DISCUSSION

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43 Expatriation literature has burgeoned over the past two decades. According to Furuya  
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45 et al. (2009) investigative efforts have mainly focused on expatriate commitment,  
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47 expatriation as a socialization/coordination mechanism, effective expatriate management, and  
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49 expatriate self-adjustment. This article extended the study of expatriate self-adjustment,  
50  
51 believed to be one of the most frequent reasons for expatriate failure (Okpara & Kabongo,  
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53 2011). We accomplished this by examining how expatriate managers learn, adapt, and  
54  
55 acquire new knowledge during international work assignments in China. This was done  
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3 through the lens of Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory, recently highlighted as a  
4 particularly fertile area for investigation of expatriate adjustment (Yamazaki, 2010). Our  
5 study also sought to extend the adjustment model proposed by Black et al. (1991) that has  
6 already galvanized a large body of evidence and is believed to be the most influential  
7 theoretical treatment of expatriate experiences (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005).  
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14 With regard to factors associated with anticipatory adjustment in Black et al.'s (1991)  
15 model, our results revealed that managers with prior experience of working abroad had a  
16 positive association with their level of work adjustment in the host culture. This was to be  
17 expected because previous overseas work experiences have been shown to foster accurate  
18 assessment of future stressors (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005) and provide more information  
19 from which uncertainties can be reduced and problems anticipated more clearly (Black et al.,  
20 1991). Importantly, our results revealed that managers' previous overseas work experiences  
21 significantly influenced expatriate adjustment during their current international assignments  
22 in China via expatriate learning. Expatriate managers with previous experiences of overseas  
23 assignments found it easier to adjust to a host culture's dominant learning style (e.g.  
24 diverging). This may be due to them shifting from their previous dominant preferred learning  
25 styles (e.g. converging) to becoming more balanced learners, thereby enabling them to adapt  
26 their learning style towards the demands of the host country. Such reasoning would fit with  
27 Kolb's (1984) assertion that flexibility of a person's learning style is related to the degree to  
28 which one integrates the dual dialectics of the learning process – abstraction/experience(AC-  
29 CE) and action/reflection(AE-OR) (Kolb, 1984). Individuals with balanced learning profiles  
30 on these learning dimensions will be more flexible learners than those with specialised  
31 learning styles (Mainemelis et. al., 2002).  
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54 With regard to individual skills associated with Black et al.'s model, these were  
55 categorized by Mendenhall & Oddou (1985) into the three dimensions of *self* (e.g. self-  
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3 efficacy), *relational* (e.g. fostering relationships with host nationals) and *perception* (e.g.  
4 cognitive abilities associated with correctly perceiving and evaluating the host environment  
5 and its actors). All are positively related to expatriate adjustment (Black et al., 1991). More  
6 recent authors have strongly suggested that to fully understand expatriate adjustment  
7 processes we need to also consider the importance of individual learning characteristics for  
8 developing and exhibiting culturally appropriate behaviors to 'fit in' with the host culture  
9 (Maertz et al., 2009; Berry, 1997). Our study drew on previous research associated with  
10 Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory to demonstrate that Anglo managers' dominant  
11 preferred learning orientations are skewed towards Abstract Conceptualization (AC) when  
12 grasping new experiences and Active Experimentation (AE) when transforming those new  
13 experiences (e.g. *Converging* learning style). In contrast, preferred learning orientations of  
14 Chinese managers are skewed towards Concrete Experience (CE) and Reflective Observation  
15 (RO) respectively (*Diverging* learning style). Dissonances of this kind are likely to impede  
16 cross-cultural adjustment.  
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34 Results of the study revealed that degrees of adjustment were higher when expatriates'  
35 learning styles were congruent and lower when they were incongruent with the host culture.  
36 This suggests that the diverging learning style needs to be adopted by Anglo expatriate  
37 managers in order to adjust more successfully to their MNCs business context in China. It  
38 will be recalled that whilst learning style refers to a person's preference for grasping and  
39 transforming new experiences, adaptive style refers to the flexibility of a person's learning  
40 styles when dealing with changing circumstances, competing demands and environmental  
41 complexity (Kolb, 1984). Our results demonstrated that expatriate managers with greater  
42 levels of adaptive flexibility adjust significantly better to their international assignments in  
43 the host country. Expatriate managers' learning styles and their degree of adaptive flexibility  
44 are therefore critically important individual characteristics when considering international  
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3 adjustment to host cultures. This result supports Yamazaki and Kaye's (2007) assertion that  
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5 developing greater adaptive flexibility is a key component of successful cross-cultural  
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7 adjustment.  
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10 On the basis that successful adjustment of expatriates will hinge on how well they  
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12 learn from experiences during their international assignments (e.g. Li et al., 2013; Ng et al.,  
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14 2009) we were also interested to determine the extent to which individuals' learning styles  
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16 might adapt to the host culture. We therefore examined the relationship between expatriate  
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18 managers' learning styles and the duration of their assignment in China. Results (see Figure 4)  
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20 appear to indicate a transition in learning styles from converging to diverging although this  
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22 observation needs to be treated with some caution because data were collected in a cross-  
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24 sectional and not a longitudinal manner. This potential phenomenon needs to be subjected to  
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26 further research of a longitudinal nature. Nevertheless it does raise the interesting possibility  
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28 of a developmental change brought about by challenging new learning situations as managers  
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30 adapt to cross-cultural differences. Such a possibility has been previously alluded to by Kolb  
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32 and Kolb (2009), who suggest that a consequence of developmental change of learning styles  
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34 will lead to greater degrees of adaptive flexibility when people face different learning  
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36 situations.  
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41 Results of our study also revealed that Anglo expatriate managers with higher levels  
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43 of managerial tacit knowledge associated with managing-self, adjusted significantly better  
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45 during their international work assignments. This partly confirms that managerial tacit  
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47 knowledge is a predictor of success in work environments in cross-cultural contexts and  
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49 contributes to an increasing body of literature linking learning styles to tacit knowledge and  
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51 enhanced work performance (e.g. Sternberg et al., 2000; Armstrong & Mahmud, 2008). Our  
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53 results also demonstrated that managerial tacit knowledge was higher when expatriate  
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55 managers' learning styles were matched with the host culture (e.g. Diverging) and lower  
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3 among those who's learning styles were incongruent with the host culture (e.g. Converging).  
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5 With regard to the three different hierarchical management groups within this cross-cultural  
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7 context, results of the study revealed significant differences in managerial tacit knowledge  
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9 with each successive group in the hierarchy demonstrating significantly higher levels of tacit  
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11 knowledge than more junior groups. This is entirely consistent with previous research in the  
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13 field (conducted in domestic contexts) where successful-novice groups within the same  
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15 profession have been shown to differ in this way (Wagner & Sternberg, 1985, 1987; Nestor-  
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17 Baker, 1999; Armstrong & Mahmud, 2008). This, in part, confirms the validity of the present  
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19 study.  
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23 Results from our demographic data suggested that female managers may be more  
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25 adept at transitioning from AC toward CE learning modes during their assignments in the  
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27 host culture. Also, the study revealed that managerial tacit knowledge is unrelated to the  
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29 length of expatriate's completed assignment tenure. This finding lends support to the belief  
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31 that it may be how people learn from experience rather than the length of experience that  
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33 matters (Ng et al., 2009). This also corroborates the findings of Armstrong and Mahmud  
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35 (2008) who suggest that accumulation of tacit knowledge is independent of the length of  
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37 peoples' general work experience, but closely associated with matching work functions to the  
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39 work context. They further argue that 'tacit knowledge acquired through experiential learning  
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41 may be influenced by managers' individual learning styles, and the degree to which these are  
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43 consonant with the work context' (p.201).  
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#### 47 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

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49 There is limited understanding of how expatriate managers develop through  
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51 international assignments to become successful global managers. Most previous empirical  
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53 research associated with expatriate success has focused on expatriates' performance and  
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55 adjustment (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). Few have considered the importance of assessing  
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3 the effectiveness of international assignments in the context of expatriate management  
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5 learning. MNCs clearly believe in international assignments to enhance global management  
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7 effectiveness (Collings & Scullion, 2007). The present research provides new insights into  
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9 ways of making global manager development more effective both prior to, and during their  
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11 international assignments by considering individuals' learning styles, managerial tacit  
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13 knowledge, and adaptive flexibility. The results of our study have revealed a number of  
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15 important findings and these have a range of implications for both theory and practice.  
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19 First, the field of research exploring managerial tacit knowledge in expert/novice  
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21 groups in a variety of professions has previously been confined to domestic contexts. Our  
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23 study extends that research by demonstrating that managers' level and content of managerial  
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25 tacit knowledge are able to also predict success in work environments in cross-cultural  
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27 contexts. Increased levels of managerial tacit knowledge were also shown to have a positive  
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29 influence on cross-cultural adjustment in a work context. This has implications for cross-  
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31 cultural training of staff, deemed to be a necessity and not a luxury for the improvement of  
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33 cross-cultural assignments (Black et al., 1991). Currently, only 25% of MNCs make cross-  
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35 cultural training mandatory with the majority relying heavily on formal factual training  
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37 methods which are effective in transferring explicit knowledge but not tacit knowledge  
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39 (Lenartowicz et al., 2014). When training is provided in formal, organized, time-bounded and  
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41 structured ways, these programs are often divorced from managerial reality. Most learning to  
42  
43 manage occurs through practice (Sternberg et. al., 2000) in an informal context, emphasizing  
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45 on-the-job learning that occurs experientially in culturally embedded ways leading to greater  
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47 acquisition of managerial tacit knowledge (Armstrong & Fukami, 2009). A blend of formal  
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49 learning approaches to understanding the host culture, with informal approaches that take  
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51 place in work-based or simulated work-based problem scenarios are likely to lead to a greater  
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53 understanding of the art and craft of cross-cultural management (Kenworthy-U'Ren &  
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Peterson, 2005), as well as more effectively facilitating the accumulation of managerial tacit knowledge prior to embarking on overseas assignments. Kolb's (1984) learning theory provides a useful theoretical framework for routine inclusion of these types of training methods.

Second, our study found that learning styles are a significant factor influencing expatriate adjustment. Managers with diverging learning styles, congruent with the demands of the host culture, not only accumulate higher levels of managerial tacit knowledge during their assignment tenure but they also adjust better to their international assignments in China. Few previous studies have examined reasons why there are often significant variations in managers' ability to learn from experience that lead to concomitant differences in content and levels of accumulated tacit knowledge. This is despite knowing that expert managers acquire more tacit knowledge than other managers even though their intellectual abilities and general work experiences may sometime be similar (Colonia-Willner, 1998). Our findings demonstrate that the degree of match between managers' learning styles and the demands of the learning context may account for some of these differences. The implications of this for MNCs is that they may benefit from considering learning style theory as one criteria against which to base their recruitment and selection criteria when choosing staff for overseas assignments. In the case of this study, it would seem that choosing staff whose learning styles are congruent with the demands of the host culture would lead to an acceleration in their adjustment to the host culture and their levels of accumulated managerial tacit knowledge. However, whilst matching the person to the environment in this way may lead to more effective short term results due to the degree of consonance between the learner and the learning context, this may have a negative effect on the longer term expatriate manager development process. Kolb and Kolb (2009) highlighted the potential long term value of intentionally mismatching individuals' learning styles with their learning environments in

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3 order to increase adaptability, help learners overcome weaknesses in their learning style, and  
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5 develop a more integrated approach to learning. Our study went some way towards providing  
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7 empirical support for this theory by demonstrating that when MNCs expose their managers to  
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9 a mismatched learning environment where cultural differences are high, they appear to  
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11 subsequently develop a wider repertoire of coping behaviors and learning strategies that help  
12  
13 them to adjust to the host culture more effectively. Cross-cultural assignments were shown to  
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15 have the potential to facilitate management development by shaping their under-developed  
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17 modes of learning and enabling enhanced levels of adaptive flexibility as they wrestled to  
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19 adjust themselves to challenging new environments. This is derived from our results  
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21 associated with Anglo expatriate managers' learning style as a function of assignment tenure  
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23 (Figure 4). However, further research is needed in this area because these findings were based  
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25 on cross-sectional rather than longitudinal observations and the implications of this are  
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27 considered in more detail in the next section.  
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32 Thirdly, our study also revealed that those expatriate managers who are able to learn  
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34 to use a variety of problem-solving and learning strategies (high adaptive flexibility), and  
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36 apply them in situations that do not match with their natural learning style, adjusted better to  
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38 their international assignments in China. This opens up the possibility of restructuring  
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40 training and modifying instructional treatments and strategies as a means of addressing  
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42 individual learner differences and developing more rounded learners. Such approaches may  
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44 help ensure that managers are more capable of performing effectively across a wider range of  
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46 situations than managers with limited stylistic versatility – enabling them to 'think globally'.  
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50 Fourthly, with regard to gender differences, it was shown that female expatriate  
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52 managers have a preference for grasping new experiences that are more attuned to Confucian  
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54 cultures than male managers. This also has potential implications for selection of staff in  
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56 situations that would require expatriates to adapt more quickly to the host culture.  
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3 Fifthly, managers with previous overseas assignments, irrespective of location,  
4 adjusted to their work in China more effectively than those with no prior international  
5 assignment experiences. Past international assignments have been previously shown to  
6 facilitate all dimensions of adjustment because 'seasoned veterans adjust easier as they are  
7 able to anticipate problems more clearly, given their accumulated knowledge from prior  
8 experiences of living and working overseas' (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et. al., 2005, p260). MNCs  
9 would clearly benefit from having a pool of these seasoned veterans from which to select in  
10 order to satisfy the requirements of future overseas assignments.  
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21 Finally, of greater significance, was the duration of time in position in China which  
22 was positively related to Anglo managers' adaptive flexibility. This meant they were more  
23 able to adjust their learning style to manage competing demands and environmental  
24 complexity. Developing greater adaptive flexibility has been identified as a key component of  
25 successful cross-cultural adjustment (Yamazaki & Kayes, 2007) and should be a major focus  
26 in any pre-departure expatriate management training initiative. Based on the findings of this  
27 study, training based on experiential learning as a source of learning and development would  
28 be a sensible option.  
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39 In a pre-departure training situation, learning styles are best interpreted through actual  
40 dialogue with participants in order to help them to assess their strengths and weaknesses in  
41 learning and problem solving. It will also be useful to explore relationships between  
42 participants learning styles and those demanded by the host culture. In order to improve  
43 participants Diverging learning style skills, training may be designed in such a way as to  
44 enable them to: be sensitive to people's feelings; be sensitive to values; listen with an open  
45 mind; gather information; imagine the implications of ambiguous situations (Kolb, 1999).  
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3 perspectives; engaging in exercises that involve listening and observing non-judgmentally;  
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5 getting involved in more brainstorming activities and small-group discussions.  
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8 Similar approaches are put forward by Kolb (1984) in order to develop other learning  
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10 styles, leading to the development of more 'rounded learners' referred to above who have  
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12 equal abilities in the four areas of CE, RO, AC, and AE, resulting in increased levels of  
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14 adaptive flexibility. This requires learners to 'be able to involve themselves fully, openly, and  
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16 without bias in new experiences (CE); to view these experiences from many perspectives  
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18 (RO); to create concepts that integrate their observations into logically sound theories (AC);  
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20 and to use these theories to make decisions and solve problems (AE)' (Kolb, 1984, p2).  
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24 If cross-cultural training methods are adopted in a way that takes account of the  
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26 outcomes identified by this study relating to management learning theory and the facilitation  
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28 and transfer of tacit knowledge, then we remain confident that expatriate adjustment during  
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30 overseas assignments in China (and beyond) will improve.  
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### 32 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

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34 The contribution of our study must be assessed in the light of its limitations, of which  
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36 there are several. First our study investigates Anglo expatriate managers learning, knowledge  
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38 acquisition, and adjustment to the host culture when working in MNCs operating in a  
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40 Confucian culture. Due to constraints over time and resources, our samples in this study  
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42 were limited to Anglo expatriate managers working in MNCs in mainland China. The extent  
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44 to which our findings can be generalized to other Confucian cultures should therefore be  
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46 interpreted with caution. It is recommended that future studies be conducted with Anglo  
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48 expatriate managers working in MNCs in other Confucian cultures such as Japan, Singapore,  
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50 South Korea or Taiwan in order to further confirm the validity and generalizability of the  
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52 present findings.  
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3 Second, our conclusions and implications considered ways in which cross-cultural  
4 training might better prepare managers for overseas assignments by developing alternative  
5 learning style abilities to those associated with their dominant preferred learning style. The  
6 viability of this depends on the extent to which learning styles are stable or open to change.  
7 Whilst there are theoretical arguments to suggest the latter (Mainemelis et al., 2002), further  
8 empirical research is needed to determine the extent to which a person's learning style is  
9 malleable.  
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19 Third, one element of our research considered Anglo expatriate managers' learning  
20 style as a function of time in position (Figure 4). Care must be taken not to interpret this  
21 particular result as meaning a transition of learning styles had taken place over time because  
22 data were collected on a cross-sectional basis. It is therefore not clear whether the managers  
23 sampled had the same (or different) learning styles when they began their assignment. Our  
24 observations in that section of the data analysis may therefore be a selection rather than a  
25 development effect. Future research would benefit from measuring learning styles in a  
26 longitudinal manner at various points in time across the duration of their assignment.  
27 Collecting qualitative data would also add to the richness of future studies.  
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39 Finally, our theoretical argument that Confucian cultures are congruent with  
40 Diverging learning styles, whereas Anglo cultures are congruent with Converging learning  
41 styles was based on limited empirical research. Examining Anglo managers' learning styles  
42 prior to, and at various points during their overseas assignments would provide us with a  
43 more conclusive picture of the entire expatriate learning processes.  
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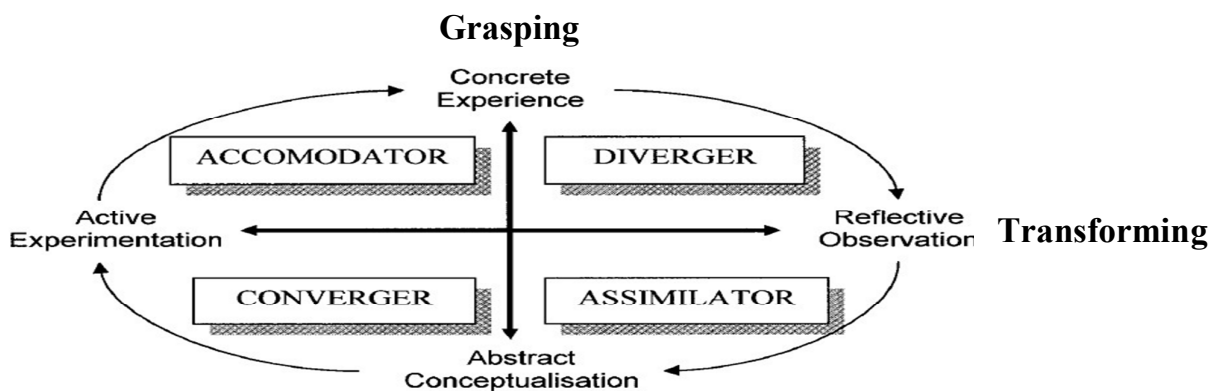


Figure 1: Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Cycle

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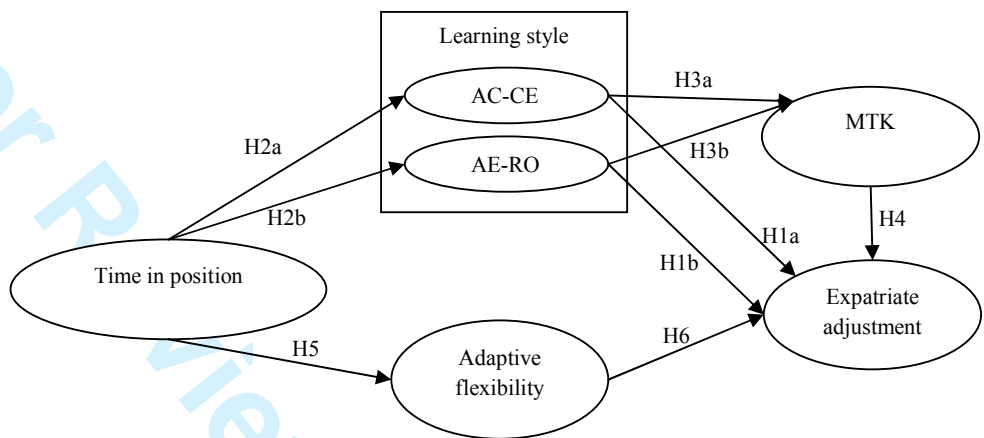


Figure 2 Hypothesized research model

Note: MTK = managerial tacit knowledge

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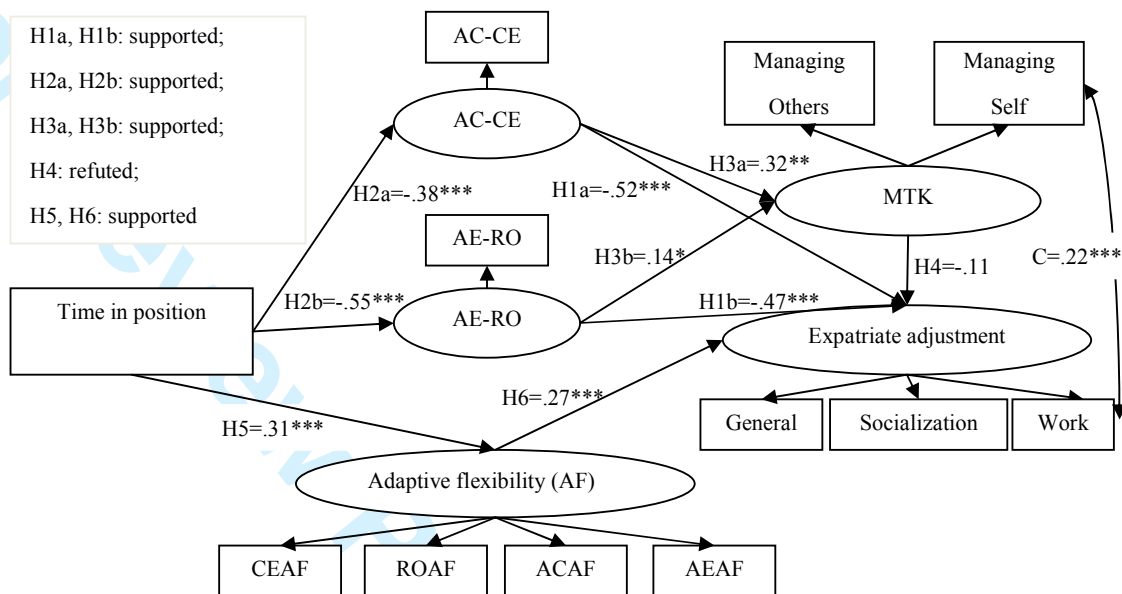


Figure 3 The structural model with testing results (n=121; C=Covariance; \* p<0.05; \*\* p<0.01; \*\*\* P<0.001(two-tailed))

Note: MTK = managerial tacit knowledge

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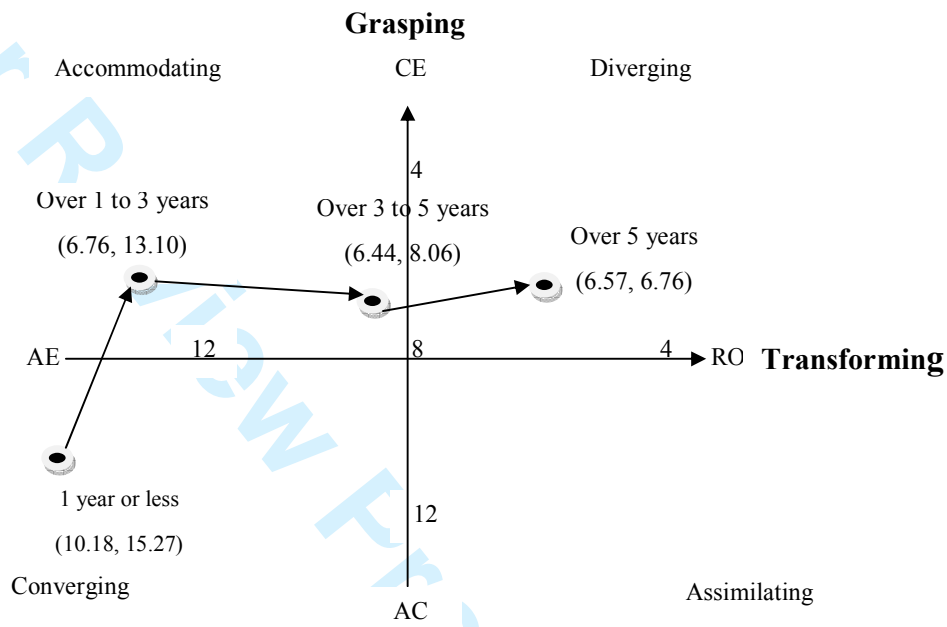


Figure 4: Anglo expatriate managers' learning style as a function of assignment tenure  
 Each of the four groups is placed based on their two learning dimensions' (AC-CE, AE-RO) mean scores

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Table 1 Demographic characteristics of survey participants (N = 121)

	Frequency	Percent		Frequency	Percent
<u>Nationality</u>			<u>Overseas work experience</u>		
UK/Ireland	43	35.5%	Yes	42	34.7%
USA	36	29.8%	No	79	65.3%
Canada	26	21.5%	<u>Overseas study experience</u>		
Australia	11	9.1%	No	89	73.6%
New Zealand	5	4.1%	Yes	32	26.4%
<u>Gender</u>			<u>Educational achievement</u>		
Male	105	86.8%	Master	51	42.1%
Female	16	13.2%	Bachelor	69	57%
<u>Age</u>			other	1	0.8%
20-29	8	6.6%	<u>Job position</u>		
30-39	71	58.7%	CEO/President	5	4.1%
40-49	38	31.4%	Senior manager	26	21.5%
50-60	4	3.3%	Middle manager	75	62%
<u>Time in position</u>			Junior manager	15	12.4%
<u>in China</u>			<u>Function area</u>		
1 year or less	22	18%	HRM/general	21	17.4%
1 to 3 years	42	35%	Operations/production	30	24.8%
3 to 5 years	36	30%	Sales & marketing	22	18.2%
over 5 years	21	17%	Engineering/design	29	24%
			Finance/accounting	13	10.7%
			Other	6	5%

Table 2 Model fit statistics of the measurement models

Construct/Indicators	Loading factor	$\chi^2/df$	TLI	RMSEA	CFI	GFI
AC-CE learning dimension		1.88	.83	.06	.91	.90
AE-RO learning dimension		1.74	.88	.06	.92	.90
Adaptive flexibility (AF)		1.83	.92	.04	.98	.97
<i>CEAF</i>	.83**					
<i>ROAF</i>	.80**					
<i>ACAF</i>	.77**					
<i>AEAF</i>	.81**					
LAMTK		1.55	.91	.03	.94	.92
<i>Managing self</i>	.81**					
<i>Managing others</i>	.84**					
Expatriate adjustment		1.49	.90	.04	.93	.90
<i>General adjustment</i>	.88**					
<i>Socialization adjustment</i>	.85**					
<i>Work adjustment</i>	.87**					

\*\*p < 0.01(two-tailed).

Note: MTK = managerial tacit knowledge

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Table 3 Means, standard deviations and intercorrelations for key study variables (N = 121)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Gender	-												
2. Tenure	-.01	-											
3. Previous IA	.16	.05	-										
4. Job position	.03	-.20*	-.26*	-									
5. AC-CE	-.35**	-.21*	-.49**	.06	(.77)								
6. AE-RO	-.10	-.43**	-.23**	.14	.37**	(.74)							
7. CE	.23**	.29**	.33**	.07	-.85**	.26**	(.77)						
8. RO	-.07	.16**	.14*	.05	.27**	-.85**	-.39**	(.74)					
9. AC	-.13*	-.16*	-.17**	.01	.90**	-.45**	-.55**	.07	(.72)				
10. AE	-.01	-.14*	-.13	.05	-.46**	.90**	.09	-.48**	-.52**	(.73)			
11. EA	.15	.59**	.26**	-.14*	-.43**	-.34**	.47**	.38**	-.22**	-.16**	(.90)		
12. MTK	-.15	-.23**	-.23**	.27**	.20**	.21**	-.28**	-.29**	.15**	.18**	-.12*	(.88)	
13. AF	.13	.31**	.50**	-.08	-.55**	-.45**	.57**	.51**	-.39**	-.44**	.39**	-.16*	(.79)
Mean	1.13	36.50	.50	2.83	7.26	10.89	24.58	26.31	31.83	37.12	4.02	1.07	16.03
SD	.34	26.34	.77	.69	5.97	5.86	4.22	4.24	3.97	3.92	.74	.13	2.58

Notes: IA = international assignment; CE = concrete experience; RO = reflective observation; AC = abstract conceptualization; AE = active experimentation; EA = Expatriate Adjustment; MTK = managerial tacit knowledge; AF = adaptive flexibility; SD = standard deviation; Gender: 1 = male, 2 = female;

Internal reliability coefficients appear in parentheses along the main diagonal.

\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$  (two-tailed).

## AUTHOR NOTES

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