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UNIVERSITY OF VAASA

Kukka-Maaria Kenkkilä

**The long-term effects of international work
experience on the career success of expatriates**

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Tekijä:	Kukka-Maaria Kenkkilä		
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Työn ohjaaja:	Vesa Suutari		
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ABSTRACT:

Yritysten ja tutkijoiden kiinnostus kansainvälisiä uria kohtaan jatkaa kasvuaan. Maahanmuuttajien määrä on kasvanut nopeammin kuin maailman väkiluku. Maailman globalisoituessa, yritykset tarvitsevat työntekijöitä, jotka kykenevät menestyksekkäästi hoitamaan tehtävänsä kansainvälisessä ympäristössä. Täten myös kansainvälisissä työtehtävissä työskentelevien henkilöiden tulee panostaa oman urapääoman kehittymiseen, jotta he kykenevät ylläpitämään ja kohottamaan omaa markkina-arvoaan ja kilpailemaan työpaikoista kansainvälisessä ympäristössä. Vaikka nämä kansainväliset lahjakkuudet ovat arvokas voimavara yrityksille, tutkimukset osoittavat, että kansainvälisten työtehtävien vaikutukset työntekijän uramenestykselle ovat ristiriitaisia. Tutkimukset ovat kuitenkin lähinnä keskittyneet kansainvälisten työtehtävien lyhyen aikavälin seurauksiin. Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoitus on tuoda esiin, miten kansainvälisissä työtehtävissä työskentelevien henkilöiden urapääoma kehittyy pitkällä aikavälillä ja millaisia vaikutuksia urapääoman kehittymisellä on työntekijän markkina-arvoon ajan saatossa. Tutkimuksen teoreettinen viitekehys pohjautuu urapääoma teoriaan, joka koostuu kolmesta osa-alueesta (miten-, miksi-, ja kuka-tietämys). Miten-tietämys kuvastaa henkilön uraan liittyviä tietoja ja taitoja. Miksi-tietämys viittaa henkilön uramotivaatioon ja kuka-tietämys puolestaan kuvastaa uran kannalta merkityksellisiä sosiaalisia verkostoja ja kontakteja. Urapäöman lisäksi teoreettisessa viitekehyksessä perehdytään työntekijän käsitykseen omasta työllistyvyydestä, joka kuvastaa työntekijän uskomusta omasta markkina-arvostaan nykyiselle työnantajalle sekä työntekijän markkina-arvoa ulkopuolisille tahoille, kuten muille yrityksille. Teoreettinen viitekehys on luotu antamaan perusteellisen pohjan empiiriselle tutkimukselle. Tutkimus toteutettiin laadullisena, osittain jäsenneltyinä haastattelu tutkimuksena, jossa yllä mainitut käsitteet ja teoriat toimivat ohjenuorina. Tutkimusaineisto sisältää yhdeksän haastattelua, jotka on nauhoitettu ja litteroitu analyysia varten. Kaikki haastateltavat ovat suomalaisia ja he ovat olleet ulkomailla töissä vuonna 2004. Tässä tutkimuksessa olemme seuranneet haastateltavien urapäöman kehittymistä viimeisen 15 vuoden ajalta. Suurimmalta osin, tämän tutkimuksen tulokset tukevat aiempia tutkimustuloksia. Tulokset osoittavat, että ulkomailla työskentelyllä koetaan olevan positiivisia vaikutuksia työntekijän uramenestykselle pitkällä aikavälillä. Urapäöman eri osa-alueet kehittyivät merkittävästi ulkomailla työskennellessä. Erityisesti miten-, ja kuka-tietämysten kehittyminen koettiin olevan työntekijän markkina-arvon kannalta merkittäviä. Tutkimustulokset osoittivat myös, että kuka-tietämyksen ylläpitämisellä ja hyödyntämisellä pitkällä aikavälillä on positiivinen vaikutus työntekijän uramenestykselle.

KEYWORDS: Expatriation, Career capital, Perceived marketability, Career success

Table of contents

1	INTRODUCTION	6
1.1	Study background	6
1.2	Research question and objectives	8
1.3	Structure of the thesis	9
1.4	Terminology and key concepts	10
2	INTERNATIONAL CAREERS	12
2.1	Expatriation process	13
2.1.1	Selection	13
2.1.2	Training	17
2.1.3	Relocation and adjustment	22
2.1.4	Repatriation and expatriate retention	24
2.2	Career perspectives and career success	26
2.2.1	Traditional careers	28
2.2.2	Protean and boundaryless careers	29
2.3	Development of career capital in international assignments	31
2.3.1	Knowing-how career capital	32
2.3.2	Knowing-why career capital	34
2.3.3	Knowing-whom career capital	35
2.4	Career capital development and marketability	37
3	METHODOLOGY	41
3.1	Methodological approach and strategy	41
3.2	Data collection	41
3.3	Data analysis	44
3.4	The quality of the research design	45
3.4.1	Reliability	46
3.4.2	Validity	47
4	Results and findings	49
4.1	Development of career capital during international assignments	49

4.1.1	Development of knowing-how career capital	49
4.1.2	Development of knowing-why career capital	53
4.1.3	Development of knowing-whom career capital	55
4.2	The impact of career capital development on perceived marketability	57
5	Conclusions	62
5.1	Conclusions of the study	62
5.2	Delimitations of the study	64
5.3	Practical implications	65
5.4	Suggestions for further research	66
	REFERENCES	67

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES**Figures**

Figure 1. The most important intercultural competencies in expatriate selection (Graf, 2004).	14
Figure 2. Theoretical framework of the study.	40

Tables

Table 1. International training activities vs. international development activities (Caligiuri and Tarique, 2006).	20
Table 2. Interviewees' profiles.	43

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Study background

Interest in global careers has increased and is still increasing (Shaffer, Kraimer, Chen, & Bolino, 2012). Studies show that diversity and volume of expatriate mobility are increasing (Caligiuri & Bonache, 2016; Jonasson, Lauring, & Guttormsen, 2018). The volume of international migrants has grown faster than the world's population (United Nations, 2017). Nowadays, when the world is globalizing, employees who successfully manage their work assignments in the global environment are wanted in the eyes of employers (Mäkelä, Suutari, Brewster, Dickmann, & Tornikoski, 2015).

Furthermore, statistics are highlighting the importance of international experience. Based on Martin (2004), almost half of the chief executive officers in the US managing the country's 100 largest International corporations have international work experience. In turn, in the United Kingdom, 80% of the CEOs' of the Financial Times Stock Exchange 100 have had global assignments (Maitland, 2006). Due to the high importance of understanding global mobility, much effort has been given to research of international careers (Shaffer et al., 2012).

Several researchers have identified the benefits of international experience. Bolino (2007) claims that individuals with global experience are more likely to receive career responsibilities earlier than employees who don't have global experience. Furthermore, studies suggest that these individuals get easier promotions during their careers (Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005). They are also selected into the chief executive officer positions more often compared to employees without international experience (Magnusson & Boggs, 2006). According to Martin (2004), an international experience gives huge competitive advantage and increases the employee's marketability. Besides the benefits for the employee, the researchers highlight the importance of international assignments for corporations. Mendenhall (2001) points out that international assignments are the most

important means for the development of global managers. Study results also indicates that multinational corporation's capability to develop global managers has a positive relationship to its return on assets (Stroh & Caligiuri, 1997).

Although there are numerous studies highlighting the importance of international assignments for the success of both, employer, and employee, still there exist several contradictory results. Hamori and Koyuncu (2011) recognise the importance of international experience but their results imply that individuals who take less assignments, have shorter assignments or gain global experience by sitting in the firm headquarters and from there, time to time visits foreign divisions, may reach top positions faster. Studies conducted already in the 80s and in the 90s indicates that managers are unwilling to accept international assignments due to the reason that they are concerned that it may have a negative effect on their career (Tung, 1988; Selmer, 1998).

Furthermore, according to a research conducted to German expatriate managers, respondents faced career related problems after returning from abroad (Stahl, 2000). For example, they found it difficult to find proper re-entry positions and promotion opportunities (Stahl, 2000). Another research conducted to American corporations revealed that inside a company there are different assumptions concerning expatriation. Based on a study, 65% of human resource managers assumed that international assignment is affecting positively on an individual's career and in turn, 77% of expatriates felt that international assignments had affected negatively on their careers (Black, Gregersen, Mendenhall, & Stroh 1999, p. 193). Although human resources managers and business leaders do not seem to acknowledge the "dark side" of international careers, they recognize that global mobility is becoming more complex and challenges have intensified and changed over the years (Bader, Schuster, Bader, & Shaffer, 2019). Overall, the studies of expatriates' career development during and after an international assignment are highly contradictory.

Due to the contradictory research, the aim of this study is to identify the long-term effects of international assignments. Mostly studies of international assignments are conducted as a cross-sectional study. Very little knowledge exists on long-term effects of international assignments on individuals' career. This follow-up study of expatriates' career development gives better understanding of the long-term impacts of international assignments. These long-term impacts are identified by applying DeFillippi and Arthur's (1994) theory of career capital which includes elements of knowing-how, knowing-whom, and knowing-why.

Based on the theory of career capital, expatriates' career success is studied from perceived marketability point of view. In literature, career success has divided into objective and subjective success (Hughes, 1937, 1958; Heslin, 2005). In this study, these two forms are applied to identify the effects of expatriates' career success. In addition, expatriates perceived marketability is evaluated by applying Eby, Butts, and Lockwood's (2003) concept of perceived marketability which refers on the individual's value for current employer and/or to other employers. By using this theory, the long-term impacts of international assignments to individual's value in labor markets are identified.

1.2 Research question and objectives

The purpose of the research is to identify the long-term effects of international experience on the career success of expatriates based on the theory of career capital. Besides the theory of career capital, the effects of the international assignments are studied from a perceived marketability point of view. Therefore, the research question is:

1. What kinds of effects the international work experience has on the career success of expatriates?

The following objectives are given to the study:

1. To identify how the elements of career capital have developed during the international work

2. To identify what kinds of effects the international assignments have had on expatriates' perceived marketability

1.3 Structure of the thesis

The thesis consists of five main chapters. The first chapter of the research paper will start with the introducing the study background. This part also defines the research question, and objectives of the study. In addition, the structure of the thesis and key concepts are described in the first chapter.

The second chapter is about literature review. Terminology and key concepts presented in the introduction chapter of this research proposal will be introduced thoroughly. This chapter includes theories of international careers, expatriation process, career perspectives, career capital concept, and perceived marketability. All these theories are linked to the career success of expatriates.

In the third chapter, methodology of the thesis will be presented which consists of justification of selected approach, strategy, data collection, data analysis, samples, and method. In addition, discussion on validity and reliability of the study will be identified.

The fourth chapter consists of the results and findings. It starts with the empirical examination and continues to the findings of the study.

The fifth and final chapter of the research consists of conclusions of the study. It also includes delimitations of the study, practical implications, and suggestions for further research.

1.4 Terminology and key concepts

Expatriate

Expatriate is an employee of a company or government organisation who is sent to another country which is not his or her home country to accomplish an organisational goal or a work for a specific, temporary timeframe (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2008).

Career

The term career refers to the sequence of individual's job experiences over time (Arthur, Hall & Lawrence, 1989; Arthur, Khapova, & Wilderom, 2005).

Career capital

Career capital refers to a theory created by DeFillippi and Arthur's (1994). The theory consists of the elements of knowing-how, knowing-whom, and knowing-why. Knowing-how career capital is related to tacit or explicit career-relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities that are practical for employees throughout their whole working life (Inkson & Arthur 2001; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Knowing-why career capital is connected to issues of personal meaning, a sense of purpose, motivation, and identification with work (Cappellen & Janssens 2005; Inkson & Arthur, 2001). The third dimension of career capital is knowing-whom which refers to contacts and career-relevant networks (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994).

Career success

Career success has been categorized into objective and subjective success. Objective success refers to measurable and directly observable factors such as promotions, salary and professional status that are verifiable by a neutral third party (Hughes, 1937, 1958). Subjective success can be measured for example through perceived marketability, career

satisfaction and, it refers to emotions experienced by the individual engaged in his or her career (Heslin, 2005).

Perceived marketability

Perceived marketability is categorized into internal marketability and external marketability, where internal marketability refers to the belief that the employee is valuable to their current employer and external marketability refers to the belief that the employee is valuable to another employer (Eby et al., 2003).

2 INTERNATIONAL CAREERS

The question of international assignments has become increasingly important for multinational corporations (Shaffer, Harrison, & Gilley, 1999; Kraimer, Wayne, & Jaworski, 2001) due to the reason that the work environment is becoming progressively global (Oddou & Mendenhall, 1991). Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran (2008) describe an expatriate as an employee of a company or government organisation who is sent to another country which is not his or her home country to accomplish an organisational goal or a work for a specific, temporary timeframe. The length of expatriation period is usually from 6 months to 5 years (Aycan, 1997). Corporations are using expatriates to carry out different kinds of goals and positions. For example, expatriates are used to spread organizational culture, to transmit technologies in joint ventures, to develop the international skills of employees, and to enter new markets. (Bennett, Aston, & Colquhoun, 2000)

The background of expatriation goes to the time after World War II and in the 1960s when U.S. corporations experienced rapid internationalisation. Back then, the main responsibility of human resource management was to select expatriates based on the candidates' knowledge in the following fields: familiarity of products, culture, technology, and organization. Good financial benefits were given to the expatriates in order to persuade them to move outside their home country. Although companies increased financial investments and human resources and, put effort into these international assignment processes, many of the international assignments failed and therefore, interest towards failures of expatriation came into prominence. In the 1990s, global competition started to increase which caused pressure on human resource management. In order to be a competitive on a global level, corporations had to be able to transfer know-how across geographical borders. (Evans, Pucik, & Barsoux, 2002, p. 15 - 25)

2.1 Expatriation process

Researchers have divided the expatriate process into four phases which are selection, training, relocation, and repatriation. All these phases are important for successful expatriate performance. In the following subchapter different phases of the expatriation process and their importance to expatriate's career success will be introduced.

2.1.1 Selection

Efficient expatriate selection has been identified as a main mechanism to improve expatriate success (Bolino & Feldman, 2000; Kealey, 1996; Solomon, 1996). Although the importance has been addressed, many companies continue to base expatriate selection decisions only on technical competencies and employee's willingness to go abroad (Mendenhall, Kühlman, Stahl, & Osland, 2002). On the other hand, some studies indicate that more emphasis has been paid on utilizing selection practices that go beyond assess factors and technical skills, such as intercultural skills (Bennett et al., 2000; Forster, 2000).

Graf (2004) has identified in her study the most important intercultural competencies in expatriate selection based on U.S and German managers. Results are listed in figure 1.

	Number of participants naming the competencies		
	U.S. Sample	German Sample	Total
1. Speak Foreign Language	41	40	81
2. Openness	19	39	58
3. Knowledge of Culture, Religion, Customs, etc.	21	30	51
4. Diplomacy, Tolerance	6	28	34
5. Adaptability	6	20	26
6. Patience, Calmness	10	8	18
7. Empathy	7	12	19
8. Respect	8	8	16
9. Team Play Ability	3	12	15
10. Self-Confidence	3	6	9
11. Business Knowledge	8	–	8
12. Knowledge about Political and Monetary Differences	6	–	6
13. Analytical Ability	6	–	6
14. Previous Experience	–	4	4
15. Courtesy	–	4	4
16. Further Competencies	10	5	15
TOTAL	154	216	370

Figure 1. The most important intercultural competencies in expatriate selection (Graf, 2004).

In both samples, the ability to speak the language of the interacting individuals is graded to be the most important intercultural competency. The second important competency is the ability to be open toward other cultures (Graf 2004). Several researchers have highlighted the importance of being open to new and unfamiliar experiences in order to be a successful expatriate (e.g., Mol, Born, Willemsen, & Van der Molen, 2005; Caligiuri et al., 1998; Jordan & Cartwright, 1998). Other important competencies to expatriate success based on the U.S and German managers are the knowledge of the culture, religion, and customs of the interacting individuals, and diplomacy/tolerance. Furthermore, adaptability and respect for cultural differences are also relevant competencies for expatriates. (Graf 2004)

Black and Gregersen (1999) have also pointed out the comprehensive language skills in their study. Moreover, the model of Black and Gregersen (1999) highlights the importance of being enthusiastic, extrovert and social. In this model, communication with host country nationals in free time, cultural flexibility, a universal orientation, and a collaborative negotiation style are characteristics of a successful expatriate. An expatriate can have better insight into local markets when he or she interacts with host country

nationals frequently, develops relevant contacts with main stakeholders, and fosters successful completion of international assignment. (Black & Gregersen, 1999)

Tung (1981) in turn, has divided expatriate success into four groups of variables. The four groups were personality or relational competencies, technical competencies, family situation, and environmental variables. Most likely international assignments are likely to involve new cultural situations. Thus, personality variables such as individual differences in interpersonal acumen have an important role in success. Technical competencies apply to procedural and declarative work knowledge which play a crucial role in success due to the reason that usually expatriates are sent abroad because of their technical expertise that they can share with the host country employees. Family factors, for example the presence of children and family adjustment, will affect performance via spillover effects and support mechanisms.

As we can see from the study results above, the soft competencies are becoming more important in expatriate selection. For the German managers, the softer competencies seem to be more important than for U.S managers. A research by Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran (2008) indicates the differences in expatriate selection practices between continents. Multinational corporations in U.S. usually select expatriates based on technical knowledge. European and Asian MNCs tend to use predictors of both cross-cultural adaptability and technical knowledge. Furthermore, European MNCs use realistic job previews when staffing expatriate operations. The study suggests that European and Asian MNCs pay more attention to ensure expatriate success before the international assignment starts. This is the reason why the expatriate success rate is higher in Europe and in Asia than in the U.S. (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2008)

Besides the increased emphasis towards intercultural competencies, studies have indicated that high-performing expatriates share similar personality traits (e.g., Mol et al., 2005; Shaffer, Harrison, Gregersen, Black, & Ferzandi, 2006). According to Mol et al., (2005), extraversion, agreeableness, emotional stability, and conscientiousness

contribute to successful work performance in the international assignment. Other traits indicating high-performance in the international assignment are being self-confident, dutiful, and stable. Based on the research, a successful expatriate is not shy, easily nervous, or worried. (Mol et al., 2005)

Mostly the researchers have concentrated in their studies on technical and intercultural competencies. Caligiuri and Tarique (2006) have a different point of view. They have categorized international expatriate selection practices into three "best" practices. The first is to provide realistic previews of international assignments in order to create realistic expectations during or before selection. The second practice is the concept of self-selection which enables international assignee candidates to decide whether the international job is right for his or her career stage and personal and family situation. The third is traditional candidate assessment which consists of for example, personality competencies, technical competencies, language skills, and past experience skills. (Caligiuri and Tarique, 2006)

For expatriates, international assignments can be personally very demanding. Expatriates are out of their own comfort zones and are predisposed to different kind of challenges such as the incapacity to manage with the stress of culture shock, the incapacity to speak foreign language and the incapacity to communicate efficiently with host country nationals (Caligiuri & Tarique, 2006). Briscoe (1995, p. 53) stated that expatriates should be able to transfer their technical competencies and managerial expertise, and in addition to be able to adjust to the new and unfamiliar environment.

The expatriate selection process has been a topic of numerous studies for decades. Later studies are supporting the older theories. The focus of expatriate selection studies has been mostly in technical skills and intercultural competencies of expatriates. A recent study by Baluku, Schummer, Löser & Otto (2018) introduces a different point of view. In this study, the importance of career orientation is highlighted when choosing proactive behaviours and career paths to achieve career success (Baluku et al., 2018). Career

orientation attitudes present the natural desire to achieve career success. Graduates who have strong career orientation actively think about career possibilities which can offer opportunities for success, including expatriation and entrepreneurship and, therefore these graduates are usually more willing to work abroad. (Otto, Roe, Sobiraj, Baluku, & Garrido Vásquez, 2019) Studies have also indicated that most students who study abroad want to employ abroad (Arthur & Flynn, 2011; Teichler & Jahr, 2001). Host countries have noticed that students enhance their labor markets and human capital (Otto et al., 2019). Furthermore, intensity and number of international experiences increase student's readiness to go abroad before and after graduation (Felker & Gianecchini, 2015). Thus, courses with international aspects generate more mobile graduates (Ryan, Silvano, & Brown, 2013). Organizations should value student's inter-national experience because it enhances the possibility for successful expatriation.

To conclude, the selection process is a crucial part of the whole expatriate process. Many studies are concentrated on the importance of expatriate selection to employers. However, successful selection is also important for employee's career success. If an unsuitable candidate is selected, it will have negative effects on the employee's career development and career success. Thus, the employers should pay attention to the expatriate selection process in order to select candidates who most likely will manage the international assignment. International professionals are considered to be more successful in their careers due to the reason that working in a foreign country enhances the career success (Bolino, 2007).

2.1.2 Training

The second phase of the expatriation process is training. Based on a research, more in-depth approaches to expatriate preparation is connected with a higher degree of adjustment and integration with the host-country employees (Mendenhall, Dunbar & Oddou, 1987). Still, studies have indicated that approximately 70% of American expatriates receive little or no preparation before starting an international assignment (Windham

International, National Foreign Trade Council, & Society for Human Resource Management, 2002). The situation is even worse for managerial level expatriates. According to Brewster & Pickard (1994), less than 10% of managerial level expatriates receive some cross-cultural training in host-country customs or practices. Managers often get very short notice of their international assignments and thus, the company doesn't have time to prepare and train the managers (Tahir & Ertek, 2018). Organizations often see expatriate training only as an expense or waste of valuable resources rather than an investment on expatriate's career development (Feldman & Thomas, 1991). Although, researchers have a common opinion that the result of a well-planned and implemented expatriate training initiative probably outbalances its associated costs (Mesmer-Mangus & Viswesvaran, 2008). In addition to the organization's weak ability to see the importance of proper training, many expatriates do not either see the need for training. Often expatriates are unaware of their need for training before starting the international assignment (Stroh et al., 2005). Thus, they are not prepared to require training from their employer although it would be important to their adjustment in the new environment and successful performance (Mesmer-Mangus & Viswesvaran, 2008).

A study of Western expatriate managers in the United Arab Emirates indicates that the expatriate managers who were given cross-cultural training adjusted faster in their assignments, they were more satisfied and happier than those managers who were not given any cross-cultural training. Based on the study, cross-cultural training reduces the time needed to adjust in the new culture and decreases the severity of cultural shock. Furthermore, the study revealed that cross-cultural training shortens the time needed to become more productive in the work during the international assignment in the United Arab Emirates. (Tahir & Ertek, 2018)

Caligiuri and Tarique (2006) have categorized companies training procedures in international training activities (ITA) and international development activities (IDA). ITA is concentrated on the competencies required to perform more efficiently in one's current work. In contrast, IDA focus on the procurement of competencies required to perform in

some future work. The aim of ITA is to solve short-term performance concerns and IDA in turn, is long-term orient-ed. Caligiuri and Tarique (2006) have identified some of the training and development activities such as cross-cultural training, pre-departure cross-culture orientation, language training, traditional education in international management, diversity training, cross-national coaching or mentoring, immersion cultural experiences, international assignments and gross-border global teams. Below is the table of training activities for short-term and long-term goals.

Table 1. International training activities vs. international development activities (Caligiuri and Tarique, 2006).

Training activity	International training activity - short-term orientation	International development activity - long-term orientation
Cross-cultural training	The goal of cross-cultural training is to increase an expatriate's specific cross-cultural knowledge of a given country	Cross-cultural training will be engaged for individuals who must work across a variety of cultural contexts, without any specific cultural context in mind
Pre-departure cross-culture orientation	The immediate goal of cross-cultural orientation is to help an expatriate learn the basic information to live and work comfortably in the host country. (e.g. public transportation, currency and working hours)	
Language training	Organizations can offer language training when an expatriate will be moving to a country where different language skills are needed	Organizations may offer language training in the corporate language for all who are interested. In this situation, language training may be viewed more developmentally
Traditional education in international management		University or specific training programs are often offered as a part of a larger developmental plan
Diversity training	Increase one's ability to understand and appreciate multiple cultural perspectives	Increase one's ability to understand and appreciate multiple cultural perspectives
Cross-national coaching or mentoring	Cross-national coaches can be assigned on a specific task (for example, delivering an important speech in another country, negotiating an international joint venture)	Cross-national coaches and mentors help international assignees build cultural awareness, work on cultural 'blind-spots' and help develop competencies for becoming effective in an international environment.
Immersion cultural experiences		The goal of immersion is to create a culture shock for the developmental purpose of increasing expatriate's ability to identify and value multiple cultural perspectives
International assignments	Means by which people develop cross-cultural competencies	Living and working in another country may have a long-term effect on an individual's cross-national competence
Gross-border global teams	Individuals are debriefed after a multicultural team experience (e.g. meeting) to receive feedback of the immediate team	Individuals are debriefed after a multicultural team experience (e.g. meeting) to receive feedback in order to improve their skills, on how to be a better leader, team member and so on in a multicultural context

For both, short-term and long-term expatriate training activities, rigor has been identified as a crucial forecaster of the utility of a cross-cultural training program (Black and Gregersen, 1991; Stroh et al., 2005). Stroh et al. (2005) describe that rigor reflects on both, time requirements of the training program and to the extent to which a specific training activity insists the trainee to mentally participate in the learning of the training content. Low rigor approaches are probably less efficient in facilitating learning due to the reason that those require less mental involvement from the trainee (Black et al.,

1991). Videos, lectures, books, and area briefings can be categorized as low rigor approaches (Black et al., 1991). Language training, role modelling and discussion groups require also only passive learning from the trainee but can be categorized more rigorous approaches. Researchers have identified that simulations, assessment centres and interactive language and cultural competencies training are high rigor approaches because these activities insist higher involvement and interaction from the trainee. Therefore, it is more likely that the trainee will learn the training content and will be able to integrate to the host country. (Mesmer-Mangus & Viswesvaran, 2008)

Black et al. (1991) suggest that the necessary level of rigor depends on three dimensions which are job toughness, cultural toughness, and communication toughness of the host culture. The first, job toughness is associated with the degree to which the expatriate's new work position will require more advanced competencies, independence, or responsibility than his or her prior position. Expatriates are often promoted just before the international assignment. Rigorous training is necessary in situations when the expatriate had to adapt several things such as new culture, country, business customs, work, and new more demanding work than previous one. Cultural toughness in turn, shows how difficult it is for the expatriate to adjust to the host country's culture. It is evaluated by the relative difference between the expatriate's home and host countries. Previous international assignments are also considered, and their quality, depth, and similarity. The third, communication toughness refers to the degree to which the expatriate is obligated to communicate comprehensively with host-country nationals. More rigorous approach on language training is crucial for the expatriate in order to communicate with the host-country locals in an informal way. (Black et al., 1991)

In addition to the training orientation and the level of rigor, acculturation profiles play an important role in expatriate training practices. Already in 1986, Mendenhall and Oddou have identified different acculturation profiles of expatriate managers that companies should take into consideration when designing and implementing cross-cultural training programs. Mendenhall et al., (1986) suggest three dimensional approaches to

understand expatriate acculturation that are self-orientation, others-orientation, and perceptual-orientation. Self-orientation refers to the degree to which the expatriate indicates a compliant concern for self-enjoyment, self-preservation, and mental hygiene. The other-orientation in turn, refers to the degree to which the ex-patriate is worried about the host-country's colleagues and wants to affiliate with them. Last, but not least, is the perceptual-orientation which reflects the know-how the expatriate possesses in precise understanding why host-country locals engage in seemingly unsuitable or strange behaviours. Based on these three dimensions, companies can categorize expatriate managers into acculturation profiles. (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1986)

Over the years, academics have identified several useful practises to train expatriates before and during their international assignment. Training is an important part of the expatriation process because it enhances the possibility of successful expatriation. A study indicates that training significantly influences organizational environment, increases expatriate adjustment and, expatriate performance (Min, Magnini, & Singal, 2013). Thus, training activities are linked to expatriate's career success. Based on the studies, expatriates who receive training are performing better in their position and thus, training has positive effects on their career success.

2.1.3 Relocation and adjustment

The third phase of the expatriate process is relocation and expatriate adjustment. In this phase, an expatriate's willingness to adjust to a new culture is very important but also the employer should help the expatriate in adjustment. According to Haslberger, Brewster, and Hippler (2013) expatriates are costly for employers and thus, expatriates should adjust to the new culture and become competent in the new culture as soon as possible. Moreover, expatriates face high pressure in international assignments which means that it is relevant for them as well to adjust to the new environment as quickly and efficiently as possible (Haslberger et al., 2013). Researchers have also identified that successful

adjustment to the new environment is an important factor of expatriate performance (Collings & Scullion, 2008, p. 88).

Although relocation and adjustment are important for expatriate, studies are indicating that expatriate's spouse and family should be taken into account as well. Shaffer et al. (1999) point out that companies should provide cross-cultural training to the expatriate and the family. They also suggest that even personal support for the spouses could be provided so that they don't need to rely only on knowledge and second-hand information from the expatriates. Andreason (2008) indicates that poor adjustment of the spouse can lead expatriate failure.

Mostly the expatriate adjustment studies follow three facets suggested by Black (1988). These facets are general adjustment, work adjustment and inter-action with host country nationals. The general adjustment refers to coping with the general daily tasks and living in a foreign country and culture. The work adjustment includes adaptation to new job-related responsibilities and expectations. Interaction adjustment in turn, refers to how comfortable the expatriate feels when socializing and interacting with host country nationals at work and in free time. (Black, 1988)

Studies have mostly concerned on expatriate's ability to adapt to a new culture. A little attention has been paid on the importance of how the host country nationals are accepting expatriates. Expatriate adjustment is causing huge challenges for organizations. Although immigrant employees are usually an important source of innovation and creativity, they often face challenges adapting to a new work environment which is culturally different (Bader et al., 2019). Often these employees face for example ostracism, hostility, and identity conflicts (Harrison, Harrison, & Shaffer, 2018).

As a conclusion, successful relocation and adjustment have positive effects on expatriate career success. Studies are indicating that expatriate adjustment is related positively to their performance (Harrison & Shaffer, 2005; Hechanova, Beehr, & Christiansen, 2003).

Expatriates, who are able to perform well in an international environment, are promoting their career success. Poor expatriate adjustment in turn, is related to work-related problems such as lack of organizational commitment, job satisfaction and poor performance which result in early returns and failed assignments (Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Harrison, Shaffer, & Luk, 2005).

2.1.4 Repatriation and expatriate retention

Although expatriates are vital assets for companies, often companies fail to keep expatriates when they repatriate. Top management may fail to understand that repatriation may express a similar shock to the repatriate and his or her spouse as the actual relocation phase (Tung, 1988). Denying the repatriation phase of the expatriate management process grows the potential for unreturned investment. (Mesmer-Mangus & Viswesvaran, 2008) Based on the 2004 Global Re-location Trends Report, 44% of repatriates resign from the company within two years after they have returned to the home country (Kraimer, Shaffer, & Bolino, 2009).

Leaving the company after repatriation can be good for the expatriate's career but a failure for the company (Bonache, Brewster, Suutari, & de Saa, 2010). Studies have indicated the high number of global expatriate failure rates. For example, Shaffer et al., (1999) estimated the failure rate at 16-40%. Other researchers have estimated that the rate is even higher, 20-40% (Salomon, 1996), 30-50% (Black et al., 1991), and 50% (Allerton, 1997). On the other hand, Harzing (1995) claims these results to be a persistent myth.

Studies are indicating that the expatriates feel that the international assignment had negative effects on their career (Hammer, Hart, & Rogan, 1998). Less than half of the expatriates are promoted upon return and often the expatriates experience the re-entry position less satisfactory compared to the international assignment (Hammer et al., 1998). For numerous reasons, often expatriates feel that their current employer doesn't value the skills they have perceived in international assignments (Suutari & Brewster,

2003). Lack of opportunities is causing that employees start to seek new opportunities from other organizations if the current employer does not provide satisfactory opportunities after repatriation (Enache, Sallan, Simo, & Fernandez 2011). This is contradictory because companies are investing big amounts of managerial and financial resources in the international assignments (Mäkelä et al. 2015). Mäkelä et al. (2015) also point out that other employers in the home country and abroad are better recognizing expatriates' skills gained from international assignments. Furthermore, previous studies are also supporting this finding (Daily, Certo, & Dalton 2000; Hamouri & Koyuncu, 2011; Shaffer et al. 2012).

Overall, there are numerous reasons why an international assignment can fail. The most common reasons are expatriate's or spouse's inability to adjust to the host country, other family related problems, expatriate's inability to manage responsibilities of international work, lack of technical knowledge, expatriate's emotional or personal immaturity, and expatriate's lack of motivation (Tung 1987). Most of the multinational corporations recognize that the wrong person in an international assignment can lead in weak individual work performance, anxiety or emotional problems and early repatriation. Moreover, failure usually causes long term consequences in both home and in the foreign country. (Caligiuri, Tarique, & Jacobs, 2009) Still, little attention is paid to these factors when companies are selecting and training the expatriate for an international assignment. Typically, the expatriates are selected based on their technical competencies relevant to the international assignment. (Mesmer-Magnur & Viswesvaran, 2008)

Recent studies are providing reasons why repatriation and retention phases are difficult for organizations to manage. Expatriates have different kinds of assignments, from personal development to business drivers (Dickmann, 2018). For an expatriate, it may not be clear what the main goal of his or her international assignment is. Therefore, in order to avoid disappointments at the end of the international assignment, it is crucial that the employer and employee together share their expectations. Formalizing processes will reduce the level of ambiguity and help to implement transparency. (Bader et al., 2019)

Another way to handle ambiguity is to be aware of the psychological contracts. Psychological contracts are indirect, unwritten parts connected with the assignment. If the employer does not know about the respective component of the psychological contract the employee has in mind, there is a big chance for ambiguous understanding. Consequently, this may lead to misinterpretation which can cause that expatriate experience that the employer has violated the psychological contract. (Bader et al., 2019) This may lead to a variety of negative outcomes such as negative affect or attitudes (Rousseau, Hansen, & Tomprou, 2018). Thus, avoiding misinterpretation, being as unambiguous as possible and creating clarity is vital for organizations and managers (Bader et al., 2019).

As a conclusion, the repatriation phase is important for expatriate retention. Studies are clearly indicating that a number of companies are unable to maintain expatriates when they repatriate. This can have negative effects on a company's success due to the reason that they lose valuable assets and investments. On the other hand, studies are showing that other employers seem to value expatriates more and thus it can have positive effects on these other companies' success. For expatriates, the repatriation phase can either enhance the career success or have negative effects on their career success. The result is highly dependent on the employer and the actions taken by the expatriate in order to enhance her or his career success.

2.2 Career perspectives and career success

The definition of a career can be categorized into old and new meaning. Old meaning defines career as a course of professional progression and it is used only of professional groups with formal hierarchical advancement, such as professionals and managers (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). New meaning in turn defines a career as developing sequence of any person's work experience over time (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996).

The term career has four different meanings identified in literature. The first meaning identifies career as advancement. Employees move upward in a company's hierarchy and thus, careers can be called as vertically mobile. A career includes a sequence of promotions and upward moves in a work-related hierarchy during a person's work life. A person may change the occupation in order to advance his or her career. The second meaning sees career as a profession where certain positions are representing careers, and others do not. These certain career occupations are those where a pattern of systematic advancement is obvious. In contrast, positions that do not generally lead to development are often viewed as not forming a career. The third meaning views a career as a life-long sequence of jobs. Unlike in the second meaning, in this category career is identified as a person's series of positions held over work life, despite a position or level. This means that all working individuals have careers, and the value does not consist of position or the direction of movement. The fourth meaning identifies career as a lifelong sequence of role-related experiences. From this point of view, a career illustrates the way an individual experiences the sequence of occupations and activities that constitute his or her work history. A career is seen as subjective which illustrates a person's changing aspirations, self-conceptions, satisfactions, and other attitudes towards work and private life. (Hall, 2002, p. 8-10)

The concept of careers has changed over time. We have moved from the industrial economy to the knowledge-based economy. This has caused that the meaning of career has changed from objective to a subjective, where objective defines external factors and subjective defines internal factors. In the past, only the few lucky ones had a career and mostly they were men. The success was defined based on external factors such as salaries, titles, and moving upward the hierarchical ladder. The companies had the responsibility to provide careers for the ambitious and talented employees. Moreover, a loyal employee allying with the right people was able to work the entire work life in one organization. Nowadays knowledge and technology are changing rapidly. This has caused that there can be no guarantee that a person can make a lifelong career only in one organization. Unlike in the past, a career consists of an individual's entire work life

regardless whether it moves upward, downward, sideways or stays the same. These changes have shifted the responsibility of the career from companies to individuals. People can't or are not willing to rely on the organization's ability to provide standard careers. Everyone is responsible for his or her own market value and making satisfying decisions from their own subjective criteria. (Poulsen, 2006) The success of this kind of subjective career perspective is based on an individual's experienced emotions and engagement to his or her career which can be measured for example through career satisfaction (Heslin, 2005). In the following subchapters, both traditional career concepts and new career concepts are explained. New career concepts include two career types which are protean and boundaryless career.

2.2.1 Traditional careers

The characteristics of traditional career are based on linearity and path dependency (Valcour & Ladge, 2008). The main assumption is that development and growth are typically built on an organizational career system (Valcour & Ladge, 2008). Employees move only in one direction through predictable career phases and organized career development (Rosenbaum, 1984). Rosenbaum (1984) also pointed out that early success and failures have long-term effects on the individual's future career.

Traditional careers can be described as highly structured, hierarchical, and rigid structures (Baruch, 2003). In the time of traditional careers, individuals had only one or few employers and thus, employees tried to reach the career goals by adapting company processes and objectives (Banai & Harry, 2004). In order to have a successful career and get ahead in the career, an employee had to do what the company requested and to be grateful for opportunities that the employer offered (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996, p. 3). In return the employer granted rewards such as increased pay and promotions for their employees. The career success was evaluated based on these rewards. (Valcour & Ladge, 2008) Dickmann, Brewster and Sparrow (2016) highlight that high potential employees

are expecting more traditional career options where inter-organizational mobility is low and upward mobility is high.

The traditional career concept has been a dominant form of employment through the mid-1980s (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). Nowadays, causal relationships are not fully clear and international mobility professionals can't rely on previous experiences. Increased global competition, new work values, technological disruptions, and demographic change are the main factors to increased ambiguity. (Bader et al., 2019) Market pressure is constantly increasing, and employees are assumed to be flexible and lean, companies prefer short-term, transactional exchanges with their employees. These activities have decreased the possibility for vertical mobility within the organization. (Greenhaus & Kossek, 2014) With regard to international careers, increased importance of protean careers is emphasized (Breitenmoser, Bader, & Berg, 2018).

2.2.2 Protean and boundaryless careers

The rapid technological advancement, increasing global economy and constantly changing organisational structures have transferred jobs into less predictable career patterns (Guan et al., 2018). In these days, employment conditions are turbulent, unstable and create increasing ambiguity regarding expectations and career paths (Briscoe, Henagan, Burton, & Murphy, 2012; Hofstetter & Rosenblatt, 2017). Employers are not controlling and structuring individual's careers as much as before, and thus careers have become more diverse and open (Banai et al., 2004). Nowadays, when individuals are directing their own careers, intrinsic values have replaced extrinsic motivations (Cortellazzo, Bonesso, Gerli, & Batista-Foguet, 2020). Individuals are also expecting the company to serve them, and the time in one company can be reduced to a few years or less (Banai et al., 2004).

Along with these changes, two new perspectives have arisen to the literature: protean career and boundaryless career. Differences between these two perspectives can be

defined based on career success. Career success can be categorized into subjective and objective forms. Objective success is measurable and possible to observe by a third party such as promotions, status, and salary (Hughes, 1937, 1958). In subjective success, employee's career commitment is measured based on a person's experienced emotions and feelings (Heslin, 2005).

Protean career concept is an opposite to traditional career concept. As the traditional career is based on objective success, the success of protean career is evaluated based on psychological or subjective success such as pride, emotions and individual achievements that results from accomplishing persons' important objectives in life. The success of the career is measured by ongoing learning and identity changes, not by life phases and chronological age. (Hall 1996, p. 8-10)

The focus of protean career concept is to gain subjective career success through self-directed professional behaviour (Briscoe, Hall, & Frautschy DeMuth, 2006). The concept was developed by Hall (1976, 1996, 2002). Briscoe et al., (2006) suggest that individuals who hold protean career attitudes use their own values to guide their career and not the organizational values. This kind of person does not usually follow an idealised career path that is limited by company mandates (Nimmi, Zakkariya, & Nezrin, 2020). They take an independent role in managing their professional behaviour (Briscoe et al., 2006). Individuals with protean mindset can take risks in an uncertain career scenario due to the self-directed and flexible approach to career progression (Gubler, Arnold, & Coombs, 2014). Usually, protean talents own a strong protean mindset that allows them to work with various organizations throughout their career in business relationships, which enable them to stay employable and valuable to present and future employers (Lin, 2015, p. 754). These individuals continuously equip themselves with knowledge and skills needed to be competitive in the labor market, which enhances their employability (Nimmi et al., 2020). This career concept can be described being autonomous, self-inventive, self-directed, and frequently changing. (Hall, 2002, p. 4)

The boundaryless career concept in turn concentrates on crossing both subjective and objective forms at multiple levels (Guan et al., 2018). Objective forms include features such as mobility, organisational position, work environment and flexibility. In addition, the boundaryless career de-emphasizes reliance on promotions and organizational career paths. (Briscoe et al., 2006) From the subjective point of view the boundaryless career concept refers for example individual's behaviour and attitude of being boundaryless (Arthur et al., 1996: 6).

Furthermore, boundaryless concept refers to sequences of work possibilities that go beyond the boundaries of one employment (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994). In boundaryless career orientation different kinds of boundaries are crossing each other, for example relational, organizational, hierarchical, psychological, and work life (Guan et al., 2018). Briscoe et al., (2006) divided boundaryless career orientation into two dimensions, boundaryless mindset and mobility preference. Boundaryless mindset applies to a general preference to work with individuals beyond her or his current organization. Mobility preference in turn, refers to a preference to change employers. Studies have found several advantages in boundaryless career orientation. Boundaryless career orientation among American Master of Business Administration (MBA) samples predicted higher levels of career satisfaction, career autonomy, knowing-how and knowing-why competencies, and lower career insecurity (Colakoglu, 2011; Stumpf, 2014). In a sample of Italian MBA alumni, boundaryless career orientation forecast more promotions (Gerdi, Bonesso, & Pizzi, 2015) and among Chinese Human Recourse professionals, higher levels of career competencies and career adaptability were discovered (Guan, Yang, Zhou, Tian, & Eves, 2016).

2.3 Development of career capital in international assignments

Based on literature, significant learning occurs when employees have demanding and unfamiliar work (Jokinen, 2010; McCauley, Ruderman, Ohlott, & Morrow, 1994). Researchers have identified that positive development of career capital can be an outcome

of international work experience (Jokinen, Brewster, & Suutari, 2008; Suutari & Mäkelä, 2007). One of the main goals for individuals is to improve their career capital during the international assignment (Dickmann & Doherty, 2010). Thus, it is more likely that they will apply or accept an international assignment if they expect that they are able to increase their career capital abroad (Dickmann & Doherty, 2010). Several studies have divided career capital into three dimensions which are knowing how, knowing why and knowing whom (Cappellen & Janssens, 2005; DeFillippi & Arthur 1994; Eby, Butts, & Lockwood, 2003; Inkson & Arthur, 2001).

2.3.1 Knowing-how career capital

Knowing-how career capital is related to tacit or explicit career-relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities that are practical for employees throughout their whole working life (Inkson & Arthur, 2001; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). To be precise, knowing-how skills are flexible and transportable across positions and organizational boundaries (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1996). According to Cappellen and Janssens (2005), these skills are also internationally applicable. Most likely, challenging tasks in the international work environment and potential need to use foreign languages will improve practical skills and knowledge and thus develop expatriates knowing how career capital (Harzing, Köster, & Magner, 2011). Furthermore, individuals who continuously update their work-related competencies are likely to broaden their roles which leads to higher ratings of individual work performance (Sultana & Malik, 2019).

The development of knowing-how has been studied from different kind of perspectives. Mäkelä et al., 2015 observed the impacts of career capital on expatriates' perceived marketability. They discovered that from the marketability point of view the most significant type of career capital is knowing-how. For employers and especially for external employers these work-related competencies and knowledge gained while working abroad are easier to recognize compared to knowing-why and knowing-whom. Expatriates are able

to use and transfer the knowing-how career capital over the years (Dickmann, Suutari, Brewster, Mäkelä, Tanskanen, & Tornikoski, 2016).

Researchers have identified various competencies that expatriates are able to develop while working abroad. Dickmann and Harris (2005) compared the development of knowing-how from individual and from the company perspectives. For individuals, the development of knowing how career capital was mostly related to people skills and during the international assignment they were concentrated to increase their social capital. In contrast, from the company point of view job rotation and job learning were seen to be the most important components of organizational activities to increase knowing-how career capital. Furthermore, individuals who had been on international assignments were able to increase general business understanding, intercultural competencies, and self-confidence. A broader perspective was also identified as a result when working abroad.

Dickmann and Doherty (2008) divided knowing how career capital into interpersonal and technical competencies. Based on the study, softer skills are developing the most during an international assignment such as cultural awareness, cross-cultural sensitivity, managerial capability, global business understanding and capability to deal with diversity. Beyond these softer skills that were often developed while working abroad, the study indicated that acknowledging technical competencies were highly dependent on the position and work content.

Dickmann and Doherty (2010) received similar results from their later study. Intercultural competence, broader perspective and improved communication skills of expatriates were developed the most while working abroad. Overall, several studies conducted in different kinds of research settings indicated that international assignees concentrate more on building social capital abroad than acquiring skills and knowledge (Dickmann & Harris, 2005; Dickmann & Doherty, 2008; Dickmann & Doherty, 2010).

Jokinen (2010) also acknowledges the development of social skills while working abroad. Participants in her study developed areas connected to immediate, face-to-face interaction between people. Moreover, ability to express oneself, learn languages, listen, negotiate, and show respect were seen areas where expatriates had been able to develop knowing-how career capital. Other areas where the participants felt that they had improved were people-related knowledge, knowledge of the organization and its business and task-related knowledge specific to the position and area of responsibility.

2.3.2 Knowing-why career capital

Knowing-why career capital is connected to issues of personal meaning, a sense of purpose, motivation, and identification with work (Cappellen & Janssens, 2005; Inkson & Arthur, 2001). Knowing-why career skills are also connected to career confidence, insight and clarity through which persons can seek desired career path (Inkson & Arthur, 2001). Hall (1976), pointed out that knowing why is highly related to the protean careers due to the reason that in the protean career concept, individuals are making personal career decisions and searching self-fulfilment. Individuals with a protean career orientation set challenging, realistic, and achievable career goals for themselves. Moreover, due to their increased inherent interest in the work, they may reach greater task performance and higher levels of natural career success. (Sultana & Malik, 2019)

Suutari and Mäkelä (2007) have studied knowing-why in an expatriate context and identified that expatriates are able to improve their awareness of their strengths and weaknesses during their international assignments. Other qualities gained while working abroad are acknowledging work related values and creating stronger career identity. In addition, international experience develops expatriates' self-confidence and reinforces their belief in their abilities to sort out future challenges. (Suutari & Mäkelä, 2007)

Knowing-why is clearly influencing the interests, values, and career development of expatriates (Jones & Lichtenstein, 2000; Dickman & Harris, 2005). According to the

research by Dickmann and Harris (2005), international assignments made interviewees' rethink their prior certainties. Working abroad made them also question their motivation, commitment, and willingness to stay or return to the organization. Furthermore, the experience of working abroad shaped their knowing-why by encouraging self-reflection, creating self-awareness, and challenging their own beliefs. (Dickmann & Harris, 2005)

Dickmann and Doherty (2010) also highlighted that knowing-why development impacts the development of individuals' career path. Based on the assignees, working abroad led them to challenge their values and norms. After repatriation, the assignees discovered high uncertainty and disappointment to the organizational support. This had made them rethink their commitment and expectations to the organization. (Dickmann & Doherty, 2010) Thus, for an employer, more may not be better in terms of knowing-why career capital. Expatriates may become aware that working in the company is not the best alternative for them personally. (Dickmann et al., 2016)

Beside the increased understanding of own values and norms, international assignments are also increasing the understanding of other cultures. Living in another culture gives expatriates the possibility to develop insights into various logics behind decisions and actions in other countries. They can learn to become more open-minded towards different cultures and their values. They can realize why people think, experience and handle things differently. (Antal 2000)

2.3.3 Knowing-whom career capital

The third dimension of career capital is knowing-whom which refers to contacts and career-relevant networks (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994). Knowing-whom is composed of the quality and quantity of social relationships that can be useful to an individual's career and work life (Mäkelä et al., 2015). Relationships in our social world are the glue that keeps everything together and those are fundamental to a successful career (Arthur,

Khapova, & Richardson, 2017). Studies indicate that while working outside the home country, social connections and networks are likely to increase and thus, expatriates have more social capital compared to employees working in their home country (Bozkurt & Mohr, 2011; Mäkelä, 2007). Especially, repatriates can use better quality networking due to the reason that they have acquired more understanding of their social capital (Dickmann et al., 2016). Several studies highlight the importance of knowing-whom career capital for employees' career success (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994; Inkson & Arthur, 2001).

Overall, the impact of knowing whom seems to be variable (Dickmann & Doherty, 2010). According to a study by Dickmann and Harris (2005), most of the managers felt that their knowing-whom career capital had suffered as a result of an international assignment. The managers experienced that international assignments had caused strains in their social networks and thus, they needed to put more effort on keeping the networks alive. Mäkelä et al., (2015) provided similar results. Creating new and maintaining existing social connections to the home country is more challenging when working abroad (Mäkelä et al. 2015). On the other hand, the study indicated that the managers saw social capital as the most important career capital (Dickmann & Harris, 2005). The managers noted that organizational career progression was highly predicated by the quality of the internal contacts and networks that people are able to establish.

A recent study is supporting these findings. The study of Sultana and Malik (2019) suggest that individuals with a protean mindset are actively engaging in building social contacts and networks with people inside and outside their organization. Thus, they may get access to resources and information. In addition, building social capital may encourage protean individuals to use discretion in implementing initiatives that go beyond their formal work duties in order to increase opportunity to link themselves to powerful people with influence in the organization that could lead to heightened performance evaluations. (Sultana & Malik, 2019)

2.4 Career capital development and marketability

Perceived marketability can be divided into internal marketability and external marketability, where internal marketability refers to the belief that the employee is valuable to their current employer and external marketability refers to the belief that the employee is valuable to another employer (Eby et al., 2003). Perceived marketability has been defined as the career outcome of employees' potential, especially, their perceptions in terms of their added value in the labor market (De Vos, De Hauw, & van der Heijden, 2011). Employees who can continue to add value in their current position or are able to remain value-adding to another employer are more likely to be successful in their careers. (De Vos & Soens, 2008; Eby et al., 2003).

When it comes to perceived marketability in terms of career capital, several researches indicate that development of knowing-how career capital in international assignments are not highly valued and recognized within the company (Daily et al., 2000; Suutari & Brewster, 2003; Hamori & Koyuncu, 2011; Shaffer et al., 2012; Mäkelä et al., 2015). The expatriates believe that the development of competencies and knowledge gained from an international assignment is not valued and recognized by the employer (Mäkelä et al., 2015). On the other hand, studies indicate that other employers in the home country and abroad better recognize and value the knowing-how development of expatriates (Daily et al., 2000; Hamori & Koyuncu, 2011; Shaffer et al., 2012; Mäkelä et al., 2015).

Age has been recognized as one factor affecting negatively on the perceived external marketability and promotions (Suutari, Brewster, Mäkelä, Dickmann, & Tornikoski, 2017). These findings are supporting the studies of the dark side of international careers which is associated with repatriation (Richardson, 2009; Richardson & Zikic, 2007). Already early studies have indicated that a high number of expatriates leave their workplace within a short time after repatriation (Black, 1992; Solomon, 1995; Suutari & Brewster, 2003). A consultancy report indicates the same outcome (Brookfield Global Relocation Services, 2014). Lack of the job opportunities in individual's current organization, push expatriates to look for possibilities outside their current organization and country

(Mäkelä et al., 2015). Expatriates believe that their international experience increases their external marketability (Suutari et al., 2017). Expatriates are also attractive to corporate recruiters and international headhunters. (McNulty, De Cieri, & Hutchings, 2013; Suutari & Brewster, 2003). Although several studies indicate that short-term impacts of international assignments are often seen as negative, some studies indicate that in a long-term, the impacts can be more positive (Doherty & Dickmann, 2012; Suutari et al., 2017).

Knowing-why in turn has not been linked to perceived marketability. There are no connections found in studies between increased personal understanding and clarifying of motivation towards increased marketability (Mäkelä et al., 2015). The reason for this can be that nowadays people want to fulfil their personal needs and have more free time than before and thus, they may move down in the organization so that they would have less responsibility and work (Hall & Mirvis, 1996). For companies, it is easier to recognize the knowing-how development because the nature of the development is more concrete compared to the development of knowing-why (Mäkelä et al., 2015).

Literature of expatriate's perceived marketability from the knowing-whom point of view are diverse. Smith (2010) indicates the connection between comprehensive social networks and opportunities for career enhancement which are recognized both internally and externally. Mäkelä et al., in turn (2015) point out that networks in the home organization often will weaken during the international assignment and in addition, new networks may not be strong enough so that the employee would be able to use them to increase his or her marketability. Moreover, in international career context, employees can move across countries and thus, the networks may not be beneficial in other locations in terms of marketability (Mäkelä et al., 2015). Dickmann and Doherty (2008) also see that utilization of knowing-whom career capital can be more difficult in international context. Benson and Pattie (2008) suggest that through new international contacts, expatriates reduce the networks that lead to work propositions. The situation may be

better for assigned expatriates. Studies indicate that assigned expatriates can benefit more from their social relationships within their current employer (Suutari et al., 2017).

Summary of the theory section

All in all, the theoretical framework of the empirical section of the present study is built around the career capital theory. The theory section begins with an introduction of international careers which consists of expatriation process and different career perspectives. The expatriation process and career perspectives are linked to career success. The core theory, career capital development is linked to external and internal marketability. Thus, we are able to compare the results of this study to previous studies which are mostly short-term effects of international work experience on the career success of expatriates.

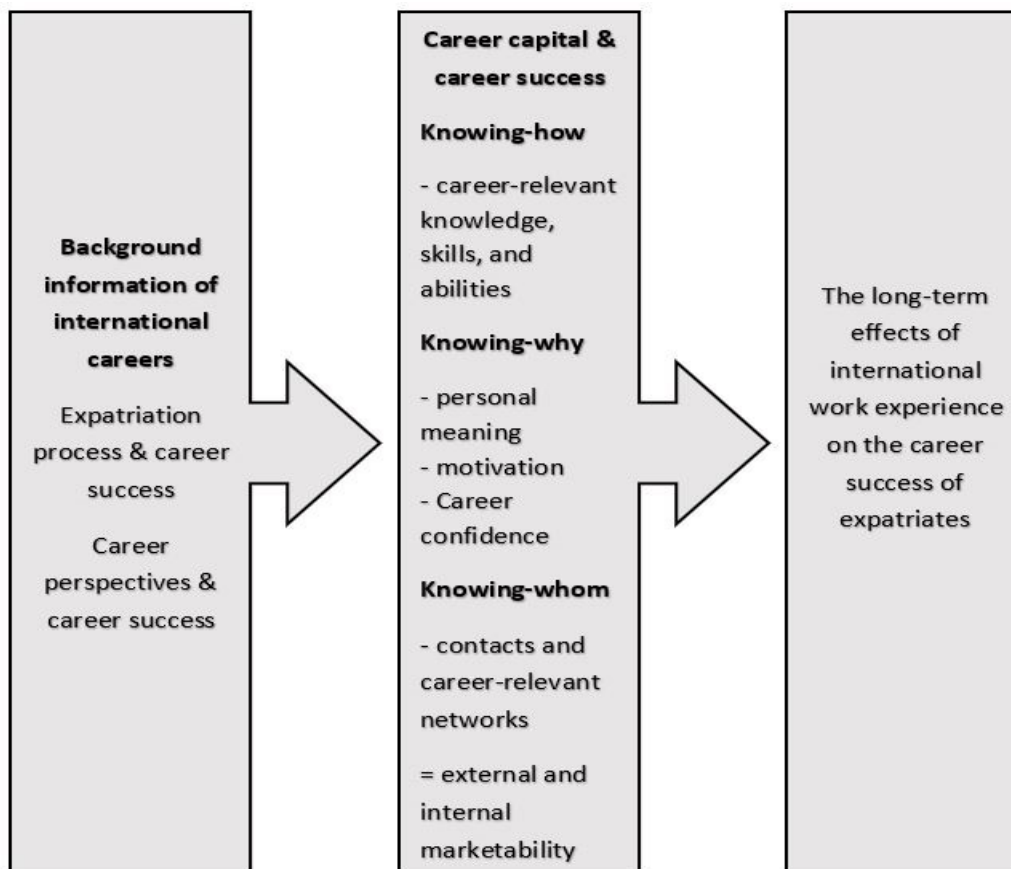


Figure 2. Theoretical framework of the study.

In the next chapter, the chosen methodological approach and strategy will be introduced and explained, followed by introduction of the data collection and data analysis sections. The quality of the research design will be discussed at the end of the next chapter.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Methodological approach and strategy

The nature of the study is exploratory research aiming to gain understanding and answer what has happened during expatriates work life and how their career capital has developed. According to Robson (2002, p. 59) *“an exploratory study is a valuable means of finding out ‘what is happening; to seek new insights; to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light’”*. Exploratory study is useful to have an in-depth understanding of a problem when for example, the precise nature of the problem is unclear (Saunders, Philip, & Thornhill, 2009, p. 139).

The approach for the study is abductive. Abductive approach refers to a continuous movement between a theoretical and an empirical world (Dubois & Gadde 2002, p. 554). The issues arising from the research and the logical framework during the process are reoriented when they are confronted with the empirical world (Dubois & Gadde, 2002, p. 554). At the beginning, the theoretical section will be planned based on the previous empirical research. Theoretical and empirical parts are supporting each other during the whole research.

The sample size is small in the survey and the aim is to gain an in-depth understanding of the interviewees working life in connection to career capital and to examine their expectations versus actual development path.

3.2 Data collection

Data was collected by using qualitative methods. Qualitative data means all non-numeric data and the data is collected for example through open-ended questions, or in-depth interviews (Saunders et al. 2009, p. 480). Saunders et al. (2009, p. 480) stated that

qualitative data must be analysed, and meanings should be understood in order to gain access to useful data.

The qualitative method is semi-structured interviews. The characteristics of semi-structured interview include outline of a topic, wording and order of questions may vary in interviews (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016, p. 82). According to Eriksson and Kovalainen (2016, p. 82) this type of interviews are informal and fairly conversational. The challenge in semi-structured interviews is to make sure that all topics are covered (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016, p. 82). In this study, the framework for interviews is well structured. The framework is divided into four different sections in order to keep in track which subjects should be discussed and, in which order. Sometimes interviewee may answer a different question than what is asked. In these cases, the interviewer had to come back to the question and ask it in other words.

The data was collected via phone interviews. The sample was received from Vaasa University and Finnish Association of Business School Graduates union. The union has been able to identify expatriates who were working abroad in 2004. Back then, a survey was sent to 688 individuals working in international assignment and 233 expatriates answered to the survey. The research group deleted many replies because of incomplete answers. In the end, the approved sample size was 209. In 2012, the university updated their list and a new survey was sent to 433 individuals from the original list. They received 207 replies and after incomplete answers had been removed, the sample size was 203. In 2018, the university research group has interviewed 17 individuals who participated in the survey in 2012. Interviews were semi-structured phone interviews.

Sample for this study was collected from this 2012 survey respondents. Interview requests were sent to eight individuals who had responded to the questionnaire in 2012. One individual didn't reply. Seven individuals replied that they can be interviewed. The criteria were that the person had to have experience of at least one international assignment. After the interviews, six interviews were applicable to this study. In order to

increase the sample size, also three earlier interviews that were made by the project group were utilized. The structure and guidelines of all interviews were the same and thus, there was no difference in the results of these interviews.

Table 2. Interviewees' profiles.

Interview	Current position	Number of international assignments
1	Chief Financial Officer	1
2	Entrepreneur	5
3	Executive Vice President, Chief Transformation Officer	6
4	Chief Executive Officer	2
5	Key Account Director	3
6	Director, sales & after sales	2
7	Entrepreneur	1
8	Director of HR center	1
9	Disability pension	5

As can be seen from table 2, all interviewees were from Finland. Due to the reason that the nationality was the same for both, interviewees and researcher, all interviews were conducted in Finnish. This made the linguistic equality setting possible which means that both, interviewee, and researcher speak their mother tongue and thus, the setting is equal (Marschan-Piekkari & Reis, 2004).

Telephone interviews were conducted from January 2019 to March 2019. All interviews were strictly anonymous. The duration of the interview was between 35 minutes to 1 hour and 40 minutes. Average duration was 1 hour and 10 minutes. All interviews were recorded with the permission of interviewee and written after interviews. The structure of the interview was divided into three sections. The first section consisted of background information and current work situation. In the second section, the focus was on career development between 2004 and 2019. In this section, the elements of career

capital were applied. The third section focused on interviewee's perceived marketability and future work opportunities.

3.3 Data analysis

In the data analysis process, research materials are separated or disassembled into parts, pieces, units, or elements. The aim of the data analysis process is to gather or reconstruct the data in a comprehensive or a meaningful way. (Boeije, 2010, p. 76) Saunders et al., (2009, p. 516) point out that it is important that the researcher is objective in the analysis due to the reason that qualitative research projects are interpreted only by the researcher. When the data is reassembled, all data should be processed the way that it gives the answers for the research questions and that it presents the literature on the matter of studied phenomenon (Boeije, 2010, p. 76).

The data analysis of this study included nine interviews which resulted in 107 pages of verbatim interview transcripts in Finnish language. The data was categorized and analysed based on the theoretical framework which concentrated on the three types of career capital, knowing-how, knowing-why and knowing-whom. Moreover, answers to perceived marketability were identified and analysed. Interview questions related to knowing-how career capital focused on the development of career relevant competencies and job-related knowledge. Questions related to knowing-why career capital focused on the development of work-related motives and interests. In addition, the development of self-understanding and personal growth was examined in this section. Questions related to the knowing-whom career capital focused on the development of social contacts, relationships, and networks. Lastly, the questions related to perceived marketability focused on how the expatriates experienced their internal and external marketability, and how the international assignment or assignments had affected their marketability.

3.4 The quality of the research design

The three elements, reliability, validity, and generalizability are important criteria to assess and evaluate the credibility and quality of a research (Saunders et al. 2009, p. 156-157). In general, these concepts are appropriate when evaluating a quantitative research due to the positivist assumptions but criteria for evaluating qualitative research is a subject of discussion among researchers. (e.g. Guba and Lincoln 1985; Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002; Bryman, 2012). When evaluating the quality of qualitative research, reliability and validity are considered as technically and philosophically inappropriate due to interpretive assumptions, where reality is seen as being socially multifaceted and constructed (Saunders, Philip, & Thornhill, 2019, p. 216). Thus, parallel versions of reliability, internal and external validity have been developed to ensure the quality of qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) formulated criteria where dependability replaced reliability, credibility replaced internal validity and transferability replaced external validity. In addition, Guba and Lincoln (1989) have introduced the authenticity criteria concept as an option to validity. The new concept has moved even further away from the traditional concepts of reliability, internal and external validity in order to appropriately assess and judge the quality of qualitative research (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 217).

Although some academics suggest that the concepts of reliability and validity are inappropriate to ensure the quality of qualitative research, there are academics who continue to use these concepts to assess the quality of qualitative research. These academics believe that since all research must be valid and reliable, using these terms is crucial to be able to indicate the comparable status and quality of qualitative research. (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 216) Furthermore, in Europe most of the academics have continued to use the concepts of reliability and validity to assess the quality despite the type of the research (Morse et al. 2002, p. 14). Thus, also in this study, reliability, internal and external validity concepts are used to assess the quality of the research.

3.4.1 Reliability

When reliability is applied in qualitative research, it refers to consistency and replication of the research process. A research can be seen as reliable if a researcher can achieve the same findings by replicating an earlier research design. (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 213) Reliability of a research can be divided into internal reliability and external reliability. Internal reliability relates to verifying consistency during a research project which can be gained by using more than one researcher to carry out interviews or observations. (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 214) In this study, internal reliability is enhanced by using several researchers to conduct the interviews. The researcher of this study has listened to, and transcribed prior interviews conducted by the university's research group. In addition, the researcher has used the same written guidelines as the university's research group to conduct the interviews for this study.

External reliability in turn, is related to data collection techniques and analytic procedure, and whether consistent findings could be produced, if they were replicated by the same researcher or a different researcher (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 214). According to Daymon and Halloway (2011, p. 79) the research process must be described step by step in detail in order to enhance the reliability of the qualitative research. Saunders et al., (2019, p. 215) also point out that the research process should be clearly thought through, evaluated, and ensured that it doesn't include false assumptions or logic leaps. Moreover, each part of the research process should be reported in a completely transparent way so that others can judge the study themselves and repeat the study (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 215). In order to enhance the external reliability of this study, methodological approach, strategy and data collection methods are described in detail in the sections 3.1 and 3.2. Furthermore, written guidelines for interviews are comprehensive and tested by the university research group.

Saunders et al., (2019, p. 214) have categorized four threats to reliability which are participant error, participant bias, researcher error and researcher bias. Participant error refers to factors that adversely affects the participant performance (Saunders et al., 2019,

p. 214). In order to avoid this threat, the interviewee decided the time that is suitable for the interview. Participant bias refers to a situation where a participant induces a false response (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 214). Participant bias was tried to avoid by sending information about the study before the interview. If the interviewee didn't understand the question or it was too wide, the interviewer explained the question in other words. In addition, beginning and during the interviews it was highlighted that all the responses are confidential, and no individual can be recognized from the research findings. Researcher error in turn is related to factors that adversely affects the researcher's performance (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 214). In order to avoid this thread, the researcher was well prepared for each interview. The final threat, researcher bias refers to situations which cause bias in the researcher's recording of answers (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 214). In this study, the researcher transcribed the recordings exactly as the interviewees told them. If the interviewer didn't understand the interviewees' responses, the interviewer asked to clarify what the interviewee meant in order to avoid interpreting false responses.

3.4.2 Validity

Daymon and Halloway (2011, p. 79) proposed that in qualitative study the concept of validity is more important and unequivocal than the concept of reliability. The concept of validity refers to the findings of the research, accuracy of the analysis of the findings, appropriateness of the used measures and generalisability of the results (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 214). Validity of a research indicates whether the study findings really are, what they seem to be about. (Saunders et al. 2009, p. 157). Validity can be divided into internal validity and external validity. Internal validity estimates whether the research method and questions are really measuring what it is supposed to measure. External validity is related to a question whether the study findings can be generalised to other relevant contexts. (Saunders et al. 2009, p. 157-158; Saunders et al., 2019, p. 215-216) In general, internal validity in qualitative research is not seen as a problem due to the reason that qualitative methods are in-depth in nature and thus, proposed theoretical relationships

can be seen to be comprehensively grounded in a rich collection of data (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 2016). In order to increase the internal validity of the research, the interview questions were based on DeFillippi et al., (1994) career capital theory which has been widely used to study the development of career capital of expatriates in different contexts (e.g. Suutari et al., 2007, Dickmann et al., 2010, Harzing et al., 2011, Mäkelä et al., 2015). In addition, a small number of respondents provided an opportunity for in-depth communication between the interviewer and interviewee. Thus, the researcher was able to gain in-depth understanding of interviewees long-term career capital development and its effects on their marketability.

The adaptation of the concept of external validity to qualitative research can be difficult because researchers often use the case study as the method for data collection or unrepresentative and small number of respondents. (Bryman 2012, p. 389, Saunders et al., 2009, p. 327). Small sample sizes limit the generalisability of studies (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 2016). The small sample size of this study can affect on the external validity of the study. The study includes nine in-depth interviews and thus, it may not give a comprehensive picture of the entire population. It should be taken into account that all of the respondents are Finnish, results may not be generalized to different country nationals. On the other hand, the variation between respondents' profiles are comprehensive in terms of sex, number of international assignments, destination country and industry. This increases the external validity of the research. Overall, the initial aim of this research is to widen the theoretical knowledge of long-term career capital development and its effects on expatriates' marketability and thus, their career success. In the end, findings of this study can give a framework of long-term effects on expatriates' career success in terms of career capital and marketability that can be further developed in different contexts.

4 Results and findings

In this chapter the data collected from the interviews is described and analysed in detail in order to reply to the first objective of the study which is to identify how the elements of career capital have developed during the international work. The first subchapter and its sub-subchapters include the elements of career capital, knowing-how, knowing-why and knowing-whom. The fourth subchapter illustrates the results of expatriates' perceived marketability. Answers of this topic fulfil the second objective of the study which is to identify what kinds of effects the international assignments have had on expatriates' perceived marketability.

4.1 Development of career capital during international assignments

The respondents of this study have developed their career capital during their international assignments in various aspects.

4.1.1 Development of knowing-how career capital

The respondents had developed their work-related competencies and knowledge during their international assignments. Based on the results, softer skills had developed the most during expatriates' international assignments. All interviewees pointed out that one of the main learnings during their international assignments happened in intercultural competencies. Ability to work in an international environment was highly connected to cultural differences and working with different nationalities. Results also indicated that understanding of different behaviour and operating models increased during their assignment.

“Working in international trade and in international business environment was maybe the main learning.”

“Operating in an international environment. It is that kind of a thing that you can’t learn it without doing it. You come across it in numerous details every day.”

“I learnt a sense of proportion towards cultures.”

“Mostly I have learnt interaction between people.”

The study results indicated that significant learning took place in social skills such as communication skills and cross-cultural sensitivity. Although all people are different, in the international environment the differences are highlighted. Many factors for example religion, culture and values are forming individual’s behaviour and thus, cross-cultural sensitivity is important when communicating with host country nationals.

“Maybe the most important skills have been these social skills. With some people, you have to be more active and with some a little passive.”

“You have to be flexible in some situations in order to be able to work with everyone.”

Furthermore, broader perspective was recognized as one the soft skills that was developed during their international assignments. Based on the results, working in an international environment gives a broader perspective for life which helps to operate in different environments. They had become more aware of other cultural habits and operating models and thus, expatriates are forced to question the habits and operating models of his or her home country. Moreover, they are able to see their home country in a more objective way.

“Ability to rise to helicopter perspective.”

“You learn to see the world from different point of views, and you are also able to relate to the home country more objective in both, in good and bad.”

“If you travel in world in work assignments and not as a tourist, you are able to see different cultures and other work cultures. You are

forced to question Finnish ways of doing things and, at least you can see that this Finnish way is not the only right way and it is not the top of the development.”

The results also indicated that respondents were able to increase their global business understanding during their international assignment. Two respondents highlighted the importance of knowledge of what is happening in the industry. It is important to know the competitors, customers, and market environment.

“You must follow all the time, what is happening in the industry and what your competitors are doing.”

“People who haven’t worked abroad don’t have knowledge of the markets. You have to be moving all the time, because information comes from the front line. Then you know what the customers want or at least you think that you know what they want. It is extremely important to meet people in person.”

The development of work-related skills and technical skills were also named as knowledge acquired from international assignments. Still, acquiring technical skills and knowledge were not highlighted because work related skills and know-how increases also in the domestic work environment. Moreover, the world is changing rapidly and thus, skills needed in the past may not be useful in the future because work and working environment are also changing. Therefore, the respondents experienced that it is more important to build social capital abroad than technical knowledge.

“I learnt the operation model, how financial management, legislation and payments, checks and different roles work.”

“General things of financial management. I was also responsible of investor relations. I learnt how to operate with the investors.”

“Things and technical things have developed so much in ten years.”

Beside the technical skills and soft skills, language skills were seen a crucial part of development of knowing-how career capital. Based on the respondents' answers, language skills are important in order to cope successfully in an international environment. When starting the first international assignment, respondents had some knowledge of the local language acquired from school or a summer job etc. Many of the respondents were able to manage with the local language when they started their international assignment, but they were able to improve and polish their language skills during their international assignment. The ones who had gained long international experience, had acquired comprehensive language skills over the years.

"I speak French and English. I had studied French at school and in my first international assignment in -84, I learnt to use it. If you are interested in international assignments, you have to speak languages. Those are tools. You are able to learn work-related tasks as fast as possible when you are able to speak languages."

"Swedish, Finnish, English, German, Spanish and somehow French. I have studied the languages, but my language skills have polished when I have worked abroad."

"I speak German, Russian, Swedish, Finnish and English. Also Spanish in tourist level. When I moved to Germany, I had some knowledge of German language, but it has improved a lot during my career in Germany."

One respondent also mentioned that the ability to live outside the home country increases responsibility and planning skills.

"When you leave a safe environment in your home country for a long time and you are committed to it, in certain ways it is for a young man or a person an opportunity to raise that kind of a sense of responsibility and planning. Things don't always go as planned in there and you just can't come back and abort the whole thing. In that

sense, you have to plan that you act in all situations so that you will manage. You get a big responsibility, and it will develop you.”

All in all, it can be said that the respondents of this research gained knowing-how competencies in different areas. They learned to work in different environments, integrate to a different culture and cope with different kinds of people. Overall, their soft skills developed the most when interacting with people from foreign countries. They were able to broaden their perspective, see the world from other points of views, gain global business understanding and intercultural competencies. Furthermore, they learnt, improved, and polished their language skills. Their work-related skills developed, and they came familiar with country specific operating models.

4.1.2 Development of knowing-why career capital

In this knowing-why career capital section, the variation between respondents' competencies were higher than in the development of knowing-how competencies.

According to the respondents, personal growth took place during their international assignments. Overall, working in an international environment had been a mind-broadening experience. They were able to see the world through different kinds of lenses when living in different cultures and this had affected their values, opinions, and attitudes. Due to the reason that they had seen different kinds of cultures, values, and behaviour manners, it became easier to accept people from different backgrounds. International experience has had effects on how the respondents see their home country. Personal growth was also linked to desire to grow, develop, and learn new things.

“Open mind, desire to grow and develop and learn new, and according to my philosophy, a person is never ready, and you can always learn new and develop and grow. In my opinion, it supports the utilization of personal growth.”

“Seeing the world through a different kind of lenses has affected on my doing and own opinions and attitudes.”

“It has expanded my thinking. It is easier to accept if someone has different kind of values and culture specific behaviour manners or other differences, it is not worse or better. It has also affected my values: financial good does not bring you happiness.”

Furthermore, one female respondent pointed out the cultural differences towards gender which had affected her personal growth. In some cultures, expatriates can face discrimination because of their gender. Thus, it can be challenging to gain acceptance in a foreign country. These experiences can develop knowing-why career capital because you have to recognize your own value and stay strong although you may not receive appreciation from others.

“When I was working in a South-German company, I was responsible of operations in Dubai. There I had terrible battles with our Lebanese installation team. They didn’t want to accept me at all. (‘’) It was because I was a woman. It was that kind of a growth place.”

Respondents experienced that knowing-why competencies have developed through self-observation. Respondents learnt and became aware of new characteristics and personality traits. They learnt to recognize and accept their own strengths and weaknesses.

“You learn quite a lot from yourself and, also from societies. Things about your personality, in Finland you can be an extrovert and in somewhere else you might find yourself being an introvert.”

“In few negotiation situations, I have had to admit that I have been completely off track. You had to analyse the situation and accept that sometimes you can be wrong. It was really a tough place for me not to find the guilty per-son elsewhere than myself. These situations may have come across also in Finland. I can’t say more but here those

culminated in certain situations, but those will make you stronger.”

Beside the competencies mentioned above, respondents highlighted the development of increasing self-confidence and courage. Increasing self-confidence made them become more aware of what they want to do with their work and life. On the other hand, they became aware of what they don't want.

“Increasing self-confidence and knows that you can go and call and go anywhere without having an agent or other person with you.”

“I have become a lot bolder in certain things. I don't think too much anymore.”

“I'm able to set things in priority and know whether I go into things or not.”

As a conclusion, it can be said that knowing-why career capital developed in different ways and areas. One of the main developments took place in personal growth, which included increasing understanding of different cultures, societies and towards different values and behaviours. These learnings had affected their values, opinions, and attitudes. Furthermore, respondents developed knowing-why competencies through self-observation, which resulted that they became more aware of their strengths and weaknesses. They had also learned about their personality, gained more courage, and improved their self-confidence.

4.1.3 Development of knowing-whom career capital

All respondents have been able to develop knowing-whom career capital during their international assignments. They also see that creating networks is an extremely important part of their career and career advancement.

“Networks are extremely important.”

“Another thing that is still useful after ten years are the contact networks which I have created.”

“Yes, those are very meaningful.”

Respondents pointed out that you must be active in order to develop knowing-whom career capital. You have to do that by yourself. You have to be social in order to be able to create new contacts.

“It comes through doing. Of course, I got some contacts from my predecessor. However, networks are mainly born through your own doing. You must be active. You must be aware of the need.”

Beside, being able to create contacts, respondents highlighted the importance of being able to maintain those contacts. They experienced that it is crucial to maintain the networks, not only at the beginning. In this way the respondents were able to maintain long lasting relationships from which they were able to benefit at some point of their career. You will lose the gained social capital if you don't see the effort to maintain your relationships.

“Physical meetings, phone calls, emails, WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn. In multiple levels. With some even daily.”

“I travel quite a lot during my free time and from work. So many times, if I go somewhere, I check whether there is someone I know. In that way, I have maintained the contacts.”

“Yes, although they may not have direct meaning. I do it because you never know what is ahead. (‘’). At some point everything is linked together.”

One interviewee pointed out that creating relationships is important for the employee's mental wellbeing because you are able to enjoy your time in foreign country if you have been able to create relationships.

“It is an obvious thing, if you are not able to create net-works, it will be difficult. Probably you won’t enjoy being in that country and working in those assignments for a long time and you will return back home.”

As a conclusion, the development of knowing-whom career capital was seen important during international assignments. Contacts are seen crucial when it comes to career advancement and career success. Results also indicated that it is not enough to create net-works, you should be able to maintain the relationships and it takes time and effort.

4.2 The impact of career capital development on perceived marketability

The results indicated that development of career capital in international assignments had had a positive effect on expatriates perceived marketability. They saw that their market value is high. The respondents felt that getting a new job would be easier because of their international experience.

“My market value is quite good.”

“I would imagine that it wouldn’t be so difficult.”

“Definitely it wouldn’t be any problem.”

“Yes, I would find a job in the consulting field.”

Furthermore, headhunters are interested in employees who have gained international experience. The interest of headhunters indicates that companies want to hire employees with international experience. Based on the interviews, several respondents have received inquiries from headhunters.

“I have done my career in human resource field and noticed that surprisingly few people in this field have gained international experience. I think that that is why headhunters have called me because I have longer period and several assignments abroad.”

“Headhunters have always called me.”

Although the respondents evaluated that their marketability is high, older respondents experienced that high age had negatively affected their marketability. Answers indicated that high age was the only thing that was seen as a negative factor when applying for a new job. Respondents near 60 years felt that their age would make it more difficult to have a new job.

“Challenge or weakness is that soon I will be 61 years old. (‘’) My age would definitely be a clear negative thing if I would like to apply for a job.”

“I noticed that there is terrible age racism in Finland.”

“This age, although I have experience it wouldn’t be easy because I’m 62-years old.”

On the other hand, the study indicated that high age is seen as a negative factor mainly in Finland but abroad the high age is seen as a positive factor due to the long working experience. This was connected to the culture. More collectivistic cultures seem to appreciate a long working experience. Individualistic cultures in turn, consider the shorter time a person can work for the company as a negative factor. It seems that individualistic cultures do not realize what the person can give for the company.

“I was 55 when this current firm wanted me to work for them. It was nothing to do with my age. It was like I still have over 10 years time to work. For them it was important that they got my contacts. In Finland, this wasn’t appreciated at all.”

“On the other hand, if we think Asians or others, for them, a high age is not a negative thing. They respect grey hair and deep knowledge.”

Based on the results, perceived marketability and the reasons that advance the possibility to have a new job are linked to knowing how and knowing whom career capital.

“I believe that a good track record is the heaviest thing like trainings and good work experience and evidence that I have got things done.”

(“”) If I should start looking for a new job, I have quite good and convincing references in my contacts and networks.”

“I have so many contacts and in this shipbuilding industry it doesn’t matter where you live. We are quite moving people so worldwide I would find some-thing. (“”) Contacts make it easier. Experience, reputation and these contacts help.”

“My huge and deep networks make it easier and that, basically I have worked in all significant Finnish companies.”

The development of knowing-how career capital had affected also respondents’ future careers. All respondents had experienced that working in international assignments had advanced their career success. The experience gained abroad and acquired knowing-how career capital had had a positive effect on their future career opportunities. The respondents also pointed out that the international experience alone has not advanced their career success. They have managed the international assignment successfully. It is important that a person has been able to work an in international environment successfully.

“The fact that I’m the CEO now, most likely I wouldn’t be if I haven’t been abroad.”

“Yes, it can be said that it had positive effects, you come back from a foreign assignment and you have managed the tasks as agreed, it helps.”

“It helped in the application process. At that time no one applied to that place who wouldn’t have had international experience.”

The development of knowing-why career capital is also connected to career success. Knowing-why competencies and career-related growth situations motivate the respondents in their work and thus, contribute to career success. Respondents pointed out that motivation is extremely important for career success.

“It is obvious and what I have said to offspring is that you should go into tricky places and tour the world in order to learn.”

“I think that it is for all the same that those are important. Motivation is extremely important and for success, motivation is the most important.”

The third element, knowing-whom career capital is very important in terms of perceived marketability and career success. Networks had advanced the interviewees’ future careers. They received new work possibilities and offers from their connections, or they were able to utilize their connections when they applied for new positions.

“Yes, the old networks worked. The CEO knows well one of my old colleague who is now retired. We were a work pair. I was responsible of marketing and he was responsible for product development. He had heard that I could jump into this kind of a project and, through that came the connection.”

“When I came back, I was asked to apply for specific positions and those were people who had seen me working.”

Furthermore, the respondents highlighted that you must be able to utilize your networks in order to increase your marketability and enhancing your career success.

“The operation model is based on utilizing networks. (‘’) Asia is that kind of an area that without networks you can’t do anything. (‘’) The only way to gain information and go forward is to know some person who knows the person you want to talk with.”

“You must have courage to use those because many people are like they don’t have anything to do with this. You just had to be brave. I have learnt that when you honestly say what is going on and ask help, no one has ever said that they won’t help me.”

Based on the interviewee's answers, there is a link between similarity of industry and possibility to utilize knowing-whom career capital. The ones, who had stayed in the same industry, but the employers were changed were able to use their contacts better than the ones who have changed the industry.

"Telecom industry is quite different from a forest industry and, in that sense, the contacts are more personal."

"When I moved in here in 2012, I knew all the companies, but I had to start creating new networks because people were different although the customers / companies were the same. (""") The old networks helped me in this because if I didn't know who to contact, I called someone I knew in a high position in that company and asked who I should contact. (""") I was able to move forward by using my old contacts."

In addition, the results indicated that respondents have been able to utilize old connections in different phases of their work life. For example, although the interviewee is not able to utilize old relationships in their current position, he or she has been able to utilize those in some previous position at some point of his or her career. Some have been able to utilize connections in their current position that he or she has created a long time ago, although they have had positions between when they haven't been able to utilize these connections.

"Even when I was working for Huhtamäki. (""") In that sense some connections I had created already when I was working in Huhtamäki, those have been useful in this position."

5 Conclusions

The aim of this research was to identify the long-term effects of international experience on the career success of expatriates. Thus, the focus was to identify how the elements of career capital have developed during the international work and, what kinds of effects the international assignments have had on expatriates' perceived marketability in terms of career capital and career success in a long term.

5.1 Conclusions of the study

This research supports the previous findings and provides new evidence on the long-term effects of international experience. Firstly, the development of career capital was significant in all areas. The respondents gained knowing-how competencies in different areas and these results were in line with previous studies. The Respondents learned to work in different environments, integrate to a different culture and cope with different kinds of people. Overall, their soft skills developed the most. They were able to broaden their perspective, see the world from other points of views, gain global business understanding and intercultural competencies (Dickmann & Doherty, 2008). Several studies conducted in different kinds of research settings were indicating that international assignees concentrate more on building social capital abroad than acquiring skills and knowledge (Dickmann & Harris, 2005; Dickmann & Doherty, 2008; Dickmann & Doherty, 2010). Furthermore, the results indicated that they learnt, improved, and polished their language skills. Language learning was also acknowledged by Jokinen (2010) in her study.

The results of the knowing-why career capital were also in line with previous studies. Based on this study, the main developments took place in personal growth, which included increasing understanding of different cultures, societies, values, and behaviours. These learnings had affected their own values, opinions, and attitudes. Similar results have been identified in a previous study (Antal, 2000). Furthermore, this study and a study of Suutari and Mäkelä (2007) indicated that respondents developed knowing-why

competencies through self-observation which resulted in them becoming more aware of their strengths and weaknesses. They had also learnt about their own personality, gained more courage, and improved their self-confidence.

The results of the third element, knowing-whom career capital were contradictory. In this study, the development of knowing-whom career capital was seen crucial for career advancement. No one from the respondents experienced negative effects of international assignments to their knowing-whom career capital. These findings are in line with some previous studies (DeFillippi & Arthur 1994; Inkson & Arthur, 2001; Mäkelä, 2007; Bozkurt & Mohr, 2011) and inconsistent with some studies (Dickmann & Harris, 2005; Benson & pattie, 2008).

The present study indicates new evidence on expatriates' perceived marketability in the long term. External marketability was high among respondents. The respondents were valued in the eyes of other employers and headhunters. Although the older respondents were not as valued in Finland, they were valued in other cultures. Moreover, consulting firms were interested in their knowhow and networks. These findings are in line with previous study results. Other employers in the home country and abroad better recognize and value the knowing-how development of expatriates (Daily et al., 2000; Hamori & Koyuncu, 2011; Shaffer et al., 2012; Mäkelä et al. 2015). Perceived internal marketability was more complex. Between the years 2004-2019 some of the expatriates had changed the employer because they were not valued by their previous employer. Some changed the employer or came back to Finland because of personal or family reasons. Some were able to move upward internally. In 2019, most of the respondents were at the end of their career and thus they didn't have plans to move upward in their organization. For many it would have been also impossible because they were already in the highest position or owners of the company.

In this study, external marketability was highly linked to an industry. The results indicated that getting a new job is easier from respondents' current industry, due to the reason

that their knowing-how and knowing-whom career capital are specified to a certain industry. The respondents were able to use the experience, knowledge and networks that they had gained over the years within the same industry, but if they were changing the industry they had not been able to benefit from their background that much. In addition, the results emphasize the importance of knowing-whom career capital from the marketability point of view. The respondents have been able to utilize old connections in different phases of their work life and thus, they have been able to advance in their careers. Mäkelä et al., (2015) discovered that from the marketability point of view the most significant type of career capital is knowing-how. The present study also recognizes the importance of knowing-how career capital, but it also highlights the importance of knowing-whom career capital from the marketability point of view.

5.2 Delimitations of the study

The delimitations of the study are introduced in this subchapter. One of the key limitations is the qualitative nature of this research. The sample size is small, and it can limit the generalisability of the study (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 2016). The study includes nine in-depth interviews. It may not give a comprehensive picture of the entire population. Thus, one should be cautious in interpreting the findings. Nevertheless, the sample size is big enough to reach the data saturation point.

Another limitation is the respondent profile. All respondents are Finnish and thus, the results may not be generalized to different country nationals and cultures. Study samples of different nationals or a mixture of different nationals could reveal additional aspects or overall, indicate different results. On the other hand, this study aims for analytical generalization, not statistical generalization.

Furthermore, respondents' memory can be named as one limitation. As the study is concentrated in long-term development, respondents may not remember exactly what they have learnt during each international assignment. This may be among those who have

been working in an international environment their whole career. Moreover, the researchers' own preoccupation with the topic and the interview situations itself may have influenced the results and thus, these can be seen as limitations.

5.3 Practical implications

As a practical implication drawn from our study, it is obvious that international work experience is crucial for expatriate's career success. Although, several studies of repatriation and expatriate retention indicate that international assignments have negative effects on expatriate's career, this study shows that long-term effects of international assignments are mainly positive and career enhancing. Thus, a good choice for individuals who want to advance their career is to go abroad either as an assigned expatriate or a self-initiated expatriate. It is also important that individuals actively develop their career capital in the host country. Especially, this study highlights the importance of career relevant networks in terms of career success.

Practical implications for organizations are connected to the expatriation process. Based on the results, expatriates believe that their external marketability is relatively high. Especially, expatriates are wanted in the eyes of competitors due to their knowing-how and knowing-whom capital. Increasing expatriate's internal marketability is important. Organizations could pay more attention to how they treat their expatriates in order to keep their valuable assets. Moreover, in order to enhance expatriate's success, employers could put more effort into the whole expatriation process. If an international assignment fails, it has negative effects for the individual and organization. Therefore, successful selection, training, adjustment, relocation, and retention are important parts for both parties' success.

5.4 Suggestions for further research

Expatriates' development and success in international assignments have been studied from many points of views. Still, there is existing little knowledge of the long-term effects of international assignments. One interesting point of view would be from a career perspective. Comparing traditional career types to protean and boundaryless career types in terms of utilizing career capital development in long term. This study was conducted as a qualitative study and the sample included only Finnish people. Therefore, another suggestion for future research is to conduct a quantitative study in order to receive more generalized results. If a sample would be taken from several countries, it could be generalized to other countries and cultures.

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