

EXPATRIATION AND THE FRAMEWORK FOR ANTICIPATORY ADJUSTMENT: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT: Nowadays, companies started to internationalize in search of new paths and options that make them more competitive and profitable due to the high openness of world trade from globalization. From that moment, the need to send skilled professionals to manage venture abroad, which is called expatriation, arises. Thus, this article aims to perform an analysis on the expatriation process and their intercultural adjustment in the destination country, focusing on the Framework for Anticipatory Adjustment of Black, Mendehall and Oddou. To fulfill this goal, this study includes a bibliographic and exploratory research and a case study performed with an international leading European company in design, manufacture and distribution of drilling equipment, which was conducted at its hub in Houston, United States of America. With the results obtained, it was found that the anticipated adjustment proposed contributes positively to the sense of well-being of the staff and it can be a major influence on the success of the expatriation process; however, it is not used extensively by companies when undertaking the preparation for the international mobilization.

Keywords: Internationalization. Expatriation. Framework for Anticipatory Adjustment.

EXPATRIAÇÃO E A ESTRUTURA PARA AJUSTES ANTECIPATÓRIA: UM ESTUDO EMPÍRICO

RESUMO: Hoje em dia, as empresas começaram a internacionalizar-se na procura de novos caminhos e opções que as tornem mais competitivas e rentáveis, devido à grande abertura do comércio mundial globalizado. A partir desse momento, surge a necessidade de enviar profissionais qualificados para gerenciarem risco no exterior, o que é chamado de expatriação. Assim, este artigo tem como objetivo realizar uma análise sobre o processo de expatriação e sua adaptação intercultural no país de destino, com foco no Quadro de Ajustamento preventivo da Preto, Mendehall e Oddou. Para cumprir esse objetivo, este estudo inclui uma pesquisa bibliográfica e exploratória e um estudo de caso, realizado com uma empresa europeia, líder internacional em design, fabricação e distribuição de equipamentos de perfuração, no seu hub em Houston, Estados Unidos da América. Com os resultados obtidos, verificou-se que o ajustamento antecipado proposto contribui, positivamente, para a sensação de bem-estar do pessoal e pode ser uma grande influência sobre o sucesso do processo de expatriação; no entanto, não é amplamente utilizado por empresas que realizam a preparação para a mobilização internacional.

Palavras-chave: Internacionalização. Expatriação. Quadro de Adaptação antecipatória.

1. INTRODUCTION

The globalization in its contemporary format focuses on several areas and it is based on the growth of capitalism whose expansionist force boosted the integration between markets worldwide, in a context where geographical boundaries are no longer central to the organization of space as a whole. These factors allowed the globalization to be seen as “open borders”, paving the way for companies to expand internationally.

According to Hitt (2007 apud GOUVEIA, 2010, p. 8), “we can understand internationalization as a broad phenomenon, whereby businesses sell their products and services outside the sphere of their local markets.” Thus, whether through export of goods and services or production and direct provision thereof in foreign markets, domestic companies have to keep an increasingly active and growing role in other countries.

The transfers of activities abroad is a strategic decision for achieving greater competitive advantages and maximize their results because it allows the company to enjoy the benefits inherent in the new location, as the dispute for new consumer markets and approaching customers.

According to Orsi (2010);

With this new reality established, it is born in these companies the need to build cadres of managers and specialists to deploy and manage the enterprise abroad, disseminating its management model, its technology, and especially its organizational culture (ORSI, 2008, p. 8).

For this, companies started sending executives who can perform these functions abroad. Sending an executive for a multinational¹ company to work in one of its units abroad for more than one year is called expatriation, with the executive being named “expatriate” (CARPES et al, 2012). However, expatriation is a complex activity, subject to many variables and requirements and involves many risks related to both the costs of the process itself and its possible failure, for the family issues and uncertainty about the future of the expatriate (ORSI, 2010).

The success in the expatriation process is represented by the degree of adaptation of the expatriate in three dimensions: the general adaptation to environment, adaptation to social interactions and adaptation to work (BLACK; MENDENHALL; ODDOU, 1991); because their role is best played depending on their degree of psychological comfort and sense of well-being.

Since the 1980s, ways to improve intercultural adjustment during the expatriation process are studied, starting with the establishment of some specific dimensions. Among the proposed models on the subject, it is worth highlighting the Adjustment Model of Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991), which suggests that there are two stages of expatriate adjustment. The first would be the Early Adjustment, prior to expatriation, and the second,

¹ The concept of a multinational company differs from a transnational. While the first describes any company that has subsidiaries beyond the borders of its country of origin - with these being very dependent on the matrix, not having a lot of autonomy in relation to it - the second has the subsidiaries with more autonomy from the matrix, with greater power decision which can exert control over others (MONTEIRO et al, 2008).

the adjustment in the Foreign Country, with the expatriate exercising his duties in the destination country.

The Early Adjustment is related to individual aspects, such as international experience and intercultural training prior to shipment, and organizational aspects, those related to the mechanisms and criteria for selection of candidates for expatriation. The corresponding step to the Adjustment in the Foreign Country covers the work-related factors, organizational culture and context out of work. According to these authors, the adjustment of the expatriate is easier when it is done an effective training by the company.

According to Global Line - a Brazilian company focused on training and consultancy specialized in cultural development and team building - through its Mobility Brazil Research in 2013, it was seen that, despite the intercultural training be used in 74% of international mobilizations made by foreign companies, only 56% of the Brazilian multinationals use it. Moreover, it was observed that only one in four expats succeeds in his professional mission.

Thus, how exactly the earlier adjustment can influence the success of the expatriation process of a professional? The general aim of this article is to conduct an analysis on the process of expatriation of professionals and their intercultural adjustment in the destination country, being the specific objectives: I) to investigate how companies use or not the Anticipatory Adjustment in their expatriation process; II) to analyze, from the available data, the positive and/or negative effects of absence and/or presence of this enterprise policy; III) to establish the perception of expatriates about the same.

The relevance of the theme highlights the need for more qualitative studies on the issue of expatriates' adaptation, as well as on the tools that can be used to manage more efficiently the selection and training of these professionals in order to increase the success of their international mobility. Additionally, the article is relevant to the International Relations' field due to its broad and multidisciplinary nature, requiring understanding from cultural issues to psychological aspects that influence the adaptation of the expatriate and hence the international strategy adopted by the company.

To achieve the stated objectives, the present work includes, in addition to a literature and exploratory research, a case study with a leading international company in design, manufacture and distribution of drilling and completion equipment for onshore and offshore applications. With its headquarters in Europe, the company has various operating centers, one located in Houston, United States of America, which will be used for the research in question.

The choice of this case study is given for the sake of ease access, given the difficulty of obtaining data to proceed with the research in Brazil. Importantly, before the due focus given to the foreign company, three Brazilian companies were contacted to provide data, but in all cases, the denial of information occurred. With the company B1², leaders reported that the data is confidential. Companies B2 and B3 reported not having accurate data regarding expatriation processes. It is believed that these companies did not have solid processes related with its expatriate employees, which led, one assumes, to the human resources departments

² We use the term B1, B2 and B3 to refer to Brazilian companies through which attempts were made to obtain data on their expatriation processes. In all attempts there was no success. For information purposes, the company B1 is part of the textile industry, and companies B2 and B3 of the construction business.



of these companies the fear of exposing certain structural flaws, even though the research may had come to serve as a basis for restructuring the internal policies of expatriation.

Aiming to remain with a focus that sought to bring data about the reality of a Brazilian company, a reversal of means was made, to seek answers for our research questions. Thus, there was a line of research for expatriates themselves, and not more for the expatriation department and its policies. Therefore, a rigid guide survey was sent to the employees of the company B2, all in Accra (Ghana), but we could not get answers from these employees and it is believed that the reason was fear of possible retaliation, given that the company does not have any adjustment models. It is necessary to emphasize that throughout this research there was an explicit commitment of the researchers with the secrecy of all information.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. THE EXPATRIATION PROCESS

Among the various meanings that can be attributed to globalization, one that is perhaps the most accurate is the one who sees this phenomenon as a process of deterritorialization (IANNI, 2001). From this perspective, globalization consists in weakening territorial boundaries between nations. As a consequence, the (personal, commercial and productive) social relations are no longer constrained only to the borders of national geographic space. Although globalization is often seen primarily as a typical economic phenomenon, the result of the growth of capitalism, a novel factor presented nowadays is the deterritorialization of social space, which causes changes not only in personal relationships, but as well in firms relations with their customers (IANNI, 2001).

Thus, seeking greater competitive advantage, winning new markets and seeking proximity with customers and suppliers, companies have started to diversify the ways in which they establish relationships in the world. Whether through export of its products and/or services or production and direct supply of products in foreign markets, companies began to expand their activities in the international market, a phenomenon known as internationalization, one of the dimensions of economic globalization (BRAZIL, 2009).

The internationalization of companies provides opportunities for learning and growth for these organizations due to exposure to the new environment, new cultures and ideas, access to new markets and resources, making it possible to obtain greater advantages inherent in the new location. According to Carpes et al (2012),

Realizing in its internal competencies the efficiency of certain employees as a usable resource to capture benefits, internationalized companies often choose to transfer some of its members to the units located abroad (CARPES et al, 2012, p. 92).

To this transfer, it is given the name “expatriation” and the executives who are sent to another country, are named “expatriates”.

According to Tung (1988), the expatriation process ranges from the recruitment and selection of candidates for international mobility, to its insertion and monitoring in the destination country. For the transfer of the executive to another country be characterized as an expatriation, it is vital that it occurs “through a formal legal process, with specific conditions defined” (NUNES et al, 2008, p.28). In other words, expatriation involves the negotiation of the transfer and the legal procedures involved in the process, such as setting the length of stay in the country, duties to be exercised, financial benefits that will be granted, intercultural and language training and executive facility in the country.

Therefore, according to Gonzalez et al (2011), the expatriate differs from an immigrant, because the first has a transfer within the scope of a company and for a limited time, while the second leaves their country for economic reasons and usually plan to live permanently in the country of destination. De Cieri et al (2007, p.288) adds that “expatriation may involve the transfer of host country nationals, to nationals of the subsidiary’s country, and nationals of a third country who are employees of a multinational.”

The need of expatriation can be given for three reasons, according to Baruch, Steele and Quantrill (2002). First, by particular business requirements, such as facilitation of a merger or acquisition, knowledge transfer to local professionals, developing long-term vision, technology transfer, among others. In these situations, professionals with specific skills are sent to suppress what is lacking in the local environment. The second reason is the control over the transactions carried out abroad, in order to maintain organizational strategy aligned with the matrix. The third reason is the need to develop managers, i.e., gives managers the opportunity to gain career experience in the performance of managerial activities abroad. In this context, the expatriation serves for the company to develop a system that ensures the exploitation of opportunities within itself, facilitating career progression in the short term for expatriates. Furthermore, through this process new knowledge is generated for the organization and skills are acquired by managers in order to help in the formation of new global leaders.

Mendenhal and Oddou (1985) state that, according to a survey with expatriates, 90% of them reported an increase in their overall outlook after activities abroad, 80% said they are able to communicate more effectively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds, and 80% felt more able to understand and deal with global business trends. These results support the rationale for work abroad as very beneficial for expatriates and for the company itself.

According to the Mobility Brazil research in 2013, the main objective of international mobilizations in the country that year was the completion of technical needs, accounting for 26% of these transfers. Secondly, filling managerial needs accounting for 19% of the mobilizations, and the development of managers in third place with 18%. Technology transfer appears in fourth place with 13%, followed by the spread of corporate culture in fifth place with 9% of the mobilizations. The lack of local manpower and launching initiatives appear in sixth and seventh place with 8% and 4%, respectively, and the development of relationships in last, totaling 3% of transfers made in Brazil this year. The research also indicates that management function is the most present among the mobilized professionals, with 53% of them (GLOBAL LINE, 2013).

The main factor considered responsible for the better conduct of business activities in the international environment, according to Carpes et al (2012), is the expatriate adjustment. According to Ali et al (2003), the international adjustment is the degree of psychological



comfort of the expatriate at the new location. The terms and adjustments are commonly used interchangeably, however Kubo (2011) points out that the adjustment is pre-adaptation, and it is needed for it to happen. In other words, the difference between the two terms would be in, higher or lower, the sense of well-being related to life and work in the host country level, including the psychological and sociocultural dimensions. Thus, the success or failure of the expatriate's professional mission abroad is strongly related to its ability to adapt to the new reality, being this adaptation considered therefore the backbone of the expatriation process (HARRISON; SHAFFER; BHASKAR, 2004).

Baruch and Altman (2002) believe that the success of expatriation comes from four elements: (1) the choice of the candidate for expatriation; (2) preparation of the expatriate and his family prior to expatriation; (3) support and maintenance of relationships with the matrix during the international mission and; (4) the facilitation of a peaceful return to headquarters after the end of the mission, which is known as the repatriation process. Franke and Nicholson (2002) emphasize the necessity of observing the situation of the family and spouse support for the international mission of the expatriate, as they are possibly the most important and overlooked factors during the process of selection of candidates for expatriation. The Mobility Brazil Research in 2013 also found that marital status is the main factor of difficulty of the expatriation process pointed out by expatriates. Thus, it was found that the degree of difficulty encountered during the international mobilization varies according to the profile of the expatriate and his family (GLOBAL LINE, 2013).

All these factors show how complex is the process of expatriation due to the amount of variables to which it is subjected. Thus, there is difficulty in finding professionals with the right profile and with different skills that are required for the performance in the domestic environment, that make them able to operate the activities so as to achieve the result expected by the company abroad. To expand internationally, organizations need professionals with capabilities to explore the foreign environment and, according to Orsi (2010, p.8), this professional "needs to communicate in different languages, understand and deal with different cultures, be resilient in the face of challenges in a distant country where he is alone and a stranger".

Thus, the expatriation is based on a large number of benefits to make the mobilization not only more attractive, but also to compensate for the extra costs of the new life abroad compatible with the locality, apart from the benefits that enable a more rapid and comfortable fit to the family, as funding for the spouse, for example. According to the Mobility Brazil Research in 2013, an expatriate is twice the cost of a domestic professional (GLOBAL LINE, 2013).

Furthermore, according to Tung (1982 cited Gonzalez et al, 2011),

A poor adaptation to the country of destination translates into costs for the organization in terms of absenteeism, poor performance, and in extreme cases, premature closure of the mission and return to the expatriate country (TUNG, 1982 apud GONZALEZ et al, 2011, p. 3).

Copeland and Griggs (1985) also show that in 1985 companies worldwide have borne with more than U\$250,000 in direct costs related to problems of adaptation of expatriates. Moreover, Abbot et al (2011) point out that, recently, the costs derived from failures in the expatriation process outnumber one million dollars.

Thus, it can be observed that expatriation is a very expensive process and it involves many costs to companies, not only those inherent in the process, but also the risks of failure that involves. Therefore, it is necessary for companies to look upon as a project, something that needs to be worked out and prepared in advance, not only for the company but also by the expatriate himself and his family (DUTRA, 2002).

2.2. The International Personnel Management in the Expatriation Process

Fischer (2002) states that every organization depends, to a greater or lesser degree, on the human performance for its success. Therefore, it develops and organizes a way of acting on the behavior of people who come to be called People Management model. Such a model must, by definition, differentiate the company in its market, contributing to the establishment of its image and competitiveness. Also according to Fischer (2002):

It is understood by people management the way a company is organized to manage and guide human behavior at work. For that, the company is structured setting principles, strategies, policies and practices or management process. [...] When this concept is strategically oriented, its primary mission is to identify patterns of behavior consistent with the organization's business (FISCHER, 2002, p. 12-13).

For the expansion and development of its activities in a global context, companies need professionals who can conduct these activities successfully way beyond their geographical boundaries. For this reason, it is critical that the business has mechanisms that aim to attract, develop and keep their human resources in order to choose and prepare professionals with the most suitable profile for the international mission and who play and adapt better to their functions (TAYLOR, 1996).

Competence in managing people becomes, therefore, strategic within the context of internationalization of a firm. Hence the practice of the International People Management (IPM) arises, a response from the Human Resources department to these new challenges created by the complexity and demands of the new role in the international arena, which distinguishes itself from the traditional practice of People Management.

As stated by Minervini (2001), IPM aims to maintain or enhance the company's competitiveness on a global level, this being the essence for companies to project and manage to keep the international market successfully. In short, it has the overall objective to act on global business unmasking talents of individuals - the expatriates - who form the human capital of the company (MORAN; HARRIS; STRIPP, 1999), and seek to reconcile their expectations with the organization, so that they perform what is expected of them.

The IPM is therefore crucial to managing the workforce of the company, supporting multinational companies in their need for coordination and control of employees in widely dispersed units (ORSI, 2010). Thus, it plays a crucial role within organizations, and can be considered one of the determining factors of success or failure of international business (ASHAMALLA, 1998, SCHULER et al, 2002). In fact, Man and Tolfo (2008) reinforce the success factor and its relationship with the management of professionals:



The selection, preparation before departure, compensation and support offered by organizations for expatriate professionals are activities conducted by the International Human Resource Management [IHRM], which can contribute to the success or failure of the missions abroad (MAN; TOLFO , 2008, p. 202).

Schuler et al (Apud 2002 MAN; TOLFO, 2008, p 204) made a compilation of what they believe to be the main activities and planning processes that the IPM needs to deal related to the expatriate professional:

The planning and cost allocation; candidate selection; terms of mission and condition of the documentation; relocation process; cultural aspects and orientation/language training; administration of compensation and payment process; administration fees; planning and career development; aid to spouse and other dependents in the immigration process (SCHULER et al 2002 cited in MAN; TOLFO, 2008, p. 204).

It is important to determine, according to Dowling and Welch (2005) that any activities of hiring, promotions, layoffs or rewards in this case will be determined by the practices of the host country and anchored in the culture of that country.

2.3. ANTICIPATORY ADJUSTMENT IN THE COUNTRY OF DESTINATION

The authors Black, Mendehall and Oddou (1991) proposed a model of expatriate adjustment based on the facilities and difficulties encountered by the professionals abroad, crucial for the success of the international designation, by indicating aspects to be developed in order to improve their adjustment in the host country. This model is the most cited and influent among the studies on expatriation, and it suggests the existence of two stages of the expatriate cross-cultural adjustment process: Anticipatory adjustment, performed before the expatriation process, and the Adjustment in the Foreign Country, done with the employee located at its final destination.

These two steps bring the idea that the adjustment process consists of five dimensions, the first two being described as the problems preceding the expatriation, and the last three, factors that are essential following the arrival of the professional in the destination country. The Anticipatory Adjustment would be related to factors related to the individuals as a global mindset, previous experience abroad and intercultural training prior to the embark, as well as factors related to the organization, these related to the mechanisms and criteria for selection of candidates for expatriation. The step corresponding to the Adjustment in the Foreign Country covers the work-related factors, organizational culture and context out of work.

The authors believe that the international adjustment of the expatriate begins before the embark to the destination country, as it is guided by a process that begins from the selection of candidates to the training they will receive, which involves not only the technical expertise of the individual, but also the intercultural competences and their previous experiences. Thus, they believe that when a person receives an efficient preparation prior to the expatriation, it is easier to adjust to with, because the professional will be equipped with the necessary tools for the mission, and will also be more aware of the reality that he will meet, and the expectations of the company related to his work and duties.

Training is extremely important not only to increase and provide the professional skills that are essential in the exercise of their activities abroad and prepare them for it (LACOMBE 2005), as well as for providing an environment in which mistakes are less costly and serious than when committed within the real work environment, which is critical for the formation of future expatriates. This training would also include cultural aspects because, according to Black (1988), the main challenge faced by expatriates is the difficulty of adapting not only to work but also to new forms of personal and professional relationships in the destination country.

It is also important that prior preparation is done not only with the candidate for expatriation, but also with his family, since it will accompany him in the international assignment. Caligiuri et al (1999) state that the discomfort of a family member could influence in a premature return to the country of origin, because it would affect their emotional stability, thus affecting work performance, productivity and performance of their functions, and compromising the success of their international assignments.

3. METHODOLOGY

In order to identify the influence of the Anticipatory Adjustment in the success of the expatriation process, first, we present a literature and exploratory research. The bibliographic research consisted in the starting point of the scientific research as it seeks to identify, locate and retrieve documents relevant to the subject, thus rising to basic bibliography for the drafting of an article. According to Severino (2000, p. 76), “these texts therefore play the role of consultation sources from which will develop the various scientific discourses.”

The bibliography used included books, journal articles, dissertations, PhD theses and researches were related to the theme of expatriation and that could provide the necessary information for analysis and the variables involved in it, especially on the issue of the importance of prior adjustment before the work abroad. At this stage, part of the documentation technique used was the indirect documentation that, according to Marconi and Lakatos (2003), is the one that covers the literature and in which data collection is based on pre-existing research documents, and not taken by researchers at the place where the observed phenomena occur.

According to Gil (2008, p.27), “Exploratory researches are undertaken with the objective of providing overview, of approximate type, about certain fact.” It, therefore, was the first stage of the research, a preliminary study in which the aim of the research was started and the criteria, methods and techniques for the preparation of it were established, allowing greater familiarity with the theme, making it specific to researchers. From this type of research, all information on the subject could be grouped and correlated, facilitating further examination.

Within the exploratory research was outlined a case study to conduct a more comprehensive survey with professionals in a multinational company who were available to provide information and opinions about their expatriation process. According to Yin (2001), the method of case study covers the selection of cases for data collection and their conducting with the collection and analysis of data, resulting in the reporting and analysis of the case that interprets the research results (YIN, 2001, p. 40-77).



3.1. CASE STUDY

Regarding the type of research, it can be classified as qualitative, since concepts and theories can be developed from an understanding provoked by interviews, instead of performing data collection to prove hypotheses and pre-designed models. The sample data collected is also qualitative, in which the amount of interviewees is small and there is no interest to project the results to the entire population. For this, a semi-structured questionnaire was developed and standardized, since, although there were rigid issues to be unveiled, there was interest from authors to make the interview more flexible as way of seeking additional information that might be relevant. The questionnaire is available Attachment A.

The case study was done focusing on the operational center of a multinational company in Houston. The firm has 250 employees, including 20 expatriates (until the final moment of this research). Of the total of expatriates was chosen a group of 6 employees as representative portion of expatriates. Among the 6 contacted for the case study, only 4 made available to provide information about their expatriation process, giving opinions, criticisms and providing a basis for detailed understanding of the work of the Human Resources of the company with respect to the expatriation adjustment processes, based on satisfaction, problems and challenges presented by the expatriates interviewees.

The referred expatriates come from Europe, and their international assignment is expected to last five years, as shown below:

Table: Profile of the expatriates interviewed.

Identification	Gender	Age range	Activities in Houston	Time in Houston (in months)	Dependents
E1	Male	25-31	Design of oil platforms, on-shore and off-shore	12	0
E2	Male	25-31	Design of oil platforms, on-shore and off-shore	12	0
E3	Male	25-31	Project of drilling rigs	5	0
E4	Male	25-31	Structural projects	12	0

Source: Data collected in the survey.

According to the data of the table above, it was observed that all the expatriates are male, in age range between 25 and 31 years, and most of them are in Houston for at least one year. The four expatriates went to the United States unaccompanied by any dependent. For purposes of this study, expatriates received an identification, being the first E1 and the other following this sequence.

3.2. PRESENTATION OF THE ANALYSIS RESULTS

From the realization of the questionnaires, was observed that only one of the expatriates remained in the same role in the company (E2), two were already hired to be expatriates

(E1 and E3) and one previously had another role within the same company (E4). Also, this is the first expatriation of them all.

Regarding the selection criteria used in the expatriation process, in general, all believe that their professional skills and willingness and openness to leave the country were crucial to this. Regarding to the characteristics they have and consider that were essential to their selection, the answers were varied. E1 attributed his selection to his fluency in several languages, his experiences abroad and his area of expertise. E2 attributed his selection to his good performance at work at the headquarter of the company before the expatriation and also in college. E3 believes that the two professional experiences that had previously at other companies and his willingness to work outside the country were determinant for his selection, while E4 assigns the selection to his skills, his modesty and humbleness and for being open, always accepting what the company proposes.

Regarding the selection criteria and its perception on the part of expatriates, it is noted the predominance of the reference of their availability to work and live in another country and also their good professional performance. Also, it is noticed a preference by the company of young professionals, which may indicate a thought that they would have more chances to adapt due to their greater willingness to face new challenges and certainly because they moved without family or any dependent. Thus, it is observed that in this case, previous international experiences as other expatriations not affected in the decision of their selection.

Regarding the question of the existence of preparation before the international mobilization, two of the expatriates (E2 and E3) state that they have received this training and two didn't (E1 and E4). E2 had three weeks of training for the function to be carried on Houston. He liked the preparation received and believed it was important to the process, but pointed out that the course received is available to everyone, not just candidates for expatriation. E3 received the same training, but said he received no specific training related to life in the United States. That is, the preparation is not extensive to all employees, and also cultural aspects were not addressed, only work-related information on the company in Houston.

When asked if something is missing and / or needs to be improved in the expatriation process, three of the expatriates (E2, E3 and E4) believe that everything is well in process and they do not feel something was missing or need to be improved. However, the absence of a pre-departure training was felt by E1, who believes that training is needed and that more information should be provided by the company. Interestingly, although E4 have not received training prior to shipment, he, unlike E1, did not feel the lack of it, just mentioning the issue of long time waiting for the visa as the only factor that could be improved.

Considering the success of their expatriation process, they all evaluate that was successful, however the reasons for this vary between them. For the two expatriates who did not receive preparation (E1 and E4), success was credited at their disposal to make it happen, to their personal characteristics. E1 adds that the benefits offered by the company in the destination country also helped in the issue of adaptation and, consequently, in the success of expatriation. E4 also attributes the success to his professional features. E2 and E3 attribute to the company the success that, for E2, provided the preparation related to the professional skills required in Houston and, for E3, due to the assistance provided by the company with respect to the documentation required for the process.

In this case, we can see that although the theories indicate that the Anticipatory Adjustment can influence the success of the expatriation process, it is interesting to notice that those who not received it believe their preparation process was also successful but, in this case, would be related to its individual capacity to do so.

All expatriates believe that they adjust to the country of destination and to the activities performed. However, E1 points out that, in relation to the role performed, he does not believe that he adjusts in the long term, while E3 says that at first he did not adjusted, but now yes. Furthermore, most of them believe that they had the necessary support during the transfer. Only E1 states that it happened only in part, because he believes that there is a lack of communication by the company during the visa procedures. E2 emphasizes that the Human Resources office helped him a lot in the process.

Taking into consideration the intercultural adaptation, the expatriates, in general, believe that it is satisfactory. However, E1 reports that it does not occur with respect to the relations with co-workers because, according to him, the co-workers of other nationalities do not have an open mind and do not accept other cultures. E3 also identified the issue of social relations which, he said, only happens mostly among the expatriates and not with Americans. E4 have reported that adaptation did not occur in relation to the language. Regarding the score that they give to their expatriation processes, two of expatriates gave the maximum score of 10 (E2 and E4), the expatriate E1 gave score 7 and E3 gave 8, generating an average of 8.75, which demonstrates a very positive perception of their expatriation.

Regarding the knowledge if the company has an expatriation plan, everyone said yes, citing that the company provides financial benefits, such as home, car, cover expenses for food, gas, etc. The expatriates E1 and E2 add that these benefits vary according to the status of expatriates, the destination and their contract. E3 says there is a special contract for expatriates, which is similar among all of them, and E4 states that the expatriate receives a differentiated treatment and more benefits, with an adjusted salary to the new condition. As previously described, these policies of financial benefits correspond to a significant support to expatriation, facilitating the adjustment of expatriates to provide a more comfortable environment in the country of destination and neutering costs with the transfer.

Regarding the importance of the Human Resources work for their expatriation, they consider as important, as they recognize that is the sector that takes care of everything related to the expatriation process. But about the involvement of this area in their expatriation process, two of the expatriates (E2 and E3) believe it enlightened some questions before the transfer, because the Human Resources sector at the headquarters helped them with everything they needed. However, E2 adds that the operational center in Houston does not help at all. E1 believes that its role was enlightening in part, because it sometimes did not communicate very well, not answering his questions about the transfer and the visa procedures. E4 already said that the role of Human Resources was not clarifying for not providing all the information he requested, but it has always been polite and available. Thus, it is seen that the performance of the Human Resources sector, in general, leaves a lot to be desired, as there are disparities between the different treatment received by expatriates, as well as differences between the work done at headquarters and in the United States.

All expatriates identified differences between the HR policies between the country where the headquarter is located and the United States, emphasizing that salaries in Houston are more advantageous and that, according to E1, the compensation amount received can be

three times larger than in the home country of the company. He also emphasizes that the career path is best in Houston because the city is located in the center of oil and gas. E3 also highlights the benefits received in the United States and, as a disadvantage, talks about the distance from home and family. E2 said that in the United States people work more hours and E4 tells the differences between the vacations and holidays policy between the two countries.

4. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

From the theoretical approaches regarding expatriation and analysis based on interviews with expatriates of the company referred, new factors were found related to the adjustment in the destination country that confronted some of the guidelines found in the literature. Although studies indicate the Anticipatory Adjustment as decisive for the success of the expatriation process, it was found that the lack of preparation to half expatriate did not compromise their perception of success in international assignments.

This fact is proven by the high score indicated by the interviewees, as well as one of the interviewees have highlighted that the absence of appropriate monitoring did not affect his adaptation process, and if there were such a process he believed that no improvement would be needed. Thus, the success is credited to its active attitude, however, is necessary to mention that the role of Human Resources is not quite clear for expatriates of the company referred, who said just knowing that it provides help in the expatriation process, without further details.

Moreover, still regarding the expatriates interviewed, it was observed that even though there has been a preparation, it was not complete because it did not covered intercultural aspects and the life in another country. Expatriates of the company did not receive any kind of preparation about language, cultural and social aspects and believe that there are factors to be improved regarding the pre-departure preparation, information on the process of obtaining a visa - as well as time required to receive it, considered by all expatriates too long – and, in addition, regarding the cultural issues, cover them with greater importance in this preparation. One of expatriates even claims that the relationship between them is nonexistent, and another that relates only to expatriates from the same company. The issue of socialization in the expatriation factor is essential for both the success of the company, and for the well-being of the employee, that needs to feel at home and ready to start a new life in another country.

Thus, answering the research problem, the Anticipatory Adjustment can influence positively to the success of the expatriation process, contributing to a sense of well being of the employees, but it is not a *sine qua non* condition for it to be successful.

From the analysis on the expatriation process of professionals and their intercultural adjustment in the destination country, the research on how companies use or not the Anticipatory Adjustment pointed out that this step is not provided at all to expatriates. Still, when it is put into practice, it is conducted in an incomplete way, because it does not address important issues of expatriation, such as the country of destination intercultural adjustment. However, stands out from the company a good selection of its employees, primarily for its proactive features that have just compensate for the lack of preparation received.

By conducting a case study on multinational concerned, it observed, from the data obtained, that the absence of an extensive earlier adjustment to all expatriates did not generate negative effects in your absence was not felt by most respondents, as well as not affected the perception of success of the expatriation process on their part, which was well evaluated by them. However, it can be said that the absence of this step in the expatriation process is felt by the lack of communication between the company and its employees and regarding the socialization with other company employees and on the same destination country.

Performing the case study in the multinational referred, it was observed, from the data obtained, the absence of an Anticipatory Adjustment extensive to all expatriates did not cause negative effects, where the absence was not felt by most of the interviewed, as well did not affect the perception of the success of their expatriation process. However, it can be said that the absence of this stage in the expatriation process is felt by the lack of communication between the company and its employees and with respect to the socialization with other employees of the company, in the country of destination.

Finally, the case study also allowed notice that the company actually works with the Anticipatory Adjustment, however it is not extended to all candidates for expatriation. Moreover, the refusal of information by those Brazilian companies mentioned and their expatriate employees to answer the questionnaire sent, leads to the belief that they do not have solid expatriation processes.

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6. ATTACHMENT A – INTERVIEW GUIDE

About you:

- 1 – What is your nationality, profession and age?
- 2 – For how long have you been working in Houston, TX?
- 3 – What is your main role in Houston? What was your previously performed role in Italy?
- 4 – In your opinion, what was the selection criteria used in the process of expatriation? Which did you consider the most appropriate?
- 5 – What personal and professional characteristics you think were essential to your selection for expatriation?
- 6 – Did you receive any type of preparation by your company before the international mobilization? (Yes or No)
- 7 – If the answer to the previous question was yes, what is your evaluation on the preparation received? Did you consider it important or critical to your international adjustment?
- 8 – In your opinion, what was missing and/or what needs to be improved in your process of expatriation?
- 9 – Do you consider that your expatriation process was successful? What do you attribute the success or failure of it?
- 10 – Do you think that you fit well in your destination country and to your duties performed there?
- 11 – Has your family accompanied you during the expatriation? If yes, how many people? There was some kind of preparation for them?
- 12 – Did you have the necessary support for your transfer?
- 13 – Have you ever attended any expatriation process before? If yes, tell us about your experience.
- 14 – Did you have a good cultural adaptation (language, coworker relationship, friends, social life) in your destination country?
- 15 – How would you rate the end result of your process of expatriation? (0-10)

About the company:

- 1 – Does your company have an expatriation policy? If yes, do you know any information about it?



- 2 – How important is the job of the Human Resources of the company for expatriation?
- 3 – The involvement of HR sector in the process of expatriation was helpful with any doubts and questions you had before the transfer? Comment.
- 4 – Human Resources policies (career path, compensation, training, holidays, salary etc.) of the original enterprise differ according to the country where you have been allocated? What are the advantages and disadvantages?