

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The liberalization of Macau's gaming industry has attracted international casino developers to build world-class facilities in Macau and has brought this city to the global scene, in addition to bringing an astonishing economic growth. This phase in the evolution of the Macau Gaming Market has brought employment and professional development opportunities to the local labor workforce, and has also witnessed the arrival of many expatriate personnel (232%¹ increase from 2004 to 2008) bringing international experience and expertise into the local labor market workforce.

This influx has presented interesting social dynamics and behaviors in terms of the factors affecting expatriate lifestyle adjustment into an already diverse Macau cultural scene. As a result it is very important for the host companies to understand and to manage effective adjustment of their expatriate workers not only within the company but also into the local community.

This research looked into the social factors – specifically the anticipatory and in-country factors - that positively impact the adjustment of the expatriates working in the Gaming Industry of Macau. The research used a qualitative approach with data obtained through in-depth interviews with ten expatriates at the managerial and director levels who are employed at four different Casinos. The study adopted the conceptual framework of International Adjustment by Black et al, (1991).

The findings of the study indicate that language ability is a major important

¹ Macau Labor Affairs Bureau and Statistic and Census Bureau, 2008

factor for work, interactive and cultural adjustment, particularly for those who need to deal directly with local front line staff. Spouse and family adjustment is another critical factor that significantly impacts on the expatriate's overall adjustment. In addition, co-worker and logistical support are important in facilitating adjustment and can assist the expatriates in gaining an in-depth understanding of the host organizations and an appreciation of the local culture. This study also found that previous overseas experience, self-efficacy, relational skill, role clarity and role discretion further facilitate the expatriates' adjustment experience. Conversely, the study shows that role novelty and culture novelty tend to inhibit the expatriates' adjustment. And role conflict does not have real impact on adjustment.

From the findings, the study suggests the proliferation of written and spoken English to be used in the public domain (e.g. road signs, instruction guides) and the availability of translation facilities and services in order to support smooth adjustment of expatriates to the local culture. In addition, the provision of a standard for training modules on local cultural awareness for both in-company and societal situations, along with improved company support and community services would help expatriates during their adjustment period.

Implications drawn from this study have practical significance to provide key factors for gaming companies and society to facilitate the expatriates' adjustment and further obtain higher productivity and stability from these human capitals. Further research on the relationship between the factors and the overall outcome of expatriates' adjustment and analysis of the critical factors are recommended.