

“The Effects of Repatriation on Managers Returning From
Foreign Assignments”

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DECLARATION

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Abstract

This study explains the effects of repatriates on managers returning from foreign assignments. The first chapter provides the reader with an introduction to my chosen topic, the justification of undertaking the topic and my research objectives. The second chapter explains the research methodology, my questionnaire design and the problems I encountered when gathering information. The study goes on to explain the expatriation/repatriation process in detail. It begins with the selection criteria needed for expatriation and goes on to criticize it. Next, the factors needed by the expatriate to adjust to their new environment are explained. I have then set out a training process an expatriate should go through before the assignment.

Repatriation is then explained in detail for the reader describing present barriers to the process and factors needed to be taken into consideration during the repatriate's adjustment. Proactive strategies are then suggested with a conclusion provided for the reader.

The next chapter is the main body of my research and is all my primary research explained through the use of diagrams and tables with literature explaining every response I received. This section provides four sections: Demographics of respondents, Length of expatriation and repatriation, the expatriation/repatriation process and Independent Variables.

The final chapter consists of conclusions and recommendations. It suggests a recommended repatriation program and a possible way of carrying out future research on this topic.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Within this dissertation, the research objectives, the methodology, the research setting and the problems and limitations of the research are explained. This paper aims to explain the effect of repatriation on managers who have accepted international assignments abroad and why they have accepted these posts. Repatriation is the home coming of an expatriate after they have completed an assignment abroad. I will endeavour to give the reader an understanding of both repatriation and expatriation. I will do this by providing information from primary and secondary research about the rationale behind decisions made by management to place managers working for their organization in positions abroad. The paper will also discuss what motivates individuals to take up these positions and if these motives are realized. I will be recommending what I consider is an effective repatriation programme based on my primary research

Justification for my Chosen Topic

I chose this topic for several reasons. I believe repatriation study is important to organizations and their employees because of the amount of executives leaving their jobs when undergoing the process. I have always been interested in the repatriation and the expatriation process and have recently studied expatriation during my masters program. The expatriation process depends on the factors of the job, the organizational factors, the positional factors, the non-work factors and most importantly the individual factors. This is explained in more detail in Chapter 3.

A writer called Dowling (1986) has identified the process of repatriation which starts with preparation, then physical relocation, then transition and finally readjustment. I also believe that repatriation is as crucial as expatriation and that the repatriation process is heard about less in organisations compared with expatriation. I have always had an interest in executives working abroad within a different culture and the way they would handle the process of returning to their original post in a Multi National Enterprise in Ireland.

Research Objectives

The following are my research objectives:

1. To investigate the motivations and experiences of repatriates. – in other words, identify the main reasons why Irish managers take international assignments and whether these motives are realistic and realised.
2. To examine the process of re- integration. I will be looking in detail at this process to see if it is working for the repatriate.
3. To identify the main difficulties encountered by the repatriate- This meaning the repatriates difficulties in their career life and personal life.
4. To analyse training to facilitate re-adjustment – Here, I will identify the particular company's support for managers that is in place or not in place

Problems with Repatriation

The problem of repatriation is twofold: readjustment and re-establishment (Borg 1988).” Returning home means ‘getting back to normal; and friends, relatives and colleagues are often not really interested in the expatriates experiences” (Anne-Wil Harzing and Joris Van Ruyssevelot 1995). A normal repatriate complaint would contain the following ‘The line managers should cooperate more and not keep the repatriates within the business area. There may be suitable jobs in other parts of the corporation if the company is a large one’ (Anne-Wil Harzing and Joris Van Ruyssevelot 1995). In most cases, the repatriates must arrange everything by themselves and have to contact the line manager who sent them abroad in the first place, or the personnel department in their particular Multi National Company. It has also been said that the knowledge the repatriate has gained abroad may not be useful in their home country (lowering the self esteem of the re-assignee).

When a repatriate returns home they can run into problems regarding their work and their family life. The company must support their repatriate as much as possible so that this does not occur. If the repatriate has been away for a long time they might have missed out on major events in their home country or company. The repatriate's job and life might be completely different compared to what it was before they left.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an introduction to my chosen topic and has outlined the structure and possible problems with repatriation. The primary research has been collected from Irish companies but the information contained in the study can be used by any organization. I believe that both the business and their repatriated employee will benefit from a programme designed to eliminate barriers to repatriation. I will endeavor to show the effects of repatriation on Managers returning from foreign assignments and make my own recommendations to this effect. The following chapter will explain the repatriation process in greater detail.

Chapter 2 – Research Methodology

Introduction

This chapter will deal with the research results that I have gathered from relevant business sources. I will outline the research methodology I used in my questionnaire and my research setting. There are always certain limitations when undergoing a study of this kind and these will be outlined. I will critically analyze secondary research that I have gathered from relevant sources who deal with the subject of repatriation and expatriation. The design of my questionnaire will be explained and where I went for the primary data and how I got it. I will give a profile of the respondents with how many questionnaires I sent out and how many I received back fully completed. I will also explain what the different administration techniques I used for the primary data, and finally I will describe the conclusion I have drawn from the research.

Research Setting

With more and more organizations going global, many have personnel abroad on foreign assignments. These personnel are very important to the organization as they could be the difference between the business succeeding and failing. When the repatriate comes back they have a crucial knowledge of overseas markets and customers and this knowledge can be of great use to the home organization. I will examine the re adjustment of Irish managers both professionally and socially taking into account that the social element is just as important as the professional side. I will be looking at all the different training programs the repatriate goes through and the effect it has on them. After looking at these different training methods I will make recommendations on what method is the best. All this research will be done about Multi National Enterprises or companies that have an organization in Ireland and one or more subsidiaries overseas including Merrill Lynch and Piercom.

Methodology

The Methodology I used in this dissertation includes both primary and secondary research. The aspects of Primary research will be a structured questionnaire (see Appendix) which I have tried to distribute to as many companies as I can, as I expected a small response rate of somewhere between 5 and 20%. The questions range from basic questions around the profile of the role to their expectations prior to taking up the position abroad. My academic research will include theories detailing the main themes such as what motivates managers to take up international assignments, the barriers to re adjustment and the use of training programs in the repatriation process.

For my qualitative research I propose to conduct interviews with repatriates who are now living in Ireland. This I believe will give the reader a real insight into the experiences positive and negative of the repatriate. When designing the questionnaire I aimed to gather consistent responses and to provide as much information as possible. It is important that the person filling out my questionnaire understands exactly what I was looking for and that it was filled out in full. The design needed to be short so that it will not take too long to fill out. I planned on carrying out a pilot study to bring up any flaws or inadequacies that may arise in the questionnaire which I did. In general I will use more closed type questions which will provide more consistent responses. Open ended questions that I used provided a more detailed response. This can be used when there is a wide range of responses possible. Other information was gathered from other organizations, newspaper reports, magazines and internet sites.

Secondary Research Data

Secondary research was used and proved to be useful when reviewing the research topic. I collected secondary data from many different sources to give an overall perspective about repatriation. Articles from the University of Wales were used and proved to be a great information resource. When I began my secondary research I found a website called www.expats.com. This website gave me an overall perspective on why employees take on international assignments and provided information about how families and managers deal with the whole process of expatriation and repatriation.

The internet was used extensively looking at multinational companies annual reports and repatriation programs in place. Articles such as “Bringing them home again” by Andreason and Family issues in repatriation by Larson were of great use when searching for information on the topic.

It is obvious that there has been a lot of research done on the idea of repatriation which is evident on the amount of information I found. The main secondary information was gathered from books, Ireland China Association, The Department of Foreign affairs, the IDA and Cultural institutes and the internet.

Primary Research Data

I chose a quantitative method of collecting data in the form of a questionnaire for the purpose of primary research. I distributed the questionnaire by handing it in personally to different companies and by e-mail. The cost element of sending these e-mails was very low so I sent a lot of them to a range of multinational companies around Ireland. I seemed to get a better response from the e-mail as the respondents found the questionnaire easy to fill out and well time managed. I found the quantitative technique to be more successful than qualitative interviews that I undertook. In these qualitative interviews I asked the same questions as I had in the questionnaire asking the interviewee for a more detailed response to closed questions.

Questionnaire Design

I designed the questionnaire in such a way as to make it easy for the respondent to fill out. The main objective of this questionnaire was to identify the main factors regarding problems with the repatriation process and to establish if there were any programs in place to deal with these employees. I divided it into four sections.

The first deals with the demographic Variables which included questions like sex, age, time spent abroad and the length of time they have been back in Ireland.

The second section deals with the expatriation/repatriation process and what the respondents felt they got out of the time abroad and their return home. Here, they were also asked whether there was a program in place for them when returning from their foreign assignment.

The third section deals with the possible Barriers to re-entry, and Independent variables are dealt with in the fourth section which asked the respondent their view on the significance of their experience.

When designing the questionnaire I screened every question thoroughly in order to make it effective.

Problems/Limitations with Research

Next I looked at the possible problems and limitations of the research. Getting in contact with large scale companies proved to be quite difficult. Getting enough people to fill out the questionnaire also proved to be quite difficult possibly because these Multi National Companies have employees who are very busy and do not have time to fill out a questionnaire. The questions I put to the repatriate might be misinterpreted as a different question and I might not get the proper answer I was looking for. The repatriate who is answering the questionnaire might be back from their assignment a long time resulting in an inaccurate response to questions asked. The idea of sending out a questionnaire means that there is no benefit of personal interviews where I could pick up a lot more information from things like body language, longer responses and overall more accurate data.

Sample Selection

I distributed the questionnaire to as many multinational companies in Ireland as was possible. Most of these companies had their main headquarters in Dublin. I used the internet extensively to look for these particular companies taking into account their relevance to my chosen topic. All together, I sent out 189 questionnaires and received 41 back fully completed. This was a better response than the 5% rate that I originally expected. The responses came from 11 different individual companies although a lot of these responses were through contacts that I had in multinationals. A letter was also distributed to the potential respondents (see Appendix). This made the company aware that the objective of the thesis was to examine the manager repatriation process and most importantly they were told that the information will be kept confidential and only used for academic purposes. Contact details and the e-mail to reply to is also provided.

Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the type of organizations I have dealt with during this study. The type of methodology I have used is explained for both primary and secondary research. I designed a questionnaire which is split into sections that I gave out to executives in different companies. I also explained some of the problems I ran into when trying to gather this research. The next chapter contains all my findings from most of my secondary research and is titled 'Literature Review'

Chapter 3 – Literature Review

Introduction

In business there has been much emphasis put on the concept of expatriation. This is due to a massive increase in globalization in major multinational companies. The research on expatriation tends to focus on how the individual deals with the whole process of working in a different country and environment. Only, recently there has been extensive research undertaken concerning repatriation and the fact that lack of programs and policies is resulting in barriers to successful repatriation.

It is a competitive necessity these days to have a workforce that is fluent in the ways of the world. It is not surprising then that most of these multinationals send their professionals abroad, and plan to increase this number over the coming years (Selmer 2001). If the expatriates are unable to adjust to life and work in their particular country, they are likely to perform badly and return early (Ones and Viswesvaran, 1997). International assignments are seen as being very important to Multinational companies as it allows their employees to gain vital overseas experience. Research has shown that it is essential for MNCs to attract, select, develop and retain employees who can live and work effectively outside of their own national borders (Black, Gregerson and Mendenhall 1992a, Miller and Tung 1990).

My report will focus on why Irish managers accept these posts abroad. It will explain the factors involved in the expatriation adjustment process including individual and positional factors. The study will describe some of the barriers to the re-adjustment process and, most importantly will detail a program that I feel would be beneficial for repatriates to undertake before returning. I hope at the end of this study to have added value to the current literature on expatriate managers returning to Ireland.

Expatriate Selection

The field of HR Management typically differentiates between four different types of how managers chose and manage their staff in their foreign subsidiaries.

An *Ethnocentric* Multinational Enterprise tends to have few foreign subsidiaries and would make decisions from its home country where its main headquarters is. Ethnocentric companies place employees from the parent company into key positions within overseas subsidiaries worldwide. In this type of company the key positions are usually held in the headquarters country and reflect a colonialist approach to human resource management (Heller 1980). “This could put considerable pressure on the MNE to have special selection, training, orientation, compensation and re-entry policies and practices for expatriate managers” (Miller 1973)

A *Polycentric* MNE on the other hand would tend to have a large amount of offshore manufacturing, marketing and distribution subsidiary operations. The polycentric manager is designed to prepare local managers of host countries for crucial positions in foreign subsidiaries. The Managers that do not reach the key positions in their home country usually end up in the key positions in one of the foreign subsidiaries.

Regiocentric MNE's tend to use a more vast pool of managerial personnel than polycentric and ethnocentric MNE's (Heller 1980). “They do this by engaging third country nationals of neither headquarters nor – host country origin for managerial posts” (Ondrack 1985). These managers are developed within a region for key appointments and continue to be employed within that region.

Geocentric MNEs chose their executives on the ability to do the foreign assignment rather than basing it on their country of origin. “Their managerial training is aimed not at preparing them for a particular foreign location, but for global assignments” (Heller 1980). Geocentricism is slowly becoming the most popular strategy of expatriation for MNE's.

Selection Criteria

It is clear that some organizations have better expatriate selection processes than others. The deficiencies in this selection process have been highlighted by Mendenhall and Macomber (1997). Their theory is that the process is indeed an irrational one and that it is out of the hands of HR. Klaus (1995) has also pointed out that when an expatriate is needed abroad urgently, the process is done quite quickly. It has been shown that a workers technical competence, interpersonal skills and the importance of spouses and children contribute to the success of the expatriate's foreign assignment (Anderson 2005). These are explained in more detail:

Technical Competence

Almost every organization regards the technical skills of an expatriate to be the most important criteria to have when taking up an international assignment. Halcrow (1999) suggests that "the emphasis on technical skills over 'soft issues' (such as job fit or personality) in the selection process may reflect the discouraging reality that of all the constituencies involved in the selection process and that HR has the least influence on the decision." Halcrow has done research on this and results show that HR plays little or no role in the selection process of expatriates. A problem organizations seem to have is that they choose a candidate for the assignment based on the criteria they would employ in a domestic position.

Interpersonal Skills

Interpersonal Skills are considered to be one of the major factors when selecting an expatriate. It has been suggested by Arthur and Bennett (1995) that differences in psychosocial factors can play a significant role in distinguishing between successful and unsuccessful expatriates, who, having being selected on the basis of job knowledge and technical ability, should all be capable and knowledgeable. These expatriate interpersonal skills can be determined by psychological tests although there are not many organizations that use this assessment. It has been suggested by Guptara (1986) that there are a few different psychological tests that qualified staff can carry out on expatriate employees during the selection process.

Partner and Children

Most organizations realise the expatriate spouse's attitude during the assignment can be a major influence on its success, and must be considered during the recruitment and selection process. Black and Stephens (1989) indicate that 'the more spouses that in favour of the international assignment, the higher was their adjustment to their general environment and their interaction with host nationals'. Human Resource professionals have reported that spouse resistance to expatriation is one of the most critical issues when it comes to these overseas assignments.

Criticisms of the Selection Process

A study carried out by Jan Selmer (2001) found that selecting the right candidate for the foreign assignment was not the issue but that it was trying to find anyone actually willing to take up the position. To do this he took a large sample of western workers working in Hong Kong who responded to a mail survey about their sociocultural and psychological adjustment. The results showed that "age had a positive association with general, interaction and work adjustment of the expatriates as well as with psychological adjustment" (Jan Selmer, 2001). Being married was a positive thing for the expatriate but gender had no implication on the assignment.

It has been seen that the line manager almost pushes the expatriate abroad implying that there is no formal selection process and recruitment procedures because the job is rarely advertised. This then implies that either the manager or the personnel department have little say in who takes up the foreign assignment. "Some typical complaints from the personnel department are:

- 1) Recruitment should be more open and the job should be advertised
- 2) The personnel manager should interview the candidate (or candidates) in order to test whether he/she is suitable for the transfer abroad." (Anne-wil Harzing and Joris Van Ruysseveldt 1995)

There are also issues regarding compensation, legal matters, schools for children and housing. The appealing characteristics of expatriation are always glamorous at first, the generous salary, the large house, allowances and sometimes even a servant in places like China and Japan.

Managers Motives for going abroad:

<u>Motive</u>	
Desire for new experience	96%
Better economic conditions on employment abroad	84%
Increased prospects of future promotion with employment abroad as a background	82%
Employment abroad can indicate immediate promotion	70%
Employment abroad gives possibility for improvement within his or her field	48%
Desire to escape from personal problems at home	21%
Dissatisfaction with prevailing home conditions	19%
Restricted career possibilities within the parent company	15%
Other	25%

Source: Borg, 1988 Table 9.3 Page 191 *International Human Resource Management*, Anne-wil Harzing and Joris Van Ruysseveldt 1995

We can conclude from this study that the most important reason for taking up an international assignment was a desire for a new experience. This can be compared with my primary research in Chapter 4 where around a third of my respondents said that they took up the assignment for the experience. 70% of Borg's respondents said that promotion would be the reason they went, compared with my 30%. It seems like the executive is the only person who knows why they are going on their international assignment. This is where pre-departure training is of paramount importance. It gives the candidate the opportunity to make their opinion known to senior management and to have answered any questions they might have. Pre-Departure training is explained in more detail in the pages following.

Adjustment to expatriation

“Psychological adjustment and sociocultural adjustment is a distinction that has been proposed in the literature on international adjustment” (Ward and Kennedy, 1992) This deals with the mood of the expatriate, e.g. depression, anxiety, tension and fatigue. The adjustment from the home country does not necessarily mean that the expatriate must change their values in any way just to conform to a new set of cultural norms abroad (Furnham and Bochner 1986). It is therefore sufficient for the candidate to learn the values of the host country and then to simply discard them when repatriation comes into play. Although gaining experience and world knowledge should be put into practice when returning home wherever possible.

A typical MNEs Procedure: This process begins with a line manager who has decided to appoint a manager within their organisation to achieve a certain task. The idea behind this is that the appointed manager will integrate into the wider organisation and bring back the experience gained for the benefit of the Multinational Enterprise. By doing this the Multinational Enterprise exposes the manager to its core values and culture. The manager in turn brings back the benefit of his experience to the MNE. Because of Ireland’s dependence on foreign direct investment the process of expatriation plays a significant part in how Irish companies run their organisation and manage their staff.

The Individual factors: The potential expatriate must have certain characteristics in order to be successful on an international assignment. If they are going to a particular country it is a bonus for the expatriate to be fluent in that language although this is not always the case as the executive might be going to a country with English as the first language. They must be able to interact with people from different cultures socially as well as professionally and they must rely on themselves to get work done at an efficient rate. It might be easier to adjust to a country like France than it is in a country like China. For example: In France customs like the hand shake are the same as in Ireland. In China these customs are very much different. When a Chinese businessman greets anyone whether they are from China or another country they bow to them and there is no physical contact. If this cultural difference is not taken into account by someone from a country like France or Ireland it can result in the Chinese person feeling offended. This can then lead to a loss of business, can damage the business’ reputation, and can steer potential clients in the direction of the competition.

Positional factors: This simply is the position of the expatriate in the organization whether they are a manager or someone less senior.

Job factors: This is where the expatriate encounters problems regarding the role they play in the organization compared with the role they played in their home country.

Expatriate Pre-Departure Training

When an employee is about to go on a foreign assignment, Pre-Departure Training is of paramount importance. This can consist of information on bank accounts, housing, cultural differences compared with Ireland, and even information on schooling for children. The executive and family must prepare to enter a different environment and culture and should be ready and knowledgeable about what they might, and will encounter. The more thorough the training, the better the chance is of the expatriate returning when they are supposed to and not pre-maturely.

A training process by Tung (1981) was introduced to help expatriates before their departure and is described below:

- 1) *Area Studies Programs:* This was designed to provide information for the expatriate with information on a country's socio-political history. It also gives the assignee information on the geography of the country, the climate, the potential housing and the state of the economy. Each information pack is different depending on the country they are going.
- 2) *Language Training:* The language of the country is taught to the candidate, but this can often take months or even years (especially if the candidate is going to a country where there are many different dialects).
- 3) *Cultural Assimilator:* This system is designed to share information to the employee about the values of the particular country and about the different cultural institutions. This is hoped to increase the candidates' inter-cultural skills and make them aware of how to assimilate the foreign country's culture, eg. handshakes and gestures.

- 4) *Sensitivity Training*: this program focuses on flexibility so that the expatriate can become aware of and eventually accept that 'unfamiliar' modes behavior and value systems can also be valued ways of doing things in a different culture.
- 5) *Field Experiences*: This is where the employee is sent for a brief period to a country somewhat similar to the one they will eventually go to. This is hoped to give the employee a feel of what to expect in terms to the culture, climate, language, etc.

Without this training failure of expatriation can become a major problem for companies. Much research on expatriation failure is written by Rosalie Tung. This work was a comprehensive study on expatriate selection and overseas evaluation that included 300 U.S, 246 Western and 110 Japanese Multinational companies. It was reported by Tung that U.S companies did not do as well as Multinationals in Japan and Europe did (Tung(1981).

We can conclude from this section that Pre-departure Training can increase an expatriate's chance of success. Everything they learn from the organization before they leave can be put into practice abroad. This helps the executive to get on with their objectives and will keep their family from avoiding a culture shock and to get on with their lives in a happy, safe environment.

Repatriation – An Introduction

Repatriates have completed a global assignment and can help expand a MNE's international business. They can do this because they have first hand knowledge of cultural contexts, including specific markets and customers. They understand how the company is seen in another country and are part of a social network around the world which when put into practice, can advance the company's business. The knowledge that repatriates have is very valuable and therefore companies need to see them as being an important human capital investment.

From my research I found that Borg (1988) carried out a study of why managers choose to return to their original job in their home country. It was interesting to notice that the highest percentage was 56% them returning for promotion. I took from this that the repatriate returned for the good of themselves rather than what was best for their family. This would be apparent in some of the respondents to my questionnaire. Some might feel promotion would benefit them and their family.

Only 4% of the respondents said that they left pre-maturely because they felt uneasy about their employment in their host country. This suggests that when the executives were at their posting most of them felt secure in their jobs.

Why Managers choose to resume post in their home country,

<u>Motive</u>	
There was a possibility of promotion within the home organisation	56%
Consideration for the education of the children	54%
Discomfort for the employee or his family caused by the conditions Of the host country	36%
Considerations for relatives, friends etc.	35%
Need to keep abreast of one's own profession	31%
Employment was found in another firm	21%
Failure with the appointment in the host country	17%
Uneasiness with the employment in the host country	4%
Other	7%

Source: Borg, 1988, Table 9.4, Page 193 *International Human Resource Management*, Anne-wil Harzing and Joris Van Ruysseveldt 1995

Family Issues

Family issues are considered by most executives to be the most important factor in the expatriation/repatriation process. The manager must take into account every hindrance and benefit their family may or may not experience when abroad and when returning. Brett and Stroh (1995) found that if the candidate's spouse is willing to relocate it will result in influencing the executive but not the other way around.

The repatriate can experience a pay cut compared with what they were getting in their host country which can discourage the manager from their new status. The repatriate's family (especially children) can have a problem re-integrating themselves into school and their general surroundings. This can then lead to stress on the part of the spouse and result in a poor work performance in the job.

When an expatriate comes home, usually the spouse will be looking for a job which is a hard and long process. It is of utmost importance that the repatriate's Multi National Company help out in this regard. The company should set out a list of relevant associations or professional groups within the region, a list of conferences in the beginning of the spouse's repatriation process regarding their field of interest and a list of internet sites within the spouse's career field eg. (expat.repat.com)

According to the repatriation website one in four (or 25%) of expatriates will leave the company after returning to their original post. This shows poor utilization of the company's employees, and needs to be looked at in more detail so that they can retain an employee which has cost the company money to send on a foreign assignment. Managers of expatriates should have knowledge of the repatriate's expectations and needs and should adhere to this. The company must ensure a smooth transition for the manager.

According to Eaton Consulting group, "repatriation training should take place approximately three months before returning from assignment, and/or not later than within the first 2-3 weeks upon return".

Some of the main problems for repatriates can also be unclear career progression, the city in which they were originally has drastically changed, their home no longer feels like home and they experience a reverse culture shock and a sense of loss when returning to the original workplace.

We can conclude from this that family issues in the expatriation/repatriation process is of paramount importance. It is a major factor in an executives life and needs to be dealt with professionally and efficiently.

Barriers to Repatriation

Andreason and Kinneer (2004) have outlined some of the possible barriers to re-entry a repatriate can experience.

Personnel readjustment problems: " The causes of personal re-entry readjustment problems are to a certain extent inherent in the dynamics of having had to adjust to living in a foreign culture for a period of time". Families have reported a disappointment when returning home because of high expectations of what they thought their home country was like. They can tend to only remember the positives associated with their home country and leave out the negatives. This disappointment when returning home can often be too much for the repatriate to handle.

When an expatriate is abroad they might hold a more senior, more important role but when returning might not have that status. The expatriate can get used to luxuries they never had before, like a servant or higher social status which they lose when returning. A financial shock can happen when the repatriate realises that on the same money their life is less comfortable as it was.

Before a foreign assignee leaves for their assignment, they usually expect everything to stay as it was in their home country, but as they find out when returning many things tend to change. While the expatriate is abroad it is only natural that they and their families pick up habits and customs of their host culture, and when returning miss out on what they have been used to. It has been found that children have a major problem in re-adjusting to their home country. They find themselves out of touch with music, television and general slang. This makes it very difficult for them to be accepted by their peers and they may feel like outcasts from the group.

When returning home the repatriate often feels like they need to talk about their experience to their colleagues in their home country. It has been shown by Andreason and Kinneer (2004) that the home employees are not interested in hearing their stories and experiences. This then results in the repatriate feeling that they do not fit in, as a direct result of their foreign assignment. All of this, results in the repatriate glamorizing their assignment abroad and sometimes wanting to return to it. Life for the employee now seems dull and un-interesting, and tend to associate themselves more with the host country. They then become less committed to their job in the home country and eventually quit.

Professional re-entry problems: “Though many professional readjustment problems are related to or are extensions of the personal aspects of readjustment, for the repatriating manager themselves, the problems encountered in professional readjustment are even more difficult than those of personal adjustment” (Andreason and Kinneer 2004). When managers accept an international assignment they must be thinking about how it will benefit their career in the long – term. Instead, the manager often forgets what they have learned and does not know how to use the knowledge that they remember. Returning home, they find that some of their colleagues have been promoted ahead of them and that they are put in irrelevant jobs where their work is not appreciated. The repatriate’s spouse can be disrupted, resulting in a negative impact on job readjustment or looking for a job. This can result in a negative atmosphere in the marital relationship. The main message we can see here is that taking a foreign assignment is a high risk venture as far as the persons career path goes and the nature of the employee’s job.

Factors in Repatriation Adjustment

This section is different than the previous one because it explains the factors involved in successful repatriation adjustment rather than barriers to the process. It has been suggested by Black and Gregerson (1991) that there are three factors that affect repatriation adjustment, Individual factors, Organizational factors and Re-Entry Factors. The following is adapted from their material:

Individual Factors

Older repatriates seem to have more knowledge and experience and as a result can deal better with changes that have happened in their home country. As a result this reduces uncertainty about readjustment both by the repatriate and their spouse (Gregerson, 1991). Gregerson also found that the length of time spent on the most recent assignment plus the length of time on all assignments usually has a negative effect on the repatriate. Sussman (1986) has said that expatriates who adjust well in their host country seem to have worse problems when returning to their home country. The longer the employee stays away the more difficult it will be to settle back into their home country. Gregerson found that there was a negative relationship between the length of the foreign assignment and how well the repatriate readjusted but Hammer et al (1998) found that there was no connection between the employees intercultural experience and how they readjust.

The better the repatriate's intercultural experience the harder it is for them to settle back down in their home country. If they did not have a good experience they will tend not to talk about it and be happy that they are home back in their old job. Social Status is also a factor. Anxiety can be felt by the repatriate returning home when they feel that they are at a lower end of the social chain than they were before they left. When a repatriate returns to a job, status comes with the position they are put in. This is reflected not only in their work but in their social life also. If this happens it not only effect's the repatriate but their spouse also. Gregerson (1991) has noticed that this downward shift reflects negatively on the readjustment process.

Organizational factors

Gregerson (1991) found that role clarity was of utmost importance to the repatriate when adjusting to the home country. He also found that role discretion is positively related to repatriation work adjustment. Role clarity reduces the repatriate's uncertainty associated with the work situation, and role discretion allows the employee to change the role of the job to suit the individual to get back to the way things were before they left.

Pre-Return Training is one of the most important services organizations need to provide to their expatriates before they return home. As can be seen from my primary research survey, not one of the individuals interviewed was in a company where they offer such training. The training will need to contain detailed information on the re-entry process. This should be done for both the returning employee and their spouse (and advice on their children if applicable). It should contain the likely problems encountered by repatriates, thereby reducing the level of uncertainty the repatriate might be having. Gregerson (1991) has found that re-entry training and programs have positively facilitated in the readjustment process.

Re-Entry Factors- An introduction

Good experiences are not the norm when it comes to expatriation assignments even though common sense dictates “they are coming home. How much adjustment is needed”(Tung 1998). Tung (1998) found that expatriate employees are typically satisfied with the expatriation process but dissatisfied with the repatriation process. “Upon returning home, many expatriates feel they are given a position that feels like a demotion from their foreign assignment and are denied opportunities to use their skills they have used when abroad”(Black and Gregerson 1999). Like the expatriate worker, the spouse can find the condition of the foreign assignment - perks, extra money, and nice living conditions have all changed upon return (Stroh et al.,1998). Returning expatriate spouses who adjust better to their home country environment are usually more willing to go overseas again than those who have had more difficulty. It has also been seen that the children who have had to readjust in many different environments before returning home reduces the spouse’s uncertainty concerning the ability of the family to readjust to future assignments.

In December 2005 the minister for finance, Brian Cowan, announced that he was planning to end tax breaks for expatriates in this country. This allows the executives to only pay tax on the salary they earn in Ireland. “The closure of the scheme, as well as the high cost of living, has discouraged some executives from moving to Ireland. However, there is still a big Irish community living abroad who still want to come home” said McBride & Webb (2007). They also said that salary and bonuses make moving back to Ireland worthwhile. This can be seen as an incentive for the expatriate to return to their home organization. On average, an executive in a top bank or company in Ireland can earn from 150,000 to 200,000 euro.

Repatriation Programs

Planning for reentry should begin even before sending employees on a foreign assignment (Andreason and Kinneer 2004).An effective pre-departure selection process takes out potential employees with family problems or characteristics that would limit their probability of success. This also rules out the people that do not want to go on the foreign assignment. The organization can then do a thorough pre-departure training course with a program in place for the expatriate in their host country. This will give them advice on what sort of problems to expect both in their host country and when returning. The repatriate needs to be proactive in their response to these programs which can result in the employee and their family having a good idea of what to expect.

It has been suggested by Andreason that the repatriate have a repatriation agreement. This is where a firm gives a candidate preparing for an international assignment a written guarantee regarding the length of the assignment, the expectations they have of the candidate while abroad and when returning the promise of an acceptable position in the organization. If this contract is not drawn up and the candidate is promised these things and does not receive them it can result in the employee leaving their job pre-maturely.

(Andreason and Kinneer 2004)Also, a firm can create accurate expectations in the use of repatriation agreements by the following:

- Allow the expatriate to visit the home organization at certain times during the assignment to maintain professional contact. This will keep the future repatriate connected to what is going on and the changes that have been made during their absence. Also it gives the spouse and other family members in touch with changes in the home country so that they don't get a shock when returning after a long period.
- A mentor or supervisor can be appointed to the expatriate during their assignment. This person would usually be from the home organization and could help in any repatriation problems the expatriate experiences.
- When the repatriate returns have policies and procedures in place so that the employee can be assessed and use the skills they have learnt.

Repatriation – the Process

From my research and results I believe that the process of repatriation begins when the employee has been chosen for an expatriate assignment. Dowling et al (1994) has suggested a process for the repatriate as follows but does not include the idea of the repatriation process beginning when they are chosen for a foreign assignment.

- 1) *Preparation* includes the gathering of information about the position and preparing for the future. Here the organization can provide a checklist of things needed for the employee returning home such as closure of bank accounts and taking care of bills.
- 2) *Physical Relocation* involves breaking ties that have been made with friends and colleagues and heading back to the home country. Some multinational companies use relocation consultants for expatriation and repatriation.

- 3) *Transition* is also a process where companies hire consultants. It involves becoming accustomed to temporary accommodation while the consultant looks for permanent housing and schooling for the employee's children. It can also include the setting up of bank accounts and up-dating driver's licenses etc.
- 4) *Readjustment* involves coping with a reverse in culture and career demands. This phase is often taken for granted, but in many situations it is not as easy as the organization thinks it is.

Research has shown that almost a third of repatriates quit their job after two years of returning home. A multinational company must keep to this process as closely as possible to ensure successful repatriation of their employees. The repatriate can feel like their job is not a challenge to them anymore and that they are not using skills that they have learned overseas. They can also feel that there is no real career path left for them when returning.

Programs in place before returning home can help repatriates and their family members in the following:
Andreason and Kinneer (2004)

- 1) Relocation assistance
- 2) Financial help
- 3) Reentry debriefings – This helps the repatriate to put into practice what they have learnt abroad.
- 4) Finding relevant schools and colleges for their children
- 5) Career counseling for the spouse and something in place so that they can find a job
- 6) Training in changes in the workplace that have happened since they left.

Although these programs can be effective and result in retaining the repatriate, they have also been proven to be quite expensive especially by small and medium sized firms. Also there is a certain level of expertise needed to carry them out that some firms might not have. The best thing these types of firms can do is to hire a consultant that deals with these types of problems instead of handling it themselves.

Proactive Strategies

Repatriates should be encouraged by their companies to help themselves with the repatriation process . A common problem repatriate's experience is that they are not aware of coping strategies like information gathering and using a social network for their benefit. The first step is that the organization create a proactive environment for its employees. The firm can do this by letting the repatriate search for a job position that they would like, provide proactive training, provide job discretion and having senior management provide support. Expatriates and their families need to be proactive by staying in contact with their organization and home country. This can be done by keeping up with national events, subscribing to home country newspapers, magazines and using the internet for updates on home news. The repatriate needs to do their homework on the potential living conditions, the schooling options and the overall job assignment. Up to now the expatriate had friends who had looked for them, but now returning to their home country it is up to them to seek out their friends and contacts.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to give an overall view of the expatriation and repatriation process. A detailed expatriation selection process is provided taking into account the criteria needed for a candidate to take up an international assignment and this process is then criticized. Repatriation is then introduced which is the main focus of my research. The research then gives possible problems associated with returning home and program suggestions needed for successful repatriation. The following chapter contains the findings from my primary research.

Chapter 4 - Primary Research findings

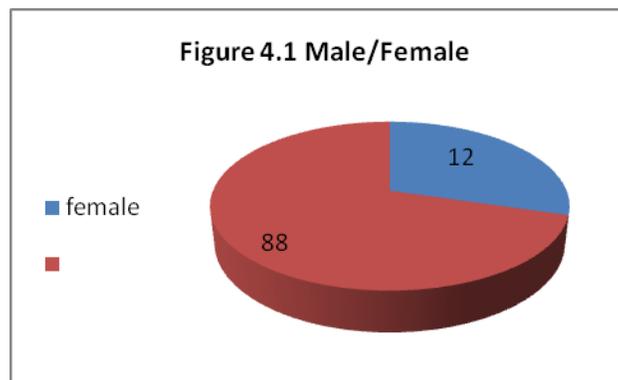
Introduction

This chapter will explain the results of the primary research I have carried out in various different companies around Ireland. I have split the questionnaire results into four sections. Section 1 is the demographics of Respondents, Section 2 contains the length of the candidates expatriation and repatriation, Section 3 is the expatriation/repatriation process and Section 4 is the Independent variables. All of these results are as a result of the responses I got from my questionnaire (see Appendix). Some of the companies I received responses from were Merrill Lynch and Piercom.

Section 1 – Demographics of Respondents

Q. 1. Gender?

The largest percentage of respondents was male with 88% and there was a response of 12 % from the women. This is shown in the pie chart below.



The age of respondents ranged from 20 years of age to 60 and over. The Largest percentage was 30-39 with 48.8% as shown on the page following. I included this question because I thought it was relevant to know how many males versus females I was dealing with in the repatriation process.

I predicted that I would get more males responding to my questionnaire than females. This was because the senior management of the organizations I dealt with was mostly male. I thought it was relevant as some of the female respondents told me that they were in a situation where they could have taken up the opportunity to go abroad and return but being pregnant held them back.

Q.2. Age

Table 4.1

Age	Frequency	Percentage
20-29	5	12.2
30-39	20	48.8
40-49	8	19.5
50-59	8	19.5
60+	0	0
Total	41	100.0

The table above shows how the most popular age of my respondents was between 30-39 with no respondents being 60 or over. As can be seen from figure 4.2 the majority of respondents were married with 85.4%. The rest were Single with 14.6% and there were no respondents that were separated. The table below shows the substantial response of married respondents. I expected that there would be less married respondents than 85%. This is because a single executive would have less responsibilities than a married one. These responsibilities might include family issues like children (and their education) and their spouse wanting to work abroad. Also, over 48% of these married respondents were aged between 30-39 (see Table 4.1). This would suggest that they are recently married and have young children. I thought this was relevant as this situation is not ideal for a manager who took up a foreign assignment for a substantial amount of time.

Q.3. Marital Status

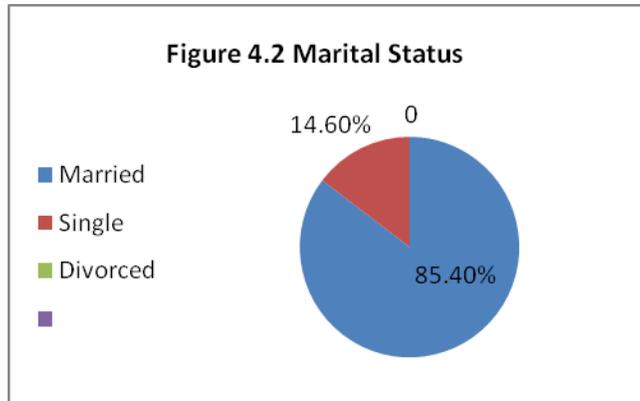


Table 4.2

Marital Status		Married	Single	Divorced	Total
Gender	Male	31	6	0	37
	Female	4	0	0	4
Total		35	6	0	41

Conclusion

This section was put in place to give me an overall look at the type of respondents that were answering the questionnaire. As can be seen the majority of the respondents were married males, the rest being single and female. I also thought it was interesting to see that none of the respondents were separated. My view on repatriation is that there are many problems when returning, both at work and at home. I expected some repatriates to experience so much disruption in their private lives that it may end their relationship with their spouse. These reasons might include the spouse wanting to further their career. Going abroad can cause the spouse to quit their job in their home country. Also, the spouse might have family in Ireland and it might not be possible for them to go abroad and return after a substantial amount of time.

Q.4. Where did you spend your last foreign assignment?

The countries that the repatriates had visited included China, U.S., Switzerland and Canada.

Section 2 – Length of Expatriation and Repatriation

Q4. How long was that assignment? (continued from section 1)

Table 4.3 highlights the time spent abroad by the expatriate. The most amount of time spent abroad was 13-24 months with 46.3%. The least amount of time spent abroad was less than 6 months with a result of 2 people shown in the table below. Figure 4.3 explains the information on a bar chart showing the total number of respondents to be 41.

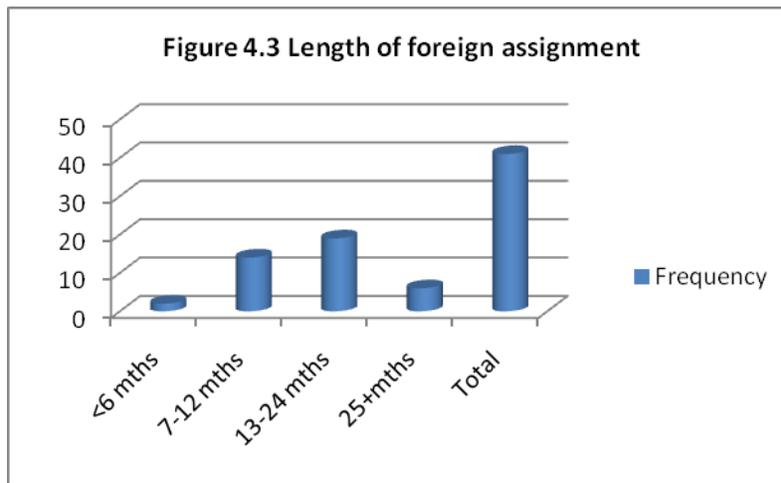


Table 4.3 Length of foreign assignment

Length	Frequency	Percentage
<6mths	2	4.9
7-12mths	14	34.2
13-24mths	19	46.3
25+mths	6	14.6
Total	41	100.0

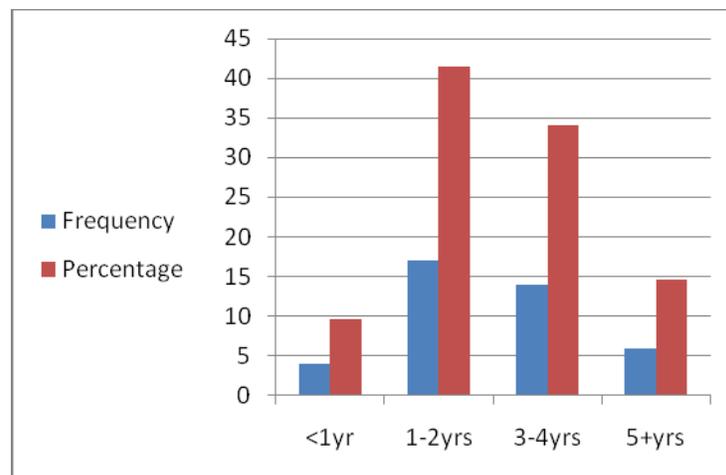
Q.5. What is the total number of years you have spent working on foreign assignments for any organization?

Next, the respondent was asked about the total length of time they spent abroad taking into account every assignment they took part in. These results are shown in the table below. Figure 4.4 highlights the highest percentage of respondents spending between 1 and 2 years abroad with 41.5%.

Table 4.4

Length of time abroad	Frequency	Percentage
<1yr	4	9.7
1-2yrs	17	41.5
3-4yrs	14	34.1
5+yrs	6	14.7
Total	41	100.0

Figure 4.4 Length of time abroad

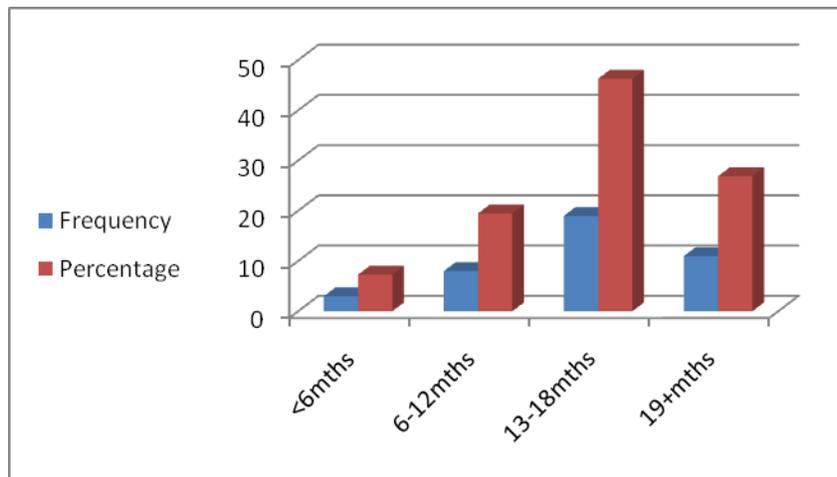


The questionnaire then asked the respondent how long they have been back in Ireland since their expatriation. The results are shown below.

Table 4.5

Length of time back In Ireland	Frequency	Percentage
<6mths	3	7.3
6-12mths	8	19.5
13-18mths	19	46.3
19+mths	11	26.9
Total	41	100.0

Figure 4.5 Length of time back in Ireland



This question was asked because I wanted to see how long the repatriate was back in their organization since their foreign assignment. It was relevant as I wanted to know how many of the respondents were still working, even though they were experiencing problems with repatriation.

It was my view many executives leave their jobs after returning because of these problems. It can be seen from Table 4.5 that 73% of the respondents were back in their home country over 13 months. This was relevant as even though they are experiencing problems, they continue on with their company.

Section 3 – Expatriation/Repatriation Process

Q.7. What were your main reasons for taking up a foreign assignment?

Main reasons for taking up a foreign assignment

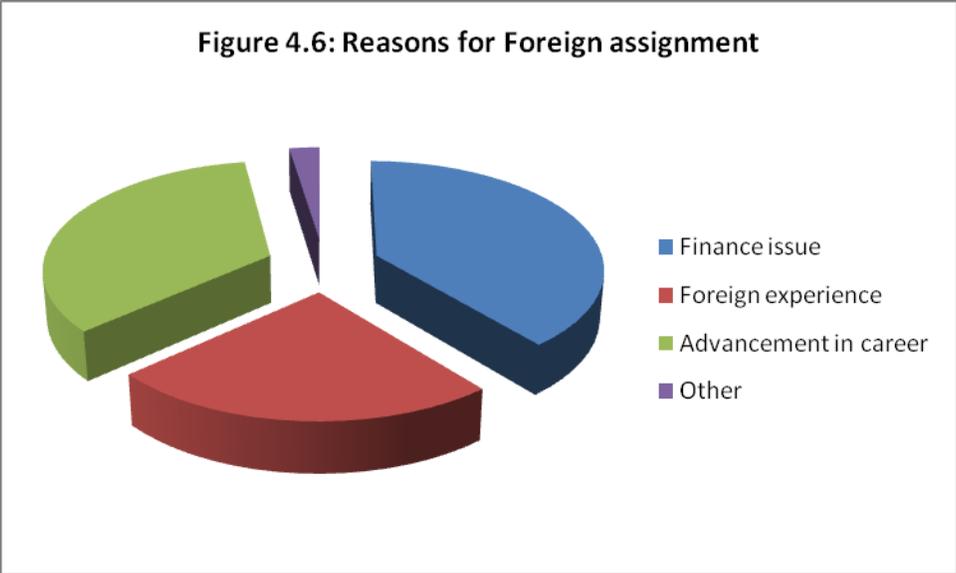


Table 4.6

Main Reason	Frequency	Percentage
Finance issue	16	39
Foreign Experience	10	24
Advancement in Career	14	35
Other	1	2

I chose this particular question because I wanted to know what was motivating these managers to take up a foreign assignment in the first place. I also wanted to link the age of the respondent, the time they were home and why they went. I found that the biggest response were executives who were aged between 30-39, who were home over 13 months and went on the assignment for financial gain.

Figure 4.6 illustrates the reason why these repatriates took up their foreign assignment. The main reasons were almost split three ways, a financial reason, foreign experience and advancement in their career. Some of the respondents chose the option 'other'. I asked them to list these other reasons. 90% of them said that their other reason for going abroad was for the benefit of their family.

According to Kathleen Boies (1999) globalization is becoming the norm in today's business world. This results in companies wanting their employees to go abroad either short or long term. Miss Boies has said that these international companies need to increase the attractiveness of these foreign assignments and lower their failure rate and early repatriation. The information I have gathered helps in the process of finding out what motivates these managers. By finding these motivations it will enable the organization to adapt to what the employee wants and needs. For example Noe, Steffy and Barber (1988) "have proposed that identifying employee characteristics influencing willingness to accept mobility opportunities will assist organizations in developing appropriate reward systems in order to attract the most qualified candidates". Feldman and Thomas (1992) have a theory that if the employee is given a choice on whether to accept a particular assignment it will increase the chances of the assignment being successful. They think that if the employee goes on the assignment at the wrong time they will tend to opt out during it, compared to a person who is more willing to make the assignment successful.

35% of my respondents said that the reason they took up their assignment was that they wanted to advance in their career. An employee can advance in their career if they go abroad but it can also have some serious drawbacks. In the past, going abroad and returning tends not to help the employee advance in their career and results in no position held for them upon return. Goman (1994) received a response rate of 25-50% for expatriates returning early or in other words the expatriation process failing. This results in the organization losing a substantial amount of money. According to Goman, early repatriation of one employee can cost anything up to \$200,000. It can also damage the organizations productivity and morale. Mendenhall, Punnett, & Ricks, 1995 had a response of 30-50% of American employees being ineffective in their positions overseas. They found that the employees are having difficulty adjusting to the climate of the foreign assignment.

A small number of organizations in Ireland are trying to make the process of repatriation easier for managers through programs like mentorship. Weeks (1993) undertook a study on international companies and reported that 68% of the 128 organizations looked at, said that their employees doubted whether their assignment would result in advancement in their career. And 29% of the employees said that the assignment was a necessity.

My research has shown that when it comes to the expatriation/repatriation process there are many studies that have examined the relation between factors not related to work such as spouses and children, and willingness to relocate. From this research it can be seen that older spouses seemed to be better educated and have a better attitude towards relocating. Also spouses who didn't have any children had a more positive attitude toward moving (Brett & Stroh, 1995).

Job Satisfaction plays a major part in the interest shown by employees in the international assignment. Tett and Meyer (1993) have "found that job satisfaction significantly predicted turnover". "Research on turnover for a multinational company has shown that there is a consistent negative relation between turnover and job satisfaction. This suggests that other factors are causing these employees to quit prematurely.

Career satisfaction can mean that the employee will be satisfied with the progress they make over a life time and not a specific assignment they have been asked to undertake. 39% of my respondents said that the reason they took up the foreign assignment was for financial gain. This is a substantial percentage. When the employee returns home they may run into financial pressures. This is a result of foreign compensation levels and loss of overseas allowances when returning home. This change in pay results in stress because the lifestyle of the repatriate is dramatically changed Michael G. Harvey (1989). The higher cost of living when returning has a major impact on the executive and their family."The family has to re-establish their household with increased costs for housing, furniture and appliances" Harvey (1989). Allowances that the repatriate may have had before returning home like country club membership, housing and even servants may be taken away on their return (Clague and Krupp1978). When the executive takes the foreign assignment, sometimes they do not take into account the expenses for their children's higher education, pension requirements for retirement, and their spouse when returning to their home country.

24% of my respondents said that a foreign experience was the reason why they took up an assignment. It tends to be typical in organizations for the repatriate to be an underappreciated resource (Fink and Meierewert 2001).

When their knowledge is used as best it can, it can play a major part in competitive advantage for the organization. The manager can learn things like market specific knowledge, job-related management skills, personnel skills and network skills. These are the skills that 24% of my respondents hoped to get out of their foreign experience together with a cultural experience and general lifestyle changes. In the next section we will see if these reasons were fulfilled.

Q.8. Were these reasons fulfilled?

The response I got from this question was more negative than positive. 65% of my respondents said that their reasons for going on their international assignment were not fulfilled while 35% said that they were. Following this question I asked them why their reasons were fulfilled or why they were not. Some of the repatriates responded positively mentioning that “future promotions were accomplished because of the experience. The family benefited from the time outside of the US.” Others mentioned that they did not benefit financially from the assignment and in some cases the managers were less well off than before they left.

The next question was: **Q.9. Before you left for your foreign assignment did you discuss the impact and general things to expect with Management?**

Figure 4.7

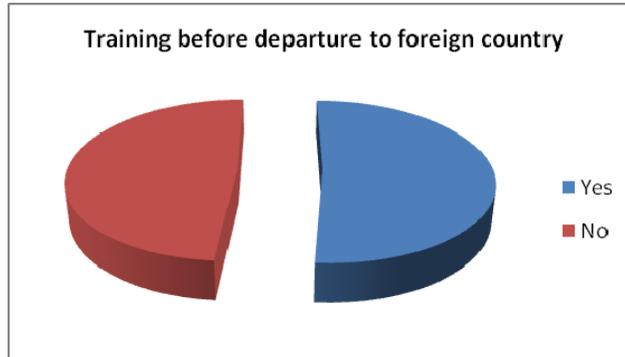


Table 4.7

Training before departure to foreign country	Yes	No
Frequency	21	20
Percentage	51	49

The response to this question was almost split between executives receiving training before they go on assignment and those that receive no training. I believe that this training is not just useful for the expatriation process but is where the repatriation process begins.

Pre Departure Training

Q.10. Was Pre Departure Training offered to you before returning to Ireland?

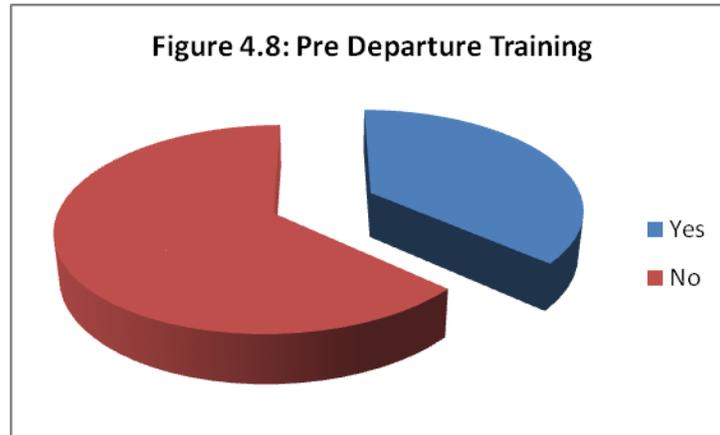


Table 4.8

Pre Departure Training	Yes	No
Frequency	15	26
Percentage	37	63

Out of the 41 candidates asked, 37% said that they did receive Pre-Departure training for their assignment and 63% of them said that no training was provided. The number of respondents and frequency can be seen in the chart and table above. Out of these responses a lot of the candidates that said they had no training returned early from abroad. “Based on the assumption that adequate training facilities effective development of the expatriate resource for company performance, a connection between insufficient expatriate training and both home-country and host-country performances can be drawn” (Lin & Wei 2005).

It has been argued that insufficient pre-departure training can undermine the effective development of competent managers which leads to them coming home prematurely. Kealey and Protheroe, (1996); and Tahvanainen, (2000), have debated whether training actually influences the company's sales and may have a direct impact on company performance. We can then say that more training deficiencies predict a higher level of expatriate pre-mature return and more training deficiencies predict lower company sales.

My research shows evidence that there is a lack of Pre-Departure training provided by multinational organizations. These companies need to look at similar organizations that have a training program in place. When this is carried out properly, the potential expatriate will know what to expect when overseas. I felt that the lack of training could be due to the organization not willing to pay trainers and spend time on something that could be avoided. The reality is that if the executive receives this training they will do their job better in an environment that they were expecting, and will be happier in their placement. A happy worker is a good worker.

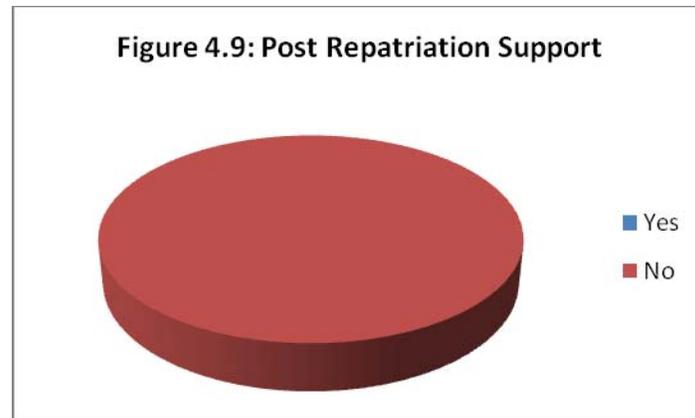
Q.11. How many hours of training did your company provide before returning?

This question was not answered by any of my respondents as no training was provided.

Q.12. Were there any other organizational supports/programs to help re-integration before you came home?

Post Repatriation Support

Was Pre-Departure Training offered before returning to Ireland?



As can be seen from the chart not one of the respondents said that Pre-Departure training was provided at the time of expatriation. This response was key to my research. Up to now it is obvious that repatriates experience various problems when returning to their home country (Ireland). In my research I found that Solomon & Marmer 1995 have written a personnel Journal about repatriation training. It is about a business director in Brussels. His company takes international human resource planning seriously and when they returned to America they were met by a repatriation program. This consisted of a program in which they (him and spouse) learned what they should expect upon re-entry. “They were warned about the culture shock of returning home, about how colleagues and friends might be different, about how the office environment might have altered, about how much the expatriate experience had changed them and their three children.” The business director and his wife were allowed to share the knowledge they have learned over their period abroad in a debriefing session. They then invited five people from the organization to share with them their experience of living abroad both personally and professionally, and what it was like to return home. His family admitted that when returning home, they were in a time warp meaning that they were in familiar surroundings but a lot had changed. This family was quite lucky in that their organization took an interest in their expats return.

The director was promoted to director of finance when returning which meant that his whole experience was a success and his reasons for going abroad in the first place were realized. In this personnel journal it is mentioned that “the vast majority of re-entering expatriates don't experience similar HR planning and repatriation programs to help them.” This is evident from Solomon’s research and my research.

Repatriation is a complicated process for the manager returning and for the organization, and successful re-entry means employees reaping payoffs and benefits from their assignment abroad. Also, the company reaps the international competencies of its employees. These problems vary from job type, industry and company.

At re-entry Solomon & Marmer (1995) have listed what the company must provide to their expatriate. I felt that if these were to be put into practice in every company in Ireland who have assignees returning home the repatriation process would be more successful:

- “Arrange an event to welcome and recognize the employee and family, either formally or informally
- Establish support to facilitate family reintegration
- Offer repatriation counseling or work-shops to ease adjustment
- Assist spouse with job counseling, resume writing and interviewing techniques
- Provide educational counseling for kids
- Provide employee with a thorough debriefing with a facilitator to identify new knowledge, insights and skills, forums to showcase new competencies, and activities that utilize competencies
- Offer international out placement to employee and re-entry counseling to entire family if no positions are possible
- Arrange a post-assignment interview with expatriate and spouse to review their view of the assignment and address any *repatriation* issues.”

Solomon & Marmer, C. (1995) “Repatriation Planning Checklist”, *Business Source elite*, Vol. 74, Issue 1

I would also provide information for the repatriate on what has been going on in Ireland since they have left. This could include political changes, the general state of the economy and even sports events which have taken place. For example, the company could have been involved in a sponsorship deal that the returning employee would need to know about just in case a client asks about it. The repatriate should be given this information both verbally and in some sort of literature.

It is also important for the company to plan out the expatriates financial planning and related activities. As can be seen in figure 4.6, 39% of managers go abroad for financial reasons. When they return it is important to have a process in place whereby the assignee will not lose out financially when returning home.

According to Solomon (1995) an expatriate should go through the following:

- “ Coordinate with home and host offices prior to repatriation to identify repatriation date
- Run cost projection with anticipated repatriation date to determine the most cost-effective time frame for departure
- Arrange pre-repatriation home country house hunting/school enrollment trip to allow for re-occupying/securing home country housing and registering dependent children for school.
- Arrange for shipment of personal goods.
- Identify dates for temporary living in home and host countries.
- Arrange tax exit interview for employee with tax service provider to determine need for tax clearance/final host country tax return to leave the country.
- Provide tax service provider with year-to-date compensation data for tax clearance/return processing.
- Process any relocation payment.
- Process return incentive payment.
- Process payroll documents to remove employee from expatriate status and review need for actual withholding payments for remainder of year with tax service provider.
- Provide HR generalist in new location with necessary personnel files.”

Solomon & Marmer, C. (1995) “Repatriation Planning Checklist”, *Business Source elite*, Vol. 74, Issue 1

I believe that the above list covers everything an expatriate should go through before returning. Out of these options, I think the most crucial point is to arrange pre-repatriation home country house hunting, school enrollment and then securing the home country housing. These elements involve the repatriate’s family which is usually the most important factor to the executive.

Question 13, 14 and 15 were not answered by any of my respondents as these questions were relevant to the executives having training programs.

Section 3 Barriers to re-entry

Q.16. Please rate your response to each statement?

Table 4.9

Rate	1	2	3	4	5
	%	%	%	%	%
Financial Pressures When Returning Home	12.19	19.5	24.39	29.26	14.63
Family Problems when Returning	14.63	56.09	21.95	4.87	2.43
Problem with re-establishment into firm	24.39	41.46	26.82	4.87	2.43
Lack of training effected settling back	26.82	53.65	14.63	2.43	2.43
Stress came as a result of the latter	26.82	48.78	14.63	7.31	2.43

1 = Strongly agree, 5 = Strongly disagree

As can be seen in table 4.9, 26.82% of respondents felt that lack of training effected them settling back into their jobs when they returned home. This proves my previous point where all of my respondents felt that training is needed before returning. They also thought that Stress came as a result of the options given with a response rate of 26.82%. The highest percentage was 56.09% where the respondents agreed that they ran into various family problems when returning. Only 2.43% strongly disagreed that they had family problems, a problem with re-establishment into their firm, lack of training and stress as a result of the latter. The responses are illustrated in Table 4.9.

Research has shown that repatriation of managers was long neglected as a part of the assignment that was irrelevant. The increasing problems as is listed above have given rise to an increasing number of studies dealing with the repatriation process in general (Peltonen 1997). Standard of living, cultural readjustment and roles in work that are unclear are creating mental pressures for the repatriates and their families.

Section 4 Independent Variables

Q.17. How significant are the following factors in the successful repatriation process?

Next, I asked the candidates how significant the following factors were in a successful repatriation process?

Table 4.10

Rate	1	2	3	4	5
	%	%	%	%	%
Position they hold in the organization	29.26	43.90	12.19	12.19	2.43
The Duration of the Assignment	4.87	24.39	26.82	24.39	19.51
Age	29.26	43.90	17.07	9.75	0
Previous Cultural experience	7.31	36.58	19.51	14.63	21.95
Effect of family life	29.26	48.78	21.95	0	0

1 = Very Significant, 5 = Not Significant

Figure 4.10

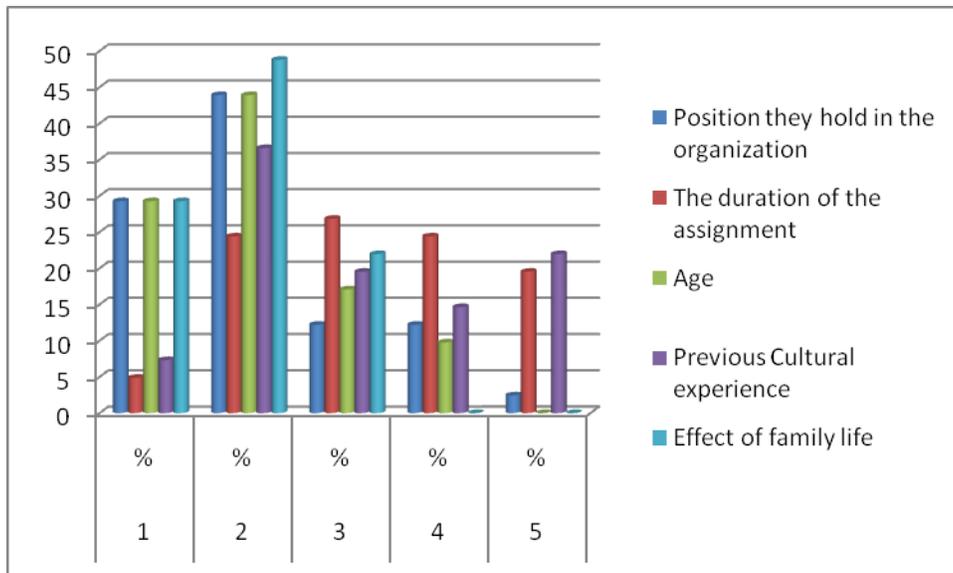


Table 4.10 shows five different choices for the candidate to rate from 1 to 5. The candidates tended to think that the Position they held in the organization, Age and the effect the process had on their family were the most significant factors with high ratings of 1 and 2 for each of them.

Over 70% of the candidates said that the position they hold in the organization is important. I took from this that when they returned they expected to be promoted and that that was the main reason they went on the assignment in the first place. According to the managers then, failure to be promoted results in an unsuccessful repatriation process. Research from Lazarove & Caligiuri (2000) has shown that some repatriates get forgotten about by senior management. A lot of their respondents said that the position they now hold was nothing to do with management but rather the reason was from knowing contacts and having an extensive network of business associates. The results showed that it was unclear whether the repatriate believed that the position they hold now is better or worse than before they left. The people that thought they advanced in their career were more likely to stay in their jobs because they were being supported by the organization. Upon returning home, many expatriates feel that they are given a position that feels like a demotion from their foreign assignment and are denied opportunities to use their skills developed overseas (Black and Gregerson 1999).

Also 70% of the respondents strongly agreed that age was a major factor in the repatriation process. I took from this that it is crucial to go on an assignment at a certain age. It is obvious from my research that the best age to go abroad and return is when the manager is not married and has no children. This results in less disruption to the executive's life. It means that schools for the children will not have to be looked for or paid for. Not having a spouse will mean not having to find a job in the new country or the need to get another one when returning. The manager going abroad can depend on when they don't have a spouse or family.

The effect on the manager's family also had a strong response rate with a response of 70%. A spouse that re-adjusts to their home environment well is more likely to take up another international relocation. This unfortunately is not the norm as repatriation is usually a forgotten element of the international assignment. Like repatriates, spouses returning to their home country face challenges. They find that the perks, extra money and general living conditions have all changed (Stroh et al., 1998). It can be seen then, that the expatriation process is similar to repatriation for the spouse. The repatriate and their spouse may also experience problems within the organization such as organizational culture, colleagues and friends and power structures as well as problems in society such as technology, social norms and economic conditions.

Q.19. Please rank the importance of the following factors in successful expatriation?

I asked the candidates to rank the importance of the following factors in successful expatriation

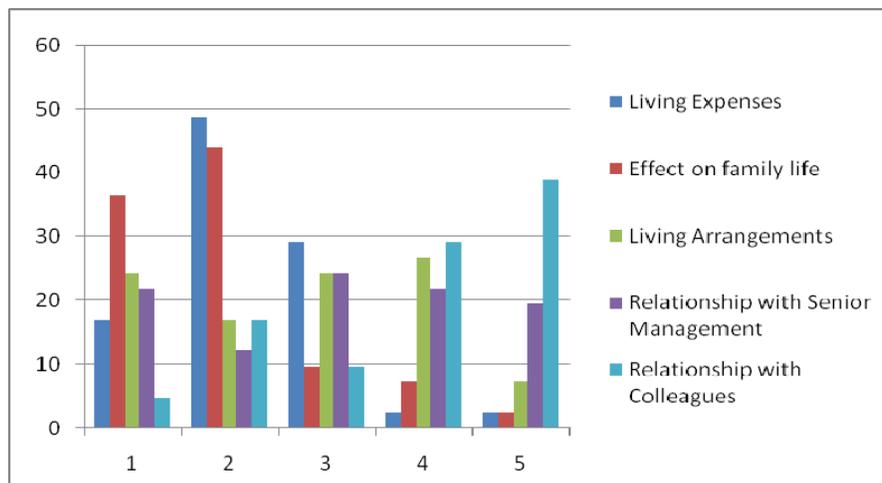
Table 4.11

Rank	1	2	3	4	5
	%	%	%	%	%
Living Expenses	17.07	48.78	29.26	2.43	2.43
Effect on family life	36.58	43.9	9.75	7.31	2.43
Living Arrangements	24.39	17.07	24.39	26.82	7.31
Relationship with Senior Management	21.95	12.19	24.39	21.95	19.51
Relationship with Colleagues	4.87	17.07	9.75	29.26	39.02

1 = Most Important 5 = Least Important

Figure 4.11

The important factors in successful expatriation



1 = Most Important 5 = Least Important

Successful expatriation is the key to candidates coming home at the time they are supposed to and not pre-maturely. An expatriate returning early is considered a failed assignment and can cost the organization thousands of euros. As can be seen from table 4.11 my respondents felt that the effect of expatriation on family life was the most important factor with 80% between option 1 and 2. When answering this question a lot of respondents added in comments mentioning things about their spouse and children in relation to them settling into a new environment.

“Expatriate failure rates suggest the need for more robust support programs”(Jack and Stage, 2005). Douglas and Stage believe that it’s not only getting results in business but how these results are achieved. These results must be achieved by the expatriate in a way appropriate to the business environment and culture. The following tips are what Jack and Stage produced for expatriates to be successful:

1. To offer different sources of information and resources to help the expatriate on-boarding process to the assignment.
2. Provide post-arrival care when the executive has arrived in their new environment thereby increasing effective support efforts.
3. Look for outside behavior change specialists to support key segments of the coaching process.
4. Have a good relationship between the expatriate and the coach so that the expatriate feels that they can reach out when most needed during the foreign assignment.
5. Join the local Chamber of Commerce in the particular foreign country. i.e., the Irish Chamber of Commerce in Brussels.

Jack and Stage have set out five very important elements that should be contained in a support program. I thought post-arrival care when the executive has arrived in their new environment was of paramount importance. It means that once the expatriate arrives they will not feel that they have been forgotten about and any questions they might have after arrival can be answered. Joining the Chamber of Commerce is also advisable as it is a good source of information and statistics that the expatriate may find useful.

Successful Expatriation

Expatriates are quite an expensive asset to an organization and have proven to be even more expensive if they fail. “Most executives agree losses are substantial, affecting up to 40% of all expatriate assignments” (Jack and Stage, 2005). The main reason for these failures is that there is a lack of support when working and living in these foreign countries. This is adapted from Jack and Stage who have identified five essential conditions for development:

- *Insight:* This is the first step towards change. The expatriate candidate must know what is expected of them so that they can reach goals and develop skills. Three questions must be asked; what is the definition of success in this particular job? What has failed in the past? Do they have these skills? All development must address these questions. The executive must know where their strengths and weaknesses fit the requirements of the job. They must adapt their leadership style to their new environment and to take into account cultural differences when trying to lead people. A lot of enterprises are failing to attend this expatriate development.

- *Motivation:* is said to be paramount to success in expatriation. Usually the person who takes the position of an assignee is already well motivated. There can be many different motivations for an expatriate such as trying to impress senior management, a desire to see the world, experience different cultures and experience new things. The personality characteristics of the executive must be taken into consideration and it has been noted that a 360 degree assessment and selection system should be in place to separate the potential expatriates and those that would not be eligible. “Compared to non-expatriates, personality data shows that managerial expats express more need to move up the corporate ladder quickly and achieve a high-level position. Expats also score higher than non-expats in the personality trait scales of taking initiative, influencing others, take charge and what we call ‘thought focus,’ that is, their ability to spot trends and issues quickly” (Jack and Stage, 2005). Researchers called Nilsen, Kowske and Anthony (2005) have noted that there is data that shows managerial expatriates are more open which suggests they would be better at adapting to new situations and environments. This is compared with non-expatriates scoring higher on self-confidence, trust, and independence. Data collected from multinational companies says that bosses tend to rate non-expatriate managers better than expatriates on communication skills. These include speaking effectively, listening to others and managing disagreements.

- *Capabilities:* This is where, through the expatriation process employees can determine their skills to put them into practice. Mentoring, on-site development and coaching all help the expatriate to acquire knowledge and develop skills. Other resources that can be used are classes, performance support tools and development suggestions. When the expatriate goes abroad the organization needs to put them and their family into a pre-planned support network. At the moment most companies only offer the employee pre-departure preparation and maybe cross cultural training. Also, basics like transportation information, housing and banking are supplied. The companies need to supply cursory language training, family support programs and cultural sensitivity programs. It is recommended that support programs are provided throughout the employee development process.

- *Real-World Practice:* The employees need to apply the skills they have learned and then reflect on those experiences to create new behaviors. Some enterprises use a mentor which they call a “buddy”. This buddy is used to assist the employee in managing the new business environment or as a sounding board. A behavioral change specialist or an outside coach can help the expatriate through change on a more formal or measured basis. These people guide the expatriate so that they can see the big picture and answer questions like, what they want to learn and achieve while they are there, what strengths will they leverage and what areas the need most development in. The president of a company called Sauer-Danfoss-Daikin Ltd., was a German working in Japan following an assignment in China. He (Koenig) looked for coaching as a follow up to a managerial leader development program. He was said to be a good performer and someone who has high leadership potential and sees coaching as a major part of investing in his future. “Working and living in a different culture and leading a cross-cultural team representing several business cultures and nationalities requires special emphasis and attention” Koenig said (Jack and Stage, 2005). He also says that his manager provides him with good feedback allowing him to learn from his mistakes and is helping him to adapt to his new business environment.

- *Accountability:* Coaches, mentors and a well rounded expatriate program support accountability efforts in far-flung countries (Jack and Stage, 2005). When the organization sets goals and has a good feedback system in place it can then hold the executive accountable for their performance. The expat is bound to fail if there is lack of support from the organization, not having enough knowledge about the country or the business culture and a poor repatriation method.

Business in today's world is fast and cost-conscious and as a result companies generally don't think of expatriate support programs. The best time to support these expatriates is when they are on the assignment in their particular country and not before they leave. It is at this point where mentors and coaches are most needed both by the executive and by his or her family. "Repatriation activities- such as post assignment career planning, frequent visits to the home country, as well as an ongoing bridge to the home office and repatriation discussions-are essential to avoid de-motivation or attrition during, or after, the assignment. The rest is up to the expatriate", Jack and Stage (2005).

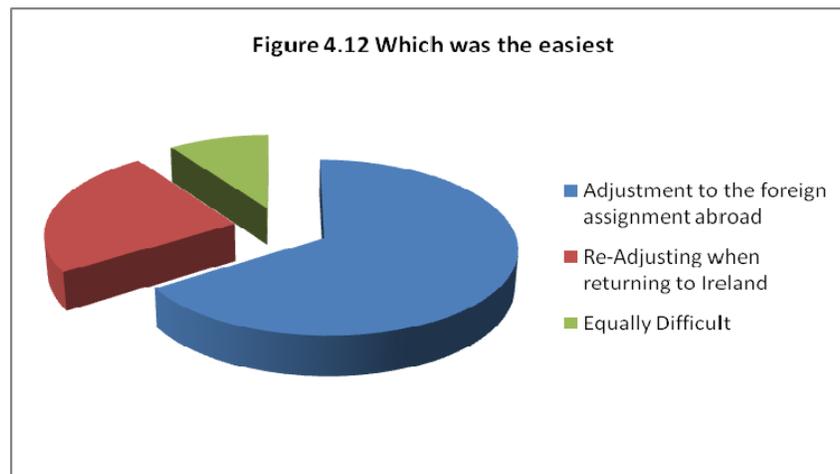
To sum up, I thought that successful expatriation is paramount for a multinational company. Failure can result in a substantial amount of money being lost and the loss of an employee. I felt that the most important condition listed in the latter was the company determining what motivates a particular executive for a particular assignment. This will separate the candidates that would suit the assignment and the ones that won't. Jack and Stage thought that expatriate program support accountability should be essential in far-flung countries. I feel that these programs should be present in every country even if it is as close as the U.K or as far as China.

Q.18. Which was easiest for you?

I needed to see which what the easiest time for the candidate in the expatriation, repatriation process so I gave them the following options.

Table 4.12

Answer	Number	Percentage
Adjustment to the foreign assignment abroad	27	65.39
Re-Adjusting when returning to Ireland	10	24.39
Equally Difficult	4	9.75



It is obvious from the pie chart that my respondents found adjusting to the foreign assignment abroad easier than re-adjusting when returning to Ireland. This option had a response rate of 24% with 66% saying they found the expatriation of the assignment easier and 10% saying they were both equally difficult. These results have suggested that a proper repatriation program needs to be in place for organizations to retain their employees. Research indicates that repatriation can be more difficult than expatriation (Forster, 2000). 25% of repatriates leave their company within one year of coming home and over 50% of managers said they experienced social re-entry problems when returning and that returning can be hazardous to the organizations and repatriates (Bland, 2002).

There seems to be a lack of respect for acquired skills from foreign assignments, loss of the repatriate's status and reverse culture shock by organizations (Stahl, Miller, & Tung, 2002). Organizations must facilitate these repatriates by understanding the whole process creating a smooth transition from expatriation to re-entry. Research on repatriation found that the culture shock of coming home is usually more difficult than the culture shock of going abroad (Adler, 1981; Black, Gregerson, Mendenhall & Stroh, 1999).

Repatriation Adjustment

This issue was first identified in the 1950's and 60's (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963). Ogberg (1960) produced the term "culture shock" and viewed it from a coping and stress perspective. He produced four stages the repatriate will go through upon re-entry. These are the honeymoon stage, the hostility stage, the recovery stage and the adjusted stage. This culture shock makes the repatriate feel isolated and have a lack of current behavioral understanding. When the candidate enters their foreign country their perception of the world has changed and different cultural values are realized. This can make the executive self-aware and uncomfortable with previously accepted cultural norms that they experience on return. The two most affected areas in work of repatriation adjustment are performance and turnover according to Black, Gregerson and Mendenhall (1992). When the repatriate adjusts well on re-entry the job performance is usually high and also leads to the employee staying with the firm.

Job satisfaction is an important facet for the employee. "The context of the work environment is multidimensional, with the major constructs being job/task characteristics, organization characteristics, and worker characteristics. The interaction of these constructs collectively results in an environment unique to a particular organization and set of employees. Thus, the workers attitude may result from the expatriate's characteristics in interaction with the job/task characteristics and organizational characteristics"(Lee, & Liu, 2006). Also, organizational commitment is a major factor for the repatriate and focuses on how the manager perceives their alignment with or attachment to their whole organization (Buchanan, 1974).

To sum up, my research has shown that executives found returning home after the assignment to be the most difficult process. This emphasizes how important the repatriation process is. It must be executed properly by the organization and is crucial in retaining the employee.

The response rate of 66% finding problems with re-entry tells me that these programs are not in place and if they are, they are not being executed properly. I believe that when the employee returns, the organization should have a meeting arranged to hear feedback from the executive. This meeting can also be used to inform the employee and their spouse about any possible adjustments that they can expect in the coming weeks. With the rise of globalization and the size of Ireland's economy the experience of expatriates is becoming a crucial asset for global organizations. "International assignment experience is rare, valuable and hard to imitate" Lazarove & Caligiuri (2000). The company needs to capitalize and value on the skills and knowledge of their repatriates. This will result in a contribution to the strategic development of the company (Lazarove & Caligiuri 2000). "This question points to the possibility that factors that facilitate expatriation adjustment may in turn inhibit repatriation adjustment (Black & Gregerson, 1991)". I also noticed that the longer the employee is away from their home country the harder it was to readjust. This is evident from table 4.4 where 49% of the executives were away for 3 years or over.

Q.20. Would you advise your colleagues to take up a similar foreign assignment?

The candidate was finally asked if they would advise their present colleagues to take up a similar assignment. This was their response.

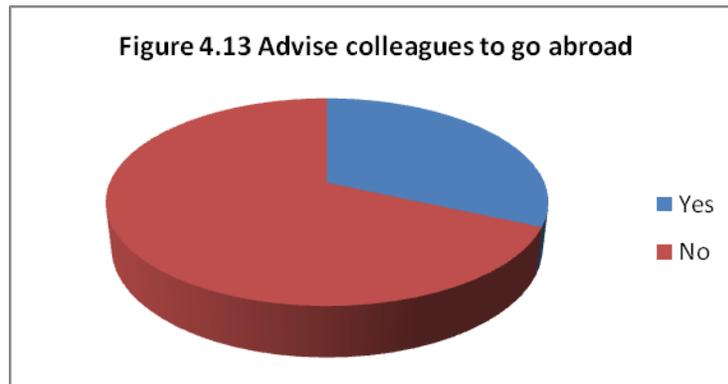


Table 4.13

Answer	Yes	No
Number	13	28
Percentage	31.7	68.29

Out of the 41 candidates, 68% of them said that they would not advise their colleagues to take up a similar assignment. This was seen as a very informative response. It gives the impression that the repatriates did not enjoy either, the expatriation process, the repatriation process or both.

Some of the respondents told me that if they were to advise their colleagues on going abroad it is advisable to assess risks and their likelihood of success. Research suggests “that the major contributing factor to expatriate failure is an inability to adjust to the foreign environment rather than a lack of technical competence” Andreason (2003). The first step should be to see the manager’s ability to adapt to a different culture. There are a few programs that exist to screen for success factors and predispositions indicating an ability to adjust to an overseas posting (McCallum, & Olson, 2004). The second step is to assess any other professional considerations for expatriation and any issues related to repatriation.

Looking at expatriates that have previous expatriate experience can help the executive before he takes up his/her assignment. If the expatriate has greater discretion and lower initial performance expectations it can result in a higher likelihood of success (McCallum, & Olson, 2004).

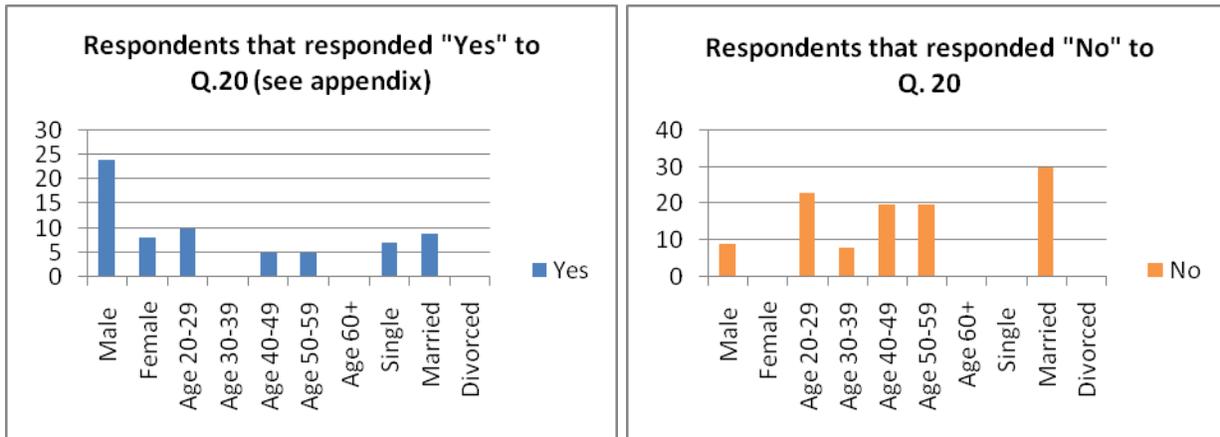
My respondents also said they would advise their colleague on language training, continue to engage in career development activities, look at a possible mentoring program, receive some sort of culture training, adjustment assistance for their spouse and have an involvement in anchoring such as schools, religious organizations and international clubs.

The other 13 candidates said that they would advise their colleagues to go on an international assignment, (38%). I took from this that these respondents had a good experience when in their host country and also when returning. It could also mean that they would like their colleague to leave the parent company. This might make way for them to be promoted. McCallum, & Olson (2004) have researched and interviewed expatriates and have suggested several reasons for working abroad.

1. Have a good compensation and benefits package
2. Long-term wealth-building opportunities
3. Have an enhanced career path
4. Career opportunities for their spouse or partner
5. The acquisition of new and useful skills
6. Employer-paid trial run for retiring overseas
7. Investment opportunities abroad
8. Improvement in quality of life: better travel opportunities, good schools and overall have a slower pace of life.

As can be seen in Figure 4.12 the majority of respondents replied no, to advising their colleagues on going abroad. It is noted that they said no despite the benefits listed above. This would lead me to believe that the repatriates may have experienced some of these benefits and not others. I felt that certain factors could be deal-breakers depending on the individual, i.e. they may have most elements on the list but if there is no career opportunity for their spouse they might as well have nothing.

Figure 4.14



Here I conducted a breakdown of male/female respondents, their age and whether they were married or not. Their replies to whether they would advise their colleagues to go abroad or not are evident in Figure 4.14. I noticed a trend of male respondents who were aged between 20 and 29 that were single who said yes. I thought that this was very relevant to the expatriation/repatriation process. These individuals are young males without families and without many responsibilities. It was easier for them to take up the international assignment as they had little reason for staying in their home country. I believe that these individuals were highly motivated by money and career opportunities and could prove to be the best possible expatriation/repatriation candidate for an organization.

It is interesting to see that males aged between 40-59 who were married answered “no” to advising their colleagues to go abroad. This is not surprising as this sort of executive has many responsibilities including a family and spouse. They must take careers for their spouse and schools for their children into consideration.

Table 4.14

Pearson Chi-square test of significance

	Yes abroad	No abroad				
Single	7	0			$p=0.00008334$	$p<0.01$
Married	9	30				
	Financial	Foreign	Advancement			
under 40	13	3	19		$p=0.00480547$	$p<0.01$
40+	27	13	11			
	Financial	Foreign	Advancement			
under 50	19	10	28		$p=0.00606634$	$p<0.01$
50+	21	6	2			
	Yes abroad	No abroad				
Male	24	9			$p=0.09455877$	
Female	8	0				
	Financial	Foreign	Advancement			
Single	5	5	2		$p=0.0869867$	
Married	28	6	11			

Using Pearson's chi-square test of significance and setting p at < 0.01 , I can reject the null hypothesis that the two samples are independent i.e. that they could have occurred by chance. Therefore there is a statistically significant relation between marital status and recommendation or between age and reasons for going abroad". For the nearly significant ones the last two in my spreadsheet the chi-square test works best with larger sample sizes, so my relatively low sample size has affected the result. With a larger sample I am confident that it would have been significant.

Conclusion

This primary research illustrates how executives in multinational companies experience problems with repatriation. It is obvious from the overall results that repatriation was seen as being more difficult than adjusting to an environment abroad. In this study the reasons for taking up the foreign assignment were found and discussed. The respondent was also asked if these reasons were fulfilled. Next, pre-departure training and post-repatriation support was discussed and examples were provided. The study went on to provide results from repatriates on possible barriers to repatriation.

The next section dealt with the factors involved in a successful expatriation and repatriation process. It can be seen from this study that repatriates are experiencing problems with their family when returning. The study shows how the organization should provide an effective repatriation program that deals with both the manager and their family. I also thought that maybe the negative effects of repatriation overshadowed the positives of expatriation, i.e. I may have received a different response breakdown if I had surveyed current expatriates rather than repatriates. Finally, the executive must ask themselves if they value the placement, recognize it and if the management reward it.

The following chapter will provide the conclusions and recommendations from my study.

Chapter 5 Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

From this research, it is obvious that there are many barriers to the repatriation process in Ireland. My primary research questionnaire is evidence of this. This research shows a lack of support on the part of the organization when an assignee returns to their home country. It is apparent that if there is a support program put in place, organizations will increase their chance of retaining their executive. This research can be used by companies both in Ireland and abroad to assist in the expatriation/repatriation process.

Expatriation Selection

The first objective was to establish the reason why managers took up these foreign assignments and if these motivations were realized. The following are what I ranked in order of importance when a manager is taking up their assignment and whether these motives were realized.

1. *Financial issue*- My research shows that going abroad for financial gain was quite popular among executives. I felt that my respondents would not have even thought about going abroad unless there was some sort of financial incentive. It is evident from my research that the younger managers aged under 40 went abroad because of a financial issue, not taking into account promotion in their job or an international experience. I would recommend these employees to consider their future when deciding on their assignment as well as financial gain.
2. *Advancement in career*- A substantial amount of my respondents went on their assignment to advance in their career. The majority of these executives told me that this motive was not realized. This meant that the manager had been promised a higher position in the company if they were to go abroad and return. I would advise the manager to have a written agreement arranged, stating the organizations intent to promote the employee upon return.
3. *Foreign experience* – It is evident from my research that a substantial amount of executives go on these assignments to gain foreign experience. Some of them told me that their plan was to gain the experience and then use their skills and knowledge for the benefit of the business. The reality was that the organization did not use these skills and this knowledge when the repatriate returned.

This made the employee feel unappreciated and as if their assignment was pointless. I would recommend that the organization know that the employee is going on the assignment to gain foreign experience and to acknowledge and use their skills upon return. This all comes back to the type of support program the organization is willing to put in place to utilize their employees and to retain them.

4. *Family issues*- are a key factor in the expatriation process. I labelled this response as “other” but felt family issues was the most important response I received from the executives. As is shown in my research, an executives spouse can have a major influence on proceedings and can determine whether they take up the assignment. If the spouse feels that leaving their home country may disrupt or end their career, candidates can pull out of going abroad. It has been reported by human resource professionals that spouse resistance is one of the main issues when it comes to expatriation. Children can also have a major influence on the executive going abroad. Schooling and general life disruptions are taken into account here before a decision is made. I would recommend that the multinational companies have a support program in place containing data of everything that the executive’s family will expect in their new environment. This will prevent premature return of the assignee. Also, I believe that there are situations where the manager takes up an assignment for the benefit of their spouse and children. I would also recommend that the executive taking up the assignment should consider going abroad for the benefit of their spouse and children. If the family is happy the executive is happy.

Pre-Departure Training

This study has indicated that there is a lack of training and support programs for executives before they go on their assignment. It can be seen that the companies who have these programs in place have less turnover than those companies who choose to ignore it and that the companies choosing to ignore it end up with employees coming home prematurely. There are many barriers an employee needs to be prepared for upon return to their home country. If these repatriates were well prepared for these barriers the number of employees leaving their jobs would fall.

Repatriation

Post Repatriation Support

My research showed there to be typically no post repatriation support available to the returning manager. This lack of training is another reason why managers are leaving their jobs. These executives are returning home not knowing what changes have happened in their organization and their home country since they have been gone. Relocation, financial problems, stress and re-entry into the home organization are all part of the repatriation process. Having a support program in place will insure a smooth transition upon re-entry.

Repatriation Barriers

Financial Pressures- Most of my respondents felt that they did not experience financial pressures when returning home. I found this surprising when looking at the present state of the Irish economy. A salary in most foreign countries would be substantially less than it would be in Ireland. I concluded that most of the respondents were offered the same salary/wage plus bonus money for taking up the foreign assignment.

Family Problems when returning – The research proved that repatriates run into problems with their families upon return. The standard of living, cultural readjustment and roles in work that were unclear are creating mental pressures for the repatriates and their families. I thought that the whole process of repatriation could result in family break ups and divorce.

Problems with re-establishment into firm- The majority of my respondents told me that they had problems when trying to re-establish themselves into their firm. The executives felt that they were a stranger in their own company and some felt that their skills and knowledge picked up on their assignment was not being appreciated by senior management and not being put into practice. From a psychological perspective I concluded that the firm needs to make the repatriate feel welcome. This will make the repatriate feel that even though they have been gone for a substantial amount of time they are still an important part of the organization.

Lack of Training affected settling back- There was also a strong response to this question with respondents agreeing that lack of training affected them settling back. This training is the most important process an organization needs to put their employee through. From my research it is obvious that companies are doing nothing when executives are settling into their previous positions.

Stress came as a result of the latter- I asked the respondents this question because I wanted to know how they were psychologically after the whole repatriation process. Nearly half of the executives told me that they did feel stress after coming home, that it was affecting them at home and that at times was physically draining. This stress could be dealt with by a company psychologist or someone hired by the organization. I believe that companies should be knowledgeable about stress and know how to deal with it if they ever encounter it. Ogberg (1960) did research into the repatriate coping with stress from an executive's perspective.

The duration of the assignment- I felt that the duration of the assignment did not affect the executive when returning. From the response of the managers I got the impression that they would feel the same no matter how long they were away for. The most popular time to be abroad was between 1 and 2 years and a lot of the respondents had been home over a year.

Age- Age seemed to be an important factor when returning. The younger the executive was the more enthusiastic they sounded about the repatriation process. The older executives seemed to have more problems. I put this down to them having more responsibilities upon return.

Previous cultural experience- About half of the executives believed that their experience abroad was useful when going through the repatriation process. I would advise any repatriate to utilise any skills or knowledge obtained abroad to help them and their family settle back into Ireland.

Effect of Family Life- Upon returning the executive and their family are going to experience problems and this is evident from the response I got. They need to be ready for changes in the economy, social changes, possible changes in organizational power structures, and changes in technology. The children may experience difficulties when settling into a new school and if the spouse has put their career on hold for the duration they were abroad it may be difficult for them to pick up where they left off. Even though there was nothing offered to my respondents in the way of information on what to expect upon return, I would advise the executive to at least find out what to expect in relation to their family.

Successful Repatriation

My research has shown that repatriation is the most important process when it comes to a manager going overseas and returning to Ireland. The organization must have a training/support program in place covering all aspects of repatriation. The company needs to invest time and money into this process in order to retain the employee because to lose a repatriate costs more than training them. I believe that the employee needs to be kept up to speed on events in their home country so that when they do return they will not experience a shock, either personally or professionally.

The repatriate needs to be brought through a structured process as soon as they return and have any questions they may have answered. The organization needs to recognise the skills and knowledge that the repatriate has obtained while abroad making the employee feel appreciated.

A recommended repatriation program

I believe that successful repatriation should contain the following:

- Assistance about the employee's career path needs to be provided. This should contain many options on where the executive can go in the organization upon re-entry.
- Financial and tax assistance will help the executive manage their money well without any loss of earnings or tax incentives.
- Information on possible changes in corporate culture can prevent the executive coming home to a culture shock. This will contain every change in the organization since the manager has been abroad, especially changes in authority.
- Stress management will help both the executive and their family deal with every aspect of stress upon return. There are so many elements to take into account when returning and stress can be one of them. This is evident in table 4.8 where the candidates strongly agreed that they experienced stress due to repatriation barriers.
- There is also a need to establish a networking opportunity. This will help the executive get back to having contacts that they may have lost over the period abroad.

Future Research

This research explains the repatriation process and the motives involved in going abroad. Even though the study advises the use of a training program for repatriates there are other aspects that need to be researched. The length of this training needs to be decided and if the manager needs to be in a repatriation program before they go abroad, during the assignment or before returning to their home country. Also, the management of these programs need to be evaluated closely. Finally, who should be included in these repatriation programs? Should the family be included to reduce stress? A survey by Harvey (1989) concluded that 75% of his respondents said that only the executive should be included. Based on my research the family should be included as well as the executive.

Conclusion

This study has identified the main aspects of repatriation and what executives need to be aware of when returning to Ireland. It has outlined the main reasons why managers take up foreign assignments and whether these motives were realized. I believe that this information could be useful to an Irish organization who are sending employees abroad and bringing them home again. It would especially help in regards to retaining their employees and making them feel safe in their jobs. The problems experienced by the repatriate may have a negative effect on the willingness of future assignees.

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Appendix 1



Portobello College Dublin

Officers Married Quarters

Cathal Brughra Barracks
Rathmines

Dublin 6

Phone : 0876458822

E-Mail: murrayothomas@hotmail.com

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am currently completing a Master's thesis in the Portobello College Msc in International Business program. I am looking to collect information on the repatriation process of managers who have returned home from foreign assignments.

The objective of the thesis is to examine the manager repatriation process. Specifically I am interested in the process expatriates go through when returning home. Programs in place for this process would interest me greatly and the barriers to repatriation that some employees encounter. Any information about programs you have in place to facilitate this process would be much appreciated.

I would be very grateful if you could fill out the questionnaire as best you can and return it to the above address. It should take no longer than ten minutes and all the information will be kept confidential and only used for academic purposes.

Thank you for your time and cooperation

Yours Sincerely

Owen Murray

Appendix 2

Quantitative Survey on the Effects of Repatriation on Managers Returning From Foreign Assignments

Please mark the appropriate response with any mark you wish i.e (. * #)

If you cannot mark the appropriate box a mark beside it is sufficient

Section 1 - Demographic variables

1. Gender Male Female

2. Age 20-29 30-39 40-49
50-59 60+

3. Marital Status Single Married
Divorced

4. Where did you spend your last foreign assignment and how long was that assignment?

Country _____ City _____

<6MTHS 7-12MTHS 13-24MTHS 25+MTHS

5. What is the total number of years you have spent working on foreign assignments for any organization?

<1Yr 1-2Yrs 3-4Yrs 5Yrs+

6. How long have you been back in Ireland or your home country since your foreign assignment?

<6MTHS 6-12MTHS 13-18MTHS 19MTHS+

Section 2 – Expatriation/Repatriation Process

7. What were your main reasons for taking up a foreign assignment?

Finance issue

Foreign experience

Advancement in Career

Other

If "Other" Please List

8. Were these reasons fulfilled?

Yes No

Why if Yes?

Why if No?

9. Before you left for your foreign assignment did you discuss the impact and general things to expect with Management?

Yes No

10. Was Pre-Departure Training offered to you before returning to Ireland?

Yes No

(If Yes Proceed to Question 11, If No go to Question 12)

11. How many hours of training did your company provide before returning home?

<3HRS 3-6HRS 7-12HRS 13+HRS

12. Were there any other organizational supports/program to help re-integration before you came home?

Yes No

13. If Yes, what form did the programs or supports take?

14. Were these programs effective for you?

Yes No

15. If Yes, what part of the program did you find most beneficial?

Section 3 - Barriers to Re-entry:

16. Please rate your response to each statement below on a scale between 1 and 5

1 = Strongly agree 2 = Agree 3 = medium 4 = disagree 5 = Strongly disagree

a) I had financial pressures when I returned to Ireland _____

b) My family had problems when returning _____

c) It was difficult to re-establish myself into the firm _____

d) Lack of training affected me settling back in _____

e) Stress came as a result of all of the above issues _____

Other problems experienced if any:

Section 4 – Independent Variables

17. How significant are the following factors in the successful repatriation process?

Please rate your response between 1 – 5 according to the scale below:

1 = Very Significant 2 = Significant 3 = Medium 4 = A Little Significant 5 = Not Significant

Position you hold in the organization _____

Duration of Assignment _____

Age _____

Previous cultural Experience _____

Effect on Family life _____

18. Which was easiest for you?

Adjusting to your foreign assignment abroad

Re-Adjusting when returning to Ireland

Equally Difficult

19. Please rank the importance of the following factors in successful expatriation?

1 = Most Important 5 = Least Important

Living Expenses _____

Effect on family life _____

Living Arrangements _____

Relationship with Senior Management _____

Relationship with Colleagues _____

Other (if so please state) _____

20. Would you advise your colleagues to take up a similar foreign assignment?

Yes No

If "Yes" Please give a reason

If "No" Please give a reason

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation
