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## An Examination of Perceived Organizational Support as a Multidimensional Construct in the Context of an Expatriate Assignment

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*We examined a multidimensional measure of perceived organizational support (adjustment POS, career POS, and financial POS) within an integrative stress model of expatriate success. Expatriate success was defined in terms of multiple criteria and the predictors included role stressors, situational stressors, supervisor support, and POS. Hypotheses were tested with 230 expatriate-supervisor dyads and S.E.M. analyses. Support was found for a partially mediated model. The results showed that the POS dimensions differentially predicted expatriate success criteria.*

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A recent survey by Windham International and the National Foreign Trade Council indicated that the prevalence of expatriate assignments continues to increase among U.S.-based companies (Windham International, 1999). Organizational scholars have addressed the challenges of expatriate assignments by theoretical and empirical examination of the predictors of various expatriate success measures (e.g., Aycan, 1997; Black & Gregersen, 1991a; Black, Mendenhall & Oddou, 1991; Caligiuri, 1997; Caligiuri, Joshi & Lazarova, 1999; Kraimer, Wayne & Jaworski, 2001; Shaffer, Harrison & Gilley, 1999). Much of this research has adopted the stress perspective of employee adjustment because it is especially relevant to expatriate assignments due to the uncertainty involved in living and working in a foreign country (Black et al., 1991; Sanchez, Spector & Cooper,

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2000). From this stress perspective, expatriate research has examined various role stressors, situational stressors, and social support as predictors of expatriate success. A handful of studies have begun to examine the role of perceived organizational support (POS), a particular source of social support, in predicting expatriate success with promising results (Guzzo, Noonan & Elron, 1994; Kraimer et al., 2001; Shaffer, Harrison, Gilley & Luk, 2001). This paper is intended to contribute to research on POS by developing and testing a multidimensional measure of POS. The relationships of POS with employee outcomes are examined within an integrated stress model of expatriate success.

Perceived organizational support has been defined as the employees' global beliefs that the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson & Sowa, 1986). Organizational support theory supposes that employees infer the extent to which the organization cares about their well-being through various policies, practices, and treatment. Employees then reciprocate such support with increased loyalty and performance (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Research on POS has found consistent support for organizational support theory (see Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002, for a review). Of relevance to this study, POS has been positively related to expatriates' adjustment to the country and work (Kraimer et al., 2001), organizational commitment (Guzzo et al., 1994), and intentions to remain on the assignment (Shaffer et al., 2001). Related, expatriates' perceptions of supportive company practices have been positively related to expatriates' adjustment to the foreign country (Caligiuri et al., 1999; Florkowski & Fogel, 1999; Shaffer et al., 1999). While this research has been consistent with organizational support theory in the expatriate assignment context, this research has also suggested that a more complex conceptualization of POS may be warranted (Guzzo, Noonon & Elron, 1993; Guzzo et al., 1994). Accordingly, one purpose of this study is to develop a multidimensional conceptualization of POS consisting of adjustment POS, career POS, and financial POS. Through an examination of the dimensions of POS, insights can be gained in terms of how these three forms of organizational support are related to different employee outcomes.

A second purpose of this study is to examine the role of POS in predicting expatriate success by testing an integrative model based on the stress perspective of employee adjustment. We, thus, include role stressors, situational stressors, supervisor support, and POS as predictors of expatriate success. We also include multiple criteria of expatriate success: expatriate adjustment, organizational commitment, job performance, and intentions to remain on the assignment. While a multitude of studies have examined predictors of expatriate adjustment (e.g., Black, 1990; Black & Gregersen, 1991a, 1991b; Caligiuri et al., 1999; Kraimer et al., 2001; Parker & McEvoy, 1993; Shaffer et al., 1999) and various withdrawal cognitions (e.g., Black & Gregersen, 1990; Gregersen & Black, 1992; Guzzo et al., 1994; Shaffer & Harrison, 1998; Shaffer et al., 2001), less research has incorporated multiple criteria of expatriate success in a single study. Thus, a final purpose of this study is to investigate the relationships among the expatriate success criteria by testing a mediated model in which the success criteria are represented as primary and secondary level outcomes. We begin with a discussion of expatriate success and then turn to the development of our integrative model incorporating POS as a multidimensional construct.

## Expatriate Success

In the expatriate literature, “success” has most commonly been examined using constructs such as expatriate adjustment (Black et al., 1991; Florkowski & Fogel, 1999; McEvoy & Parker, 1995; Shaffer et al., 1999), withdrawal cognitions (Florkowski & Fogel, 1999; Guzzo et al., 1994; Shaffer & Harrison, 1998; Shaffer et al., 2001), job performance (Caligiuri, 1997, 2000), and organizational commitment (Florkowski & Fogel, 1999; Gregersen & Black, 1992). While most of these success criteria are examined independent of each other, “there seems to be general agreement on the fact that ‘overseas success’ is evident if expatriates (1) remain in the assignment until the end of the term, (2) adjust to living conditions in the new culture, and (3) perform well on the job” (Aycan & Kanungo, 1997: 251). Additionally, with the increasing concern over retaining expatriates upon their repatriation to the home-country, organizations consider retention of these former expatriate employees as an important success criterion (Black & Gregersen, 1991b; Lazarova & Caligiuri, 2001; Stroh, 1995). Consistent with this converging view of expatriate success, we define success in terms of expatriate adjustment, commitment to the organization, job performance, and intentions to complete the assignment.

Expatriate adjustment consists of three facets: work, general, and interaction (Black & Stephens, 1989). Black and Stephens defined work adjustment as the expatriates’ psychological comfort with respect to job tasks of the foreign assignment. General adjustment is with respect to the general living conditions and culture of the foreign country. Interaction adjustment is with respect to interacting with the host-country nationals. Expatriate adjustment has been one of the most studied success criterion since Tung’s (1981) seminal article in which she noted that expatriate’s inability to adjust to living in the foreign country was one of the most frequently cited reasons for assignment failure. Kraimer et al. (2001) found that expatriate adjustment was distinct from job performance among expatriate employees.

Commitment to the organization is defined as the expatriate’s affective attachment to the organization and has been shown to be a strong correlate of turnover (Griffeth, Hom & Gaertner, 2000). Caligiuri (1997) noted that “expatriates need to be especially committed to their organization and their position . . . given the significant upheaval the expatriate position will have on their personal lives” (p. 123). We also assume that expatriates who are committed to the parent company will be less likely to leave the organization upon their repatriation to the home-country. Research has shown that expatriate employees develop attachments to the foreign facility separately from their attachment to the parent company (Florkowski & Fogel, 1999; Gregersen & Black, 1992). Thus, in this study, we included commitment to the foreign facility and commitment to the parent company as separate measures of organizational commitment.

The third success criterion we examined is job performance. In her model of expatriate performance, Caligiuri noted that performance may include both task and contextual aspects specific to expatriate assignments (Caligiuri, 1997; Caligiuri & Day, 2000). We define task performance in terms of the expatriate’s performance on meeting job objectives and technical aspects of the job. Contextual performance refers to the expatriate’s performance on aspects of the job that go beyond specific job duties but are essential to performing well in an expatriate assignment, such as establishing good relationships with host nationals and

adapting to the foreign facility's business customs. Thus, we included task and contextual performance as measures of job performance.

Finally, completion of the expatriate assignment is the most basic behavioral criterion used for assessing "assignment success." Success occurs when an expatriate remains on the assignment for the entire expected duration (Black, 1988, 1990; Caligiuri, 1997; Tung, 1981). Following the literature on employee turnover, studies have relied on behavioral intentions as an indicator of assignment completion (Shaffer & Harrison, 1998; Shaffer et al., 2001). Thus, we examined intentions to complete the expatriate assignment as a proxy for successful assignment completion. Shaffer and Harrison (1998) found that intentions to withdraw from the assignment was a distinct construct from expatriate adjustment and commitment to the parent company.

In sum, we define expatriate success in terms of expatriate adjustment, commitment to the organization (foreign facility and parent company), job performance (task and contextual), and intentions to complete the assignment. As will be discussed in the next section, we expect that these success criteria will be best represented as primary and secondary level outcomes.

### **Integrative Stress Model of Expatriate Success**

Expatriate researchers have adapted the stress model of employee adjustment for a number of reasons. First, research has found that feelings of stress are a common response to job relocations (Anderzen & Arnetz, 1997; Brett, 1980; Munton, 1990), especially international relocations (Fisher & Shaw, 1994). Second, stress also has been found to be an important correlate of work attitudes and behaviors (Cohen, 1980; Fisher, 1985; Motowidlo, Packard & Manning, 1986; Tetrick & LaRocco, 1987; Vicino & Bass, 1978). In combination, examining expatriate success from a stress perspective seems particularly appropriate. Theories of stress management have highlighted that role stressors, situational stressors, and lack of social support will exacerbate the dysfunctional effects of a stressful life event (such as an expatriate assignment) on employee behavior and attitudes (Ashford & Taylor, 1990; Bhagat, 1983). Role and situational stressors contribute to the employee's appraisal of the actual threat and uncertainty associated with the new job and work facility (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980). Social support contributes to the employee's ability to cope with the stress (House, 1981). Accordingly, we included three role stressors (role ambiguity, role conflict, and role novelty), four situational stressors (lack of language fluency, national culture novelty, lack of promotion expectations, and lack of free choice), and two social support factors (leader-member exchange and POS) in our model of expatriate success.

Our hypothesized model tests the contention that the expatriate success criteria represent primary and secondary outcomes of the stressors and social support (see Figure 1). In this model, the stressors and social support factors are independent antecedents of expatriate adjustment and organizational commitment. Further, adjustment and commitment mediate the relationships between the antecedents (stressors and social support factors) and the outcomes of performance and intentions to complete the assignment. This model is largely based on Ashford and Taylor's (1990) model of the adaptation process and is described next.

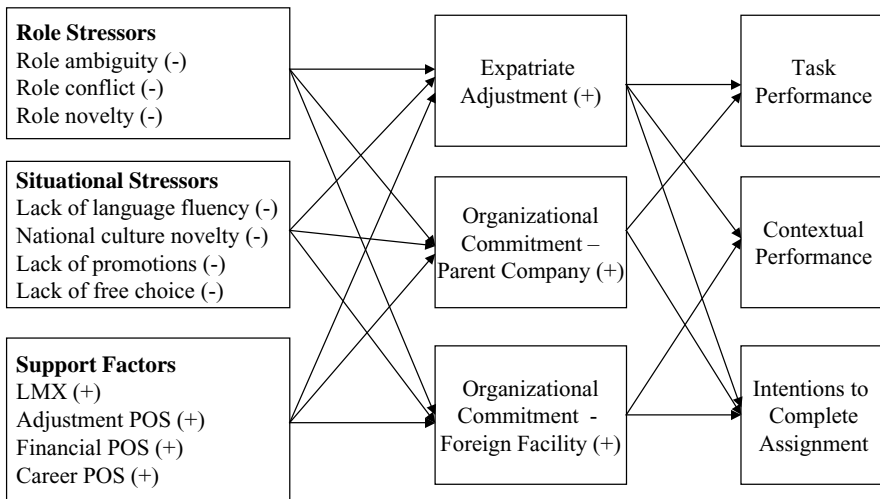


Figure 1. A mediated model of expatriate success.

### *Interrelationships Among Expatriate Success Criteria*

In their model, [Ashford and Taylor \(1990\)](#) proposed that various person, transition, and situation factors (similar to our stress and support factors) will impact an individual's ability to adapt to a new environment. Adaptation results when the individual learns and maintains behaviors appropriate to the new environment. The individual's level of adaptation will then determine secondary outcomes such as the individual's performance and tenure intentions. Without adaptation to the environment, the individual will not know which behaviors are required for successful performance and maintaining tenure in the organization. The definition of expatriate adjustment (psychological comfort with respect to work, the culture, and interacting with host nationals; [Black & Stephens, 1989](#)) implies that high levels of adjustment are indicative of successful adaptation. Thus, we would expect that expatriate adjustment positively relates to job performance and intent to complete the assignment (a concept similar to expatriate assignment tenure). Empirically, [Kraimer et al. \(2001\)](#) found support for the fact that expatriate adjustment positively relates to job performance. While [Shaffer and Harrison \(1998\)](#) found a negative correlation between expatriate adjustment and withdrawal cognitions, expatriate adjustment was not a significant predictor of withdrawal cognitions when other variables were included in the regression equation. Thus, in order to provide another test of the relationship between expatriate adjustment and these outcomes, we offer the following hypothesis.

*Hypothesis 1:* Expatriate adjustment will positively relate to (a) task performance, (b) contextual performance, and (c) intentions to complete the assignment.

While [Ashford and Taylor's \(1990\)](#) model suggests that expatriate adjustment would also mediate the relationships between our independent variables and organizational

commitment, it is possible that organizational commitment will instead serve as a mediating construct along with expatriate adjustment. This is because affective organizational commitment has been shown to be an indicator of withdrawal behaviors and cognitions. The turnover literature has found consistent support for the theoretical relationship between affective organizational commitment and turnover (Griffeth et al., 2000) as well as turnover intentions (Bozeman & Perrewe, 2001). In the expatriate literature, research has found support for a negative relationship between affective organizational commitment and intentions to withdraw from the expatriate assignment (Florkowski & Fogel, 1999; Shaffer & Harrison, 1998). Additionally, research has found organizational commitment to be a predictor of job performance (DeCotiis & Summers, 1987; Wright & Bonett, 2002). We expect both parent company and foreign facility commitment to predict intentions to complete the assignment because this behavioral intention reflects engaging in a behavior that benefits the parent company and the foreign facility. However, commitment to the parent company will most likely relate to task performance, but not contextual performance. Employees who are highly committed to the parent company will be motivated to complete their job responsibilities per the expectations of the parent company, however, the foci of one commitment (the parent company) may not necessarily lead to the employee displaying extra-role contextual performance behaviors at another facility. For this reason, though, we would expect commitment to the foreign facility to relate to extra-role contextual performance behaviors at that foreign facility.

*Hypothesis 2:* Commitment to the parent company will positively relate to (a) task performance and (b) intentions to complete the assignment.

*Hypothesis 3:* Commitment to the foreign facility will positively relate to (a) contextual performance and (b) intentions to complete the assignment.

### *Role Stressors*

A role is a pattern of behaviors expected by an employee while performing his/her job tasks (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991). If these patterns of behaviors are not clear, then role stress is considered to occur (Katz & Kahn, 1978; Rizzo, House & Lirtzman, 1970). Role ambiguity occurs when the behavioral expectations for a role are not clear. Role conflict occurs when the focal person perceives there to be incompatibility between expected sets of behavior (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Role novelty refers to the degree to which the role permits the exercise of prior knowledge, practiced skills, and established habits (Nicholson, 1984). Expatriate research has found that these three forms of role stress are negatively related to expatriate adjustment (Aryee & Stone, 1996; Black, 1988; Black & Gregersen, 1991a; Fisher & Shaw, 1994; Florkowski & Fogel, 1999; Shaffer et al., 1999) and that role conflict and role ambiguity are negatively related to organizational commitment (Florkowski & Fogel, 1999; Gregersen & Black, 1992; Naumann, 1993). Thus, we incorporated role ambiguity, role conflict, and role novelty in our model and offer the following hypotheses as replications.

*Hypothesis 4:* (a) Role ambiguity, (b) role conflict, and (c) role novelty will be negatively related to expatriate adjustment.

*Hypothesis 5:* (a) Role ambiguity and (b) role conflict will be negatively related to commitment to the parent company and foreign facility.

### *Situational Stressors*

In their model of individual adaptation to work transitions, [Ashford and Taylor \(1990\)](#) noted that three transition factors will contribute to the individual's assessment of the degree to which the transition is stressful and threatening: the magnitude of the transition, the individual's evaluative reaction to the assignment, and the source of the work transition. The situational stressors examined here are intended to capture these three types of transition factors. First, we included two variables to capture the magnitude of the work transition: the expatriate's ability to speak the foreign language and national culture novelty. National culture novelty is defined as the differences between the host-country's and home-country's national cultures ([Church, 1982](#); [Hofstede, 1980](#)). It is expected that expatriates will perceive that a lack of language fluency and a novel national culture are stressful as these situation factors reflect the fact that the their host countries are greatly different than their home countries. Research has found national culture novelty to be negatively and language fluency to be positively related to expatriate adjustment ([Kraimer et al., 2001](#); [Parker & McEvoy, 1993](#); [Shaffer et al., 1999](#)). In replication of this research, we offer the following hypothesis.

*Hypothesis 6:* (a) Lack of language fluency and (b) national culture novelty will be negatively related to expatriate adjustment.

A third situational stressor examined was the expatriate's expectation that s/he will not be promoted upon repatriation (lack of promotion expectations) and is intended to capture the expatriate's evaluative reaction to the expatriate assignment. One important source of a positive evaluation for expatriate assignments comes from the individual's belief about his/her career prospects upon repatriation ([Feldman & Thomas, 1992](#); [Gomez-Meija & Balkin, 1987](#)). Specifically, if the expatriate believes that the assignment will lead to a promotion upon repatriation to his/her home-country, the expatriate is more likely to view the assignment in a favorable manner. Research has found that promotion expectations upon repatriation positively related to expatriate adjustment ([Parker & McEvoy, 1993](#)) and intentions to remain on the assignment ([Feldman & Thomas, 1992](#)). However, consistent with [Ashford and Taylor's \(1990\)](#) model of individual adaptation, we believe that the relationship between a lack of promotion expectations and intentions to remain on the assignment is mediated through organizational commitment and expatriate adjustment.

*Hypothesis 7:* Lack of promotion expectations will be negatively related to (a) expatriate adjustment, (b) commitment to parent company, and (c) commitment to foreign facility.

The final situational factor, lack of free choice, refers to the expatriate's perception that he/she was pressured by the organization into accepting the expatriate assignment (i.e., he/she did not have free choice in making the decision to accept the expatriate assignment). Expatriates who are pressured to take the expatriate assignment by organizational managers should perceive the assignment to be more threatening, as it indicates a lack of control over the decision. Lack of free choice has been negatively related to expatriates' intentions to



remain on the assignment (Bolino & Feldman, 2000; Feldman & Thomas, 1992). However, consistent with Ashford and Taylor's (1990) model of individual adaptation, we believe that the relationship between a lack of free choice and intentions to remain on the assignment is mediated through organizational commitment to the foreign facility and expatriate adjustment. An employee who is pressured into the assignment by his/her organization may feel less control over the decision to accept the assignment, however, s/he may regain control over this forced decision by not making efforts to adjust to the foreign country and workplace and by being less committed to the foreign facility.

*Hypothesis 8:* Lack of free choice will be negatively related to (a) expatriate adjustment and (b) commitment to the foreign facility.

### *Supervisor Support*

Supportive relationships at work can serve to alleviate the stress associated with working and living in a foreign country. We, therefore, included two work-related sources of social support in this study: supervisor support and organizational support. We examined supervisor support in terms of leader–member exchange (LMX; Kraimer et al., 2001; Liden, Sparrowe & Wayne, 1997). LMX refers to the quality of the interpersonal exchange relationship between an employee and his/her supervisor and has been shown to be a significant predictor of expatriate performance (Kraimer et al., 2001) as well as numerous work attitudes and behaviors of “domestic” employees (see Liden et al., 1997, for a review). Consistent with this research, we expect LMX will be positively related to expatriate adjustment and job performance. We hypothesize the direct link to job performance, rather than a mediated one through expatriate adjustment, because of the large body of research that has shown a direct relationship between LMX and job performance (Liden et al., 1997).

*Hypothesis 9:* LMX will be positively related to (a) expatriate adjustment, (b) task performance, and (c) contextual performance.

### *Perceived Organizational Support*

In this study, we are interested in investigating whether a particular source of social support—organizational support—plays a role in predicting expatriate success. Organizational stress scholars have argued that organizational support may be an important determinant of employees' adjustment and performance following a job transfer (Anderson & Stark, 1985; Guzzo et al., 1993; Payne, 1980). Additionally, organizational support theory suggests that POS is a valued resource because it assures employees that help will be available from the organization “when it is needed to carry out one's job effectively and to deal with stressful situations” (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002: 698). Given that expatriate employees are living and working in a foreign country at the request of their organizations, we expect POS to be a particularly valuable source of social support. Expatriate scholars have in fact found initial evidence that organizational support positively relates to expatriate adjustment (Caligiuri et al., 1999; Kraimer et al., 2001; Shaffer et al., 1999), organizational commitment (Guzzo et al., 1993, 1994), and intentions to remain on the assignment (Shaffer



et al., 2001). However, this research has not examined the multidimensional nature of POS, explored the role that POS plays in predicting expatriate success relative to other predictors, nor examined POS with respect to a full set of expatriate success criteria.

Guzzo et al. (1993, 1994) argued that POS represents the employees' psychological contract with their organizations. Psychological contract fulfillment occurs when the organization provides benefits and services to the employee and, in return, the employee displays positive attitudes and work outcomes. Research on expatriates suggests that the nature of the psychological contract between expatriates and organizations is much more intense than that between "domestic" employees and their organizations. Specifically, Guzzo et al. (1993) summarized their research on employer practices and expatriate managers by stating, "... expatriate assignments profoundly change the relationship between managers and their employers ... employers provide expatriates with a greater number and a more diverse set of benefits, services, and supports than are provided to employees working domestically" (p. 326). Their own research has shown that the typical provisions provided by organizations to their expatriates includes many items that are not relevant to domestic employees such as financial inducements for tax equalization, cost-of-living allowances, emergency leave programs, and foreign language training courses (Guzzo et al., 1994). Other researchers have highlighted that organizations sometimes provide pre-departure support such as cross-cultural training programs to their expatriates (Black & Mendenhall, 1990). In return for these benefits and services, expatriate employees are expected to not only perform their jobs effectively, but also develop global competencies and provide coordination between the foreign subsidiary and the parent organization (Caligiuri, 1997).

Because the expatriate assignment is considered to be a more intense employment relationship, expatriate researchers have taken the initiative of examining many specific organizational support practices in relation to expatriate success criteria. Specific types of organizational support practices that have been examined include pre-departure and adjustment-related support variables (Aryee, Chay & Chew, 1996; Caligiuri, Hyland, Joshi & Bross, 1998; Caligiuri et al., 1999; Guzzo et al., 1994), financial support variables (Florkowski & Fogel, 1999; Guzzo et al., 1994), and career support variables (Arvey, Bhagat & Salas, 1991; Aryee et al., 1996; Feldman & Bolino, 1999; Feldman & Thomas, 1992; Florkowski & Fogel, 1999; Selmer, 2000). While this research has focused on expatriate support practices, its depth provides us with an opportunity to examine the global POS construct in more detail than has been done with research on POS and "domestic workers." An integration of this expatriate research suggests that POS may be multidimensional such that adjustment support, career support, and financial support are distinct dimensions of global POS that differentially relate to employee outcomes. Accordingly, we first propose that adjustment POS, career POS, and financial POS are distinct dimensions of global POS and, thus, will examine these three dimensions of POS with respect to our expatriate success criteria.

*Adjustment POS.* We define adjustment POS as the extent to which the organization cares about the employee's (including family) adjustment following a job transfer. In the expatriate assignment context, adjustment POS develops through the organization's policies and practices that ease the actual transition and adjustment to the foreign country and workplace. These practices might include anticipatory and in-country adjustment programs such as cross-cultural training, relocation assistance, and language training (Black et al.,

1991; Guzzo et al., 1994). Given the nature of these types of support practices, we expect that adjustment POS will be related to expatriate adjustment.

*Hypothesis 10:* Adjustment POS will be positively related to expatriate adjustment.

*Career POS.* We define career POS as the extent to which the organization cares about the employee's career needs. For expatriate employees, career POS develops through the organization's policies and practices that allow the expatriate to continue to receive career developmental opportunities while in the foreign country. These practices might include a mentor while on the expatriate assignment (Feldman & Bolino, 1999; Florkowski & Fogel, 1999), long-term career planning (Selmer, 2000), and career-oriented performance appraisals (Feldman & Thomas, 1992). Research on career development has shown that organizational career development practices positively relates to employees' commitment to the organization (Sturges, Guest & Davey, 2000). We further expect career POS to be an important contributor to organizational commitment because expatriate employees are especially concerned with their career prospects upon their repatriation to their home countries (Lazarova & Caligiuri, 2001; Stahl, Miller & Tung, 2002). Given that career support initiated by the parent company is the type of support needed for career prospects upon repatriation, we expect career POS to relate to commitment to the parent company.

*Hypothesis 11:* Career POS will be positively related to commitment to the parent company.

*Financial POS.* We define financial POS as the extent to which the organization cares about the employee's financial needs and rewards the employee's contributions in terms of compensation and employment benefits. In the context of expatriate assignments, financial POS develops through the organization's policies with respect to financial inducements, rewards, and benefits for expatriate assignments (Florkowski & Fogel, 1999; Guzzo et al., 1994). For example, the amount of assignment bonuses, cost of living allowances, rest and relaxation leave time, and other perks associated with the expatriate assignment will be reflected in the expatriate's perceptions of financial POS. We expect that financial POS will be related to both foci of commitment. The financial support is coming primarily from the parent company, but they are receiving many of the benefits while working at the foreign facility. Our expectation is consistent with Florkowski and Fogel's (1999) finding that expatriates who felt that their companies provided them with enough support to maintain their standard of living while in the foreign country were more committed to the foreign facility.

*Hypothesis 12:* Financial POS will be positively related to (a) commitment to the parent company and (b) commitment to the foreign facility.

### *Alternative Models*

In testing the adequacy of the hypothesized, mediated model, we examined three additional models. The first model explicitly examines whether the POS dimensions

differentially relate to the three mediating constructs in order to examine the utility of a multidimensional POS construct. Thus, in the first alternative model, all possible paths from the POS dimensions to the primary level dependent variables are added to the hypothesized model. The second alternative model represents a partially mediated model and is a recommended alternative model when hypothesizing a mediated model (Kelloway, 1998). In this model, we added paths from the independent variables to the second-level dependent variables based on past empirical research. The third alternative model is a non-mediated model and represents the simplest perspective of the relationship among stressors, social support factors, and the expatriate success criteria. According to this model, role stressors, situational stressors, LMX, and POS will be direct antecedents of all six expatriate success outcomes. In this model, the expatriate success criteria are not represented as primary and secondary level outcomes.

## Method

### *Study Procedures and Sample*

Surveys were mailed to 583 expatriates and their supervisors from three U.S.-based Fortune 500 companies. These companies represent an insurance provider (Company A), a chemical processor (Company B), and a manufacturer of large construction and military machinery (Company C). The expatriates received a survey packet at work through each company's internal mail system. Each packet included a survey and return envelope for the employee and a survey and return envelope for his or her supervisor. Employees were asked to distribute the appropriate survey and return envelope to their supervisors. International business reply envelopes were provided allowing all respondents to return their surveys directly to the researchers. We number coded the surveys in order to match the employee's and appropriate supervisor's responses. Three weeks after the initial mailing, we mailed "reminder postcards" to all respondents encouraging their participation. Seven weeks after the initial mailing, we mailed a second complete survey packet to all expatriates who had not yet replied to the first request.

Across all three companies, we received 339 expatriate employee surveys (a 58% response rate) and 278 supervisor surveys (a 48% response rate). Complete data were received from 230 dyads and are used to test the hypotheses in this study (a 39% effective response rate). The large majority of the sample respondents are from Company C ( $n = 192$ ) with 11 from Company A and 27 from Company B. This sample represents 30 different country assignments (see Table 1 for list of countries). All expatriate employees were U.S. citizens. Data from this sample were used in a previously published paper (Kraimer, Wayne & Jaworski, 2001).

The average age of the expatriates was forty-four years. Ninety-seven percent (97%) of the respondents were male. Ninety-three percent (93%) of the respondents were Caucasian. Ninety-four percent (94%) of the respondents were married and 53% had children with them in the foreign country. In terms of highest attained education level, 2% had a high school diploma, 6% had an Associate's degree, 55% had a Bachelor's degree, 34% had a Master's degree, 1% had a law degree, and 2% had a Ph.D. Forty-nine percent ( $n = 112$ )

Table 1

Number of expatriates assigned to each country represented in sample

Country	Number of expatriates	Country	Number of expatriates
Argentina	3	Japan	22
Australia	10	Mexico	9
Belgium	22	Northern Ireland	1
Brazil	8	Norway	1
Canada	7	Philippines	2
Chile	3	Russia	3
China	10	Saudi Arabia	5
Colombia	2	Singapore	21
England	25	South Korea	1
France	20	Spain	2
Germany	7	Sweden	2
Hong Kong	8	Switzerland	19
Indonesia	8	Thailand	2
Ireland	1	United Arab Emirates	2
Italy	3	Venezuela	1

had an assignment of a general managerial/supervisory nature and the remaining ( $n = 118$ ) had a technical/functional purpose to their assignments. On average, the expatriates had been working for their companies for nineteen years. The average length of time on the current expatriate assignment was two years. Of the supervisors who responded to our survey, 74% were located at the same foreign facility as the expatriate. The remaining 26% of the supervisors were located either in the U.S. or in a foreign facility that was different from the facility of the expatriate they supervised. The supervisor's average organizational tenure was twenty-two years and job tenure was three years. Seventy-four percent of the supervisors were U.S. citizens with the remaining being foreign nationals. Thus, in terms of citizenship status similarity between the expatriate and his/her supervisor, 74% were both U.S. citizens and the remaining 58 dyads had differing national citizenship status. A MANOVA indicated that there were not significant differences between these two categories of citizenship similarity with respect to the dependent variables ( $F = 1.351, p > .05$ ).

### Measures

Supervisors completed measures for the expatriate's task and contextual performance. Expatriates provided self-assessments of all remaining variables except national culture novelty, which we created based on the country assignment. Unless otherwise noted, we created scale scores by averaging the composite items for each scale.

*Job performance.* Supervisors responded to five items to measure task performance and six items to measure contextual performance. The items were developed based on interviews with seventeen employees who had recently returned from an expatriate assignment. Supervisors rated each expatriate on a scale from "1 = very poor" to "7 = outstanding." We subjected all eleven items to an exploratory factor analysis using varimax rotation. In this initial analysis, we obtained two factors with eigenvalues greater than one, however,

Table 2  
Results of exploratory factor analysis on performance items (varimax rotation)<sup>a</sup>

Scale item	Task performance	Contextual performance
Meeting job objectives	<b>.83</b>	.30
Overall job performance	<b>.80</b>	.41
Meeting performance standards and expectations	<b>.75</b>	.34
Technical competence	<b>.74</b>	–.09
Meeting specific job responsibilities	<b>.61</b>	.40
Interacting with host-country coworkers	.09	<b>.82</b>
Establishing relationships with key host-country business contacts	.15	<b>.81</b>
Adapting to foreign facility's business customs and norms	.30	<b>.76</b>
Interacting with co-workers	.32	<b>.75</b>
Eigenvalues	4.73	1.34
Percent of explained variance	53	15

<sup>a</sup> Factor loadings for items defining each performance measure are in bold.

two of the items had high loadings on both factors. After deleting those two items, we re-ran the exploratory factor analysis using varimax rotation and obtained two unique factors with no cross-loadings greater than .41. The results of this factor analysis appear in Table 2. Cronbach's alpha was .84 and .86 for contextual and task performance, respectively.

*Expatriate adjustment.* Expatriates completed Black and Stephens' (1989) 14-item scale to assess adjustment to work, general environment, and interactions with host-country citizens. Expatriates indicated how well adjusted they were on a scale from "1 = very unadjusted" to "7 = very adjusted." While most research has retained the adjustment dimensions as separate variables, examining the dimensionality of expatriate adjustment was not of focal interest to this study. Thus, we examined whether it would be appropriate to represent the expatriate adjustment dimensions as a single global scale. Accordingly, we conducted a second-order confirmatory factor analysis in which work, general, and interaction adjustment loaded on a higher-order construct of expatriate adjustment. This second-order, 3-factor model had acceptable fit (GFI = .93; AGFI = .89; CFI = .95; RMSEA = .07; SRMR = .04). The gammas for the three dimensions loading on the higher-order construct were all statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ; standardized gammas were .41, .79, and .63 for work, general, and interaction adjustment, respectively). Thus, we created a single scale score for expatriate adjustment ( $\alpha = .85$ ).

*Organizational commitment.* Affective organizational commitment was measured with Meyer, Allen and Smith's (1993) affective commitment scale. Expatriates responded to the scale twice: once with respect to the parent company and once for the foreign facility. The items were modified such that no items needed to be reverse-scored. The item "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career at this company" was dropped for commitment towards the foreign facility as it was not appropriate. Responses were made on a scale from "1 = strongly disagree" to "7 = strongly agree" and were averaged to form a single scale

score for each foci. Cronbach's alpha was .89 for commitment to parent company and .88 for commitment to foreign facility.

*Intentions to complete the assignment.* In efforts to keep the survey length to a reasonable completion time and because this is a fairly face-valid construct, we developed three items to measure the expatriates' intentions to complete the assignment, rather than use longer existing measures such as that used by Shaffer and Harrison (1998). The items were "I am seriously considering ending my expatriate assignment early (reverse-scored)," "I intend to stay for the entire expected length of my expatriate assignment," and "Most likely, I will request an early return to a home-country assignment (reverse-scored)." Responses to these items were made on a scale from "1 = strongly disagree" to "7 = strongly agree." Cronbach's alpha was .85.

*Role stressors.* *Role ambiguity* was measured using the six reliable items from Rizzo et al. (1970) scale. An example item is "I know exactly what is expected of me" (reverse-scored). *Role conflict* was measured with the six highest loading items obtained from Kelloway and Barling's (1990) factor analysis of Rizzo et al.'s (1970) scale items. An example item is "I work with two or more groups who operate quite differently." For the above items, expatriates indicated on a scale from "1 = strongly disagree" to "7 = strongly agree" the extent to which they agreed that each statement described their current jobs. *Role novelty* was measured with a 4-item adaptation of Nicholson and West's (1988) role novelty scale. Expatriates indicated on a scale from "1 = not at all different" to "5 = very different" how different their current expatriate job assignments were from their previously held jobs (prior to the expatriate assignment). An example item is "how different are the tasks involved in your present job from your most previous job?" We created scale scores by averaging the appropriate items ( $\alpha = .87, .79$ , and  $.71$  for role ambiguity, role conflict, and role novelty, respectively).

*Situational stressors.* *Lack of language fluency* was measured by asking the respondent to indicate on a scale from "1 = not at all" to "5 = fluently" how well he/she spoke the host-country language and then reverse-scored the response. *National culture novelty* was calculated by the procedures described by Parker and McEvoy (1993). This involved computing an absolute difference score for each respondent based on the difference in Hofstede's (1980) four dimensions of national culture between the respondent's home-country and host-country and then computing the average difference across the four dimensions. For example, Hofstede's score for individualism-collectivism is 91 for the U.S. and 46 for Japan. Thus, the difference score for an American expatriate living in Japan is 45 for the individualism-collectivism dimension. The other difference scores for an American in Japan are 33 (masculinity-femininity), 46 (uncertainty avoidance), and 14 (power distance) for an average difference score of 34.5 (138/4). Expatriates provided the name of their host-countries. All respondents' home-country was the United States. The range for national culture novelty was 2.75 to 48.25. *Lack of promotion expectations* was measured using Parker and McEvoy's (1993) 4-item scale. Items were scaled from "1 = strongly disagree" to "7 = strongly agree" and scored so that a high score indicated a lack of promotions. An example item is "I expect a promotional advancement in

(company name) when I repatriate” (reverse-scored;  $\alpha = .76$ ). *Lack of free choice* was measured using four items from Feldman and Thomas’s (1992) free choice scale. Respondents indicated on a scale from “1 = strongly disagree” to “7 = strongly agree” how much they agreed with each statement. An example item is “this wasn’t really an ideal time in my career for me to be sent to a foreign country.” The items were scaled such that a high score reflected a lack of free choice in accepting the expatriate assignment ( $\alpha = .70$ ).

*Leader–member exchange.* LMX was measured with Liden and Maslyn’s (1998) MDM-LMX 12-item scale. Responses were made on a 7-point scale from “1 = strongly disagree” to “7 = strongly agree.” An example item is “My supervisor would come to my defense if I were ‘attacked’ by others.” Cronbach’s alpha was .93.

*Perceived organizational support.* A 12-item scale to measure the dimensions of POS (career, financial, and adjustment) was developed specifically for this study. An important step in scale development is content validation (Hinkin, 1995). Accordingly, twenty items were initially developed and content analyzed by ten faculty members and doctoral students. Scale items were based on Guzzo et al.’s (1994) and Aryee et al.’s (1996) research on the most common types of organizational support provided to expatriates and Eisenberger et al.’s (1986) POS scale. Originally, the intent was to measure four dimensions: career, financial, adjustment, and family support. The faculty and doctoral students were provided with the definition of POS with respect to career concerns (organizational support that addresses career needs and concerns), POS with respect to financial concerns (organizational support that addresses financial concerns), POS with respect to family concerns (organizational support that addresses family needs and concerns), and POS with respect to adjustment concerns (organizational support that aids in your adjustment to living in the foreign country). They were asked to categorize each scale item according to the four dimensions or to an “other” category. The results indicated that the faculty and doctoral students did not make a distinction between family POS and adjustment POS. Thus, the two dimensions were combined into one dimension and is referred to as adjustment POS. Any items that were not assigned to the a priori dimension by all faculty and doctoral students were deleted from the scale. This resulted in a 14-item scale (four items per dimension, plus two additional items for adjustment) that was used for the survey.

Using the survey data from the complete expatriate sample ( $n = 339$ ), the fourteen items were subjected to an exploratory factor analysis using varimax rotation. While three distinct factors emerged, two items intended to measure adjustment POS cross-loaded on one of the other factors. After deleting these two items, twelve items remained, four items per factor, which are used in subsequent analyses. Cronbach’s alpha were .87 for adjustment POS, .88 for career POS, and .92 for financial POS.

An additional measure of POS was obtained using the shortened-version (9 items) of Eisenberger et al.’s (1986) global POS scale. Responses were made on scale from “1 = strongly disagree” to “7 = strongly agree.” The nine items were averaged to form a single scale for global POS ( $\alpha = .93$ ). This measure of POS will be used to test convergent validity of our POS measure.



**Controls.** When testing the hypothesized model, we included organizational tenure and time in the foreign country as control variables. Specifically, we controlled for the relationships between: organizational tenure and commitment to the parent company; organizational tenure and task performance; and time in the foreign country and expatriate adjustment. Other possible relationships between these two tenure measures and the expatriate success criteria were examined but found to be non-significant. Organizational tenure was measured with a single open response item and is reported in years. Time in the country was measured with a single question (“how long have you been in your current country assignment?”) and is reported in years. Additionally, a MANOVA indicated that there were significant differences across companies with respect to the dependent variables ( $F = 7.31, p < .01$ ). Thus, we controlled for company differences as necessary by creating two dummy-coded variables where Company C is the excluded category.

## Analyses and Results

Descriptive statistics and intercorrelations for the study variables are reported in [Table 3](#). We first present the analyses and results confirming the convergent and discriminant validity of the dimensionality of the POS scale and then present the analyses and results for testing the hypothesized model.

### *Confirmatory Factor Analysis of POS Scale*

We proposed that POS will consist of three dimensions: adjustment POS, career POS, and financial POS. In order to test this contention, we conducted a second-order confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in order to assess the convergent and discriminant validity of the POS dimensions and the contribution of each dimension to the overall construct of POS. In specifying the second-order CFA, we included the twelve items that survived the exploratory factor analysis reported above. We then compared the 3-factor model to a 1-factor model and all possible 2-factor models. We also tested the convergent validity of our measure of POS by examining the correlations between our measure of POS and [Eisenberger et al.’s \(1986\)](#) global POS scale.

The second-order CFA specifying one higher-order construct predicting three lower-order constructs had acceptable fit ( $\chi^2 = 129.70, df = 51, p < .05$ ; RMSEA = .07; CFI = .97; SRMR = .05; GFI = .93; AGFI = .90). The 3-factor model was significantly better than a 1-factor model ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 15.77, \Delta df = 3, p < .05$ ; RMSEA = .07; CFI = .96; SRMR = .09; GFI = .93; AGFI = .89) and all possible 2-factor models. The results from the 3-factor model indicated that all scale items significantly loaded on their intended construct ( $p < .01$ ; see [Table 4](#)). The gamma loadings for the three dimensions were also significant ( $p < .01$ ) with respect to the higher-order POS construct (standardized gammas: adjustment POS = .89, financial POS = .74, career POS = .65). [Eisenberger et al.’s \(1986\)](#) global POS scale correlated as follows with each of the dimensions:  $r = .60$  with adjustment POS,  $r = .77$  with career POS, and  $r = .47$  with financial POS. These results provide support for the convergent and discriminant validity of adjustment POS, career POS, and financial POS as dimensions of global POS.

Table 3  
Descriptive statistics and intercorrelations<sup>a</sup>

Variable	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
1. Expatriate adjustment	5.36	.75																			
2. Commitment parent company	5.69	.99	.18**																		
3. Commitment foreign facility	4.89	1.26	.43**	.37**																	
4. Task performance	5.55	.78	.16*	.06	.08																
5. Contextual performance	5.33	.86	.24**	.05	.22**	.57**															
6. Intent to complete assignment	5.83	1.32	.26**	.14*	.25**	.09	.08														
7. Organizational tenure	19.06	8.93	−.00	.27**	.09	−.18**	−.07	.05													
8. Time in country	2.02	2.04	.19**	.00	.12	−.01	.13*	.13	.16*												
9. Role ambiguity	2.50	.96	−.49**	−.26**	−.38**	−.25**	−.21**	−.26**	−.09	−.17*											
10. Role conflict	4.51	1.17	−.16*	−.11	−.18**	−.10	.00	−.20**	.00	.03	.26**										
11. Role novelty	3.52	.87	−.12	.00	−.01	−.25**	−.12	−.03	.16*	.17*	.11	.13									
12. Lack of language fluency	2.77	1.53	−.31**	−.02	−.11	−.00	−.17**	−.00	.08	−.05	.18**	.04	−.06								
13. National culture novelty	24.43	12.07	−.11	−.07	−.03	−.14*	−.17**	−.07	.06	.05	−.05	−.08	.19**	.24**							
14. Lack of promotions	3.44	1.27	−.03	−.31**	−.08	−.06	−.09	−.09	.28**	.11	.04	.10	.02	.17*	.14*						
15. Lack of free choice	3.03	1.29	−.12	.06	−.16*	−.01	−.08	−.16*	.11	−.22**	.03	−.09	−.11	−.08	−.10	.08					
16. LMX	5.50	.95	.17**	.22**	.24**	.21**	.22**	.23**	.09	.14*	−.37**	−.26**	.02	.08	.18**	−.04	−.09				
17. Adjustment POS	4.37	1.30	.31**	.38**	.32**	−.03	.05	.28**	.14*	−.11	−.23**	−.25**	−.10	−.05	−.12	−.12	.03	.13*			
18. Career POS	4.40	1.21	.28**	.49**	.28**	.12	.16*	.33**	−.01	−.10	−.30**	−.27**	−.09	−.15*	−.16*	−.44**	−.03	.14*	.55**		
19. Financial POS	4.71	1.51	.22**	.33**	.25**	.13*	.07	.29**	.10	−.13*	−.14*	−.18**	−.12	.04	−.18**	−.17**	.05	.04	.60**	.47**	
20. Global POS	5.06	1.02	.28**	.72**	.35**	.05	.07	.28**	.11	.00	−.32**	−.28**	−.12	−.07	−.13*	−.36**	−.00	.19**	.61**	.77**	.47**

<sup>a</sup>  $n = 230$ .

\*  $p < .05$ .

\*\*  $p < .01$ .

Table 4

Lambda loadings from the 3-factor second-order confirmatory factor analysis of POS scale

Scale item	Factor 1 (financial)	Factor 2 (career)	Factor 3 (adjustment)
(Company) has taken care of me financially.	.86		
The financial incentives and allowances provided to me by (Company) are good.	.92		
I have received generous financial support from (Company).	.85		
I cannot complain about the financial benefits associated with my expatriate assignment.	.80		
(Company) takes an interest in my career.		.87	
(Company) considers my goals when making decisions about my career.		.78	
(Company) keeps me informed about career opportunities available within the company.		.67	
I feel that (Company) cares about my career development.		.90	
(Company) has shown an interest in my family's well-being.			.76
(Company) has provided my family with enough assistance to help them adjust to the foreign country.			.86
(Company) has provided me with many opportunities to ease the transition to the foreign country.			.82
Help is available within (Company) whenever I have questions or concerns about living in the foreign country.			.71

Fit statistics: RMSEA = .07; CFI = .97; SRMR = .05; GFI = .93; AGFI = .90.

### *Hypothesized Model*

The hypothesized model was tested using Structural Equation Modeling via LISREL 8.53 (maximum likelihood estimation). The measurement and structural model were assessed simultaneously. As the measurement model was not of substantive interest in this study, we wanted to prevent measurement misspecification from being misinterpreted as misspecification of the structural model (Burt, 1976; Netemeyer, Johnston & Burton, 1990; Williams & Hazer, 1986). Thus, we used scale values as the indicator for each latent construct. The covariance matrix of scale scores was used as input to LISREL 8.53. The path from the latent variable to the indicator (lambda X and lambda Y) was set equal to one in order to scale the latent variables (Bollen, 1989). To adjust for measurement error in the scale values, the error variance (theta delta and theta epsilon) was set equal to the variance of the scale value multiplied by 1.0 minus the reliability (Hayduk, 1987; Williams & Hazer, 1986). The correlations among the exogenous latent constructs (phi matrix) were estimated as is recommended practice (Hayduk, 1987). Additionally, we estimated the correlation between the two performance dimensions (psi matrix) in order to statistically control for their intercorrelation (Hayduk, 1987; Medsker, Williams & Holahan, 1994). The adequacy of the structural model was assessed by comparing the goodness of fit of the hypothesized

Table 5  
Results of model comparisons<sup>a</sup>

Model	$\chi^2$	df	$\Delta\chi^2$	RMSEA	CFI	SRMR	GFI
1. Hypothesized	151.24**	71		.07	.94	.04	.94
2. Hypothesized + all POS paths to mediators	141.51**	66	9.73	.07	.95	.04	.95
3. <b>Partially mediated</b>	<b>81.03**</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>70.21**</b>	<b>.05</b>	<b>.98</b>	<b>.03</b>	<b>.97</b>
4. Non-mediated	77.72**	48	3.31	.05	.98	.03	.97

<sup>a</sup> Model 2 and Model 3 are compared to Model 1. Model 4 is compared to Model 3. The best-fitting model (Model 3) appears in bold.

\*\*  $p < .01$ .

model with the three alternative, nested models as is recommended practice when assessing model fit (Kelloway, 1998).

The fit statistics from the model comparisons are reported in Table 5. While the hypothesized model (Model 1) had a significant chi-square, the goodness of fit statistics suggested that the model fit the data well (see Table 5). This model was then compared to the alternative model in which all possible paths from the POS dimensions to the mediating constructs were allowed to be estimated (Model 2). The nested model comparison indicated that Model 2 was *not* superior to Model 1 ( $\Delta\chi^2 = -9.73$ ,  $\Delta df = 5$ ,  $p > .05$ ). *Further, none of the non-hypothesized paths from the POS dimensions to the mediating constructs were significant.* We then compared the hypothesized model to a partially mediated model (Model 3). In Model 3, we freed (estimated) several direct paths from the exogenous variables to the second-level dependent variables based on previous research findings. Specifically, in Model 3, we freed the paths from: role ambiguity to task performance; role conflict to task performance; role novelty to task performance; lack of language fluency to contextual performance and intentions to complete the assignment; national culture novelty to all three outcomes; lack of promotion expectations to intentions to complete the assignment; and lack of free choice to intentions to complete the assignment. Additionally, in Model 3, we freed the paths from adjustment POS to all three second-level outcomes, career POS to all three second-level outcomes, and financial POS to all three second-level outcomes in order to provide a rigorous examination of the dimensionality of POS. The nested model comparison indicated that Model 3 was superior to our hypothesized model ( $\Delta\chi^2 = -70.21$ ,  $\Delta df = 19$ ,  $p < .05$ ). We, thus, compare our remaining alternative model to Model 3. The final alternative model, Model 4, tests a non-mediated model in which the paths from the mediating constructs to the second-level dependent variables were fixed to zero (not estimated), but we retained the freed paths added in Model 3. The nested model comparison indicated that Model 4 was *not* superior to Model 3 ( $\Delta\chi^2 = -3.31$ ,  $\Delta df = 4$ ,  $p > .05$ ). While Model 4 is a more parsimonious model than Model 3, we retained Model 3 as the best-fitting model because there were two significant mediating paths in Model 3 that would be overlooked if we retained Model 4. Thus, we test our hypotheses, using one-tailed tests, based on the results provided in Model 3 (partially mediated model). The parameter estimates for the estimated relationships are reported in Table 6.

**Hypothesis 1** predicted that expatriate adjustment would positively relate to (a) task performance, (b) contextual performance, and (c) intentions to complete the assignment.

Table 6

Completely standardized path estimates from partially mediated model (best-fitting model)<sup>a</sup>

Predictor variable	Expatriate adjustment	Commitment-parent	Commitment-foreign facility
Control variables			
Organizational tenure	NE	.21**	NE
Time in country	.13*	NE	NE
Company A	-.13*	NE	NE
Company B	NE	-.38**	NE
Stressors			
Role ambiguity	-.44**	-.20**	-.40**
Role conflict	-.02	.04	-.07
Role novelty	-.13*	NE	NE
Lack of language fluency	-.25**	NE	NE
National culture novelty	-.07	NE	NE
Lack of promotion expectations	.09	-.18*	-.01
Lack of free choice	-.20**	NE	-.23**
Social support			
LMX	-.03	NE	NE
Adjustment POS	.25**	NE	NE
Career POS	NE	.34**	NE
Financial POS	NE	.09	.22**
	Task performance	Contextual performance	Intentions to complete assignment
Control variables			
Organizational tenure	-.15*	NE	NE
Time in country	NE	NE	NE
Company A	NE	NE	NE
Company B	NE	NE	NE
Stressors			
Role ambiguity	-.20**	NE	NE
Role conflict	-.08	NE	NE
Role novelty	-.18*	NE	NE
Lack of language fluency	NE	-.12*	.08
National culture novelty	-.14*	-.18**	-.03
Lack of promotion expectations	NE	NE	.11
Lack of free choice	NE	NE	-.16*
Social support			
LMX	.19**	.23**	NE
Adjustment POS	-.38**	-.21*	-.03
Career POS	.00	.11	.37**
Financial POS	.27**	.05	.15
Mediating variables			
Expatriate adjustment	.02	.14	.16*
Commitment to parent company	.09	NE	-.11
Commitment to foreign facility	NE	.16**	.09

NE = path was not estimated in model.

<sup>a</sup>  $n = 230$ .\*  $p < .05$ .\*\*  $p < .01$ .

The parameter estimates relating expatriate adjustment to task performance and contextual performance were not statistically significant, however, the parameter estimate for expatriate adjustment to intentions to complete the assignment was significant and positive ( $t = 1.74$ ; see Table 6 for parameter estimates). Thus, only Hypothesis 1c was supported. Hypothesis 2 predicted that commitment to the parent company would be positively related to (a) task performance and (b) intentions to complete the assignment. The parameter estimates testing these relationships were not significant, thus, Hypothesis 2 was not supported. Hypothesis 3 predicted that commitment to the foreign facility would be positively related to (a) contextual performance and (b) intentions to complete the assignment. The parameter estimate relating commitment to the foreign facility to contextual performance was statistically significant and positive ( $t = 2.39$ ), but the path from commitment to the foreign facility to intentions to complete the assignment was not significant. Thus, Hypothesis 3a was supported.

Hypothesis 4 predicated that (a) role ambiguity, (b) role conflict, and (c) role novelty will be negatively related to expatriate adjustment. The parameter estimates relating role ambiguity and role novelty to expatriate adjustment were significant and negative ( $t = -5.74$  and  $-1.69$ , respectively) but that from role conflict to expatriate adjustment was not significant. Thus, Hypotheses 4a and 4c were supported, but not Hypothesis 4b. Hypothesis 5 predicted that (a) role ambiguity and (b) role conflict would be negatively related to both foci of organizational commitment. The parameter estimates relating role ambiguity to commitment to the parent company and commitment to the foreign facility were statistically significant and negative ( $t = -3.21$  and  $-5.52$ , respectively), but parameter estimates relating role conflict to the commitment measures were not significant. Thus, Hypothesis 5a was supported, but 5b was not supported.

Hypothesis 6 predicted that (a) lack of language fluency and (b) national culture novelty would be negatively related to expatriate adjustment. The parameter estimate relating lack of language fluency to expatriate adjustment was statistically significant and negative ( $t = -3.85$ ), but that from national culture novelty to expatriate adjustment was not significant. These results provide support for Hypothesis 6a. Hypothesis 7 predicted that lack of promotion expectations would be negatively related to all three primary level outcomes. Only the parameter estimate from lack of promotion expectations to commitment to the parent company was statistically significant ( $t = -2.22$ ) and it was in the expected direction. Thus, Hypothesis 7b was supported. Hypothesis 8 predicted that lack of free choice would be negatively related to (a) expatriate adjustment and (b) commitment to the foreign facility. The parameter estimates testing both of these relationships were statistically significant and negative ( $t = -2.71$  and  $-3.06$ , respectively for Hypotheses 8a and 8b). Thus, Hypothesis 8 was supported.

Hypothesis 9 predicted that LMX would be positively related to (a) expatriate adjustment, (b) task performance, and (c) contextual performance. In support of Hypotheses 9b and 9c, the parameter estimates relating LMX to task performance and contextual performance were statistically significant and positive ( $t = 2.49$  and  $3.07$ , respectively). Hypothesis 10 predicted that adjustment POS would positively relate to expatriate adjustment. This parameter estimate was statistically significant and positive ( $t = 3.74$ ) supporting Hypothesis 10. Hypothesis 11 predicted that career POS would be positively related to commitment to the parent company. This parameter estimate was statistically significant and positive ( $t = 3.81$ ) supporting Hypothesis 11. Hypothesis 12 predicted that financial POS would be positively

related to (a) commitment to the parent company and (b) commitment to the foreign facility. Only the parameter estimate relating financial POS to commitment to the foreign facility was statistically significant ( $t = 3.23$ ) and it was positive, thus, providing support for Hypothesis 12b.

In the partially mediated model, we estimated additional paths based on previous research findings. We found the following paths to be statistically significant and in the expected negative direction: role ambiguity to task performance ( $t = -2.30$ ); role novelty to task performance ( $t = -2.49$ ); lack of language fluency to contextual performance ( $t = -1.87$ ); national culture novelty to task performance ( $t = -2.01$ ) and contextual performance ( $t = -2.47$ ); and lack of free choice to intentions to complete the assignment ( $t = -1.87$ ). While all possible paths were estimated from the POS dimensions to the second-level outcomes in the partially mediated model, only the following paths were statistically significant: adjustment POS to task performance ( $t = -3.10$ ) and contextual performance ( $t = -1.72$ ); career POS to intentions to complete the assignment ( $t = 2.63$ ); and financial POS to task performance ( $t = 2.66$ ). It should be noted that the relationships between adjustment POS and the two performance measures were negative.

In sum, we found support for Hypotheses 1c, 3a, 4a, 4c, 5a, 6a, 7b, 8a, 8b, 9b, 9c, 10, 11, and 12b. The nested model comparisons found partial support for our mediated model such that expatriate adjustment mediated some of the relations between the exogenous variables and intentions to complete the assignment and commitment to the foreign facility mediated some of the relations between the exogenous variables and contextual performance. The partially mediated model explained 53% of the variance in expatriate adjustment, 59% in commitment to the parent company, 32% in commitment to the foreign facility, 28% in task performance, 20% in contextual performance, and 26% in intentions to complete the assignment.

## Discussion

The core contribution of our study is finding support for a model in which (1) the POS dimensions differentially relate to the expatriate success criteria and (2) the expatriate success criteria of expatriate adjustment and commitment to the foreign facility are primary level outcomes and the success criteria of commitment to the parent company, job performance, and intentions to complete the assignment are secondary level outcomes of several role stressors, situational stressors, and social support factors. These findings have implications for POS and expatriate research.

### *Implications for POS Research*

The results indicated strong support for a multidimensional POS construct. We identified three key dimensions of POS for expatriates: adjustment POS, career POS, and financial POS. That the three dimensions of POS differentially related to six expatriate success criteria highlights the importance of examining the type of POS depending on the outcome of interest. While adjustment POS had a positive relationship with expatriate adjustment, we were surprised that it negatively related to task and contextual performance. One possible



explanation for this finding is that expatriates who received a great deal of adjustment support may have been less focused on their job tasks. That is, the nature of adjustment support (e.g., cross-cultural training, language training, and family relocation assistance) may have heightened the expatriate's awareness of cultural differences and adjusting to the new culture to such an extent that he/she became less focused on job tasks. Career POS had a positive relationship with commitment to the parent company and intentions to complete the assignment. It is possible that when the expatriate perceives career POS, he/she is more likely to view the company's offer of an expatriate assignment as a beneficial career opportunity and be more committed to completing the assignment. Also, the expatriate may reciprocate to the employer for this potential career-enhancing opportunity by being more committed. Financial POS positively related to commitment to the foreign facility and task performance. This finding extends prior research on POS by emphasizing the role of financial rewards in creating employee feelings of obligations to reciprocate (Rhoades, Eisenberger & Armeli, 2001). Overall, the results indicate the value of examining adjustment, career, and financial POS as separate indicators of expatriate success. Future research on expatriates should examine whether the influence of the POS dimensions on expatriate success differ depending on whether the expatriate assignment is for management development purposes, strategic purposes, or strictly for technical purposes, in which there is no developmental component (e.g., Caligiuri, Lazarova & Tarique, 2001).

We encourage future researchers to examine POS using our multidimensional construct with other types of employees and in other contexts. Future research along these lines would first require replication of our factor structure. It is reasonable to expect that all employees value organizations that provide support to them in order to meet non-work adjustment concerns (e.g., work–life balance), career concerns, and financial concerns. While the scale items were designed to capture concerns related to expatriate employees, the items could easily be modified to apply to non-expatriate employees. For example, the items measuring adjustment POS, could be modified to reflect concerns about general well-being and instead of using the term “allowances” in the questions related to financial POS, the word “benefits” could be substituted. An interesting theoretical question would be the predictive power of the dimensions of POS with other types of workers. For example, career POS may be a more important predictor of work attitudes and behaviors among professional employees such as computer professionals or academic professors than among “blue-collar” workers. Whether there are differences in POS perceptions between men and women would also be interesting to investigate.

### *Implications for Expatriate Research*

The model comparisons indicated that role stressors, situational stressors, and social support have direct relationships with the expatriate success criteria of expatriate adjustment, commitment to the parent company, commitment to the foreign facility, and task performance. Further, the stressors and social support factors have some direct relationships with contextual performance and intentions to complete the assignment, but also some indirect relationships exist through expatriate adjustment and commitment to the foreign facility. For example, the relationships for role ambiguity, role novelty, lack of language fluency, and adjustment POS with intentions to complete the assignment were indirect through expatriate

adjustment. Further, expatriate adjustment partially mediated the relationship between lack of free choice and intentions to complete the assignment. These findings are consistent with Ashford and Taylor's (1990) model of employee adaptation in that some of our role stressors, transition stressors, and social support variables related to employee adjustment, which, in turn related to tenure intentions. Additionally, the relationships for role ambiguity, lack of free choice and financial POS with contextual performance were indirect through commitment to the foreign facility. This finding supports the notion that contextual performance represents those behaviors that go beyond the job description and asks the employee to engage in activities that benefit the organization. Our results suggest that expatriates must first be committed to the foreign facility before they will engage in these contextual performance behaviors that benefit the foreign facility. Our findings suggest that some ways to increase commitment to the foreign facility is by decreasing role ambiguity, increasing financial support, and not pressuring employees into accepting expatriate assignments. Overall, the model results support the notion that expatriate adjustment and commitment to the foreign facility are primary level expatriate success criteria which in turn relate to the secondary success criteria of contextual performance and intentions to complete the assignment.

In terms of other noteworthy results, we found that national culture novelty, an objective measure of the magnitude of the transition, was negatively related to task and contextual performance. These relationships extend prior research that has found a negative relation between perceptions of national culture novelty and expatriate adjustment (Kraimer et al., 2001; Parker & McEvoy, 1993; Shaffer et al., 1999). These results highlight the difficulties of performing well in a culture that greatly differs from one's home culture. Future research should investigate which cultural dimensions (individualism–collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, or masculinity–femininity) are the most critical inhibitors of high performance in foreign cultures.

One final noteworthy finding from the stressors examined here was that role ambiguity negatively related to four of the six expatriate success criteria including expatriate adjustment, commitment to the parent company, commitment to the foreign facility, and task performance. This finding, while expected, is noteworthy because it highlights that it is critical for organizations to provide clear job objectives to employees on expatriate assignments. Future research should examine the ways in which organizations can best develop expatriate assignment expectations in order to minimize role ambiguity. Research should also examine whether there are individual differences that might account for role ambiguity perceptions. For example, do employees with more international experience perceive less role ambiguity on a foreign assignment?

### *Strengths and Limitations*

There are a number of strengths and limitations of the study that should be acknowledged. In terms of limitations, the study was cross-sectional, the expatriate sample consisted of 97% males and 92% Caucasians, and the expatriates had been on their current assignments for an average of two years. Thus, there is the question as to whether these results generalize to expatriates starting a new assignment, to female expatriates, or to ethnic minority expatriates. Future research is needed that explores the predictors of expatriate success over time with

employees starting a foreign assignment and/or with women and ethnic minority expatriates. A second limitation is that same source bias may have inflated the results for four of our dependent variables; thus, the findings for our hypothesized relationships should be interpreted in light of this. However, when designing the survey we attempted to minimize same source bias by placing the dependent variables and independent variables in separate sections of the survey.

In terms of strengths, the hypotheses were developed based on the stress literature and included a multidimensional perspective of both expatriate success and POS. Furthermore, because task and contextual performance were assessed by the expatriates' supervisors, same source bias was not a concern for those dependent variables. Finally, the sample was fairly large and included expatriates from three organizations and working in 30 countries, increasing the generalizability of the study's findings.

In sum, this study extends the research on POS by demonstrating support for a multidimensional measure of POS. Further, this study extends the research on expatriate success and finds support for examining expatriate success from a stress and organizational support perspective. Our results suggested that POS serves as a source of social support and has direct effects on multiple expatriate success criteria controlling for several role and situational stressors typically examined in expatriate research. The findings presented here also shed light on the interrelationships between the expatriate success criteria. Our results indicated that expatriate adjustment and commitment to the foreign facility are primary level outcomes which in turn relate to contextual performance and intentions to complete the assignment. Other secondary outcomes included commitment to the parent company and task performance. Future research should investigate other primary level outcomes that may influence these variables such as job satisfaction.

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