

The impact of the host-country language on international adjustment: Spanish engineers in Germany

Ruth Vijande Rodríguez and Guadalupe Ruiz Yepes

The main aim of this paper is to expand the knowledge on impact of host-language proficiency as predictor of international adjustment (work, interaction and general) and outcomes (job satisfaction, withdrawal intentions and performance) of a global workforce group of growing importance, the self-initiated expatriates (SIE). 870 Spanish engineers answered an online survey (part of a PhD research). Aiming to validate an international adjustment framework based on the model of Black *et al.* (1991), with the outcomes extensions suggested by Bhaskar-Shrinivas *et al.* (2005) and new factors relevant for the SIE. The analysis was done with ATLAS.ti 7 and IBM SPSS. The paper provides empirical insights about how host-country language proficiency characterizes the sample. It suggests that despite intensive training, financed by companies or expatriates directly, German is a “hard” language for Spaniards to learn and be proficient at. It also has consequences in their career development, as English might be the theoretical official language at international companies, but German is still the most used at the work place.

Keywords: international labor migration, expatriate, self-initiated expatriate, international adjustment, host-country language, high skilled labor, engineers, Spain, Germany.

El impacto del idioma del país de acogida en el proceso de ajuste internacional: el caso de ingenieros españoles en Alemania. Este artículo de investigación tiene como objetivo ampliar los conocimientos sobre el impacto de la competencia en el lenguaje del país anfitrión como predictor en el proceso de ajuste internacional (en el trabajo, de interacción y general) y su impacto en el ámbito laboral (satisfacción, intenciones de abandono y rendimiento) de un grupo mundial de trabajadores de creciente importancia; los auto-expatriados (SIE). Para ello, 870 ingenieros españoles respondieron a una encuesta on-line (parte de una investigación de tesis doctoral), con el objetivo de validar un modelo de ajuste internacional basado en el modelo de Black *et al.* (1991), con las

extensiones sobre los impactos laborales sugeridas por Bhaskar-Shrinivas *et al.* (2005) y nuevos factores relevantes para el SIE. El análisis se realizó con ATLAS.ti 7 y IBM SPSS. El artículo proporciona información empírica sobre cómo se caracteriza la muestra con el idioma del país anfitrión. Sugiere que, a pesar de la formación intensiva, financiada por empresas o los expatriados directamente, el alemán es un idioma “duro” para los españoles de aprender, especialmente si se tiene como objetivo lograr un alto nivel de dominio. También tiene consecuencias en su desarrollo profesional, ya que aunque el inglés sea el idioma oficial en las empresas internacionales, el alemán sigue siendo el más utilizado en el lugar de trabajo.

Palabras claves: migración laboral internacional, expatriado, auto-expatriado, ajuste internacional, idioma del país de acogida, mano de obra cualificada, ingenieros, España, Alemania.

1. Introduction

Context

Recent years are marked by two phenomena in the socio-economic field: first, the globalization of the economy, which is increasing the internationality of companies. Second, the financial crisis and economic imbalances between different geographic areas, resulting in increased migration flows (Simon 2015).

In the case of Germany, its global business expansion and the consequent internationalization of its companies are identified as key to the country's current economic stability. In addition to these factors, high demands of technological innovation also create a great need for high-skilled workers. The shortage of professionals is further exacerbated by the negative demographic trends in Germany (German Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs¹ - BAMS 2015).

In the case of Spain, globalization has contributed to the country's financial crisis, as being an open economy, which has been affected by both internal and external problems. One substantial result is the increase in unemployment rates, especially among younger generations. This has generated a flow of migrants, for which Germany is currently one of the most chosen destinations (Spanish Statistical Office² - INE 2015).

Statement of the problem

Due to the rapid rise of international labor mobility in the last years in Europe, new issues arise that require major changes, not only for

governments coordinating initiatives, but also organizations have to face new challenges in managing international human resources (Collings *et al.* 2007). Global human resources present many opportunities, but also risks, such as withdrawals or cross-cultural ineffectiveness with all the costs related. Furthermore, failed international experiences can damage firm reputation, disrupt relationships with locals, and negatively affect expatriate's psychological health (Fisher & Hartel 2003). Therefore, with increasing expansion into international markets and a bigger global workforce, organizations shall give even greater attention to the selection, training and adjustment of their international employees specially regarding their host country language skills.

2. Literature review

Self-initiated expatriates (SIE)

The overwhelming majority of research on labor migration in recent decades has focused almost exclusively on a specific population: organizational expatriates (OE), employees that are sent by their companies to foreign countries (Edström & Galbraith 1977). This limited approach has led to a poor understanding of the experiences of expatriates that do not fit in this description; in particular, those employees who work abroad on their own initiative (Suutari & Brewster 2000). This gap in the literature has led to limited knowledge of the SIE group, which can potentially be problematic for the practical management of these workers, due to the large and growing number of employees who fulfill the SIE classification (Jokinen *et al.* 2008).

In fact, as noted in Peltokorpi and Froese (2009), “little is known about any international adaptation of SIE or differences between OE and SIE”. In other words, while research conducted on expatriates sent abroad by their organizations is compelling, it is not clear to what extent the results of this research can be generalized to the experiences of expatriates that have started their experience abroad by their own initiative.

International adjustment

The expatriate literature has offered a wide array of potential explanations for the international assignment failures, a lack of adjustment to the host culture being among the most prominent (Black & Gregersen 2007). Adjustment has been defined as the extent to which expatriates successfully cope with the nuances of their new environment (Takeuchi

2010). Expatriates' adjustment has behavioral impacts in organizations, such as job dissatisfaction, early return, or poor work performance (Bhaskar-Shrinivas *et al.* 2005); which clearly have an economic effect in the companies.

Framework for International Adjustment

According to recent reviews (Mendenhall *et al.* 2002; Hechanova *et al.* 2003; Bhaskar-Shrinivas *et al.* 2005), the international adaptation model proposed by Black, Mendenhall and Oddou in 1991 is the most influential and often cited theoretical framework in the research about expatriates. One contribution of this model is its multifactorial adjustment conceptualization, since adjustment is measured as the degree of stress absence in an international experience associated with three main dimensions:

- general (GA), comfort associated with various cultural factors, such as general living conditions, food or entertainment
- interaction (IA), associated comfort in relationships with nationals of the host country (HC), both inside and outside of work; and
- work (WA), associated adjustment with the job role and organization (see Figure 1).

Organizational outcomes

Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Harrison, Shaffer and Luk (2005) conducted a meta-analysis of the research so far (66 studies with 8.474 expatriates) based on the model of Black *et al.* (1991). Perhaps one of their most interesting conclusions was to add three outcomes of international adjustment for the organizations to assess expatriate effectiveness: job satisfaction, withdrawal intentions and performance. Each of these variables has implications for human resources policies (Judge *et al.* 2001).

Job satisfaction is defined as the “emotional state resulting from the evaluation of own work or work experience” (Locke 1976). It is supposed to happen after a successful international work that fit requirements and the development of successful relationships with company workers abroad and customers (Shaffer & Harrison 1998).

Due to difficulties in accessing figures on the number of expatriates who leave their job, most of the research on the consequences of adjustment has focused on the intentions of staying at work and the decisions to returning to the country of origin or wanting to end the assignment.

They are precursors to finishing the international assignment or returning prematurely (Shaffer & Harrison 1998). Domestic research staff rotation (Lee & Mowday 1997) suggested that leaving a job, or in this case **withdrawal intentions** (start to develop the idea to leave), may be a reaction to reduce sources of negative emotional responses to their environment.

A hypothesis constantly used in research on expatriates, is that a poor fit can result in poor **performance** (Caliguri 1997). In research on the domestic setting, the theoretical and the empirical results support the idea that psychological stress can have negative effects on performance: it creates fatigue, which deprives individuals of the energy needed to successfully perform the tasks (Cohen 1980).

Proficiency in the host-country language (HCL)

Impact on adjustment

Local language proficiency's relationship to expatriate adjustment has intuitive appeal, but little empirical support. Language skills shall allow expatriates to form social networks, solve workplace problems, and acquire abilities that shall enhance their job satisfaction (Naumann 1993b). From the socio-analytic perspective (Hogan & Shelton 1998), proficiency in the HCL facilitates foreign workers' cross-cultural adjustment through the need to *get along* with locals and find meaning in cultural differences. A high level of proficiency in HCL can enable expatriates to adopt appropriate work values and behave appropriately in the workplace (Takeuchi *et al.* 2002).

HCL proficiency has been shown to facilitate interactions with locals outside the workplace and general adjustment to the HC (Peltokorpi 2008; Selmer 2006; Takeuchi *et al.* 2002). For example, this proficiency can induce and foster expatriates' daily interactions with locals and help them to understand the local culture (Froese 2010; Takeuchi *et al.* 2002). This increased understanding of the HC culture enables foreign workers to *get along* and interact more effectively with their hosts. Thus, the more proficient the foreign worker is in the HCL, the easier it is to enjoy various aspects of his or her life in the HC (adjustment).

By contrast, insufficient HCL proficiency can consequently act as a natural barrier to intercultural communication and information flows in the workplace and have a negative influence on foreign workers' work-related adjustment. Anxiety/uncertainty management theory maintains that limited proficiency in the HCL can reduce foreign workers' motivation to interact with HC nationals (Gudykunst 1986). A low level of

HCL proficiency can limit a foreign worker's social interactions in the HC to other foreigners or to a small number of host nationals who are proficient enough in English or some shared language (Park *et al.* 1996). In support, low HCL proficiency is found to have a negative impact on expatriates' general and interaction adjustment, as seen in China (Selmer 2006) and Japan (Peltokorpi 2008). Expatriates with insufficient HCL proficiency are more likely to be categorized as out-group members (Peltokorpi 2007; Toh & Denisi 2007). Besides, expatriates can be excluded from communication networks due to the natural tendency of people to interact in their native languages (Froese & Peltokorpi 2010). Therefore, a lack of HCL skills isolates expatriates at the workplace and leads to lower-quality relationships (Froese 2010), with the natural consequences of a lower adjustment.

Impact on organizational results

The idea of the impact of local language proficiency on expatriate performance is also straight forward. People who can speak the local language should be better able to understand and adapt to the local culture, consequently perform better on the expatriate job assignment. However, HCL proficiency's relationship to expatriate performance has, as mentioned, little empirical support.

The meta-analysis by Bhaskar-Shrinivas *et al.* (2005) showed that HCL proficiency was associated to general and interaction adjustment. Another example is the research by Peltokorpi (2008), that found that language proficiency was predictive of general and work adjustment of expatriates in Japan. Ward *et al.* (2007) used English language ability as a variable in their relationship to psychological, sociocultural, and academic adaptation in a group of Asian and Western international students. The results of this study suggested that English language ability was related to fewer adjustment problems.

Another research that investigated the relationship between HCL proficiency and expatriate outcomes was a study conducted by Chen *et al.* (2010) on Philippine expatriates working in Taiwan. In their study, they found that HCL ability was able to predict performance. A particularly interesting aspect of the study was that English was the language of the workplace and Chinese was the language of the culture. The results showed that while English language proficiency was positively related to job performance, the expatriate's Chinese language ability was negatively related to job performance.

If the results of all of these studies are taken together, then a very strong case can be made for, at a minimum, proficiency in the language of the workplace being an important factor for expatriate success.

3. Theoretical Model

As part of a PhD research with the goal to analyze international adjustment for Spanish engineers in Germany, the model used as reference was the one of Black *et al.* (1991), with the outcomes extensions detailed by Bhaskar-Shrinivas *et al.* (2005) and new factors relevant for the SIE. This paper focuses just on the HCL skills impact on international adjustment and organizational outcomes, as it can be seen in Figure 1.

Hypothesis

In order to cover the gap in expatriate literature, as discussed in the above paragraphs, the following hypotheses have been developed:

H1. Expatriate’s adjustment (general, work, and interaction) mediate the relationship between expatriate HCL proficiency and organizational outcomes (job satisfaction, withdrawal intentions and job performance).

H2. Expatriate’s adjustment (general, work, and interaction) mediate the relationship between expatriate’s adjustment to HCL and organizational outcomes (job satisfaction, withdrawal intentions and job performance).

H2. Expatriate’s adjustment (general, work, and interaction) mediate the relationship between family’s adjustment to HCL and organizational outcomes (job satisfaction, withdrawal intentions and job performance).

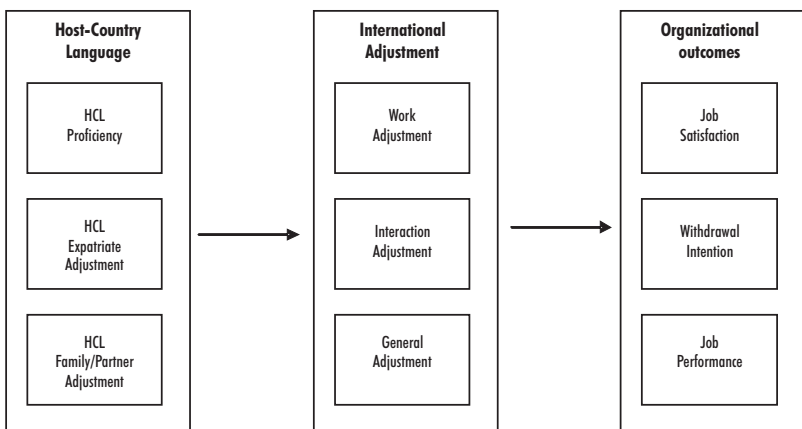


Figure 1. *Research Theoretical Model*

4. Methodology

The methodology applied in this study is consistent with repeated calls for a deeper contextualization of research, the investigation of less studied topics and unique settings, and the use of innovative methods in the field of international business (Tung 2008; Caprar 2011).

Sample

Population

It is necessary to mention that most of the research up to date is based on anglo-saxon populations' environments. Therefore, to expand the novelty of the research the chosen population were Spanish engineers in Germany.

As of 1.1.2015, there were 4,146 Spanish engineers working in Germany. The active working population is 57,795 Spaniards of the total of 146,846 living in Germany. Observing the evolution of Spanish engineers in Germany, it has been a steady increase from 724 in 2000 to 4,146 in 2015 (BAMS 2015).

The number of engineers in Germany has also increased since 2000, from 660,353 to 880,582 in 2014 (VDI⁴, The Association of German Engineers). Although there are up to 1.7 million with an engineer degree, not all work strictly in the profession. 156,100 engineers are foreigners and have obtained their degree from a foreign university; 113,500 are foreigners, but they achieved their degree at a German university (VDI 2014). Currently, the unemployment rate among engineers in Germany does not even reach 4%, with 32,506 professionals (BAMS 2015). VDI predicts that due to the demographic evolution, there will be a generational deficit of 15,000 engineers p.a. that shall be attracted from abroad to conduct their studies in Germany or by means of international recruitment.

As for Spain, the number of engineers is 470,000; 11% are unemployed, below the average for most occupations in Spain. However, in the last ten years, the number of engineering students has decreased 21%.

Sample Access

Contact to the sample was performed using various channels, but the largest number of responses was obtained using professional social networks, as LinkedIn and Xing. An invitation to participate in this study was sent to more than 1,200 engineers living in Germany. 870 eligible par-

ticipants participated (21% of the total population of 4.146), a response rate of 72% percent, which fulfils the requirements for further testing of a confidence level of 95%. From the 870 responses, 837 met the proposed requirements and 724 fulfilled all criteria for statistical analysis.

Sample Description

90% of the sample of Spanish engineers is SIE and just 10% OE. Regarding the demographics, 69% of the participants were male and 31% women. The average age was 32 years. Regarding the academic level, the largest group, was with 61% “master” engineers (10-12 semesters studies), in mechanical (19%), telecommunications (14%) or information technology (12%). Working as R&D engineers (25%), project managers (17%), in production (12%) or consultants (10%). In terms of geographical distribution, the largest number lives in the Munich (27%), Stuttgart (16%) and Cologne (15%) area. This is plausible, as they are the German areas with largest population and vacancies for engineers (VDI 2014).

Sample Particularities

The Spanish migration to Germany has profoundly changed since 2008, specially compared to the population characteristics of the big immigration wave in the 1960s (C. Pfeffer-Hoffmann 2014): There is a bigger mixture of social classes, the main motivators are a mixture of job search and education, they are more mobile as the bureaucratic barriers are reduced.

According to Vilar Sánchez (2016), the Spanish migrants to Germany nowadays are much better qualified than their ancestors in the 1960s. Most of them having a university qualification. However, one point they have in common with their ancestors is that learning the German language is seeing as being a huge challenge, for some of them even as a hurdle impossible to take (K. Vilar Sánchez 2016). But regarding this difficulties with the German language Spaniards are not alone. Other nationalities that migrate to Germany have to face the same problems with the German as their host-country language (C. Faraco Blanco 2014).

The conditions in which Spanish expatriates travel nowadays to Germany are also very different to those that the Spanish expatriates of the 1960s had to deal with. According to Muñoz Sánchez (2012) in the 60s the expatriates coming from the south of the peninsula had to travel to Madrid and the Basque Country before being able to reach Germany. They had to travel in packed third class carriages, and usually did not get the food and beverages promised by the corrupt agencies of the Franco Regime that kept the money they received from the German Government for the expatriates.

Data collection

The main data collection instrument used was an online survey. It is a technique that ensures consistency, has the advantage of anonymity and participants can respond with enough time. The first version of the survey was tested with a pilot group of 15 participants. The final version was posted online. The whole questionnaire had 175 items, as it was part of a PhD research. Expatriate adjustment was measured with 12 items by using Black's (1998) scale. Organizational outcomes were measured with 9 items using Caligiuri (1997) scale. Besides, open-end questions were placed, so engineers could elaborate some answers about their own experiences.

Measures and data analysis

For this research, qualitative data analysis methodologies were used.

From the qualitative perspective, the open-end questions of the survey were intended to explore new activities and realities not described in the literature: 1) motivations and expectations to move to Germany, to identify subgroups within the expatriate population, 2) verify the effectiveness of current management strategies of companies, whether facilitate or fail to the adjustment of their foreign employees; and 3) identify areas of these programs that could be improved by obtaining relevant and useful for decision-making information on them. The statements were analyzed with the ATLAS.ti software to find groups of topics.

From a quantitative point of view, it is a partially confirmatory study, since it checks the validity of the Black *et al.* (1991) framework for the sample population selected. At the same time, it was an exploratory study, since factors were added to the model: i) as Bhaskar-Shrinivas proposed in 2005, with adjustment effects on organizations, such as performance, job satisfaction and intention abandonment; and ii) with new factors considered relevant for the SIE. Descriptive statistics were used in the data analysis with the SPSS.

5. Results

Analysis

LANGUAGE SKILLS

HCL Proficiency

The results indicate that most engineers have a medium-high level of German, as most of the jobs required a certification of the language pro-

iciency as described in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Bilingual (5%), C1 (32%), B2 (28%), B1 (17%), A2 (10%), A1 (5%), none (3%).

68% of the engineers had previous international experience (language courses, internships, working), predominating Erasmus studies in European countries.

HCL Training

Being asked “in which topics would need more training”, 66% of the Spanish engineers stated that they needed more training in the German language, although their language skills are high level. The intercultural aspect is not considered critical by respondents, not reaching 14% of the respondents that see a need for it.

Among Spaniards, German has the reputation of being a difficult language. Some of the challenges the engineers mentioned were: difficult vocabulary and phonetics, the fact that adjectives, pronouns and nouns are declined, the fact that there are three different genders (masculine, feminine and neuter) and the use of prepositions. Unexpectedly they did not mention the Konjunktiv I and II.

Use of foreign languages at the workplace

In the selection process, 23% of the Spanish engineers had an English proficiency test and 17% a German skills test. Just 2% had a cross-cultural testing; however, 16% state they think they were selected by the companies due to their intercultural skills.

The majority of the Spanish engineers, 77% of the cases, use the German language at the workplace company. Although it is noteworthy that more than half, 57%, also use English. This could be due to the lack of knowledge of German at the required level or simply have to communicate with international colleagues or customers who do not speak German. 20% of the engineers answered that they use Spanish and 6% another language.

The Spanish engineers were asked, if not being bilingual in German impacts negatively their career development at their company. The majority agree with the statement: 26% strongly agree (7 in the Likert scale), 19% (6), 16% (5), 11% (4), 3% (3), 10% (1) and 12% strongly disagree.

INTERNATIONAL ADJUSTMENT

Work adjustment

The adjustment at work scored high values with an average of 5.7 out of 7. Moreover, by asking respondents what their company did that facili-

tated their adaptation, some reiterated the importance of support to increase their German language skills, to encourage good working atmosphere, social network activities – even out of office events, or help with the bureaucracy.

Interaction adjustment

Respondents gave just a medium score to their adaptation in interaction with German nationals, 4.4 out of 7. However, it seems much easier to interact with the Germans at work (5.2), compared with in the free time (3.7).

General adjustment

It scores slightly higher than interaction adjustment, with an average of 4.8 out of 7, but almost 1 point lower than work adjustment. The highest adjustment is shown with the life conditions in general and lowest with the climate. Besides, asking the Spanish engineers for their adaptation facilitators, the most mentioned argument is “prior knowledge of the German language and culture” and the “own personality/drive”.

ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOMES

Job satisfaction

It is the highest valued variable from the outcomes, and the 4th in the total ranking, with a score of 5.5 out of 7. 18% select the maximum score of 7 to “being satisfied with the role”, 28% “with the work environment” and 31% “with the company”.

Job withdrawal intentions

It has an average of 3.3 out of 7, but with the highest average standard deviation of 2.1. Besides, 39% state that they want to stay in the current position; 23% want to change company within Germany; 18% want to look for a job in Spain; 15% want to change jobs within their company and 14% want to find work in another country.

Job Performance

The self-assessment done by the engineers present high results, with an average of 5.6 out of 7. Although it gets lower (5.1) when they are asked to compare their performance to their colleagues’. In the open end ques-

tions, 113 Spanish engineers stated that they got very positive reviews in their appraisals.

Other Findings

Some other findings in the research, focusing on the HCL for this group are:

To learn the German language is not the main push-motivator to go to Germany

Just 19% of the cases stated that learning German was a motivator to go to Germany:

“I always wanted to work abroad, learn another language and get to know another working culture” (P523).

“For me, as an engineer, Germany was the place to go. It was clear that I needed to learn the language first. So I spent the first six months just living and learning the language directly in Germany, doing an integration course” (P419)

Difficulties with the German language are not the main pull-motivator to want to go back to Spain

Just 14% of the engineers selected that difficulties with the German language was a reason to want to go back to Spain and 9% difficulty to adapt to the German culture:

“As I could not speak properly German and my colleagues’ English was very basic, it comes to a point when my colleagues were not even trying to communicate with me. It was too much, then I decided to prepare things to go back” (P523).

German is a “hard” language to learn

Compared with the English language, many Spanish engineers state that German is a language hard to learn and takes much longer to become proficient at than in English:

“I had some (German) courses at the university before coming to Germany. But when I arrived I understood nothing. When I went to England before, I was able to understand and communicate much faster, although I was not proficient at all” (P026).

“To speak and write the language is really complex, with all the cases and declinations. I think I will never be able to speak it perfectly” (P016).

“He (my boss) speaks quite closed Bavarian dialect that differs greatly from standard German I learned and sometimes I can hardly understand him” (P197)

German lessons provided by companies are not enough

In 55% of the cases, their companies helped them with German lessons. However, 66% considered that they still need training:

“German classes were only paid by the company during the first year, 3h per week. I would have needed to have classes daily and with smaller groups or even individuals” (P856)

Many SIEs have invested in language classes, but none in cross-cultural training

106 Spanish engineers claimed to have invested their own money to attend German courses. The amount varies from a few hundred euros to several thousands. None seems to have invested in intercultural training, although it could be part of the language course.

“Although I know there are free language courses, I preferred to do an intensive professional course” (P596)

“I started with the free integration courses in Germany and then I took further courses I paid by myself” (P158)

What has helped them the most to adjust in Germany?

Regarding language skills 56 cases stated that previous knowledge of German language and culture helped, compare with just 5 cases about English.

“I had been before in Germany as an Erasmus student, so I had previous knowledge of the language before I came back to work” (P567)

“The English language is also a good substitute for some things in Germany” (P204)

What have their employers done that helped them the most?

Again, the most frequent answer was that employers provided German lessons or helping with the language have made things much easier:

“Provide me German lessons” (P133)

“Speaking in German from day one with me” (P687)

“Having a private teacher for German, so that my wife could also receive German classes” (P841)

What made their adjustment more difficult?

In this case, also the language takes the predominant place of the engineers’ answers, at least for the initial phase:

“Though I have been in Germany for a while and I can speak now good German, from the beginning it has been the topic that has given me more stress” (P133)

“The German language has created for me at the beginning many misunderstandings for me inside and outside the workplace” (P233)

“As my family does not speak good German, outside work we mainly have non-German acquaintances” (P862)

“Although I have a good German level, it is sometimes difficult to explain what I mean. So I have noticed that I am becoming less talkative here. I need to work on it” (P468)

Although most employers are international companies, German is still the official language at the workplace

Even though all employers seem to be companies with international businesses and English is in many cases stated to be the official language, German is still the most used language at the workplace:

“In the interview I was told English is the official language. However, that is absolutely not the case. I have many colleagues that just speak rudimentary English, especially the oldest ones” (P476).

Better career opportunities, if you can speak German

Besides the comments being made about negative impact on the career, if not being bilingual in German; many Spanish engineers stated that speaking the German language can open many doors at the work place:

“The German language is very important when working as an engineer in the country. Almost all companies require a high level to full professional competence. If you only speak English as a foreign language, you can find work at the end, but with lower pay and less responsibility in the majority of cases” (P069)

“I am in my second job in this country and the conditions and the type of work improved incredibly when I changed. They appreciate much that you can speak the language and have previous experience in Germany. In my first job they tried the Spanish accept a salary slightly lower than it should, with the excuse that they do not speak good German. It is not very clear but it’s there” (P702)

“To speak German to find a job was more important than I expected. Although you can find jobs that use English, certainly speaking the language opens a lot of doors“ (P147)

“Due to my German level, I do not have a job according to my educational level. That is, my position is still basic and I am still as in a period of acclimatization. My goal would be to direct my own projects” (P799)

“My problems up to now were mainly due to the language barrier and not the character or attitude of my colleagues. Sometimes I do not get 100% but it's because my German is not yet perfect. In some cases we finish speaking in English, but it is basically a language problem” (P114)

6. Conclusions

Despite the shift in thinking about the added value of diversity in international business in recent years, recruitment and retention policies of foreign workers are occurring at a very slow pace (Collings, Scullion & Dowling 2009). The focus of the HR activities in the organizations is still mainly given to HC nationals employees (Collings y Mellahi 2009). Recruiting in foreign countries is still considered a risky and high investment, mainly due to the employee's lack of HCL skills and their expected intentions to return to their home-country. It is undeniably that at least initially the investments are higher with expatriates (OEs even higher than with SIEs) than with locals (language courses, logistical help, support needed from supervisor/colleagues, etc.). However, benefits for the companies shall be able to compensate the effort and return on investment they made.

Therefore, the International Human Resources department should make clear the benefits for the organization of the foreign employees and encourage the incorporation of this type of intercultural profiles. Technical, language and cross-cultural skills are key for international business. Consequently, organizations shall support the training to increase language skills for their foreign employees; it impacts their business immediately –in the contact with external / internal customers and colleagues, and also on the long term– increases employee satisfaction and their career opportunities at the organization, as a result reducing the withdrawal intentions of their foreign employees.

Besides, although they are non-work aspects, organizations should facilitate and encourage family / partners to migrate with the employees. Also make them participants of HCL training, with their employers. The motivators to migrate are rational and mainly work driven. However, drivers to return are mainly emotional, which seem hard to

be reduced by new acquaintances in the HC. Nevertheless, companies can encourage social support from supervisors and colleagues, establishing mentor, buddies or social networks.

Being career development so relevant for SIEs, organizations should emphasize to the supervisors, the need of frequent and clear feedback. So misunderstandings, due to language or cultural effects, can be clarified and the status in the adjustment process can be checked. Besides, clear feedback shall be given regarding performance, steps and goals to be achieved for career development and clarify their perspectives within the company.

On a country level, probably HC benefit on the short term with the migration of high skilled workers, but home countries could also profit on the long term. Migrants can build momentum on their return to Spain, applying the knowledge acquired in foreign countries; launching new business projects, improve the production and trade system, so that at the end, they will be contributing to job creation and economic growth.

In this research, it has been confirmed that the sample of Spanish engineers is in 90% of the cases self-initiated (SIEs), and just 10% organizational expatriates (OEs). The main drivers and characteristics are also matching this heterogeneous population in most of the cases: self-initiation to move; mainly career driven; no limit on time perspective to stay abroad, job roles in low hierarchy levels or no repatriation agreements.

7. Suggestions for further research

The findings have to be interpreted in light of the limitations that are associated with this study. First, the study is based on expatriates from Spain in Germany and is thus, to a certain degree context-bound. We deliberately took into account the specific context of Germany. Future studies can show to what extent the findings are generalizable to other contexts.

Second, this study and the majority of other studies on expatriates are not able to provide a longitudinal account of expatriate organizational outcomes due to cross-sectional designs (Hechanova *et al.* 2003; Bhaskar-Shrinivas *et al.* 2005). This is unfortunate because they are, as international adjustment, time-related processes. Longitudinal designs are important because the salience of certain predictors may vary in time and some factors can be more important at the onset of an assignment than later during the assignment.

Third, a research focus could be to compare degrees of adjustment of expatriates who have received various types and degrees of pre-departure language training and who have had various degrees of previous cross-cultural experience. Work, interaction, and general adjustment outcomes may be measured through a combination of post-expe-

rience scores and 360-degree evaluations of expatriate performance.

Finally, expatriate organizational outcomes can be influenced by several additional factors (see Bhaskar-Shrinivas *et al.* 2005). Future research will benefit by integrating more antecedent factors.

Despite these limitations, the present study takes a significant step forward and sheds some interesting light onto the complexity of expatriate adjustment and organizational outcomes. At the same time, it underlines the need for more empirical work in this area.

Ruth Vijande Rodríguez
Fakultät für International Business (IB)
Universidad de Heilbronn
74081 – Heilbronn – Alemania
Ruth.vijande@googlegmail.com
ORCID: 0000-0002-7047-6341

Guadalupe Ruiz Yepes
Fakultät für International Business (IB)
Universidad de Heilbronn
74081 – Heilbronn – Alemania
guadalupe.ruiz-yepes@hs-heilbronn.de
ORCID: 0000-0002-8781-1759

Recepción: 09/11/2016; Aceptación: 18/02/2018

Electronic Sources:

- ¹ German Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. 2016: <<http://cort.as/-6CHB>>.
- ² Spanish Statistical Office. 2016: <<http://cort.as/-6CHF>>.
- ³ German Federal Affairs Office. 2016: <<http://cort.as/-6CHL>>.
- ⁴ VDI, German Engineers Association. 2016: <<http://cort.as/-6CHS>>.

References

- Berry, John. 1997. "Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation". *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 46:1. 5-34.
- Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Purohit, David Harrison, Margaret Shaffer, and Dora Luk. 2005. "Input-based and time based models of international adjustment: meta-analytic evidence and theoretical extensions". *Academy of Management Journal*, 48:2. 257-281.
- Black, Stewart. 1988. "Work Role Transition: A study of American Expatriate Managers in Japan". *Journal of International Business Studies*, 19: 2. 277-294.
- Black, Stewart and Gregory K. Stephens. 1989. "The Influence of the Spouse on American Expatriate Adjustment and Intent to Stay in Pacific Rim Overseas Assignments". *Journal of Management*, 15: 4. 529-544.
- Black, Stewart, Mark Mendenhall, and Gery Oddou. 1991. "Toward a comprehensive model of international adjustment: an integration of multiple theoretical perspectives". *Academy of Management Review*, 16:2. 291-317.
- Black, Stewart and Hal Gregersen. 1999. "The Right Way to Manage Expats". *Harvard Business Review*, 77:2. 52-62.
- Black, Stewart and Hal Gregersen. 2007. "The Right Way to Manage Expats". In: *Reading and Cases in International Human Resource Management*, Mark Mendenhall and Oddou Gery (eds.), 119-128. Oxford: Routledge. 4th ed.

- Brewster, Chris, Jaime Bonache, Jean Luc Cerdin, and Vesa Suutari. 2014. "Exploring expatriate outcomes". *International Journal of Human Resource Management*. 25. 1921-1937.
- Bonache, Jaime, Chris Brewster, and Vesa Suutari. 2007. "Knowledge, international mobility and careers". *International Studies of Management and Organization*, 37. 5-21.
- Caligiuri, Paula. 1997. "Assessing expatriate success: Beyond just being there. New approaches to employee management", *International business journal*, 4.117-140.
- Caprar, Dan. 2011. "Foreign locals: A cautionary tale on the culture of MNC local employees". *Journal of International Business Studies*, 42. 608-628.
- Chen, Georg, Bradley Kirkman, Kim Kim, Crystal Farh, and Subra Tangirala. 2010. "When does cross-cultural motivation enhance expatriate effectiveness? A multilevel investigation of the moderating roles of subsidiary support and cultural distance". *Academy of Management Journal*, 53.110-1130.
- Cohen, Stephen. 1980. "After effects of stress on human performance and social behavior: A review of research and theory". *Psychological Bulletin*, 88.82-108.
- Collings, David, Hugh Scullion, and Michael Morley. 2007. "Changing patterns of global staffing in the multinational enterprise: Challenges to the conventional expatriate assignment and emerging alternatives". *Journal of World Business*, 42. 198 - 213.
- Collings, David and Kamel Mellahi. 2009. "Strategic talent management: A review and research agenda". *Human Resource Management Review*, 19. 304-313.
- Collings, David, Hugh Scullion, and Peter Dowling. 2009. "Global staffing: A review and thematic research agenda". *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 20. 1251-1269.
- Doherty, Neville. 2013. "Understanding the Self-initiated Expatriate: A Review and Directions for Future Research". *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 15. 447-469.
- Babcock, Richard and Berta Du-Babcock. 2001. "Language-Based Communication Zones in International Business Communication". *International Journal of Business Communication*, 38: 4. 372-412.
- Edström, Andreas and Jay Galbraith. 1977. "Transfer of Managers as a Coordination and control Strategy in Multinational Organizations". *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 22. 248-263.
- Faraco Blanco and Christian Pfeffer-Hoffmann. 2014. *Arbeitsmigration nach Deutschland: Analysen zur Neuen Arbeitsmigration aus Spanien vor dem Hintergrund der Migrationsprozesse seit 1960* (244-283). Berlin: Mensch & Buch.
- Fisher, Gregory and Charmaine Härtel. 2003. "Cross-cultural effectiveness of Western expatriate. Thai client interactions: lessons learned for IHRM research and theory". *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal*, 10:4. 4-28.
- Florkowski, Gary and Daniel Fogel. 1999. "Expatriate Adjustment and Commitment: The Role of Host Unit Treatment". *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 10. 783-807.
- Froese, Fabian Jintae. 2010. "Acculturation experiences in South Korea and Japan", *Culture & Psychology*, 16:3. 333-348.
- Froese, Fabian Jintae and Vesa Peltokorpi. 2011. "Cultural distance and expatriate job satisfaction". *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 35. 49-60.
- Froese, Fabian Jintae. 2011. "Motivation and adjustment of self-initiated expatriates". *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 23: 6. 1095-1112.
- Froese, Fabian Jintae and Vesa Peltokorpi. 2013. "Organizational expatriates and self-initiated expatriates: Differences in cross-cultural adjustment and job satisfaction". *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 24. 1953-1967.
- Gudykunst, William. 1986. "Ethnicity, Types of Relationship, and Interethnic and Interethnic Uncertainty Reduction". In: *Interethnic Communication: Current Research*, Young Y. Kim (ed.), 201-24. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

- Hechanova, Regina, Terry Beehr, and Neil Christiansen. 2003. "Antecedents and Consequences of Employees' Adjustment to Overseas Assignment: A Meta-Analytic Review". *Applied Psychology*, 52:2. 213-236.
- Hogan, Robert and Don Shelton. 1998. "A socioanalytic perspective on job performance". *Human Performance*, 11. 129-144.
- Howe-Walsh, Liza and Birgit Schyns. 2010. "Self-initiated expatriation: Implications for HRM". *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 21. 261-273.
- Huff, Heather. 2013. "Language, cultural intelligence and expatriate success". *Management Research Review*, 36:6. 596-612.
- Inkson, Kerr, David Thomas, and Sean Barry. 1996. "Overseas Experience: Increasing individual and national competitiveness". *University Auckland Business Review*, 1. 52-61.
- Inkson, Kerr, Michelle Arthur, Jean Pringle, and Sean Barry. 1997. "Expatriate Assignment versus Overseas Experience: contrasting models of International Human Resource Development". *Journal of World Business*, 32. 351-368.
- Jokinen, Tiina, Chris Brewster, and Vesa Suutari. 2008. "Career capital during international work experiences: Contrasting self-initiated expatriate experiences and assigned expatriation". *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 19:6. 979-998.
- Jokinen, Tiina. 2010. "Development of career capital through international assignments and its transferability to new contexts". *Thunderbird International Business Review*, 52:4. 325-336.
- Judge, Timothy, Carl Thoresen, Joyce Bono, and Gregory Patton. 2001. "The job satisfaction-job performance relationship: A qualitative and quantitative review". *Psychological Bulletin*, 127. 376-407.
- Lazarova, Mila and Paula Caligiuri. 2001. "Retaining repatriates: the role of organizational support practices". *Journal of World Business*, 36:4. 389-401.
- Lee, Thomas and Richard Mowday. 1987. "Voluntary leaving of organization: An empirical investigation of Steers and Mowday's model of turnover". *Academy of Management Journal*, 30. 721-743.
- Locke, Edwin. 1976. "The nature and causes of job-satisfaction". In: *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, M. D. Dunnette (ed.), 1297-1349. Chicago: Rand-McNally.
- Mayrhofer, Wolfgang and Hugh Scullion. 2002. "Female expatriates in international business: empirical evidence from the German clothing industry". *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 13. 815-836.
- Mendenhall, Mark, Torsten Kühlmann, Günter Stahl, and Joyce Osland. 2002. "Employee development and expatriate assignments". In: *Handbook of Cross-Cultural Management*, Gannon Joan and Newman Karen (eds.), 155-183. Blackwell, Malden.
- Mol, Stefan, Marise Born, Madde Willemsen, and Henk Van Der Molen. 2005. "Predicting Expatriate Job Performance for Selection Purposes: A Quantitative Review". *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 36:5. 590-620.
- Muñoz Sánchez, Antonio. 2012. "Una introducción a la historia de la emigración española en la República Federal de Alemania (1960-1980)". *Iberoamericana*, 12:46. 23-42.
- Naumann, Earl. 1993. "Organizational Predictors of Expatriate Job Satisfaction". *Journal of International Business Studies*, 24:1. 61-81.
- Oddou, Gary, Joyce Osland, and Roger Blakeney. 2009. "Repatriating knowledge: Variables influencing the "transfer" process". *Journal of International Business Studies*, 40. 181-199.
- O'Sullivan, Sharon. 2013. "The empowering potential of social media for key stakeholders in the repatriation process". *Journal of Global Mobility*, 1. 264-286.
- Park, Cynthia, Anthony Smith, Gary Lautenschlager, Julie Earles, David Frieske, Meliassa Zwahr, and Christinne Gaines. 1996. "Mediators of long-term memory performance across the life span". *Psychology and Aging*, 11. 621-637.

- Peltokorpi, Vesa. 2007. "Intercultural communication patterns and tactics: Nordic expatriates in Japan". *International Business Review*, 16. 68-82.
- Peltokorpi, Vesa. 2008. "Cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates in Japan". *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 19. 588-1606.
- Peltokorpi, Vesa and Fabian Jintae Froese. 2009. "Organizational expatriates and self-initiated expatriates: who adjusts better to work and life in Japan?". *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 20. 1096-1112.
- Peltokorpi, Vesa and Fabian Jintae Froese. 2012. "Differences in self-initiated and organizational expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment". In: *Self-initiated Expatriation*, M. Andresen, A. Al Ariss and M. Walther (eds.), 142-165. Routledge: London.
- Pfeffer-Hoffmann, Christian. 2014. *Arbeitsmigration nach Deutschland: Analysen zur Neuen Arbeitsmigration aus Spanien vor dem Hintergrund der Migrationsprozesse seit 1960*. Berlin: Mensch & Buch.
- Reiche, Sebastian, Mila Lazarova, and Mok Shaffer. 2014. Me, myself and I: From individual-centered to multiple stakeholder perspectives in expatriate research. Panel presented at the Academy of International Business Annual Meeting.
- Reynolds, Adrienne. 2005. "An examination of the goodness-of-fit between the expatriate adjustment model and self-selecting expatriates". *Journal of Economic & Administrative Sciences*, 21:2. 52-67.
- Searle, Wendy and Coleen Ward. 1990. "The prediction of psychological and sociocultural adjustment during cross-cultural transitions". *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 14. 449-464.
- Selmer, Jan. 2006. Language ability and adjustment: Western expatriates in China. *Thunderbird International Business Review*, 48.3. 347-368.
- Shaffer, Mok and David Harrison. 1998. "Expatriates' psychological withdrawal from international assignments: Work, non-work, and family influences". *Personnel Psychology*, 51. 87-118.
- Shaffer, Mok, David Harrison, Matthe Gilley, and Dora Luk. 2001. "Struggling for balance amid turbulence on international assignments: work-family conflict, support and commitment". *Journal of Management*, 27:1. 99-121.
- Simon, Stephens. 2015. "The global financial crisis and migration: the experience of Irish graduates". *Journal of Global Mobility*, 3:1. 83-99.
- Suutari, Vesa and Chris Brewster. 2000. "Making Their Own Way: International Experience Through Self-Initiated Foreign Assignments". *Journal of World Business*, 35:4. 417-436.
- Takeuchi, Ryo, Seokawa Yun, and Paul Tesluk. 2002. "An examination of crossover and spillover effects of spousal and expatriate cross-cultural adjustment on expatriate outcomes". *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87. 655-666.
- Takeuchi, Ryo. 2010. "A critical review of expatriate adjustment research: Progress, emerging trends, and prospects". *Journal of Management*, 36. 1040-1064.
- Toh, Soo Min and Aangelo DeNisi. 2007. "Host country nationals as socializing agents: a social identity approach". *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 28:3. 281-301.
- Tung, Rosalie. 2008. "Human capital or talent flows: Implications for future directions in research on Asia Pacific". *Asia Pacific Business Review*, 14. 469-472.
- Van der Born, Floor and Vesa Peltokorpi. 2010. "Language policies and intra- and inter-unit communication in multinational companies: The role of human resource management practices". *Journal of Business Communication*, 47:2. 97-118.
- Vilar Sánchez, Karin. 2016. "Deutsch? - Das schaff ich schon! Spracherwerbsmotivation unter den spanischen Emigranten der neuen Generation". *German as a Foreign Language*, 2. 44-66.
- Ward, Christopher and James Liu. 2007. "Cross-cultural adaptation of Asian and Western international students in New Zealand". In: *Casting the individual in social and cultural contexts*, J. Liu et al. (eds.). Seoul: Kyoyook-Kwahak-Sa Publishing.

ANEX I

RESEARCH SURVEY OVERVIEW

VARIABLES / CONSTRUCTS	Definition	Classification	Survey items	Source
ANTICIPATORY				
Individual				
V1 A1	International experience	Multiple	18.6. Have you had international experience before moving to Germany?	Whitman (2013)
A2 V2	Language skills	Multiple	18.9. Current level of German and difficulties with this language 18.10. In what language do you communicate in your company	Own
V3 A3	Intercultural training	Qualitative	10.12. Own investment in training - see if anything in intercultural	Own
V4 A4	Realistic expectations	Quantitative	Expectations 1.2.1 -1.2.5 Germany	Own
		Multiple	2.5. Reasons for acceptance of work in Germany	
		Qualitative	1.2.6. Another Expectations Germany + 1.3. Clarify	
Organizational				
V5 A5	Technical / Management competency tests	Multiple	21. Location search 2.2. Search means 2.3. Selection processes 2.4. Reasons for selection of the company	Own
A6 V6	Intercultural competence tests	Multiple	2.3.6. Intercultural competence tests 2.3.7. Testing knowledge of German 2.3.8. English proficiency tests	Own
IN THE COUNTRY				
Individual				
V7 IC1	Self-efficacy	Quantitative	6. Your attitude to challenges 6.1. 6.2. 6.3. 6.4. 6.5.	Self-Efficacy Scale of Baessler and Schwarzer (1996)
V8 IC2	Relationship skills		No items in the questionnaire	
V9 IC3	Perceptual skills		No items in the questionnaire	
Non-work				
V10 IC4	New culture in the country	Multiple	5. Cultural News 5.1. Germans 5.2. The Spaniards 5.3. If you wish, clarify answer	Globe project. Black & Stefens 1989 Torbion 1982:
		Qualitative		
V11 IC5	Family Adjustment	Quantitative	4.2. Adapting family / partner in Germany	Black & Stefens 1989

Role				
V12 IC6	Role clarity	Quantitative	7.3. Clarity 7.3.1. - 7.3.5.	Rizzo, House, Lirtzman (1970)
V13 IC7	Role conflict	Quantitative	7.4. Conflict 7.4.1. - 7.4.5.	Rizzo, House, Lirtzman (1970)
V14 IC8	Flexibility discretion	Quantitative	7.5. Flexibility 7.5.1. - 7.5.3. (<u>7.5.2. Reverse</u>)	Black 1988
V15 IC9	Role novelty	Quantitative	7.2. Novelty 7.2.1. - 7.2.5	Black 1988
Organizational Culture				
V16 IC10	New organizational culture	Quantitative Qualitative	8. Corporate culture 8.1., <u>8.2.</u> -8.9. 8.10. Valuing Diversity Company	Cooke and Szumal (1993) Organizational Culture Inventory
V17 IC11	Social support in the organization	Quantitative Qualitative	9.1. Supervisor (9.1.1. - 9.1.5) <u>9.1.4. Reverse</u> 9.2. Your fellow 9.2.1. - 9.2.10. (<u>9.2.2., 9.2.9 and 9.2.10 reverse s</u>) 9.3. Clarify answers in 9.1 & 9.2.	VanMaanen and Schein's (1979) Ashford & Black, (1996) Bauer & Green (1998)
V18 IC12	Help in organizing logistics	Multiple Qualitative	3.1. Company support 3.2. What you'd need more help	Own
Socialization in the Organization				
V19 IC13	Socialization tactics	Quantitative	10.1.-10.9. House training (<u>10.9. Review. 10.6.</u>)	Jones (1986) & Own
V20 IC14	Socialization content	Multiple Qualitative	10.10. What else training 10.11. Training business hours 10.13. Clarify (qualitative) answers	Fisher (1986) & Own
VARIABLE MEDIATORS - ADJUSTMENT				
M1 V21	Work Adjustment	Quantitative	12.14. - <u>12.16.</u>	Black & Stephens, 1989
M2 V22	Interaction A.	Quantitative	12.11., <u>12.12.</u> , 12.13.	Black & Stephens, 1989
M3 V23	General Adjustment	Quantitative	12.1. - 12.10.	Black & Stephens, 1989
V21 V22 V23		Qualitative	May refer to M1, M2 or M3: 12.17. What has helped you?	
V21 V22 V23		Qualitative	12.18. What has your company done that has helped you the most 12.19. What difficults your integration 12.20. Clarify answers to 12 previous questions.	Own

OUTPUT VARIABLES				
R1 V24	Job satisfaction	Quantitative	14.2.1., 14.2.2., 14.2.3. 14.2.1. I am satisfied with job 14.2.2. The work environment is pleasant 14.2.3. I am pleased that I chose this company over others	Rizwan 2014
V25 R2	Job withdrawal intentions	Quantitative	16.2. Current exchange company intentional (16.2.1 - 16.2.3.)	Rizwan 2014, Yu <i>et al.</i> (2005)
		Multiple	16.1. Current employment intentions (16.1.1 - 16.1.7.) 16.3. Reasons to stay in your company (16.3.1 - 16.3.9.) 16.4. Reasons to change your company (16.4.1 - 16.4.8.)	Own
		Qualitative	16.5. Indicates which could do / have done your company for you to stay	Own
V26 R3	Performance	Quantitative	15. Performance 15.1. in general, 15.2. compared to colleagues	Smith, Organ, & Near (1993), Paula M. Caligiuri (1997)
		Qualitative	15.3. Performance results in the company	
		Multiple	15.4., 15.5. Have you been promoted, you think you deserve a promotion?	
NEW ANTICIPATORY & IN-COUNTRY VARIABLES				
V27 N1	Motivations go to host country	Multiple qualitative comments	1.1. Motivations to go to Germany	Own, based on studies (Suutari and Brewster, 2000), Inkson <i>et al.</i> (1997) on the SIEs
V28 N2	Intention to return to home country	Multiple qualitative comments	17. Return to Spain 17.1. When? 17.2. Conditions? 17.3. Reasons?	
V29 N3	Job conditions	Multiple qualitative comments	19. Employment situation 19.1. What is your contract? 19.2. What is the dedication of your contract? 19.3. Business sector 19.4. Nr.employees company 19.5. Job description 19.6. Current job according to education 19.7. Nr.jobs in Germany 19.8. All jobs according to education 19.9. Salary net in Spain 19.10 Salary net in Germany	
		Quantitative	19.11. Rate satisfaction with your salary in Germany	

V30 N4	Career development	Quantitative	11. Promotion 11.1. - 11.5 (11.1, 11.2, 11.5) 15.6. Language difficulty
		Qualitative	15.3. Performance results in the company
		Quantitative	15.4. You've been promoted 15.5. Deserve a promotion?
V31 N5	Support from family and partner	Quantitative	4.1.1. Support of your family to go to Germany
			4.1.2. Support of your family to stay in Germany
			4.1.3. Support of your partner to go to Germany
			4.1.4. Support of your partner to stay in Germany
V32 N6	Social environment	Multiple	13. Environment in Germany 13.1. - 13.4. German friends 13.5. Most common friends' nationality in Germany
			13.6. How often you contact your family in Spain
			13.7. How often you contact with friends in Spain
			13.8. How often follow news about Spain
			13.9. Channels to keep in touch with Spain
V33 N7	SOCIODEMO-GRAPHICS	Multiple	General information about engineers 18.1. Sex 18.2. Country of birth 18.3. Age 18.4. Academic level reached 18.5. Field of study 18.7. How many months have you been in Germany? 18.8. What region you live in Germany? 2.1. Job search place 2.2. Job Search channels General information about partner 4.1.5. Partner Nationality 4.1.6. Partner Country of Residence

Figure 2. Table with survey structure and questions

ANEX II

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS RESULTS

As it can be observed in the next Figure 3, the variables valued with highest agreement from the engineers were the family/partner support to go and stay in Germany; and their own assessment on self-efficacy. From adjustment point of view, the highest rated was Work adjustment, followed almost 1 point lower by family adjustment, with an average very similar to the engineers' general adjustment and in last position the interaction adjustment, half a point lower. These valuations were confirmed with the comments made in the survey, where many Spaniards expressed their difficulties to establish friendships with the host nationals.

Nr	Variable	Average	Av. SD	Av.Variance
1	V28 N2 Family / Partner support	5.88	1.4	2.0
2	V7 IC1 Self-efficacy	5.77	1.0	1.0
3	V23 M3 Work Adjustment	5.67	1.1	1.1
4	V24 R1 Job satisfaction	5.45	1.4	2.1
5	V4 A4 Realistic expectations	5.44	1.3	1.6
6	V12 IC6 Role clarity	5.44	1.3	1.7
7	V15 IC9 Role novelty	5.38	1.4	1.9
8	V26 R3 Performance	5.36	1.0	2.0
9	V17 IC11 Social support	5.25	1.4	2.1
10	V33 N7 Employment conditions	5.09	1.4	2.0
11	V14 IC8 Role flexibility	4.83	1.5	2.3
12	V11 IC5 Family adjustment	4.83	1.2	1.5
13	V30 N4 Social environment in Germany	4.81	1.8	3.1
14	V21 M1 General adjustment	4.80	1.5	2.2
15	V16 IC10 Organizational culture	4.60	1.5	2.2
16	V22 M2 Interaction adjustment	4.38	1.6	2.7
17	V19 IC13 Socialization tactics	4.23	1.8	3.2
18	V31 N5 Career development	3.43	1.7	3.0
19	V25 R2 Withdrawal intentions	3.26	2.1	4.5
20	V13 IC7 Role conflict	2.86	1.7	3.1

Figure 3. Summary of results for variables, ordered by its highest average, ranked by the Spanish engineers in Germany in the online survey

For the outcome variables, the highest rated was Job satisfaction, with a significant value ranking in the fourth position of all quantitatively evaluated variables, followed by Performance also with a high value. Remarkably, withdrawal intentions have a low average value, but at the same time show the highest average standard deviation and variance, indicating a wide range of different answers to the engineers' intentions.

Descriptive statistical analysis results for Anticipatory Adjustment

1. Previous international experience: 68% of the engineers have previous international experience (language courses, internships, working), predominating Erasmus studies.
2. Language skills: 77% have a high level (B2-C1) and claim it is the language used primarily in the company. However, more than half also use English in the organization.
3. Intercultural skills: Possessing intercultural competence is only relevant for 14%, which would request support from their company. Almost none invested in cross-cultural training.
4. Realistic expectations: 69% confirmed they got an interesting job; 52% good career opportunities; 48% a good salary. However, only 34% got the job security they expected to find and just 22% confirm they have a good working environment.
5. Criteria and selection mechanisms: They were selected based on their technical skills for the job and only 2% were tested in intercultural skills during the recruiting process.

Descriptive statistical analysis results for In-Country Adjustment

6. Self-efficacy: The engineers scored high levels, with an average of 5.8 in the 7 Lykert scale. This is the variable with the second highest value in the whole survey. The highest rated item was "I can always manage to solve difficult problems, if I try hard enough".
7. Cultural Novelty: Following the GLOBE scale, the engineers estimated much lower scores of Spanish vs. Germans in future orientation (3% vs. 77%), assertiveness (14% vs. 60%), power distance (20% vs. 56%) and uncertainty avoidance (4% vs. 54%). Spaniards rated higher in-group collectivism (77% vs. 18%) and human orientation (20% vs. 60%)
8. Family Adjustment: The engineers estimated in 4.8 out of 7 the level of adjustment of their families in Germany, with the highest levels in adjustment in housing standards and the low-

est levels with climate and to establish relations with the Germans. HCL also played a key role in the adaptation of the family in Germany.

9. Role Clarity: The Spanish engineers rated an average of 5.4 out of 7, which is higher than expected due to the potential uncertainties and misunderstandings.
10. Role conflict: Low average agreement, 2.9. out of 7, which indicates fewer uncertainties and misunderstandings than expected for the expatriates with a new role and company.
11. Role flexibility: The results are medium-high values, 4.8 out of 7, indicating that respondents experience good levels of flexibility in carrying out their role in the new job.
12. Role Novelty: The results present high values, average 5.4, indicating that respondents experience many new aspects and tasks in their new job.
13. Organizational culture novelty: The results show lower perceived novelty values in the organization (4.6 of 7) than in the role (5.4).
14. Social support in the organization: The supervisor support got high scores with an overall mean of 5.2 out of 7. Peer support got even higher values, with 5.5. The item "I do not have problems with my supervisor/colleagues", with an average of 6.0/6.1 are ones of highest agreement in the whole survey. The lowest support in the organization is reported to be from the HR Department (4.5).
15. Logistical support the organization: 55% received language courses, 54% support with the health system. Just 43% received help with housing search and 36% with relocation, both typical contents of the relocation package for organizational expatriates.
16. Socialization Tactics: With an average of 4.2 out of 7, is one of the variables with lowest score in the survey that indicates some dissatisfaction with the organizational programs for training of new employees.
17. Socialization Content: 66% state that they need more training in German language, 47% in competencies to better develop their job and 39% about organization processes.

Descriptive statistical analysis for new proposed variables of In-Country Adjustment

18. Motivations for travel to Germany: The top three reasons mentioned fit the typical motivations of self-initiated expatriates: 41% to acquire international work experience, 34% to develop their professional career and 24% to get to know a new culture.

The motivation to emigrate due to the lack of jobs in Spain applies only to 21% of the cases.

19. Intentions to return to Spain: 44% has not decided yet when to return. The option between 2 and 3 years is the second choice with 14% and 3-5 years with 13% of the cases. There's even an 8% that do not wish to return.

Likewise, the motivations to return are also unclear in 30% of the cases. Although almost 40% indicate that they will only come back, if they find a good job; and 30% when they have gained more professional experience. The reasons indicated to return are: 67% miss family and friends. Direct problems with Germany (language, making friends, etc.) fail to exceed 15% of the cases, although they were rated with a low level of adjustment.

20. Employment situation: 66% of the engineers have a permanent contract and 94% work full-time. 84% have a current job according to their training. 56% are in their first job in Germany. Regarding wages, there is also a high satisfaction on average 5.1 out of 7.
21. Job Promotion: This is one of the variables with lowest score, 3.4 out of 7. Especially lack of transparency and a defined roadmap for the development of their career in the organization. Although 55% think they deserve a promotion, only 31% received it, even if 15% were told by their companies that they will. Most highly agree that the fact of not being bilingual hinders their chances of promotion within the company.
22. Support from family and partner: There is a high support from the family for the engineers to go to Germany (6.0 by family, 5.9 by partner), although the average is reduced to the fact to stay in Germany (5.7 by both parts). In fact, it is the variable with highest score in the survey. If the nationality of the partner is analysed, 62% are Spanish, 21% German and 17% of another nationality. In 74% of the cases the partner also lives in Germany, which can reduce the urgency to return to Spain.
23. Social environment in Germany: The nationality of friends is mostly Spanish (57%), German in only 25% of cases, confirming the difficulty or lack of interest of respondents to establish relationships with nationals. However, the respondents give high ratings to the support they receive from their German friends, with an average of 5.2 out of 7.

Descriptive statistical analysis results for Adjustment variables

24. Work: The adjustment at work scored high values with an average of 5.7 out of 7. Moreover, by asking respondents what

their company did that facilitated their adaptation, some reiterated the importance of support to increase their German language skills, to encourage good working atmosphere, social network activities – even out of office events, or help with the bureaucracy.

25. Interaction: Respondents gave just a medium score to their adaptation in interaction with German nationals, 4.4 out of 7. However, it seems much easier to interact with the Germans at work (5.2), compared with in the free time (3.7).
26. General: It scores slightly higher than interaction adjustment, with an average of 4.8 out of 7, but almost 1 point lower than work adjustment. The highest adjustment is shown with the life conditions in general and lowest with the climate. Besides, asking the Spanish engineers for their adaptation facilitators, the most mentioned arguments is “prior knowledge of the German language and culture” and the “own personality/drive”.

Descriptive statistical analysis results for Outcome variables

27. Job satisfaction: It is the highest valued variable from the outcomes, and the 4th in the total ranking, with a score of 5.5 out of 7. 18% select the maximum score of 7 to “being satisfied with the role”, 28% “with the work environment” and 31% “with the company”.
28. Job withdrawal intentions: It has an average of 3.3 out of 7, but with the highest average standard deviation of 2.1. Besides, 39% state that they want to stay in the current position; 23% want to change company within Germany; 18% want to look for a job in Spain; 15% want to change jobs within their company and 14% want to find work in another country. As for the reasons wanting to change their organizations: 47% stated to get better conditions and 30% because their initial expectations have not been met (psychological contract breach). On the other hand, for reasons to stay at their organizations, 54% state that due to “provide professional challenges”, 50% “praise my actions”, 45% “work life balance”, 30% “provides me options to promote in my career”.
29. Performance: The self-assessment done by the engineers present high results, with an average of 5.6 out of 7. Although it gets lower (5.1) when they are asked to compare their performance to their colleagues’. In the open-end questions, 113 Spanish engineers stated that they got very positive reviews in their appraisals.