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**PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR SELF-INITIATED
EXPATRIATES**

Master's Thesis in
International Business

VAASA 2017

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Master's Program:	Master's Degree Programme in International Business	
Year of Entering the University:	2013	
Year of Completing the Thesis:	2017	Pages: 84

ABSTRACT:

The purpose of this paper is to determine if there are performance management practices that would enhance self-initiated expatriates' adjustment and performance in a host country. As defined in this thesis, self-initiated expatriates are people who move abroad to work on their own initiative, in contrast to assigned expatriates sent by their organization. In addition to selection and recruitment, this thesis emphasizes the importance of other performance management practices such as goal-setting, performance evaluation and training.

First, this paper offers a literature review of the previous research on performance management of assigned expatriates. In addition, a comparison is drawn between two types of earlier mentioned expatriates and domestic employees. As revealed in the literature review, there are not many differences in performance management between assigned expatriates and domestic employees.

The empirical study, conducted by interviewing six Finnish females living abroad, exposes that language skills and self-management assist in adjustment the most in contrast to assigned expatriates who appreciate organizational support. The performance of an expatriate originates from adjustment, which has a direct link to motivation and background of the expatriate. Consequently, the organization should pay attention to performance management practices, such as training and selection and recruitment to enable self-initiated expatriate's good adjustment and performance.

By focusing on self-initiated expatriates, this study extends the existing literature on expatriate performance management and adjustment. There are still emerging gaps in the literature on self-initiated expatriates, which provide opportunities for future research.

KEYWORDS: Performance management, self-initiated expatriate, adjustment

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter determines the need for this study. It shows the research gap and introduces how the subject will be approached. Finally, it presents the structure of the paper.

1.1. Background

People seek employment in different countries than their own to a greater extent. For instance, in European union the free movement of labour eases this mobility in its member states. As internationalization and orientation to the global markets since the inception become more common, organizations must also be prepared for managing international work force, such as expatriates. In multinational companies (MNC) for instance, expatriates play a key role in knowledge transfer between the subsidiaries (Chang, Gong, Peng 2012), when the multinationals are seeking competitive advantage with well-performing employees across borders. Performance management is one way to improve the employees' success in the work, hence the value of expatriate performance management is emerging.

Performance management is a process to improve and develop performance of employees within an organization (Armstrong 2006: 1–2). The systems selected for this research are selection and recruitment, goal setting, performance appraisal, training and development and they are assisting the management process (Shih, Chiang and Kim 2005). For an international approach, performance management needs to include a new angle; expatriates.

The definitions of expatriates can vary depending on an author and researcher. In general, expatriates are defined as people working in another country than the country of their origin. However, there can be found multiple terms for different kind of assignments, such as overseas experience and expatriate assignment (Inkson, Arthur, Pringle & Barry 1997), company assigned expatriates (Jokinen, Brewster & Suutari 2008), organizational expatriate (Froese 2012) and self-initiated foreign assignment (Suutari & Brewster 2000). In this thesis, the terms used are *assigned expatriate* and *self-initiated expatriate*.

There are differences between assigned expatriate and self-initiated expatriate. Assigned expatriates are usually sent abroad temporarily by MNC (Tahvanainen 2000) to improve their international skills to achieve more career opportunities or financial benefits. The length for an assigned expatriation is usually pre-planned and lasts from six months to five years. As for self-initiated expatriates, they decide themselves to move and work abroad and the time-period is usually undefined in advance. While assigned expatriates know the procedures of the company, self-initiated expatriates need to, not only to adjust to a new country, but also to practices of a new company (Peltokorpi & Froese 2009). In this thesis, the self-initiated expatriation is introduced more deeply, and they are compared with assigned expatriates.

As mentioned, the time-period for the stay abroad is usually vague in case of self-initiated expatriates, and often they are more likely to move abroad even permanently. Helsingin Sanomat (Niemeläinen & Korhonen 2016) conducted a questionnaire for Finns abroad. Based on the answers, only 19% of 799 respondents consider repatriation possible. In 2006, this percentage was 41% of 430 respondents. Therefore, eventually most self-initiated expatriates may become domestic employees. Hence, this thesis also explores if there is variation in performance management when comparing self-initiated expatriates to domestic employees.

The subject of this thesis is determined by my interests. The passion for self-initiative expatriation in particular forms the other half of the literature. The second half of it will cover the performance management of assigned expatriates and the systems more deeply. While the previous studies have not investigated the performance management for self-initiated expatriates, the subjects will be combined and researched in this thesis. Previously Kraimer, Wayne & Jaworski (2001) have discovered that adjustment has a direct effect on performance, which creates a need to investigate the most crucial adaptation factors and the most appreciated performance management systems in case of self-initiated expatriates.

1.2. Research Gap

When it comes to research in performance management, the focus has been mainly in performance management for domestic employees. A few studies (e.g. Tahvanainen

2000; Shih, Chiang & Kim 2005) have been conducted concerning expatriate performance management. However, the research in performance management practices in case of self-initiated expatriates is lacking.

Assigned expatriation itself is widely studied. The study of Suutari and Brewster (2000) indicates that there are possibilities for research of self-initiated expatriates and remarkable differences between them and assigned expatriates. Even though the literature on self-initiated expatriates is increasing, only a few researchers have paid attention to the support that human resource management (HRM) could provide for better adjustment among self-initiated expatriates (Howe-Walsh & Schyns 2010). The main researchers in the field of performance management and self-initiated expatriates have been gathered in the table in Appendix 1.

From the managerial point of view, this study will offer information for organizations, particularly for HR function, to act in order to ensure better performance of their self-initiated expatriates. Suutari and Brewster (2000) have suggested that the management of self-initiated expatriates should be implemented to utilize their full potential. The study will uncover the previous experiences and wishes for these specific expatriates, and help the organizations to understand and manage their international work force better.

1.3. Research Problem and Objectives

As mentioned previously, the thesis consists of two main concepts, self-initiative expatriation and performance management. These themes are approached with the following research problems:

- 1. How does the performance management for self-initiated expatriates differ from the performance management for domestic employees?*
- 2. What performance management practices could be recommended to enhance successful self-initiative expatriation according to SIEs experiences?*

In order to find an answer to the research problem, theoretical and empirical objectives are contributing.

Theoretical objectives:

1. Who are self-initiated expatriates and how do they differ from assigned expatriates or domestic employees?
2. What kind of performance management practices are implemented for assigned expatriates?
3. What are the suggested factors for good expatriate adjustment?

Empirical objectives:

1. How do self-initiated expatriates perceive performance management practices in the organization, and are their performance managed differently compared to domestic employees?
2. Does the organization enhance the adjustment of its self-initiative expatriates?

1.4. Structure of the Thesis

After introduction, the second chapter covers the definition of self-initiated expatriates. They are compared with assigned expatriates and then the characteristics of domestic employees are discussed in order to investigate their relationship compared to self-initiated expatriates. Last, the paper defines the most common factors for successful expatriation based on the previous studies.

In the third chapter, performance management is introduced and the primary focus is specifically on the expatriate performance management utilized in the host country. The previous literature presents expatriate performance management for assigned expatriates, but the research is minimal concerning performance management for self-initiated expatriates. Therefore, based on the literature on expatriate performance management for assigned expatriates and for domestic employees, the chapter discusses how performance management systems could be carried out and implemented in case of self-initiated expatriates. Later, these assumptions will be empirically tested.

The fourth chapter will justify the methodological choices in this study. The sample definition and collection methods are explained. Lastly, the data analysis process and methods are presented. The research results and findings will be presented and discussed in the fifth chapter. The findings are categorized into six themes; Motivation, Selection and Recruitment, Adjustment, Goal setting, Performance evaluation, and Training and development.

Then at last, all the findings are collected together to clarify how self-initiated expatriates under this study are managed, and if it supports both the assumptions and previous research. It will also be discussed, if the organization could improve its performance management to ensure better performance and success of self-initiated expatriates. In this case the success covers adjustment and work performance in a host country from the point of view of expatriates.

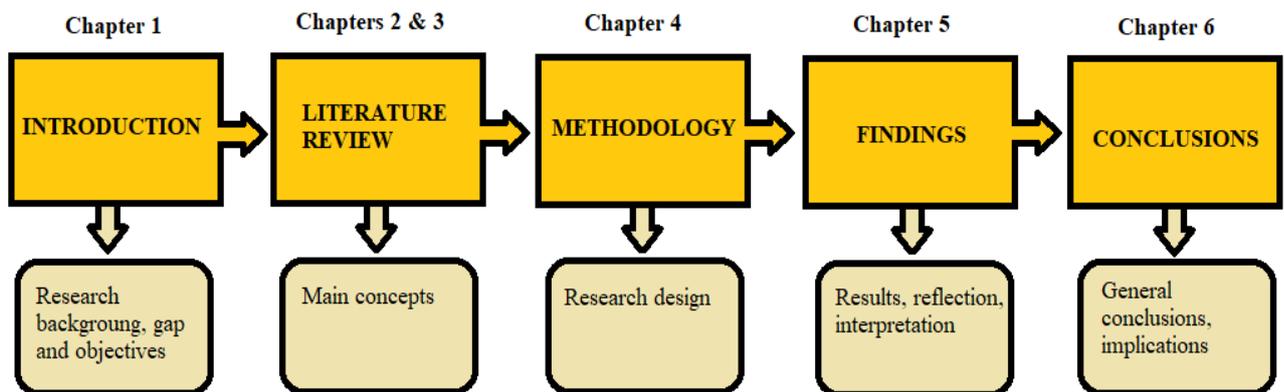


Figure 1. Structure of the thesis.

1.5. Delimitations

The study will be conducted from the expatriates' point of view. The aim is to reveal their experiences and how they perceive the performance management practices that their organization uses. The organizations are not interviewed neither their perspective will be covered, and the impact of the expatriates' performance is not measured.

Theoretically, the subject will be approached in two sections. First one will introduce self-initiated expatriates and compare them to assigned expatriates and domestic employees.

The second theory chapter will focus on expatriate performance management and more detailed how it differs from performance management for domestic employees and what practices could be seen proper or necessary for self-initiated expatriates. There is no previous research in this area. Therefore, first in the theory part, suggestions for suitable performance management practices are presented, and later the study will aim at showing, which practices are used.

2. SELF-INITIATED EXPATRIATES

This chapter introduces self-initiated expatriates and compares them with assigned expatriates according to the previous literature. It explains how self-initiated expatriates vary from domestic employees and if they can be distinguished from them. At last, it presents the most significant factors that determine expatriation success in case of assigned expatriates.

2.1. Subgroups of Self-Initiated Expatriates

The traditional reasons for expatriation are usually (1) to transfer knowledge to less-developed countries; (2) to give a possibility for a manager to improve their international experience in an international subsidiary for future work tasks; and (3) to develop the organization, for instance its structure, decision making or control and coordination. (Brewster, Bonache, Cerdin and Suutari 2014.) All of these define assigned expatriation (AE).

However, as mentioned in the introduction, self-initiated expatriates (SIE) are individuals who decide to look for a work outside their home country by their own initiative (Peltokorpi & Froese 2009). The concept was first introduced by Inkson et al. (1997) with the term “Overseas experience”, in which the intention for international work comes from the individual. In its early concept, the person is highly mobile between different jobs and different areas and countries. There is fluctuation between periods of work and vacation, and the type of work are often rather temporary and unskilled (Inkson et al. 1997). Later the theory around this subject has developed and broadened.

According to the research of Inkson et al. (1997), Suutari and Brewster (2000) have deepened the theory into self-initiated expatriates. It has been stated that self-initiated expatriates are not a homogenous group, and “Whereas young people are principally interested in obtaining new experiences, [...] established professionals take greater stock in attractive job conditions and career opportunities” (Froese 2012: 1107). Hence Suutari and Brewster categorized them into six subgroups according to their study on the movements of Finnish expatriates. It indicates the fact that self-initiated expatriates are

not all similar to each other but also have different backgrounds and motives for expatriation.

Young opportunists

This subgroup consists of young people, under 30, in their early career stage. In Finland it is usual to be raised internationally and number of student exchanges is also increased. Even greater amount of young people leaves abroad for travelling or work. Young opportunists are positioned below middle-management level and main reasons for self-initiated expatriation is self-development and career progress. They usually work for international companies or Finnish company subsidiaries abroad and they expect that international experience will give better career prospects in the future. (Suutari & Brewster 2000.)

Job seekers

The second subgroup, job seekers, have travelled abroad to look for employment when being unemployed in a home country or in a hope for better career progress. Their motives for self-initiated expatriation are highly focused on poor work situation at home and financial benefits. Most commonly they work as experts or clerks. (Suutari & Brewster 2000.)

Officials

Officials usually work for big international organizations, such as European Union or United Nations. The middle age of this subgroup is relatively higher than in other subgroups. This subgroup seeks for internationalization, financial benefits and new experiences. Usually, they work in Europe and their average monthly salary is better than in other subgroups. (Suutari & Brewster 2000.)

Localized professionals

This group is probably the smallest one and has travelled abroad for permanent working contract. They have less or no intention for going back to their home country and reasons for that are, for example, better career prospects abroad, preference for the local

environment or personal relationships or marriage to a local. Personal interest for internationalization is the most common motive. (Suutari & Brewster 2000.)

International professionals

The members of the subgroup ‘International professionals’ are more likely to change the employer depending the job offers they receive. They might have a wide experience of working abroad. More or less, they work in Asia. Their working position is on higher-level or expertise. (Suutari & Brewster 2000.)

Dual career couples

If the spouse is assigned as an expatriate abroad, the other tries to find a job him- or herself as well. The reasons for this is that they are willing to feel more equal in working life. The free moving of labour within EU makes it easier to work, as Europeans do not need work permits. (Suutari & Brewster 2000.)

2.2. Differences Between Assigned and Self-Initiated Expatriates

As the background of the self-initiated expatriates is now presented, some of the previous research also reveals the differences between assigned expatriates (AE) and self-initiated expatriates (SIE). These differences gathered from the relevant literature (Doherty, Dickmann & Mills 2011; Suutari & Brewster 2000; Richardson & McKenna 2002; Inkson et al. 1997; Peltokorpi & Froese 2009; Biemann & Andresen 2010; Jokinen et al. 2008; Benson & Pattie 2008; Collings et al. 2011; Bonache & Noethen 2014) are summarized in Table 1.

The choices for the expatriation country and the length of the assignment vary between assigned and self-initiated expatriates. The latter pay more attention to the location and reputation of the host country (Doherty, Dickmann & Mills 2011), while they may have a better opportunity to choose. The literature suggests (Suutari & Brewster 2000) that they are more likely to seek a job near their home country because of the easier access to travel there. Distance to home country may also reflect to fewer cultural differences (Suutari & Brewster 2000). Self-initiative expatriation usually lasts for longer period of

time or turns out to be permanent stay abroad (Doherty et al. 2011), even though the length is not usually predetermined (Howe-Walsh & Schyns 2010).

Table 1. Differences between assigned and self-initiated expatriates.

	Assigned expatriate	Self-initiated expatriate
Expatriation country	North-America and Asia (more far away)	Europe (nearby)
Work position	Higher level positions	Lower level positions
Motives for expatriation	Organizational goal, Financial Benefits	Self-development, Job market situation at home, Exploring countries and cultures
Duration of stay	From 6 months to 5 years	More likely permanent, usually not predetermined
Initiative for leaving the home country	From employer	From individual
Organizational reasons for expatriation	Knowledge transfer, Controlling foreign operations	-
Funding of the expatriation	From company	From personal savings
Career-planning	Company-supported	On own responsibility
Benefits after repatriation	Possible salary growth, Developed competencies, Increased self-awareness, Confidence in own capabilities	Clearer career focus, Developed competencies, Increased self-awareness, Positivity towards work- related challenges

Motives for expatriation are slightly different among self-initiated and assigned expatriates. As for self-initiated expatriates, employment situation might be worse or they look for better career prospects and self-development abroad (Richardson & McKenna 2002), assigned expatriates are fulfilling organizational goals and looking for financial benefits. Both groups value international experience and career development and progress

(Suutari & Brewster 2000). For self-initiated expatriates, the reason might also merely be exploring a new country and culture (Inkson et al. 1997; Richardson & McKenna 2002).

When expatriate is assigned by MNC, the support from the company is generally continuous before, during and after the expatriation. If the expatriate is self-initiated, arrangements and preparations for the assignment but also career planning are on the responsibility of expatriates themselves (Suutari & Brewster 2000). Further, the company financially supports housing and other funding for assigned expatriates may be available. Self-initiated expatriates need to find their accommodation themselves and the funding comes from their personal savings, which may complicate the adjustment process (Peltokorpi & Froese 2009; Inkson et al. 1997).

Furthermore, the background of expatriates varies when concerning the work position. Assigned expatriates work in higher level positions in larger organizations (over 1000 employees) than self-initiated expatriates. Assigned expatriates are sent abroad mostly to control foreign operations and transfer knowledge in company subsidiaries (Suutari & Brewster 2000; Doherty et al. 2011).

In addition to other issues discussed, there is a significantly higher number of men as assigned expatriates than self-initiated and they are usually travelling alone. Anyhow, these may reflect from the fact that in studied organizations, there is a majority of men in higher positions (Doherty et al. 2011). Suutari and Brewster's (2000) findings support the fact, while they discovered that self-initiated expatriates are slightly younger, more often female and single. (Biemann & Andresen 2010; Suutari & Brewster 2000).

The benefits of expatriation between assigned and self-initiated expatriates do not differentiate. Although, assigned expatriates may have higher level positions (Suutari & Brewster 2000). It is stated precisely, "The finding on equal learning outcomes between AEs [assigned expatriates] and SEs [self-initiated expatriates] is important when looking at this from the perspective of people who have no opportunity to work abroad as assigned expatriates". Both assigned and self-initiated expatriates have developed their competencies during expatriation, thus self-initiated expatriates face a little less development. This may be derived from the fact that assigned expatriates are already aware of organizational procedures, for instance. Also, because of the increasing international experience, both groups of expatriates are more self-aware of their values, work interest and capabilities (Jokinen et al. 2008).

According to the repatriation research, there appears a problem to find managers that are committed to their organization as they change employer usually after an international assignment. Among self-initiated expatriates, organizational mobility is still higher than among assigned expatriates (Biemann & Andresen 2010). Comparing to employees without any experience abroad, expatriates are more likely to leave the organization after an international assignment (Benson & Pattie 2008), even though assigned expatriates are potential to be promoted after the assignment (Jokinen et al 2008; Doherty et al. 2011). Furthermore, Collings et al. (2011) say expatriates generally have privilege in labour markets and usually expatriates are expecting some career development after international assignment (Benson & Pattie 2008; Biemann & Andresen 2010). Yet, it is false to expect to be promoted if the assignment type does not allow them to bring benefits for the organization (Bonache & Noethen 2014). When it comes to career-decisions, self-initiated expatriates are less interested in corporate career paths. They are more willing to independently pursue careers in different nations, instead of staying employed within the same organization (Biemann & Andresen 2010).

2.3. Self-Initiated Expatriates Compared to Domestic Employees

Because of the undefined expatriation length of self-initiated expatriates, most of them will eventually become immigrants of a host country. They may apply and be admitted permanent working permits and visas, possibly even citizenships. (Al Ariss 2010; Jokinen et al 2008.)

Self-initiated expatriates may be contrasted with domestic employees. Especially if they are fluent in the local language and already living in the host country (Howe-Walsh & Schyns 2010). Most likely localized professionals of previously listed subgroups are the ones that can be compared with domestic employees. They have been abroad for a long time already and have adapted the situation of permanent stay there, which may have created a willingness to apply local nationality. They are not treated as expatriates in their organization anymore. (Suutari & Brewster 2000.)

In some cases, self-initiated expatriates may even be a better choice for the work than domestic employees. Because of their possibly higher level international experience, self-initiated expatriates may have better cross-cultural skills and international business knowledge. Yet they are not strong in the positions that require in-depth local knowledge.

(Tharenou 2013.) Another alternative reason for hiring a self-initiated expatriate is the shortage in skills amongst domestic employees (Howe-Walsh & Schyns 2010).

2.4. Key Factors for Successful Expatriation

”Poor expatriate adjustment [...] might lead to frustration, isolation, low motivation, and unhappy feelings with the host country’s work and social environments.” – Bhatti, Kaur & Battour 2013: 545.

Expatriate assignments fail easily if the organization and the expatriate are not prepared for the assignment. Adjustment is not only important for expatriates themselves but also offers benefits for the organization (Lee & Kartika 2014). Based on the literature, here are introduced the most common factors affecting the success of assigned expatriation. In other words, success consist of work, general and interaction adjustment and job performance. The factors to guarantee a successful assignment can be categorized in personal factors and competencies, family factors, organizational factors and support and environmental factors. (Cole & Nesbeth 2014; Holopainen & Björkman 2005; Causin & Ayoun 2011; Bhatti, Kaur & Battour 2013.)

Here unsuccessful expatriation is considered as failed adjustment in a host country, which may lead to premature return to a home country. The most common factors of successful expatriation have been summarized in Table 2.

Organizational factors and support

The most significant issue in assignment success is organizational support. It depends on the difference between expatriate’s expectations for organizational support and the reality, how intensive supporting should be. If expatriates are expecting more support from the organization than the reality is, they must do more themselves to adjust in the local environment. (Bonache 2005; Cole & Nesbeth 2014.)

Supporting and communicating between employer and both employee and his or her family needs to be continuous (Cole & Nesbeth 2014; Sarkiunaite & Rocke 2015). Supporting should start a while before the assignment and last a long after it to get its full potential (Collings, Doherty, Luethy & Osborn 2011).

The differences in organizational culture and management systems can complicate the adjustment process (Holopainen & Björkman 2005). If expatriates are satisfied with job characteristics and different tasks they receive and the working environment offers possibilities for learning and increasing knowledge, adjustment to working environment goes more smoothly. (Bonache 2005). However, expatriates tend to be unsatisfied with the internal communication of the company (Bonache 2005). Hence, active interaction with local employees and good career management for expatriates may be beneficial that they adapt their place in working life (Cole & Nesbeth 2014).

Table 2. Key factors for successful expatriation.

Organizational factors and support	Family factors
Expectations for support	Support and accept local environment
Support for expatriate and family	Language and cultural differences
Organizational culture	Children
Training and career planning	Spouse's employment
HRM practices	
Personal factors and competencies	Environmental factors
International experience	Standard of living, cost of living
Interest in country, culture	Education for children
Adaptability, openness, motivation	Transportation, food, housing, healthcare
Technical skills, language skills	
Adjustment to environment and job	

It has been emphasized that the success is based on the HRM practices in which selecting and training are one of the most important ones (Arthur & Bennet 1995). To enable expatriate's better adjustment to working environment and the new country, it is desirable that company offers some training and career planning. Companies may offer cross-cultural training for expatriates but families are mostly left out of training (Chen, Tzeng & Tang 2005). According to the studies, many repatriates leave the organization after the international assignment. The reason behind it could precisely be influenced by poor HRM (Brewster et al. 2014).

Family factors

The decision of starting a global career usually relies on family and job location (Suutari, Tornikoski & Mäkelä 2012). According to Cole and Nesbeth (2014), family is the second most important part in successful expatriation. In contrast, Arthur and Bennet (1995) say it is the most important factor. However, family must be supportive and accept the new living and working conditions (Sarkiunaite & Rocke 2015). The problems expatriate may face during expatriation are, for instance, marital problems, spouse's employment difficulties, homesickness, and children's struggles at school. For many expatriates, spouse's employment plays a key role in adjustment process (Chen et al. 2005). In addition, expatriates and their families need to be prepared for different language and other cultural variety in a host country. These issues will most likely create problems in communication with locals. However, differences in language, and values and lifestyle, are less common reasons for assignment failures. (Cole & Nesbeth 2014; Holopainen & Björkman 2005.)

Personal factors and competencies

Personal characteristics are also relevant that expatriation will succeed. Expatriates, who are emotionally intelligent, who have previous international experience and who can handle stress better, adjust more easily to a new environment. (Lee & Kartika 2014).

Individual factors, such as adaptability, openness, motivation to expatriation and interest in other cultures, might help expatriates to create better relationships at work and outside the work. Consequently, those relationships may ease adjustment in local environment and it can be stated that fluent adjustment affects job performance. In contrast, in the home country, individual factors not necessarily guarantee better job performance

because of the key role that adjustment plays in expatriation success. (Bhatti et al. 2013; Sarkiunaite & Rocke 2015.)

Some positions require language skills. Cross-cultural communication becomes more difficult if an expatriate is unable to speak the local language. (Chen et al. 2005; Mansor, Hamid, Kamil & Abu 2013.)

Not only personal strengths, previous international experience and positive attitude towards employer but also attendance on local social life and support from the co-workers are needed for the assignment to succeed (Sarkiunaite & Rocke 2015). Self-initiated expatriates are more interactive in local life in host country than assigned expatriates (Peltokorpi & Froese 2009).

Environmental factors

There can be listed some factors in a host country environment that create problems in adjustment. First, the standard of living is an issue that expatriates and their families need to prepare for, especially, if there is a great difference in a home country. Secondly, the cost of living is an important factor, too. There can also be identified issues, such as transportation, food and housing facilities that have an effect on expatriates' adjustment. Healthcare and education opportunities are significant, particularly if expatriates have children. However, cost of living is seen as the most important of these factors. (Chen et al. 2005.)

3. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

First, this chapter discusses expatriate performance management systems for assigned expatriates. After, some differences in performance management systems for domestic employees are introduced. Last, it suggests HRM practices for self-initiated expatriates.

3.1. Definition of Performance Management

The Oxford English Dictionary (2015) defines performance as “an accomplishment or carrying out of something commanded or undertaken”. Performance is more than what is achieved, it is also how to achieve something. In other words, there is a need to consider both “inputs (behaviour)” and “outputs (results)” (Armstrong 2006: 7).

From organizational perspective, individual performance is also following the goals and values of an organization. Moreover, individual employees need to set their behaviour by focusing on the core values of the organization and use their knowledge, skills and competencies effectively. (Armstrong 2006: 7.)

Performance management can be defined “a systematic process for improving organizational performance by developing the performance of individuals and teams”. The aim of performance management is to get employees take responsibility of continuous improvement for their own skills, which consequently reflects to improving business processes (Armstrong 2006: 1–2). Performance management can be seen as guiding, improving and evaluating employees’ performance (Shih et al. 2005). In other words, performance management is not only tactical process but also it needs to be integrated with company strategy (Biron, Farndale & Paauwe 2011).

Performance management can be used as a tool in knowledge sharing. Employees are not eager to share their knowledge if they have a privilege position in a company because of their expertise. Proper performance management and compensation systems contribute efficient knowledge sharing. (Evans, Pucik & Björkman 2011: 404–405.)

3.2. Expatriate Performance Management for Assigned Expatriates

As the degree of internationalization is rising in multinational companies and hiring of international workforce is increasing, it is significant to study how expatriates' performance should be managed. The more internationalized a company is, the more essential is managing expatriate performance efficiently (Fee, McGrath-Champ & Yang 2011). Also, expatriates play a significant part when it comes to company strategy and competitiveness, which makes it even more important to manage their performance (Tahvanainen 1999: 225).

It depends on the degree of internationalization; how complex and significant expatriate performance management is for a company (Fee et al 2011; Beardwell & Thompson 2014: 425). According to Aguinis et al. (2012) the methods in which performance management systems are formed and implemented get affected by cultural differences, not to mention, how effective these systems will eventually become (Beardwell & Thompson 2014: 425). Because of the cultural and geographic differences between domestic and expatriate employees, performance management systems should be customized for expatriates, instead of using standardised systems for all employees. As the company expands its business to become more and more global, expatriate performance management needs to be developed to support communication and control in subsidiaries (Fee et al 2011).

In addition, expatriation is an expensive process. Therefore, an efficient use of expatriate performance management will reduce the costs that are derived from failed expatriation (Sarkiunaite & Rocke 2015).

3.2.1. Performance Management Systems

Performance management systems are made to help managers to get their employees perform at their best (Varma & Budhwar 2011:442). The way in which the performance management activities are carried out depends on the type of the assignment the expatriate has. The length of the assignment has a major influence in these activities and so does the cultures of home and host countries (Shih, Chiang and Kim 2005).

Company's global setting defines the effective use of performance management components. Performance management systems (Figure 2) can be categorised in selection

and recruitment, goal setting, performance evaluation, training and development (Shih et al. 2005). When the degree of internationalization rises in global companies, more comprehensive and powerful activity in ‘hard’ components of performance management, such as goal-setting and performance evaluation, can be expected (Fee et al. 2011; Woods 2003). However, while the degree of internationalization in a company increases, personal approach to its employees decreases. This can be seen as lack of use of ‘soft’ components, such as training and mentoring for expatriates (Fee et al. 2011).

Previously mentioned hard components, performance appraisal and goal-setting, are the most important factors in expatriate performance management. Moreover, expatriates prefer structured performance appraisal and informal meetings with their supervisors monthly to discuss the results of their performance and to follow the progress. Furthermore, expatriates should participate in goal setting together with their immediate supervisor. (Ellis 2012; Woods 2003.)



Figure 2. Performance management systems.

It is significant for international assignee to have continuing counselling before, during and after the assignment. There are different actions that should be considered during each phase of an international assignment. It motivates and commits an assignee and help them and the organization to define the goals and expectations of the international

assignment. Also, the support of the family is important. (Collings, Doherty, Luethy & Osborn 2011.)

The following performance management systems that are introduced, are formulated for assigned expatriates. It will be later discussed performance management for domestic employees and, afterwards, for self-initiated expatriates.

Selection and recruitment

In case of expatriates, selection and recruitment are crucial. According to 2011 Worldwide survey of International Assignment Policies and Practices, most international assignments fail because of poor selection process. Selection process is the one in which the company determines the best person for expatriation and of which the success of an assignment is mostly dependent. During the selection process of expatriates, it is useful to highlight three factors; personal competencies, global management skills and opportunities for adjustment. All of these should be considered. (Causin & Ayoun 2011.)

Companies do not necessarily use enough resources to find the best candidate who is determined and has the right skills and purposes for the assignment, and consequently will achieve the organizational strategic objectives (Cole & Nesbeth 2014). Also, there might be lack of required training for expatriates as they are not necessarily aware of the procedures in the host country or the local culture (Sarkiunaite & Rocke 2015).

As mentioned before, expatriation is very expensive, particularly if it fails. Also, globalization increases the significance of improvement in selection processes in attempt to find the best and most qualified expatriates. Therefore, the value of proper recruitment needs to be emphasized. (Chen et al. 2005.)

Goal-setting

According to Suutari and Tahvanainen (2002), many companies use SMART-model created by Armstrong and Baron (1998) in goal setting, whereby a goal needs to be Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic and Time-related. Furthermore, both qualitative and quantitative and personal and team goals should be also combined (Fee et al. 2011), thus, quantitative and personal goals are slightly more common. Although, it occurs that

formal goals which are in written form distinguish higher efficiency of performance management system (Suutari & Tahvanainen 2002).

The methods of goal setting are depending on the nature and the length of an assignment that an expatriate is carrying out. The goal can be either set by the expatriates themselves with approval of their managers or the managers set the goals for expatriates (Shih et al. 2005). Usually, goal-setting is done once a year (Suutari & Tahvanainen 2002). According to Varma and Budhwar (2011: 443), the goals should be set in a cooperation between employee and his or her superior to make sure that employee will understand the expectations, business strategies and possibilities to plan their work better. Even though a superior can be located in different country than an expatriate, it does not, however, seem to have influence in expatriates fulfilling goals (Suutari & Tahvanainen 2002).

Commitment is also meaningful issue in goal setting. When the goals are clear and employees have committed to pursue these goals, it improves their performance. Two-way communication helps the process of stronger commitment to individual and common goals. (Evans et al. 2011: 351, 355.)

Goal setting is less specified in companies with a lower degree of internationalization. Then again, in highly internationalized companies goal setting is more systematic and specific and the quantitative goals are mutually agreed by the expatriate and his or her manager in written form. (Fee et al. 2011; Woods 2003; Suutari & Tahvanainen 2002.)

Performance evaluation

In addition to effective goal-setting, employees need permanent support and continuous feedback to perform successfully (Suutari & Tahvanainen 2002). In general, expatriates themselves consider performance appraisal as important or very important part of their career development and, moreover, appraisal should be fair and accurate (Woods 2003). If the appraisal system is not carried out well, it can only do harm for the organizational environment and cause frustration and lack of motivation (Varma & Budhwar 2011: 442).

The methods mostly used in evaluation are self-evaluation and feedback from immediate superior both in home and host country, even though a host country evaluator is more common (Suutari & Tahvanainen 2002). However, Tahvanainen (1999: 229) suggested that using both home and host country evaluators may lead to a confusion of different

expectations from evaluators. Usually, in highly internationalized companies there are multiple evaluators (Fee et al. 2011). Depending on a job, the organizational position and the company in question, the evaluator varies (Tahvanainen 1999: 42). Still, the immediate superior is seen as the most important person in evaluation (Woods 2003). The form used in appraisal is usually standardized for both headquarters and its subsidiaries (Woods 2003; Shih et al. 2005) and the evaluation often consists of comparing expatriate's previous goals and current performance (Suutari & Tahvanainen 2002).

Feedback should be given via face-to-face conversations (Maley & Moeller 2014). According to Aguinis et al. (2012), "the purpose of performance feedback is to improve individual and team performance, as well as employee engagement, motivation, and job satisfaction". They studied what are the features of effective feedback, because giving feedback can do both harm and good. The study focuses on the strength-based approach and compared it to traditional weakness-based feedback. The weakness-based feedback appears negatively: what employees do wrong or cannot do. Then again, strengths-based feedback focuses on employees' skills: and abilities what do they do right. In strength-based feedback it is not forbidden to say something negative, but weaknesses are handled constructively. The idea in strength-based feedback is not only to improve employees' performance and increase motivation towards their job, but also help managers to give feedback more easily. (Aguinis, Gottfredson & Joo 2012.)

The results of expatriate's work performance are better if the evaluation is done while abroad, not after repatriation. The best outcome is received if the evaluations is done once or twice a year or more frequently (Suutari & Tahvanainen 2002). "Regular feedback would allow the organization to signal problems in the expatriate's performance at an early stage and provide opportunities to improve this performance" (Harzing & Christensen 2004).

Culture may have an effect in evaluation. It is hard to evaluate expatriates' performance as the values and expectations of the supervisor may differ from the values and expectations of the subordinate because of the other culture (Brewster et al. 2014). Furthermore, it depends on feedback orientation and valuation how feedback is used in an organization (London & Smither 2002). For instance, in Japanese culture the respect for seniors and higher positions is a significant issue which is the reason why Japanese companies use only one-way feedback. On the contrary, the most effective and common feedback is two-way (Shih et al. 2005). If feedback is well-used in the organization, it can

implicate in career development and performance improvement (London & Smither 2002).

Training and Development

Based on observations of other researchers, Tahvanainen (1999: 49–51) states that training and development are tools to improve employee's performance in a long term and should be linked with employees' individual goals. Training can take place both on-the-job and off-the-job. While training is more formal with the lead of a trainer, developing can include informal mentoring and coaching. For expatriates, it is usually provided cross-cultural training, in particular.

Training is a 'soft' component in performance management. For companies at all the degrees of internationalization, training and mentoring could be beneficial. Mentoring can be used to support expatriate performance management and it is an easy and inexpensive way to transfer knowledge, skills and values. (Fee et al 2011.)

Training for expatriation can happen before and after the departure. While the pre-departure training for expatriates is valuable and used commonly, there is a lack of on-the-job training in the host country during the assignment. Cross-cultural training that is conducted before the assignment, might help in adjustment process in a host country. Unfortunately, the lack of on-the-job training can lead to uncertainty of expatriates' career development after expatriation. The problem in on-the-job training is the managers' confusion of the expatriate's future plans and that is one of the reasons why it is relatively seldom provided. They are not aware what the expatriate will be doing after repatriation and how to support the capabilities of the expatriate. (Shih et al. 2005; Harzing & Christensen 2004.)

3.3. Performance Management Compared to Domestic Employees

It is explained below how domestic employees' performance is managed differently from expatriate employees in MNCs.

According to Tahvanainen (1999: 225, 230–231), studies show evidence that expatriates' performance should be managed differently to domestic employees' performance.

However, there is not major variety in performance management practices between domestic employees and expatriates in highly internationalized MNCs because of the global standards. Then again, if the company is less internationalized, more significant differences are likely to occur.

When reflecting to other studies (Sarkiunaite & Rocke 2015; Cole & Nesbeth 2014), it can be assumed that the selection process for domestic employees is slightly less complicated than for expatriates. For instance, it is not necessary to know about candidate's international experience and abilities to adapt new environment (Bhatti et al. 2013). Moreover, referring to other researchers, Tahvanainen (1999: 30) says that in domestic context goals and appraisal are more job-related. Regarding domestic employees, there is not necessarily a need to evaluate abilities to adapt international context or cross-cultural skills, which expatriates naturally face. Although, in international company these skills are significant also for domestic employees.

According to previous studies, performance evaluation is not that complex in a domestic setting. The performance evaluation of domestic employees is less uncomplicated, as the evaluator may be more aware of their previous performance and from longer term. In addition, performance evaluators are mostly located in a home country only. For domestic employees, it might be clearer to understand the performance expectations and the evaluator is likely to be present. (Tahvanainen 1999: 31, 40, 228.)

The major difference in performance management for domestic employees is that they, apparently, have better training and career-planning. Then again, they do not necessarily receive that much cross-cultural training (Tahvanainen 1999: 49, 230). However, in MNCs also domestic employees will benefit from cross-cultural training. Hence, it should be offered both domestic employees and expatriates.

3.4. HRM practices suggested for Self-Initiated Expatriates

According to the literature, there are not major differences in performance management between assigned expatriates and domestic employees in MNCs (Tahvanainen 1999: 230–231). Below, it is discussed performance management practices that could be suggested for self-initiated expatriates, based on literature and on the previous observations and variation concerning assigned expatriates and domestic employees.

Later the methodology tries to investigate if these activities occur in practice and if they need to be more targeted for self-initiated expatriates.

Howe-Walsh and Schyns (2010) suggest two different approaches to self-initiated expatriation. They are either 'career expatriates' who move to another country after being offered a job, or 'private expatriates' who enter a country before applying any job. For the former, the organization may be unfamiliar with the needs for training, for instance, as for the latter, the organization might consider them as similar to host country nationals and not necessarily is prepared for treatments that would suit for expatriates. On the side of the expatriate, the former is most likely prepared for job-related issues but not cultural challenges, and as for the latter, it might be another way around. (Howe-Walsh & Schyns 2010.)

For assigned expatriates, employer is more responsible for employees' career than in case of self-initiated expatriates, who need to take responsibility of their own career to a greater extent. However, there are alternatives for employer company, too, to take part in self-initiated expatriates' development and career opportunities (Howe-Walsh & Schyns 2010). Even though many companies have standardized their performance management systems also for international employees, it should be reflected with the assignment purpose (Evans et al. 2011: 386).

The people who are involved in self-initiated expatriates' selection process, training and performance management, should be aware of some individual factors expatriate has. Not only personality, self-efficacy level and cultural adaptation, but also social network and previous international experience of expatriates are important for employer to recognize to achieve better understanding and managing of the expatriate go along more smoothly. (Bhatti et al. 2013.)

The HRM practices and their implications in self-initiated expatriates are gathered in Table 3. Later these implications are discussed more detailed.

Table 3. The implications of HRM practices in self-initiated expatriates.

Recruitment and Selection	Training	Self-management	Other issues
Adjustment to work	Adaptation of work practices	Preparation for an assignment	General adjustment
No premature return to a home country	Adaptation of new country and culture	Supports achieving goals	Family adjustment

Selection and recruitment

Self-initiated expatriates do not face the same selection process as assigned expatriates. Suutari and Brewster (2000) propose that the selection process of self-initiated expatriates has sometimes done only occasionally, not necessarily adequately, to bring internationality to the company. The selection process can often be similar to the selection of domestic employees, in particular among certain subgroups of self-initiated expatriates. For young opportunists, localized professionals and dual career couples (see p. 16–17), their different nationality is not necessarily concerned, which may lead to additional cost for an organization and employment relationship, when selection is inefficient (Suutari & Brewster 2000).

When hiring self-initiated expatriates, the employer knows something about their background, probably based on their application and interview, but not necessarily expatriates' family situation and consequently, their ability to adjust (Causin & Ayoun 2011). Hence, a good strategy for recruitment furthers organizational opportunities, because it also attracts possible good and talented employees and brings strategic advantage for the company (Suutari & Brewster 2000; Howe-Walsh & Schyns 2010).

If selection and recruitment are conducted efficiently, the selected self-initiated expatriates adjust well in a working life in a host country and will not return back home ahead of time. (Suutari & Brewster 2000; Howe-Walsh & Schyns 2010.)

Training and development

As stated previously, for assigned expatriates, there is usually offered continuous support from the organization. Also, training before and after leaving for an assignment is common, with a cultural context. Then again, self-initiated expatriates are unlikely treated the same way. When the receiving organization cannot support the self-initiated expatriate before moving to the host country, they should focus on supporting after arrival and on-the-job training, instead (Howe-Walsh & Schyns 2010; Shih et al. 2005; Harzing & Christensen 2004.)

Language training and mentoring or coaching are rarely provided for self-initiated expatriates. Expatriates consider language skills relatively important in adjustment (Suutari & Burch 2001), so there should be offered language training by the organization. Additionally, mentoring is a good alternative in the adjustment process. By training and mentoring, both cultural and work-related awareness can be raised and the adaptation of cultural and working environment is eased (Howe-Walsh & Schyns 2010).

Self-management

Because of the possible lack of support from the organization, self-initiated expatriates need to take the responsibility of expatriation themselves by doing self-management (Howe-Walsh & Schyns 2010; Harzing & Christensen 2004).

One of the means for self-management is self-preparation. Previous international experience is an advantage in cross-cultural self-preparation, especially, if there are similarities in previous cultural experiences. Most expatriates search information of the host country from the Internet and books, in order to try to understand the local culture and behaviour (Despotovic, Hutchings & McPhail 2015).

Other option for self-management is self-assessment. "Self-assessment is a process in which individuals review their own performance." By doing self-assessment, employees can take the responsibility of analyzing their own performance and developing their skills. However, employees may sometimes estimate their abilities and performance incorrectly and employer must get involved with the issue. Employees must understand the aim in self-assessment that it will be effective enough. (Armstrong 2006: 95–97.)

Self-management eases the preparation for the upcoming assignment. Also, when recognizing their own skills and understanding the expectations in their work, they are able to evaluate their own performance, which will eventually lead to meeting their goals. (Armstrong 2006: 95–97; Despotovic et al. 2015.)

Other issues

In addition to previously mentioned activities, assigned expatriates are generally offered many benefits, such as an accommodation and an insurance but also better salary, that are available neither for self-initiated expatriates nor for domestic employees (Bonache 2005).

Suutari & Burch (2001) suggested supportive practices in general life, such as accommodation; running errands in shops and banks; transportation; public authorities; local laws and rules; health care system; schools and day care; free time possibilities; spouse's work arrangements and family social activities (Suutari & Burch 2001). To familiarize themselves with these issues, may take a long time for expatriates. Hence, should the organization assist to save time from the adjustment (Howe-Walsh & Schyns 2010). These are important also for family adjustment.

In addition, national culture in the home and the host country are assumed to have an effect in performance management. If there is much variety in cultural distances, it may be visible in performance management systems. (Tahvanainen 1999:224, 229.)

Furthermore, if the organization is engaged in expatriates' adjustment, will expatriates, as well, put more effort to adopt the new environment and procedures (Howe-Walsh & Schyns 2010).

3.4.1. HRM Challenges for Self-Initiated Expatriates

Comparing to the HRM practices for domestic employees, self-initiated expatriates may need wider and more complex HRM practices. On international scale, there is a need for more HR activities, such as support in general life adjustment, as specified above. Broader perspective of cultural variety is significant, as employees come from the different nationalities. In addition, more involvement in employees' personal lives because international employees likely will benefit from support outside work, as well. All these

activities take resources of an employer. (Dowling, Festing & Engle 2008: 5–7.) Below, there is listed some important challenges that organizations should prepare for.

Organizations may face some challenges when having both domestic and self-initiated expatriate employees. The selection process is the most important phase that the right expatriates are selected and they do not return to their home country ahead of time. However, during the selection process, for instance, employers are not necessarily willing to treat self-initiated expatriates differently from domestic employees and applicants (Howe-Walsh & Schyns 2010). Furthermore, in Finland, for instance, in recruitment situation it is forbidden to inquire about applicant's marital status or family situation, which are, however, certainly relevant when recruiting self-initiated expatriates. Teagarden and Gordon (1995: 31) say that considering family situation in selection, will likely result more successful expatriation.

As stated previously, self-initiated expatriates are more willing to change the employer than organizational expatriates or domestic employees. For HRM this brings challenges. The organization must identify the skills of its employees to ensure the knowledge share, in case of the skilled employees leave. On the other hand, better option would be to attract employees to stay employed within the same company by developing them and giving new opportunities. In the company's perspective, self-initiated expatriates may bring in abilities that domestic employees do not have. (Inkson et al. 1997.)

There are variations in a work-load, work-descriptions and requirements between different countries and self-initiated expatriates might not be aware of these. Hence, self-initiated expatriates should be informed and supported to understand the organizational expectations related to expatriates' work performance. (Howe-Walsh & Schyns 2010.)

Despite many self-initiated expatriates work in MNCs, there is a great amount of them working in small and medium sized companies that might not even have an HR department. Nonetheless, some suggested practices should be offered to support expatriates' adjustment and well-being, which will ease them to perform well. (Howe-Walsh & Schyns 2010.)

As mentioned previously, many performance management systems are usually standardized for both domestic employees and assigned expatriates in highly internationalized organizations (Tahvanainen 1999: 225, 230–231). This is challenging

for those organizations that use self-initiated expatriates as work force. While assigned expatriates are aware of company procedures, self-initiated expatriates are not. Hence, even big organizations should recognize that some HRM practices, such as selection and training but also general assistance, should be customized for self-initiated expatriates.

4. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to display the methods chosen in this study. It will present and justify the choices for research approach and method, as well as for data collection, sampling and for the data analysis. Finally, it will confirm the validity and reliability of the collected data in this study.

4.1. Research Method and Approach

Research design is the framework for the study, the plan for data collection and its analysis (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010: 54). In addition to a well-defined research topic, planning is an important phase in research (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2010: 25). At the beginning of the research process, the researcher formulates assumptions based on the objectives in the study, which then determine the chosen methods for data collection, analysis and interpretation of the results (Creswell 2013: 3).

There can be identified two basic approaches in research, deduction and induction. Deduction means that existing literature will be the base on the hypothesis that will be tested later empirically. Then again, induction will create a theory after testing it empirically. Purely deductive or inductive studies are rare, even though it may seem as it at first. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2010: 21–23; Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010: 15.) Combining these theories are referred with the term abductive approach (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009: 124–127).

Also, in this thesis, abductive approach is adapted, albeit it inclines more towards deduction. In abductive approach the aim of the research is to find a simple explanation via empirical research. The theory in the literature review formulates an understanding prior the empirical research, which will later complete the theory through the empirical findings. The aim is not to test any previous major theories, nor to develop a new theory (Saunders et al. 2009: 124–127). In this study, the literature review suggests some practices that could be recommended to use in performance management for self-initiated expatriates. The reality will be investigated through interviews. Afterwards, conclusion will be drawn and, furthermore, the performance management practices for self-initiated expatriates are available.

4.2. Data Collection

There are two choices for data collection method and they are quantitative and qualitative methods. The major difference between these two methods is the procedure; quantitative data includes measurements and it focuses on facts while qualitative does not, but it emphasizes the interpretation and understanding the respondent's point of view. (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010: 103–105). Qualitative research does not highlight the quantity or amount of responses, but focus on the quality in answers (Denzin & Lincoln 1994: 10). This study is qualitative and the method was chosen because the objective in the study is to reveal respondents' perceptions and experiences. The perceptions are more easily covered, when the conversation topics are not too strictly defined in advance.

Both secondary and primary data are both used in this study. Secondary data is sourced from previously published and collected articles, books or journals, for instance. It is a convenient way to gather information and understand, but also explain the theory around the research problem (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010: 90). In this study the secondary data is used to form the theoretical part, literature review in chapters 2 and 3, but it will also be used in reflecting the empirical findings in chapter 5.

Then again, primary data is collected through empirical methods, such as interviews, surveys, questionnaires or observations. The intention is to extend the knowledge in certain area and offer more specific information (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010: 99–100). In qualitative studies the methods for gathering data are observation, interview and survey (Uusitalo 1998: 89–93). However, interviews are most frequently used data collection method (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010: 106).

Qualitative interviews are usually divided as three types of interviews; structured and standardized interviews, guided and semi-structured interviews and unstructured and informal interviews (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2010: 80–83). As the research question considers the perceptions of self-initiated expatriates, the most suitable choice would be semi-structured interviews. Therefore, it enables to gain in-depth knowledge in respondent's experiences by forming open-ended and follow-up questions (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2010: 82–83).

Interviews can be executed face-to-face or via telephone, mail or online (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2010: 78; Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010: 125). In this case, the respondents in the

chosen sample are living outside Finland, which forces to conduct the interviews online via Skype, for instance. This is a synchronous interview, which means it will take place in real time and, therefore, it can be simulate face-to-face situation (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2010: 104).

Recruiting respondents for online interviews can happen in multiple ways. In this study, they are contacted via email or Facebook groups, such as “Suomalaiset Saksassa” [Finns in Germany] and international career groups. The data for the research is collected via Skype interviews.

The respondents are contacted on Facebook and the sample definition is formed as follows:

A Finn, who

- * has looked for a job abroad on his/her own initiative, not assigned by a company
- * works now or has worked abroad before for a company/government/other equivalent organization, is not an entrepreneur him/herself
- * is highly educated (University or equivalent)

Table 4. The sample description.

	Gender	Age	Nationality/ citizenships	Host country	Education	Years of working abroad	SIE Subgroup
SIE 1	female	32	Finnish	Germany	Doctor of Science in Technology	6	International professional
SIE 2	female	29	Finnish	Germany	Radiographer (University of Applied Sciences)	2	Young opportunist
SIE 3	female	39	Finnish	Germany	Bachelor of Business Administration (University of Applied Sciences)	15	Localized professional
SIE 4	female	24	Finnish	Spain	Master of Science in Economics & Business Administration	1	Young opportunist
SIE 5	female	44	Finnish	Myanmar	Master of Social Sciences, Reporter	12	Official
SIE 6	female	30	Finnish	UK	Master of Science in Comparative Politics	5	Localized professional

The cases in this study are chosen because of their willingness to participate in the study. The sample consist of 24-50-year-old highly educated (University or University of Applied Sciences) female Finns. The background details of the respondents are collected in Table 4. The self-initiated expatriates under the research are based in Europe in five out of six cases. Their international work experience varies from one year to fifteen years.

In general, case studies are used when the aim of the study is to gain an insight in a point of view and experience of an individual. Usually, the case study has one case under the research to reveal the phenomenon in the natural environment (Uusitalo 1998: 75–76). The ‘cases’ in this study will be individuals, self-initiated expatriates, who are researched with the same setting, and whose experiences are later compared to each other’s. Such method is called comparative case study, and the intention is to interpret the experiences and, based on the analysis, form holistic view on the issue. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2010: 115, 117; Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010: 110.) Comparative case studies indeed offer more fruitful insight than researching only one case (Uusitalo 1998: 77).

4.3. Research Process and Data Analysis

In qualitative studies, the intention is not only present the data, but more importantly interpret the results and draw conclusions based on the theory. The data can be analysed in different methods, such as content analysis, discourse analysis and discussion analysis. For this study, the most appropriate method will be content analysis, while the two other options are also interpreting the details in interviewees speech, such as pauses and non-verbal behaviour. These are not notable to introduce for this study’s purpose. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2009: 219–222). Content analysis presents only the meaningful issues for the study in a concise and well-presented manner. The challenge of content analysis is in determining these meaningful issues, without leaving anything crucial out, and still having the focus on the research problem. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009: 92, 113.)

The research process was started with the collection of the existing literature and combining and reviewing them. The aim of the study, the research questions were kept in mind when structuring the theoretical part. Once the theory was well-adapted and the overview on the subject was clear, the preliminary questions (Appendix 2) for the interviews were composed.

It is indeed recommended to have an interview guide where the topics are listed before starting the interviews (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010: 126). The preliminary interview questions were structured according to the existing literature and by taking references of some previous research in the same study area (Appendix 1).

As mentioned previously, the respondents were recruited on Facebook. The preliminary interview questions were sent to the respondents prior the interview to familiarize them with the subject. At the beginning of the interview, confidentiality was assured for the respondents and permission for recording was requested. The interviews lasted for approximately 60 minutes and all of them were recorded.

After conducting interviews in Finnish, which is the mother tongue of each respondent and the researcher, the recordings were transcribed and the key points then translated into English under each relevant category of different performance management systems, motivation and adjustment. Listening the interviews several times eased the work in spotting the relevant themes and similar experiences shared with many of the interviewees.

4.4. Validity and Reliability

In scientific research, two central concepts, *validity* and *reliability* arise, and they are significant in ensuring the quality of the research. Validity means the ability to measure that certain issue what it is supposed to measure, and it can be divided to internal and external validity. Then again, reliability is involved in the repeatability of the research (Yin 1994: 34–35; Uusitalo 1998: 84).

Validity concerns the accuracy and trustworthiness of the research. Insufficient validity means that the empirical findings in the research are entirely different to the intention of the research. Therefore, the theoretical and empirical definitions need to be attached to each other. One issue weakening the validity is the lack of reliability (Uusitalo 1998: 86). When ensuring the validity, it must be remembered that every answer of each interviewee is subjective and they might have variation.

As mentioned, validity consists of external and internal validity. External validity relates to the applicability and generalizability of the research in different circumstances (Ghauri

& Grønhaug 2010: 84). This study cannot offer generalizability yet, because of the small and rather homogenous sample consisting of only female Finns, but the expands the previous theories of self-initiated expatriates and performance management. The outcomes of this study should be later tested with different sample to make generalizations.

Internal validity refers to the relationship between two variables and how they correlate (Ghuri & Grønhaug 2010: 83). While conducting data analysis, internal validity appears when the factors have causal connection (Yin 1994: 35). Therefore, it is important to carefully listen and transcribe the interviews, but also translate them into English. It enables that the findings are interpreted in a correct manner.

Reliability considers the consistency of the data collection methods and analysis to ensure similar outcomes when replicating the study by other researchers. Therefore, it is not allowed to have random or coincidental results (Uusitalo 1998: 84). In order to show that the results and conclusions are sufficient, the researcher has to indicate that the results describe the phenomenon correctly and they can be proven (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2010: 294). In qualitative studies, the weakness in reliability is that the situation and circumstances cannot be exactly the same when repeating the study (Marshall & Rossmann 1999). Also, conducting the interviews via Skype instead of having them face-to-face may create a bias in results when the study would be repeated.

There are multiple ways to improve reliability and validity of the study, in addition to the previously mentioned. If the research process is described in a detailed manner, it does not leave room for assumptions or speculation (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009: 227), as it has been done in the previous chapter (4.3.). All the interviews were recorded, and it supported the possibility to focus on the interview itself, even though some notes were taken as a backup. Furthermore, the anonymous results were assured to let the respondents to speak freely. However, some of their experiences shared in the interviews were placed in a few years back, which influences the study, if the memories are not fresh. A comparative case study also increases the validity by identifying certain trends in the respondents' experiences (Yin 2003: 34). Reliability in this study has been enabled also by analysing the used theories and categorizing the findings with the same structure as in the theory.

Despite the outcome of aiming for as reliable results as possible, some shortcomings can be accepted. Imperfect reliability is not turn the study unusable. Above all, it is necessary

to evaluate the reliability to be able to evaluate the accuracy of the results. As stated previously, reliability is also contributing to validity; however high reliability does not assure valid results (Uusitalo 1998: 84–86).

The study has its limitations, which are presented more detailed in chapter 6.2. The sample of this study is small, hence more reliable study could have been ensured with a greater sample. In addition, the sample consists of only female self-initiated expatriates with Finnish nationality. However, it has been stated that there are more female than men as SIEs, which fact this study partly supports, while the volunteers were mostly female. Yet, the intention was not to create a new theory but explore the experiences and perceptions of the respondents.

In addition to reliability and validity, the trustworthiness of the study can be investigated through different criteria created by Lincoln and Cuban (1985), which are creditability, transferability, dependability and conformability. By creditability, they mean that the study can be repeated with the same sample and material with the same results and outcomes. Transferability concerns that the study can be linked to previous research without plagiarism, and the researcher has enough information of the subject to be able to interpret the empirical findings based on the theory. Then again dependability designates that the study is documented and logically conducted to enable the presentation for the reader. Lastly, conformability ensures that the collected material and the interpretations are not imaginary but must be connected and can be presented to the reader (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2010: 294.)

5. FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to gather and present the relevant findings from the conducted interviews. They are structured according to performance management systems and in addition, motivation and adjustment are added as their own categories. Each theme will be reflected to the theory and crucial comments from the interviewees are highlighted.

Altogether six self-initiated expatriates from different backgrounds were interviewed. All of them are Finnish and female and their age is 33 in average. With one exception, everyone is located in Europe and they have been working abroad nearly seven (6,8) years in average. Half of the interviewees (SIEs 1, 3 and 4) are working for MNCs, one (SIE 2) in private healthcare, one (SIE 5) in a non-governmental organization and one (SIE 6) for the University.

As already stated in the literature review, the degree of internationalization affects the complexity of the performance management and the significance of its usage (Fee et al 2011; Beardwell & Thompson 2014: 425). Only one of the interviewees (SIE 2) is working in an organization with lower level on internationality among the employees. It also has an effect on her performance management, and her responses related to performance management are most often divergent from the other respondents, as will be revealed later in this chapter.

5.1. Motivation

Firstly, the intention in the interviews was to recognize the motives for leaving abroad for work. In case of self-initiated expatriates, the motivation for leaving abroad most often originates from individual initiative (Peltokorpi & Froese 2009).

The reasons for self-initiative expatriation are often based on the international background (Froese 2012), and an increasing number of student exchanges may be the trigger for international career. All of the interviewees have gained some previous international experience, alternatively by living abroad at a young age, completing exchange studies or entire degree abroad.

“My family is very international. [...] Therefore, I was more open to leave abroad myself. [...] I’m not very close to my family, so in a way that made it easier to leave.” – SIE 2

The pull-factors for choosing a specific country were most often related to family or friends living in that country, or already obtained language skills. Almost all of the interviewees are based in Europe, which also supports the previous studies in choosing of nearby countries (Suutari & Brewster 2000).

“I started studying German already in secondary school. My aunt lives in Germany and I have German cousins. In a way, I have always had the connection to Germany as a country.” – SIE 3

“It also helped at that point to have friends living in Germany. It was in a way easier to leave when you knew people living here.” – SIE 1

When expanding the motivational factors, this study supports the previous research by identifying different subgroups. As revealed in the theory, self-initiated expatriates come from different backgrounds, and hence have different motives for expatriation. The respondents in the study represent four out of six subgroups identified by Suutari and Brewster (2000). The motivational factors for moving abroad and for possible repatriation are examined according to the subgroups.

One of the interviewees settles into the subgroup **International professionals**. They are usually highly educated and have a longer experience abroad. SIE 1 has lived in many countries and speaks seven languages.

“I did look for a job in Finland as well, when I graduated as a Doctor, but in Finland, if you are 25 and graduating Doctor and a young woman, you have no chance to get a job. I was there thinking of in which countries it’s appreciated to be educated. The most nearby ones were German speaking countries.” – SIE 1

For them, the location and the organization are not important, but they are looking for opportunities for career progress.

“I won’t stay in Germany for the rest of my life. I’m sure about that. But I’m open concerning other destinations. I’ve said at work I want to do an international assignment. [...] If there will be a situation, where I notice that my career isn’t going to the direction I want, I’m ready to change the organization.” – SIE 1

It can be said that **Localized professionals** have had a desire of moving abroad since younger age. Because of being bounded with the culture and language for some time, they have stronger connections. Also, there is usually another party, spouse and possibly family, involved, which strengthens their decision to stay in one place for a longer time. This aligns with the previous findings of a family being an influential motivational factor (Froese 2012). Two of the interviewees belong to this subgroup.

“I’ve been interested in moving abroad since the high school, because I was interested in languages. [...] It didn’t have to be Germany, but there was an interesting German study line at The University of Applied Sciences in Vaasa. [...] And later I met a German boy and we started dating.” – SIE 3

“Initially, I left abroad because I wanted an international work and I was keen to study abroad. Eventually, there was a bit of coincidence involved. It was the classic scenario as I got to know with my husband and he was a British citizen.” – SIE 6

Localized professionals have built their home in the host country. Their intentions to return to their home country do not have a strong base. Even though they wish for it, it may never happen, because of the challenges it would bring for other family members.

“Returning Finland is a complicated issue. I have a German husband and a six-year-old son. My family is here. It would be difficult for him [the husband] to move to Finland and learn the language in order to get a job. [...] If I will change the job, I will look for one inside Germany. In a way, I’ve settled in here and the center of my life is here.” – SIE 3

“I wish I could return to Finland one day, but it’s dependent on work. If there will be jobs that I can imagine of doing in Finland. And of course, if the other family member will find a job. But hopefully. I would like to return, at least for a short period of time.” – SIE 6

Young opportunists are at an early stage of their career. They are looking for experiences and better career opportunities for the future. Two of the respondents are categorized in this subgroup. SIE 2 was more an opportunist about moving abroad, whereas SIE 4's motives were then only related to her career building. She partly felt that she was forced to move abroad by the circumstances, and she did not really want to.

“I had a feeling that I wanted to experience something in life and move abroad. [...] My German friend encouraged me to move to Germany. I didn't even speak any German. Half a year later I made the decision and started to learn the language.” – SIE 2

“I came here 98% because of the job and 2% for the country. I wanted to have a big global brand in my CV. [...] It doesn't really matter in which organization I will work, it's the matter of the job description.” – SIE 4

Officials' career decisions determine the reason to be abroad, rather than the desire. Likewise one of the interviewees, they usually work for the international organizations, such as United Nations and European Union.

“The primary, and most likely the only reason [for moving abroad] was, that I was interested in development cooperation. You can't really learn it if you aren't on the field. [...] The main reason wasn't to go abroad at any price. When you want to do development cooperation, being abroad comes with it.” – SIE 5

Returning home may also be determined by the work.

“The job on the field always brings its own challenges, so I don't think I will do this the rest of my life. In this industry, it's also challenging when the work contracts are quite short and fixed. It's hard to tell if I would still make myself at home in Finland or would I be too restless. However, it's not an impossible idea.” – SIE 5

The primary motivation for leaving abroad has been mostly related to the previous international experiences of the self-initiated expatriates in question. When having a closer look to the reasons, the previously identified SIE subgroups are relevant. This is an important note for hiring organizations to be aware of the motivational factors of the SIEs in order to select the best candidates for their need.

5.2. Selection and Recruitment

One of the most crucial factors in performance management is selection and recruitment. It is recommended that organizations have a good recruitment strategy for international employees to attract them (Suutari & Brewster 2000; Howe-Walsh & Schyns 2010).

Selection and recruitment should be executed well to avoid hiring people who cannot adjust to the local community or the work (Suutari & Brewster 2000; Howe-Walsh & Schyns 2010). Bad selection may lead to returning home, but the cases in this study had not faced this. Even though the previous studies suggest (Suutari & Brewster 2000; Howe-Walsh & Schyns 2010.), there were not notable differences in recruitment processes between domestic employees and the self-initiated expatriates under the study. However, two of them mentioned that they received some financial support for plane tickets and accommodation during the process.

“I found it good that they organized all of the plane tickets and hotels. [...] I got to say which flight I want to take. And also, the transportation from and back to the airport was arranged. So, every practicality was arranged, I just had to show up.”
– SIE 1

“They paid for my flights, but I had to take care of the accommodation. I arranged interviews for the same days with some other companies as well, so it wasn’t economically that bad.” – SIE 3

Five out of six interviewees were not placed in the host country, when applying and receiving the job offer. At least three of six interviewees recognize their international experience influenced their selection. It can be assumed that the reason behind their selection was the intention to bring multi-culturalism to the work community, and qualifications to perform certain international work tasks.

“One reason [for selection] was that I was international. The other reason was that I did my doctoral study about business life in China, so I had knowledge in China and I speak Chinese.” – SIE 1

“The reason why I was chosen for that position was affected by my previous international experience. I also spoke four languages and my English skills were strong.” – SIE 3

“I’ve been told afterwards that the reason was my international work experience. [...] I guess it didn’t matter that I was a foreign citizen.” – SIE 6

Sometimes the selection is done out of curiosity. In this case it has not been a problem, but commonly it may lead to a return to the home country (Suutari & Brewster 2000; Howe-Walsh & Schyns 2010).

“I think they had a small interest in finding out, why someone from Finland is applying this position.” – SIE 2

One of the respondents working for non-governmental organization, is used to have a certain recruitment process in that industry. It can also be assumed that in international recruitments in general, the applicant must be active and prepared for extra costs, such as accommodation and flight tickets during the interviews.

“In my industry, the biggest responsibility is on the employee’s shoulders. To which kind of positions, you will end up and how the own rights in recruitment need to be held onto.” – SIE 5

As has been stated previously, international experience plays a partial role in selection of self-initiated expatriates. As soon as the selection is not only based on this fact, it seems to be accurate. Even though the interviewees did not have any specific issues to criticize in their recruitment and selection, everyone was happy with the support they received from the organization. Even small details, such as helping financially, will have a positive impression of the organization.

Self-initiated expatriates are responsible for themselves, also during the recruitment and selection process. In case of assigned expatriates, the assignment often fails because of the poor recruitment (Causin & Ayoun 2011). In every selection, the organization must investigate personal competencies, global management skills and opportunities for adjustment of their candidate, either assigned or self-initiated expatriate. Supposedly, when applying the job in a foreign country the SIEs have already weighted the possibility

to move abroad and will take the responsibility of their adjustment to the host country. Therefore, the risk of failed recruitment is not necessarily that strong as it might be in case of assigned expatriates, who may count on the skills of the organization doing the right selection.

5.3. Adjustment

As stated in the second chapter, good adjustment is crucial for successful assigned expatriation. This chapter reveals, if the same factors affect the adjustment in case of self-initiated expatriates. The success factors for adjustment were previously categorized to (1) Organizational factors and support, (2) Family factors, (3) Personal factors and competences, and (4) Environmental factors. The highlight for adjustment in self-initiative expatriation is in different factors.

According to the previous research (Suutari & Brewster 2000), self-initiated expatriates do not get the same continuous support that is offered for assigned expatriates. Against the previous suggestions, three SIEs in this study were offered at least some support. Only two of six interviewees received support in finding an apartment. The others were not offered, or did not need the help.

“I know the program was about spending 4 months in one place and then moving to another. [...] Our company has many own apartments here, so I got straight from them a furnished apartment.” – SIE 1

“When you arrive the country, you’ll receive a welcoming package with information of the country and your location. [...] The employer will advise on the vaccinations [...] and orientate to the safety procedures.” – SIE 5

“We needed a local identity number and work permit, which was entirely taken care by the company. [...] When I went to the bank and said which company I’m working for, everything was automated. Also, it was easy to get an apartment. The company maintains a certain brand, which eased many things.” – SIE 4

Most of the support offered for assigned expatriates, is now on SIE’s responsibility. However, nearly all of the interviewees neither expected to be supported, nor felt it would

have been necessary. This argues with the assumptions made on the literature review basis.

“Basically, they [the organization] didn’t offer any support. [...] I myself find out everything and asked a lot of questions from my colleagues and friends. [...] But I’ve got used to it and didn’t expect anything. The situation would have been the same in Finland.” – SIE 2

One of the interviewees described herself lucky, when she found an external service to help with practicalities in a city with many foreign employees. Apparently, the service has been widely-used and appreciated.

“We had relocation service and there was a woman, who spent a forenoon with me and [...] helped with practicalities. [...] It was an external service.” – SIE 1

In the previous literature, the adjustment of expatriate’s family has received significant attention. In this study, none of the interviewees had spouse or other family, when they left abroad. Therefore, the adjustment factor’s importance in self-initiated expatriates’ case cannot be proven.

According to general knowledge, assigned expatriates often have their own circles and housing areas consisting of many other assigned expatriates as well. Because of the shorter period abroad, they may not have to integrate with the local community and local people that strongly. Therefore, the emphasis of the previous research regarding the adjustment to the local environment is not that strongly present. Nevertheless, in self-initiated expatriate’s case, they have to communicate with the locals more and build their own networks. Indeed, all of the six interviewees described the integration with locals and other employees to be important for good adjustment. They all integrated well.

“In our team, all of us were quite young [...] and my colleagues took me with and we did a lot of things together outside the office hours. All of them were Germans [...] At first, the close friend circles helped [the adjustment].” – SIE 3

“Once a month or every three weeks we have hangout evenings with our team. We also have a lot of clubs to join. [...] The social integration has well-organized.” – SIE 4

“The most important [factor for adjustment] is the unofficial channel. The inner circle and the team you are working with.” – SIE 5

“It was really easy to blend into the work community, when we have so many international employees. Being different is no issue, when we have such multicultural community.” – SIE 6

“My case [the integration with local employees and other expatriates] was different because I had the trainee-group. Since the first day, I got to know many new people and locals.” – SIE 1

Also, the language skill requirements for assigned expatriates are only briefly mentioned in the literature review. Likewise in the study of Froese (2012), learning the language is seen as the most relevant reason for adjustment of self-initiated expatriates. Five out of six interviewees had skills in local language at least in some level.

“It [the reason for adjustment] is mostly the language. [...] It’s really important to know. Then you will talk with the locals and get to know with them.” – SIE 3

“I guess it [the adjustment] was easy, because my language is completely fluent and I already knew so much about this culture.” – SIE 6

Still, learning the language has brought challenges at least for two interviewees. One describes that the time for studying it was difficult to find and the other had some problems in communicating with locals before being fluent.

“It [studying the language] was frustrating and it was really difficult but it’s the only reason why I currently speak so good German and I have adjusted in this country. They consider me as a local.” – SIE 1

“I was quite melancholy for the first year, because I couldn’t express myself well enough. [...] I looked for a tandem-partner from Facebook to practice my language skills. [...] Once my language skills improved, the adjustment was easier.” – SIE 2

The interviewees highlighted strongly the importance of language skills. As mentioned earlier, SIEs must blend into the local community more strongly, whereas assigned

expatriates may live in their own areas. For this reason, the language skills are seen more relevant for self-initiated expatriates. If the language skills are not required on the job, the organization might not consider it relevant. However, the integration with the local colleagues could be faster or better if the self-initiated expatriates could communicate with the same language. According to Peltokorpi and Froese's (2009) findings, SIEs in general have stronger language skills and a better understanding of the culture than assigned expatriates, which eases their integration with local people.

This study did not pay any attention to cultural differences, but none of the interviewees mentioned facing any substantial challenges when cooperating with the host country culture. While all the interviewees being Finnish, their adaptation to the local culture may be similar to each other's. However, one of the SIEs wishes for better understanding for the native culture. It could be suggested for people working with foreign cultures to participate cross-cultural training.

“In a way, you would wish for more understanding to another culture. [...] It might have been because I spoke so good German, when I came here. The situation is still today that if you speak good German and you have been here for a long time, the Germans know you come abroad, but they still don't understand your other mentality. As a Finn, I don't react to things in a same way as Germans do.”

– SIE 3

None of the six interviewees mention the environmental factors to influence the adjustment. The reason behind this, may be related to the opportunity to choose their expatriation countries themselves, whereas assigned expatriates' location is determined by the work-related factors. In this study, five out of six interviewees live inside European Union, in which the standard of living does not vary from Finnish standards remarkably. Also, the previous studies suggest the self-initiated expatriates prefer nearby countries (Doherty et al. 2011; Suutari & Brewster 2000).

An important adjustment factor to mention among the interviewees was self-management. As stated previously, the SIEs did not receive that effective organizational support, hence they will have to take the responsibility on their own. Bhatti et al. (2013) suggested that individual factors, such as adaptability, openness, and interest in other cultures, might help expatriates to create better relationships at work and outside the work.

Previous international experience is an advantage in cross-cultural self-preparation (Despotovic et al. 2015).

“Own adjustment and performance are self-directed. When you have lived in many countries and got used to finding own social circles. The organization may help you till a certain point and support you to find contacts, but the final responsibility is yours.” – SIE 1

“Ultimately it’s a self-directed decision to move abroad and you are responsible of it yourself.” – SIE 4

One of the interviewees also highlighted that people moving abroad should not have unrealistic expectations or other pipe dreams. It may be predicted that self-initiated expatriates prepare themselves better for the move to another country, whereas assigned expatriates are more focused on the work and its content.

“You also have to be realistic when leaving abroad. Every country has their own issues and no country is perfect. You will face ups and downs that you would face in your home country as well. It’s about your own attitude. I have seen so many expatriates that have left back to their home countries after three months, because of their unrealistic expectations.” – SIE 1

Even though all of the respondents in this study adjusted well, and did not face any premature return to the home country, some issues may have an effect on bad adjustment. For instance Froese (2012), discovered that SIEs motivated to leave abroad by the poor work situation at home, have a tendency of experiencing difficult adjustment. This study did not have any SIEs belonging to the subgroup **Job seekers**.

To highlight the most important factors in self-initiated expatriate adjustment, this study reveals it to be the language skills and integration with the locals. For the organizations, this is an issue worth recognizing. At least language training cannot be too difficult to arrange, and preferably it could be done partly during the working hours, as the training outside the office hours may be too time-consuming, depending on the type of the work.

When it comes to integration with the locals, it is certainly on the responsibility of the SIEs themselves. However, a team or another internal function inside the organization

should support by organizing some activities or at least give some guidance for local events.

The lack of discussion on work-related adjustment may refer to positive experiences, but cannot be proven. As mentioned previously, integration with the locals and other employees is seen important, which will further influence the adjustment in the work place. Supposedly, the adjustment outside the work will affect the performance and success in the job as well, while positive mood can be assumed to create better results.

5.4. Goal-setting

Goal setting can be done in multiple ways. According to the interviews, the way in which the goals are defined is dependent on the organization. However, inside that specific organization, the practices are standard and not depending on the location or nationality. Still some superiors may highlight the process more strongly than others, and the goals might not have that clear focus that they would have with another superior.

Four out of six has their goals defined for a year ahead. Usually, they are written down in a system or some other form. To the general knowledge, this is common in many MNCs with own evaluation and development systems or tools for all their employees.

“We have an HR program, where the goals are written down for a year ahead. [...] Your goals are documented and they remain in the system, even though your superior changes.” – SIE 1

“We have an excellent software, in which my personal development plan has been written down. We update it every three months with my superior.” – SIE 4

Slightly against the previous theories (Fee et al. 2011), in most cases in this research, the goals are personal and qualitative, instead of being quantitative. They are often defined in cooperation between the superior and subordinate. All respondents with such system, consider it as a good practice to understand the broader business perspective and have realistic goals approved by someone with more experience.

One of the interviewees mentioned that they had tried to define the goals together with the team. Straightforward team goals are not common among other SIEs in this study, but usually they have some higher-level purpose in relation with business goals.

“They [goals] are personal, but if you have subordinates, you can partly assign some of your goals to them. [...] Everyone in the team must work together for a common goal. We defined our goals in a team meeting after everyone had presented their individually defined goals. [...] It was the first time we defined our goals with the team and I think it’s a good practice. Now everyone knows others’ goals and responsibilities.” – SIE 1

“We have business goals and personal goals. Business goals are coming from the European management [...] and the personal goals are defined according to my and my superior’s suggestions.” – SIE 3

Three out of six interviews have their goals set according to SMART framework, in which the goals are Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic and Time-related (Suutari & Tahvanainen 2002). This was especially common among SIEs working in global companies. Most of the goals are qualitative, with one exception, but some still have quantitative measurements.

“We have more qualitative goals. [...] Specifically, all of our goals must be SMART. The goals must be clear and measurable.” – SIE 3

“The numerical goals are already pre-defined and there is no room for changes. If I remember correctly, the country goal is divided to the teams and it will be divided as many shares as there are members in the team.” – SIE 4

*“We also have qualitative goals, but I think you’ll have to be in a higher level that you are a keeper and people are interested in you and to improve your skills.”
– SIE 4*

Two of the respondents do not have any personal goals defined, but it appears to be industry- or role-dependent. However, one of them have clear project-related targets to guide also her work. She does not even wish for strictly specified personal goals.

“The project has certain goals, but job-specific goals are not defined, especially when they are related to PR [interviewee’s industry]. [...] Generally, the organization has a vision of the publications that should be published and the events that should be arranged, but it’s not that goal-oriented.” – SIE 5

The main reason for not having any goals, one of the interviewee (SIE 2) mentioned the type of her work. She does not have that clear opportunities for career progression, hence the personal goals and self-development in a career perspective are on her own responsibility. Another reason, which is explained in the literature review, might be the low degree of internationalization (Fee et al. 2011). The SIE in question is the only foreign employee in the healthcare industry.

The most common target in goal setting amongst the respondents is usually the career and personal development. However, one of the cases sees the relation only to her financial benefits.

“All the time it [the goal setting] could be improved. Our goals only influence our bonuses and pay raise. I would give more opportunities for personal development.” – SIE 3

For all of the respondents the goal-setting has been semi-structured with a time-frame and measurements. None of them sees this as a negative issue. Worth mentioning would be the type of the goal. It should be related to both personal and organizational development.

5.5. Performance Evaluation

As Woods (2003) has stated, expatriates usually appreciate evaluation and feedback from their superiors. All of the SIEs in this study expect and value feedback and also evaluation in some form. However, the evaluation system varies between the respondents. For some of them it is more structured and standardized, and will be recorded to the systems, which is common in highly international organizations (Woods 2003; Shih et al. 2005). Furthermore, their performance was always evaluated according to the goals. Only one of the interviewees has a comprehensive and structured self-evaluation.

“Because of our HR system, my superior and I can see and edit the status of our goals all the time. At the end of the year, the superior will evaluate, how many percent of the goal we have accomplished.” – SIE 1

“They evaluate “what” and “how”. They include goals that are measurable. Then we use Lominger competencies, which are different human characteristics that will affect our profit. Our company has defined the most important characteristics. We are evaluated in four levels according to our strengths and weaknesses.” – SIE 3

Four out of six interviewees had a development discussion to discourse their performance. The time frame between the official, scheduled discussions varies from every two weeks to once a year. In some of the cases, the development discussion was not that structured, but more informal.

“The discussion is always orally, but it will be saved in our electronic system. We have the development discussion twice a year and we go through the current situation of my goals, if there are any roadblocks disallowing my goals to be fulfilled.” – SIE 3

“Even though we have the development discussion only once a year, it doesn’t mean that we only discuss then. We also have a monthly meeting to discuss whatever. [...] We might go through the performance, or if I don’t know how to proceed. It is more like mentoring-kind chatting.” – SIE 1

“The performance is evaluated according to a number defined quarterly. But my superior evaluates me more comprehensively. We have a development discussion every two week, in which we go through the last closed deals and I’ll get continuous feedback from my immediate superior.” – SIE 4

Previous studies cover more the location of the evaluator. There may be multiple evaluators in both host and home country, at least for assigned expatriates. In this study, one of the interviewees has her immediate superior located in a different country. In addition, as stated previously, in highly internationalized companies there are multiple evaluators (Fee et al. 2011), but in this study only one of the interviewees has. Her situation is also other way different, as the reasoning for face-to-face evaluation was also related to law in one case.

“It [the evaluation and development discussion] is always face-to-face. Legally, your immediate superior has to be in the same country. You may also have a functional superior in some other country, and if you have, she or he will also be present in the face-to-face conversation. [...] Once I had three functional superiors and my legal superior. And then we five people sat there discussing my performance.” – SIE 1

Feedback should be given via face-to-face conversations (Maley & Moeller 2014). All of the interviewees receive the feedback orally face-to-face from their immediate superior, but one receives it mostly by email because of the nature of her remote work. In addition to feedback from the superior, many receives it from the team and colleagues. The manner of the feedback was positive in five out of six cases.

“My current superior gives me very constructive feedback and both positive and negative, but mainly with a positive manner.” – SIE 3

“Of course, it’s good to hear others’ opinions. However, I’m very analytical and critical towards myself and therefore I do self-evaluation all the time.” – SIE 1

“Every time, when the work has been done well, we give two-way feedback to our colleagues. [...] We get more positive or constructive feedback, as the Brits believe in sandwich compliments that you will always have to tell a positive thing first, then the constructive and lastly one positive to close the sandwich.” – SIE 6

According to Aguinis et al. (2012), positive strength-based feedback appears to improve employee’s performance and motivation, whereas negative may cause harm. Only one is only receiving negative feedback.

“At first it was a shock [...] but I don’t really get any positive feedback. They will tell me only when shit hits the fan. [...] Basically, if you do your job well, it’s all good and we are working efficiently.” – SIE 2

While almost every respondent receives structured evaluation, one of the interviewees does not require a scheduled feedback session, but expects to have feedback, when it is justified.

“I don’t require feedback and the development discussion is unnecessary. I want the immediate superior to be present and that I will get feedback, when I deserve it, not after six months. If the relationship with your superior is working, you’ll get feedback whenever it’s needed.” – SIE 5

Despite one of the interviewees, the others are happy the way in which their organization performs evaluation. It can also be stated, that the commonly acknowledged practices inside the company define the scope and way of the evaluation. It is then dependent on the superior, in which way the practices are followed. However, all the self-initiated expatriates in this study wish for positive and constructive feedback.

5.6. Training and Development

In case of assigned expatriates, many of them receive training before during and after their assignment (Shih et al. 2005), and it is often cross-cultural training, mentoring or coaching (Tahvanainen 1999: 49–51). For the interviewees in this study, the opportunities for training and development are related to their career progression before than cultural skills.

Most of the SIEs are having opportunities to develop and educate themselves with courses that their organization offers. Yet, only two of them mentioned them to be linked in their goals and performance evaluation.

“I have been offered courses inside the company. It’s one thing discussed in the development discussion. We go through in which courses I could participate and what should I improve and develop in myself.” – SIE 1

Most of the courses offered are optional and their organization does not require completing them. It leaves the decision and development for the SIEs themselves.

“We’ve had shorter courses, week-long periods. I wish for more access trainings to databases. They are pleased if you are familiar with the databases but they don’t require it.” – SIE 3

“We had a learning site, online university for variety of data and other material and courses in limitless amounts. But I didn’t do those.” – SIE 4

“Always, when it’s possible [to complete courses], and when I’m located in more boring place, where you can’t live normal life, I’ll do online courses. [...] Also, during the holiday periods, if some interesting course is at the same time. It is nice to meet people in communications, because in the field you may be the only person in that area of work.” – SIE 5

One of the SIEs is working in an organization with an exceptional system for their training and development.

“Every employee is given a certain sum of money that can be used for personal career development. We may use it for a course, language course or other self-development that will give us benefits for our work.” – SIE 6

When there are expatriates in question, there may be discussion of language courses and if it will be offered or even required. As it appears on the research results regarding the adjustment and previous studies, language skills are considered relatively important (Suutari & Burch 2001). However, language courses are rarely provided. Only two of the SIEs were offered a language course and only one of them completed it. One other tried to apply for funding. The rest of the interviewees did not need or require a language course.

“I got a language course. I had to complete it on my own time. But the company paid for it.” – SIE 1

“My first position was the only one, where a language course was offered. I tried at first, but it didn’t fit to my schedule. [...] In my work, in such short-term contracts, the language skills aren’t that significant.” – SIE 5

On-the-job mentoring is mentioned in one of the interviews. If the organizations are not able to offer support before self-initiated expatriates are in the host country, mentoring should be considered as relevant to introduce the SIE to the organizational practices but also to the local environment. Both cultural and work-related awareness can be raised and the adaptation of cultural and working environment is eased (Howe-Walsh & Schyns

2010). The SIE had a mentor herself at the beginning of her career and they still communicate together in various issues. She also recommends it for others at the early stage of one's career.

“At the beginning of one's career, after graduating, it would be really nice to have a mentor. [...] You are looking for your place in working life, so it would be nice to have someone to guide, bounce ideas, get advises and connections.” – SIE 6

As it appears, the receiving organization does not or cannot support the self-initiated expatriate before moving to the host country, they should focus on supporting after arrival and on-the-job training, instead (Howe-Walsh & Schyns 2010; Shih et al. 2005; Harzing & Christensen 2004.) The job-descriptions and expectations may differ between the countries, therefore self-initiated expatriates should be informed and supported to understand the organizational expectations related to expatriates' work performance. (Howe-Walsh & Schyns 2010). One of the respondents could have wished for more training and orientation.

“I would have wished for more orientation to the job itself. They could have had a list to go through all the necessary things. [...] It felt that everyone expected that I already knew everything.” – SIE 2

Training that is linked to the self-initiated expatriate's goals, would serve them and the organization in the best way. At least some occasional training offered would support the performance of SIEs well. It can be said, that practices such as training are often related to the organizational success and they are first to be left out, when saving costs for instance. As already mentioned, language skills are the most important factor in expatriate adjustment, according to this study, and they will presumably have a direct influence on the performance. Therefore, it would be worth acknowledging.

5.7. Female Self-Initiated Expatriates

In addition to the experiences in performance management, which are the main subject of this thesis, issues related to womanhood are relatively strongly present. The sample of the study consist of only female SIEs, which of course has an effect on the trustworthiness of the findings. However, there are previous studies (e.g. Suutari & Brewster 2000) which

suggest that there are more men as assigned expatriates, whereas women are majority among self-initiated expatriates.

Two of the SIEs placed in Germany had faced some issues because of being female. It was surprising for them, how unequal the treating of women may be. However, it must be noted that these issues may be determined by the local cultural behaviour.

“The only culture shock is related to the treatment of women and how few women there is in working life. Only 9% of mothers of two are working full time. [...] In this area where I live, the number of career women is rising nowadays, but before it was embarrassing if women needed to work, as the men are supposed to provide the living.” – SIE 1

“The first trouble came up, when I wanted to go back working full time after getting a child. They wonder, how a mother can work full time and for me it’s obvious. [...] I guess there is only two women with a family, who are working full time in our company. [...] Mainly career women are working full time and others do as much as needed for subsistence. People here still see the man as the breadwinner of the family.” – SIE 3

Furthermore, at least one of the interviewees mentioned that being female is also influencing the opportunities for career progress in Germany.

“Everybody thought at first that I was I secretary, so had to use some creative ways to get credibility. Still, it’s hard for women to get promoted. You really need to have a superior who supports it.” – SIE 1

As the sample consists of only females, the findings could have been different with a sample of male self-initiated expatriates. However, this issue can be considered relatively interesting, while the previous research also claims that most of the self-initiated expatriates indeed are single female.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This study describes the performance management and adjustment of Finnish female self-initiated expatriates in their host countries. It reveals their perceptions and wishes on performance management systems used by their organizations. This study was conducted to answer the following research problems:

1. *How does the performance management for self-initiated expatriates differ from the performance management for domestic employees?*
2. *What performance management practices could be recommended to enhance successful self-initiative expatriation according to SIEs experiences?*

To summarize the theory behind this research, performance management systems that are mostly used in expatriation are selection and recruitment, goal-setting, performance evaluation and training and development. When comparing performance management systems for assigned expatriates and domestic employees, there is not notable difference found in previous studies. However, based on the information offered, some practices could be formulated for self-initiated expatriates.

When distinguishing self-initiated expatriates from domestic employees in the selection process, one reason appears to be SIE's international experience. As also previously stated, it will most likely be an influential selection criterion (Tharenou 2013). The study also supports the previous theories that self-initiated expatriates, who have lived in the country for longer time, will in many occasions considered as locals (Howe-Walsh & Schyns 2010). In assigned expatriate's case, international experience may also have a great influence, however, the selection criteria may be based on the technical competencies more strongly.

The right selection is mentioned to affect significantly to the success of an international assignment (Causin & Ayoun 2011). It can be assumed that the reasoning behind this statement is indeed valid for assigned expatriates, whose international assignment is often an initiative of the employer (Suutari & Brewster 2000). In case of self-initiated expatriates, the decision to move abroad has considered before applying any jobs outside

the home country, and the move might be more permanent. Therefore, recruiting self-initiated expatriates not necessarily fail that often.

Even though the theory suggests the importance of organizational support, when arriving in the country, and all of the respondents receiving it have been pleased, none of them eventually required it. These supporting practices can include efficient selection, a clear job description, mentoring, co-working, cross-cultural training and also practical support, such as helping to find accommodation or schools for children (Howe-Walsh & Schyns 2010). However, the highlight of the smooth adjustment is in the SIEs self-management, self-preparation, active attitude and realistic expectations. It appears that at least one of the interviewees was happy with the support, she got from an external service. It can be suggested for organizations either encourage external people to establish this kind of service or direct their self-initiated expatriates towards the existing ones.

Particularly, adjustment in a host country is an important in successful expatriation, as also Kraimer et al. (2001) have been demonstrated. As a consequence, self-initiated expatriates do not face premature return and they will perform well. To achieve smooth adjustment, organizational support is seen as the most significant factor, when the assigned expatriates are in question (Bonache 2005; Cole & Nesbeth 2014). Then again, self-initiated expatriates are lacking the same support, even though some of the SIEs in this study were offered it. This emphasizes the relevance of performance management, and adjustment is precisely dependent on efficient performance management systems for self-initiated expatriates, in addition to their self-management and personal factors. (Howe-Walsh & Schyns 2010).

According to previous research (Howe-Walsh & Schyns 2010), if self-initiated expatriates are treated similarly to domestic employees, they might suffer from lack of cross-cultural training and their international background is not necessarily considered, while assigned expatriates might have even extensive trainings before, during and after their assignment. This study shows the claim to be true. It also reveals that the most important performance management system in successful self-initiated expatriation is training while the SIE is abroad.

Supporting the findings of Froese (2012), who studied the motivational factors and adjustment of self-initiated expatriates in Korea, language skills appear to be the most relevant factor for good adjustment. Still, only two of the respondents were offered it.

The conclusions of this study can emphasize that the need for training and development as performance management systems should be re-evaluated in case of self-initiated expatriates. Proper language skills will enhance the integration to local community, both inside and outside the work, which was another relevant adjustment factor for self-initiated expatriates in this study.

In addition to the importance of language training, this study as well as previous ones (Howe-Walsh & Schyns 2010) support the opportunities for mentoring. When the self-initiated expatriate is coming from a different country and culture, she or he needs to adapt this new environment. Not only the cultural issues, but also work-related practices could be easier to cope with by having a mentor to support the adjustment. According to the knowledge of the current practices that different organizations use, it may be an increasing trend of having mentors in different kind of positions.

Despite the previous assumptions, assimilating self-initiated expatriates into domestic employees, does not seem to have an effect on adjustment. Self-initiated expatriates themselves have decided to move abroad, so they need to take responsibility of their own adjustment, as well (Howe-Walsh & Schyns 2010), which is also proven by this research. However, there may be identified some common wishes or matters, such as language course, that could ease the SIEs adjustment.

The previous research also appoints that family and expatriates' personal characteristics play a key role in successful self-initiative expatriation. It is important that also the family adjusts in a host country environment. Adaptability and openness to new environment, culture and work tasks are appropriate personal factors of both expatriates and their families that ease the adjustment process in a host country (Sarkiunaite & Rocke 2015; Bhatti et al. 2013). This study cannot support the topic, since none of the SIEs had children or other family when leaving abroad. However, it may be easier for SIE's own adjustment, if they do not have any family to be concerned about.

In the previous research (Howe-Walsh & Schyns 2010), it has been suggested to approach self-initiated expatriates differently depending, if they are 'career expatriates' or 'private expatriates' These are defined according to their situation of being offered a job before moving to the country or already being settled in the country before applying for a job. This study includes one example of 'private expatriate', but it does not seem to have an effect on issues under investigation in this research.

It has been suggested (Fee et al. 2011) there is a relationship between performance management systems and the degree of internationalization in the organization. The use of 'soft' and 'hard' components of performance management is reflected by that degree. However, both components are significant and the efficient usage can improve expatriates' performance and, consequently, organization's performance (Fee et al. 2011). In this study, it appears that hard components, such as goal setting and performance evaluation are more commonly used than soft ones, such as training and mentoring, but there is not notable correlation to the degree of internationalization. Still, in the organization with a low level of internationalization, the use of performance management in general was minimal. This is also related to the type of the work the SIE has.

As mentioned before, organizational mobility is higher among self-initiated expatriates than among assigned ones. Self-initiated expatriates are more willing to keep their independency and their career-decisions are formed perhaps by the eagerness for international mobility, as well. These companies that manage to offer interesting career development for also self-initiated expatriates, might keep talented employees longer within the company (Biemann & Andresen 2010). Furthermore, it has been stated that employer is more responsible of assigned expatriates and self-initiated expatriates career (Howe-Walsh & Schyns 2010). An assignment may have a target to be accomplished and further it may have an effect on expatriate's career development. Still, SIEs have the same treatment and career opportunities as local employees and assigned expatriates.

The first aim of the study was to investigate if the performance management for self-initiated expatriates differ for domestic employees. Eventually, there does not appear many differences. Especially in the international organizations, the performance management practices are standard. However, the organization may pay more attention to the adjustment of the foreign employees by supporting in practicalities that a local employee does not have to consider, such as work permits and finding an apartment.

The second aim was to uncover if certain performance management practices could be recommended for managers of self-initiated expatriates. Previous studies (Fee et al 2011) claim that performance management systems should be customized for expatriates, instead of using standardized systems for all employees. None of the respondents in this study notice any divergent performance management systems compared to the local employees, neither require them.

One central note can be made, when comparing self-initiated expatriates to the theory of assigned expatriates. Because of difference in background of SIEs and AEs with the former often having more international experience and more preparation for moving abroad, also the factors for adjustment are varying. As a consequence, this creates a need for hiring managers and HR function to rethink their performance management practices for self-initiated expatriates to assure or at least contribute in their adjustment. Especially training to the organizational practices and local language would enable better adjustment for SIEs, which is often directly linked to the work performance (Bhatti et al. 2013).

All in all, the performance of a foreign employee originates from the past. By identifying the background and motivational factors, organizations can support and manage these expatriates in a suitable manner, which has a direct effect on adjustment in work life, as well as in private life (Froese 2012). Furthermore, adjustment has a straight linkage to performance (Kraimer et al. 2001).

6.1. Managerial Implications

Even though this study proves that interviewed self-initiated expatriates have mostly been satisfied with the performance management practices, it can be recommended for managers to have closer consider their systems to reveal possible faults. Being of aware the crucial factors for SIE adjustment and further its effect on performance, could enhance their success in working life. Favourable HRM supports self-initiated expatriates and creates an environment that eases expatriates' adjustment. Even though self-initiated expatriates rarely expect, neither require it, some practices could be customized to support them.

As stated, the language skills are seen as the most relevant factor for adjustment in the host country. Assuming the personal adjustment correlates with the on-the-job performance, organizations could consider providing language and cross-cultural training for both expatriates and domestic employees. It could support the performance of an individual and a team inside the work place, but also the adjustment to the local community, which has been proven to also increase good performance (Kraimer et al. 2001). Furthermore, training and career development is also detected to be appreciated

among the most of self-initiated expatriates under research. Consequently, organizations should pay more attention to these soft components of performance management.

It can also be recommended that hiring managers are aware of the background of the self-initiated expatriate and his or her motives to look for a job abroad. This would save costs of failed recruitment and gives the manager an overlook of the length of the planned time abroad. One significant note for the hiring organization would be to identify the SIE subgroups that very much define the background and motivation of the self-initiated expatriates.

Most importantly, hiring organizations could even prioritize self-initiated expatriates over assigned expatriates or domestic employees in some occasions, when the inside information about the organization or the local country is not crucial. Because of their previous international experience and own initiative, SIEs can be more reliable or confident choice than AEs. They have weighted the choice to move abroad and most likely more prepared for the challenges in new country. AEs are expensive with the start packages and repatriation benefits (Sarkiunaite & Rocke 2015; Chen et al. 2005) and their assignments fail easily (Causin & Ayoun 2011). Naturally, when the driver to leave as a SIE is a bad job market in the home country, it is necessary to consider affecting the adjustment (Froese 2012).

6.2. Limitations and Further Research

There is a lack of research regarding self-initiative expatriation and, moreover, no previous research on performance management systems for self-initiated expatriates. Despite the fact that this study will broaden the research in self-initiated expatriates and their adjustment and performance, there can be identified various limitations and opportunities for future research.

The key limitation of our study relates to sampling. This study focuses mainly on countries inside European Union and the sample consist of only Finnish females with higher education (University or equivalent). It arises a question, if the outcome of the study would be different with a sample of men. The study should be retaken with different sample to prove it holds true. In addition, the impact of womanhood is not covered, but

only briefly discussed. The small sample and also the nature of qualitative method define this study rather explanatory than universally applicable.

While the aim of this study was only to reveal the experiences of self-initiated expatriates, it does not measure the outcomes in performance of different type of employees; self-initiated or assigned expatriates, or domestic employees. It cannot be proven how the current performance management practices are affecting the performance of each individual or the organization itself.

As witnessed, performance management practices differ between organizations, but they may also differ between countries and cultures. It does not consider cultural differences or their influence in adjustment and managerial implications. This study should be repeated in other countries and be targeted to another nationality than Finnish. Cultural issues are mentioned to affect performance management but where the cultural differences originate is not covered.

Most of the interviewees have been living in the host countries over 3 years. This study does neither cover the effect on adjustment, nor adjustment phases in depth. It does not consider the fact that 'memories grow sweeter with time'. Yet expatriate adjustment is a widely studied subject in assigned expatriate's perspective, there is still opportunities for SIE adjustment research more deeply.

One limitation is related to the motives of becoming a self-initiated expatriate. It is stated that depending on the motives for expatriation, how self-initiated expatriates should be managed (Richardson & McKenna 2002; Howe-Walsh & Schyns 2010). This thesis did not cover the motives and their implications in HRM in depth.

Furthermore, performance management is not the only tool to use that expatriates would perform and better. For instance, talent management should be applied.

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APPENDIX 1. Main Researchers in the field

Author	Concept	Key Findings	Research setting & Methodology
Suutari & Brewster (2000)	Self-Initiated Foreign Assignments (SFA)	Remarkable differences between assigned and self-initiated expatriates in motives and backgrounds. Six subgroups for SFAs	Quantitative questionnaire
Howe-Walsh & Schyns (2010)	HRM implications for Self-Initiated expatriates	Self-Initiated Expatriates would need allocated HR practices	No study conducted, Theoretical review
Froese (2012)	Motivation and Adjustment	Three motivation factors related to general adjustment	Exploratory qualitative study, interviews
Shih, Chiang & Kim (2005)	Expatriate performance management	Lack of practices for expatriate performance management	Qualitative, Case study, semi-structured interviews
Tahvanainen (1999)	Expatriate performance management	The performance management of different types of expatriates in varying situations should differ	Qualitative, Case study, interview
Peltokorpi & Froese (2009)	Organizational expatriates and self-initiated expatriates' adjustment	SIEs adjust better to general aspects of their host country and interactions with host-country nationals than OEs	Quantitative, questionnaire
Suutari & Tahvanainen (2002)	Expatriate performance Management	Company's level of internationalization, size, the position of the expatriate, task type, the location of the host unit and organizational structure influence performance management practices	Quantitative, questionnaire

APPENDIX 2. Suggested interview questions

In English

1. Introduction

- Background (name, age, nationality, host country, education, previous international [work] experience)
- Position in the organization relevant for this research. Describe your tasks shortly, working language

2. Motivation

- Which factors influenced your decision to move abroad? Why?
- Were you already living in the foreign country when you got the position or did you get the position while in your home country? Have you worked abroad/ in the same country before? How about for the same organization?
- Did you have a certain country in which you wanted to work?
- Do you think you will be move back to your home country some day?

3. Recruitment process

- How would you describe the recruitment process? (interviews, communication with the candidate)
- What do you think were the primary reasons for your selection? Was the purpose to hire an international applicant?
- Why did you apply for the position?

4. Adjustment

- What kind of support (financial/non-financial) and information did you receive about the organization or the country before the departure? (HR policies and labour law, culture, housing, taxation, practicalities with living in the host country, language courses) Do you think it was sufficient? Why? Why not? What would you improve?
- How did you integrate with local employees/ other expatriates? What could be improved and how?
- Which factors affect the adjustment the most? (organizational factors, support to you and your family, organizational culture, personal factors and competences, language issues, environmental factors, standard of living etc.)
- Were you familiar with the local language and culture?

- How did your family adjust?
- Is there anything that the organization did exceptionally well or not so well for your adjustment? Why?

5. Goal-setting

- Do you feel that your goals are clearly defined? Why? Why not?
- Who sets your goals? Do you participate in your goal setting?
- Team goals? Personal goals?
- Is there something to improve in goal-setting? What? Why?

6. Performance evaluation?

- How is your performance evaluated? Is the evaluation done in a good way or is there something to improve?
- Who evaluates you? Self-evaluation?
- How often and how you receive feedback on your performance? Face to face or in written? Positive or negative?
- Do you perceive feedback as important for your good performance?

7. Training and development

- Were you offered language/ Cross-cultural training?
- Did you have a mentor/coach?
- Is there anything that could be improved? Does your training differ from the training for local employees? If not, should it?

Others

- How does your career path look alike? Will you stay in the same organization or same country?
- Have you had difficulties because of your different nationality? What?
- What do you think could be improved that you would perform/ adjust even better?
- Do you have development ideas on the topic?
- Anything else?

In Finnish

1. Alustus

- Tausta (nimi, ikä, kansallisuus, kohdema, aiempi kansainvälinen työkokemus)
- Positio organisaatiossa. Kuvaile työtehtäviäsi lyhyesti

2. Motivaatio

- Mitkä tekijät vaikuttivat muuttoosi ulkomaille? Miksi?
- Asuitko jo ulkomailla, kun sait position vai olitko vielä kotimaassasi? Oletko työskennellyt aiemmin ulkomailla/ samassa maassa? Entä samassa organisaatiossa?
- Halusitko työskennellä tietyssä maassa?
- Arveletko, että palaat joskus kotimaahasi?

3. Rekrytointiprosessi

- Kuinka kuvailisit rekrytointiprosessia? (haastattelut, kommunikaatio kandidaatin kanssa)
- Mitkä arvelet olevan ensisijaiset tekijät sinun valinnallesi kyseiseen position? Oliko organisaation tarkoituksena rekrytoida ulkomainen työntekijä?
- Miksi hait kyseistä positiota?

4. Sopeutuminen

- Millaista tukea ja tietoa sait organisaatiosta tai kohdemaasta ennen saapumista? (HR käytännöt ja työlaki, kulttuuri, asunto, verotus, maan asumiskäytännöt, kielikurssi) Oliko se riittävää? Miksi? Miksi ei? Mitä kehittäisit?
- Kuinka integroiduit paikallisten työntekijöiden/ muiden ekspatriaattien kanssa? Mitä voisi kehittää ja kuinka?
- Mitkä tekijät vaikuttivat sopeutumiseesi eniten? (organisaation tuki, organisaatiokulttuuri ja käytännöt, omat henkilökohtaiset ominaisuudet, kieli, ympäristöön liittyvät seikat, elintaso jne.)
- Tunsitko kohdemaan kieltä tai kulttuuria?
- Kuinka perheesi sopeutui?
- Edistikö organisaatiosi sopeutumistasi joltain osin erityisen hyvin? Onko jossain kehittämisen varaa? Miksi?

5. Tavoitteiden asettaminen

- Ovatko tavoitteesi selkeästi asetettu? Miksi? Miksi ei?
- Kuka määrittelee tavoitteesi? Oletko mukana tavoitteiden määrittelyssä?
- Tiimikohtaisia tavoitteita? Henkilökohtaisia?
- Laadullisia tai määrällisiä tavoitteita?
- Kehittäisitkö jotain tavoitteiden asettamisessa? Mitä? Miksi?

6. Suorituksen arviointi

- Kuinka suoritustasi arvioidaan? Onko arviointi toteutettu hyvin vai olisiko jotain kehitettävää?
- Kuka arvioi suoritustasi? Itsearviointi?
- Kuinka usein saat palautetta suorituksestasi? Kasvotusten tai kirjallisesti? Positiivista vai negatiivista?
- Koetko palautteen olevan tärkeää hyvän suoriutumisesi kannalta?

7. Koulutus ja kehitys

- Tarjottiinko sinulle kielikurssia?
- Oliko sinulla mentoria/ coachia?
- Poikkeako koulutuksesi paikallisten työntekijöiden koulutuksesta? Jos ei, tulisiko sen poiketa?
- Voisiko jotain kehittää?

Muuta

- Miltä urapolkusi näyttää? Aiotko pysyä samassa organisaatiossa tai samassa maassa?
- Oletko kohdannut vaikeuksia eri kansallisuutesi vuoksi? Minkälaisia?
- Koetko, että jotain voisi kehittää, jotta suoriutuisit/sopeutuisit paremmin?
- Onko sinulla kehitysideoita aiheeseen?
- Muuta lisättävää?