



<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Master's thesis
<input type="checkbox"/>	Licentiate's thesis
<input type="checkbox"/>	Doctor's thesis

Subject	International Business	Date	10.3.2005
Author	Henna Taponen	Student number	
		Number of pages	128
Title	EXPATRIATE ADJUSTMENT OF FINNISH PEACEKEEPERS – Peacekeepers in the KFOR Operation in Kosovo		
Supervisor	Dr.Sc.(Econ.) & Ph.D.(Social Sciences) Kari Liuhto		

Abstract

Expatriate adjustment has been considered to be an important research topic because the adjustment problems of expatriates have been found to cause much inefficiency and most of the failures of the foreign assignments. The Finnish peacekeepers can also be considered to experience expatriate adjustment when on a peacekeeping mission. However, their premature returns are considerably rare. This encouraged to study the Finnish peacekeepers' adjustment more closely. The aim of this study was to find out what is critical to Finnish peacekeepers' expatriate adjustment and its success. This aim was pursued by exploring what factors affect the peacekeepers' anticipatory as well as on-site adjustment the most. Also the degree, facets and modes of their adjustment were studied and finally, a collective explanation for the influence of the adjustment factors was sought for. The practical use of the research was to be gained by finding new means to facilitate peacekeepers' adjustment. The results were expected to be relevant also for other organisations since applications were to be derived from the factors that facilitate peacekeepers' adjustment the most.

The research was qualitative and it was conducted by interviewing Finnish KFOR-peacekeepers that were team leaders, deputy team leaders or patrol leaders in the rotation of April 2004. As a whole, the studied group of peacekeepers had adjusted well. The research results reinforced the crucial role of training. Also spouse's attitude had considerable influence on adjustment. Surprising was the ambiguous influence of previous experience – it facilitated adjustment remarkably but also generated occasional frustration. Interestingly, neither role novelty, organisation culture novelty or culture novelty had significance in peacekeepers' adjustment. This is most likely due to the effective initiation on-site.

The most obvious obstacles for adjustment were role conflict and low degree of role flexibility that was due to the rigid hierarchy. Providing more justifications for the commands and not emphasising military skills over the professional skills too much could probably reduce role conflict. Role flexibility could be increased by granting more responsibility and discretion to the ranks. Probably the most practical application for other organisations is peacekeepers' serial socialisation. That is, adjustment can be facilitated if experienced expatriates initiate newcomers to their assignments. This could serve also as a "mentor system". Due to the limitations of this study, the results cannot be generalised to all Finnish peacekeepers. Especially female peacekeepers and other operations would need further studying. In addition, repatriation deserves further research. For future research on expatriates, longitudinal methods can be recommended in order to gain knowledge on different phases of adjustment. Participating observation, in particular, could elicit rich data on the subject.

Key words	adjustment, expatriate, Finnish, KFOR, Kosovo, peacekeeper
Further information	

