

Introduction: Summary of the Survey Results

The following is a chapter-by-chapter summary of the main points that became apparent as a result of this survey.

The design of the survey form is similar in most respects to the one that we have already conducted to persons dispatched overseas by Japanese companies. This allows one to read and understand the similarities and differences between expatriates dispatched to Japan by foreign companies and Japanese dispatched overseas by Japanese companies. (Information about employees dispatched overseas by Japanese companies can be found in our publication, *The Analysis of Work and Life among Japanese Expatriates at Japanese Companies in Foreign Countries*, The Japan Institute of Labour, 2001.) The Japan Institute of Labour (JIL) plans to publish a book which includes a comparative analysis of these two groups.

Chapter 1 discusses the situations of the expatriates prior to their arrival in Japan and the pre-assignment training that they received. The results are as follows:

Over 90% of current expatriate employees wished to come to Japan, and almost all the respondents wanted their current assignment.

The respondents received private notification of their overseas assignments an average of 4.5 months beforehand. Some people, 12.1%, were informed of their assignments one month in advance, while more than three-tenths (33.6%) were told of their assignments six or more months before the assignment.

When asked whether there were any regulations or guidelines for overseas assignments, 21.2% replied that there were regulations, and 42.0% replied that there were guidelines. In addition, 34.2% reported that there were neither regulations nor guidelines, while the ratio reporting that there were regulations or guidelines was six-tenths (63.2%). If the respondents indicated that there were regulations or guidelines for the length of the assignment, we asked what the length was, and the length of the assignments averaged 3.5 years. The longest overseas assignment periods were for employees dispatched by companies headquartered in Europe.

When we asked expatriates who are union members at their dispatching organization whether the selection of workers for overseas assignments was one of the subjects of labor-management consultations, we found that this had been the case for very few, only a small percentage.

When we asked whether the expatriates had received any orientation and training ahead of time, the highest percentage of responses came from the 64.8% who reported that they had taken a pre-assignment trip to Japan. In comparison, fewer than half of the 64.8% dispatched by Japanese companies received such orientation. Considering that fewer than half of this percentage of employees dispatched overseas by Japanese companies received such orientation, the

percentage receiving orientation or training from foreign companies is extraordinarily high. Following this, a high percentage, about five-tenths, had either opportunities for group discussions or individual consultations with former expatriates who could provide specific advice as well as general information about conditions in Japan. Both types of training were closely associated with life in Japan. Between three-tenths and four-tenths of respondents reported receiving instruction about their company's management principles and overseas strategy, Japanese language instruction, training in adaptation to other cultures, and intercultural communication. Next in frequency were training in overseas management and overseas business, reported by 25.1%. Fewer than one-tenth received English language training, --perhaps because they were being assigned to Japan--Japanese industrial relations practices, labour practices, or measures for accident prevention at work.

The type of pre-departure training evaluated as most effective by the largest number of respondents was the type that was also the most commonly implemented, the pre-assignment trip to Japan. Among the types of training regarded as next most effective was instruction in English (note, however, that few expatriates received such instruction) and group discussions or individual consultations with former expatriates.

When asked about pre-departure orientation for accompanying family members, more than three-tenths received a general introduction to Japanese situation or group discussions or individual consultations with returnees.

Asked about the need for language abilities at their work site, only 53.1%, slightly more than half, reported that they needed Japanese. In contrast, as many as 96.1% of expatriates reported that they needed English. Expatriates who were already competent in English were the ones dispatched to Japan, but their Japanese language ability improved to a certain extent during their assignment.

In Chapter 2, we look at the current jobs and organizational ranks of expatriates employed at foreign companies in Japan and their jobs and ranks immediately before their arrival in Japan. The following points were evident.

First, "top management" was the main current job of 44.3% of the expatriates. The next largest classification was "other," at 12.7%, while 10.4% were in sales. Looking at the relationship of their current jobs to their jobs prior to this assignment, we found that more than half the respondents in jobs such as general affairs, accounting, and personnel were following the same jobs as prior to this assignment.

On the average, the respondents performed 2.4 jobs in their current jobs, and 1.9 jobs prior to this assignment, so that they performed slightly more jobs currently. This tendency is similar to what we see with workers assigned overseas from Japanese companies.

The largest number, 39.4%, of respondents gave their current rank as “chairman/company president,” followed by “department manager class” at 21.2% and “executive class” at 18.9%, so that nearly eight-tenths were at the department manager class or higher. Most expatriates were at a position higher than their rank before the assignment.

Yet 4.5% said that their rank had dropped as a result of their being assigned to Japan, while 32.9% stated that there had been no change in their rank, but 63.9% of expatriates said that they had experienced an rank or more above their previous rank. The expatriates experienced an average rise of 1.2 levels in their rank. Therefore, like employees dispatched overseas by Japanese companies, the respondents tended to acquire a higher job ranking through their overseas assignment.

In Chapter 3, we considered the working hours and compensation of expatriates, and the results were as follows:

First of all, the largest number of expatriates, 30.3%, responded that they worked “60 or more hours” per week. The next most common response, at 29.6%, was “between 50 and 55 hours.” Thus, if we assume that the respondents do not go to their workplace on weekends and holidays, this response of “60 or more hours” indicates that the expatriates are working more than 12 hours per day.

Reasons mentioned for these long working hours include “work gets very busy at times” (83.7%), followed by “communicating with headquarters operations staff regarding work” at 52.1%, “entertaining or meeting with visitors from headquarters” at 30.9%, and “unable to delegate much of my work” at 30.6%.

Major differences were perceived between North America-Europe group and Oceania-Asia group with respect to “communicating with headquarters operations staff regarding work.” In other words, more expatriates from North America or Europe reported “communicating with headquarters” as a reason for long working hours than did expatriates from Asia or Oceania. It is believed that the reason for this disparity is the greater time difference between Japan and North America or Europe than between Japan and Asia or Oceania. It is anticipated that similar tendencies will be found among personnel dispatched overseas by Japanese companies.

When asked how compensation was paid, the largest number of respondents (46.3%), replied that they were paid “entirely in Japan,” followed by 1/4 each who stated that they received “partial payment in Japan and the remainder in the home country of the dispatching organization” or were paid “entirely in the home country of the dispatching organization.”

Asked about how satisfied they were with overall compensation package including local compensation, 27.7% of the expatriates replied that they were “very satisfied,” and 53.7% replied that they were “somewhat satisfied,” for a combined total of 81.4%, but however strong or weak their feelings are, we may safely say that they are satisfied with their compensation. We observed a tendency

for satisfaction about total compensation to be higher among expatriates who were employed by local organizations with the larger number of employees.

Chapter 4 summarizes information about what kind of support foreign companies are providing for their expatriate employees and their accompanying family members. Given that support, we analyzed the degree to which the expatriates were satisfied with their current jobs in Japan. The basic units for analysis in this chapter included the country in which the headquarters is located, and as our basis for comparison we used countries which include ten or more respondents. We applied chi-square analysis to the entire sample as the statistical technique for comparing companies for percentages of each item.

In any case, we obtained some unique results when we conducted a comparative analysis among countries concerning the support systems of foreign companies and expatriates' own degrees of job satisfaction.

First of all, in the area of support systems, we found significant differences among the countries in the entire sample when it came to systems for bringing family members from the home country, subsidies for various expenses (language training in Japan for the employee, language training for family members in Japan, health examinations, private accident insurance), and advice on education for children in Japan. On the one hand, there was no difference with respect to temporary home visits for the employee or family members, travel to third countries, or information concerning work or everyday life. We therefore believe that differences among the nationalities of the companies affect almost all the additional subsidies for expenses.

In particular, Swedish companies had the highest rate of implementation of 5 of the 6 items for which differences were displayed, reflecting a national character of being generous with welfare benefits. On the other hand, Germany had the lowest implementation rate for 4 of the items, and it had a low rate of providing support with additional expenses.

Overall, the system of assistance judged to be the most necessary were support for language training in Japan and a system of support for career development after repatriation.

On the other hand, an analysis of the factors in job satisfaction singled out three factors: satisfaction with compensation, satisfaction with the workplace, and satisfaction with one's career and superiors. Among these factors, satisfaction with one's career and superiors includes the item "guaranteed career after repatriation." This is seen as an acknowledgment that superiors make an essential contribution to one's future career.

The results of variance analysis of differences among countries with respect to the three factors showed no significant differences. Even so, a comparison of the average scores of the countries that accounted for 10 or more respondents shows that of the three factors, Denmark had the highest scores for the 2 factors satisfaction with compensation and satisfaction with the workplace, which indicates that expatriates from Denmark are highly satisfied with their workplaces.

In Chapter 5, we analyzed the educational situation of accompanying children, degree of satisfaction with their education, and the expatriate's own adaptation to working in Japan and living in a different culture. We centered our analysis on the country where the headquarters is located, and, as in the previous chapter, applied statistical analysis to the differences among countries that yielded ten or more responses.

First, when looked at by the nationality of the dispatching organization, families with accompanying school-age children tended to be most common among expatriates from American (51.5%) and British (47.1%) companies. When asked about the schools that their children were attending, 90% of French respondents replied that their children were enrolled in a home-country system school.

There were no differences among countries in terms of satisfaction with everyday life, but on the whole, the items having to do with food and safety and morality tended to be rated higher than the others.

Adaptation to a foreign culture can clearly be classified into overall adaptation, interpersonal adaptation, and adaptation to the job, but by location of the headquarters of the dispatching organization, it was noteworthy that expatriates from Sweden scored high on overall adaptation, those from Denmark on interpersonal adaptation, and those from France on adaptation to the workplace.

In Chapter 6, we looked at what expatriates think will happen in their work and daily life after their future repatriation. The results may be summarized as follows:

First, the most commonly expressed work-related concern was "personal networks within the company have weakened" (53.1%), followed by "dispatching company work style has become unfamiliar" (32.6%). On average, respondents were uneasy about 1.7 aspects of their work after repatriation. "No particular daily life concerns" were expressed by 46.3%, or nearly half, of the expatriates. Of the items mentioned, the ones that were mentioned by a relatively high 20-30% of respondents were estrangement from relatives and friends, problems with children's education, and having become unfamiliar with the circumstances in their home country. In addition, they mentioned being uneasy about an average of 2.3 aspects of their daily life. This makes it clear that expatriates believe that they will face more worries about their daily lives than about their work after repatriation.

A plurality respondents answered the questionnaire about taking another overseas assignment with "I'd like to go depending on the assignment region," with 44.0% attaching geographical conditions. In addition, as many as 25.1% of the expatriates attached no conditions to their acceptance of an overseas assignment, replying, "I'd very much like to take the assignment." A mere 3.9% of the expatriates said that they "would not take the assignment."

Chapter 7 looks at (1) general descriptions of the local organizations, (2) general descriptions of the dispatching organizations, and (3) the attributes of the respondents.

(1) General Descriptions of the local or receiving Organizations

Of the companies where the respondents worked in Japan, 37.4% were manufacturing companies, while 61.6% were non-manufacturing companies, so somewhat more expatriates work at non-manufacturing companies.

There was a wide variation in the numbers of employees at the companies where the expatriates worked, but the average number of employees was 761.2. The average number of employees at the non-manufacturing companies was higher than the average number at the manufacturing companies: 845.6 for the former and 631.1 for the latter. The sizes of the companies varied even more according to the country where the company headquarters were located. The largest companies were headquartered in North America or Europe, while the companies headquartered in Oceania and Asia were smaller, with fewer than 100 employees.

The average number of expatriates dispatched to the companies where the respondents worked was 21.9 persons per company. There was a significant difference based on the country in which the headquarters were located. North American companies averaged 46.6 expatriate workers, European companies averaged 12.1 expatriates, companies from Oceania averaged 2.2 expatriates, and Asian companies averaged 9.6 expatriates, but these figures are also a reflection of the respective sizes of the companies.

An average of 3.0 nationalities were represented among the expatriates at these companies, but a plurality of 32.6% of the companies had expatriate employees of only one nationality while 8.8% had six or more nationalities represented.

We asked about expatriates as a percentage of the total number of employees (the percentage of expatriates) in the local organization, and the overall average was 2.9%. This figure varied greatly depending on the location of the company headquarters and the industry in which the company was involved. By industry, non-manufacturing companies had a higher percentage (3.7%) of expatriates than manufacturing companies (1.0%). By location of the company headquarters, European companies had the lowest percentage (1.9%), while on the other hand, Asian companies had an extremely high percentage (10.3%).

Of the company presidents in Japan (including branch directors and office heads), 22.1% were of Japanese nationality, 58.6% were from the home country (the country where the company headquarters was located), and 16.9% were from a third country, so that nearly six-tenths of company presidents and other top managers were from the home country.

Even though most of the workplaces began operations after 1995, the startup years were widely scattered through every decade, and investment was not concentrated in any specific period. The average year that operations began was 1977.1.

Classified by the percentage of capital that foreign firms invested, 30.0% of the workplaces were branches or offices of a foreign company, 44.3% were wholly-owned subsidiaries of foreign companies, and 5.5% were subsidiaries in which a

foreign company held a majority share, so that the majority, about eight-tenths or 79.8%, received more than half their financing from foreign capital.

Workplaces with labour unions amounted to 20.5% of the total, while 77.5% of the workplaces had no labour unions. This figure varied greatly according to the size of the company, and the larger the company, the more likely it was to have a union.

(2) General Descriptions of the Dispatching Organizations

Some expatriates were dispatched directly from the headquarters (parent company) of a multinational company, while others were dispatched from another company in the corporate group. Then, when we looked at which companies the respondents had been dispatched from, we found that 76.9% were dispatched directly from the parent company and that 16.3% were dispatched from a company in the parent company's group, so that slightly less than eight-tenths were dispatched directly from the parent company.

Arranged in order of frequency, 23.5% of dispatching organizations were located in the United States, 14.0% in the United Kingdom, 12.7% in Germany, 8.8% in France and 6.5% in Switzerland, so this distribution was centered on North America and Europe. On the other hand, 25.7% of the corporate headquarters were located in the United States, 13.0% in the United Kingdom, 12.4% in Germany, 7.8% in France, and 7.8% in Switzerland. The locations of the dispatching organizations and the location of the corporate headquarters were therefore almost the same.

Slightly more of the dispatching organizations were in non-manufacturing industries (52.1%) than in manufacturing industries (46.3%).

The average number of employees in the dispatching organizations was 28,160, so most of the respondents were from large corporations.

Looking at the presence or absence of labour unions in the dispatching organization, we found that 56.4% of the companies had labour unions, while 39.4% did not, so that more than half had organized labour. Companies headquartered in North America had an extremely small percentage of companies with organized workers, only 23.9%, but there were no regional differences among other areas of the world, where more than seven-tenths had unionized workers.

(3) The Attributes of the Respondents

An overwhelming high percentage (96.1%) of the expatriates were male, and only 3.9% were female.

The ages of the expatriates were concentrated in the range between 40 and 44, and their average age was 43.0. Age is strongly related to occupational rank, since a person's position tends to rise as he or she grows older.

The expatriates had been employed at the dispatching organization for an average of 12.9 years. The number of years of service was strongly correlated with age, and it tended to rise as the person grew older.

The largest percentage of expatriates was from the United States (20.2%), followed by the United Kingdom (17.9%), Germany (13.0%), France (8.8%), Australia (5.5%), and Canada (5.2%).

Asked about their direct boss at the receiving organization, a plurality (46.6%) stated that they were the top manager and had no direct boss, while 24.8% said that their direct boss has the same nationality of parent company headquarters, 19.2% said that their direct boss was Japanese, and 8.1% said that their direct boss was a third-country national, so there was a great deal of variety including Japanese and third-country nationals.

Asked about their family structures, responses included 59.0% replying that they had brought their entire family with them, 23.5% that they had brought part of their family, 12.7% that they were single, and the rare exception of 3.9% that they had come alone (leaving their entire family behind). Family structures clearly differed greatly according to age. A high percentage of people in their twenties, 63.6%, were single, but most of the people in their thirties and forties had brought their entire families. Furthermore, more than six-tenths of people in their fifties had brought only some of their family members.

We asked the respondents who had brought their entire families or part of their families which family members had accompanied them. We found that 92.2% had brought their spouses, 45.7% had brought all their children (including adult children), and 9.4% had brought some of their children. In these cases, the number of children in the household varied greatly according to the age of the respondent.

We inquired about the status under which the expatriates were assigned to Japan by their dispatching organization. We found that 45.0% were expatriate assignees to a non-Japanese branch or office, 26.4% were official transfers, and 21.2% were seconded or loaned employees from a parent company. These three statuses accounted for 92.6% of the total. Note, however, that the type of assignment differed according to the financial composition of the receiving organization.

In terms of length of assignment in Japan, 14.0% of respondents had been in Japan less than one year, 21.5% had been here one to two years, and 17.6% had been here two to three years, so that 53.1% of the expatriates had been here less than three years. However, 23.1% were long-term expatriates who had been in Japan five years or more. The number of years on assignment was clearly correlated with job rank, and the higher the job rank, the longer the number of years on assignment in Japan.

Most of the expatriates, 65.8%, had worked in the country where their dispatching organization is located immediately before coming to Japan.

When we asked how many times the respondents had worked overseas, including their current assignment in Japan, 45.0% said once, 23.1% said twice, and 14.7% said three times, so that the total for these three was 83.2%. We may say that only a few respondents, 15.6%, had worked overseas four times or more. However, 5.2% had experienced six or more overseas assignments. The

respondents had experienced an average of 2.2 overseas assignments, and the number of overseas assignments was noticeably greater among the older respondents.

Respondents who said that they had experienced two or more overseas assignments were asked whether there had been any regional pattern to their assignments, and 19.5% said that they had always gone to the same country, 26.0% said they had always gone to the same region, and 49.7% said that they had been assigned to several regions. By location of the home office, most expatriates from American companies had been assigned only to Japan, while most expatriates from European companies had been assigned to more than one region.

In 43.0% of cases, it was not clear how many countries the respondent had worked, including their current assignment in Japan, but 11.7% had been assigned to one country, 22.5% to two countries, 9.8% to three countries, and 13.0% to four or more countries. The number of individuals who had experienced assignments in several countries tended to increase with age.

Most respondents had had five to fifteen years of overseas work experience, and the average total was 11.6 years. The number of individuals with long cumulative years of overseas experience tended to increase with age, and 38.9% of respondents age 55 or older had twenty or more years of overseas experience.

Chapter 8 is devoted to analysis of the respondents' free comments. That is to say, respondents were instructed to write down their "thoughts or opinions on problems or concerns about [their] work and life in Japan." Fifty-five of the 307 valid completed surveys, a rather high proportion at 17.7%, contained such individual remarks. The unfiltered opinions written in the space for free comments acted as supplementary material to the quantitative analysis in the first seven chapters.

We received a wide variety of comments, but for purposes of our study, we divided them into (1) concerns about the dispatching organization (headquarters), (2) concerns about the local organization and work-related problems, (3) concerns about daily life, (4) concerns about language and communication, (5) concerns about government procedures, (6) concerns about repatriation, and (7) other concerns and opinions. In general, all the concerns mentioned had to do with Japan. Pre-departure training, the notification period for assignment to Japan, the assignment period, compensation, and public peace were not mentioned.

In any case, these unfiltered opinions from expatriate employees of foreign firms truly pointed out a variety of problems and opinions. It is especially interesting to note that no mention was made of two frequently noted concerns of Japanese expatriates, namely concerns about the assignment period and rotation.

In contrast, expatriates tended to mention concerns about the vagueness of decision making procedures in Japanese companies and organizations, stringent working conditions, problems with communication, problems with language study,

and other types of concerns about daily life. Furthermore, the respondents clearly would like to see improvements in the government bureaucracies, particularly the Immigration Office.

The individual chapters were written by the following persons:

Introduction:	Summary of the Survey Results	Mitsuhide Shiraki
Chapter 1:	Status and Training before Departure	Mitsuhide Shiraki
Chapter 2:	Current and Previous Work	Takashi Umezawa
Chapter 3:	Working Hours and Compensation in Japan	Takashi Umezawa
Chapter 4:	Support Systems of the Dispatching Organization and Expatriates' Job Satisfaction	Hirohisa Nagai
Chapter 5:	Expatriates' Living Environments and Adjustment to a Different Culture	Hirohisa Nagai
Chapter 6:	Work and Daily Life after Repatriation	Takashi Umezawa
Chapter 7:	Characteristics of the Receiving Organizations, the Dispatching Organizations, and the Respondents	Mitsuhide Shiraki
Chapter 8:	Analysis of the Free Comments	Mitsuhide Shiraki