THE INFLUENCE OF MANAGEMENT SELECTION PROCESS ON
THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EXPATRIATES WORKING FOR
MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS IN KENYA; A CASE STUDY
OF TETRA PAK LIMITED

BY

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for examination in any university.

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This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University Supervisor.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my dear wife Isabela Nyakundi, who motivated me to enroll for a master’s degree, my parents Joseph Aming’a and Rose Aming’a for making me who I am. I will not forget my supervisor Dr. J. K. Yabs who has guided and mentored me throughout the study.
ABSTRACT

Over the past few decades, the world’s fundamental business and economic perspective have greatly shifted. Today, the boundaries of a country do not in effect determine the limits within which companies conduct their businesses and how they select their employees. Many large companies have injected huge capital investments in branches overseas in pursuit of new markets for their products, cheap labour or other factors of production. The advent of international business and globalization have given birth to multinational corporations (MNCs) which are ever confronted with the challenge of selecting the best, effective, efficient and competent managers (expatriates) for their international outlets. In order the get the most effective and efficient expatriates MNCs must adopt an objective and water tight selection process. This research was conducted to determine how the management selection process of expatriates affects the effectiveness of those expatriates in Kenya and Tetra Pak was used as a case study. The contingency approach to management as pioneered by Fred Fiedler which suggests that efficient management techniques vary in different types of situations and circumstances was the basis of this research. The hypothesis of the research was that the effectiveness on expatriates depends on their individual characteristics and the company characteristics. The research focused on the expatriate’s personal characteristics that affect their preference to be sent to undertake foreign assignments and how those characteristics affected their effectiveness. In play here were characteristics such as age, gender, international experience, location, nationalities, salary scale, areas of specialization, family status, and other inherent qualifications and characteristics. Company characteristics and policies were also taken into consideration. Data was collected from the expatriates as well as from the HRM at Tetra Pak using interview guides. Additional information about expatriate at Tetra Pak was gathered from websites and other print media. The data that was collected was grouped into common recurring themes and was analyzed using content analysis. The information was presented in tables, graphs and charts. The study established that the selection process highly affect the effectiveness of expatriates working for MNCs. The expatriates were satisfied with the selection process as formulated by their employer. The study established that all of the respondents had spouses but female expatriates were not staying with their partners. This depicts that the majority of the expatriates valued their families but the company did not. Of interest was the fact that Tetra Pak did not involve the spouses of the potential expatriates in the selection process yet family situation was a key consideration for expatriation. It was established that majority of the expatriates were from the home country of the MNC therefore it was conclusive that ethnocentric selection approach was preferred by Tetra Pak. The study also established that the selection of expatriates from within the organization highly influenced their effectiveness. The use of a succession planning model was very important in enhancing expatriate success. The study recommends review of the existing policies to give family situation a higher consideration. There being no expatriate aged below 30 years, it was recommended that the company considers hiring young and vibrant expatriates.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

MNC – Multinational Corporation

HR – Human Resource

HRM – Human Resource Management

IHRM – International Human Resource Management

HQ – Head Quarters

FDI – Foreign Direct Investment

BC – Before Christ

TP – Tetra Pak
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Over the past few decades, the world’s fundamental business and economic perspective have greatly shifted. Today, the boundaries of a country do not in effect determine the limits within which companies conduct their businesses and how they select their employees, Hill (2005). Many large companies have injected huge capital investments in branches overseas in pursuit of new markets for their products, cheap labour or other factors of production. Globalization has reduced the world into a small village where countries are intertwined by a web of intricate dependencies which create both threats and opportunities, Ricky and Michael (2010). The advent of international business and globalization have given birth to multinational corporations (MNCs) which are ever confronted with the challenge of selecting the best, efficient and competent managers (expatriates) for their international outlets. In order the get the efficient expatriates MNCs must adopt an objective selection process. There are undisputedly many potential candidates for an overseas assignment, particularly due to the slowing economies which make jobs less secure. The problem however is not the supply of potential candidates but the selection of those who will succeed abroad, Daniels et al., (2013).

Today labour is very mobile across the globe stimulated by the increased activity of MNCs, Daniels et al., (2013). The contingency approach to management as pioneered by Fred Fiedler suggests that efficient management techniques vary in different types of situations and circumstances, Fiedler (1971). The same principle applies to expatriates and their selection must therefore always be based on the prevailing conditions including
who the expatriates are, the policies of the parent company and the country they will work. The movement of expatriate labour and how it is combined with other factors of production has completely changed how business is done and more so how employees’ efficiencies are influenced, Stoner et al., (2009). The effectiveness of expatriates deployed in various branches across the world is of great concern to many IHRM.

There are thousands of foreigners working as expatriates for hundreds of multinational corporations in Kenya, many of these expatriates live in Nairobi. They have left their countries and their families and are willing to work, some on short term contracts and others on long term engagements. Management selection process of these expatriates is a very critical process of ensuring the success of any foreign assignment. This research will be conducted to find whether the selection process really influences the effectiveness of expatriates working for MNCs in Kenya and specifically at Tetra Pak Limited. The research will focus on the expatriate characteristics that affect their preference to be sent to undertake foreign assignments. In play here will be characteristics such as age, gender, international experience, location, nationalities, salary scale, areas of specialization, family status, and other inherent qualifications and characteristics, Fred and Jonathan (2006).

1.1.1 Global Human Resource Selection Practices

International human resource experts generally agree that it is imperative for multinational companies (MNCs) to attract, select, develop, and retain employees who can live and work effectively outside of their own national borders, Adler (2001). The
critical nature of foreign assignments cannot be underestimated and selecting the right expatriate is the key, Tung (1990). There are considerable variations in the types of criteria used in evaluating how successful expatriate should be selected. To date, the three most common criteria for evaluating expatriate for effectiveness and success are; the ability for cross-cultural adjustment, ability to complete the global assignment, and performance on the global assignment, Caligiuri (1997). Parker (1993) suggests that cross-cultural adjustment may be the antecedent of both performance and completion of the global assignment. Given that these are both important for MNCs, a better understanding of the factors which impact cross-cultural adjustment is necessary. Many MNCs have placed much weight on the expatriates’ ability for cross-cultural adjustment, that is, the extent to which expatriates feel comfortable and adapted to living and working in their host country.

The strategic importance many MNCs place on global assignments for example the high level negotiations, new market development and sometimes strategic political alignments means that the harm an unsuccessful expatriate may cause in the host country can be detrimental to any MNCs' future global business, Banai (1985). They further suggest that the real cost of an unsuccessful international executives extends beyond the monetary expenses of compensation. An unsuccessful expatriate almost invariably has a negative impact on future interactions between the MNCs and the host countries, Banai (1985). For this reason, international HR practitioners and management researchers alike are particularly interested in understanding how to best predict individuals who can live and work successfully in cross-national settings. This is the general practice of many MNCs
across the globe and there is none that is not keen in selecting expatriates who will be effective and successful. Despite the fact that there are generally agreed upon objectives in selecting expatriates, how HRM policies are implemented substantially differ from country to country and from individual to individual. The way an American expatriate will be handled is very different from the way a Japanese expatriate will be handled. This is basically because of their varying socio-cultural, political and economic backgrounds, Bennett (1995)

1.1.2 Multinational Corporations (MNCs) in Kenya

A Multinational Corporation (MNC) is an organization with direct or indirect presence in many countries across the globe. MNCs engage in international business through FDI or through importation and exportation of goods and services. MNCs are able to have their presence in many countries enhanced by both technology and global talent. MNCs are a creation of globalization which can be defined as a trend towards greater economic, social, cultural, political and technological interdependencies which is characterized by denationalization (national boundaries becoming irrelevant in controlling the flow of factors of production) and promoting internationalization, Wild et al., (2010).

According to a famous international human resource information website (http://www.careernation.com/?category_name=advice-resources), there were over 100 MNCs by the close of 2011 which had opened subsidiaries in Kenya and set Nairobi as their central location of operation. Nairobi is preferred because of its strategic location within the east African market and the rest of Africa. Among the most critical success
factors for these MNCs is global talent. Attracting and retaining the right talent to propel these MNCs ahead of their competitors has not been an easy task for many IHRM. However the secret to the attraction and retention of efficient expatriates largely depend on the selection process. The expatriate selection influences their effectiveness to a very large extent. Many of the expatriates leave their countries, sometimes entire families and acquaintances and agree to settle in Nairobi, some on short term contracts and others on long term engagements to offer their services to various MNCs. The research used Tetra Pak as a case study.

1.1.3 Tetra Pak East African Limited

Tetra Pak was established in Sweden in the city of Lund in May 1951. In 1952 the first filling machine producing 100 ml cream tetrahedrons was delivered to a local dairy. In the subsequent years, the tetrahedron packages became more and more frequent in Swedish grocery stores, and in 1954 the first machine producing 500 ml milk packages was sold to a Stockholm dairy. That same year the first machine was exported to Hamburg, Germany, soon to be followed by France (1954), Italy (1956), Switzerland (1957) and later the Soviet Union (1959) and Japan (1962). In 1972, a training center was opened in Nairobi Kenya and later the same year a factory was opened.

Today Tetra Pak is present in over 170 countries globally and employs more than 23,000 workers. This was according to the company’s website (http://www.tetrapak.com/about-tetra-pak). Tetra Pak uses expatriates to oversee its operations in its many foreign branches globally. The expatriates are selected from all over the world and they form a
team that has constantly driven global growth and expansion. Tetra Pak Limited has employed the geocentric approach in selecting their expatriates. This, they believe breaths in a true spirit of a multinational and also ensure that the best talent is sourced from any part of the world as long as it adds value to the company. This research looked at how the selection processes for the expatriates who work at the Kenyan Subsidiary influence their effectiveness.

1.1.4 Managerial Approaches in Selecting Expatriates

Expatriate selection process will either make or break the success of any foreign assignment. Expatriate selection can be defined as the screening of executives to find those with the greatest inclination and highest potential of successfully executing a foreign assignment, Daniels et al., (2011). The selection process is not always straightforward due to the shortage of talented staff with capabilities and willingness to be assigned foreign positions. The need for expatriates to run foreign assignments spurred with the high costs of expatriate failure have led MNCs to reconsider their selection processes and many have resorted to a well defined and systematic selection process. Many companies rely on cultural, career, family as well as psychological assessments anchored in concrete staffing policies to organize this selection process.

Three key indicators are mostly considered as critical for the success of an expatriate in any foreign assignment. These characteristics are; Technical competence of the potential candidate, Adaptability to the new environment, and Leadership capabilities. Different MNCs have different staffing policies depending on their level of engagement and
involvement in the international subsidiaries. However, there are four general approaches that MNCs use in selecting expatriates for their foreign operations and they are as discussed below;

Ethnocentric selection is an approach where expatriates or individuals from the home country are sent to manage operations abroad. Many companies that pursue this approach are those whose main objective is to exert utmost control of their branches from the headquarters, Wild et al., (2010). Many MNCs use this approach when they want to re-create foreign operations in the image of the home country operations. Thus the company’s corporate culture and certain important values are easily infused into the foreign branches. Some MNCs feel that managers sent from the home country will look after the company’s interest more faithfully and efficiently unlike natives of expatriates from other countries. Japanese MNCs are notoriously known for using this selection approach for their top level managers, Wild et al., (2010).

Polycentric selection is an approach where the MNC uses individuals from the host country to manage its operations. The approach is used when MNCs want to give their subsidiaries a sense of localization and autonomy. Such expatriates selected from the host country are extensively trained and exposed to the MNC’s home country culture and values. This approach is very good for MNCs competing in terms of human resources because the expatriates/managers understand the host environment better than any outsider could understand, Daniels et al., (2013).
Regiocentric selection approach is where expatriates are selected from within a region of the world which most closely resembles that of the host country. The company merely expands its search for expatriates beyond the borders of the host country, but stops short of seeking the expatriate personnel for its operations from throughout the world. The theory behind this selection process is that nationals of the region in which operations actually take place are better able to deal with language and cultural problems than are managers from outside the region, Irwin (1994).

Geocentric selection approach is whereby expatriates are selected from all parts of the world as long as they are qualified to manage foreign operations. The expatriate can be selected from the home country, host country of any other third party country. Geocentric selection approach has an effect in how expatriates feel while they are in foreign assignments. It brings in a breath of a true multinational spirit and breaks down nationalistic barriers, Stoner et al., (2009). This approach is mostly used by large MNCs whose objective is to seize global opportunities and compete competitively in the global market. The cost implications for this approach are however prohibitive. Expatriates who are able to fit into different culture and at the same time effectively execute their assignments are usually highly prized and in most cases head-hunted by other MNCs.

Despite the fact that selection is just but an initial step in the hiring of expatriates, it greatly influences the effectiveness of expatriates working for MNCs across the globe including Tetra Pak Limited. The level of expatriates’ motivation may play a crucial role
and the selection process is the one which will ultimately either make or break the success of any foreign assignment.

1.2 Research Problem

The concept of expatriation is at the heart of many MNCs. Expatriates are normally hired to execute specific tasks or to serve well defined objectives. The ability of IHRM to predetermine the ability of potential expatriates who will be able to complete the foreign assignments successfully depends on the selection process. If a MNC selects the wrong candidate, no amount of training, developments or motivation can transform that person into an effective expatriate. Daniels et al., (2013) intimate that there are undisputedly many potential candidates to be sent to execute foreign assignments. The problem is to select those who will succeed. They further indicate that sometimes selection is a matter of arbitrary convenience; people get sent because they are willing to go, Daniels et al., (2013)

Globalization, technology and international labour laws have continuously stimulated the growth of a new and intricate era in the business world characterized a diminished world into a small village but widening and complex markets. MNCs have sprouted in many countries including Kenya and these MNCs hire expatriates to manage their foreign operations, Daniels et al., (2013). The expatriates are like airplanes flying in the air, just as the pilot uses various control mechanisms to keep the airplane on course so does the MNCs to get the desired results from the expatriates employees. Many MNCs use two mechanisms; financial adjustments and psychological elements. However, striking a
balance between the two in order to achieve maximum desired results has been a paradox for many MNCs and researchers have not ventured into the intricacies therein. MNCs can only get it right if the selection process is up to standards and takes into consideration all contingencies, Ashour (1973).

The management selection process of expatriates influences their effectiveness and MNCs need to understand how they can blend and skew their human resource policies especially those pertaining to selection process to best suit the interests of the MNC as well as that of its expatriates. Modern MNCs based in Nairobi need to understand what motivates their foreign expatriates within the context of the pre-engagement activities. Potential candidates for foreign assignments differ in the level of their needs depending on their nationalities, age, sex, education level, career level, line of specialization. Some expatriates may want more income but others may require a more interesting and challenging job and all these are critical factors to consider during the selection process.

In today’s world, it seems that money has become less of a motivator among many individuals. The employee’s request is more than just high wages. They now do require some benefit and flexibility even that of bringing their work and personal life seamlessly together, Fred and Jonathan (2006).

Some people may be motivated by high financial rewards, some by other benefits like security of tenure, flexible working schedules, travel allowances back to their home countries et cetera, other individuals may crave for a good working relationship with colleagues, for others the opportunity for growth is a must, Deresky (2008). It becomes
the employer’s responsibility to involve expatriates in the business and let them know that the employer appreciates their ideas and suggestions even at the selection stage. Knowing what it takes to do what is right for expatriates can help many MNCs be competitive in Nairobi as well as in other global markets. Accordingly, enhancing the effectiveness of staff is part of an MNC’s responsibility and this research will unearth how good selection policies attract, motivate and retain expatriates. Enhancing effectiveness will help maximize the ability of human resource and develop sustainable human resource management strategies for the MNC’s seeking success, relevance, competitiveness and longevity, Ricky and Michael (2010). According to Tung’s framework of international human resource management both personal characteristics, technical competencies on the job, environmental variables and family situation are key determinants of the success or failure of an expatriate to efficiently execute a foreign assignment, Dowling et al., (2008)

Tetra Pak uses many expatriates to manage its foreign subsidiaries. In Kenya there are seven expatriate positions. The company spends a lot of resources in selection, hiring, training and maintaining and rewarding expatriates. It requires a delicate balance between how much they is willing to spend on them and the perceived returns to the company. The process of hiring foreign employees is sometimes long, maintaining an expatriate is also expensive and complex. Expatriate failure is even more costly and it normally runs into millions of shillings. TP as well as other MNCs must therefore deliberately and purposely select the right expatriates at all costs for effectiveness and ensuring that foreign assignment are completed according to plan. So, how does the management
selection process of expatriates affect the effectiveness of those expatriates at Tetra Pak Limited?

1.3 Research Objective

This study sought to determine how management selection process of expatriates influences their effectiveness at Tetra Pak Limited.

1.4 Value of the Study

This research will contribute the existing theoretical framework which pertain to IHRM that the success of management is a contingent affair. It will also contribute towards filling the gap left by many researchers and scholars in organizational policy setting particularly but not limited to policies relating selection of expatriates. The research will enable HR managers at Tetra Pak Limited, MNCs, policy makers in Government institutions as well as Domestic Companies understand the importance of a tailor-made effectiveness enhancement schemes for individuals and those suitable for the entire organization as well as the need for involving the expatriates in setting motivation policies, during selection process, that directly affect them. This research will also add value to other researchers and academicians who may want to study about the selection process of expatriates. This research will also fill the gap in the study and research about expatriates pertaining to the matter of gender issues. It will enrich previous findings about expatriates thus providing very interesting results about female expatriates. The research will dig deeper into and investigate the how the expatriate’s family may influence the assignment abroad and also how the decision about expatriation depends on the presence or lack of family in the expatriate’s life.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews some of the international human resource literature available pertaining selection of expatriates. The theoretical foundations are examined as well as the empirical literature about selection of expatriates. The chapter closes with the affirmation that selection of expatriates in the key to the success of any foreign assignment.

2.2 Theoretical Foundations of the Study

The contingency theory of management as pioneered Fred Fiedler’s suggests that in order to successfully execute an assignment, the technique used will vary with the situation, people, and circumstance, Fiedler (1967). The main ideas underlying contingency in a nutshell are that organizations are open systems that need careful management to satisfy and balance internal needs and to adapt to environmental circumstances. The approach emphasizes that there is no one best way of doing things. The appropriate approach depends on the kind of task or environment one is dealing with, Fiedler (1964). Therefore an expatriate being selected to execute a foreign assignment must be screened against the prevailing conditions including but not limited to the individual’s personality, past track records, host country environment and the MNCs staffing policy.

The environmental dependency theory emphasizes that an organization’s survival depends on resources that are scarce and usually outside the organization and that
organizations must engage external players in the environment in order to acquire these resources, Wild et al., (2000). The selection process of expatriates is highly influenced by many factors; internal environmental factors of the organization, host countries’ political, economical and socio-cultural factors, and activities of other MNCs as well as personality traits of the potential candidates. The selection process among many MNCs put emphasis on the technical competencies and forgets that external environmental dependencies play a key role in determining the suitability of a candidate to successfully execute a foreign assignment. The table below illustrates the theory;

Figure 2.1: Factors in expatriate selection

Source: Adapted from Dowling and Welch, 2004, page 98

A needs assessment must be conducted whereby data from the external environment is collected and is used to make subsequent decisions. The needs assessment analysis enables the selection team to gather information about the foreign environment and also
be aware of what other MNCs are doing, Mendenhall et al., (1995). The assessment also enable the IHRM determine the type and level on pre-engagement training for cultural adaptation that will be required. The environmental dependency theory also points to the fact that IHRM must identify organizational norms, values, extrinsic and intrinsic rewards, formal and informal rules which must be shared with the potential candidates to allow them make informed decision as to whether to accept or reject the overseas position. Environmental information about the host country and its institutions is used during fact-oriented pre-field training, cultural beliefs, values, attributes and behaviors must be put into perspective at all times, Ricky and Michael (2010).

Tung’s framework which is as a result of a study conducted in eighty MNCs United States of America in 1987 indicate that expatriate selection practices and their predictability are based on four general categories of predictors, Dowling et al., (1994); Technical Competence on the Job; It is reasonable that MNCs emphasize on the technical and managerial competences in the selection process. To select the best qualified person for a task, it is natural to firstly consider the person’s ability to perform certain tasks, his/her special knowledge and skills required by the job, so technical competence, which is equal to job-related factors, is an essential selection criterion. If the candidates are recruited internally, MNCs can rely on their past performance. However, many researches show that technical competence may be unnecessarily overrated, Dowling et al., (1999). The Price Waterhouse (1997-1998) survey of 184 companies in European state that technical competence was the most important selection criteria: 99% of them used the job-related skills, Dowling et al., (1999).
Personal Characteristics; the inability of managers and their spouses to adapt to the new culture is one of the main reasons for expatriate failure. Apart from technical competence, personal characteristics have been identified as important predictors of expatriate success, Tung (1988). When personal characteristics are used in the selection process, companies usually test the expatriates’ cross-cultural suitability. But it is difficult to define what personal characteristics consist of. Another problem is that few MNCs evaluate a candidate’s personal characteristics through standard tests or formal interviews, Swaak (1995). Most MNCs only focus on the technical competence of the candidate, Dowling et al., (1999). Tung’s study of 1981 found that only 5% of the MNCs carried out tests to evaluate the interpersonal skills and personal characteristics of their candidates for international assignments, Hill (2005).

Environmental variables; culture novelty is the main part in the environmental variables. Culture novelty means a gap of differences exists in the culture between the home and the host country, Ali (2003). Cultures in different countries cannot be totally the same. If there is a high degree of dissimilarity between cultures, there might be a clash of different values, norms, and behaviours. Owing to this, it is better for expatriates to be aware of the culture of the host country before going abroad, Mendenhall et al., (1995). Beside culture novelty, there are some other ordinary environmental variables, such as favourable living conditions and assignment duration certainty, Ali (2003)
Family situation; Family situation is the last dimension of Tung’s findings, but not the least. The main reason for expatriate failure is the inadaptability of the family’s adjustment to the new environment, Hill (2005). A survey was done by Black and Stephens in 1989 and it found that the adjustment of the spouse was positively related to the adjustment of the expatriate. However, they indicated that only 30% of the companies took the spouses’ opinions into consideration regarding international assignment, Dowling et al., (1999). Ali (2003) points out that the most neglected factor in the expatriate selection process might be the family situation.

The need for global managers who can spur and propel MNCs to competitive levels has been discussed in many forums across the globe. An international assignment is seen as a strategy in developing global leaders who can be relied upon by MNCs to take organizations and the overall global business environment to greater heights, Daniels et al., (2013). Although management of expatriates in foreign assignments is viewed as a challenging task, the selection process bears the utmost weight and it determines the success or failure of any foreign assignment.

2.3. Management Selection Process of Expatriates by MNCs

As discussed in the theoretical foundations of this study, the success or failure of a foreign assignment depends on various factors but selection is key among them. There are several studies that have been done pertaining to the selection of expatriates. Many researchers agree that certain common characteristics cannot be ignored. Stoner, Aram and Rubin, (1972) illustrate that the caring for, respecting, and understanding people of
different cultures comprises an important component of intercultural learning and potential expatriates must exhibit the ability to be able to work with people from all cultures. These competencies have been described as cultural empathy.

Adler, (2000) studied about selection of expatriates and concluded that internationalization of management education and learning has become well established globally. Effective managers no longer work solely in the comforts of their home culture, but also must learn to work across cultures. These cross-cultural experiences occur in many forms: encounters with individuals of different cultures, jaunts to overseas customers or suppliers, short visits to international divisions, and long term emersion in a new host culture have become an expected, even required, aspect of management success.

Caligiuri (2000) conducted a research about selecting expatriates for personality characteristics and narrowed it to the moderating effect of personality on the relationship between host national contact and cross-cultural adjustment of the expatriates. The study examined the process by which interactions with host nationals helped facilitate expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment. The hypotheses were based on two related theories, the contact hypothesis and social learning theory. The study concluded that Personality characteristics (openness and sociability) were important for cross-cultural adjustment. The study findings also suggest that greater contact with host nationals positively relates to cross-cultural adjustment when an individual possesses the personality trait of openness.
Galgallo (2013) conducted a study about the factors influencing expatriates cultural adaptation at Kenya Red Cross Society. The study established that majority of the expatriates stayed with their spouse/partner during the assignment. This implies that during selection the expatriate’s family situation must be considered. The study depicted that expatriates valued their families and thus opted to stay with their spouses/partners during the assignment to enhance the cultural adaptation. The study concluded that the organizations should offer a high quality cultural training to the expatriates coupled with efforts of integration with the local community to maximize their cultural adaptation in Kenya, Galgallo (2013). This means that the ability of expatriates to easily adapt the new culture is critical to their effectiveness.

Daniels et al., (2013) suggest that motivating expatriates in the international context starts with the selection process. Selecting the right expatriate is crucial for success of any international assignment. Several different factors that influence choosing the right candidate for an expatriate job; the candidate has to meet the technical skills required for the position abroad. Not only specific competence in certain field, but also the knowledge about the company and the corporate culture are equally important. Another important factor is the managerial qualities as the foreign assignment requires the expatriate to have an experience in a managerial position.

The appropriate expatriate needs to have a psychological and emotional stability in order to deal with the culture shock. Hofstede (1980) suggests some cross-cultural skills as;
relativity of one's own knowledge and perceptions, capacity to display empathy, capacity to be flexible, capacity for turn-taking, that is letting everyone take turns in discussions and also tolerance for ambiguity. All the attributes need to be viewed in the context of the host country’s culture and how compatible the individual will be in the new environment. Each culture has its own criteria of the importance of each of the characteristics, and the particular location of the foreign assignment should be applied with regard to the cultural area, Daniels et al., (2013).

Stoner et al., (2009) indicate that a person has got to have the right chemistry and the right attitude in order to do things right. They emphasize the importance of the selection process as intimated above. Stoner, et al., (2009) also indicate that cheerleading in the world could not feed an employee’s family; therefore financial incentives to keep the employee happy are needed such as profit sharing, incentive bonuses and stock purchase options and the selection stage must carefully screen the potential candidates against their desire for such compensation related issues. In this case, the authors are of the opinion that financial incentives are paramount to making an employee happy but the amount attached as compensation that an expatriate can be happy with varies from individual to individual and must be carefully discussed during the selection stage.

Robock and Sommonds (1989) underline that there is no ideal criterion when choosing an expatriate. The authors indicate that “the acculturation process is not yet well understood to create satisfactory selection methods”. On the other hand Torrington (1994) suggest that the general way of choosing an appropriate expatriate by means of HRM tools,
appraisal and career planning can function pretty well. Thus it seems that every multinational company should follow its own approach towards the selection of the candidates for expatriates, Torrington (1994).

Deresky (2008) says that once an expatriate manager has been selected, it is necessary to motivate and prepare him for the coming assignment. The success of the expatriation is mostly based on the willingness to be sent abroad, including the simple availability, the frankness, the attitude and the interest in the expatriate destination.

2.4 Effectiveness of Expatriates in MNCs

Many MNCs do not have IHRM policies which ensure that the selection process for expatriates which is ordinarily complex results into a successful placement. Success in a foreign assignment will not only depend on an individual’s domestic track record but on motley characteristics. The need to ascertain whether a potential expatriate has the necessary cross-cultural awareness and interpersonal skills is often overlooked by many MNCs. The family situation of the expatriate must be examined as well. A study done by Sisa Ntshona in 2007 about expatriate management within the context of best practice in African division of a multinational bank indicate that during selection, some factors pertaining to relationship dimensions such as cultural empathy and flexibility, motivation state, language skills and family situation are overlooked, Ntshona (2007). Ricky and Michael (2010) indicate that it is important to involve the spouses of the potential expatiate in the selection interview.
One of the greatest contributors to expatriate failure is the selection process based on headquarters criteria rather than the assignment needs and individual characteristics, Deresky (2008). Helen further says that 89% of MNCs formally assess a candidate’s job skills prior to posting but very few gauge whether the family will cope in the new environment. Daniels et al., (2013) indicates that many MNCs today start preparing their staff for offshore assignments years before they actually deploy them. This maximizes the possibility of success and minimizes the odds of failure. Apart from the above considerations, the selection process must be screened against the following parameters; Technical abilities, managerial abilities, adaptability, diplomacy, language ability, positive attitude, emotional stability, maturity and adaptability of the expatriate’s family.

2.5 Summary

This chapter delved into the contingency theory of management by Fred Fielder and its relevance to the purposeful selection of expatriates for effectiveness. The environmental dependency theory and how an organization’s survival depends on external environmental factors was also discussed. Tung’s studies on expatriation are discussed in details. Various empirical literatures that relate to the selection of expatriates by MNCs and their ability to be effective were discussed. The theme that seems to repeat itself is that potential candidates must have the social skills to adapt to the new environment and work well with the host. Potential candidate must also have the right technical competency, social skills as well as the good will to be sent. The chapter concludes that selection is the key to the success of any foreign assignment.
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the research design and it highlights how the chosen design is pivotal to the outcome of this research. The chapter also details collection method and finally data analysis procedure used in carrying out the study to approve or disapprove the proposition as captured in the objective of the study.

3.2 Research Design

Research design provides the intellectual glue that holds the research project together. This research was designed to use a case study. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), indicates that a case study is an in-depth investigation of an individual, institution or phenomenon. It is a plan and structure of investigations aimed at retaining the holistic meaning and characteristics of real life events. A case study was chosen for this research because of its ability to study the subject in depth rather than in breadth and more emphasis will be given to a limited number of events and conditions. Primary data that was collected was up to date and thus more reliable in correlating how the selection process of expatriates at Tetra Pak Limited affects the effectiveness of those expatriates.

3.3 Data Collection

Primary data was emphasized over secondary data. The data collection instrument that was used in this research was interview guide. Most of the data pertaining to the expatriates especially bio-data and other personal details was sought from the HRM database. Interview guides were designed and administered through interviews and
discussions with key informants. These comprised of open ended questions which allowed for greater depth of response. Data that meet the specific objectives was collected and recorded. The interview guides facilitated the collection of comprehensive requisite data from human resource managers Tetra Pak Limited as well as from the expatriates themselves.

The following expatriates were the targeted respondents in the study; The Regional Managing Director, the Marketing Director, the Sales and Technical services Director, the Factory Director, the Finance and Business Transformation Director, Food and Beverages Director and finally the Human Resource Manager who is a local Kenyan. The respondents were listed that way because Tetra Pak global policy requires that those positions be held by expatriates.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data collected from the above instruments were put in tables according to common themes and then analysed. The interview guides were edited for completeness and then analysed using content analysis. Content analysis is any technique used to make inferences systematically and objectively thus identifying specific characteristics and messages, Mugenda and Mugenda (1999). The analysis was based on the insights derived from literature review and the data collected. In the case where the respondents gave comments especially during data collection, the comments were grouped according to common recurring themes and frequency and then analysed in light of the selection approaches as put forward by various scholars and as discussed in chapter two in the literature review section.
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study were summarized in two major sections in congruent to the research topic “the influence of management selection process on the effectiveness of expatriates in Kenya –a case study of tetra Pak”. These classifications were; (1) Personal Characteristics (2) Company Characteristics. The research findings according to personal characteristics were as follows;

The table below summarizes the findings and is subsequently discussed;

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Living with Family</th>
<th>Worked with TP</th>
<th>Employment Type</th>
<th>Years of experience</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>&gt;20</td>
<td>Expatriate</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Contract</td>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>Expatriate</td>
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<td>41-45</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>11-15</td>
<td>Expatriate</td>
</tr>
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<td>Lebanese</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Contract</td>
<td>&gt;20</td>
<td>Expatriate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1: Summary of expatriate individual characteristics

The response was 71% of the expected number. Out of the respondents, it was found out that majority of the expatriates were male at 67% whereas female expatriates only
accounted for 33%. It was a fair distribution of expatriates by sex owing to initially held belief that expatriate positions are predominantly filled by men rather than women. There was no definite response on the salary scale from any respondent. However, this did not affect the results of the research. Online information from property managers and international schools indicated that apart from basic salaries, the company spends between Ksh. 700,000 to Ksh. 1,500,000 on rent, utility bills, work permits, children school fees, subscriptions and other sundry expenses on each expatriate. There was a plan by the company to reduce the number of expatriate positions due to the cost of hiring and maintaining them; “I will not disclose the salary scale for the expatriates, however we are in the process of reducing the number of expatriate positions because of the high cost of paying their salaries and maintaining them.”

![Chart of percentage expatriates by sex](image)

**Figure 4.1: Chart of percentage expatriates by sex.**

It was found out that majority of the expatriates were at their prime years. 100% of the expatriates had worked with Tetra Pak before. It is clear that people who have not worked
for Tetra Pak before have very little or no opportunity at all to be selected as expatriates for Tetra Pak outlets. The fact that Tetra Pak select expatriates from within means that expatriates selected are well know and their track records locally and abroad puts them at an advantage of being selected and consequently being effective.

Below is what the HRM had to say about succession expatriation at Tetra Pak;

“We have a succession planning process where individuals in critical positions are earmarked and groomed to taking leadership after a certain period for example six months, one year, two years et cetera to come. Therefore once positions fall vacant then the recruitment team goes back to the succession planning board and selects from the succession planning pipeline. They look at who is suitable and ready now and request for application and shortlist as the normal recruitment process.”

The findings about the years of experience for the expatriates were as follows;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of international experience</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15 years</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 20 years</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 20 years</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.2: Chart of Expatriate’s years of experience.

About family situation, the data collected indicated that 67% of the expatriates were living with their families whereas 33% had their spouse abroad. 100% of those who did not live with their spouses were female expatriates. 20% of those living with their
families expressed difficulty in coping and adjustment to the new environment by the family members especially their spouses. Of interest were the female expatriates who were unable to convince their husbands to leave their jobs and country so that they could live together here in Kenya. Such separation meant that either the expatriate or her spouse needed to travel frequently and this affected their effectiveness and robbed them of valuable productive time.

“It is not easy to be flying home after every few days. Sometimes you arrive and you are so tired that the purpose of the trip gets consumed in nursing travel related fatigue”

![Chart of family status](chart.png)

**Figure 4.3: Chart showing the family status of expatriates at Tetra Pak**

The data collected indicate that Tetra Pak largely uses the Ethnocentric Selection approach for its expatriates. This is because over 50% of the expatriates we from Tetra Pak’s home country, that is Sweden. The earlier held hypothesis that Tetra Pak uses geocentric selection approach is therefore nullified because this MNC uses ethnocentric selection approach 50% of the expatriates being citizens of the home country.
Figure 4.4: Chart showing the Nationalities of Expatriates at Tetra Pak

The expatriates at Tetra Pak were mostly senior citizens. 80% were aged between 41 years and 50 years. Only 17% of the expatriates were aged between 31 years and 40 years. No expatriate was below 30 years of age. Further research on expatriation of young and inexperienced individuals should be researched and the findings might be interesting.

Figure 4.5: Chart showing the age of expatriates at Tetra Pak
The company characteristics indicated the following interesting results;

About who are involved in the selection of expatriates for Tetra Pak, it was reported that there is a ‘Tetra Pak Global Recruitment Team’ which is involved in the selection process. When an expatriate position falls vacant, there is a succession planning process followed where individuals in critical positions are ear-marked and groomed to taking leadership after a certain period for example after six months, one year, two years et cetera. Therefore once positions fall vacant then the recruitment team goes back to the succession planning board and select from the succession planning pipeline. They look at who is ready at that time and request for application from those individuals and shortlist as the normal recruitment process.

During the selection process the candidates’ spouses are not involved. “We do not involve the spouses of the candidates at any point as the contract is between the prospective candidate and Tetra Pak.”

It also come out clearly that apart from technical competency, there are other characteristics are sought after by Tetra Pak. Leadership skills is at the top of the pyramid and is looked at very keenly. Leadership elements are evaluated on every person each year and they play a big role in the career development within the organization and more so for expatriates. Over the years, it was noted that there were very good people in technical skills but lacked leadership hence the reason why the importance of the skill was added in the performance evaluation cards for the company.

On whether cultural change impacts the effectiveness of expatriates posted to work for Tetra Pak, it was noted that culture plays a very big role in expatriation of staff. However, since Tetra Pak is a global company, most of the staff have had an opportunity to travel to
various countries and have an exposure to various cultures to understanding how culture varies from country to another. During glooming for succession, the potential candidates are given an opportunity to travel throughout the world wherever there is an opportunity so that they get a glimpse of what international culture feels like. The general feeling was that;

“The beauty about Kenyans is that they are very hospitable and this helps a lot in the fast settling down of the expatriates”.

“Kenyans are a little bit beyond what is expected from them in terms of ensuring the expatriates have an easy way in adjusting to their new country and to the Tetra Pak office here in Kenya. This in return has positively contributed to the effectiveness of expatriates”

About the measures that the company takes to ensure that expatriates settle down as fast as possible, the feedback was that once expatriates signs contracts, the next thing is to start preparing their work permit and other relevant documents. The expatriates also get booked in furnished apartments as they search for their houses and schools for their children. However, they are given assistance by the company’s chief security office as to which neighborhood to look for a house. Expatriates are encouraged to live in the up market estates like Runda where security is good.

“Expatriates are also are given an option to ship in their furniture at the company’s cost so that they still feel that they have their homes. They are also assigned a driver to take them round during the first three months to acquaint themselves with the different locations, shopping malls, churches, mosques, sports clubs and roads”
As to whether the company undertakes any pre-engagement activities with potential candidates which motivate expatriates to accept foreign assignment, it was noted that it is not a mandatory requirement to have done a pre-assignment before any expatriates are posted for an international assignment. However, if there is any project that is going on in the country then the potential expatriates are given an opportunity to visit the country they will probably work in to be engaged with the locals and have a taste of what working there would feel like. It was also noted that 83% of the expatriates were given a chance to have a pre-visit the country before they signed their contract. This was in a bid to minimize the chances of expatriate failure. In the past five years, one expatriate changed his mind and requested not to sign his contract because he disliked Kenya. His request to be sent to Nigeria was granted and in his place another expatriate was hired. If there was no such contingent measure, this could have been an outright expatriate failure. Therefore this selection process involving sending potential expatriates to pre-visit their planned destination highly positively influences the effectiveness of expatriates and maximizes the chances of expatriate success. In the last 10 years, there have not been any reported incidences of expatriate failure, ineffectiveness or premature repatriation.

In regard to factors that are mostly overlooked by the selection team during the selection process and how are they affecting expatriates’ effectiveness, it was noted that the selection process is very thorough and it is robust as recruiting expatriates is expensive. “Clear structures have been put in place to ensure that even the least detail is not overlooked and there is no hidden terms and conditions in their contracts. However, as much as the expatriates are well prepared and keenly selected, there is still much more that can be done. Sometimes, the negotiation process takes a while which as a
consequence makes the position vacant for a longer period. This means if the current position holder exits the position there is no handover between the outgoing and incoming. This time lag has had a negative impact on the effectiveness of expatriates as they are not officially handed over the office from the outgoing office holder.

The following pyramid illustrates what characteristics the company considers as critical for the effectiveness of expatriate starting from the most important;

![Pyramid Chart]

**Figure 4.6: Chart showing inherent characteristics affecting preference to be selected as an expatriate.**

In addition to the above, sometimes the expatriate’s contracts expire when they have just settled in terms of work and in dealing with the locals. Therefore the extension of the contracts can be evaluated based on performance and how the person has succeeded in dealing with local issues. Longevity of expatriate contracts especially those who settle with their families should be considered.
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

In this chapter, the conclusion of the literature with those of the findings of this research will be discussed according to the extent of the findings in relation to the literature. Future research needs will also be recommended in line with the research findings as well as the practical implications to the organization in study.

The population characteristics indicate that all the expatriates had spouses and families. Surprisingly, Tetra Pak does not consider involving the spouses of expatriates neither during interviews nor during signing of contracts. This high percentage of expatriates with spouses indicates the strong need to consider involving spouses in the selection process. The expatriate’s family ability to adapt to their new homes affected directly how effective an expatriate would be. Some expatriates expressed their frustration brought about by their spouses who did not know how to communicate in English. It was painstaking paying for English lessons so that the spouses could overcome the language barrier. However the costs of such lessons were borne by the employer and this motivated them and positively affected their effectiveness.

From the data collected, it was clear that Tetra Pak employs only mature individuals aged over 30 years and highly experienced in handling international assignments. This selection approach by seniority criteria and years of experience highly increased the effectiveness of the expatriates. The selection of expatriates by Tetra Pak using their succession planning means that the company only hires expatriates whom the company knows too well and therefore this minimizes the chance of expatriate failure. The potential expatriates were also given an opportunity to travel and stay in their new
proposed duty stations as an on-the-job experimentation of their ability to effectively execute their foreign assignments. This highly increases the effectiveness of the expatriates.

The company’s policy of not including expatriate’s spouses in the selection process has to a smaller extent affected the expatriate’s effectiveness. Some spouses were reported to be complaining about home sickness and inability to get jobs locally as well as make new friends. This meant that the expatriate had to sacrifice and frequently take the family to their home country during holidays and in one way or another it affected their effectiveness. There were only a limited number of trips to the expatriate’s home country, a maximum of 3 trips per year paid by the company, the need for frequent travels put a constrain on the expatriates finances and this affected their effectiveness but to a small extent. It is paramount from the research findings that the company could do better if it takes into account the family situation during selection. If it is possible, the company should also be able to facilitate the spouses to get jobs locally, help the expatriates identify good international schools for their children and also help them in identifying good house to rent.

Since there have not been significant incidences of expatriate failure, the HRM at Tetra Pak accredited this success to the good selection process and an elaborate succession planning that each MNC should embrace. However, in as much as there is a good succession planning, sometimes one expatriate my leave his/her office at the expiry of the contract and by that time a replacement might not be available or ready. Therefore it is recommended that the time lag between the outgoing and the incoming expatriate be put
at the minimum. A good common practice is whereby there is an overlap so that the outgoing expatriate can hand over to the incoming expatriate.

Based on the research findings and discussions above, it can be reliably concluded that the selection process is key to the success of foreign assignments by expatriates. Tetra Pak scores highly by using a comprehensive succession planning and an elaborate selection process. There is a delta relationship in success by selecting experienced and mature expatriates. There is a direct correlation between the probability of being selected as an expatriate, being effective and having worked with Tetra Pak before.
REFERENCES


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http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/business/Kenya retrieved on 28/03/2014


APPENDIX I: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION TO THE RESPONDENTS

University of Nairobi,
School of Business,
P. O. BOX 30197-00100,
Nairobi.
July 2014

Dear Respondent,

RE: COLLECTION OF DATA.
I am a masters’ degree student at the University of Nairobi, School of Business. In order to fulfill the master’s degree requirements, I am undertaking a research project on; “The Influence of Management Selection Process on the Effectiveness of Expatriates Working for Multinational Corporations in Kenya – A case study of Tetra Pak”

I kindly request you to assist me to collect data by filling out the accompanying questionnaire. The information provided will be used exclusively for this research only and it is for academic purposes and will be held in strict confidence.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Julius Aming’a........................Student

Dr. John Yabs..........................Supervisor
APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE HRM

1. Who are involved in the selection of expatriates for Tetra Pak E. A?

2. When an expatriate position falls vacant, what procedure is followed in order to fill it?

3. During the selection process, are candidates’ spouses involved?

4. Apart from technical competency, what other characteristics are sought after by TP?

5. Does cultural change impact the effectiveness of expatriates posted to work for TP in Kenya? How?

6. What measures does the company take to ensure that expatriates settle down as fast as possible when posted?
7. Does the company undertake any pre-engagement activities with potential candidates which motivate expatriates to accept foreign assignment? Please explain

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8. What factors are mostly overlooked by the selection team during the selection process and how are they affecting expatriates’ effectiveness?

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9. Please list the following factors in their order of importance starting with the most important in selecting expatriates at TP

(Personal characteristics, Technical competencies, Environmental variables, Family situation, Cultural adaptability, Leadership Skills)

1. ....................................................................................................................... 
2. ....................................................................................................................... 
3. ....................................................................................................................... 
4. ....................................................................................................................... 
5. ....................................................................................................................... 

10. What other relevant information affects the effectiveness of expatriates that has not been capture above? Please give details

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## APPENDIX III: BIO DATA CAPTURE FORM

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<thead>
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<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Employment terms</th>
<th>Yrs of Experience</th>
<th>Highest Education level</th>
<th>Area of Specialization</th>
<th>Salary scale</th>
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<td>Gender</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Relocated with family to Kenya?</td>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>Employment terms</td>
<td>Yrs of Experience</td>
<td>Highest Education level</td>
<td>Area of Specialization</td>
<td>Salary scale</td>
<td>Worked with TP before?</td>
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APPENDIX IV: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR EXPATRIATES

Kindly answer the following questions by ticking in the appropriate box or filling the spaces provided.

1. What is your Nationality?

Country……………………………………

2. How long does your contract with T.P run and how does it affect your effectiveness as an expatriate?

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3. How well have you managed to take T.P to the next level

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4. Years of experience as an expatriate (Tick as applicable)

1-5 years [ ] 6-10 years [ ] 11-15 years [ ] 16-20 years [ ] over 20 years [ ]

Years of experience as a non-expatriate if any………………………………………………………..

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5. Is salary a key motivation factor to work as an expatriate? Please Explain

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6. Had you worked for another multinational corporation before joining Tetra Pak E.A Ltd? Please give more information

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7. During the selection process, was your spouse involved? In either case how has it affected your effectiveness after being posted in Kenya?

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8. Apart from technical competency, what other characteristics are key to your effectiveness as an expatriate?

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9. Has cultural change impacted your effectiveness since you were posted to Kenya? Please give details

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10. Before you were sent to Kenya, what measure did the company take to ensure that your settlement was fast and smooth?

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11. What are the challenges that you face as an expatriate which you believe that they affect your effectiveness in Kenya?

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12. What factors/information did you overlook as an individual during the selection process and how is it affecting you effectiveness as an expatriate now?

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13. What factors do you think were overlooked by the selection panel during the selection process and how are they affecting your effectiveness now?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION