Heta Peltonen

INTERNATIONAL ASSIGNEE SATISFACTION TOWARDS IN-
TERNATIONAL ASSIGNMENT PROCESS AND PRACTICES:
CASE GLASTON

Degree Programme in International Trade

2018

ULKOMAANKOMENNUSLAISTEN TYYTYVÄISYYS KOMENNUSPROSES-
SIIN JA KÄYTÄNTÖIHIN: CASE GLASTON

_____

Tämän opinnäytetyön tarkoitus oli tutkia ulkomaankomennuslaisten tyytyväisyyttä,
jotta saataisiin tietää, onko ulkomaankomennusprosessissa tai käytännöissä liittyen ul-
komaankomennusprosessiin jotakin, mitä voitaisiin parantaa kohdeyrityksessä. Tämä
tutkimus tehtiin, sillä HR Managerit halusivat tietää, onko ulkomaankomennuksilla
joitakin käytäntöjä, mitä he voisivat parantaa. Työ tehtiin myös siksi, että ulkomaan-
komennusten tehokkuutta saataisiin paremmaksi keskittymällä ulkomaankomennus-
laisten tyytyväisyyden parantamiseen.

Tämä työ toteutettiin käyttämällä abduktiivista metodia. Metodi vaati tutkijaa pereh-
tymään tutkittavaan aiheeseen ennen itse tutkimuksen toteuttamista. Tutkimuksessa
käytettiin myös kvalitatiivista metodia ja puoli-strukturoitua haastattelumetodia em-
piirisessä osassa. Haastateltavia oli tutkimuksessa yhteensä 10 ja haastattelut tapahtui-
vat marraskuussa 2017. Tulokset analysoitiin käyttämällä laadullisen tutkimuksen kä-
sittelyyn tarkoitettua ohjelmaa nimeltä Nvivo.

Tutkimuksen tulokset vastaavat tutkimuskysymyksiin. Tutkimuksen tulos oli toivotun
lainen ja vastasi, siihen mihin tutkimuksella pyrittiin. Tutkimuksen empiirinen osa oli
onnistuneesti toteutettu ja saadut tutkimustulokset olivat merkittäviä. Haastatteluista
saadulla negatiivisella ja positiivisella palautteella saatiin esille toimintaehdotuksia
kohdeyrityksen ulkomaankomennusprosessiin.

INTERNATIONAL ASSIGNEE SATISFACTION TOWARDS INTERNATIONAL ASSIGNMENT PROCESS AND PRACTICES: CASE GLASTON

_____

The purpose of this thesis was to study the international assignee satisfaction to find out how the assignment process and practices could be improved in case company. This study was conducted since the Human Resources Managers wanted to know if there is some IHRM practices that they could improve regarding international assignments. The study was also conducted to improve the efficiency of international assignments with focusing on improving the assignee satisfaction.

The procedure used in this research was abductive approach which required to gain good understanding of the studied subject before making the research itself. Research was conducted by using qualitative research method. Semi-structured interview method was used in the empirical research. This research had in total 10 interviewees and the interviews were held during November 2017. The results were analyzed by using qualitative data analysis software called Nvivo.

The research found out answers to research questions. The outcome of the research was wanted and what the research aimed for. The empirical part of itself was successfully conducted and the attained results were relevant. With positive and negative feedback that was received from the interviews, this study was able to attain improvement ideas to the existing international assignment process and practices in case company.

CONTENTS

1 SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

IHRM	International Human Resource Management
HRM	Human Resource Management
HR	Human Resources
Short-term assignment	International assignment from one to twelve moths
Long-term assignment	International assignment from one to five years
Home-company	The company which is sending the international assignee
Host-company	The company which is receiving the international assignee
Home country	Country where the HQ of the company is located
Host country	Country of company´s operations which is other than the country of HQ

2   INTRODUCTION

Nowadays international assignments are significant resource for companies. International assignments enable the company to transfer complex knowledge fast and efficiently between different locations and countries (Waxin 2006, 391). International assignments are also companies' resource to attract future workforce, since the population born between 1981-2000 are expecting to have global assignments during their career (Millennials at work Reshaping the workplace in financial services 2012).

Trough the increasing amount of global operations the number of nationalities, locations and international assignment types has grown in companies. The limited amount of HR Managers to manage the increasing amount of international operations, IHRM has become challenging. (Herod 2012, 13.) The biggest challenges in managing the international assignments are related to policy problems, establishment of effective administration system for assignments and addressing the concerns of the assignees (Herod 2012, 3). The objective of this thesis is to bring out the concerns of the assignees in case company to get better result from international assignments.

This thesis studies the satisfaction of international assignees before, during and after international assignments with focus on how the assignments have been managed by home-company HR and by host-company HR. The thesis finds out more information about international assignee satisfaction in case company and brings out current information to HR Managers about company´s international assignees satisfaction before, during and after assignment.

With information that this thesis provides, HR Managers can see what is the current situation regarding international assignment management in case company. HR Managers are able to improve their international assignee satisfaction and get better result from international assignments in the future.

3 PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Purpose and objectives of the research

The purpose of this thesis is to find out current information about how the international assignment process could be improved in Glaston. This thesis finds out those practices which the international assignees are satisfied with and practices which they are not satisfied with before, during and after the assignment. This information benefits the company and company´s international assignees. This study helps case company to improve their employee satisfaction and get better results from international assignments.

Research objective is to find out are the international assignees satisfied with the existing international assignment process and can the process be improved somehow. The objective is also to find International Human Resource Management (IHRM) practices that does not exist in case company but could be useful regarding international assignment process. To find answers to these research objectives, this thesis need to include theory information about the subject and the way of managing international assignments in general. It is also necessary to find out are the international assignees satisfied with how the assignments have been managed before, during and after assignment in general and in Case company.

The main research problem of this study is:

- How can the international assignment process be improved in Glaston?

Subproblems of this thesis:

- What kind of practices exist regarding international assignment processes?
- Are the international assignees satisfied with how international assignment process has been managed in general and in case company?

- Are there some IHRM practices that international assignees would like to improve and how?
- Are there some IHRM practices that does not exist in Glaston but could be useful regarding international assignment process?

This study focuses only short-term assignments, long-term assignments and repatriation from these assignments, since these are the assignment types in case company. The thesis will not define any other international assignment types. The focus of this thesis is only on the assignments inside Glaston group. This thesis will only study the assignments from home country to host country, meaning the assignments only from Glaston Finland location to another Glaston location.

This thesis will only focus on those practices in the assignment process in which this thesis can influence. For that reason, this study will not measure satisfaction on compensation, insurances nor international assignee taxation. These concepts are mentioned in chapter 6, since they are relevant in understanding case company´s assignment types. International assignee compensation and taxation are also mentioned in chapter 8, since these concepts were brought up by the interviewees and were considered important to mention in research results. This thesis excluded cost related issues in chapter 5, since they are irrelevant considering this thesis. This thesis will look international assignee satisfaction only from international assignee perspective.

3.2   Conceptual framework
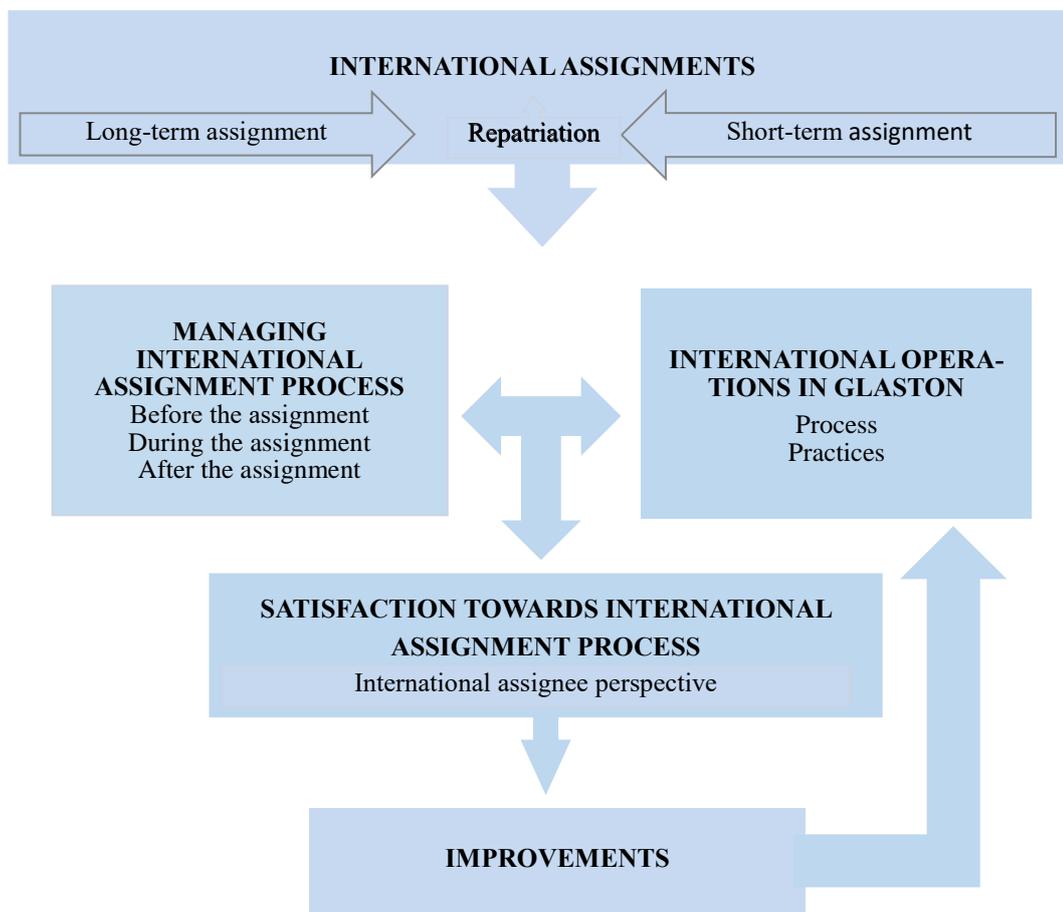
Figure 1. Conceptual framework

Conceptual framework (Figure 1) explains the key concepts of this thesis and the re-lationship of these key concepts. This conceptual framework helps to understand the outlines and structure of this thesis. Conceptual framework also points out what this thesis studies. The flow of this conceptual framework goes from top to down and ends in the concept of international operations in Glaston.

The key concept international assignment is where the flow begins. It includes two types of assignments which this thesis will study, and coming back from these assign-ments. International assignment links to managing international assignment process and the case company international assignment operations. Managing international as-signment process goes theory wise little deeper in international assignments and its

structure, and for that reason it is linked to the concept of international assignment. International operations in Glaston links to the concept of international assignment, since the concepts of international assignments are explained here from the company´s view. These both concept of managing international assignments and international operations in Glaston are linked to each other, since these are compared and the research of satisfaction towards international assignment process and practices are conducted based on the ideas gained from the comparison.

Here is also been brought up that this thesis will only study the satisfaction from assignee perspective. International assignee satisfaction towards international assignment process is then linked to improvements. Improvements are conducted from the analysis and result of the research. These improvements can then be implemented in international operations in Glaston to get better results from international assignments.

4   INTERNATIONAL ASSIGNMENTS

4.1   International assignments in general

International assignment means an overseas placement of an employee, where the employee works outside of his home country (Mutsuddi 2011, 11). The key role of international assignments is to fulfil the gaps in specific managerial or technical competences in certain countries of the organization. With international assignments organizations can transfer and share knowledge. Assignments also enable organizations to transfer know-how fast and efficiently. (Waxin 2006, 391.)

Companies have recognized the competitive importance of international assignments (Mutsuddi 2011, 113). Nowadays, international assignments can be company's source to attract new employees, especially millennial workers, born between 1981 and 2000, which are going to be around 50 % of workforce in 2020. The millennials say that 72% of them expect to have an overseas assignment during their career. (Millennials at work Reshaping the workplace in financial services 2012.)

Organizations can send an international assignee to understand host-company activities and to learn new knowledge about specific tools, processes, competences and organizational culture. The know-how transfers in both ways, from home-company to host-company and vice versa. If company sets up activities in host country, and these activities does not exist there yet, then international assignment has a role of training personnel in that location. The long duration of international assignment enables to gather and transfer complex and specific information between home- and host-companies. The transfer of knowledge from assignments also continues after the international assignment. Assignees can transfer that knowledge back at home-company and organization can benefit from it in decision making processes and strategic planning. (Waxin 2006, 391.)

4.2   International assignment types

This chapter will define those type of international assignments which are relevant regarding this thesis. These assignment types are long-term assignment, short-term assignment and repatriation from these assignments. Some authors describe international assignees also with term expatriate (Mutsuddi 2011, 11). Expatriation can be defined as a process of selecting and sending employee to an overseas for fixed period (Chen & Chang 2016, 1). The definition of expatriation has a long history. Expatriation can mean the act of banishing people from their own country and the term expatriate can be used to describe a person who has been exiled from one´s country. Nowadays, the term expatriation is used to describe the process of someone taking a residence in another country. (Green 2009.) The definition of expatriation can vary between companies. In this thesis, the term expatriation means both a long-term assignment and short-term assignment.

Expatriates can be categorized into two separate groups, self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) and or organizational expatriates (OEs). Self -initiated expatriate are those expatriate employees who decide themselves to go live and work abroad. Since these self-initiated expatriates are not relevant in this thesis, they will not be defined more nor noticed further on. Organizational expatriates are type of expatriates send by the

home-company for an assignment overseas. This thesis will study organizational expatriates. (Peltokorpi & Froese 2009, 1096-1112.)

The duration of long-term assignment is normally from one to five years and average duration is three years. Long-term assignee is an expatriate who is located to the host country, normally with possible family and spouse. (Waxin 2006, 395-397.) Worldwide Survey of International Assignment Policies and Practices by Mercer (2015), found out the trends in international assignments. The study showed that long-term assignments were used in most of the companies. 98% of the respondents said that they are offering currently long-term assignments. However, the study found out that most did not expect increase in long-term assignments. Most of the respondents rather expected increase in short-term assignments. According to the EY Global mobility effectiveness survey (2016) the policy types that were in force in respondent organizations were 85% short-term assignments and 75% long-term assignments. From these surveys, we can tell that the trend is indeed going more and more towards the decrease of long-term assignments in organizations.

Between companies the concept of short-term assignment varies. There is no one correct way to say what is considered as short-term assignment. Here is introduced one concept how normally short-term assignment are categorized. The duration of short-term assignments is from one to twelve months. In these assignments, assignee´s possible family normally stays in home country and does not go along with the employee. (Waxin 2006, 397-398.) During this time home-company has a responsibility of assignees salary payment, social security and pension benefits. Some short-term assignments are more learning-driven, meaning that the assignment has a purpose of developing assignees cross-cultural skills, global mindset and building up their career in the company. Some short-term assignments are more demand-driven and the assignment has a purpose of effectively fulfil task related goals of the company. (Söderberg & Zölner 2012, 108.)

EY Global mobility effectiveness survey (2016), found out that majority of the international assignments in organizations were short-term assignments. However, the study pointed out that 25% of the organizations do not have any formal policies for short-term assignments and these organizations haven't even considered having one.

28% of the respondents are considering having a formal policy for short-term assignments and 47% of the respondents already has a formal policy. This study pointed out that even though short-term assignments are more and more used nowadays, many organizations do not have formal policies for these types of assignments.

Repatriation, also called cross-cultural re-entry describes the process where expatriate is coming back to home-company from overseas assignment (Mutsuddi 2011, 113). Mainly the term repatriation has been associated with long-term assignments, but the term can be used when assignee is returning home from short-term assignment as well (Starr 2009, 286).

5   MANAGING INTERNATIONAL ASSIGNMENTS

5.1   International Human Resource Management

IHRM refers to the process of efficiently controlling the HR in multinational corporation (MNC). HR include practices such as human resource planning, staffing, performance management, training and development, compensation and benefits, and labor relations. MNCs need to adjust their policies and practices to fit every existing location in a way that the overall goals of the corporation can be achieved. (Mutsuddi 2011, 3.) In this thesis IHRM is viewed from international assignment management perspective and this section focuses also only on those practices in IHRM. Nowadays the biggest issues in managing the international assignments are related to policy problems, establishment of effective administration system for assignments and addressing the concerns of the assignees (Herod 2012, 3). This thesis focuses mainly of the concerns of the assignees.

IHRM can take different approaches to different countries involved in the company´s operations. These countries can be categorized as host country and home country. Home country can be considered as a country where the headquarters of the MNC or international company is located. Host country can be defined as a country where subsidiary or branch office of the company is located. (Mutsuddi 2011, 5.)

IHRM consists of much wider range of functions than domestic human resource management. These functions include taxation, international relocation and orientation. IHRM faces challenges in expatriate administrative functions such as selecting and training of international employees, and the management of host government relations. Compared to domestic HRM, IHRM must include policies and practices which fit to home- and host companies, and the differences in cultures. (Mutsuddi 2011, 8.)

The very basic functions of domestic HRM can change and be more diverse compared with IHRM. For instance, the headquarters need to take into consideration the currencies and the changes in exchange rates in compensations. Some companies also might include benefits for family, often considered spouse and children, but in some cultures "family" can be interpreted differently as more wider range of relatives. All these kinds of aspects need to be taken into consideration in MNCs or international companies. (Mutsuddi 2011, 8-9.)

In IHRM, HR Managers often need to be more involved in employees´ personal lives than in domestic HRM. When expatriate is going for an assignment, HR Managers are often involved in housing arrangements, transportation of household items, healthcare and education. IHRM functions are also more influenced by external forces than domestic HRM. These external forces can include ministers, politicians, and other social and economic groups. (Mutsuddi 2011, 9-10.)

Today the number of nationalities, locations and international assignment types is increasing in companies. That combined with limited amount of HR Managers to manage the increasing amount of international HR, IHRM has become challenging. Companies have more and more seen the importance of expatriate career management regarding international assignments. IHRM should include practices which will turn down the issues in international assignments regarding expatriate career. (Herod 2012, 13.) The most important practices from career management perspective have been listed here:

- Standardized selection: Assessing competence also from other perspective than technical such as cultural flexibility, communication skills and leadership style.
- Dual career assistance: To help the assignees spouse to get working permits and education.
- Cross-cultural training: To help the assignee and his or her family in adjusting to host culture as well as home country culture after repatriation.
- Destination service: Supporting and assisting in managing logistical issues when settling in to the host location.
- Communication programs: Clear communication about compensation, policies, benefits and allowances.
- Corporate mentor: Advises the expatriate.
- Senior management planning committee: Meets at least twice a year and reviews the expatriates´ purposed career plans.
- Repatriation: Counseling and support programs.
  (Herod 2012, 16.)

5.2 Managing international assignment process and practices

Through the lack of theory information about international assignment process and practices, specifically what kind of processes and practices other companies use, in this thesis the information about the topic has received through surveys. In this section is introduced global assignment process model according to Global Assignment Policies and Practices survey of KPMG (2017). This section gives information about how the respondent organizations manage their global mobility. The survey information helps companies compare their assignment program to other companies. This survey was conducted in 2017 and for that reason we can tell that information introduced in this section is current. (Global Assignment Policies and Practices survey 2017, 4-6.)

Here is introduced the participants of the survey to get better understanding of the context. Over 150 organizations cross the industries participated to the survey. 52% of organizations' headquarters were in USA, 32% in EU, 4% in UK, 4% in Canada, 4%

in Asia, 2% in Australia, 1% in New-Zealand and 2% in Middle-east. In the respondent organizations, the department handling the global assignments were 41% HR department and 33% global mobility department. (Global Assignment Policies and Practices survey 2017, 5-11.)

In this survey, short-term and long-term assignments were defined the same way as in this thesis in part 4.2. Duration of short-term assignment is less than 12 moths and duration of long-term assignment is from one to five years. In the participant organizations, the assignment type that was used were 97% long-term assignments and 86% short-term assignments. The top four locations where to send assignees among participants were USA, UK, Singapore and China. The number of employees in respondent organizations were divided in the following way: 25% had 10 000-25 000 employees, 18% had 25 000-50 000 employees and 17% had 1000-5000 employees. (Global Assignment Policies and Practices survey 2017, 5-11, 19.)

Pre-assignment and relocation

During assignment
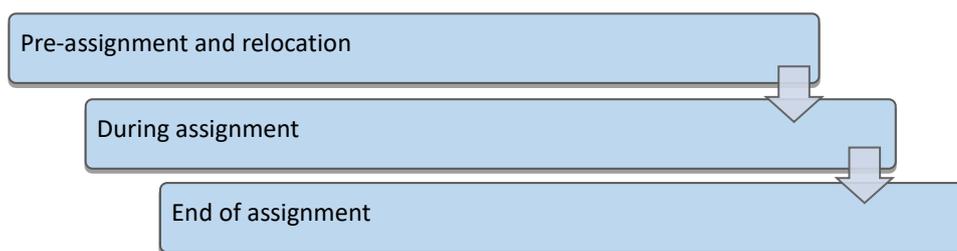
End of assignment

Figure 2. Global assignment process (Adopted from Global Assignment Policies and Practices survey 2017).

In Figure 2 the assignment process has been divided into three layers, pre-assignment and relocation, during assignment and end of assignment. These layers consist of different practices. These practices are introduced and analyzed detailed in next paragraphs.

Pre-assignment and relocation: According to the survey of KPMG of Global Assignment Policies and Practices (2017), the assignment planning process is lacking management. 35 % of the survey participants said that the planning process of assignment is not well managed, and 25% had a neutral viewpoint to the matter. In 89% of the organizations assignees were sourced by selection made by business unit. Most of the

organizations (60%) do not have assignee assessment at all and 38% conducts an informal assessment. (Global Assignment Policies and Practices survey 2017, 26-31.)

Only 21% of the respondent organizations said having specific, assignment-related goals for every assignee. This gives information about the lack of setting goals for the assignment in organizations. However, the goals are reviewed systematically during the assignment in 41% of the organizations. Majority of the respondents said that pre-assignment consultation is a core policy benefit in the organization. 90% of the organizations said that they are providing formal pre-assignment trip to the host location. Also, majority of the respondent organizations (59%), are providing the advance trip for both the assignee and his or her spouse. (Global Assignment Policies and Practices survey 2017, 26-38.)

Minority of the respondent organizations had standard policies in language and cultural training. Most of these organizations who provided language and cultural training, the training began on-site in the host country to support the adaptation to the host location. In these organizations, the spouse and children are more likely to be included to the language and cultural training rather than leaving them out of the training. Majority of the respondent organizations are providing relocation-related policy benefit. This relocation benefit in most of the organizations included household good shipping benefit, temporary living, miscellaneous relocation allowances and destination services such as designated vendor, house hunting and schooling search. (Global Assignment Policies and Practices survey 2017,39-47.)

During assignment: Most of the organizations (74%) said that they provide host country housing as a core policy benefit. Majority of the organizations provided shipping for the assignee´s furnishings from the home country to the host location. 71% of the respondent organizations are providing one home leave trip per year. These organizations are in between of allowing the assignees to spend their home leave wherever they want or allowing them only to visit their home country. (Global Assignment Policies and Practices survey 2017, 48-52, 63-65.)

Spouse assistance were provided as a core policy benefit in 48% of the organizations. The majority of assistance provided through organizations were 46% allowance that

must be used for designated expenses, 43% work visa assistance in the host country, 33% job search assistance at host country. 99% of the organizations provided some sort of benefit for children's schooling. Normally these benefits included the tuition, registration and other required fees to be paid by the organizations. (Global Assignment Policies and Practices survey 2017, 59-62.)

End of assignment: The organizations were asked how they manage their repatriation process. 25% somewhat disagreed to managing the process well, and 26% had a neutral viewpoint. From these results, we can tell that there is a lot to be improved in repatriation management. Most of the organization provided shipment of household goods, tax consultation, temporary living and travel to home country as a core benefit of repatriation process. The planning of repatriation started in 49% of the organizations 6 months prior, and in 26% of the organizations 3 months prior to the actual return date. (Global Assignment Policies and Practices survey 2017, 70-73.)

Assignment failure was also an issue. Even though 33% organizations said that only 1-5% of the employees left the organization after assignment, another 33% of the organizations answered that they do not know the rate how many has left the company after assignment. From this we can conclude that organizations have poor performance in tracking the resignation of repatriates. Organizations also reported that top three causes for assignees leaving the company were the fact that there is no appropriate job available in the home country, the fact that they received a better job in another organization and the fact of not being able to use new skills learn from the assignment. (Global Assignment Policies and Practices survey 2017, 78-79.)

5.3   Challenges in assignee satisfaction before, during and after assignment

In the next paragraphs are introduced the usual challenges of international assignments from assignee perspective. This section gives an overview of the challenges that might occur regarding international assignments and assignee satisfaction.

Adaptation: International assignees are expected to accomplish the demands of the assignment in unfamiliar cultural environment, which often requires quick adaptation

to new cultural norms and language (Dickmann 2008, 89). For employees, the usual problem is to adapt to foreign environment. Environmental factors that effect on adapting can be separated into two categories, macro- and micro-environmental. Macro-environmental factors can be culture, business practices, religious and political system, security, climate, health system, socio-economic development such as housing standards, and administrative difficulties like work permits. Micro-environmental factors can include work related elements such as support by the supervisor or co-workers and the level of difficulty in work related matters. Micro-environmental factors can also include private-life related matters such as partner´s and family's motivation to stay. Family related issues are also spouse´s and children´s adjustment and schooling, also networks and friend related issues. (Dickmann 2008, 135.)

The Global mobility trends survey of Brookfield Global Relocation Services (2016) studied the global talent management in over 163 different companies worldwide. The respondents were located 54% in Americas and 40% in EMEA. Average 18% of the assignees in respondent companies said having difficulties adapting to local culture or business environment in host country. The most difficult countries to adapt for assignee and family were China, India, Brazil and Russia. From this study, we can see that adaptation to foreign environment is indeed a problem that should be addressed.

Assignment failure: The challenges in international assignment can also lead to assignment failure. Failure of assignment can be seen if the performance targets have not been achieved. For instance, overseas relationships have been damaged, poor performance quality in host-company or missing overseas business opportunities. Dissatisfaction of assignee or family, lack of support, early return to home, or lack of adjustment can also be factors for assignment failure. Also, employee leaving the company after repatriation can be considered as an assignment failure. (Pokharel 2015, 311.)

According to the Global mobility trends survey of Brookfield Global Relocation Services (2016), the top three causes for international assignment failure was family related issues, poor candidate selection and the fact that the assignee cannot adapt to host location. According to Mercer Worldwide survey of International Assignment Policies and Practices (2015), poor candidate selection, difficulty adjusting to host country,

poor job performance and spouse unhappiness were the biggest reasons for assignment failure.

According to the Brookfield Global Relocation Services' survey (2016) most of the assignees feel that the assignment had a positive impact on their career. 43% of the respondent felt that they are more likely to be future leaders and 23% of the respondents felt that their career will have more rapid or frequent promotions. In the other hand 6 % of the respondent felt that they are more likely to leave the company. Ernst & Young's Global Mobility Effectiveness Survey (2013) found out that 16% of employees who returned from assignment left the company within the first two years. The survey also pointed that 35% of assignees returned to their old positions, even though they had spent 3 to 5 years learning more about business and global mindset.

Repatriation: Repatriation process is often considered less difficult than the expatriation process. Employees and managers often do not expect any difficulties when employee returns to home country. With that mindset, companies do not plan the actual repatriation process as well as they plan expatriation. (Vidal, Valle & Aragon 2008, 1685.) According to the Brookfield Global Relocations services survey (2016), 82% of the companies do not have formal strategy for repatriate´s career planning and retention. Yet, repatriation can be even more shocking than the expatriation experience, since repatriates often face reverse cultural shock when they return. (Vidal et al., 2008, 1685.)

Challenges can occur after the assignment when the mindset and know-how of the assignee has changed, and the home-company does not respond to these changes. Employees often feel that their work and experiences abroad are not appreciated by the colleagues or other personnel. These employees also feel frustrated by colleagues while they are not interested about their journey abroad. (Alsop 2014.)

Challenges in repatriation adjustment can be categorized as work-related, socio-cultural or psychological problems. Work-related problems are factors such as deterioration of work status after assignment, relationships with colleagues and changes in work environment. Socio-cultural problems include adjustment to life style, problems re-

garding relationships, social activities, cultural issues and financial problems. Psychological problems that may occur are expectations, stress and the loss of previous conditions and relationships in host location. (Bhushan & Sayalee 2016, 10.)

5.4   Managing the satisfaction of international assignees

This chapter will bring up information about international assignee satisfaction and specifically towards factors in assignment process, in which HR Managers could influence. International assignment is a huge investment to the company and for that reason companies are interested in handling the assignments successfully. By identifying and addressing the factors influencing assignee satisfaction, the assignment can potentially be more successful. (Downs, Thomas & Singley 2002, 24.) Employees who are satisfied with their work can handle more stress, achieve wanted results and do their job more efficiently. (Raj et al., 2017, 32.) There is not a one correct answer on what are the most influential factors on employee satisfaction, but some of the most important ones we can tell by the taken surveys.

The network and propriety web survey from Boston Consulting Group (2013) found out that the top three factors for employee satisfaction were appreciation for your work, good relationships with colleagues and good work-life balance. In the survey of The Society For Human Resource Management (2017) about employee job satisfaction and engagement, found out that the three most important factors for employee satisfaction were respectful treatment of all employees at all levels, compensation and pay overall, and trust between employees and senior management.

Before the assignment: Pre-departure training is important in order the international assignee to accomplish the goals set up for the assignment. Reaching the organizational goals also helps the assignees to be satisfied. (Chen & Chang 2016, 1-14.) Expatriate training helps to reduce the risk in expatriate failure and increases the success in expatriation. Nowadays, HR Managers have been taken more and more into practice two different approaches on expatriate training, which will orientate the assignee on

coping with challenges regarding working environment in host country. These approaches are Global Mindset Training and Orientation, and In-Country Real-Time Training. (Mutsuddi 2011, 59-61.) Global Mindset Training and Orientation includes:

- Pre-departure expatriate training: This includes adaptation to host country business environment, culture, government regulations, learning the local language depending on the length of the stay and learning managerial responsibilities and legal issues.
- Pre-departure global strategies orientation program: This part includes orientation on business and finance strategies, sharing information from earlier assignments and overall give necessary strategic knowledge.
(Mutsuddi 2011, 61.)

During the assignment: One of the most difficult steps in maintaining individual's satisfaction and success in international assignments is adjustment during the assignment. Assignees who adjust fast to local culture and learn the local language are more likely to be more satisfied and have a successful assignment. (Sarkiunaite & Rocke 2015, 43-45.) After the assignee and possible family has been relocated to the host country, training during the stay will benefit both the company and the family. (Mutsuddi 2011, 64-65.) In-Country Real-Time Training includes:

- Area and orientation tours: Showing to the assignee and the companied family how to move around the area.
- Living and working orientation: Orientates to the differences in social interactions as well as business ethics between cultures.
- Expatriate and assignment training: Reviews the type of knowledge and skills which the expatriates considered necessary.
- Cultural diversity training: This helps the assignees to understand the cultural differences which effect on behaviours and workplace social culture.
- Global leadership workshops: Helps to learn more about globalization and its impacts on organization. (Mutsuddi 2011, 64-65.)

Expatriate satisfaction surveys are pointing out the fact that lack of communication affects negatively on expatriate satisfaction. The problem in communication was pointed to be between expatriate and HR, other departments and functions, as well as between expatriate and home- and host-company management. It is important to keep in touch with the expatriates during the assignment to make the expatriates feel that they have not been forgotten by the home-company. Expatriates should be informed what is happening in home-company through regular contact with company as well as through web conferences and webcasts. (Herod 2012, 13-14.)

Expatriates often complain about the lack of relocation support. Expatriates often feel that they have not received enough support in orientation and settling in at the host country. This causes unhappiness among expatriates and expatriates´ families and causes risks in the success of the assignment. (Herod 2012, 14.) According to the research of Suutari & Burch (2001, 298-311) about on-site training and support, respondent didn't receive at all or received only very little support in schooling and day-care, work arrangements of spouse and family social activities. Yet, the respondents felt that it would have been necessary to have help and support in these by the host HR.

After the assignment: The changes in working environment, reverse cultural shock, lack of appreciation and worries regarding career opportunities after assignment often impacts negatively on repatriates' satisfaction. It is often seen that the training during pre-departure and post-departure is considered more important than repatriate training. However, repatriate training can be as important. (Greer & Stiles 2016, 107-109.) Repatriation training provides the assignee to recognize the talents gained from the assignment and plan how the organization could benefit from those skills as well as set future goals. Repatriation training provides the assignees a chance to speak openly about the repatriation and its different stages. (Mutsuddi 2011, 118.) Repatriation training should take into consideration the following aspects:

- Dealing with cultural shock after returning: Knowledge the fact that assignee may feel reverse cultural shock when returning to home country.

- Knowledge transfer: Discussion about how to transfer gained knowledge from the assignment. Discussion can be done for instance informal or during meetings.

- Mentoring other expatriates: Repatriates can be source for organizations in a form of mentors to other expatriates going to the same location. Information transfer between repatriate and expatriate can have positive impact on the assignment success.

- Core self-evaluation: Measuring self-esteem, self-efficiency, locus of control, and emotional stability. This has shown to have correlation in measuring job satisfaction.

- Repatriate forums: Making a group of repatriates and giving them opportunity to share their knowledge. Employees feel that assignment has been valued and networking and sharing information may create more satisfied global workforce in the future.

- Providing career paths: Makes the repatriation smoother when repatriate is given knowledge about career opportunities available when returning to home country.

  (Mutsuddi 2011, 118-119.)

According to dissertation of Kohonen, adjustment to work and home country was difficult after expatriation. One of the factors causing homecoming stress was the fact that the employers and colleagues were not interested about expatriate's experiences. Expatriates felt that their work during expatriation would have been appreciated more back at home country. (Kohonen 2015) Large percentages of international assignees leave their organizations within the first 3 years of repatriation. To maintain repatriate satisfaction and organizational success, repatriates should be given a chance to transfer their knowledge and get to utilize their information gained from international assignment. (Greer & Stiles 2016, 107-109.)

Research of international worker´s satisfaction with the repatriation process pointed out factors which influence on employee satisfaction after assignment. These factors included how the professional career of worker has been managed by the company, how clear the repatriation practises are and how specific the work expectations of the

employee are and how well they address these work expectations to home-company before repatriation. (Vidal et al., 1691-1695)

6   INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS IN GLASTON

6.1   Glaston Corporation and international assignment policy

Glaston operates internationally in glass processing technology. Glaston Corporation is also leading supplier of lifecycle solutions in glass processing machines. Glaston has customers worldwide and they have more than 20 service and sales locations. They have production on three continents and total in four countries. (Website of Glaston 2017.)

Glaston operates in two business areas. In Glaston´s Machines business area, they produce wide range and technically advanced machines for glass processing. Those Glass processing machines are produced for flat tempering, bending, bending-tempering and laminating. Glaston´s Services business area provides glass processing machine maintenance services, spare parts, tools required for high-quality glass processing and machine upgrades and modernizations. (Website of Glaston 2017.)

Geographical net sales 2016
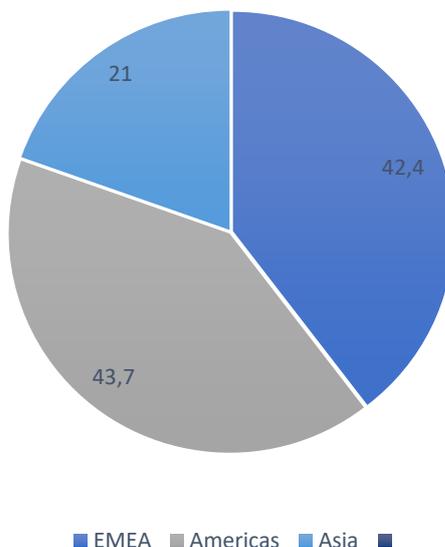
Figure 3. Geographical net sales 2016 (Glaston Annual Review 2016, 4).

Figure 3 shows the net sales of Glaston. In 2016 net sales were total 107.1 million euros. Geographically, 43.7 million euros of net sales were in Americas, 42.2 million euros in EMEA and 21 million euros in Asia. Net sales in different business areas were 39 million euros in Services and 63 million euros in Machines. (Glaston Annual Review 2016, 4).

Glaston had total 415 employees in the end of 2016. 39% of these employees worked in Finland, 15% in other locations of EMEA region, 30% in Asia and 16% in Americas. Personnel additions were made in North America during the year. These personnel additions were mainly in engineering and the total amount of additions were around 10 people. Through efficiency measurements, some personnel were reduced in China and Brazil. Around 50 people were reduced in these locations throughout the year. To secure the need of skills in Glaston, the career and success plans for key position are updated annually. Addition to that, development functions are also agreed. (Glaston Annual Review 2016, 26-27). Other information about personnel and mobility of people inside the company cannot be revealed to competitors and through that, that information is not provided here.

The target of Glaston´s international assignment policy is to transfer critical skills and knowhow within the Glaston Group, to provide successful global careers for employees with key potential and talent, set up a frame for international assignments, develop international assignments and to make international transfer administration working process elaborate. Glaston´s international assignment policy principles and guidelines regulate that international assignments are justified only with strong business benefit since international assignees are 1,5-4 times more expensive than locally hired employee. Glaston´s policy principles and guidelines attend defined and shared processes, and harmonized terms & conditions. (Ruhtinas 2016.)

Home-company in Glaston is defined as a Glaston company which is assigning the employee to another location in another country. That employment is valid in that Glaston company until further notice. Host-company is defined as a Glaston company which receives the employee for a fixed period. For all types of international assignments Glaston arranges medical examinations and vaccinations for the assignee and the assignee´s family members. These pre-assignment arrangements will be provided by the home-company. In Glaston, residence and work permits will be arranged by the host-company. (Ruhtinas 2016.)

6.2   Short-Term Assignment

When Glaston´s employee goes for an international assignment for fixed term, minimum 6 months to maximum 12 moths it is defined as a short-term assignment. If the assignment is shorter that 6 moths, it is considered as ordinary business trip. In this short-term assignment Glaston uses home-company terms and conditions of employment. Usually these short-term assignments are for installation supervisors or service engineers or employees in a consulting role in host-company.

In Glaston, short-term assignments require agreement drawn between the assignee, home-company and host-company. The agreement is made for fixed period and is reviewed by home-company Business Area HR before signing. During the time in assignment, short-term assignee´s employment contract is valid in home-company. (Ruhtinas 2016.)

In short-term assignments, the salary is normally paid by the home-company. The payee of the salary is defined by the home-company Business Area HR depending on the length of the assignment. The assignee´s salary is normal home-company salary. Daily allowance is paid normally by the home-company practices. However, if the assignment enables clear tax benefits, for instance minimum or none income tax, then no daily allowance is paid. (Ruhtinas 2016.)

Taxation regarding short-term assignments is the assignee´s personal responsibility. The assignee will declare his/her income for taxation in host country. In short-term assignments, the assignee will stay in home country pension and social security. The assignees will be covered with insurance by the home-company. Either home-company travel insurance or corporate assignment insurance depending the length of the assignment. (Ruhtinas 2016.)

The assignees are following the host-company working hours. Holiday entitlement will be according to the home-company rules. In Glaston short-term assignments are normally unaccompanied. However, the assignees can have two trips home during the assignment. Home-company will pay flying tickets for reasonable price. All other travel related costs the assignee will pay by his/herself. These trips are counted as a part of the holiday period. (Ruhtinas 2016.)

6.3   Long-term assignment

Long-term assignee is defined as a home-company employee who is located to work for host-company for a fixed period. Glaston´s long-term assignees are located for fixed period from minimum 2 years to maximum 5 years to another Glaston company and country other than his or her home country. Assignees are defined as an employee who works in a host-company for fixed period minimum 12 months to maximum 24 moths. According to Glaston´s expatriate policy these assignees are considered as long-term assignees, however assignments abroad less than 24 moths are expensive and should be avoided. (Ruhtinas 2016.)

In long-term assignments, the compensation approach takes account the total package, meaning that the compensation is compared with IPE (host country market rates) and home country based build up level. Salary is paid by the host country currency and the changes in currency rates are not being taken into consideration during the time of the contract. Salary is paid by the receiving company, China being exception with split salaries. (Ruhtinas 2016.)

Housing allowance is paid to long-term assignees according the Mercer´s recommendations. If there is no Mercer´s cost of living survey in that area of assignment, then Glaston is using local real estate agent to give an estimation. Company car and phone are given by the host-company policies. Children's schooling is organized up to age of 18. Language training is organized for the long-term assignees and spouse if needed. Long-term assignees follow the working hours by the host country policies. (Ruhtinas 2016.)

Long-term assignees normally stay in home country pension and social security. Glaston provides following insurances to long-term assignments; expatriate insurance, travel goods insurance, freight insurance for removal goods. According to Glaston Global Travel Policy, long-term assignees and accompanying family are entitled to home trip once a year. All changes regarding employment terms during the assignment must be approved in home-company. Taxation regarding long-term assignment is the assignee's personal responsibility. The assignee will declare his/her income for taxation in host country. (Ruhtinas 2016.)

At the end of the assignment, usually 6 months before repatriation the host-company and home-company will discuss together with the assignee about his or her future status. The options for employees´ future status is discussed between transfer back to home country, transfer by the home-company to another host country for a new fixed period or employment by the host-company with a local employment contract and under local conditions. (Ruhtinas 2016.)

6.4   International assignment process in Glaston

In Figure 4 is introduced the International Assignment Process model of Glaston. It is separated into three phases, contract preparation and moving phase, settling in phase and repatriation or localization phase. Every task during the process is categorized with whose responsibility the task is and in which phase of the process the task is. These tasks are explained detailed in the next paragraphs. (Ruhtinas 2017.)
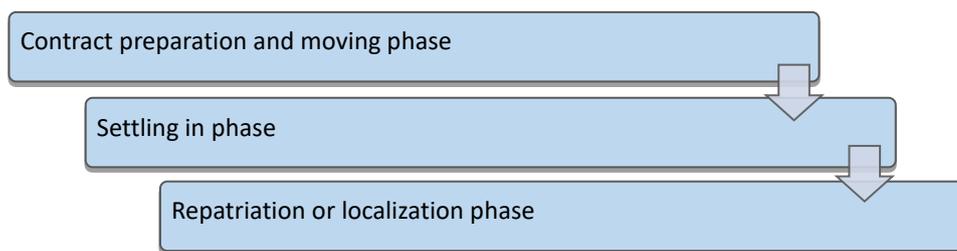

Figure 4. International Assignment Process (Adopted from Ruhtinas 2017).

The contract preparation and moving phase: This phase includes first the need that comes from the home or host superior. Next step is to plan the compensation package. The compensation planning happens between home country business area HR and business manager. (Ruhtinas 2017.) According to HR Manager M, Ruhtinas the recruitment interview and selection is more informal, since the recruitment is done by the need and willingness of a person in that business area, not so much by applicating to the position and then recruiting the best candidate. After recruitment, the pre-assignment arrangements are done, including briefing, medical exams, tax, pension, social security planning. This is done by the home country HR and assignee. The assignees take care of taxation by themselves. (Ruhtinas 2017.)

Home country HR makes the agreement of assignment and organizes social security and pension related matters. The assignees take care of removal arrangements by themselves, for instance packing, transportation of housing items, housing arrangements in home country. The assignees also take care of the taxation and work permits in host country. (Ruhtinas 2017.) Advanced trips are seldom organized, some assignees have visited the assignment location, for example from earlier assignments in that location. (Ruhtinas, personal communication on 4.10.2017.)

Settling in phase: This phase constructs from host country support in housing selection and children´s schooling. The host country HR department assist the assignees in payroll arrangements. The host country HR also assists assignees in adaptation providing relocation support and language training if needed. During the assignment home country business area HR reviews the contract and salary matters of the assignee. (Ruhtinas 2017.)

Repatriation or localization phase: In this part of the process the aging contract of the assignee is first reviewed and processed by the home country HR. Then the home country business area HR plans the repatriation and settles work arrangements in home country. The host country HR supports the assignee in removal arrangements. (Ruhtinas 2017.) In the end of repatriation home country HR supports the assignee in repatriation, for instance having a conversation with the assignee about the assignment in general. (Ruhtinas, personal communication on 4.10.2017.)

7 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESEARCH AND CHOSEN METHODS

7.1 Research ethics

Ethical thinking is an ability to think what is wrong or right in some situations through your own and society's values. When implementing a research, ethical questions can be related to the selection of the subject or methods, gathering of data, reliability of the research, treatment of the participants or the influences of the research outcomes. Laws and ethical norms help making decisions when implementing a research. These laws and norms are for instance copyrights, privacy protection and confidentiality. These ethical factors are protected for instance by The Constitution of Finland and European Council. (Kuula 2011, 1-277.)

In this thesis confidentiality is the main ethical question. Confidentiality can be described as a protection of one's identity in a way that it will not be linked to the information one has provided. The participants of the research have a right to anonymity, privacy and confidentiality. In this reason, the gathered data will not be passed to anyone in any form. Interviewees are asked for permission to record the interviews and after the transcription the recording will be deleted. (Whiting 2007, 38-39.)

Ethical question of this thesis is to implement the interviews and analyze the gathered information in a way that the identities of the interviewees does not come out. Challenging in this research is to keep the answers anonymous for the HR Managers, since they know who has participated to the interviews. To gather and analyze the information confidentially, I must consider which information is necessary to leave out from this thesis. At the same time, I must consider which information is relevant to keep, to get reliable and valid research outcomes. By analyzing these ethical factors and implementing the research by considering these, the interviewees feel more open and they will give more honest answers.

Other ethical question of this research is the case company information, which information can be told, and which information cannot be told in this thesis. Since Glaston provided an access to their intranet, and the company is a corporation, it must be taken into consideration what information about the company, which has received from the intranet, can be told in this thesis not to reveal any restricted data for the competitors.

7.2   Research methods

The research strategy of this thesis is case study. Case study includes empirical research in real life context. This type of research method enables to get wide and rich understanding of the context of the research. This type of research enables to answer question about why, how and what. (Saunders, Lewis &Thornhill 2007, 139-140.)

This research was implemented by using qualitative methods. The type of the study is qualitative case-study. Qualitative method enables this research to be less structured, more holistic and get wider view. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2009, 135-166.)

Qualitative method is mainly used as a synonym to data collection methods such as interviews and data analyzing method such as categorizing data, which gives result in a non-numeric form (Saunders et al., 2007, 145-146). Next is introduced some of the fundamental characteristics of qualitative research method:

- Gathering the research data in natural and real circumstances
- Prefers using conversations with people and observation in data collection
- Collection of data is implemented in more open way and viewpoints of the interviewees are brought up, for example semi-structured interview
- Specific selection of participants
- Research results presented in non-numeric way
  (Hirsjärvi et al., 2009, 164.)

For this type of holistic research where interviewees´ viewpoints are needed to be brought up in data collection, it was reasonable to use semi-structured interviews. This semi-structured method was linked to the characteristics of qualitative research, were data collection is made in natural circumstances using discussions with people and observation. The concept of semi-structured interview is explained in the next section. Since this research studied assignee satisfaction towards the assignment process, it was reasonable to choose a method that would not measure the results with numbers or percentages, for that reason qualitative method was the best option. The participants were selected carefully with the HR department for this research and because of that this study uses qualitative method instead of quantitative where the participants are chosen for instance with sampling. (Hirsjärvi et al., 2009, 135-166.)

7.3 Collection of data

Research participants need to be selected in a consistent way to get reliable results from the research (Saunders et al., 2007, 151-152). The participants of this research were thought carefully with HR Managers in Glaston. In Table 1, is categorized the participants to give wider understanding of the research. The names of the participants

have not been written in any form to keep the identities of the participants secret. This table is only given to understand the variety among the participant and through that understand the context of the research. This table will not be used in analyzing part of the research to keep the identities of the participant safe.

Position during assignment	Gender	Year of assignment	Assignment type	Assignment destination	Spouse or Children	Companied or Unaccompanied
Vice President of Sales	Male	2015→	Long-term assignment	Australia	Spouse and Children	Companied
Vice President of Sales	Male	2005-2012	Long-term assignment	China	Spouse and Children	Companied
Automation Engineer	Male	2016-2017	Short-term assignment	USA	Spouse and Children	Unaccompanied
Mechanical Engineer	Male	2016→	Long-term assignment	USA	Spouse	Companied
Factory Manager	Male	2010-2011	Long-term assignment	Italy	Spouse and child	Companied
Senior R&D Engineer	Male	2016→	Long-term assignment	USA	Spouse and children	Unaccompanied
Chief Design Engineer	Male	2015→	Long-term assignment	China	-	-
Sales Director	Male	2008-2010	Long-term assignment	United Arab Emirates	Spouse	Unaccompanied
Platform Manager	Male	2013-2014	Short-term assignment	China	Spouse and child	Companied
Engineering Director	Male	2011-2012	Long-term assignment	China	Spouse and child	Companied

Table 1. Participants of the research

In Table 1, the participants have been categorized by their position during assignment, gender, year of the assignment, assignment type, assignment destination, did the assignee have a spouse or children and if the assignment was companied or unaccompanied. The participants were chosen in a way that the study would reveal the opinions of all types of assignees in the related field of the study. None of the participants of this study have categorized the same way, which gives wide understanding from the studied subject.

The information provided in the Table 1 has been justified in this paragraph. The participants were from very different position and that information has been told to give wider understanding of the effects of the assignees role in that company on the assignment itself. The year of the assignment has been provided, since the year will tell how current the information in this thesis is. The assignment type was described in the table, since there are two types of assignments used in case company. The assignment destination was considered important to tell, because it has a strong effect on the assignment itself. The assignees´ family and spouse status was considered important since with that information we can see if the assignment was unaccompanied or companied. The information was also important to understand better the assignment process itself, since the process varies depending on if the assignee has children or spouse with him or her in the assignment.

This research was implemented by using interviews as a method of collecting the data. The data collection was conducted between 15th of November 2017 and 29th of November 2017. The interviews were conducted by using semi-structured method. Interviewees were given the themes, which were going to be discussed in the interviews, at least one day prior to the interview to give the participants more time to process their thoughts about the themes. These interviews were audio-recorded to ease the analyzing and get better understanding by focusing on listening during interviews instead of writing answers. Some of the interviews were held in skype and these interviews were recorded by using Skype for Business Recording Manager. Interviews which were held in person were recorded with using MP3 recorder in phone. The interviews were held in a quiet location where noise would not disturb the participants or deteriorate the quality of audio recordings.

Semi-structured interview method is so called non-standardized method. This method is used in qualitative research. The main idea of semi-structured interview is that some parts of the interview have been structured but not all. When using semi-structured interview, the interview is structured in a way that the main themes of the interview have been listed to ensure that all the necessary information have been asked, and to give the interview clearer flow. These themes can be derived from researcher's con-

sidered theories, literature information, research participants or common sense. (Saunders et al., 2007, 312-321.) In this thesis, the themes were derived from literature information.

When conducting the research by using interviews and personal contact, researcher has more control over the flow of the data collection. Similar research conclusions have been made about the willingness of research participants to answer the questions. These researches have shown that the participants are more willing to be interviewed that filling a questionnaire. When using interview as a data collection method the result may also be more reliable and valid that using questionnaires. When using questionnaires, the answers lack of trust and confidential information, since participants may feel uncomfortable giving confidential answers to someone he or she has never met. Also, the questions itself may not be entirely clear to the participant and for that reason the results may not be about what they seem to be about. (Saunders et al., 2007, 316-317.)

In semi-structured interview, the questioning can happen in three different ways. By open questions, probing questions or specific and closed questions. These approaches need to be considered before conducting the interview to succeed in getting information from the areas of interest. Open questions leave the participants define and describe situations. Open questions encourage the participant to express their opinions and attitudes. Open questions often begin with words "how", "what" and "why". Probing questions can search an expansion if the researcher has not understood the answer of participant. The purpose of probing questioning is to make the participant explained their point without adding in any own views of the researcher. Here is introduced couple of example of probing questions: "what are you meaning with…", "tell me a bit more about…", "why do you see this that way..." etc. Specific and closed questions refer to those type of questions made in structured interview. These questions are used to gather specific information. These types of questions can seek answers like no or yes, or start with for instance by asking specific amounts of something. (Saunders et al., 2007, 329-330.)

As it can be seen from the appendix 1, in this research, the interview themes were basic information, before the assignment, during the assignment and after the assignment.

The interviews were conducted in a way that the flow of the interview was quite structured, and the interview themes were specific. The interview questions were carefully thought before the interviews. These interview questions were made specific and detailed. This was done to ensure the success in data collection, since the research was conducted by novice researcher. In this research, the questioning was implemented by using all of questioning types mentioned earlier; open questions, probing questions and specific questions. The questions, that were thought prior to the interview, were mostly open and specific questions. Probing questions were used in interview situation to react to the interviewee answers. For that reason, these probing questions doesn't show in the list of interview themes.

7.4   Analyzing methods

The interviews were audio-recoded. These audio-recordings were then transcribed. The analyzing was implemented by using software designed for qualitative data analyzing. These qualitative data analyzing softwares are often called CAQDAS. They enable to organize and analyze collected data easier and faster, since the analysis is not needed to be undertaken manually (Saunders et al., 2007, 470-472). In this thesis the CAQDAS software that was used is called QRS Nvivo.

The analysis of qualitative research can be done in three ways: 1) The collected data is transcribed and then analyzed, 2) The collected data is transcribed, turned into codes and then analyzed, 3) The transcription and turning into codes are combined and then analyzed. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008, 136.) This research uses the second method where collected data is transcribed then turned into codes and analyzed. This method was chosen, since the collected audio-recordings are first transcribed, then moved into Nvivo, turned into codes and then analyzed.

The main points of qualitative research can be described by following:

- The analysis starts already in the interview situation. In the interviews, the researcher makes observations and these observations can be categorized already during the interviews. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008, 136.)

- Data is analyzed in its original form. The collected data preserves in its verbal form and it is often preserved in the exact verbal form. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008, 136.)

- Qualitative research is implemented by using inductive or abductive approach. Inductive approach focuses on data collected from the research. Inductive approach enables analysis and results to be inducted exclusively from the collected data. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008, 136.) Whereas abductive research starts from empirical part but the analysis is conducted both from the theory and the research data. Essential for abductive approach is that the researcher is familiar with the subject area, since the researcher must have some guiding principles. This research was implemented by using abductive approach. In this research, the interview themes follow the guiding principles. Analysis is made from the interview results. These interview result are then compared with the theoretical ideas and concepts, which enables this study to perceive new ideas. (Pitkäranta 2014, 13-14.)

- There are many analyzing methods, and no one correct way how to analyze. Only few standardized techniques are existing in analyzing qualitative data. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008, 136.) This research used software called QRS Nvivo in analyzing the data.

The analysis of data was implemented by using thematic analysis. In thematic analysis, the themes can be related to most of the interviewees. Themes can be categorized into main themes and subthemes. These main themes are related to the themes used in interview, in this case basic information, before the assignment, during the assignment and after the assignment. Subthemes are based on researcher interpretation of the interviews. It is very unlikely that the participants express their opinions exact the same way, and that is why researcher must categorize the expressions into subthemes by using his or her interpretation. For instance, if two participants express their opinions in two different ways but these both ways can be interpreted as positive opinions, then

researcher categorize these answers under the subtheme "positive". (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008, 173.) The subthemes of this research are explained in the next paragraph.

By using Nvivo the thematic analysis was conducted in a way that themes were coded, meaning turned into main and sub nodes. The nodes used in this analysis were categorized as contract preparation, pre-assignment arrangements, contact and support during the assignment, and repatriation, since these were the main topics which were brought up by the interviewees in the interview situation. Sub nodes that were used in this analysis were categorized if the experience was positive, negative or neutral.

7.5   Reliability and validity

Research reliability refers to the consistency of the results received by using certain data collection or analyzing methods (Saunders et al., 2007, 149). There are three main ways how to define reliability. Reliability can mean when implementing the same research twice, that the results are the same both times. However, this definition is not valid in situation where the time affects the results in a way that it changes them. One way of defining reliability is when two different researchers will get similar results from the research. Third way of understanding the term reliability is when the results are similar when implementing the research with two parallel research methods. When implementing a research these three methods should be considered when defining the reliability of the research. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008, 186.)

Threats to research reliability are categorized into four groups, subject error, subject bias, observer error and observer bias. Subject error may occur when for instance the interview is conducted in different times during the day. Participant may give different answers in the morning than in the evening if their mood and mindset changes during the day. Subject bias can happen for instance if the participant does not want to reveal specific sensitive information. Then the information received is not reliable, since it will only give partial picture of the matter. The lack of standardization and structure will leave more room for observers own interpretations and at the same time increase the reliability risk. This problem is called observer error. Observer bias may occur when interpreting the answers. The researcher may attempt to impose his or her own

ideas and beliefs and have an effect on research reliability through that. (Saunders et al., 2007, 149-320.)

Validity refers to the fact if the results of the research are really about what they seem to be about. There are many threats to research validity and here is listed some of those threats. History can be a threat for instance, when studying specific opinions about specific service quality, the result might be misleading and too dramatic if there has been some negative experience in the near past. One threat can occur when the participants think they have some advantages or disadvantages when giving specific answers. This will affect to the research results. Other concern for research validity can be external validity or sometimes called generalizability. This means if your research result will be suitable for other organizations. This might be a concern when implementing a case study. In this case, the purpose is then to implement the research specifically to the case organization and not produce results that are generalizable to all. (Saunders et al., 2007, 150-151.)

Next concern in research validity is logic leaps and wrong assumptions. These may occur when choosing the research participants, data collection, data interpretation or development of conclusions. Choosing the participants for the research should be logical in a way that they will generate valid outcomes concerning the research. In data collection, the main challenge is to think about the chosen collection methods and do they generate valid answers concerning the research. When making conclusions from the research, validity issue must be addressed in a way that the conclusions will not generate logic leaps, such as does the conclusions apply to all and in every location or not? (Saunders et al., 2007, 151-152.)

The biggest risk of logic leaps and wrong assumptions are in data interpretation. Challenging in data interpretation is the fact that the researcher will move from having loads of data to the situation where the researcher writes compact package of conclusions. Other challenges are related to the selected theory information since the theory which you are working with shapes your conclusions. For this reason, it is crucial to select appropriate theory information to get valid results from the research. (Saunders et al., 2007, 151-152.)

When conducting the research by using interviews and personal contact, as the research conducted in this thesis, researcher has more control over the flow of the data collection. Similar research conclusions have been made about the willingness of research participants to answer the questions. These researches have shown that the participants are more willing to be interviewed that filling a questionnaire. When using interview as a data collection method the result may also be more reliable and valid that using questionnaires. When using questionnaires, the answers lack of trust and confidential information, since participants may feel uncomfortable giving confidential answers to someone he or she has never met. Also, the questions itself may not be entirely clear to the participant and for that reason the results may not be about what they seem to be about. (Saunders et al., 2007, 316-317.)

In this study, the level of gathered knowledge about case organization and the related field of the study can be considered good, since the research was implemented with close collaboration with the case company. The gathered theory information gives perspective, that the topic of this thesis has been studied and the knowledge in this field is good. This increases the validity of the research. The theory information in this thesis can be seen reliable, since the sources of information were considered carefully. When theory information is reliable it also increases the validity of the research. (Saunders et al., 2007, 320.)

The selection of participant was carefully done with HR Managers. The selection of participants aimed that the study would give wide picture of the studied subject. Each participant had categorized differently and none of the participants were similar to each other. This selection method gives wide understanding but leaves room for validity issues since all of the participants are a bit different from each other. For that reason, the results cannot be generalized the same way as if the participants were all similar to each other.

The research participants were informed prior to the interviews about the interview themes that would be discussed. Through that, it was possible to give the participants more time to process their thoughts about the discussed themes. This way the study gained better validity and reliability. (Saunders et al., 2007, 320.) When considering the reliability of this research critically, there are few threats. Observer error, that was

defined earlier in this section can be considered as one threat, since the lack of stand-ardization and structure left more room for researchers own interpretations. Also, the observer bias can be considered as a threat, since the research was done by novice researches, researcher could have been imposed unnoticed her own ideas and beliefs which also influences on the research reliability.

8 FINDINGS OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

8.1 Contract preparation

Contract preparation gained a lot criticism among international assignees. Compensation as a part of contact preparation was left out of this thesis in the beginning as mention in Chapter 2 (Limitations of the research) but this topic gained so much criticism from the assignees that this was useful to include. 40% of the interviewees had some negative experiences from contract preparation. All these who had negative experiences from contract preparation were long-term assignees. Those who had negative experiences were also located for an assignment in different countries. One of reported problems that had occurred from assignee perspective in contract preparation was that the HR Managers did not have enough information, and for that reason the contract preparation took too much time and left the assignees feel that the HR department is not enough up to date.

Other reported problems that had occurred in contract preparation was that the contract was not clear enough, which caused problems in interpreting the contracts itself re-garding benefits and travelling. Also, compensation gained criticism, since three of the assignees were not satisfied with the compensation proposals made by the HR depart-ment. Assignees felt that the compensation packages cannot be generalized and that is why some were not satisfied towards the Mercer´s recommendation, which company uses.

Overall the common problem that was brought up was related to the fact that contract preparation took too much time. 40% of the assignees felt that the contract preparation

took too much time. One of the long-term assignees felt that during that time when contract was prepared they might have lost some business opportunities. The long duration of contract preparation left two of the assignees also feel more stressed, since some of the respondents did not know when they would be leaving for an assignment, and some even did not know anymore are they going, since the contract preparation took so much time.

In the other hand 50% of the assignees had either positive or neutral attitude towards the contract preparation. All of those who were short-term assignees had either positive or neutral viewpoint to contract preparation and were satisfied to the existing way how the contract was prepared. 50% of the long-term assignees had some negative feedback about the contract preparation.

8.2   Pre-assignment arrangements

Pre-assignment arrangements gained positive and negative feedback quite the same amount. All of the assignees said having goals for the assignment and knew what they were going to do during the assignment. Negative feedback was mostly related to removal arrangements such as tax and predeparture training. 50% of those assignees who had negative feedback about pre-assignment arrangements felt that it took away time, which could have been used to the actual working and not organizing these arrangements.

Negative feedback was given because 60 % the assignees did not know what to expect in the host country since they were not informed about these matters beforehand. This lack of information was mainly focused on not knowing about the housing arrangements, other arrangements in the assignment country and taxation. These assignees felt that it would have been necessary to have some kind of information package about the practical formalities included in the assignment. Some of the assignees were not informed how to get information for instance about occupational healthcare in the assignment country, children's schooling, housing arrangements, social security, how to get driver's license or how it affects to your holdings in Finland when you move to for

example in USA to work. In many cases this information was received from other colleagues after arriving to the host location.

50% of the assignees also had negative experiences before the assignment, since they did not receive any proper orientation to the work, orientation to the working environment, cultural training or language training, even if they would have wanted. Orientation to the work and working environment was in many cases conducted by other Finnish colleagues in that same location. Cultural training and language training was seen necessary for those assignees who had not been visited the country before and the official language of that country was other than English. Cultural training was thought to be necessary in a way that there would have been some kind of information about the Do´s and the Don'ts in that country of assignment.

Taxation was left out from this thesis in the beginning, but it was brought up by 30 % of the assignees in the interviews and it was reasonable to include this part for that reason. Taxation was seen mostly as a problem among assignees who had USA as an assignment destination. These assignees received guidance to tax related matters from consulting company called KPMG, which was used by Glaston. All those assignees who were not satisfied to taxation, were not satisfied to the way KPMG offered the guidance. The assignees felt that it was not helpful at all to have phone conference with a consultant, and they would have rather met the consultant in person.

Positive feedback was received by the short-term assignees. They were satisfied towards how the removal arrangements and taxation were handled. Most of the assignees felt that the arrangements in the host country was handled well. In 70% of the cases the assignees felt that assistant or HR department handled the arrangements well and informed the assignees well. Also, it was seen very useful to use relocation agent who searched all the needed information for the assignee, and the assignee did not need to use their working hours for searching different options from housing to schooling. Positive feedback was also given from visa application.

8.3   Contact and support during the assignment

80% of the assignees said that the contact with home-company during the assignment was in most cases work related and was conducted with the superior or other team members in Finland. Positive feedback was received about contact made during the assignment with work related matters in the organization. Most of them said that the intranet provided them enough information to keep in track with what happens in home-company. Few of the assignees pointed out that it is so easy to keep in touch nowadays because internet works so well. 90% of the assignees had positive feedback about how the goals set for the assignment had been monitored. Only one of the assignees felt that the goals should have been monitored more. One of the short-term assignees said that the goals had not been monitored but he had a neutral viewpoint to the matter.

In the other hand 30% had negative feedback due the lack of communication inside the company. Some of the assignees did not adapt well to host-company's business environment and felt the lack of communication when having administrative difficulties. A few of the assignees felt that there was lack of communication regarding decision making. In some cases, the assignees felt that they could have been informed or included in the decision making more, for example of cases like contract extension.

The contact was made between assignees and home-company HR only a few times in cases related to for example contract extension or taxation. Two of the assignees felt that it would have been also necessary to keep in touch more with the home-company HR. These few assignees felt that they were almost like forgotten, since there was no contact made from the HR in for example repatriation related matters, and the assignees felt that home-company HR could have been more active and interested about the assignee. In the other hand some of the assignees felt that the host-company HR worked so well and provided support if needed that there was no need for home-company HR to keep in touch with the assignees more.

8.4   Repatriation

50 % of the assignees felt that it is not completely clear for them, what is their exact position when they return to home-company. Other 50% of the assignees felt that it was clear for them, what kind of position they will have when they return. Three of these assignees who said that they do not know in what kind of position they will work after coming back to home-company, felt that the situation was stressful, since everything was unclear.

6 of the assignees had already returned from the assignment. Four of these assignees returned to the same position they had when they left for the assignment. All of these assignees were satisfied when coming back to the same position. One of the assignees thought that he would expect some kind of career development and felt that it would turn down the motivation if there would be no career development seen after the assignment.

Two of the assignees said that in their opinion the company is not able to take long-term assignees back from the assignment and the repatriation planning has seen difficult for the company. The problem was seen, when long-term assignees are going for an assignment and the company usually hires someone else to their position in Finland and the company does not have that position free anymore when the assignee returns to Finland. The problem was also seen, since 30% of the assignees thought that the repatriation planning is not done early enough. Most of the assignees felt that the repatriation process for long term assignments should be started year before the actual repatriation to have enough time planning for the position for the repatriate. These assignees also felt that in long-term assignments the position in home-company after repatriation should be clear at least six months prior to the actual repatriation.

For short-term assignees the repatriation planning was not considered that important. For short-term assignees it was clear in what kind of position they will return and the actual removal arrangements regarding repatriation was considered easy and well handled. All long-term assignees organized the repatriation arrangements by themselves, meaning transportation of household goods, packing of household goods and housing

arrangements in home country. 70% these assignees had a neutral viewpoint of organizing the arrangements by themselves and one had positive feedback, when host location had offered support in some of these.

In the other hand two of the assignees had negative experiences about repatriation arrangements. The other one felt that the home-company HR could have been more active, since some of the transportation arrangements and policies were not clear. Also, the assignee felt that decisions regarding transportation costs could have been agreed with the company faster. Other negative feedback was given, since one of the assignees felt that they would have needed help in packing the household items, but this kind of support was not offered.

All of the assignees felt that after repatriation they adapted well to home country and home-organization. All of the assignees also said having positive attitude when returning back from the assignment. Most of the assignees felt that the goals set for the assignment had been fulfilled and the assignment was from their opinion succeeded. Also, all of the assignees who have returned from the assignment felt that the assignment had either positive or neutral impact on their career. Also, most of the assignees said that the assignment was a good experience and they had learned a lot from the assignment. These skills that the assignees gained from the assignment were mostly not work-related skills. In 3 cases the assignees felt that they had learned more about working in a global environment and they had got to know the people in other locations better, which has also had positive impact on their work.

9 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

9.1 Before the assignment

There were quite lot similarities when comparing the results from this study to the Global Assignment Policies and Practices survey of KPMG (2017) in section 5.2. Ac-

cording to the study of KPMG 35% of the respondents said that the assignment planning process is not well managed. In the research of this thesis 40% of the interviewees were also describing that the contract preparation was not well done. One of the assignees felt that there could have been some lost business opportunities during the time when the contract was prepared, since the contract preparation took too much time. Missing overseas business opportunities can be very costly to the company and it can cause assignment failure.

According to the Society For Human Resource Management (2017) compensation was in top three factors affecting employee satisfaction. 30% of the assignees felt that the compensation package made for the assignment was not done well and also one of the assignees felt that the Mercer´s recommendations which the company uses were not suitable for every assignment.

In KPMG´s study only 21% of the respondents said having specific goals for the assignment. In this research of international assignee satisfaction, the result was much more positive. All the respondents said having goals for the assignment and it was clear for them, what they would do during the assignment. Positive outcomes were also received, since 90% of this research interviewees said that they were satisfied to the way the goals were monitored during the assignment.

KPMG´s study also pointed out that minority of the respondent said having standard policies in language and cultural training. In this research 90% of the participants did not have any training for the assignment and most of them also though that it would have not been necessary. In the other hand it was seen necessary to have cultural training and language training in countries where the assignee had not visited before and the official language of the country was other than English. Three of the participants also would have wanted cultural and language training but the company did not offer, although in Glaston´s international assignment policy language training is provided if necessary.

9.2   During the assignment

KPMG´s study about Global Assignment Policies and Practices survey (2017) found out that spouse's assistance was provided in 48% of the organizations. In Glaston the spouse assistance that was provided was for instance visa assistance. What was not provided in Glaston was for example spouse´s job search assistance at host country and according to KPMG´s study this kind of assistance was provided in 33% of the respondent organizations.

International assignees need to adapt usually to unfamiliar environment when they go for an assignment. This research brought up that the most difficult factors which influenced on adaptation to host location were macro environmental factors such as the host-company´s business and managements styles and difficulties in administrative tasks like work permits. The business and management styles were mostly difficult to adjust for those who were in China. Administrative difficulties were mostly experienced in USA. Micro environmental factor which one of the assignees felt difficult to adjust in China was the role of superior. The Global Mobility Trends survey from Brookfield (2016) pointed out that China was in top 4 most difficult countries to adapt. In this thesis we can also see that there have been difficulties in adjusting to China.

International assignees often feel that they do not receive enough relocation support such as orientation and settling in at the host location (Herod 2012, 14). This research brought up some of the issues in relocation support. 60% of the assignees felt that they had been informed about matters regarding the assignment. One of the assignees in USA said that he did not receive proper orientation to the work or the working environment at the host-company. Most of the assignees felt that it would have been necessary to have information package when going for the assignment.

Lack of communication between HR, other departments and management can influence expatriate satisfaction negatively and leave the assignee feel forgotten by home-company (Herod 2012, 13-14). 30% of the assignees felt that the communication inside the company overall did not work well and a two of these assignees said that they would have expected that the HR Managers in home-company would have been more active and interested about the assignee overseas. One of the assignees said that it felt

like he was forgotten to overseas when the home-company HR did not have any contact with him especially when he was about to come back from the assignment.

9.3 End of the assignment

According to the survey of KPMG Global Assignment Policies and Practices (2017) 25% of the respondent organizations disagreed managing the repatriation process well. Similar result was received from the study in this thesis, since 50% of the assignees did not know in what kind of position they will return after assignment. The problem was seen in repatriation from long-term assignments and especially when planning the repatriation. Worries about career opportunities after assignments can affect negatively on expatriate satisfaction (Greer &Stiles 2016, 107-109). Three of the assignees felt that it had a negative impact when they did not know clearly what they were going to do after repatriation. The assignees felt that it would be good to have clear picture of the position back at home-company minimum 6 months prior to the actual repatriation.

The challenges in repatriation can be seen when the assignee has spent time overseas and his or her mindset and know-how has changed, and the home-company does not respond to these changes (Alsop 2014). One of the assignees said expecting some kind of career development due the assignment and felt that if there would not be any career development it might turn down the motivation. One factor influencing on international assignee satisfaction is how well they address their work expectation to home-company before repatriation, how specific these expectations are and how clear the repatriation practices are (Vidal et al., 1691-1695). From this we can see that also the communication inside company can influence in repatriate satisfaction.

Brookfield Global Relocation Services survey (2016) pointed out that most of the assignees felt that the assignment had a positive impact on their career. In this study all of the interviewees said that they the assignment had either positive or neutral impact on their career.

10 SUGGESTIONS

In this section is introduced the three most important improvement suggestions to the existing assignment process and practices. These three improvement suggestions were asked to be listed by the HR Managers of Glaston. The suggestions were thought based on the research analysis and comparison with the theory. The improvement suggestions were also though in way, how the suggestions would benefit the assignees and also the company in business wise the most.

Before the assignment the most important improvement suggestion from assignee perspective and from business wise:

- Improving the elaboration of contract preparation: Since 40% of the assignees thought that the contract preparation took too much time, and even business opportunities could have been lost during that time, this needs to be taken into consideration. The way the assignees thought this could be made more elaborate was to get more information to HR department about matters needed to know when preparing the contract such as taxation, benefits and allowances. Other thought that was brought up was that the international assignees and assignments should be reviewed more case by case and not trying to make process too standardized, since the company do not have that many international assignees. The elaboration could be also improved by being more active and communicate more regarding contract preparation from HR department´s side.

- Providing information package for the assignees: Most of the assignees thought that information package would be useful to get before the actual departure to the assignment destination, since in some cases they received only a little or did not receive at all information from for instance taxation, social security, driver's license, occupational healthcare in the assignment location, children's schooling, housing and how to move around in the assignment location how it effects on our holdings in Finland when you move to abroad. All of the assignee except one saw it useful to have that kind of information advanced or

at least know how to get these information's when arriving to the assignment location.

- Establishing formal repatriation program: Through this the international assignees would have a chance to speak openly about their work expectations and these work expectations could be then planned inside the company before the actual repatriation. This would make the repatriation smoother if the assignee would be given knowledge about the positions available when returning, since it would release the stress about not knowing in what kind of position to return. This would also increase the communication between the company and the assignees. Also after returning the assignees would have a chance to give feedback about the assignment which could also be used as a resource for the organization in a way that the information could be shared among people going for an assignment to the same location.

Next is introduced some other improvement suggestions which were thought to be useful to bring up. In this part is also been brought up the positive feedback about some of the practices, since these practices where thought useful to keep.

Improvements:

- Pre-departure training: Global Mindset Training and Orientation (defined in section 5.4) is increasing trend in companies nowadays, since it has seen to reduce the risk of failure and increase the success in assignment. This would also be useful for Glaston, since there is no formal pre-departure training other than language training and some of the assignees would have seen useful to have some of this training which is included in the Global Mindset Training and Orientation.
- Taxation consulting: The assignees were not satisfied to the KPMG services regarding taxation consulting. This would be useful to review and make some changes

- Communication inside the company: Communication programs (defined in section 5.1) would be useful to establish, since compensation, policies, benefits and allowances were in many cases unclear or not well managed from assignee perspective
- Selection method: Standardized selection (defined in section 5.1) has seen important in companies in tackling down the issues in international assignments, since now the selection in the company is made more of the willingness of the assignee to go for an assignment and the assignee is not being assessed in any way

Useful practices that already exist that could be emphasized:

- Goals are settled to every assignment
- Goals are monitored well during the assignments
- Using relocation agents: This was used in one of the assignments and it was seen very useful, since the agent searched for different options and the assignee did not need to use working hours to searching different arrangement options
- Organizational information can be easily monitored from Intranet
- Short-term assignees had mainly positive or neutral feedback: Short-term assignment are well managed
- In many cases the host-company HR or assistant in host-company is managing the assignment well

11 CONCLUSIONS

The main research question of this thesis was: "how can the international assignment process be improved in Glaston?" The purpose and objectives of the research has been attained, since the research question can be answered based on the research and analysis. The international assignment process and international assignee satisfaction could be improved in a way that the contract preparation would be made more elaborate, the assignees would be given information package before departure and the repatriation would be more planned in a form of formal repatriation program.

This answer to the research question was attained since 40% of the international assignees thought that the contract preparation took too much time. Majority of the assignees also thought that information package would be useful before the departure, since some of the assignees felt that they did not receive enough information before departure. Half of the assignees also had unclear near to repatriation in what position they would return to. Three of these assignees had negative feeling about not knowing about the position available when returning.

Some other important improvement suggestions were brought up, since these were also concerns of some of the assignees. These included pre-departure training, taxation consulting, communication inside the company and selection of assignees. Pre-departure training did not exist in the company except language training and some of the assignees would have seen pre-departure training useful. Taxation was one of the major concerns of the assignees, especially in USA. This was included in the thesis, since it was brought up by the assignees. Improvement suggestion included communication inside company and selection of assignees, since 30% of the assignees thought that the communication inside the company did not work well and the assignee selection did not use any assignee assessment.

With this information case company can analyse their way of managing the international assignment process. This thesis provides information to HR manager and with that information HR Managers can consider the improvement suggestions and make

the decisions regarding how they are going utilize the information this thesis provided them.

This research could be continued with more detailed separate studies for both long-term and short-term assignments, since now these were both combined in the same research. More studies could be also made from some of the major concerns of the assignees more detailed for instance from taxation, compensation packages and contract preparation. This research could also be continued to find out about options for taxation consulting, since the assignees were not satisfied to the KPMG services. Also, the information package could be studied more, and the actual information package could be made for the assignees. This research could also be continued by making a research about repatriation and how to establish formal repatriation program for the company.

This thesis thought me a lot about the theory information regarding international assignments, information from the case company itself and knowledge about conducting a research. Due this thesis I was able to gain more knowledge about my area of studies, international trade. With this thesis I was able to get information from people who have been working abroad. This information has benefit the company by receiving information about their IHRM regarding international assignments as well as myself by receiving realistic information about working in global context.

REFERENCES

Alsop, R. 2014. When expats return home, what's next? BBC News 16.4.2014. Referred 24.9.2017. http://www.bbc.com/capital/story/20140115-returning-expat-discontent

Bhushan, M. A. & Sayalee, G. 2016. Better Process Leads to Peak Performance: A Role of Human Resource Management Function towards Expatriate and Repatriate Process- An Overview through Existing Literature. Journal of Indian Management and Research and Practices 1, 1-13. Referred 6.11.207. https://www.ebsco.com/

Chen, H. M. & Chang, C. C. 2016. Contingent Expatriate Training Strategies with Examples of Taiwan MNEs. Journal of Human Resource and Sustainability Studies, 4, 1-14. Referred 18.9.2017. http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/jhrss.2016.41001

Dickmann, M. 2008. International Human Resource Management: A European Perspective. London: Routledge. Referred 5.10.2017. https://books.google.fi/

Downs, M., Thomas, A. S. & Singley, R. B. 2002. "Predicting expatriate job satisfaction: the role of firm internationalization", Career Development International 1, 24-36. Referred 10.12.2017. https://doi.org/10.1108/13620430210414847

Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement 2017: The Doors of Opportunity Are Open. Society for Human Resource Management. Referred 22.9.2017. https://www.shrm.org/pages/default.aspx

Global Assignment Policies and Practices survey 2017. KPMG. Referred 3.11.2017. https://home.kpmg.com/xx/en/home.html

Global mobility effectiveness survey 2013. Ernst & Young. Referred 3.10.2017. http://www.ey.com/gl/en/home

Global mobility effectiveness survey 2016. Ernst & Young. Referred 3.10.2017. http://www.ey.com/gl/en/home

Global mobility trends survey 2016. Brookfield Global Relocation Services. Referred 24.9.2017. https://www.bgrs.com/

Green, N. L. 2009. Expatriation, Expatriates, and Expats: The American Transformation of a Concept. The American Historical Review 2, 307–328. Referred 2.10.2017. https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr.114.2.307

Greer, T. W. & Stiles, A. C. 2016. Using HRD to Support Repatriates: A Framework for Creating an Organization Development Strategy for Repatriation. Human Resource Development Review. Referred 5.10.2017. DOI: 10.1177/1534484315626019

Herod, R. 2012. Global HR Management Series: International Assignment Programs: Tackling the Critical Issues. Society for Human Resource Management. Referred 14.11.2017. https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/samk/home.action

Hirsjärvi, S. & Hurme, H. 2008. Tutkimushaastattelu: teemahaastattelun teoria ja käytäntö. Helsinki: Gaudeamus Helsinki University Press. Referred 20.10.2017. https://www-ellibslibrary-com.lillukka.samk.fi/collection

Hirsjärvi, S., Remes, P. & Sajavaara, P. 2009. Tutki ja kirjoita. Hämeenlinna: Tammi.

Kohonen, E. 2015. Ulkomailta voi palata muuttunut ihminen. Talouselämä 26.8.2015. Referred 23.9.2017. http://www.talouselama.fi/tebatti/ulkomailta-voi-palata-muuttunut-ihminen-3417765

Kuula, A. 2011. Tutkimusetiikka: aineistojen hankinta, käyttö ja säilytys. Tampere: Vastapaino. Referred 11.10.2017. https://www.ellibslibrary.com/collection

Millennials at work Reshaping the workplace in financial services 2012. PWC Report. Referred 23.9.2017. www.pwc.com/financial services

Mutsuddi, I. 2011. Managing Human Resources in the Global Context. New Age International. Referred 9.11.2017. https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/samk/home.action

Peltokorpi, V. & Froese, F. J. 2009. Organizational expatriates and self-initiated expatriates: who adjusts better to work and life in Japan?. The International Journal of Human Resource Management 5, 1096-1112. Referred 2.10.2017. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09585190902850299

Pitkäranta, A. 2014. Laadullinen tutkimus opinnäytetyönä: työkirja ammattikorkeakouluun. Jokioinen: e-Oppi. Referred 24.10.2017. https://www.ellibslibrary.com/collection

Pokharel, B. 2015. Triumph over Failure of Expatriate in an International Assignments from the International Human Resource Management Perspective. Referred 27.3.2017 http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ijbm.v11n5p310

Raj, J. P., Jain, A., Noble, J., Bharath, K., Antra & Thomas, J. J. 2017. Determination of relationship between job satisfaction and job performance of an expatriate before, during and after an international assignment. International educational scientific research journal 3, 32-38. Referred 18.9.2017. https://iesrj.com/

Ruhtinas, M. Expatriate Policy 2016. Receiver: XXXXX@hotmail.com. Sent 14.7.2017 14:51 PM. Referred 6.10.2017.

Ruhtinas, M. 2017. HR Manager, Glaston Finland. Tampere. Personal communication 12.10.2017.

Ruhtinas, M. International assignment process. Receiver: XXXXX@hotmail.com. Sent 14.7.2017 14:51 PM. Referred 6.10.2017.

Sarkiunaite, I., Rocke, D. 2015. The expatriate experience: the factors of

international assignment success. Transformations in Business & Economics 1, 20-47. Referred 18.9.2017. http://www.transformations.knf.vu.lt/

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. 2007. Research methods for business student. Harlow: Pearson Education. Fourth edition. Referred 11.10.2017. https://www.daw-sonera.com/abstract/9781408212653

Starr, L. T. 2009. Repatriation and short-term assignments: an exploration into expectations, change and dilemmas. The International Journal of Human Resource Management 2, 286-300. Referred 5.10.2017. https://www.ebsco.com/

Suutari, V. & Burch, D. 2001. The role of on-site training and support in expatriation: existing and necessary host-company practices. Career Development International 6, 298-311. Referred 6.10.2017.
https://doi.org/10.1108/EUM0000000005985

Söderberg, A.M. & Zölner M. 2012. Short-term International Assignments. In: Gertsen M.C., Söderberg A.M., Zölner M. (eds) Global Collaboration: Intercultural Experiences and Learning. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 107-108. https://link.springer.com/

The Network propriety web survey and analysis. Boston Consulting Group 2014. Referred 2.11.2017. https://www.bcg.com/

Vidal, E. S., Valle, R. S. & Aragon, I. B. 2008. International workers' satisfaction with the repatriation process. The International Journal of Human Resource Management 9, 1683–1702. Referred 5.10.2017 https://www.ebsco.com/

Waxin, M. F. 2007. Strategic Human Resource Management of International Assignments. Chapter 12. In Katsioloudes M., Hadjidakis S. (eds) International Business, Elsevier, London: 387-438. Referred 9.11.2017. https://books.google.fi/?hl=fi

Website of Glaston 2017. Referred 27.8.2017.
http://www.glaston.net/fi/

Whiting, L. S. 2007. Semi-structured interviews: guidance for novice researchers. Nursing Standard 23, 35-40. Referred 11.10.2017. https://www.ebsco.com/

Worldwide Survey of International Assignment Policies and Practices, 2015. Mercer. Referred 30.9.2017. https://www.mercer.com/

Themes of the interview:

Theme 1. Basic information about interviewee:

- Marital and family status?
- Assignment country?
- Duration of the assignment?
- Companied or unaccompanied?

Theme 2 Before the assignment:

- How were you selected for this position?
- What kind of goals were set for the assignment?
- Did you had a perception of what would you do during the assignment?
- What kind of pre-arrangements was made before the assignment?
- What kind of pre-departure training did you receive?
- How did you handle removal arrangements?
- How did you handle tax and work permit arrangements?
- Was the assignment location new for you?

Theme 3. During assignment:

- How well did you adapt to the host country and its work environment?
- How were the housing arrangements done in host country?
- How were the children´s schooling organized?
- Did your spouse receive any support in working arrangements?
- Did you receive any training in host country?
- Did the home organization keep in touch with you during the assignment?

- How was the progress of the assignment managed during the time in host location?
- How was the repatriation process planned?
- How clear it was for you, in what kind of working position you would return in home country in the end of the assignment?
- What was your mindset when leaving the host location?

Theme 4. After assignment:

- What kind of removal arrangement you had to do?
- How were the work arrangements in home country organized?
- What kind of help did you receive from organization in repatriation?
- Did you return to your old working position?
- Were you able to transfer knowledge gained during the assignment back at home country?
- How well did you adapt to home country and it´s working environment?
- What kind of impact the assignment had in your career?
- What was your mindset after returning to home country?
- Do you think that the goals set for the assignment have been filled?