



Horyzonty Polityki
2023, Vol. 14, N° 49



GABRIELA STRZELEC

<http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5672-6925>
Wroclaw University of Economics and Business
gabriela.strzelec@ue.wroc.pl

DOI: 10.35765/HP.2510

The importance of the role of time in the adaptation process of traditional emigrants

Abstract

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE: The article's primary goal is to identify the factors that contribute to traditional emigrants' adaptation to foreign postings in international corporations in Poland, with particular emphasis on the role of time. At the same time, the essential intention of this research pilot is to verify the research tool.

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS: The article presents the current scientific achievements in expatriate adaptation, particularly emphasizing the longitudinal dimension. The pilot study results presented in the empirical part were carried out using the case study method, and the research tool was an interview questionnaire.

THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION: To better understand the motives, factors, barriers, and starting points that dynamically occur over time and influence adaptation in different dimensions and areas, Haslberger, Brewster, Hippler 3D model.

RESEARCH RESULTS: The main goal of the qualitative pilot study was the initial exploration of the area of expatriate adaptation. The study results fill the research gap by a) using an innovative 3-D model, b) identifying the specifics of this model's adjustment, importance, and challenges in the international context, and c) showing the crucial role of the longitudinal dimension in the adjustment process.

CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS: Few Polish researchers dealing with the issue of emigrants' adaptation have

Suggested citation: Strzelec, G. (2023). The importance of the role of time in the adaptation process of traditional emigrants. *Horizons of Politics*, 14(49), 179–200. DOI: 10.35765/HP.2510.

considered the role of time in this process. It should, therefore, be emphasized that this work is new in Polish literature and fills a research gap. Practitioners responsible for adapting expatriates (AEs), knowing the time needed for an AE to adapt to the delegation country's culture, attitudes, and behaviors, can more effectively determine the goals the employee should achieve. Therefore, having a tool that indicates facilitating factors, motives, or barriers, they can more consciously prepare a training package before entering the market and adjust its intensity over time.

KEYWORDS:

expatriates, adaptation, the role of time

INTRODUCTION

Until the 1990s, Poland was perceived as a supplier of labor force (Górny & Kindler, 2018), and it is still not a popular destination for expatriates from Western countries, so there are few developed business practices or guides for future expats. On the other hand, as a developed country in this part of Europe, it is an attractive market for foreigners to invest financial capital in Poland (with a Global Best to Invest ranking in 2022), it takes third place in the Europe Attractiveness Survey ranking (2019) and is the eighth largest market in Europe in terms of attracting foreign direct investments. Foreign capital invested in Poland at the end of 2017 came from 117 countries, with Germany, Switzerland, and Japan being the highest investors of capital value (PAIH, 2022). Following financial and technological capital, investors send their staff to Poland, especially in the initial stages of development of greenfield investments (Przytuła, 2013).

Regarding culture, religion, and ethnicity, Poland, as a relatively homogeneous country, may pose an adaptation challenge for expats from countries which are culturally very different.

It should be emphasized that most of the research on the adaptation of expatriates was conducted in Asian countries, including China (Lee & Kartika, 2014; Rafiq et al., 2019; Selmer, 1995; Takeuchi et al., 2009); Japan (Peltokorpi & Froese, 2009; Yamazaki, 2010); South Korea (Froese, 2012).

In recent years, the issues of expatriate adjustment have also been studied in African countries (Okpara, 2016).

The literature indicates an apparent shortage of research conducted in Central and Eastern Europe (Brewster, 1999; Horwitz & Budhwar, 2015; Selmer, 1995). In Europe, the adaptation of expatriates has been studied in Scandinavian countries: Finland (Suutari, Brewster, 2000), Norway and Sweden (Selmer & Luring, 2015), and also Germany (Zimmermann et al., 2003). L. Lett and M. Smith researched Polish expatriates working in Great Britain (2009).

In turn, studies in Polish concerning expatriates in Poland are very few and are represented mainly by S. Przytuła (2014), A. Pocztowski (2012), J. Grelecka (2016), I. Kubica (2017), G. Strzelec (2022).

It should also be emphasized that most research focuses on the quantitative perspective, measuring adjustments due to individual, work-related, contextual, and family-related factors (Hechanova et al., 2003).

However, as postulated by R. Fontina and C. Brewster (2020), to fully answer the contextual claims of adjustment models, it is necessary to explain the subjective behavior, feelings, and needs of expatriates through in-depth qualitative research.

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS

Initially, the pilot study intends to explore the research area and verify the research tool.

Therefore, the main goal of the qualitative pilot study, based on the 3-D model by Haslberger et al. (2014) (described in more detail in the literature review section of the article) was established as: a) identification of factors conducive to the adaptation of expatriates at the stage of implementing a foreign mission, and b) emphasizing the role of time in the process of adaptation of traditional expatriates in the country of delegation.

This article contributes to the literature on expatriate adaptation: a) by filling the research gap through the use of an innovative 3-D model, b) identifying the specificity of adaptation, as well as its meanings and challenges in the international context, and c) showing the crucial role of the long-term dimension in the adjustment process.

The role of time in the adaptation process. Literature review

There are different approaches to defining expatriate adaptation. A structured review of the literature conducted by critical researchers in the field (Bhaskar Shrinivas et al., 2005; Hechanova et al., 2003; Takeuchi, 2010) conceptualizes expatriate adjustment as the degree of psychological comfort in experiencing various aspects of work and life in the host country. It assumes adaptation to the workplace (work adjustment), interaction with the local community (interaction adjustment), and the general conditions of work and life in the host country (general living adjustment). (Black et al., 1991; Black & Gregersen, 1991; Black & Stephens, 1989). This definition became the basis for developing the expatriate adaptation model – BMO (Black, Mendenhall, Oddou). The seminal work of Black et al. (1991) has been tested many times and the multidimensional theory has been the theoretical and empirical basis for numerous research works (Caligiuri, 2000; Forster, 1997; Leiba O’Sullivan, 1999; Parker & McEvoy, 1993; Selmer, 2001; Shaffer et al., 1999; Suutari, 1998; Tung, 1998). This, however, has had its limitations pointed out by other researchers, many of whom have highlighted the weak or “artificial” theoretical support and justification for these three dimensions (Brewster et al., 2016).

Moreover, the BMO model does not consider feedback, the long-term dimension, or the complexity of the expatriate’s experience (Haslberger, 2005). Another weakness is that this model is “tailored to the individual,” i.e., it applies only to the expatriate. While more than three-quarters of expatriates take their partners and families with them, the influence of the family on the expatriate’s adaptation should be considered (Haslberger & Brewster, 2008).

Researchers also point out that the proposed adaptation dimensions fail to consider many factors that should be examined (Aycan, 1997; J. Selmer, 1995). Black et al. used only a 7-factor scale to examine general adjustment, a 3-factor scale to examine work adjustment, and a 4-factor scale to examine interaction adjustment.

Subsequent adaptation models, although primarily based on this model, included more dimensions and determinants, referred to the individual and organizational perspective, took into account the

cognitive, affective, and behavioral components, and “embedded” the adaptation process in time (e.g., Haslberger et al., 2014).

Haslberger et al. (2014) developed a three-dimensional (3-D) model of expatriate adjustment rooted in person-environment (P-E) theory and work adjustment (Haslberger & Dickmann, 2016). According to the authors of this dynamic approach, expatriate adaptation is a complex, three-dimensional process. A person adapts in many areas: systems regulating social life in a given country (law, road traffic regulations), work (labor code, management styles, organizational culture), economy (banking system, work, and residence permits), family relationships (presence of family on posting, work for spouse, education for children), social relations (neighborhood bonds, stereotypes and prejudices in a given society, norms, values and religion), in various dimensions (cognitive, affective and behavioral) and occurring dynamically over time (dynamics).

RESEARCH RESULTS

The pilot study was conducted in the period from March to May 2023. The study involved traditional expatriates, using the adopted definition of the expatriate as an employee of an international enterprise, usually a high-class specialist or manager, sent to work abroad by units (being a branch, subsidiary, or other organizational and legal form) from the company’s registered office, from a third country or moving between these entities. Such transfers are voluntary. An expatriate may come from the home country of the corporation’s headquarters or be of a different nationality altogether (Przytuła, 2014).

The purposive selection was carried out based on the selection criteria adopted below:

- an organizational unit of an international corporation (with various organizational and legal forms),
- an organization employing expatriates in various positions (traditional expatriates, i.e., those sent to host units by headquarters).

The study used an interview questionnaire comprising 15 open questions regarding factors supporting the adaptation process, reasons for leaving, duration taken to adapt to the delegation country, and barriers relevant to the process of expatriates’ adaptation. (e.g.,

how long did the adaptation process take in areas such as work, professional environment, and life in the country of delegation? What factors supported your adaptation? What barriers/problems did you encounter in the country of delegation that hindered your adaptation? What were your motives and reasons for going abroad?) The interview included elements of biographical narrative (Gibbs, 2015) because respondents spontaneously told their own stories, citing specific experiences. In many cases, these relationships were characterized by emotional language and metaphors, primarily when the issue concerned problems, barriers, and limitations in their adjustment process.

Five expatriates of traditional nationality took part in the pilot study: American (1 person), Polish (3 people) and British (1 person). The average age of the respondents was 44.8 years. The duration of the mission was set at 3–4 years. In turn, the delegation countries where expatriation occurred were Denmark, Poland, and Germany. Four expatriates carried out the mission without their family's participation, and one person carried out the mission with her husband and children.

Due to the relocation of respondents, all interviews were conducted via the Teams application.

The respondents' statements were transcribed and subjected to further analysis, which consisted of coding using QDA Miner Lite software.

Table 1 presents an example list of codes used in analysis.

Table 1. Sample code list

Category	Codes	Examples/fragments of respondents' statements
Motives determining the decision to go on a foreign posting	The desire to experience something new	I desire to travel, discover new things, and know new cultures.
Motives determining the decision to go on a foreign posting	Monotony in everyday life	I do not know why I decided to travel. I describe it as... boredom with what I already know.
Factors facilitating the adaptation process during a foreign posting	Previous international experience	I first went to Japan with my dad when I was 16. I was there for half a year. Dad worked a lot. I was studying and had to take care of myself after school. That is why I do not fear the "new" now.

The importance of the role of time in the adaptation process

Factors facilitating the adaptation process during a foreign posting	Openness (to new cultures)	I am currently in Malaysia but will be leaving for Canada soon. ... I still want to travel, discover new things, and get to know new cultures.
Barriers affecting adjustment in the country of posting	Language knowledge	I would not say I like social gatherings. Not because I isolate myself but because they do not understand me, and I do not understand them. When I need to buy something to eat, I use a translator. I have learned basic phrases, but it is not enough.
Barriers affecting adjustment in the country of posting	Closeness to family	I miss my family. We see each other once or twice a year, and they (my wife and two sons) come to see me... I like traveling, but sometimes I feel tired. However, I am also responsible for my family and must support them.
Longitudinal dimension	The time needed to adapt to specific domains	I had big problems adapting to everyday life. I have been in Poland for three years and have traveled for 21 years. Poland is culturally very different from Japan. Even though I have not been to Japan for many years, I still feel Japanese.
Longitudinal dimension	The time needed to adapt to specific domains	...at first, it was strange having to make advance plans for social visits or annual (professional) planning at work. I had some difficulties with eating and meals. I was not used to eating like this.

Source: own study.

The main goals of the qualitative pilot study (based on the 3-D model) are: a) identify factors conducive to the adaptation of expatriates at the stage of implementing a foreign mission, and b) highlight the role of time in the adaptation of traditional expatriates in the country of delegation.

First, respondents were asked about their reasons for going on a foreign mission.

Table 2 presents the codes for the “motives determining the decision to go abroad” category.

The count refers to the number of answers relevant to a specific code. Cases refer to the number of data sources (e.g., research participant interviews, cases) associated with a specific code.

Table 2. Motives determining the decision to go on a foreign mission

Category	Code	Count	% Codes	Cases	Cases %
Motives	the desire to experience something new	3	25,0%	3	60%
	monotony of everyday life	1	8,3%	1	20%
	prestige	1	8,3%	1	20%
	family care	2	16,7%	2	40%
	career development after returning from the mission	1	8,3%	1	20%
	international career development	1	8,3%	1	20%
	desire to travel	1	8,3%	1	20%
	cognitive curiosity	1	8,3%	1	20%

Source: own study

Analysis of the respondents' statements shows that the main motives determining the decision to undertake a foreign mission are the desire to experience something new (25.0%) and concern for the well-being of the family (family care – 16.7%). However, it is worth noting that the respondents also indicated motives such as the desire to travel and cognitive curiosity. Although the nomenclature differs from the motive (e.g., the desire to experience something new), the conceptual content seems the same.

Interestingly, none of the respondents indicated financial motives as a predictor determining the decision to undertake a foreign mission. As is known from numerous studies (e.g., Selmer, Lauring, 2013), the fundamental premises for AEs include those motives grouped in the finance cluster, such as salary amount, ability to save money, etc.

The comparative research of B. Bader (2016) regarding the motives for going on a foreign mission shows that the internal motivation to go abroad has not changed in the first 15 years of the new millennium. In 2002, "the importance of the work itself" and "financial considerations" were mentioned by at least 50% of all respondents. Both motives seem to be much less important today: in research in 2015, these were 42.8 and 32 percent, respectively. Financial motives currently have less influence on the decision to go abroad than previously shown in research by Stahl et al. (2002).

Moreover, as the literature on the subject shows, cognitive motives (indicated by the respondents of this study) seem to correspond more to the description of self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) than to traditional ones. An example would be the comparative studies by Brewster et al. (2019), proving that the determinants of undertaking a foreign mission among SIEs are those related to the desire to travel, experience something new, or learn about new cultures. In turn, for AEs, significant predictors are those in the finance cluster: salary (and the resulting sense of security for oneself and one's family) and the ability to save money.

It seems that there may be two reasons for this. Firstly, some respondents represent Generation Z, whose general characteristics indicate that they are more open (than, for example, representatives of Generation X) to international mobility, new experiences, or more in need of change. The Global Moving Trends report (2017) shows that 88% of respondents believe that living in another country is a beneficial life experience, 75% say that foreign experience enables a fresh look at life, 67% of respondents admitted that it broadens their worldview and encourages them to understand other cultures, and 58% claim that it encourages learning and acquiring new skills. Secondly, caring for the family and the desire to ensure the safety of family members correlate positively with those factors attributed in the literature to representatives of Generation X (including the respondents of this study). J. Selmer and J. Lauring's research (2014) conducted on a group of 428 expats from 60 countries proved that people from Generation X are less focused on financial matters or the development of their professional careers and more focused on security and family considerations.

The next question in the pilot study concerned the factors (facilitators) that influence the adaptation process of the respondents during the foreign mission. Table 3 shows the frequency of codes from the factors facilitating the adaptation process during a foreign mission.

Table 3. Facilitators that influence the adaptation process during a foreign mission

Category	Code	Count	% Codes	Cases	% Cases
Factors	previous international experience	5	25%	4	80%
	knowledge of the language of the country of posting	3	15%	2	40%
	adaptive skills	2	10%	1	20%
	organizational support	4	20%	4	80%
	support from colleagues	2	10%	2	40%
	support from loved ones (family, acquaintances, friends)	2	10%	1	20%
	knowledge of the culture of the host country	2	10%	2	40%

Source: own study

The interviews show that the key factors essential for the adaptation process in the host country were previous international experience, organizational support, and knowledge of the country's language of delegation.

It turns out that the knowledge and experience gained during trips abroad in the field of norms, attitudes, values, and the culture of the country of delegation broaden cognitive and thought horizons. They build a sense of value and a social network (which are so crucial for adaptation).

According to S.Y. Oh and K. Jang's (2020) research, previous experiences of international mobility (e.g., student exchange programs, tourist trips for holidays, short-term stays) correlate positively with a willingness to undertake expatriate missions.

J. Selmer and H. Lam (2004) postulate that people who experienced international mobility during adolescence (e.g., the children of expatriates, so-called third culture kids) perceive themselves as international. They show far higher preferences for an international career.

The respondents positively assessed the organization's support in the adaptation process. Respondents indicated that the cultural training offered by the organization, relocation assistance, apartment/house rental, psychological support, mentoring, and support in finding jobs for family members are essential factors facilitating the process of an expat's adaptation to the host country.

Research results by M. Waxin and A. Panaccio (2005) and J.O. Okpara and J.D. Kabongo (2011) show that expats participating in cross-cultural training (CCT) adapt to a higher degree than those who have not undergone such training. Similarly, J. Selmer (2005) proves the positive impact of CCT and the support of mentors from corporate headquarters as significant factors for expat adjustment (Zhuang et al., 2013).

Significantly, a foreign contract's success depends on how the expatriate mission is "organized" (Przytuła, 2014).

In the respondents' opinion, the ability to speak the language of delegation is a factor that supports the adaptation process.

In her statement, the respondent stated that speaking German (her country or language of delegation here) allowed her to communicate freely and be better perceived by her superiors and co-workers. Moreover, knowing the host country's language was an unquestionable advantage in everyday life.

However, the remaining respondents indicated that language skills were a significant barrier and contributed to isolation and building barriers with the local community.

Therefore, it was decided to ask the respondents what barriers hindered adaptation to the delegation country.

Table 4. Barriers affecting the adaptation process during a foreign mission

Category	Code	Count	% Codes	Cases	% Cases
Barriers	language knowledge	5	25%	4	80%
	family presence	1	5%	1	20%
	norms, values, and culture of the country of secondment	3	15%	3	60%
	geographical location	2	10%	1	20%
	meals eaten (type and time)	2	10%	2	20%

Source: own study

According to all respondents, the critical barrier that causes difficulties in adaptation is knowledge of the host country's language.

As the respondents emphasized, although the corporate language was English, using the official language (of the country of delegation) was an essential factor in the perception of the professional

environment. Moreover, accessible communication outside the venue was impossible due to a lack of language knowledge.

Research by S. Przytuła (2014) proves that for 63% of expats, communication and language issues were the most significant problems.

Next, respondents pointed to contextual factors such as norms, values, culture of the country of delegation, geographical location, and meals consumed (their type and time), which constitute a barrier in the adaptation process.

The respondents included representatives of cultures distant (Japanese culture) from the homogeneous Polish culture. This has connotations regarding communication and understanding Poles' norms, attitudes, and culture. Asian culture, according to Hofstede, is a collective culture. Although they work effectively in teams, Poles belong to an individualistic culture. Moreover, the timing and type of meals consumed differ from those eaten in Japan.

G. Dawe and K. Makwana (2016) indicated such problems of expatriation as cultural change, language barrier, harsh climate, different work systems, organizational changes (corporate culture, hierarchy, and decision-making structure in the new entity), different eating habits, financial issues and high costs of living, and building new social and professional relationships.

The abovementioned barriers result in expats' isolation from local communities, a deepening sense of not belonging, and difficulties building municipal social networks.

The critical question of the pilot study was the impact and role of time in the adaptation process. Respondents were, therefore, asked about the duration of time taken to adapt and about eight areas of adaptation.

Table 5 presents the longitudinal dimension of the respondents' adaptation process.

Table 5. The longitudinal dimension of the adaptation process

Category	Domains of adaptation	Period
Longitudinal dimension	regulatory systems	One year
	Work	Two weeks
	economy	Six months
	family relations	Fading family relationships
	social relations	One year
	way of thinking	Adaption did not occur.

Source: own study

The analysis shows that the longest time needed for adaptation was experienced by respondents in the domains of “way of thinking,” “social relations,” and “regulatory systems.”

The interviews showed that preserving their identity and cultural heritage is particularly important for the respondents. However, this may involve limiting contact with the host culture to a minimum, being more of an observer than a participant, predominating contact with representatives of the culture of origin, and using the native or “third” language in contact with host culture members.

The British respondent emphasized that although he has been in Poland for four years, his thinking and sense of humor are still challenging to understand.

Navas et al. (2007) prove that it is possible to adapt to the laws, work environment, and economy while failing to adapt to social relations (integration with culture and local community).

In turn, as E.H. Schein (1984, 2010) postulates, in the domain of “ways of thinking,” these are minor reactions because they refer to the deeper (subconscious) layers of the culture and religion of the host country.

One study on a group of mono- and multicultural expats showed that the multicultural group (who grew up in one country and lived in another) identified more strongly with their nationality (thereby perceiving themselves as more different from other nationalities) than the monocultural group (Kosmitzki, 1996).

Systems regulating social life are determined by public order, legal provisions, and the political system prevailing in a given country. On the surface, this seems to be an area where expatriates should not experience difficulties in the adjustment process.

However, as the pilot study showed, the time needed for adaptation in this domain was one year. Therefore, learning about and adapting to the law, tax systems (the rights and obligations that apply to an expatriate in the host country), public administration, and the political system constitute barriers to expatriates' adaption.

The balance between keeping in touch with family and friends in the home country while trying to establish new relationships in the host country can be problematic for expatriates.

Some expatriates decide to go on missions with their families. However, the vast majority (60% according to research BGRS, 2016) realize their transfer goals without family participation.

In both cases, this can be a problem area.

New technologies make it easier to stay in touch, but losing regular meetings with family and friends can be painful. A new environment may expose family relationships to significant strain (Haslberger & Brewster, 2008; Hyslop, 2012).

The respondent emphasized, "If I did not visit my wife and children in the USA, I would lose them. Despite this, our relationship has changed a lot. We are not as close as we used to be."

In turn, the expatriates who go on missions with their families experience dissonance. The desire to establish social relationships (including business) in the host country means that, for those expatriate family members who don't work and stay home, this can contribute to a) isolation of the family, b) difficulties in their adaptation, c) conflicts with the expatriate, or even shortening the duration of the expatriate mission.

An example of these considerations is the statement of the respondent, Honorata, who decided to go on an expatriate mission with her family.

We all left together (my husband and two children). It quickly turned out that it was difficult for them (meaning the family) to adapt to the new conditions, culture, etc. I was at work all day. Even though the children went to the best school, they isolated themselves from their surroundings. My husband quit his job in Poland and could not find anything in Germany. I saw that everyone was getting tired. I felt at ease and became more and more rooted in German culture. We were in Germany for four years, and the family decided they wanted to return to Poland.

At this point, the results of research conducted in Poland on a group of traditional expatriates are worth mentioning. It turns out that the longer the respondents stayed in Poland, the better they adapted to life, the work environment, and social interactions. However, this only concerned expatriates whose mission in Poland lasted longer than ten years (Strzelec, 2022).

Another researcher in expatriate adaptation presents different research results: for expatriates on a mission in China, the length of stay in the country of secondment did not impact their adaptation process.

To fully account for the role of temporal dynamics in expatriate adaptation, it is necessary to consider the feedback between primary adaptation outcomes (i.e., states) and antecedent variables and the feedback between secondary adaptation outcomes (i.e., consequences), such as performance or commitment and primary outcomes adaptation (Haslberger et al., 2014).

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The author's main intention was to explore the research by a) identifying the factors conducive to adapting expatriates at the stage of implementing a foreign mission, and b) emphasizing the role of time in the adaptation of traditional expatriates to the delegation country. Moreover, the pilot study enabled verification of the research tool used.

The pilot study revealed that the key factors facilitating the process of adaptation of respondents in the country of secondment are previous international experience, organizational support, and knowledge of the language of the country of secondment.

The research also highlighted the critical role of co-workers, family, adaptation skills, and knowledge of the host country's culture.

The conducted synthesis shows that the longest time needed for adaptation was achieved by respondents in the domains of "way of thinking," "social relations," and "regulatory systems."

This means that some expatriates change their worldview or religion, but most do not (including this study's respondents). While one of the partners/spouses realizes their mission goals in the workplace,

the other bears the burden of dealing with everyday problems, raising children, or running the house.

Moreover, societies significantly differ in how the genders meet and establish relationships. Maintaining a balance between maintaining contact with family and friends (who remain in the home country) and trying to establish new relationships with the local community becomes problematic.

Among the key motives determining respondents' decisions to undertake a foreign mission were the desire to experience something new and concern for the family's well-being. Next, they were willing to travel and have cognitive curiosity.

The critical barrier that makes it difficult for respondents to adapt is their knowledge of the host country's language. In addition, the respondents indicated factors such as norms, values, culture of the country of delegation, geographical location, and meals eaten (their type and time).

Although the study provides content regarding the opinions, motives, and attitudes of expatriates delegated on a mission to Poland, it has limitations.

An essential dilemma in qualitative research is the sample size and its representativeness. Researchers point to different optimal numbers of interviews, ranging from 5 to 60, which can provide reliable results (Guest et al., 2006). S. Pasikowski (2016) indicates that the essential condition determining the sample size is, among other things, knowledge of the population and its context, which means that the required sample size will be smaller the more information the researcher has about the representatives of a given population and the research context. Therefore, a significant barrier was determining how many expatriates were in Poland. Many of them avoid formal procedures and registration of foreigners obtaining a work permit in Poland, and their contracts are 2-3 years, so they are relatively short. Moreover, most expatriates maintain their permanent residence in the territory of a Member State other than Poland. Therefore, they are not subject to reporting for a residence and work permit in Poland.

The issues of employing foreigners in Poland are regulated by four legal acts relating to the content related to the employment and recording of the stay of foreigners in Poland. However, it should be emphasized that no single legal act regulates issues related to

integrating foreigners in Poland. Various legal acts regulate different aspects of their employment. The above argumentation shows how difficult it is to estimate the number of expatriates delegated on a foreign mission to a branch unit in Poland. Only estimated figures for issued work permits and work visas granted to foreigners coming to Poland can be mentioned. It should be noted, however, that this group also includes students, construction workers, tourists, etc. Statistics from the Central Statistical Office show that up to June 2023, 406.5 thousand were spent on permits, of which as many as 85.1% were industrial, artisans, and essential workers.

It should be emphasized that the subject of the study is expatriates sent from corporate headquarters to Poland and not foreigners employed in the Polish branch in general. The subject of the study is the adaptation process, which has a formal dimension and is offered to expats by the organization's headquarters. Then, it is continued in the country of delegation.

Moreover, the pilot study focused only on the implementation stage of the expatriate cycle, which does not allow for a comprehensive diagnosis of the adaptation process. To explore this issue, it is reasonable to conduct further research on the complete expatriation cycle, i.e., preparation-implementation and repatriation, considering the organization's perspective.

We should focus on researching self-initiated expatriates (SIEs), as their number is much more significant than traditional expatriates (assigned expatriates-AE). SIEs are part of new mobility trends and macroeconomic phenomena (including, in particular, restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic), causing international organizations to consider various scenarios of remote work rather than mobile work in the traditional sense.

The pilot study showed several shortcomings, e.g., the terminology used in the question regarding factors that support the adaptation process in areas such as: regulatory systems, work, economy, family and social relationships, and ways of thinking, which was not correctly understood by the respondents. For this reason, the question was supplemented with sample factors. In the question about barriers, additional wording and scenarios were added.

In addition, the time needed to conduct an individual interview was revised from one hour to two.

REFERENCES

- Aycan, Z. (1997). Acculturation of expatriate managers: a process model of adjustment and performance. In Z. Aycan (Ed.). *Expatriate Management: Theory and Research* (pp. 1–41). JAI Press.
- Bader, B. (2016). Motivations of Global Careers Among Expatriates in German Companies: A Comparison with the Year 2002. In A. Bader, B. Schuster, & T. Bader (Eds.). *Expatriate Management: Transatlantic Dialogues* (Issue Icd, pp. 1–341). London: Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-57406-0>
- BGRS. (2016). *Global Mobility Trends Survey*.
- Bhaskar-Shrinivas, P., Harrison, D.A., Shaffer, M.A., & Luk, D.M. (2005). Input-based and time-based models of international adjustment: Meta-analytic evidence and theoretical extensions. *Academy of Management Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMJ.2005.16928400>
- Black, J.S., Mendenhall, M., & Oddou, G. (1991). Towards a comprehensive model of international adjustment: an integration of multiple theoretical perspectives. *Academy of Management Review*, 16.
- Black, S.J., & Gregersen, H.B. (1991). The Other Half of the Picture: Antecedents of Spouse Cross-cultural Adjustment. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 22(3), 461–477.
- Black, J.S., & Stephens, G.K. (1989). The influence of the spouse on American expatriate adjustment and intent to stay in Pacific Rim overseas assignment. *Journal of Management*, 15(4), 529–544.
- Brewster, C., Houldsworth, E., Sparrow, P., & Vernon, G. (2016). *International Human Resource Management*. CIPD.
- Brewster, C. (1999). Strategic human resource management: the value of different paradigms. *Management International Review*, 39(3), 45–64.
- Caligiuri, P.M. (2000). The Big Five personality characteristics as predictors of expatriate's desire to terminate the assignment and supervisor-rated performance. *Personnel Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2000.tb00194.x>
- Conway Analytics Polska. (2022). *Global Best to Invest*.
- Dave, G., & Makwana, K. (2016). A Study on Assessing Expatriate's Challenges during an International Assignment: International Human Resource Management Perspective. *International Journal of Marketing and Human Resource Management*, 7(2), 23–35.
- Ernst & Young. (2019). *Europe Attractiveness Survey*.
- Fontinha, R., & Brewster, C. (2020). Self-initiated expatriate adjustment over time. In *Self-Initiated Expatriates in Context: Recognizing Space, Time, and Institutions*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429352690-10>

- Forster, N. (1997). "The persistent myth of high expatriate failure rates": A reappraisal. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/095851997341531>
- Froese, F.J. (2012). Motivation and adjustment of self-initiated expatriates: the case of expatriate academics in South Korea. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2011.561220>
- Gibbs, G. (2015). *Analizowanie danych jakościowych*. PWN.
- Global Moving Trends Report*. (2017).
- Główny Urząd Statystyczny. (2023). *Prognoza ludności na lata 2023–2060*.
- Górny, A., & Kindler, M. (2018). Cudzoziemcy w Polsce na przełomie XX i XXI wieku. In M. Lesińska, & M. Okólski (Eds.), *25 wykładów o migracjach*. Scholar.
- Grelecka, J. (2016). *What factors affect expatriate adjustment? Study of differences between self-initiated and assigned expatriates in Poland*. Lisboa: ISCTE Business School.
- Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods*, 18 (1), 59–82.
- Haslberger, A., & Brewster, C. (2008). The expatriate family – an international perspective. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 23(3), 324–346.
- Haslberger, A., Brewster, C., & Hippler, T. (2014). *Managing performance abroad: a new model for understanding expatriate adjustment*. London: Routledge.
- Haslberger, A. (2005). The complexities of expatriate adaptation. *Human Resource Management Review*, 15, 160–180.
- Haslberger, A., & Dickmann, M. (2016). The correspondence model of cross-cultural adjustment: exploring exchange relationships. *Journal of Global Mobility*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JGM-05-2016-0021>
- Hechanova, R., Beehr, T.A., & Christiansen, N.D. (2003). Antecedents and consequences of employees' adjustment to overseas assignment: A meta-analytic review. *Applied Psychology*, 52(2), 213–236. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1464-0597.00132>
- Horwitz, F., & Budhwar, P. (2015). *Handbook of human resource management in emerging markets*. Elgar.
- Hyslop, I. (2012). Social work as a practice of freedom. *Journal of Social Work*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468017310388362>
- Kosmitzki, C. (1996). The reaffirmation of cultural identity in cross-cultural encounters. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167296223002>

- Kubica, I. (2017). *Uwarunkowania i efektywność adaptacji pracowniczej w międzynarodowym środowisku pracy*. Kraków: Uniwersytet Ekonomiczny w Krakowie.
- Lee, L.Y., & Kartika, N. (2014). The influence of individual, family, and social capital factors on expatriate adjustment and performance: The moderating effect of psychology contract and organizational support. *Expert Systems with Applications*, 41(11), 5483–5494. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eswa.2014.02.030>
- Leiba-O'Sullivan, S. (1999). The distinction between stable and dynamic cross-cultural competencies: Implications for expatriate trainability. *Journal of International Business Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8490835>
- Lett, L., & Smith, M. (2009). East meets West: The case of Polish expatriates in the UK. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 20(9), 1864–1878. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585190903142332>
- McNulty, Y., & Brewster, C. (2019). Working internationally: Expatriation, migration and other global work. In *Personnel Psychology*, 72(4), 629–631.
- Navas, M., Rojas, A.J., García, M., & Pumares, P. (2007). Acculturation strategies and attitudes according to the Relative Acculturation Extended Model (RAEM): The perspectives of natives versus immigrants. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 31(1), 67–86. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2006.08.002>
- Okpara, J.O. (2016). Cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates: exploring factors influencing adjustment of expatriates in Nigeria. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 16(3), 259–280.
- Okpara, J.O., & Kabongo, J.D. (2011). Cross-cultural training and expatriate adjustment: A study of western expatriates in Nigeria. *Journal of World Business*, 46(1), 22–30. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2010.05.014>
- PAIH (2022). *Lista największych inwestorów w Polsce*.
- Parker, B., & McEvoy, G.M. (1993). Initial Examination of a Model of Intercultural Adjustment. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 17, 355–379.
- Pasikowski, S. (2016). Czy wielkość jest niezbędna? O rozmiarze próby w badaniach jakościowych. *Przegląd Badań Edukacyjnych*, 2(21), 195–211. <https://doi.org/10.12775/pbe.2015.055>
- Peltokorpi, V., & Froese, F. (2009). Organizational expatriates and self-initiated expatriates: who adjusts better to work and life in Japan? *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 20(5), 1096–1112.
- Pocztowski, A. (2012). *Zarządzanie misjami zagranicznymi. Organizacyjne i indywidualne aspekty pracy ekspatriantów*. A. Pocztowski (Ed.). Kraków: Oficyna a Wolters Kluwer.

- Przytuła, S. (2013). Etnocentryzm indywidualny i organizacyjny w filiach zagranicznych korporacji w Polsce-wyniki badań. *Nauki o Zarządzaniu*, 2(15), 115–133.
- Przytuła, S. (2014). *Zarządzanie kadrą expatriantów w filiach przedsiębiorstw międzynarodowych w Polsce*. Warszawa: CeDeWu.
- Rafiq, A., Saleem, S., Bashir, M., & Ali, A. (2019). The paradox role of extraversion in the cross-cultural adjustment process of Asian expatriates. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management*, 12, 179–194.
- Schein, E.H. (1984). Coming To A New Awareness Of Organizational Culture. *Sloan Management Review*, 25(2).
- Schein, E.H. (2010). *Organizational culture and leadership*. Jossey-Bass.
- Selmer, J. (1995). *Expatriate Management. New Ideas for International Business*. J. Selmer (Ed.). London: Quorum Books.
- Selmer, J. (2001). Expatriate selection: Back to basics? *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 12(8), 121.
- Selmer, J. (2005). Cross-cultural training and expatriate adjustment in China: Western joint venture managers. *Personnel Review*, 34(1), 68–84. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00483480510571888>
- Selmer, J., & Fenner, C.R. (2009). Job factors and work outcomes of public sector expatriates. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 19(1), 75–90. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1748-8583.2008.00084.x>
- Selmer, J., & Lam, H. (2004). “Third-culture kids”: Future business expatriates? In *Personnel Review*, 33(4), 430–445. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00483480410539506>
- Selmer, J., & Luring, J. (2013). Cognitive and affective reasons to expatriate and work adjustment of expatriate academics. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 13(2), 175–191.
- Selmer, J., & Luring, J. (2014). Self-initiated expatriates: an exploratory study of adjustment of adult third-culture kids vs. adult mono-culture kids. *Cross Cultural Management*, 21(4), 422–436.
- Selmer, J., & Luring, J. (2015). Work engagement and intercultural adjustment. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 16(1), 1–19.
- Shaffer, M.A., Harrison, D.A., & Gilley, K.M. (1999). Dimensions, determinants, and differences in the expatriate adjustment process. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 30, 557–581. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8490083>
- Stahl, G.K., Miller, E.L., & Tung, R.L. (2002). Toward the boundaryless career: a closer look at the expatriate career concept and the perceived implications of an international assignment. *Journal of World Business*, 37(3), 216–227.

- Strzelec, G. (2022). *Ekspatrianci X i Y. Wymiar indywidualny, organizacyjny i kontekstowy*. Warszawa: Difin.
- Suutari, V. (1998). Problems faced by western expatriate managers in Eastern Europe: Evidence provided by Finnish expatriates in Russia and Estonia. *Journal of East European Management Studies*, 3(3), 249–267. <https://doi.org/10.5771/0949-6181-1998-3-249>
- Suutari, V., & Brewster, C. (2000). Making their own way: international experience through self-initiated foreign assignments. *Journal of World Business*, 35(4), 417–436.
- Takeuchi, R. (2010). A critical review of expatriate adjustment research through a multiple stakeholder view: Progress, emerging trends, and prospects. *Journal of Management*, 36(4), 1040–1064.
- Takeuchi, R., Wang, M., & Marinova, S. (2009). Role of Domain-Specific Facets of Perceived Organizational Support During Expatriation and Implications for Performance. *Organizational Science*, 20(3), 621–634.
- Tung, R.L. (1998). American expatriates abroad: From neophytes to cosmopolitans. *Journal of World Business*, 33(2), 125–144. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1090-9516\(98\)90002-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1090-9516(98)90002-5)
- Waxin, M.F., & Panaccio, A. (2005). Cross-cultural training to facilitate expatriate adjustment: It works! In *Personnel Review*, 34(1), 51–67. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00483480510571879>
- Yamazaki, Y. (2010). Expatriate adaptation: A fit between skills and demands among Japanese expatriates in USA. *Management International Review*, 50(1), 81–108. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11575-009-0022-7>
- Zhuang, W.L., Wu, M., & Wen, S.L. (2013). Relationship of mentoring functions to expatriate adjustments: Comparing home country mentorship and host country mentorship. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 24(1), 35–49. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2012.669784>
- Zimmermann, A., Holman, D., & Sparrow, P. (2003). Unravelling Adjustment Mechanisms: Adjustment of German Expatriates to Intercultural Interactions, Work and Living Conditions in the People's Republic of China. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 3(1), 45–56.

Copyright and License



This article is published under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution – NoDerivs (CC BY- ND 4.0) License <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/4.0/>