Motivation for skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments

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Abstract

Orientation – The researcher, under the supervision of Dr Mark Bussin sought to explore and understand the factors that influence skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments.

Research purpose – identify predominant factors that motivate skilled professional to accept or decline expatriate offers and understand the impact that age has on the priority of these factors.

Motivation for the study – There is little research that has been done thus far that identifies the factors that motivate skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments and the impact that age may have on the priority of these factors.

Research design, approach and method – The researcher used an exploratory qualitative research approach and, more specifically, semi structured interviews**.**

Main findings – Career, family and geographic location appear to be key motivational factors for skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments. There is also an increasing importance being given to the presence of a comprehensive company policy with regard to expatriate assignments which gives the skilled professional a sense of comfort when making the decision. In addition age does not appear to influence the factors that motivate skilled professionals to accept an expatriate assignment however importance to various factors may change dependent on age and position in career at the time of making the decision.

Practical/managerial implications – As a result of globalisation which is currently a very prevalent influence on the economic environment, there is an increased need for skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments in multi-national companies. It is therefore important for employers to understand what motivates skilled professionals to accept these expatriate assignments.

Contribution/value-add – Although this study is explorative and descriptive, it suggests that if management at multi-national companies are aware of the factors

that motivate skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments, they stand a better chance of being able to fill positions appropriately if they are able to meet the needs of the skilled professionals.

Key words – Expatriate, skilled professionals, expatriate assignments, motivation

Declaration

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

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Name

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Signature

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Date

Acknowledgments

First and foremost I would like to thank the Almighty God, for showering me with blessings that enabled me to complete this significant task in my life.

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Dedication

I dedicate this research paper to my late dad, Nagalingam (Naga) Moodley, who was and will always be my mentor and guiding force. Dad, I know that you would have been exceptionally proud of this achievement and I could never have done this if it weren't for the values and ambition you instilled in me. A part of me feels very empty as I am not able to share this accomplishment with you but I know that wherever you are, you will be gleaming with joy and pride. You were the best father a girl could ever have asked for.

I miss you dearly, daddy. This one's for you!

Love you lots, your baby girl.

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction to the research problem

1.1   Research Title

Motivation for skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments

1.2   Research Problem

Today's business world faces major challenges that can be grouped into three categories: The challenges of Sustainability, Globalisation and Technology (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhard, & Wright, 2010). Along with these challenges comes opportunity for companies to initiate, develop and align company strategies to ensure that growth is still achieved in this challenging climate. Organisational strategies evolve over time changing in line with market strategies and emerging business opportunities (Altman & Baruch, 2012). Dependant on the business environment there may be varying options for different circumstances however Altman & Baruch (2012) argue that organisations tend to maintain a constant approach towards expatriation which is reflective of its business philosophy, market strategy, organisational culture and tradition and is therefore unlikely to change continuously.

The world of business is changing rapidly with globalisation becoming a key strategic necessity for organisations (Altman & Baruch, 2012); therefore the management of an effective international workforce is increasingly of paramount importance to maintain a competitive advantage for an organization (Pinto, Cabral-Cardoso, & Werther, 2012). With this increased demand for internationally mobile employees, of equal importance is being able to assess an employee's intention to work abroad and understand the factors that motivate them to become mobile.

There are many varied perceptions and theories that can be explored when one thinks about an expatriate concept. Perceptions specified by the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) were scrutinised as mediators of the relationship between individuals' personality traits and the intention to relocate for the purpose of working

(Remhof, Gunkel, & Schlaegel, 2014). People who cross international boundaries as a result of their own willingness, whether it be for career, economic or personal reasons are recognised as an important resource to employers and compose a significant portion of the international labour market (Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010).

There has been increased occurrence of expatriate assignments globally (Shaffer, Kraimer, Chen, & Bolino, 2012) over the last 20 years. This ranges from corporate to self-initiated expatriate assignments as well as novel assignments which include flexpatriates, short-term assignments and international business travel (Shaffer et al., 2012). Expatriate assignments have become a norm in most multi-national companies globally for various reasons such as, knowledge transfer, management development, the creation of a common organisational culture and the building of effective informal information networks, which result in organisational development (Dickmann, Doherty, Mills, & Brewster, 2008) however it can be argued that there are conflicting views on why individuals accept these international assignments.

One of the predominant views is the power of international exposure. International exposure has inherently become one of the most powerful experience tools used to shape the perspective and capabilities of effective global leaders (Altman & Baruch, 2012), a theme echoed by Benson & Pattie (2008). Consequently, expatriate assignments have also become of primary interest to "corporate executives aspiring for a global career" (Altman & Baruch, 2012, p. 234).

There is only a handful of research done thus far that investigated the factors that are considered important to skilled professionals when making the decision to relocate for an expatriate assignment. This study contributes to an important gap in current research by delving deeper into understanding what motivates skilled professionals to embark on expatriate assignments in contrast to skilled professionals who have not undertaken these assignments. It reveals key factors that motivate individuals to undertake an expatriation assignment and the similarities and differences between these two groups. The aim is to bridge the gaps previously identified in the "extant literature pertaining to the motivations to embark on a career move in a cross-border context" (Altman & Baruch, 2012, p. 234).

Factors such as funding sources, lifestyle, patterns of working and career advancement (Doherty, Dickmann, & Mills, 2011) appear to be similar between those who have done an expatriate assignment and those who haven't but research to substantiate this is scarce. There have been in depth studies done on various aspects of expatriate assignments and previous research has, in particular, focused on the motivational factors that distinguish organisation-assigned expatriates and self-initiated expatriates (Jokinen, Brewster, & Suutari, 2008; Altman & Baruch, 2012; Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010; Doherty et al., 2011; Peltokorpi & Froese, 2013), but only a limited number of studies have examined an earlier stage in the expatriation process, factors that motivate skilled professionals to accept an international assignment and work abroad, this is echoed by Stahl, Miller, & Tung (2002).

The mobility of highly skilled professionals has become a key component in management literature (Collings, Scullion, & Morley, 2007). With the increase in globalisation, international careers become a part of the globalisation process (Remhof et al., 2014). This therefore requires for individuals to be willing to move across physical and psychological barriers. It is equally important though for companies that operate in different countries, to understand the underlying factors that motivate and influence skilled professionals to embark on this move in order for them to ensure that there is a steady flow of candidates that are willing and able to work abroad (Pinto et al., 2012).

Expatriates therefore represent an important resource for multinational corporations and whilst there has been an increase in the number of expatriates, there is still a high rate of refusal of expatriate assignments by skilled professionals (Remhof et al., 2014). There has also been a high occurrence of expatriates that are not able to perform according to the organisations expectations which given the cost related to expatriate assignments, has proven to be a very costly exercise for some companies when company and employees needs are not met (Dickmann et al., 2008).

1.3   Research Aim

This indicates the need for organisations to understand who makes an ideal candidate for an expatriate assignment. Previous research has identified that there are certain personality traits, perceptions, and cognitions that influence employees toward a more favourable view of foreign assignments and in this way positively affect their intention to work abroad (Remhof et al., 2014).

Mol, Born, Willemsen, & Van Der Molen (2005) are the researchers that studied the hypothesized relationship between the Five Factor Model (FFM) and expatriation willingness and based their findings solely on the "Big Five" personality dimensions. The five major personality dimensions that were explored to determine an individuals' willingness to accept an expatriate assignments were:

1. Extroversion,
2. Adjustment
3. Agreeableness
4. Conscientiousness, and
5. Inquisitiveness

Figure 1: The Five Factor Model (Mol et al., 2005)
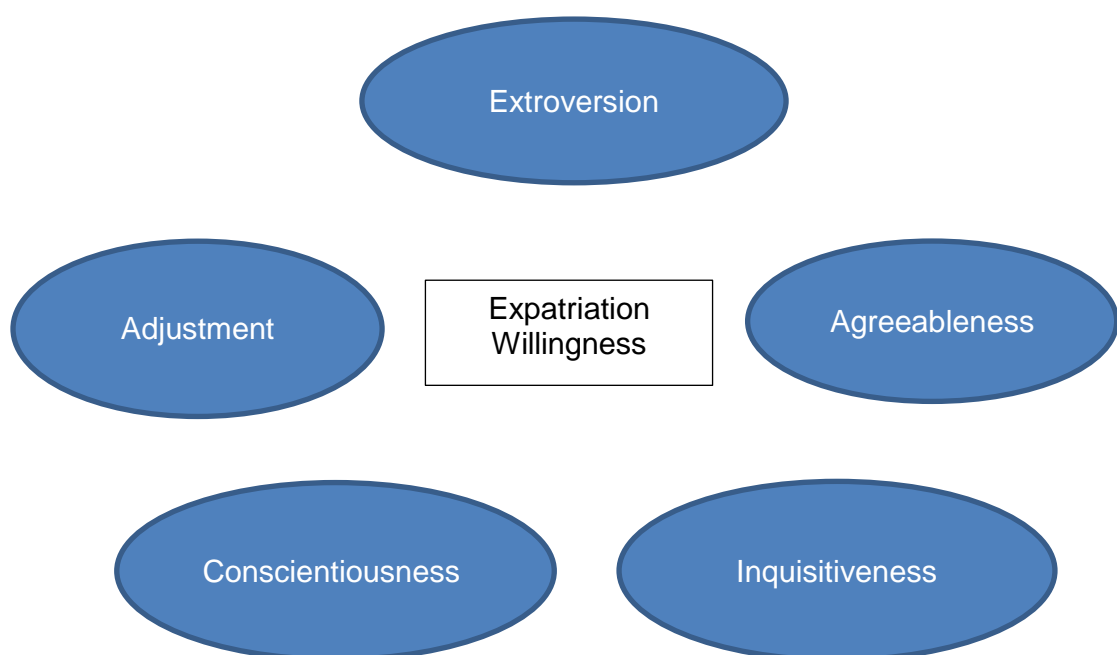
Their study indicates that if an individual depicts the personality traits of being an extrovert who is able to easily adjust, is able to compromise and is conscientious and inquisitive by nature, they are more likely to succeed on an expatriate assignment.

Personality alone however does not motivate individuals and therefore the primary focus of this study aims is to identify the factors that motivate skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments in addition to personality traits.

The growing difficulty in persuading employees to accept international assignments coincides with a fast increasing demand for expatriates, driven by rapid growth in emerging markets and the increasing degree of internationalisation of small and medium sized enterprises (Hippler, 2009). The immobility of skilled professionals has previously been attributed to the growing number of dual career couples and the threat of terrorism globally (Hippler, 2009); however there seems to be a lack of knowledge of factors that motivate skilled professional to accept assignments which leads to a reduced success rate in expatriate relocations.

On the opposite side though there are perceptions that compensation packages drive skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments, which is the argument of Bonache & Fernandez (1997) that financial incentives are offered to skilled professionals to encourage them to accept expatriate assignments. There are studies done however to counter this argument to some extent by indicating that career development opportunity motivates individuals to accept expatriate assignments (Stahl et al., 2002; Fish & Wood, 1997).

In a study done in New Zealand Jackson et al. (2005), established a set of five motivating factors for highly skilled people who moved abroad being lifestyle, family, career, culture and economics. Lifestyle and family were found to be the primary pull components while career, culture and economics were said to be the primary push factors. The authors suggested that these motivations may vary from one geographical location to another, highlighting the need for more in-depth studies to be performed to better understand the diverse drivers of global careers. (Jackson, et al., 2005).

This study aims to further understand the factors that influence skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments based on outcomes generated from views and opinions of skilled professionals interviewed.

1.4   Summary

We will look at a few definitions that provide clarity on the key concepts being discussed and the context in which this needs to been looked for this report.

1.4.1   Definitions

Expatriate:

An expatriate according to the Oxford dictionary is a person who lives outside their native country (Oxford Dictionaries, 2014).

For the purposes of this study a person is considered an expatriate if they have lived outside of their native country for a period of 6 months consecutively.

Skilled Professional:

A skilled professional is any worker who has some special skill or knowledge. A person competent or skilled in a particular activity, having or showing the knowledge, ability, or training to perform a certain activity or task well (Oxford Dictionaries, 2014).

For the purpose of this study, a skilled professional may have attended a college, university or technical school. Or, a skilled professional may have learned their skills on the job.

The discussion thus far indicates a need for further investigation and a deeper view on the literature that has been studied thus far with regard to this subject will now be considered.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The literature available thus far on expatriation tends to reflect the perspective of the organisation and the difference between self-initiated and organisation-assigned expatriation (Jokinen et al., 2008; Altman & Baruch, 2012; Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010; Doherty et al., 2011; Peltokorpi & Froese, 2013) with less focus being on the individuals perspective about factors that influence their decisions and their motives for accepting expatriate assignments (Pinto et al., 2012). In addition most of the literature seems to make the assumption that organisational interests are consistent with individuals' motives for expatriate assignments. This assumption has been under increasing scrutiny.

Dickmann et al. (2008) provide evidence that organisations seem to overestimate financial and family motives and undervalue career and work–life balance considerations expectations of skilled professionals. Larsen (2004) argues that expatriation decisions show the balance of power and interdependency between both parties rather than the assumed common interests between the organisation and the individual.

Organisations use expatriate assignments for a multitude of reasons which include the ability to maintain subsidiary control, skills and knowledge transfer, and management development (Bonache & Fernandez, 1997; Bolino, 2007). Technical competence is therefore a key attribute required for these assignments which makes skilled professionals with the necessary technical skills marketable especially if the skill required is scarce (Pinto et al., 2012).

Haines, Saba, & Choquette (2008) used a sample of Canadian MBA alumni to find that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation influence various motives for accepting an international assignment. Based on the self-determination theory, the intrinsic motivation for an international assignment is related to the inherent interest in pursuing such an activity because of joy and satisfaction gained; on the other hand, extrinsic motivation reflects that the individuals interests in

pursuing an international assignment is due to the perceived outcomes that will be generated such as financial rewards and career prospects (Pinto et al., 2012). Overall, the authors found that intrinsic motivation was generally positively related to the willingness to relocate and the motivation to communicate in a foreign language and adapt to different cultures, and negatively associated with expectations of difficulties abroad. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation was not significantly associated with the willingness to accept an international assignment, but it was associated with expectations of greater difficulties (Haines et al., 2008).

Finding skilled professionals who are willing to expose themselves and their families to an expatriate assignment can be quite challenging for organisations (Remhof et al., 2014). Many multi-national organisations face the challenge that there is a considerable amount of reluctance from employees to accept expatriate assignments due to the perceived difficulties associated with these assignments (Haines et al., 2008).

Multi-national companies have often dealt with this problem by developing innovative compensation packages to try to attract professionals however according to the self-determination theory this is unlikely to yield positive results if an individual expresses a high intrinsic motivation (Haines et al., 2008). It is therefore important to gain an understanding of all motivating factors that may influence an individuals' decision.

Doherty et al. (2011) summarised a qualitative study done on a sample of British academics by Richardson & McKenna (2006) which found that the motivation to go on an expatriate assignment was "captured by four metaphors: the motivation to explore, the motivation to escape, financial motivators and the motivation to use the experience as career building" (Doherty et al., 2011, p. 597). Subsequently, a study done at a German Multinational Company, (Hippler, 2009) found 18 motive categories for relocation which added less researched motives such as the lack of perspectives for the future and willingness to change to the already identified income, personal and career development.

The push/pull model proposed by (Baruch, 1995) suggests that there is a seesaw of forces that pushes/pulls an individual to either stay put in a particular location or (temporarily) migrate. An individuals' motive to accept an expatriate assignment can be split into two elements that cause the push (lack of positions or opportunities) and pull (learning and development) scenario. The first element is "the *person's environment* (including their personal values, needs, preferences and aspirations as well as their organisational milieu) and wider societal context (to include political, social and economic factors)" (Altman & Baruch, 2013, p. 23). The second is *the target environment*, its culture, legal system and economy. A decision to stay in country or relocate is based on weighing out the advantages and disadvantages of all of the above. Subsequently a third environment has been introduced in addition to the two above, that being *the transactional context* which includes trends, prospects and aspirations making the decision of whether to relocate or not based on the advantages and disadvantages of mobility in general (Altman & Baruch, 2013), this is further illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 2: The push/pull model of corporate self-initiating expatriates (Baruch, 1995, p. 316)
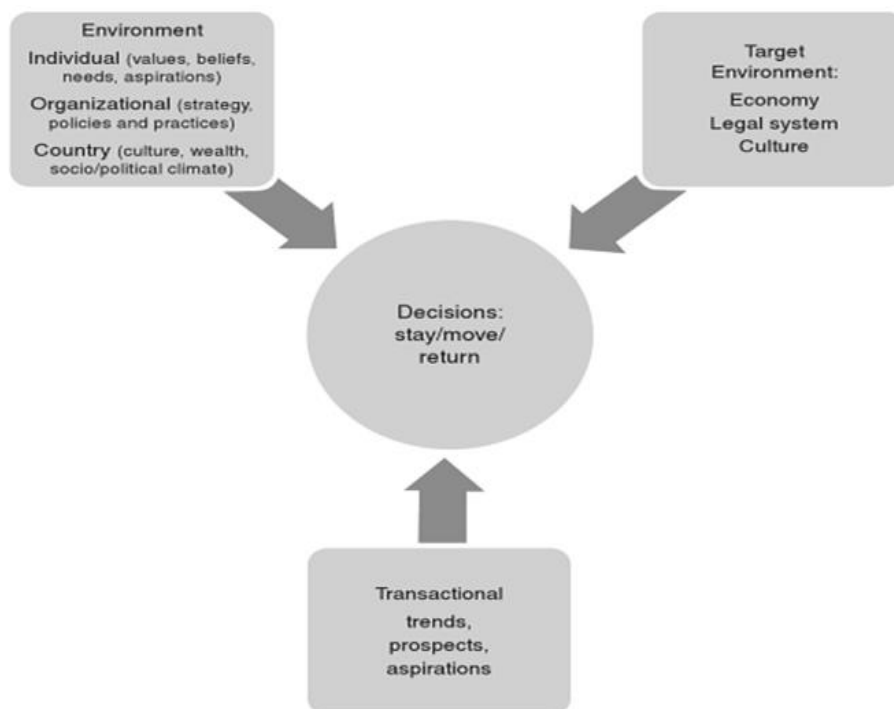
Taking into consideration the empirical studies done thus far, the figure below indicates the common factors identified that influence an individuals' decision to accept an expatriate assignment, each of which will be discussed in further detail.

Figure 3: Common factors that influence and individuals' decision
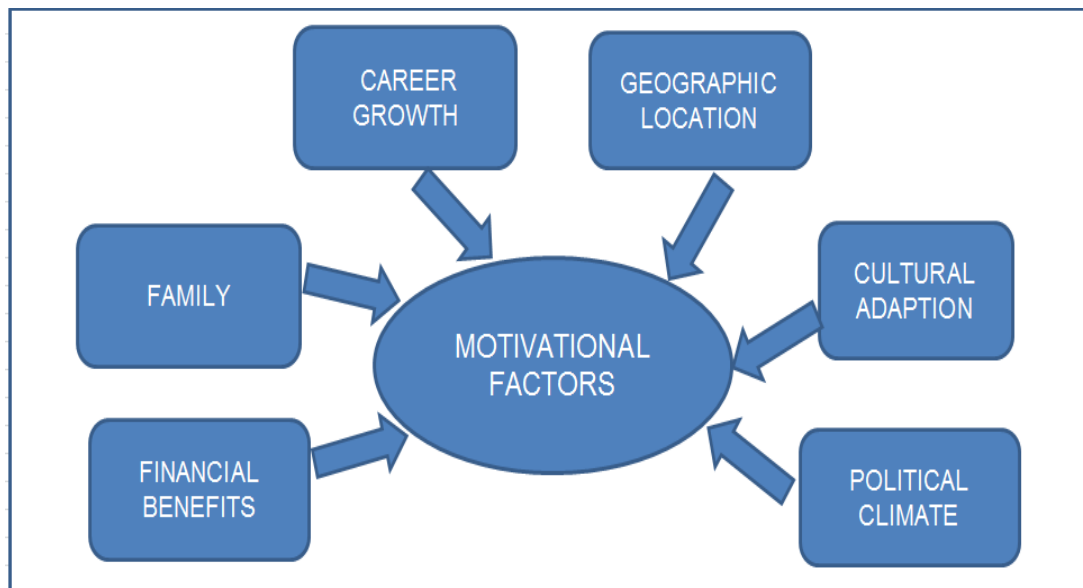
2.2 Family Circumstance

The first factor to be investigated is the perceived family influences associated with expatriate assignments. With the increased scale at which expatriate assignments are growing for most multi-national companies, there is an equally growing body of literature that focuses on the role that family plays in an individuals' decision to accept an expatriate assignment (Altman & Baruch, 2012; Shaffer et al., 2012).

The nature of an expatriate assignment requires for skilled professionals to leave their home country and resettle temporarily in another country which often has different cultures, practices and even sometimes languages (Haines et al., 2008). This relocation can be done either with or without the family. If the skilled professional choses to do the assignment with his/her family often the compensation packages cater for comfortable family relocation and good living

standards (Stahl & Bjorkman, 2006) and therefore appear to be rather attractive.

The relocation of a family however can on the other hand also prove to be quite challenging and does sometimes cause a strain on relationships (Dickmann et al., 2008). The age, once again, of the skilled professional can also be a determining factor as younger professionals without family ties can be seen as more susceptible to accept expatriate assignments as they have less complications with regard to relocation (Selmer, 2001).

Another view according to (Konopaske, Robie, & Ivancevich, 2009) is that family is a barrier for acceptance due to the skilled professional being reluctant to disrupt the family equilibrium by moving to a different environment and location. In addition the impact on children or extended family sometimes comes into play and also possible spouse unwillingness. Spousal unwillingness is often as a result of having dual careers scenario where the spouse is unwilling to put their career on hold (Makela, Kansala, & Suutari, 2011) and this is becoming increasingly prevalent in society these days. On the other hand skilled professionals who have supportive spouses who are not career driven are more likely to accept expatriate assignments (Shaffer et al., 2012).

The transition for a family that accompany a skilled professional on an expatriate assignment demands a vast amount of flexibility, adaptability and tolerance by all concerned and can be rather stressful and challenging (Altman & Baruch, 2012). It is however a key factor that appears to be rather influential in the decision.

2.3 Financial benefits

Most of the literature thus far suggests that there is to some extent an element of compensation incentives that attracts skilled professionals to expatriate assignments (Bolino, 2007; Bonache & Fernandez, 1997; Dickmann et al., 2008; Fish & Wood, 1997; Stahl et al., 2002). Most multi-national companies therefore offer generous compensation packages in an effort to attract skilled

professionals to accept expatriate assignments (Stahl & Bjorkman, 2006). Compensation packages paid to expatriates are rather expensive. It is often the single biggest expense on any one individual, barring the CEO, for most multinational companies (Selmer, 2001).

Due to the nature of expatriate assignments, requiring individuals to be relocated and placed into a new environment, compensation packages usually include additional perks such as a hardship allowance or relocation bonus which makes these assignments rather lucrative and therefore attractive to skilled professionals (Fish & Wood, 1997).

Compensation package has in many instances been identified as a key component of effective international assignment management (Bonache & Fernandez, 1997) however research suggests that contrary to popular belief, skilled professionals do not seek or accept expatriate assignments primarily for financial reasons (Fish & Wood, 1997; Dickmann,et al., 2008; Stahl et al., 2002) however it still is a factor to be considered.

2.4 Career

The second prominent factor discussed is the potential for skills development, experience and career growth that motivates skilled individuals to take on expatriate assignments. This is a very complex dimension and has been studied extensively. There are conflicting views with regard to whether these assignments assist or inhibit career development (Stahl et al., 2002). Regardless though, job satisfaction and career ambition appear to be pertinent driving factors to the decision to move (Hippler, 2009) as it is seen as a vehicle for professional development and career growth opportunities (Stahl et al., 2002).

Accepting an expatriate assignment can be seen by the skilled professional as an investment in their human capital (Altman & Baruch, 2013) and an attempt to achieve a personal goal or desire (Remhof et al., 2014). Individuals who have a desire for challenging situations and tasks have an increased likelihood to

accept expatriate assignments in an effort to see personal development opportunities and growth (Dickmann M. , 2012).

Skilled professionals either view the acceptance of an assignment as an opportunity for career advancement or standing the risk of losing out on future career opportunities that become available in their home country (Hippler, 2009). The career motive does not end at the offer for an expatriate assignment; the motivation that skilled professionals require is to have a long-term career plan which includes the possible next phase of career growth prospects to ensure that the assignment will enable growth of their career capital (Altman & Baruch, 2013).

It is perceived that the attraction to expatriate assignments for skills development and career growth purposes is generally more prominent among the younger skilled professionals who use these assignments as a springboard to enable career growth and expand on their skills. The perception is that this gives more weight to their curriculum vitae as it refines further specific unique skills attained from these assignments offering an opportunity for even further career advancement (Altman & Baruch, 2013).

Fish & Wood (1997) identified that in companies where it is compulsory for managers to do an expatriate stint in order for them to progress within the organisation, it has not always been seen as a successful approach; however this strategy has seemingly been quite successful for multi-national companies like SAB Miller.

In addition to career and skills development there is also personal development. Going back to the self-determination theory discussed earlier (Haines et al., 2008) individuals who are intrinsically motivated tend to seek optimal challenges and would therefore be motivated to accept expatriate assignments to enhance their personal development by exposing themselves to a change of environment, culture and political and economic climate.

Taking all of the above into consideration, it appears as if Skills development, experience and career growth are also key factors that need to be considered.

2.5 Location

Another factor that individuals take into consideration when contemplating accepting an expatriate assignment is the location of the destination country, cultural and religious similarities or dissimilarities as well as political climate and security (Hippler, 2009; Dickmann et al., 2008; Remhof et al., 2014). The individual may also take into consideration the proximity to the home country and their ability to get back to family that they may have to leave behind.

2.5.1 Destination country

The reputation of the country and city as well as standard of living and the attitudes of the citizens within the country are also considered (Dickmann M. , 2012). Much research has been done to understand the influence that the attractiveness of the destination country plays in an individuals' decision to accept an assignment (Altman & Baruch, 2013; Collings et al., 2007; Richardson & McKenna, 2006).

It has been suggested that location may also act as a barrier to accept an assignment dependant on the political or cultural environment (Richardson & McKenna, 2006). The difference between host and destination country culture, political climate, economics, language, healthcare, schooling for children and safety are all factors that are considered not only by the individual accepting the assignment but also by the spouse or other family members who may influence the decision (Konopaske et al., 2009).

2.5.2 Culture and religion

The impact of culture and religion are probably quite underestimated when individuals embark on an expatriate assignment. There is a need to culturally adapt when embarking on an expatriate assignment and therefore the individuals' flexibility to adapt may influence their decision to accept an

expatriate assignment. This phenomenon if often referred to as cultural novelty or cultural distance (Lowe, Downes, & Kroeck, 1999).

Incorporated into cross-cultural adaptability is religiousness and this also appears to be an influential factor (Tarakeshwar, Stanton, & Parament, 2003). Their argument is that religion is an important part of the lives of people across all cultures and locations. It has been seen to be a reliable predictor of physical and mental well-being. It is associated with cross-cultural dimensions and in essence culture to a large extent shapes religious beliefs and practices (Tarakeshwar et al., 2003).

In a study of post-graduate Indonesian students who were studying in Australia, religious background was found to be one of the most prominent factors that inhibited cultural adaptability (Novera, 2004). "Islam is not only the predominant religion in Indonesia but part of the framework of Indonesian moral values" (Novera, 2004, p. 479) therefore making it very much part of the lifestyle that they are used to. Therefore religious affiliations and belief of the skilled professional as well as those present in the destination country play a significant role in the decision to accept an assignment especially if the belief is extremely strong and rigid in nature (Tarakeshwar et al., 2003).

Upon repatriation there is also the possibility of a "reverse culture shock" which is caused by the need to adjust back to the cultural norms and practices of the home country as well as a possible change in organisational, social and political changes prevalent in the home country (Lowe et al., 1999).

Cultural and religious affiliations and beliefs therefore need to be considered and the individuals' ability to adapt to alternate behaviours and beliefs appears to be critical to ensure a successful assignment.

2.5.3 Political and economic climate

Government policies or industry policies may also play a role in influencing an individual to stay in their home country or decide to work abroad (Mahroum, 2000). Government policies can make certain locations attractive or unattractive to skilled professionals and their decision can be influenced by where they would like to raise a family or where they are able to generate maximum benefit from tax laws (Mahroum, 2000).

Politics is eminently prevalent in all countries and the political beliefs generally shape the economic environment to a large extent. Skilled professionals may therefore consider the nature of the politics in the home country and if this view is not aligned with their personal viewpoints, they may see an expatriate assignment as a means to leave the home country.

In addition the perceived political risk of the destination country may also be taken into consideration. This includes inter-nation conflict and abrupt changes in government policies (Lowe et al., 1999). "Political risk includes such items as social unrest potential, potential security threats, regional alliances and inter-nation relations" (Lowe et al., 1999, p. 225) which all appear to be factors that may influence a skilled professional's decision to accept an expatriate assignment. Destination countries with complex or more risky political environments appear to be deterrents to accept an assignment.

On the other hand, skilled professionals may consider the political environment in the home country and may base their decision to move dependant on this political landscape (Lowe et al., 1999).

Geographic location, cultural adaptation and political climate therefore also appear to be factors that need to be taken into consideration and may motivate skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments.

2.6 Summary

These among other predominant factors that may be identified through the data collection will be focused on in this research. Despite the contributions made thus far, the motivating factors remains far from clear and the prevailing assumption that the organisation's interests and the individual's interests are consistent is not particularly helpful (Pinto et al., 2012).

The literature however forms the basis on which the research objectives and questions are formed. The following chapter will discuss these objectives and questions further.

Chapter 3: Research Objectives and Questions

3.1 Introduction

Expatriate assignments represent a challenge to both organisations and employees (Pinto et al., 2012). When considering such an opportunity, individuals are therefore likely to consider various factors.

Understanding employees' motives and receptiveness to relocation offers multi-national companies new insights about how to effectively attract identified candidates to an expatriate assignment and the management of its potential outcomes. The assumption is that individuals seeking an expatriate experience are more likely to overcome adjustment difficulties, feel more satisfied with the assignment and show intentions to remain until the end of the assignment if their initial needs and expectations are met.

3.2 Research objective

There is an apparent increased need for skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments. This study aims to investigate what motivates and attracts skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments.

An additional benefit of the study will be to give guidance and clarity to multi-national companies who employ expatriates an indication of how to approach scarce skilled individuals in order to attract them to expatriate positions available within their organisation.

There is also intent to seek clarity on whether or not the individual's family circumstances play a role in the factors that motivate them to accept expatriate assignments. Age and career progression go hand in hand and therefore factors that motivate skilled professionals to accept assignments may differ dependant on progression in career.

In order to efficiently manage and understand the dynamics of the talent flow within an organisation to fulfil the globalisation needs of the organisation, it is essential to understand the factors that motivate individuals to move to a foreign location.

In addition to the lack of a comprehensive summary of the issues that are relevant to the decision to go abroad as also identified by Doherty et al. (2011), there is a shortage of comparative studies of the motives that influence skilled professionals to work abroad. Hence, this study focuses on individual motivation.

3.3 Research questions

This study will endeavour to amalgamate and develop a set of variables across which a comparison between these two populations can be drawn. This paper explores the following research questions:

1) Which factors influenced skilled individuals to accept expatriate assignments?
2) Which factors influence skilled individuals not to accept expatriate assignments?
3) What are the underlying patterns of their motivations and do these vary significantly between the two populations?
4) Do the factors that influence these individuals differ dependent on age?

3.4 Summary

The nature of the research utilises an inductive approach to identify the key factors and therefore theory based outcomes are not used as in the case of deductive research methods. An in-depth discussion on the research method used is discussed further in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to provide an in-depth description and motivation of the research design and methodology used for the purposes of this research. This research study is aimed at determining the factors that influence skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments. The research method used to determine these factors will now be discussed further.

4.2 Research Design

4.2.1　Ontology

When discussing ontology terms like realism and idealism commonly used to describe the ontology of what we know. "Ontology is the study of existence and in this context is concerned with what we discern to be real" (Ryan, Scapens, & Theobold, 2002, p. 13).

Hall (2003) states that ontology is the character of the world as it actually is. It is used to show "the fundamental assumptions scholars make about the nature of the social and political world and especially about the nature of causal relationships within the world (Hall, 2003, p. 374). It is simplistically how we perceive the social world to be.

It is therefore a difficult concept but it provides relevance to the existence in objects which makes it important for researchers to understand their ontological view of the world so that they are able to react appropriately when faced with varying perspectives of reality. It is of particular importance as the researcher's ontological view is bound to influence the research performed.

The researcher's ontological view is that the world is largely driven by opinions of different people. In this light, the researcher's ontology is

characterised as being interpretive, as the understanding of these opinions depends on being able to subjectively understand these opinions without tainting the opinions by imposing those of the researcher.

4.2.2   Epistemology

Epistemology on the other hand is the relationship between the reality, explained by ontology, and the researcher (Healy & Perry, 2000). (Gringeri, Barusch, & Cambron, 2013, p. 55) adopted knowledge from (Carter & Little, 2007;Pascale, 2010) and state that "epistemology may be seen as theories of knowledge that justify the knowledge building process that is actively or consciously adopted by the researcher" to highlight that social inquiry is to a large extent influenced by the perceptions, assumptions and processing of knowledge of the researcher. These perceptions and assumptions have an influence on the researchers' choice of topic, research questions, methods of analysis, theories and conclusions which build on the knowledge base for selected topics (Gringeri, Barusch, & Cambron, 2013).

It is therefore of importance for the researcher to examine and understand the ways in which their social views and locations affect the processing of knowledge as this will enable the researcher to understand why certain questions are asked or answered in a particular manner (Gringeri et al., 2013). In addition to this it will enable the researcher to understand how their own values affect their research observations. The intention of qualitative research is to reveal a consistent approach that is easily identifiable and recognised by the reader or reviewer (Gringeri et al., 2013).

Epistemology is therefore of key importance to the research process which makes it necessary for the researcher to explicitly decide on the relevant process of inquiry to ensure that the outcomes revealed make a valuable contribution to the existing knowledge base (Gringeri et al., 2013).

The epistemology of the researcher is interpretive. The researcher therefore views reality as being internal and subjective. The researcher is of the opinion that epistemology is shaped by knowledge and experiences. The

researcher will therefore attempt to challenge some of the assumptions that have been shaped by the researcher's experiences of reality.

4.2.3 Design

There has been research on various aspects of expatriate assignments however there is little empirical research on the factors that influence skilled professionals to accept these assignments. Expatriate assignments have become a more common practice among various multinational companies and therefore it is critical to understand the underlying factors that influence potential candidate's decisions.

The study conducted was exploratory and qualitative in nature. The researcher conducted semi structured interviews with skilled professionals who have previously been on expatriate assignments as well as skilled professionals who are considering or have considered expatriate assignments for future career growth.

Saunders & Lewis (2012, p. 110) states that exploratory studies "aim to seek new insights, ask new questions and to assess topics in a new light." An exploratory study gives insight into tentative answers that requires more detailed research in order to reach an informed outcome. The most common methods of gathering information according to (Saunders & Lewis, 2012, p. 110) for exploratory research are:

- Searching the academic literature
- Interviewing "experts" in the subject
- Conducting interview.

Conducting interviews with experts in the field enables gathering information from experienced individuals who have a wealth of knowledge in this area of study. The advantage of this method of study is that the interviewees willingly cooperate and therefore add value to the study as well as the interviewer has the benefit of being able to pre-screen participants to ensure

that the person being interviewed meets the necessary criteria of the population profile.

Qualitative data allows the researcher to explore more complex relationships between different variables in their natural setting (Worley & Doolen, 2012, p. 231) to come to a conclusion.

This study is a grounded theory type research where the researcher develops theory from data generated by a series of observations or interviews (Saunders & Lewis, 2012, p. 119). The researcher then used these findings to determine whether there are common factors that influence the interviewee's decision to accept or decline expatriate assignments.

The researcher studied the various perspectives and the experiences of individuals who have previously accepted expatriate assignments as well as those you are potentially considering future expatriate assignments or have previously declined expatriate assignments to determine the factors that influence or have influenced their decisions.

The aim of these qualitative, semi-structured, expert interviews was to determine what the participant's views and experiences are of the expatriate assignments and the associated benefits that may or may not motivate them to accept these assignments.

4.3 Universe and Population

The universe is skilled professionals: for the purposes of this study a "skilled professional" is described as an individual who has the relevant academic qualifications to perform a task within the industry that they work in or has worked in a particular industry for more than ten years.

The population of this study consisted of pre-selected skilled professionals from Freight Forwarding companies who have either completed expatriate assignments or are considering accepting future expatriate assignments or

have previously. The skilled professionals for the purpose of this study are also individuals who have had more than five years of management experience.

4.4 Sampling

Experts selected for participation in the study will be skilled professionals who have previous experience of an expatriate assignment or are considering a future expatriate assignment. The participants were senior managers identified from Freight Forwarding companies known to the researcher. The selection of participants further included:

- A selection of participants who are young and have very limited family ties, (i.e. Single, or a married couple without children), and
- A selection of participants who are older and have a more complex family structure (i.e. Married with children, or adult dependants).

The researcher utilised a purposive sampling technique, which is a non-probability sampling technique where the researcher's judgement is used to select the sample members based on a range of possible reasons and premises (Saunders & Lewis, 2012, p. 138).

Expatriate assignments are specific in their nature and therefore the researcher needed to ensure that the sample selected meets the necessary criteria and this criterion needed to be clearly defined.

Welman & Kruger (2001) state that non-probability sampling is used when the probability exists that certain members of the population may have no chance of being included in the sample. The participants for the purposes of this research have been identified through specific selection and therefore this sampling technique is appropriate. The researcher utilised a determined sample size of participants to identify trends in the responses to the research questions.

4.5 Data Collection

Data was collected by conducting semi structured interviews with 14 participants and were done face to face. The initial intention of the researcher was to conduct twenty interviews however after fourteen interviews were conducted, saturation was reached and no further interviews were conducted.

Seven of the participants selected were skilled professionals, currently in senior management positions, who have been or are currently on an expatriate assignment. The other seven participants were skilled professionals, currently in senior management positions, who have never been on an expatriate assignment but have considered or are considering future expatriate assignments.

For the interviewees who had previously or are currently on an expatriate assignment the questions in these interviews were designed to determine what were the motivating factors that influenced the decision of the selected participants to accept expatriate assignments? Questions were also included to help identify the extent to which the various factors are important and therefore significantly influenced their decisions.

For the interviewees who had not previously accepted an expatriate assignment or would consider future assignments the questions in these interviews were designed to determine what are the motivating factors that influenced the decision of the selected participants to accept expatriate assignments? Questions were also included to help identify the extent to which the various factors are important and therefore significantly influence their decisions.

Semi structured interviews are useful in extracting deeper levels of understanding as the process progresses. (Saunders & Lewis, 2012) identify the key aspects of this method of data collection which makes it attractive are:

• The same questions are used for all participants.

• It is possible for the interview questions to go through a process of development.

• Supplementary questions are used if the interviewer judges that there is more to be disclosed at a particular point of the interview.

• All interviewees receive approximately the same amount of time.

All participants were initially contacted telephonically or via email to secure the interview. As the participants are key individuals within their companies with limited time available, the researcher ensured that sufficient time is given for the interview process, as cancellations and postponements could be a problem due to the limited availability of the participants. The duration of each of the interviews was approximately one hour. Responses to the interview questions and any additional comments were captured by means of a voice recorder once consent was given by the participant.

An interview guide detailing the procedure and questions to be asked was developed in line with the objectives wanting to be achieved from the research and was sent to the participants prior to the interview. This gave the participants an opportunity to prepare their responses to the questions that were asked and maximum benefit was achieved from the interview.

Furthermore this ensured that similar general areas of information can be collected from all participants giving more reliability and relevance to the data collected.

Formal consent was requested and obtained from all participants prior to the interview, to enable all interviews to be digitally recorded and later transcribed for analysis.

According to (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001) the following guidelines are recommended to successfully conduct a semi structured interview face to face and these were the guidelines followed by the researcher:

1. Interviewees must be representative of the group.

2. A suitable location should be found, that is convenient to the interviewee and takes place in quiet venue where both parties are unlikely to be interrupted.

3. Prior to the interview, take time to establish a rapport with the interviewee. This breaks the ice and sets the tone for the interview to flow more freely.

4. Written permission is received prior to the interview, where the nature and purpose of the interview is explained. An offer to the interviewee of the report on finalisation can also be made to give the interviewee a sense of comfort that they would have visibility of how these responses are used in the report.

5. Focus on the facts instead of abstract ideas to ensure that factual information is derived from the interview.

6. Don't put words into the participant's mouths. The interviewees must feel comfortable in choosing their own means of expressing their ideas and thoughts.

7. Verbatim responses are to be recorded in handwritten notes or audio recording, if possible, to enable accurate recording the thoughts and ideas of the interviewee.

8. Reactions not to be displayed by the interviewer.

9. Remember that the facts are not always necessarily the facts. As confident and convincing as the interviewee may be, their responses should always be treated as perceptions rather than the actual facts.

Some of the benefits of semi-structured interviews identified by (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006) are that questions are prepared ahead of time giving the interviewer an opportunity to be prepared and able to be more confident

during the interview. It also allows the interviewee the freedom to express their views in their own way therefore providing reliable, comparable data.

4.6 Data Validity

A research study must seek to ensure that its findings are both valid and reliable (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). According to (Saunders & Lewis, 2012) factors that can threaten the reliability of research findings include, subject error, subject bias, observer error and observer bias.

Qualitative research is often criticised with regard to its ability to be free from errors and bias due to the nature of the research. It is therefore critical to ensure that data results attained are consistent (reliable) and that the research findings are really about what they profess to be about (validity) (Saunders & Lewis, 2012, p. 127).

4.7 Data Analysis

The content of the data gathered was analysed to categorise data into a format that was used to develop a list of factors that motivate skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments.

Categorising the data enabled the researcher to suggest a possible pattern that emanated from the data gathered to provide an outcome to possible answers to the research questions.

An inductive approach to analysis was used to analyse the findings and the categories therefore developed from the data gathered. The choice of unit of data used to attach a relevant category depended on what worked best at the time. The approach for content analysis as suggested by (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001) is as follows and was followed by the researcher:

1. Organise the data with the utilisation of index cards. This can also be used to break down large bodies of text into smaller units, in the form of

stories, sentences or individual words.

2. Peruse the entire data set a number of times to get a clear understanding of the contents as a whole then proceed to start the understanding of categorising the data.

3. Identify general categories or themes, with possible sub-categories and subthemes, and then classify each piece of data accordingly.

4. Integrate and summarize the data. This step may include offering propositions that describe the relationships among the categories.

Data analysis involves being able to apply reason in order to understand and interpret the data collected. An inductive approach to the analysis involved the use of the data analysis spiral.

The researcher was required to generate the raw text data into a brief, summary format, organise the data, read through and make notes to enable you to establish clear links/trends, categorise themes, and finally interpret data in line with the research objectives to arrive at the summary findings.

The following diagram provides a visual view of the content analysis process flow that's was followed:

Figure 4: The data analysis spiral (Creswell, 2009)
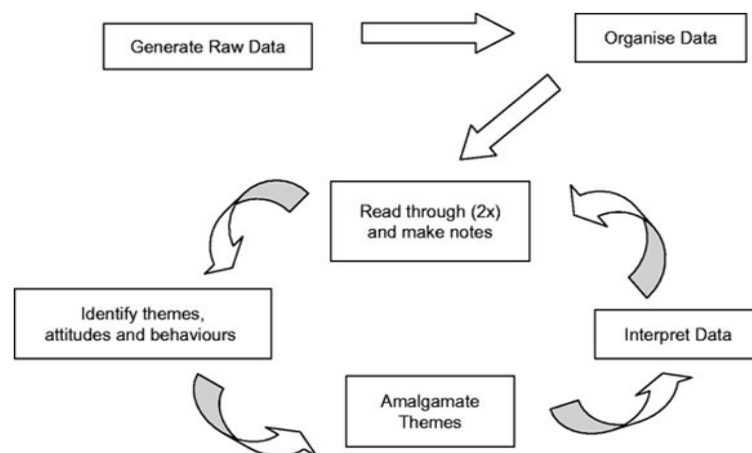
Constant comparative analysis was also required to be used to compare findings of each interview with the results of the previous interviews to establish trends.

It was the intention of the researcher to utilise some form of computer software for organising and analysing the data received. By using this method of storing and organising field notes, the researcher had the ability to retrieve required pieces of information relatively easily using the computer database. This therefore provided a practical means of storing and organising all notes and discussions, and assisted in identifying common patterns in the data.

4.8 Limitations

This study had limitations which will be highlighted to ensure the transparency of the results derived.

Firstly, this study does not cover different perceptions related to different lengths of international assignments. Individuals' beliefs, attitudes, and, as a result, also their motivations may change for regular business trips, short international assignments, and long or very long international assignments.

Secondly, some of the questions were retrospective in nature, which could influence the answers given. As the interviewees evaluate events from the past, it is not guaranteed that the answers reflect the actual behaviour or attitude, which might be viewed as a limitation within this study. Given the methodology used for the study this bias is likely to happen, the information derived however will still give a reliable indication of the factors that are of importance in the informants' decision. **In** addition, it gives the informant an opportunity to reflect on whether this is still relevant, or if it has changed through gained experience.

Finally, this study is limited to a sample of skilled professionals within the Freight Forwarding industry in South Africa and therefore does not fully represent all participants in the Universe. Outcomes derived from a research design like this are bound to suffer some degree of diminished generalizability however the respondents involved in this study worked across a variety of functions (e.g. operations, sales, finance, etc.).

4.9 Summary

Despite the limitations discussed above, the results of the study highlights the factors that influence skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments and also emphasises the need for further empirical research to be done in this field. These results will be discussed further in the following chapter.

Chapter 5: Results

5.1   Introduction and layout of results

The purpose of the data collection process was to obtain sufficient and relevant data that will provide relevant research data, which will be analysed and then utilised to answer the research questions and meet the research objectives presented in Chapter 3. In order to set the scene for the data analysis, the sample of skilled professionals utilised for this research was described in general. This was done in order to identify any rampant variable or specific observation that could highlight deviations in this research from other similar research.

Following this, the results were presented per research question as seen in Chapter 3. All research questions include the main research concepts, motivational forces for skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments.

Finally, an overall result of motivational factors has been presented, which summarises the combined findings presented in the research results. This is done in order to provide a holistic view of the common factors identified that motivate skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments.

5.2   Description of participant

The participants interviewed were all senior managers who have had at least five years of management experience. This enabled them to have had at least one opportunity in their career thus far to make the decision to accept an expatriate assignment.

Before going into the details of the interview outcomes, a brief demographic description of the participants will be given to help set the scene for the results obtained. The table below indicates the demographics for the participants who had previously or are currently on an expatriate

assignment.

Table 1: Demographic descriptors of skilled professional who have accepted expatriate assignments

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	5	71%
Female	2	29%
Total	**7**	**100%**
Race/Ethnicity	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
White	7	100%
Total	**7**	**100%**
Age	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
21-40	3	43%
41 and older	4	57%
Total	**7**	**100%**

The sample of participants included five males and two females. The gender split was not representative of the South African population or business environment. All participants interviewed were also all white therefore also not being representation of the South African population. Given the criteria that needed to be met to enable managers to be legible participants, these were the only demographic groups that are represented within the industry chosen. There is a relatively even mixture of older and younger participants.

Table 2: Demographic descriptors of skilled professional who have not accepted expatriate assignments

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	6	86%
Female	1	14%
Total	**7**	**100%**
Race/Ethnicity	**Frequency**	**Percentage**

White	7	100%
Total	**7**	**100%**
Age	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
21-40	4	57%
41 and older	3	43%
Total	**7**	**100%**

The sample of participants included six males and one female. The gender split was not representative of the South African population or business environment. All participants interviewed were also all white therefore also not being representation of the South African population. Given the criteria that needed to be met to enable managers to be legible participants, these were the only demographic groups that are represented within the industry chosen. There is a relatively even mixture of older and younger participants.

5.3 Presentation of results

5.3.1 Introduction

For the purposes of answering the research questions in chapter 3, the researcher has identified the importance of first exploring the results of the interviews with skilled professionals who have accepted expatriate assignment and those who haven't separately. This independent analysis will provide the most arduous and appropriate foundation from which to draw evidence that answers each of the research questions. The reason for this approach is simply because the answer to each of the research questions is expected to originate from two separate data sources. Therefore, clear answers to the research questions can only be formulated by first examining the results of these difference sample groups independently.

5.3.2 Interviews: Skilled professionals who accepted expatriate assignments

The general introduction into the research topic was given to all interviewees. This spurred them on to give their initial thoughts and perceptions with regard to the subject matter.

Questions were then asked to cover topics discussed and discovered from the literature review. This enabled participants to freely discuss various aspects of their assignments relevant to the factors identified from the literature review. In doing so the participants provided insight to the relevant answers required to the first three questions asked in Chapter 3.

At the end of the interview the participants were asked to list the top three factors that motivated them to initially accept an expatriate assignment and they were then asked to list the top three factors that would motivate them to accept a future assignment. The intention of this is to gauge the impact that age has on the factors that motivate skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments. This therefore provides the answers required for the last question in chapter 3.

5.3.3 Interviews: Skilled professionals who have not accepted expatriate assignments

The general introduction into the research topic was given to all interviewees. This spurred them on to give their initial thoughts and perceptions with regard to the subject matter.

Questions were then asked to cover topics discussed and discovered from the literature review. This enabled participants to freely discuss their career history and milestones and any previous expatriate assignments that they had rejected detailing the relevant to the factors identified from the literature review that influenced their decision. In doing so the participants provided insight to the relevant answers required to the first three questions asked in Chapter 3.

At the end of the interview the participants were asked to list the top three factors that influenced them to reject previous expatriate assignments and they were then asked to list the top three factors that would motivate them to accept a future assignment. The intention of this is to gauge the impact that age has on the factors that motivate skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments. This therefore provides the answers required for the last question in chapter 3.

5.4   Application of results to research questions

5.4.1 Introduction

The above independent analysis of the respective data sources provided the foundation for the accretion of results, and answering of the research questions. Due to data results emerging from two independent sources, it was necessary for the researcher to use a cross-tabulation of the two sets of results to identify possible trends that could emanate between the two sets of results.

In order to perform the cross tabulation and answer the research questions, it was necessary for the researcher to assess whether each participant can be categorised as an expatriate or not. To isolate expatriates, it was necessary for the researcher to identify skilled professionals who have worked outside of the home country for more than six months continuously. Skilled professionals, who did not meet these criteria, would not be categorised as expatriates. This threshold was set by the researcher and deemed as appropriate, due to the researcher having used a purposive sampling technique and therefore expecting participants to be in one of the two specific categories.

5.4.2 Cross tabulation construction

The cross tabulation was done in two stages, the first being the identification of expatriate respondents and confirmation that all interviewees meet the criteria of being regarded as skilled professionals. An individual is considered to be a skilled professional if they have the relevant academic qualification or sufficient on the job work experience and therefore are considered to be proficient in their job. A skilled professional is identified as an expatriate for the purposes of this study if they have worked outside of their home country for a period of more than six months consecutively.

Table 3: Identification of expatriate respondents

Interviewee No	Academic qualification	More than 10 years experience	Skilled professional	Worked outside home country for more than 6 months continuously
1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
6	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
7	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
8	Yes	Yes	Yes	**No**
9	Yes	Yes	Yes	**No**
10	Yes	Yes	Yes	**No**
11	Yes	Yes	Yes	**No**
12	Yes	Yes	Yes	**No**
13	Yes	Yes	Yes	**No**
14	Yes	Yes	Yes	**No**

The above table highlights that all respondents interviewed meet the criteria of being skilled professionals as they have the relevant academic qualifications and work experience. Seven of the 14 respondents meet the criteria of being identified as expatriates as they have worked for a period of at least six months consecutively outside of their home country.

Now that it has been established that the participants meet the necessary criteria of being identified as skilled professionals and the participants that

are regarded as expatriates have been identified, the second stage is a cross-tabulation which takes into consideration the results derived from both groups of participants with regard to motivating factors that have in the past or would in the future influence them to accept an expatriate assignment. This is to enable the researcher to justify that use of the results derived from the interviews are relevant and can be used as a means to determine the outcome required.

Table 4: Summary of responses received from all participants

Category	Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Expatriate		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Family															
	Spouse/Partner	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
	Children	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
	Extended Family	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Financial package															
	Package only	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
	Package with conditions	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Career															
	Growth	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
	Experience	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Skills development	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Location															
	Destination country	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Lifestyle	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Politics	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
	Language	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
	Religion	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
Company Policy		No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Did the factors change over time		No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Did the order of importance change		Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Age		Over 40	Under 40	Over 40	Under 40	Over 40	Under 40	Over 40	Over 40	Under 40	Over 40	Over 40	Under 40	Under 40	Under 40
Would consider a future assignment		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

The results of the above cross tabulation indicate that similar responses were received from both groups of participants for most of the factors that were identified as being motivating factors that influence a skilled professional's decision to accept an expatriate assignment. There doesn't appear to be any factors that have responses that are only specific to a

particular group of participants, therefore no particular group will influence the outcome negatively. It has also been established that all of the participants would consider accepting a future expatriate assignments and therefore the responses they have given in the interviewees resemble the thought process that they would encounter should they be faced with a future offer for an expatriate assignment.

There appears to be a high level of consistency attained from the interviews of the various participants. This can be seen as there is evidence of similar responses received for numerous factors from both groups of participants. It therefore appears to be acceptable to use these results as a means to address the research questions suggested in chapter three, the results of which can be seen below.

In chapter two it was identified that family, more specifically the spouse/partner of the skilled professional as well as children and extended family may influence the decision that a skilled professional makes to accept an expatriate assignment. Likewise, career growth, experience, skills development and various aspects of location may influence their decision. In an effort to answer the research questions established in chapter three, the various factors identified in chapter two have been grouped, based on similar attributes, into categories. In addition to the factors identified in chapter two, there was an additional factor of company policy that evolved out of the interview process and previous research with regard to the link between company policy and expatriate decision was not found. This therefore appears to be a newer factor to this study and will be discussed further through the next two chapters.

5.4.3 Research question 1 results

Which factors influenced skilled individuals to accept expatriate assignments?

The table below indicates the various factors identified as being a motivating

factor to their decision to accept an expatriate assignment and shows whether or not the participant agreed or disagreed that each factor influenced their decision to accept an expatriate assignment. This will be used to answer the research question above.

The participant numbers are shown on the horizontal axis of the table and the factors grouped into their relevant categories are shown along the vertical axis. The responses received from each participant is shown in the body of the table indicating whether or not the participant agrees (Yes) or disagrees (No) that the factor motivated their decision to accept an expatriate assignment.

Table 5: Responses from skilled professionals who have previously accepted an expatriate assignment

Category	Factor	Participant No.						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Family								
	Spouse/Partner	Yes	Yes	**No**	Yes	Yes	**No**	Yes
	Children	Yes	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	Yes
	Extended Family	Yes	Yes	Yes	**No**	**No**	Yes	**No**
Financial package								
	Package only	Yes	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	Yes	Yes
	Package with conditions	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Career								
	Growth	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Experience	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Skills development	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Location								
	Destination country	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Lifestyle	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Politics	Yes	Yes	**No**	**No**	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Language	**No**	Yes	**No**	**No**	**No**	Yes	Yes
	Religion	Yes	**No**	**No**	**No**	Yes	Yes	**No**
Company Policy		**No**	Yes	**No**	Yes	Yes	**No**	**No**

The table above shows the factors that were identified as having had an influence on the skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments. The two participants that indicated that their spouse/partner did not influence their decision were due to the fact that they did not have a partner at the time of accepting the assignment. Likewise the five participants that indicated that children did not influence their decision also did not have children at the time of initially accepting the expatriate assignment.

It can be seen that some factors like, career growth and experience appear to be highly motivational to this sample of skilled professionals as 100% of the interviewees agreed that this was a motivating factors. Other factors like language and religion appear to not be consistently motivational to all the individuals.

In order to get a better understanding of the relative extent to which the various factors influenced the decision of these skilled workers the researcher has extracted some of the comments made during the interviews relevant to these factors. Some of the general comments with regard to these various factors can be seen below.

Table 6: General comments with regard to the factors identified above

Category	Factor	General Comments
Family		
	Spouse/Partner	"My wife was general manager at the time, the move meant that she had to sacrifice her career." "Well I had just met someone, in fact but it was in just early stages that we weren't really that committed so made the decision a lot easier."
	Children	"I was very concerned about the children living in Mozambique at such a young age, they were 3 and 1 at the time.But saw it as an opportunity

		and took the chance."
	Extended Family	"I had a young family. Probably would not have moved to the US, Europe/Asia due to it being far from parents and extended family. Support structure." "Major reason for going to France was our families are all in Europe, so it was a nice opportunity that we knew we had a few years of being close to them." "There was a lot of discussions with my parents, my brothers but in fact they were all happy that I am taking the opportunity and they even motivated me more telling me to go and do it which made making the decision much easier." "Fortunately for me at the time, my extended family were spread all over the world, sister in Holland / Brother in Ireland / other brothers in Cape Town / In-laws in Portugal – so this definitely did not influence my decision."
Financial package		
	Money	"If package was less would probably not have accepted." "The packages would have to be good but that kind of goes without saying when you moving countries. It had quite a big influence but the we were looking for an opportunity to go and experience another way of life and a different lifestyle experience." "Look I think the career path was certainly a major influence and I had almost put pen to paper before they discussed the salary side of things but it was an increase that was tax free which made a huge difference."

	Additional Benefits	"The political situation, the lifestyle, those are big, I mean some places, no matter what they are paying you, are not nice to live in." "There are the other perks which were schooling for the kids going to private school made it really attractive, the housing side of things, water, electricity all those things were paid as well plus you got a car allowance as opposed to a company car, it was very lucrative, no doubt about it." "It had to be worth it to go out there because there are a lot of sacrifices. I mean there are risks up there that you wouldn't have here. There is lack of infrastructure, you are away from family but I would say that the package and the experience pretty much goes hand in hand."
Career		
	Growth	"I saw it as a stepping stone, long term. I knew I would have to take a step backwards with going to a country where I could not speak the language and the culture was extremely different to what I knew. So I knew I was going to go backwards, but ultimately long term go forward in terms of career." "It was a stepping stone. It was career development and I think from my perspective it was certainly the right move."
	Experience	"I think it's a good way to explore and gain experience. It depends I think what countries and where you're going to be an expatriate." "It was a huge change from a learning and development side of things but I don't think had I stayed in South Africa, I wouldn't have had the same experience and exposure, definitely not. So that was a huge learning curve for me."

	Skills development	"I wouldn't have developed the variety of skills that you do as an expatriate." "It depends how long you are going to be up in these African territories and where you're an expat. So a massive learning curves initially. You get to experience all aspects of the business as opposed to the just one portion and then if you then move forward 10 years or so, or 17 in my case, I came back here, I found wow, I was way behind the curve in so many aspects. You get very stale up there." "I must say, the skills I have developed working in Mozambique is way beyond what I would have developed if I remained in SA. You get a full exposure to all aspects of your trade and not just one particular area."
Location		
	Destination country	"I don't think I would have gone to the rest of the world, because I mean I am still African, hey. I enjoy it here." "I think very much if it was America, the US or Australia. Africa I am not sure of. " "If they had said to me, Zimbabwe initially, I would have jumped at that because I came from Zimbabwe so that would have been a nice one for me to look at but an opportunity came up in Malawi and I took it." "Yes. I would probably consider other countries, other than DRC because I have been to Congo as well and that is just a nightmare. Yes, I would most likely go to other countries but again I will do a full assessment first."

	Lifestyle	"Well I saw a lifestyle that expatriates live. By travelling into those countries I understood that the lifestyle was quite an easy lifestyle. We met some good people. We made some cash. So why not I guess. It made it attractive in terms of understanding what else is there other than just a package." "Your hospitalisation, health care, schooling, especially the fact that I have a 3 and a half-year-old. I don't want to when she gets to school going age that she has to be in boarding school or very far. The lifestyle with all those factors considered."
	Politics	"Getting out of South Africa was part of the plan, because there was a bit of a concern I suppose at the time about the future of South Africa." "For me safety is a big factor. So I mean we need to know what the situation is with regard to political stbility in the country that you are going to as you don't want to be worse off than you currently are, so political stability is a concern and would be very important." "We're not overly impressed with South Africa. I don't like it here, I don't like the politics, I don't like the staff taxes and the corporate environment. I don't feel safe here to be honest." "Politically no in Mozambique but a concern was crime in my home country South Africa."

	Language	"I also came to realize is how much language can be a hindrance. And I have realized how badly I communicated because I could not speak their language and when you can't speak someone's language, your typical behaviour is to just say no, no, or block it out or you dash off and that really is what it is all about, and the more time I spent there, the more I realized, and it has helped me I think since then, if you could communicate effectively with people, half the battle is won." "It was not easy in the beginning as I did speak Portuguese but slowly you learn the language and how to deal with their culture." "If I had the option between Zambia and Mozambique, I probably would have still chosen Zambia and not Mozambique even though Mozambique has lovely beaches but just because of the language barrier that is a huge, huge factor."
	Religion	"Not really but the religion played a role when I was in Tanzania.They had a strong reigious inclination which neither me nor my family were used to. And you also had not much else to do. For my son and I, we jump on a boat and you go down the river and it was ok but for my daughter and wife it was more difficult. " "If you're going to go to like a Muslim country, you've got to be very aware of their tolerances of their Anglicans or whatever and you've also got to be understanding of the way the world is right now." "No, this did not impact my decision. You can take your faith with you wherever you go."
Company Policy		"Very influencial as it gives you a sense of comfort. You uprooted yourself and your partner so need to be sure." "It didn't at that stage because I was probably young and naive with regards to it now I am very much older and not so much wiser but I would certainly look at the structure and how it is done now before going back into one of these places."

There appears to be a variety of comments relevant to each of the factors identified indicating that thought has been given to these factors when these skilled professionals made the decision to accept an expatriate assignment. It is also apparent that factors can be considered by individuals but for different reasons, for example, one of the participants indicated that politics was a motivating factor as the stability of politics in destination country was important whereas other participants indicated that politics was a motivating factor for them based on the current political climate in the home country.

In general all of the factors represented in the table appear to motivate skilled professionals in some manner while making the decision to accept an expatriate assignment.

5.4.4 Research question 2 results

Which factors influence skilled individuals not to accept expatriate assignments?

The table below indicates the various factors identified as being a motivating factors that influence skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments and shows whether or not the participant agreed or disagreed that each factor would influence their decision to accept an expatriate assignment. This will be used to answer the research question above.

The participant numbers are shown on the horizontal axis of the table and the factors grouped into their relevant categories are shown along the vertical axis. The responses received from each participant is shown in the body of the table indicating whether or not the participant agrees (Yes) or disagrees (No) that the factor would motivate their decision to accept an expatriate assignment.

Table 7: Responses from skilled professionals who previously have not accepted an expatriate assignment but would consider a future assignment

Category	Factor	Participant No.						
		8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Family								
	Spouse/Partner	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
	Children	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
	Extended Family	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Financial package								
	Package only	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
	Package with conditions	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Career								
	Growth	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
	Experience	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Skills development	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Location								
	Destination country	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Lifestyle	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Politics	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
	Language	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
	Religion	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
Company Policy		Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

The table indicates the factors that were identified that would influence these skilled professionals to accept expatriate a future assignment or resulted in the individuals rejecting a previous expatriate assignment offer. The two participants that indicated that their spouse/partner did not influence their decision were due to the fact that they are currently not in a relationship and therefore a partner does not influence their decision. Likewise the one participant that indicated that children did not influence their decision also does not have children and therefore this would not influence their decision currently.

Similar to the first sample group, experience and aspects of location appear to be highly motivational as 100% of the interviewees agreed that this would be a motivating factor. In contrast to the first group, career growth and skills development appear less motivational. Other factors like language and religion also appear to not be consistently motivational to all the individuals in this sample group.

In order to get a better understanding of the relative extent to which the various factors would influence or have previously influenced the decision of these skilled professionals, the researcher has extracted some of the comments made during the interviews relevant to these factors. Some of the general comments with regard to these various factors can be seen below.

Table 8: General comments with regard to the factors identified above

Category	Factor	General Comments
Family		
	Spouse/ Partner	"It would have to be very worthwhile to give up my whole lifestyle – to uproot your whole family. This would be a joint decision between my wife and me." "Firstly it would primarily be family that influenced the decision. So we are a family and that family time will be primary to decision."
	Children	"For family reasons, specifically with regard to my son, there were some restrictions that didn't allow me to actually take up previous offers." "My youngest is now 14, so if he finished matric and went to University, then I would be free then take up the expat opportunities, and I might well do that actually." "So I thought I better do it before I have children because children are quite difficult however an attractive offer never came up."

	Extended Family	"Yes, just looking from a support structure as well. I mean if you move across with a young family. It is disruptive for the family and there is a lack of a support structure. " "I'm quite a family person. So I think to go and do it on your own away from your parents and extended family can be quite lonely." "Extended family actually plays a very important role; to the extent that some actually move for career and then move back due to the lack of family support. So what I find is if the kids are a little bit older, and schooling, then the extended family plays a smaller role." "For me personally it is not because my family are all over the world, but I do believe it plays a huge role for others."
Financial package		
	Money	"So for me, unless it is a clearly defined like career path to ensure future additional rewards. I wouldn't take a backwards step financially however money would not be the driving force." "Yes, often it's financially worthwhile and there are a lot of financial benefits however I think there are certain sacrifices one needs to make in terms of your bigger picture, your balanced lifestyle which is more important as opposed to just monetary." "I suppose money does play a big factor and it all depends on what it will pay off because for me doing expatriate you going to give up a lot of things. So if you going to go hopefully at the end you come back with something. So it's a give and take."

	Additional Benefits	"I turned it down before we discussed package and benefits, because I didn't want to, at that point move. So we never really got specific to numbers." "No I wouldn't because of the family circumstances. However if it was an economic imperative, so let's say for example say because of BBB and I could not find a job in South Africa, then I would take it irrespective of the family consequences because then the economic imperatives come first." "If it's a financial move that will make substantial change to your quality of life as a family then yes that would be an option."
Career		
	Growth	"Career progression is important, but I think it has got to be the work that I want to do which may not necessarily be in another country." "I find that specifically expats that go into Africa certainly has a big future and can probably grow quicker than someone that did not purely because they have an experience which is accelerates career growth." "If they jumping from a manager level or to a director level, then that would be. But if you moving from director to director might not add as much value. "
	Experience	"I think, look, there are definitely things that you miss out. I mean you can't exactly replicate that experience here in South Africa." "Well at my age it would not necessarily be from a career growth point of view but would be more from an experience growth perspective. And I guess also a learning perspective but it would be very different from what I am doing at the moment. So yes, I mean it would be as I say experience. That is why I would do it."
	Skills development	"I believe employers are looking for that someone that has that extra knowledge. Has taken that leap and done something rather than just play it safe." "I think there will definitely be a notch in your belt or a paragraph in your CV."
Location		

	Destination country	"It does not have to be first world. But you need to be able to make sure that you can have similar services. Whether it be healthcare, education or whatever." "Suppose we would probably look at America or Australia, which are easier to adapt to. I think Australia is probably closer to what we are and probably easier to adapt and adjust in terms of a lifestyle." "Probably South America from the life experience point of view. I have not been to South America. So you know some of the remote areas like Chile or Argentina, whatever could be attractive. Eastern Europe would be attractive. There is a whole bunch of places. I mean Africa is number 1 but the others would fall very close seconds because I think the opportunities are there for expats and there is not much skill around." "You know for me the position would be secondary to the geographical location."
	Lifestyle	"You know the lifestyle that you enjoy and that you can replicate. Would it suit me and the family? So I think that is definitely a factor." "The thing is cultures need to align with you. I think specifically for your spouse. It must be quite important that they can link into the community and that is what I have also seen, because they can't work so quite often it's quite easy for the individual moving for work because they are busy at work all the time whereas the spouses could face quite a challenge. I think it would make the move much easier." "The weather plays a huge part because I am an outdoor person. I play golf. My wife likes outdoors. My kids love outdoors. So I'd like to go somewhere that had similar weather and culture. So the culture of being outdoors. Being out with your family in the park and going to BBQ's or braais wherever in the world you are. I think that is important for me. I would not just take up a location somewhere that is completely different. The religions are different, the weather is different, and cultures are completely different."

	Politics	"At least from a political stability point of view. I think if the country is not politically stable, like in Africa, for me say in Zimbabwe would be a country that I probably wouldn't want to be living in. You know. Probably just because there is political uncertainty. Political stability definitely plays a part." "So stability I think is key. Whoever heads up and the political environment is stable." "The instability in South Africa is a bit worrying. I would have said 20 years but we now 20 years later and I am saying maybe another 20 years but then my kids will be at the age of looking for jobs. So you know it is a big worry and it is a very big motivating factor to find somewhere else in the world. Little bit more stable to live."
	Language	"I think one wants to go predominantly into an English speaking area where it's easier for you to understand the business culture, you understand the environment. " "It's English, which is key for me and to learn a whole new language at my age, my family age. It might be difficult but it is not out of the question."
	Religion	"No, I don't think it would have a massive effect. I think one could practice the religion wherever you are. I think in this world today certain of the maybe Muslim countries maybe are more challenging, but I think generally one could actually adopt and adjust wherever you are." "No I am a Christian and if I was based in Dubai or based in Indonesia, both Muslim or based in China which is Buddhist would have no impact on me." "As long as the religion does not impact on lifestyle. I don't think that is such a big impact. So meaning to move to Saudi Arabia would probably not be a choice for me because I think my wife would battle to adjust because she comes from a Western world and dress up and that type of thing. She can't relate which I think makes it even harder."

		"I think you have got to have a more structured program to insure that you get more experienced business people to fill those roles. There is no doubt in my mind."
Company Policy		"I think hugely. If I was working for a company with a well-structured policy, I would be more comfortable but at the moment with my current employer I would not be as comfortable right now. Get a stabilised policy going first."

In this sample group of participants there also appears to be a variety of comments relevant to each of the factors identified indicating that thought would be given to these factors when these skilled professionals make the decision to accept an expatriate assignment. There appears to be more of a need to have a structured, comprehensive company policy by these individuals when compared to the first group. Like with the responses received from the skilled professionals who have previously accepted expatriate assignments, in this group too, it can be seen that individuals may consider a factor to be motivational but for different reasons.

In general all of the factors represented in the table would motivate skilled professionals in some manner to some extent while making the decision to accept an expatriate assignment.

5.4.5 Research question 3 results

What are the underlying patterns of their motivations and do these vary significantly between the two populations?

In order to answer the question above a comparison of the responses received from all of the participants had to be done. The table below indicates the responses received from all of the participants with regard to the various motivating factors identified. The intention of this is to determine whether or not there is a pattern between the two populations with regard to the factors that may influence their decisions.

A similar format to the tables used for research question one and two is

used for this table. The participant numbers are shown on the horizontal axis of the table and the factors grouped into their relevant categories are shown along the vertical axis. The responses received from each participant is shown in the body of the table indicating whether or not the participant agrees (Yes) or disagrees (No) that the factor would motivate their decision to accept an expatriate assignment.

Table 9: Responses received from all participants

Category	Factor	Participant No.														%
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
Expatriate		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	
Family																
	Spouse/Partner	Yes	Yes	n/a	Yes	Yes	n/a	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	n/a	Yes	Yes	n/a	100%
	Children	Yes	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	n/a	100%
	Extended Family	Yes	Yes	Yes	**No**	**No**	Yes	**No**	Yes	**No**	Yes	**No**	Yes	Yes	Yes	64%
Financial package																
	Package only	Yes	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	Yes	Yes	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	21%
	Package with conditions	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	100%
Career																
	Growth	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	**No**	**No**	**No**	Yes	**No**	**No**	64%
	Experience	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	100%
	Skills development	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	**No**	**No**	**No**	Yes	Yes	79%
Location																
	Destination country	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	100%
	Lifestyle	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	100%
	Politics	Yes	Yes	**No**	**No**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	**No**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	**No**	79%
	Language	**No**	Yes	**No**	**No**	**No**	Yes	Yes	**No**	**No**	Yes	**No**	**No**	Yes	**No**	36%
	Religion	Yes	**No**	**No**	**No**	Yes	Yes	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	Yes	**No**	**No**	29%
Company Policy		**No**	Yes	**No**	Yes	Yes	**No**	**No**	Yes	Yes	**No**	**No**	Yes	Yes	Yes	57%

The table above indicates that there appears to be consistency in the responses received from the expatriates and the non-expatriates. Five of the 14 factors listed yielded a 100% positive response which indicates. There appear to be low motivation associated with package only, language and religion across both sample groups. Company policy however appears to be more motivating for skilled professionals who have not previously accepted an expatriate assignment than for those who have.

The results above seem to indicate that there is an underlying pattern in the

motivating factors and there are a few variances.

5.4.6 Research question 4 results

Do the factors that influence these individuals differ dependent on age?

Participants were all asked to list the top three factors that they thought were influential initially (when they first contemplated an expatriate assignment). They were then asked what they believed are the top three factors that would influence their decision to accept an expatriate assignment currently. The responses from the participants can be seen in the table below and will be used to identify whether or not the factors that motivate skilled professionals change dependent on age.

The participant number is shown along the horizontal axis of the table and various relevant questions are shown along the vertical axis of the table. A similar table is also shown for skilled professionals who have previously not been on an expatriate assignment.

Table 10: Top three factors influential for skilled professionals (expatriates)

Participant no	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Initial factors	Money Lifestyle Career Growth	Career Growth Family Lifestyle	Experience Career growth Lifestyle	Career Growth Financial Lifestyle	Career Growth Money Lifestyle	Experience Career growth Financial	Financial Career growth Experience
Current factors	Money Career Growth Lifestyle	Money Lifestyle Career growth	Financial Lifestyle Security	Career Growth Financial Lifestyle	Family Political/ Risk Money	Experience Career growth Financial	Financial Lifestyle Political
Did the factors change over time	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Did the order of importance change	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Age	Over 40	Below 40	Over 40	Below 40	Over 40	Below 40	Over 40

Participant 1 appears to be the only participant among the interviewees who has been on expatriate assignments who did not change the factors that was believed to affect the decision to accept an expatriate assignment however the order of the factors changed.

The rest of the participants who are older seem to have all changed not only the order of importance but also there is a change in the factors that are deemed to be important to these individuals.

Two of the three participants below 40 years old seem to not have a change in the motivational factors or the order.

Table 11: Top three factors influential for skilled professionals (non-expatriates)

Participant no	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Initial factors	Career growth Lifestyle Financial	Location Experience Financial	Career growth Destination Financial	Career growth Financial Lifestyle	Career growth Financial Lifestyle	Career growth Family Financial	Career growth Financial Experience
Current factors	Career growth Lifestyle Financial	Location Experience Financial	Financial Family Destination	Political Lifestyle Financial	Family Lifestyle Financial	Career growth Family Financial	Career growth Financial Experience
Did the factors change over time	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Did the order of importance change	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Turned down a previous assignment	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Would consider a future assignment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Age	Over 40	**Below 40**	Over 40	Over 40	**Below 40**	**Below 40**	**Below 40**

There appears to be less variability with regard to responses received from participants who have not previously accepted expatriate assignments. There appears to be a trend that if the factors change the order also changes however if the factors do not change the order also does not change.

Responses from three of the four participants that are below 40 in this sample group mirror those from participants that are below 40 in the sample group of interviewees who have previously accepted expatriate assignments indicating that the motivating factors and the order of importance did not change.

5.5 Summary

The information given above provides a rather detailed view of the results attained from the interview process of this study. The results thus far indicate that the factors that were identified in chapter two as being motivational to skilled professionals when making a decision to accept an expatriate assignment are to a large extend valid and influential.

In addition to the factors established in chapter two an additional factor being company policy surfaced as a result of the interview process and had subsequently been included into the analysis.

These results will now be discussed and analysed further to determine the factors that influence skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments.

Chapter 6: Discussion of Results

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will further discuss and analyse the results presented in chapter five with reference to the research questions presented in chapter three and the literature review in Chapter two. The purpose of this chapter is to merge the relationship between this chapter, and chapters one, two, three and five. This will be used to demonstrate whether the research objectives have been met. In addition the researcher will highlight other relevant observations that stemmed from the research results.

To maintain a level of consistency the framework of this chapter mirrors, to a large extend, that of chapter five. The chapter will start off with a discussion of the various factors that influence skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments with reference to results disclosed in the preceding chapter as well as the literature review. The research questions from chapter three will then be used as major headings, which will form the basis for final research discussion and analysis.

As established in the preceding chapter, participants one to seven are all skilled professionals identified as having been on a previous, or currently on an expatriate assignment. Participants eight to 14 are skilled professionals who have never been on a previous expatriate assignment however would consider future assignments.

6.2 Family circumstances

Family circumstances can be further categorised into the following themes
- Spouse/Partner
- Children
- Extended Family

A detailed analysis of the results obtained from the interviews relevant to these three aspects will now be discussed. The table below indicates the responses received from the various participants.

Table 12: Results from interviewees with regard to family circumstances

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Family															
	Spouse/ Partner	✔	✔	✗	✔	✔	✗	✔	✔	✔	✔	✗	✔	✔	✗
	Children	✔	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✗
	Extended Family	✔	✔	✔	✗	✗	✔	✗	✔	✗	✔	✗	✔	✔	✔

6.2.1 Spouse/Partner

Selmer (2001) states that younger professionals or employees who are not in a relationship are more likely to accept expatriate assignments as there is less complication with regard to spousal relocation as well. Participant 6, 11 and 14 indicate that there is spousal influence is not relevant. These participants are currently not in a relationship which therefore validates the statement made by (Selmer, 2001).

Participant 3 is married however the spouse is not employed and therefore more flexible to move when required. This was one of the observations made by (Shaffer et al., 2012) identifying that decisions are easier to make if the spouse is not career driven as well.

The rest of the participants acknowledged that spousal influence played a role in their decision and thereby validating (Makela et al., 2011) findings that the support of a spouse who is also career driven is required in order for an expatriate assignment to be successful. Lack of this support will result in a strain on the relationship (Dickmann et al., 2008).

6.2.2 Children

Participant 1 and 7 had children at the time of accepting the expatriate assignments and therefore acknowledged that when making the decision consideration had to be given to the effect that it would have on the children however the children in both cases were young at the time and therefore

more adaptable to the change in environment. Participant 1 acknowledged that making a similar move when the children were older proved to be more complicated as they now had to consider schooling and lifestyle for the children which relates to the findings of Konopaske et al. (2009).

The rest of the participants who previously accepted expatriate offers did not have children at the time of accepting the assignment and therefore indicated that they did not need to take this into consideration at the time. Those who now subsequently have children indicated that children would be influential if they had to make a decision about a future assignment.

All but one of the participants that have never accepted expatriate assignments before have children. They all indicated that the schooling and lifestyle change for their children would definitely need to be considered should they chose to accept a future offer and this once again further emphasises the role that children play in a skilled professionals decision to accept an expatriate assignment (Konopaske et al., 2009).

6.2.3 Extended Family

Most of the participants indicated that extended family to some extent influenced, or would influence, their decision. This was primarily as a result of requiring a support structure if they had children. In some cases proximity to home country was mentioned as factor that would be considered as this would determine how easily it would be to commute back to the extended family (Konopaske et al., 2009).

In the case of the participants that indicated that extended family did not influence their decision, it was as a result of their extended family being scattered all over the world due to the increased occurrence of globalisation in multinational companies (Altman & Baruch, 2012).

6.3   Financial benefits

Financial benefits are a combination of money as well as money combined with other additional benefits. A detailed analysis of the results obtained from the interviews relevant to this factor will now be discussed. The table below indicates the responses received from the various participants.

Table 13: Results from interviewees with regard to financial benefits

Financial package		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	Package only	✔	✗	✗	✗	✗	✔	✔	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
	Package with conditions	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔

Most of the literature thus far suggests that there is to some extent an element of compensation incentives that attracts skilled professionals to expatriate assignments (Bolino, 2007; Bonache & Fernandez, 1997; Dickmann et al., 2008; Fish & Wood, 1997; Stahl et al., 2002) and this can be seen from the responses received from the participants.

All participants agreed that financial package was an influential factor however only three of the 14 participants said that a generous compensation package alone influenced their decision (Stahl & Bjorkman, 2006) meaning that if the package was less they would not have accepted the assignment. The rest of the participants agreed that money and financial benefits were influential however stated that this had to be looked at in conjunction with other factors and therefore money alone was not a driving force (Dickmann et al., 2008; Fish & Wood, 1997; Stahl et al., 2002).

Many of the participants advised that financial package was generally only discussed after they had made the decision to a large extent already and therefore played a smaller role in their decision to either accept or reject an offer.

6.4 Career

Career can be further categorised into the following themes

- Career growth
- Experience
- Skills development

A detailed analysis of the results obtained from the interviews relevant to these three aspects of career will now be discussed. The table below indicates the responses received from the various participants.

Table 14: Results from interviewees with regard to career

Career		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	Growth	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✘	✘	✘	✔	✘	✘
	Experience	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
	Skills development	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✘	✔	✘	✘	✘	✔	✔

As can be seen from the table above the different elements of career appear to be a key driving force to make the decision to accept an expatriate assignment.

6.4.1 Career growth

All participants who have previously accepted an expatriate assignment acknowledged that career growth possibility was influential to their decision to accept the assignment. The motivation that they required was to have a long-term career plan which included the possible next phase of career growth prospects to ensure that the assignment will enable growth of their career capital (Altman & Baruch, 2013).

Two of the participants who have not previously accepted an expatriate assignment also agreed with the above however other factors resulted in

these participants not having previously accepted an offer to do an expatriate assignment. They are of the firm belief that in considering future offers though, career growth will be an influential factor.

The other five participants who have not previously been on an expatriate assignment acknowledged that career growth is important however they were of the opinion that they realised sufficient career growth in their home country and therefore do not believe that their career growth would have been enhanced to a large extent had they done an expatriate assignment (Hippler, 2009).

6.4.2 Experience

Based on the self-determination theory, the intrinsic motivation for an international assignment is related to the inherent interest in pursuing such an activity because of joy and satisfaction gained as well as personal life experience; on the other hand, extrinsic motivation reflects that the individuals interests in pursuing an international assignment is due to the perceived outcomes that will be generated such as financial rewards and career prospects (Pinto et al., 2012).

The responses received from all 14 participants indicate that experience gained through expatriate assignments is a definite influential factor. They all saw the opportunity of doing an expatriate assignment as an investment in their human capital (Altman & Baruch, 2013) and therefore concurred that doing an assignment of this nature would certainly enhance their ability to achieve their personal desires and goals (Remhof et al., 2014).

6.4.3 Skills development

Like in the case of career growth, the lens through which skills development is viewed for participants who have previously accepted expatriate assignments and those who have not appear to be quite different.

All participants who have previously accepted an expatriate assignment acknowledged that skills development was influential to their decision to accept the assignment. The challenging and complex situations that you are forced to face when embarking on assignments of this nature are said to enable these skilled professionals to develop skills that they may not have been exposed to had they remained in their home country (Dickmann M. , 2012).

Three of the participants who have not previously accepted an expatriate assignment also agreed with the above and acknowledged that a unique set of skills are developed by professionals who have been on expatriate assignments. They are of the firm belief that in considering future offers skills development will be an influential factor.

The other four participants who have not previously been on an expatriate assignment were of the opinion that they realised sufficient skills development in their home country and therefore do not believe that their skills would have been enhanced to a large extent had they done an expatriate assignment (Hippler, 2009).

6.5   Location

Location can be further categorised into the following themes

- Destination country
- Lifestyle
- Politics
- Language
- Religion

A detailed analysis of the results obtained from the interviews relevant to the above aspects of geographical location will now be discussed. The table below indicates the responses received from the various participants.

Table 15: Results from interviewees with regard to location

Location		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	Destination country	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
	Lifestyle	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
	Politics	✔	✔	✗	✗	✔	✔	✔	✔	✗	✔	✔	✔	✔	✗
	Language	✗	✔	✗	✗	✗	✔	✔	✗	✗	✔	✗	✗	✔	✗
	Religion	✔	✗	✗	✗	✔	✔	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✔	✗	✗

From the table above it is evident that all of the elements of location discussed previously to some extent influence the decision of a skilled professional to accept an expatriate assignment. The extent to which each element influences the decision will be discussed further.

6.5.1 Destination country

Dickmann M. (2012) argues that the reputation of the country and city as well as standard of living and the attitudes of the citizens within the country are considered by skilled professionals when making the decision to accept an expatriate assignment. This is further confirmed by the responses received from the participants as they all agree that destination country is influential to their decision to accept expatriate assignments.

(Altman & Baruch, 2013) (Collings, Scullion, & Morley, 2007) (Richardson & McKenna, 2006) have all done research to understand the influence that the attractiveness of the destination country plays in an individuals' decision to accept an assignment and therefore the fact that positive confirmation of this factor was generated from the interviews is not surprising.

It has been suggested that location may also act as a barrier to accept an assignment dependant on the political or cultural environment (Richardson & McKenna, 2006), was strongly confirmed during the interviews with many of the participants.

6.5.2 Lifestyle

The influence of lifestyle on a skilled professional's decision to accept an expatriate assignment is quite similar to that if destination country. Once again all of the 14 participants concurred that lifestyle massively influenced their decisions previously and would influence future decisions to accept expatriate assignments.

The phenomenon of cultural novelty or cultural distance is often discussed when making a decision to accept an expatriate assignment (Lowe et al., 1999). There is a need to culturally adapt when embarking on an expatriate assignment and therefore the individuals' flexibility to adapt may influence their decision to accept an expatriate assignment and for this reason lifestyle appears to be quite influential in the decision making process.

6.5.3 Politics

Majority of the participants cited politics, be it home country or destination country politics, as being influential to making a decision to accept an expatriate assignment. A combination of government policies (Mahroum, 2000) and political risk perceived to be prevalent in the country as a result of inter-nation conflict or history of abrupt government policy changing (Lowe et al., 1999) were highlighted as concerns that would need to be contemplated when making the decision to accept an expatriate assignment. Destination countries with complex or more risky political environments appear to be deterrents for skilled professionals to accept an assignment.

Politics is eminently prevalent in all countries and the political beliefs generally shape the economic environment to a large extent. Skilled professionals may therefore consider the nature of the politics in the home country and if this view is not aligned with their personal viewpoints, they may see an expatriate assignment as a means to leave the home country (Lowe et al., 1999). Five of the ten participants that responded positively to

politics being influential commented on home country political situation being an area of concern which therefore makes an expatriate assignment attractive.

The remaining four participants stated that politics did not influence their decision much and would not be considered to a great extent for any future opportunities that may arise.

6.5.4 Language

The difference between host and destination country language is considered not only by the individual accepting the assignment but also by the spouse or other family members who may influence the decision (Konopaske et al., 2009). Interestingly though, the majority of the participants stated that language is not influential to their decision to accept an expatriate assignment.

The five participants that indicated that language can be a barrier to accepting an expatriate assignment acknowledged that whilst it is not ideal to move to a country where English is not a prevalent language, language will not necessarily be the ultimate deciding factor. They would consider language along with other more important factors first before making a decision.

6.5.5 Religion

Incorporated into cross-cultural adaptability is religiousness and this also appears to be an influential factor (Tarakeshwar et al., 2003). It is associated with cross-cultural dimensions and in essence culture to a large extent shapes religious beliefs and practices (Tarakeshwar et al., 2003). Only four of the 14 participants stated that religion was influential in their decision to accept an expatriate assignment. They stated that religion in some countries tendered to inhibit cultural adaptability (Novera, 2004) which would be the only reason that they would consider religion as a factor to be

considered. In countries that have strong religious affiliations it can sometimes become difficult to adapt (Tarakeshwar et al., 2003).

The majority of the participants though stated that religion was not much of a factor. Your religious beliefs and philosophies can be practiced anywhere in the world. It is up to the individual to not allow this to be an obstacle.

6.6   Company policy

A detailed analysis of the results obtained from the interviews relevant to the effect that company policy has on the skilled professional's decision will now be discussed.   The table below indicates the responses received from the various participants.

Table 16: Results from interviewees with regard to company policy

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Company Policy	✗	✔	✗	✔	✔	✗	✗	✔	✔	✗	✗	✔	✔	✔

Company policy is a relatively infant factor with regard to this field of study. It is not cited as an influential factor in most of the research done thus far. This was a factor that emanated out of the interview process.

Whilst it was not stated as a factor that influenced all of the participant's decision, all the participants concurred however that the presence of a sound and structured company policy for expatriate assignments within a company gives the skilled professional a sense of confidence and makes the decision to relocate easier. For companies that do not have a structured and well-oiled policy, it is not necessarily a deal breaker but it does make the decision on the part of the skilled professional more complex.

With four of the seven participants who have previously accepted an expatriate assignment stating that company policy did not influence their decision indicates that this is a relatively new concept and that it is more of a factor for skilled

professionals who have not previously done an assignment than for those who have.

6.7 Discussion of research questions

6.7.1 Introduction

In chapter one the research problem was outlined and highlighted the importance that expatriate roles play within multi-national companies. As a result of increased globalisation the need for companies to fill expatriate positions has become increasingly necessary.

The research problem was then used as a foundation to develop the research aim for this research. The aim for this research was to identify the factors that influence skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments and furthermore to ascertain whether or not these factors change over time and as individuals develop further into their careers. The research questions that were developed to execute the research aim have been presented below and discussed in relation to literature and research results.

6.7.2 Research Question 1

Which factors influenced skilled individuals to accept expatriate assignments?

The various factors that have been proven to affect skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments were discussed above. The responses received from the interviews conducted will be further analysed to establish the most influential factors that influence the decision will now be established. In an effort to answer this question a table of responses from the interviewees for all the factors will be used.

Table 17: Reponses from all expatriate interviewees

Category	Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	%
Family									
	Spouse/Partner	✔	✔	✗	✔	✔	n/a	✔	83%
	Children	✔	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	✔	100%
	Extended Family	✔	✔	✔	✗	✗	✔	✗	57%
Financial package									
	Package only	✔	✗	✗	✗	✗	✔	✔	43%
	Package with conditions	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	100%
Career									
	Growth	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	100%
	Experience	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	100%
	Skills development	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	100%
Location									
	Destination country	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	100%
	Lifestyle	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	100%
	Politics	✔	✔	✗	✗	✔	✔	✔	71%
	Language	✗	✔	✗	✗	✗	✔	✔	43%
	Religion	✔	✗	✗	✗	✔	✔	✗	43%
Company Policy		✗	✔	✗	✔	✔	✗	✗	43%

The table above confirms that all of the factors discussed thus far are all relevant factors. The degree of influence that each of these factors had on the individual's decision to accept and assignment however does vary to some extent.

The results for family have been adjusted to indicate where a specific variable was not applicable to the participant at the time of making the decision to accept an expatriate assignment. Family circumstances appear to be quite a strong prevalent factor that influences skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments. All aspects of family rated high among all the participants being factors that influenced the individuals to accept the assignments.

From a financial perspective, money alone appears to be lower in the order of importance to this group of individuals. Four of the seven participants responded that a generous financial package alone will not motivate them to accept an expatriate assignment. All seven participants however agreed that a generous financial package coupled with other factors would be very influential to their decision.

There appears to be a resounding positive affirmation that all aspects of career are factors influential to an individual's decision to accept expatriate assignments. This is the only category that all participants responded positively to all themes indicating that career growth, experience and skills development is very influential to the decision made by a skilled professional when accepting an assignment.

With regard to location, destination country and lifestyle appear to be essential to the decision with all the participants indicating that this is an influential factor. More than half of the participant indicated that politics is also influential whilst religion, language and company policy appear to be less influential.

In summary the top ten factors that appear to have influenced the decision of the participants interviewed are:

1. Children (Family)
2. Career growth (Career)
3. Skills development (Career)
4. Experience (Career)
5. Destination country attractiveness (Location)
6. Lifestyle (Location)
7. Financial packages along with other conditions (Financial)
8. Spouse/partners influence (Family)
9. Political risk – either destination country or home country (Location)
10. Extended family influence (Family)

6.7.3 Research Question 2

Which factors influenced skilled individuals not to accept expatriate assignments?

The various factors that have been proven to affect skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments were discussed above. An in-depth analysis will now be done on the responses received from participants who have not previously been on an expatriate assignment to identify the factors that will most likely affect their decision to accept an expatriate assignment in the future. In an effort to answer this question a table of responses from the interviewees for all the factors will be used.

Table 18: Reponses from all non-expatriate interviewees

Category	Factors	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	%
Family									
	Spouse/Partner	✔	✔	✔	n/a	✔	✔	n/a	100%
	Children	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	n/a	100%
	Extended Family	✔	✘	✔	✘	✔	✔	✔	71%
Financial package									
	Package only	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	0%
	Package with conditions	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	100%
Career									
	Growth	✔	✘	✘	✘	✔	✘	✘	29%
	Experience	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	100%
	Skills development	✘	✔	✘	✘	✘	✔	✔	43%
Location									
	Destination country	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	100%
	Lifestyle	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	100%
	Politics	✔	✘	✔	✔	✔	✔	✘	71%
	Language	✘	✘	✔	✘	✘	✔	✘	29%
	Religion	✘	✘	✘	✘	✔	✘	✘	14%
Company Policy		✔	✔	✘	✘	✔	✔	✔	71%

The table above confirms that all of the factors discussed thus far are all relevant factors. The degree of influence that each of these factors had on the individual's decision to not accept an assignment or to accept a future assignment however does vary to some extent. There also appears to be factors that are considerably less important to this sample group of participants.

The results for family have been adjusted to indicate where a specific variable was not applicable to the participant. Family circumstances appear to be quite a strong prevalent factor that would influence these skilled professionals to accept an expatriate assignment. All aspects of family rated high among all the participants being factors that influenced the individuals to accept the assignments. The influence that the spouse/partner and children have on these participants decision appears to be quite high as all the participants indicated that these two factors, where applicable, would impact their decision to accept an expatriate assignment.

From a financial perspective, money alone appears to be very low in the order of importance to this group of individuals. All the participants responded that a generous financial package alone will not motivate them to accept an expatriate assignment. They all however agreed that a generous financial package coupled with other factors would be very influential to their decision.

Career on the other hand appears to be less of an influential factor. There is unilateral statement that all participants would consider experience as a motivating factor however career growth and skills development appear less attractive. This may be as a result of the participants already having progressed quite far in their career and therefore developed a multitude of skills already.

When looking at location, destination country and lifestyle appear to be essential to the decision with all the participants indicating that this is an influential factor. 71% of the participant indicated that politics is also

influential whilst religion and language appear to be less influential.

The presence of an effective and stable company policy with regard to expatriate assignments appears to be an important factor for these individuals as 71% of the participants also indicated that this would influence their decision.

In summary the following factors appear to be influential to the decision of the participants interviewed are as these factors all received a positive response from more than 50% of the participants:

1. Spouse/partners influence (Family)
2. Children (Family)
3. Financial packages along with other conditions (Financial)
4. Experience (Career)
5. Destination country attractiveness (Location)
6. Lifestyle (Location)
7. Extended family influence (Family)
8. Political risk – either destination country or home country (Location)
9. Company policy

6.7.4   Research Question 3

What are the underlying patterns of their motivations and do these vary significantly between the two populations?

Question one highlighted the factors that motivated skilled professionals to previously accept expatriate assignments and questions two highlighted the factors that would motivate skilled professionals who have not previously accepted an expatriate assignment to accept a future assignment.

In an effort to answer the question above a comparison will now be made of the responses received from both groups to establish if there is an underlying pattern for their motivations.

The table below showing the predominant factors that motivated previous expatriates as well as non-expatriates will be used as a basis for this discussion. All factors that were seen as motivational factors in making the decision to accept an expatriate assignment by more than 50% of the participants in each sample group have been included in the table below.

Table 19: Comparison between expatriate and non-expatriate motivation factors

	Expatriate		Non-Expatriate
1	Children (Family)	1	Spouse/partners influence (Family)
2	Career growth (Career)	2	Children (Family)
3	Skills development (Career)	3	Financial packages with other conditions (Financial)
4	Experience (Career)	4	Experience (Career)
5	Destination country (Location)	5	Destination country (Location)
6	Lifestyle (Location)	6	Lifestyle (Location)
7	Financial packages with other conditions (Financial)	7	Extended family influence (Family)
8	Spouse/partners influence (Family)	8	Political risk – (Location)
9	Political risk – (Location)	9	Company policy
10	Extended family influence (Family)	10	

Looking at the table above it is apparent that there are a number of factors that appear to be similar for both groups of skilled professionals. Career growth and skills development are considered influential to the skilled professionals who have previously accepted expatriate assignments however they do not appear as motivational for those who have not. The skilled professionals who did not previously accept an expatriate assignment appeared to believe that they achieved similar skills and career growth in their home country. They are also of the opinion that having progressed thus far in their career; a future expatriate assignment may not necessarily equip them with further skills development or career growth.

In contrast those who have previously accepted an expatriate assignment indicated that career growth and skills development contributed significantly to their decision to accept an expatriate assignment and attested that they benefited from these assignments with regard to this area. Many of the

participants did however indicate that now that they have progressed further in their career, career growth and skills development may not necessarily be as important to them for future assignments.

Company policy on the other hand featured as being an important motivating factor for skilled professionals who have not previously been on an expatriate assignment however is seemingly less important to skilled professionals who have. It can be inferred from this that those who have previously been on an expatriate assignment are aware of the possible complications and implications of such an assignment therefore value the existence of a stable company policy with regard to expatriate assignments less. On the other hand, those who have previously not been on a previous expatriate assignment may be less aware of the possible hurdles to overcome when accepting assignments of this nature and therefore would feel more comfortable if there is a comprehensive company policy available to assist in easing the transition.

Package only, religion and language while highlighted as factor that may influence a decision have been rated as less motivational to both groups of skilled professionals and are therefore deemed as less likely to significantly influence the decision of a skilled professional to accept an expatriate assignment.

To summarise, there appears to be a definite underlying pattern in the factors that motivate skilled professionals of both the sample groups to accept an expatriate assignment. Whilst there are a few differences with regard to some of the factors, they do not differ significantly and the overall motivating factors appear to be quite similar.

Do the factors that influence these individuals differ dependent on age?

It has been established thus far that there are various factors that motivate and influence skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments. The intention now is to use the information gathered to determine whether or not the importance of the factors change as an individual gets older.

In order to do this a ranking of the various motivational factors were done based on the top three factors identified by each participant as being motivational initially (earlier in their career at a point when they were younger) and then a ranking was done of the top three factors identified by each of the participants as being motivational currently. The results of these rankings can be seen in the tables below and will be used as a basis for the discussion.

Table 20: Ranking of motivational factors for skilled professionals initially

Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Ranking
Career Growth	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	13
Package with conditions				1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
Lifestyle	1	1	1	1	1			1			1	1			8
Experience			1			1	1		1					1	5
Spouse/Partner		1											1		2
Children		1											1		2
Package only	1				1										2
Destination country									1	1					2
Extended Family															0
Skills development															0
Politics															0
Language															0
Religion															0
Company Policy															0

The table above indicates that career growth, financial package with

conditions and lifestyle are ranked as the most motivational to the skilled professionals when they are making a decision to accept an expatriate assignment earlier on in life.

Table 21: Ranking of motivational factors for skilled professionals currently

Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Ranking
Package with conditions			1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	11
Lifestyle	1	1	1	1			1	1			1	1			8
Career Growth	1	1		1		1		1					1	1	7
Politics			1		1		1				1				4
Spouse/Partner					1							1	1		3
Children										1		1	1		3
Package only	1	1			1										3
Experience						1			1					1	3
Destination country									1	1					2
Extended Family															0
Skills development															0
Language															0
Religion															0
Company Policy															0

The table above indicates that financial package with conditions, lifestyle and career growth are ranked as the most motivational to the skilled professionals when making a future decision to accept an expatriate assignment now that they are at a later stage in their lives.

It is interesting to note that political risk was not identified as a motivational factor by any of the participants when looked at earlier in their life however four of the fourteen participants listed this among their top three motivational factors for future assignments.

It appears therefore that age does not have a significant influence on the factors that motivate skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments however the importance given to each factor make vary to some extent for some individuals as they progress in their career.

6.8 Summary

The information gathered from the interviewees conducted successfully highlighted the factors that motivate skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments and therefore can be used by business to plan their expatriate recruitment strategies. The main findings, recommendations and suggestions for future research will be discussed in the next chapter as a prelude to the conclusion of this research report.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1   Main Findings

The purpose of this research was to identify factors that motivate skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments. The business world has evolved quite rapidly which has resulted in globalisation becoming a key strategic requisite for most organisations (Altman & Baruch, 2012); therefore the management of an effective international workforce is increasingly of paramount importance to maintain a competitive advantage for an organization (Pinto et al., 2012). With this increased demand for internationally mobile employees, of equal importance is being able to assess an employee's intention to work abroad and understand the factors that motive them to become mobile.

The outcome of 14 interviews conducted with a combination of skilled professionals who have previously accepted an expatriate assignment as well as those who have not accepted an expatriate assignment, however would consider a future assignment, revealed that the following factors are considered to be motivating to skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments.

- The influence that family has on a skilled professional's decision to accept an expatriate assignment was quite evident. In the case of individuals who had a spouse/partner and children consideration was given to the impact that the relocation would have on them. In addition, the proximity to extended family played a role in the decision making process for some skilled professionals. In cases where the extended family appeared to be scattered across the world as a result of globalisation, extended family appeared to play less of a significant role.

- Money, whilst not a motivating factor on its own appears to be quite motivating to skilled professionals when coupled with attractive features from other factors like, career opportunities, favourable destination country, lifestyle and experience.

- Different aspects of career appeared to significantly motivate many skilled professionals. There is the argument that career growth and skills development may not be hindered by staying in the home country however it appears to be quite evident that experience and the type of skills developed as a result of an expatriate assignment definitely motivates skilled professionals to accept assignments of this nature.

- Geographical location appears to be quite fundamental to the decision to relocate for skilled professionals. Language and religion are less motivational to the decision however the destination country, lifestyle and political situation were considered to be quite relevant motivational factors. The current political situation in the home country could also in some cases influence the decision.

- A relatively newly added factor that surfaced from this study was the influence that company policy has on a skilled professional's decision to accept an expatriate assignment. With the current instability in many economies the presence of a comprehensive expatriate company policy appears to have become an increasingly growing motivational factor. Skilled professionals are more risk averse and less likely to take the chance of uprooted themselves and their family if they are not sufficiently aware of what they are getting themselves into and the type of support they can expect from the company that is offering them the assignment.

In addition to the above, this research also indicates that the motivational factors do not change considerably as a result of the age of an individual. The importance given to various factors may change to some extent however the main motivating factors appear to remain constant. If companies take into consideration all of the above motivational factors they should have better success at attracting and placing skilled professionals into expatriate assignments.

7.2   Recommendations

The objective of this study was to identify the factors that motivate skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments. This study demonstrated that there are specific factors that predominantly motivate skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments. The knowledge of this can now be by a multitude of individuals:

- It can be used by the human resources teams of multi-national companies to ensure that their recruitments strategy, with regard to expatriates, take into consideration these key factors and the expatriate company policy is aligned accordingly.

- Management at multi-national companies have visibility to the factors that motivate skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments, they therefore stand a better chance of being able to fill positions appropriately if they are able to meet the needs of the skilled professionals.

- Skilled professionals who may consider future expatriate assignments may consider the results of this research when making their decision to accept an assignment.

7.3   For Future Research

This study had some limitations offering opportunity for future research.

This study does not cover different perceptions related to different lengths of international assignments. Individuals' beliefs, attitudes, and, as a result, also their motivations may change for regular business trips, short international assignments, and long or very long international assignments. The effect of the length of stay may be an opportunity for future research.

In addition to the above, this study is limited to a sample of skilled professionals within the Freight Forwarding industry in South Africa and therefore does not fully represent all participants in the Universe. Outcomes derived from a research design like this are bound to suffer some degree of diminished generalizability however the respondents involved in this study worked across a variety of functions (e.g. operations, sales, finance, etc.). Future research could be expanded to the investigation of other industries or within the same industry but from different countries.

7.4   In Conclusion

The research conducted indicates the factors that motivate skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments. In addition to this, the research highlighted that the factors that motivate skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments do not change considerably due to age however the order of importance given to certain factors appear to vary as a skilled professionals progresses in their career.

The contents of this research contributes to building the wealth of knowledge required for this field of study due to an increasingly growing demand for expatriates as a result of the globalisation of most companies. It also provides future researchers with a basis on which to expand this knowledge and encourages future research based on the limitations highlighted above. The results of this study, whilst conducted in a specific industry, can be applied across other industries and used to enhance expatriate business strategies in any multi-national company.

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Appendix A: Consistency Matrix

Research proposition	Literature review	Data collection tool	Analysis
1. What factors influence skilled individuals to accept expatriate assignments?	(Bolino, 2007) (Bonache & Fernandez, 1997) (Dickmann, Doherty, Mills, & Brewster, 2008)	Interviews	Qualitative
2. How important are these factors to these individuals?	(Stahl, Miller, & Tung, Toward the boundaryless career:A closer look at the expatriate career concept and the perceived implications of an international assignment, 2002) (Fish & Wood, 1997)	Interviews	Qualitative
3. What are the underlying patterns of their motivations and do these vary significantly between	(Dickmann, Doherty, Mills, & Brewster, 2008) (Shaffer, Kraimer, Chen,	Interviews	Qualitative

the two populations?	& Bolino, 2012)		
4. Do the factors that influence these individuals differ dependent on age, career position or family circumstances?	(Dickmann, Doherty, Mills, & Brewster, 2008) (Selmer, 2001)	Interviews	Qualitative

Appendix B: List and title of participants

Participant No	Title	Expatriate
1	Country Manager	Yes
2	Branch Manager	Yes
3	Financial Director	Yes
4	Country Manager	Yes
5	Regional Head of Projects	Yes
6	Country Manager	Yes
7	Financial Manager	Yes
8	Vice President - Finance Africa	No
9	Regional Head of Energy & Projects	No
10	Vice President Africa – Mining	No
11	Vice President Africa & Middle East	No
12	Managing Director - South Africa	No
13	Managing Director - Finance- South Africa	No
14	Managing Director - SSA & Middle East	No

Appendix C: Interview questions

Expatriate participant questions

Research Question 1

How old were you when you first contemplated an expatriate assignment?

- Where you in a relationship or did you have any children at the time?
- Did your family circumstances influence your decision?
- Did your go on the assignment alone?
- Are you very close to your extended family, how did extended family influence?

Research Question 2

Was the remuneration packaged offered to you financially beneficial?
- Did the package offered to you meet your expectations of a fair package for the position and location?
- Did the remuneration package influence your decision?

Research Question 3

At what stage of your career where you when you were offered an expatriate assignment?
- Was the assignment a stepping stone for further growth within the company?
- Would you have achieved similar skills development had you declined the offer?
- Where you exposed to unique circumstances as a result of your assignment?
- Did you consider career growth and skills development as an influential deciding factor when contemplating the assignment?

Research Question 4

Did geographical positioning influence your decision to accept or reject an expatriate assignment?

- Where have you been to on expatriate assignments?
- Did you choose these specific locations?
- Why?
- Would you have gone if the location was different?
- Did the politics in the home or destination country influence your decision?
- Are you very religiously inclined, did this impact your decision, if so how?
- How did you adapt to the culture in the new location?

Research Question 5

What do you consider the most influential factors that you considered when deciding on accepting an expatriate assignment?

- Of all these factors which one would you say influenced your decision the most?

Research Question 6

- Did the company have a concise expatriation policy?
- How did the company policy influence your decision
- How did it impact your assignment?

Non-expatriate participant questions

Research Question 1

Have you ever contemplated taking an expatriate assignment?

- Where you in a relationship or did you have any children at the time?
- Did your family circumstances influence your decision?
- Would you consider a future expatriate assignment?

- Would your family influence your decision?
- Would your extended family influence your decision?

Research Question 2

Remuneration packages are often more attractive for expatriate assignments

- Have you ever been offered a package? Did the package offered to you meet your expectations of a fair package for the position and location?
- Did the remuneration package influence your decision?
- If you are contemplating a future expatriate assignment would the package offered play a role in your decision, if so how?

Research Question 3

If previously rejected an offer:

At what stage of your career where you when you were offered an expatriate assignment?

- Was the assignment a stepping stone for further growth within the company?
- Did you achieve similar skills development and career growth by declining the offer?
- In hindsight would you make the same decision today?
- Did you consider career growth and skills development as an influential deciding factor when contemplating the assignment?

If you are willing to contemplate a future offer:

At what stage of your career would you like to consider an expatriate assignment?

- Do you see an expatriate assignment as a stepping stone for further growth within the company?

- Can you achieve similar skills development and career growth by not doing an expatriate assignment?
- Do you consider career growth and skills development as an influential deciding factor when contemplating the assignment?

Research Question 4

Does geographical positioning influence your decision to accept or reject an expatriate assignment?
- Where would you possibly do an assignment?
- Why would you choose these specific locations?
- Are you very religiously inclined, did this impact your decision, if so how?
- Would cultural affiliations impact your decisions, and how would you adapt to new cultures?
- Do the politics in the home or destination country influence a decision you make?

Research Question 5

What do you consider the most influential factors that you consider when deciding on accepting an expatriate assignment?
- Of all these factors which one would you say would be most important to you?

Research Question 6
- Does the company have a concise expatriation policy?
- How did the company policy influence any previous decisions?
- Would the company expatriate policy impact any future decisions to accept an expatriate assignment?

**Gordon Institute
of Business Science**
University of Pretoria

Dear Sir / Madam

Introductory Request for Research Participation

I am 2nd year Master of Business Administration student at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, part of the University of Pretoria. I am conducting a study on what motivates skilled professionals to accept expatriate roles. This research is driven by a need to better understand the factors and behavioural patterns that influence the decisions of skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments. You have been identified as a skilled professional who has accepted/rejected an expatriate position and are therefore well placed to provide insights into this study.

Your participation is entirely voluntary and will take the form of a one hour interview at your office or at a mutually convenient location. I am fully cognisant of the time commitment and potential sensitivity of information which may be shared. To protect the identity of all individuals being interviewed, personal and organisation names will not be stored and will not be identified or identifiable in the research report. The research will be conducted under the auspices of the Gordon Institute of Business Science, part of the University of Pretoria and will comply with university ethical standards.

The research is intended to enhance our understanding of identifying common factors that influence skilled professionals to embark on expatriate assignments. In return for your participation, I undertake to provide you with a copy of the completed report as I am sure that the findings are of interest to you as well.

Gordon Institute
of Business Science
University of Pretoria

Research Participant Consent Letter

I am conducting research on motivation for skilled professional to accept expatriate assignments. Our interview will last about an hour and the results thereof will assist in identifying the various common factors that influence skilled professionals to accept expatriate assignments. Your participation is voluntary and can be withdrawn at any time without any penalty. In an effort to successfully capture all details of the interview, the researcher will record the discussion. All data gathered during the interview will be treated as confidential.

If you have any concerns, please contact me or my supervisor as per the details provided below.

Researcher	**Supervisor**
Auvasha Moodley	Dr. Mark Bussin
amoodley@uti.co.za	drbussin@mweb.co.za
083 639 6777	082 901 0055

Full Name & Surname: _____

Signature of participant: _____

Date: _____

Signature of researcher: _____

Date: _____