

Going Home When Home Does Not Feel Like Home: Reentry, Expectancy Violation Theory, Self-Construal, and Psychological and Social Support

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Abstract

Reentry can be an exciting and challenging adjustment. While there are both positive and negative aspects of reentry, most sojourners would say that their cultural experience was worth the trials. The support of one's family and friends is essential in having a successful adjustment. Psychological factors can affect adjustment. Self construals help us understand our own cultural views as well as our host cultural views. They are also related to social support because the more interdependent the more a person is the more that person will rely on their social network or in-group for satisfaction. Expectancy Violations Theory can help explain problems of culture shock, reentry, and reverse culture shock. The study of these variables brought up many questions, contradictions, and ideas for future research.

Introduction

After living abroad, home does not feel like home. The life one lives in a foreign country is different than the life that was lived before the sojourner experience. The excitement of living in another country, visiting different cities and countries, and what one learns to love about the host country are gone. In the process of going home, many people believe that they will pick up in the exact place they left off. The philosopher Heraclitus said that you can not step in the same river twice, this can also be said about the process of reentry. As one changes as they are abroad, one's home country and culture also changes. Going back to the life that they left is often not the reality of the reentry experience. There are unexpected emotions such as sadness and loneliness. While many people do not know how to label this phenomenon, they experience the effects of reverse culture shock.

Most people have heard of culture shock and expect to experience cultural differences between their home and host countries. However, many individuals do not expect to have many of the same problems associated with culture shock when they come home (Gaw, 2000). When individuals return home they find that not only have they changed as a result of their time abroad, but friends and family have also changed in their absence (Seiter & Waddell, 1989). This violates the expectations of many returnees. Reverse culture shock has been studied in the fields of anthropology, cross-cultural training, intercultural communication, international education, and psychology (Uehara, 1986). According to multiple studies, the adjustment process of reverse culture shock is harder than initial culture shock (Adler, 1981; Storti, 2001; Sussman, 1986; Uehara, 1986), yet, reverse culture shock receives only a fraction of the attention that culture shock receives (Adler, 1981).

There are many variables associated with the level of reverse culture shock that one experiences. Expectancies are often violated when it comes to returning home. One expects

the places and people that they left to be the same when they return, yet this is not the case. Social support is essential to having a smooth adjustment. Struggling with fitting into one's social group creates more problems with reentry (Martin, 1986a). Self construals (independent and interdependent) help predict reentry success. People who are more interdependent will rely more on their social support than a person who identifies with an independent self construal (Goodwin & Plaza, 2000). In looking at these concepts, we are able to gain a clearer perceptive regarding reverse culture shock. The gained knowledge also leads to more questions and future studies and research that should be done in the area of reverse culture shock.

Expectancy Violation Theory (EVT)

Expectancy can be defined as "an enduring pattern of anticipated behavior that may be either generalized or person-specific" (Burgoon & Walthers, 1990, p.235). Expectancy Violation Theory created by Judee Burgoon aids in comprehending and predicting others' behaviors (Burgoon & Hale, 1988). Success is measured in conformity to the established norms. Norms and values are the guidelines in which one bases their behavior. In addition we expect others to follow the same set of norms and values (Burgoon & Walthers, 1990). Norms are based on the social and cultural environment as well as the past history of individuals. Expectancies can be based on past relational history or observations of a person. Every one has expectations regarding behavior. Changes in these expectations trigger disturbances, and heighten cognitive arousal (Burgoon & Hale, 1988).

Expectancy violations can be looked at in regards to range. When one reaches the maximum threshold, an expectancy is violated. While individuals can have tolerance for ambiguity and small violations of social norms, once the threshold reaches the maximum boundary a violation has occurred. At this point there is heightened cognitive arousal and the action has caused a disturbance (Burgoon & Hale, 1988).

While expectancies are considered to be value-neutral, violations are rarely seen as anything but negative (Burgoon & Walthers, 1990). A negative expectancy violation is an event that is not consistent with social norms or past interactions with an individual. Negative violations are seen as unfavorable. However, recent research has shown that expectations can also be violated positively. A positive violation is a communication occurrence that is viewed more favorably than conformity (Burgoon & Hale, 1998). An example of a positive violation would be a pleasant voice after a hard day.

There are five main assumptions related to Expectancy Violation Theory. The first assumption is that humans have competing desires. Second, the reward level of communication effects one's evaluation of communication behaviors. When a rewarding communicator violates an expectancy the outcome is positive. When a non-rewarding communicator violates an expectancy, the outcome is negative. The third assumption is that people develop expectations regarding how others should behave and communicate. These assumptions are regarding verbal and nonverbal communication. When expectations are violated, there is a heightened awareness which is arousing and distracting. This heightened state causes one to regard another person's communication more carefully. The forth assumption says that violations can be both extremely negative and extremely positive. The last assumption states verbal and nonverbal behaviors have meanings. These meanings are evaluated by social and cultural values (Burgoon, 1992).

While Expectancy Violation Theory began in the field of nonverbal communication, the theory has been extended to include cultural implications. Norms, rules, and expectations are not consistent from culture to culture. Cultures hold differing values and ideas. The range and thresholds in which violations are evaluated change as one enters a new culture. Some cultures value ambiguity, while others do not like ambiguity. Cultural norms and expectancies are easy to break when one does not understand them (Burgoon, 1995).

Culture Shock

In understanding reverse culture shock, one must first look at the initial culture shock a sojourner experiences when they go abroad. Studies show that some of the psychological, social and behavioral changes that occur during culture shock also occur during reverse culture shock (Rohrlich & Martin, 1991). Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) believed the only difference between culture shock and reverse culture shock is that the latter is not expected. While many researchers are in agreement that the differences between culture shock and reverse culture shock may not be large, there are some differences in the experiences. Culture shock is an emotional and psychological reaction to the loss of an individual's own culture. It involves the loss of familiar signs, symbols and social interactions. Culture shock occurs when unpredictable cues are thrown at a person and that individual does not know how to respond (Gaw, 2000).

There are many variables that can predict a successful adjustment. These variables which are related to the sojourner, person who lives abroad; and having a successful adjustment include age, gender, and social distance between members of the host country and the sojourner. Younger individuals and women report having a harder time with the adjustment process. Communicating with members of the host culture contributes to having a positive experience. Location of the sojourner and communication with the host affect satisfaction. The amount of problems within adjustment are often based on the cultural distance between host and sojourner (Rohrlich & Martin, 1991). The quality of social support from host nationals is related to positive interpersonal communication success in adjustment (Allen, Amazon, & Holmes, 1998). Adaptation of a new communication style is harder for those who do not have good interpersonal or social skills. Communication in host countries is important in understanding reentry culture shock because one must understand the changes that have occurred within themselves while abroad (Rohrlich & Martin, 1991).

Fifteen to twenty-five percent of all sojourners have significant problems with culture shock. The more ethnocentric an individual is, the harder time that person will have coping with adversity in a new culture (Church, 1982). Personality is looked at when examining adaptation. Adjustment is not as difficult if the sojourner's personality fits in with the host cultural norms. It is important to understand one's own culture and the sojourner's relationship with their new culture (Ward & Chang, 1997). The influence of both the host and the home cultures are important when looking at identity. Home and host culture can affect one's psychological adjustment depending on how much access a sojourner has to both cultures. A sojourner will also be affected by the degree of differences between cultures (Ward & Raha-Deuba, 2000). The more a sojourner communicates with their host, the better their adjustment process. Sojourners who interact with their host report more relational satisfaction (Rohrlich & Martin, 1991).

Identity changes are a major part of the sojourner experience. Many people can learn to identify deeply with their new culture. This new identification can cause many changes in one's previous identity. A person may not see themselves as part of one's culture, but as a part of both cultures (Gaw, 2000). Those who have not "found themselves" before their cultural experience report having more problems with adjustment abroad (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963). Many individuals experience change and growth in their identity due to living abroad (Church, 1982). When sojourners return to their home countries, they often struggle to keep the parts of their self they gained when they were abroad (Gaw, 2000).

Culture shock has four stages (Oberg, 1960). The first stage a person goes through when moving to another culture is the honeymoon stage. This stage lasts from a few days to six months. It is characterized by excitement, fascination and discovery. The second stage is the hostile and emotional stage. In this stage the sojourner feels hostile and relies on stereotypes to deal with the host. The sojourner is missing the culture in which they came from and tries to spend time with others from their home culture. The third stage is the recovery stage. In this stage one increases their communication with their host. They are becoming more competent in the language. The last stage is adjustment. At this stage a person has accepted the new culture, enjoying being a part of it and adjustment is near completion (Church, 1982).

Reentry and Reverse Culture Shock

Reentry is simply the process of returning home. Reverse culture shock can be defined as the psychological and social difficulties related to the adjustment of going home after living in another country (Uehara, 1986). Reverse culture shock, which is also known as readjusting, reacculturating, reassimilating or reentry culture shock, is known to affect cultural identity, cause social withdrawal, depression, anxiety, anger, fear and interpersonal problems. Sojourners report feeling out of place in their home countries because of their new and different cultural identity (Gaw, 2000). Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) were one of the first to look at reverse culture shock as part of the adjustment process. They extended the previous U-curve that only included adjustment to a host culture and created a W-curve to include coming back to the country of origin. Many people believe that reverse culture shock is worse than the initial culture shock one had when they went abroad. Studies show that those who are successful in their adjustment to another culture have the most difficult time adjusting when they go home (Koester, 1984).

Reverse culture shock is different than culture shock because there are many unexpected problems. Many people prepare for difficulties they may experience when they go abroad, but do not often prepare for the cultural changes of their return (Storti, 2001; Sussman, 1986). Individuals expect that home will not change while they are abroad. The problem with this belief is that people and places change while the sojourner is abroad (Sussman, 1986). Towns build new stores and old stores go out of business. Sojourners become out of touch with current issues of their home country (Seibenthaler, 1998). Sojourners themselves change and grow due to the cultural experiences and may not see home in the same way as when they left (Sussman, 1986). Many people feel like they are lost in time (Siebenthaler, 1998).

Another expectation that is violated when a sojourner returns home is that many people are not interested in hearing about a sojourner's time abroad. There can be many reasons for a person not to be interested in listening to a sojourner. These reasons may include

that there is not enough time to learn everything about the sojourner's experience, jealousy, or a person may have a short attention span. Individuals may feel threatened or jealous of the sojourner (Storti, 2001). People do not share the same enthusiasm for your host country (Siebender, 1998). The lack of interest of one's social support can leave them feeling sad, lost, and lonely.

Another problem exists in the word "home." Home is a place where one feels accepted and understood. Home is familiar and predictable in regards to people and places. At home one feels secure, trust, care, safety, and a sense of belonging. While abroad a sojourner creates a new home and their perspectives of home changes. There is a lot of change involved in adjustment. When returning to the country of one's origin, a sojourner must return to the norms of the former culture and relearn how to fit in. Many people feel that returning home is better described as a return to their country of origin. Sojourners often have a feeling of homelessness. The strangeness of home can be alarming and upsetting (Storti, 1990, 2001). For the purpose of this paper, returning home will mean returning to one's country of origin.

Many researchers recognize that reverse culture shock is a longitudinal process. Adjusting to one's country of origin takes time (Storti, 2001; Sussman, 1986). This process can be more difficult than the initial adjustment. Many researchers believe that the reverse adjustment, like the original adjustment, occurs in stages. The first stage is called leave-taking and departure. It is believed that reverse culture shock begins when a sojourner begins planning to go home. The leave-taking stage initials what a sojourner must do before going-home. This includes saying good bye and making logistical plans for going home (Storti, 2001). This stage can last from a few days before departure to a few months as one plans to leave (Adler, 1981). The second stage in reverse adjustment is the honeymoon stage. This stage can last from a week to a month. The sojourner returns to their home country and everyone is excited to see the sojourner and wants to hear all about their time spent in a foreign country. The sojourner enjoys their time in their home country and visits those whom they missed while abroad.

Reverse culture shock, the third stage, begins when life starts returning to normal. During this time a sojourner sees that their identity has changed. They are often plagued by doubt, disappointment and are overwhelmed at the prospect of starting over (Storti, 2001). Sojourners experience alienation, rejection, loss of sleep, anxiety, fears and phobias (Gaw, 2000; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Siebenaler, 1998). They face many decisions, responsibilities, and are required to make many choices. There are many cultural differences involved in a sojourner's adjustment. Slang and customs may have changed while the sojourner was abroad (Siebenaler, 1998). Forty-five percent of returnees have anxiety problems associated with return culture shock. Thirty-four percent of returnees regret returning home. Nine percent of returned sojourners regret going abroad in the first place (Gaw, 2000). During the reverse culture shock phase many people resist adjusting to home culture. It is normal for a returnee to feel low for two to three months (Adler, 1981). The final stage is adjustment. At this stage the sojourner has adapted to being at home and does not feel the constant desire to go back to their host country. A sojourner begins to focus on the future and not dwell on the past. They gain a balanced view of life (Storti, 2001). It may take a sojourner from six months to a year to feel like they have adjusted back into their home culture (Siebenaler, 1998).

Reentry is not always negative, it has many positive advantages (Uehara, 1986). When a sojourner is successful in adjusting to another culture, they take on many of the

characteristics of that culture. These characteristics can include interpersonal communication (accent, language competence), physical (fashion, hairstyles) and behavioral (posture, nonverbal) attributes. Sojourners struggle with how much to keep of the new identity they gained abroad when they return home (Gaw, 2000). When the sojourner returns home, they bring much of their new culture with them. They develop a new cultural identity. The way in which one views their identity changes. Their self or identity becomes more unique due to cultural experience. The changes in identity make a sojourner unique. They can now identify more than one culture and gain a new perspective (Koester, 1984). Sojourners experience positive growth (Uehara, 1986). Reentry is a transition period. It is the process of adapting to a home environment (Martin, 1986b). It is important for a sojourner to remember that the problems associated with reentry are normal. Almost everyone experiences reverse culture shock to some degree (Storti, 2001).

Japanese returnees painted a slightly different picture of their reentry from the United States to Japan. Like many sojourners returning to their home country, their identity had changed and they no longer felt Japanese. In contrast to the United States where differences and uniqueness is seen as good, in Japan differences are bad (Kidder, 1992). The saying "The nail that sticks up gets hammered down" fits this culture (Isogai, Hayashi, & Uno, 1999, p. 514). Taking big steps, direct eye contact, pierced ears, and directness in speech are seen as bad habits one gains while overseas. One returnee told a story about how her hair had been sun bleached while she was in the states. She liked the change in her hair color. When she went home to Japan, she was told to dye it black, even though her hair color was natural. One boy's parents said he was sick when he came home with a new independent attitude (Kidder, 1992). Another returnee talks about how, when he returned from the United States, he had to learn English again with an Japanese accent because his pronunciation was not right according to Japanese standards (Isogai et al., 1999). Returnees must remember and participate in customs that they now see as bothersome. They did not have to worry about these customs while they lived the United States. In Japan most wives are not allowed to have jobs because it would threaten their husband's face (Isa, 2000). Hobbies are the only acceptable way of expressing individuality in Japan (Somech, 2000). Many Japanese returnees feel that to deny part of either culture is to deny part of their identity (Isogi et al., 1999).

There are two types of adjustment, psychological and sociocultural. Although in past literature these types of adjustment have been specifically applied to entering a new culture, they can be used in exploring the reentry process. Psychological adjustment is related to personality, identity, satisfaction level and the overall well-being of the sojourner. Sociocultural adjustment is related to how well a sojourner fits into their host culture and interacts with them. It deals with social difficulty and social support networks (Ward & Chang, 1997).

Psychological Adjustment

Psychological adjustment is defined as "those who have psychological well-being or satisfaction" (Oguri & Gudykunst, 2002, p. 579). When a returnee shows a lack of mood disturbance and depression, that person is considered to be psychologically adjusted. Psychological adjustment deals with a returnee's emotional states, cognitive perceptions and personality. While studies show that personalities are not directly related to reentry success

(Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001), studies do show that having similar self-construals helps in the adjustment process (e.g., Oguri & Gudykunst, 2002).

Reentry is a difficult and stressful experience (Uehara, 1986). Psychological stress is worse in the beginning stages of the reentry process (Ward et al., 2001). The rise in stress level is due the lack of predictability (Fontaine, 1996). While abroad sojourners assimilate to the values of their host culture. When they return to their country of origin, the sojourner may feel conflicted as to if they should keep their host cultures values or return to their home culture's values. This conflict causes internal stress and confusion. In assimilating into another culture, the sojourner changes their behaviors and values. Family and friends can no longer predict the returnee's behaviors or feeling. This causes family and friends to desire the returnee to return to the values and beliefs they demonstrated before they left. In addition, when sojourners return to their home culture they have difficulty predicting the behavior of family and friends. Their expectations regarding values and behaviors have changed. This causes a sojourner to feel added stress and anxiety (Seiter & Waddell, 1989). Returnees have reported having problems completing task they do everyday. Time and space are required for the returnee to cope and become adjusted to the home environment (Fontaine, 1996).

In Seiter and Waddell's work, they quoted Jansson (1986) who stated reentry can be a slow, terrifying and painful process. Psychological problems caused by reentry are irritability, loneliness, loss, depression, anxiety, impatience, and anger. Psychological distress often causes physical problems such as losing ones appetite and not being able to sleep (Church, 1982).

Sociocultural Adjustment and Social Support

Sociocultural adjustment looks at how the returnee interacts with their previous social support network. Social support is a group of people around a person that cares, interacts, and supports a person. Social support is the product of interaction in various situations. Members of one's social support are one's family and friends (Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1994). Social support can be informational, assistance, or emotional support (Conn & Peterson, 1989; Dunkel-Schetter & Skokan, 1990). Social support is more important than previously thought. Social support helps remove loneliness. Specific relationships aid in personal adjustment (Sarason et al., 1994). High levels of social support lead to a better self-image (Allen, Amason, & Holmes, 1998). Social support affects a person's identity and helps them grow. Identity formations come from one's social network. People in one's social support group help maintain and protect a person's identify (Hobfoll, Freedy, Lane, & Geller, 1990; Rusbult & Buunk, 1993). Social support provides loving and caring assistance (Hobfoll et al., 1990). Support is expressed in ongoing interactions (Gottlieb, 1985). Social support is related to life satisfaction (Goodwin & Plaza, 2000). Those individuals in your social support group must allow change (Hobfoll et al., 1990). Studies show that in times of stress, one receives greater support (Conn & Peterson, 1989; Dunkel-Schetter & Skokan, 1990).

The social support of friends and family is critical in the reentry process. The adaptation process often creates stress and difficulties in relationships. Both the sojourner and those left at home have changed while the sojourner was away. They changed in different ways while they were apart. Understanding changes within oneself helps in relating to others. When one knows that change has occurred and deals with the change, people in one's social group can begin interacting in old and new ways. The social environment has changed and

therefore new rules of interaction must be established (Martin, 1986a). The more problematic and dissatisfying a relationship is, the more reentry problems will occur. Through relationships we understand our own self. If these relationships are not healthy, we have a harder time dealing with the issues of change within our self. Separation and distance can lead to psychological problems such as depression and anxiety. Relationships are critical in the transition phase. It is through interactions with others that adaptation begins (Martin, 1986b). The social support that one left behind in the host country must now be replaced (Siebenaler, 1998). A problem many sojourners reported when they returned is not having a cohesive group of friends like they had abroad. Many sojourners expressed having problems fitting back into their group (Sussman, 1986). Reentry can be a very traumatic on one's identity and the social support of friends (Siebenaler, 1998).

Some relationships improve when a sojourner returns from abroad. When students return, parents see a lot of growth, maturing and character changes. Personal confidence and self-reliance are two skills that sojourners learn (Church, 1982). Relationships with family members tend to improve when one returns from time abroad (Martin, 1986b). Time spent with family members has a positive affect on emotional adjustment (Selmer & Shiu, 1999). Relationships with friends are not always as positive. Often friends do not give enough of the needed social support when sojourner returns. Depending on the length of time abroad, the changes in both the sojourner and friends left behind are hard to overcome (Uehara, 1986). The more problems one has in their relationships, the more problems a sojourner will have in the reentry process (Martin, 1986a).

Self Construals

Culture is instilled in individuals beginning from the time they are children. People view the world and take action based on their cultural beliefs. Self construals are related to two cultural values, individualism and collectivism. Triandis (as referenced in Gudykunst, Matsumoto, Ting-Toomey, Nishida, and Kim, 1996) stated that individualists values uniqueness, individual goals and achievements. Collectivists value in-groups, family, harmony and conformity. Goodwin and Plaza (2000) studied the link between support systems and individualism/collectivism. They found that individualists have a looser social support system. Collectivists have a stronger social support system. The acceptance of one's social support network is more important in a collectivistic society. Collectivists tended to have higher level of life satisfaction due to their tight social support system (Goodwin & Plaza, 2000). While individualism and collectivism are variables which society identifies with, self construals are how individual levels are measured. The self construal, independents, identifies with individualism. Interdependence self construal is related to collectivism. A society is neither completely individualist or collectivist. In the same way, individuals use a combination of self construals in their daily lives. One self construal is usually dominant. Self construals effect the influence of individualism and collectivism on our behavior. People who identify with interdependence self construals are often concerned with the care of others, while independents are more concerned with the clarity of communication (Gudykunst et al., 1996).

When looking at individuals who have a cultural identity that identifies with multiple cultures, it is helpful to look at the cultural types of self construes. Yamadaa and Singelis (1999) developed four types of cultural self construals. The first type of self construal is a

bicultural self construal. In a bicultural self construal, a person has a well developed interdependent and independent self construal. A western self construal is a strong independent and a weak interdependent self construal. Traditional self construal composed of a strong interdependent and a weak independent self construal. A culturally-alienated self construal consists of a weak interdependent and independent self construal. Bicultural individuals feel that they have life experience in multiple cultures (Yamadaa & Singelis, 1999). Yamadaa and Singelis hold the opposite view of Leong and Ward (2000) who stated that independent and interdependent self construals conflict in a person who identifies with both self construals.

When looking at adjustment, matching sojourner and host self construal leads to better adjustment and better psychological health. Matching self construals of host and sojourner will produce an easier transition. While I could not find any research directly linking self construals to reverse culture shock, I think the same assumption can be made. When returning from another culture, if the self construals of the host culture and the home culture are similar, the transitions will be easier. Regardless of the host and sojourner's self construals matching, understanding another cultural perspective helps individuals to communicate effectively (Oguri & Gudykunst, 1996). In cultural situations, women have a harder time adjusting than men (Church, 1982). While it is untested, women may have a harder time adjusting to culture due to the fact that they are more interdependent. Individuals who are more interdependent may have a harder time in reentry adjustment because they rely more on their social support for life satisfaction and their social support may not like how they have changed.

Major Research Trends and Critiques

One trend is that there is lot of research on culture shock and adjustment, yet the research on reverse culture shock is limited when compared to culture shock research. Authors are linking culture shock to other communication variables, but reverse culture shock is far behind in the research. When one looks for information about reverse cultures shock there is considerably less research done on it. If reverse culture shock is something that is still widely unknown and its effects are worse the original culture shock, should the balance of research be reversed? Many studies have been done to link adjustment to other communication and psychological principles. I could not find any studies that linked reentry to any cultural variables such as individualism/collectivism, self construals, power distance, high and low context or gender. Many of the connections made in this paper are related to the initial adjustment. Combining concepts such as those listed in this paper will aid in greater understanding of reverse culture shock and increase heretical value.

Other areas in which the research seemed lacking is in applying theoretical frameworks to reentry. Martin, Bradford, and Rohrlich (1995) used expectancy violation theory to look at adjustment, but that was one of the few studies on adjustment that contained a theoretical framework. Limited research was found that connected any theoretical framework to reverse culture shock. In addition, I did not find research comparing the adjustment processes of individuals from different countries. Studies comparing individuals from individualist countries to either other individualist countries or to collectivist countries would produce some interesting findings. It appears that there is a lot of room for further research in the area of reentry and reverse culture shock.

Reentry is a longitudinal processes. Within the research found only one of the studies looked at adjustment from a longitudinal perceptive. Martin et al. (1995) examined at adjustment from pre-departure to post-sojourn. Adjustment like reentry is a longitudinal process. I could not find any studies that looked at reentry from a longitudinal perceptive. Most studies asked post-sojourners to look back and recall their experiences in order to gain data. There are many problematic issues in asking people to reflect on prior knowledge. One issue is that they do not always remember incidents correctly. I think a lot of value would be gained from a longitudinal study looking at the stages of reentry in regards to other variables performing research experiments on those who returned in regular increments for at least a year. While many individuals have reached the stage of compete adjustment in a year, I believe that there may still be some underling problems associated with reentry after a year's time. In addition, a study looking at the long-term effects of intercultural adjustment looking back at sojourners two years, five years or even ten years after their reentry may produce some interesting findings.

One major trend leans towards the bias of an individualist approach when looking at reentry. Most literature seemed to be written for an individualist audience. The ideas and research directly contradicts many of the collectivist values. Some positive factors relating to reentry and adjustment were that individuals were more self-reliant, independent and self-confident (Martin, 1986a). These qualities would not be looked at favorably in collectivist cultures where group unity, harmony and conformity are valued. The studies relating to reentry in collectivist cultures and individualist cultures did not compare the two cultures in relations to reentry or reverse culture shock. A study directly comparing the cultures would be useful in understanding cultural differences. While some studies did look at collective or interdependent sojourners readjusting from time spent in individualist cultures, I did not see any studies regarding individualist adjustment in collectivist cultures. A comparison of the two cultures should be fruitful.

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