



UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**An investigation of expatriation challenges: A case study of Transnet Port
Terminals in Durban**

by

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Abstract

Globalization has influenced internationalisation of 21st century organisations. South African organisations are expanding their horizons not only nationally but globally. The expansion of organisational activities outside national borders challenge South African companies to invoke changes that relate to the management of expatriates. Changes due to globalisation poses many new challenges for management due to the internationalisation of human resource management. As a result, employers and employees are expected to rapidly gain various skills to adapt to the speed of change for organisations to achieve competitive advantage. This study explores the expatriate process challenges at Transnet Port Terminals and examines the perceptions and experiences of expatriates prior, during and post international assignments. It also examines the perceptions of the Human Resource (HR) Managers responsible for the management and administration of global mobility. The study delves into the experiences of expatriates based on four phases of the expatriation process, that is (phase 1) **selection** of suitable candidates for international assignments, (phase 2) **pre-departure training** that looks at training before the assignment, (phase 3) **on-assignment support** that looks at communication and ongoing support between Head Office and the expatriate and lastly, (phase 4) **repatriation** of expatriates that looks at the return of expatriates back to the home country. The research methodology adopted for this study is a qualitative research to investigate the perceptions of expatriates, and acquire a deeper understanding about their experiences. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with ten participants from Transnet Port Terminals (TPT). The ten participants included six expatriates and four managers from Human Resource Management, who played an integral role in administering and managing global mobility. Adopting a single case study approach, the study explores international HR management processes and practices at Transnet Port Terminals. Data collected from the questionnaire and existing sources were analysed to answer research questions, and compared the expatriate processes at Transnet Port Terminals to ‘best practices’ obtained from literature review. The results from the study affirm the importance of four phases in the expatriation process to implement and manage a successful international assignment. The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge due to the growing demand for expatriates globally. Valuable insights on expatriation from existing literature provided in this study including the recommendations hope to inspire management at Transnet Port Terminals in developing a successful expatriation process.

Key words: Expatriation, International Human Resource Management, Globalisation.

Declaration

I, Shantel Sewnarain declare that

- i. The research reported in this dissertation/thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.
- ii. This dissertation/thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- iii. This dissertation/thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
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Signed:

Dedication

This study is dedicated to my late grandparents, Mr and Mrs Jugmohan Sewnarain and, Mr and Mrs Bharath Durjan, whom I miss dearly.

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I wish to thank God for the opportunity to learn, anything is possible with the guidance and blessings from God. I would like to acknowledge my dear parents, Mr. Hansraj Sewnarain and Mrs. Varish Devi Sewnarain, for laying the foundation of my success. Thank you mum and dad for all the love, support, encouragement and faith in me, I would not have come this far without you. I like to acknowledge my brother, Brenden Sewnarain for his confidence in me to succeed.

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List of Acronyms

- HR: Human Resources
- HRM: Human Resource Management
- IHRM: International Human Resource Management
- HCN: Host Country Nationals
- TCN: Third Country Nationals
- PCN: Parent Country Nationals
- TPT: Transnet Port Terminals
- SOBEMAP: Societe Bennoise Des Manutentions Portuaires
- GCOS: General Cargo Operating System
- TIH: Transnet International Holdings

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The internationalisation of organisations is attributed to the development of globalisation (Sarkiunaite & Rocke, 2015). Due to global rivalry, multinational organisations are expected to retain human resources who are adequately skilled and are globally mobile to gain a competitive edge in the marketplace (Araci 2015). Strategies for global labour mobility encompass flexibility, adaptability, continued progress to meet organisational needs, creating a balance between managing employees from various generations and competitive strategies in business (Global Human Capital Trends, 2014) cited in (Shvetsova, 2017).

Through international assignments, expatriates are able to share their knowledge, add value and maintain home country competitive advantage (Dowling, 2013). The three most significant reasons for need of expatriates are to develop managers, nurture their technical competencies and control (Ayoun & Causin, 2011), cited in (Rocke, 2015). Various skills and knowledge gained during an international assignment can be used upon repatriation through cross fertilization of various practices and ideas in the home country. Several researchers have suggested that “successful expatriate assignments are vital for developing global leaders” (Dalton et al., 2002; Zang, 2012; Yao, 2013; Cerdin & Brewster, 2014), cited in (Kossek et al., 2017, p.152). Successful international assignments facilitate the transfer of knowledge from home country Headquarters (HQ) to global multi-national organisations (Chang et al., 2012; Fang, Jiang et al., & Beamish, 2010; Luring, 2013) cited in (Kossek et al., 2017). International assignments promote social and cultural acumen, (Crowne, 2013; Story et al., 2014) cited in (Kossek et al., 2017), and the ability to think strategically (Dragoni et al., 2014) cited in (Kossek et al., 2017, p.152). The organisations ability to effectively manage and utilize the expertise of expatriates upon repatriation are seen as important success factors in organisations to maintain competitive advantage (Abdullah & Jin, 2015).

According to Araci (2015) expatriate failure is a result of adaptation issues in a new country and is the foremost common and costly problem facing multinational organisations today. Expatriate failure is the expatriate’s pre-mature return from an international assignment, lack of cultural adjustment, inferior work performance and displeasure with the job (Diemer, 2016). Although expatriates’ have a huge responsibility to deliver effective results, international assignments bring about substantial risk of failure. Expatriate failure is grouped into four categories. The first category is known as the pre-mature return of the expatriate; the second category includes a

justified reason for the early return. The third category of expatriate failure is poor performance of the expatriate and the last category of expatriate failure is repatriation problem or resignation of the expatriate upon repatriation (Christensen & Harzing, 2004) cited in (Borici & Celepija, 2014, p.3). Literature suggests that there is an upsurge in the number of expatriates attributed to internationalization, and “it has been reported that the failure rate of the assignment is high” (Salleh & Koh, 2013) cited in (Araci, 2015, p.994). Failure during an international assignment could mean the pre-mature arrival of the expatriate from the assignment than what was expected and may negatively impact career growth opportunities (Holt, 1998). Expatriate failure also means greater financial loss for companies abroad and negatively impacts expatriate’ in terms of career progression (Banerjee & Gaur, 2012) cited in (Rocke, 2017). According to Kataria & Sethi (2013) expatriate failure rate allows an organisation to determine the effectiveness of managing expatriates. Employees may feel unaccomplished due to a failed project which may lead to negative self-confidence and lack of employee morale. An unsuccessful international assignment is also attributed to delayed productivity, turbulence among the expatriate and the host country nationals, damage to the organisations image, and an unsatisfactory repatriation (Bennett et al., 2000); (Littrell et al., 2006) cited in (Hanberg & Osterdahl, 2009). Expatriates associate difficulties experienced in foreign assignments to inadequate pre-departure training in the home country. Direct and indirect cost are also attributed to expatriate failure. Direct costs include compensation, cost of training programs, relocation allowances and travel expenses. Indirect costs include poor relationship with host country locals and government, decline in market share and damage to business reputation (Shen, 2005) cited in (Katari & Sethi, 2013).

The importance of international human resource management in organisations cannot be overstated. International human resource management plays a fundamental role in international assignments and is unequivocally concerned with selection, pre-departure training, support and compensation including repatriation of employees upon completion of a successful assignment (Holt, 1998); (Dowling, 2013). The aim of international human resource management is to support a foreign company to compete and become successful on a global scale. The international company must therefore be able to function efficiently on a shorter time frame that enables the company to become more flexible and adaptable (Budhwar & Florkowski, 2002) cited in (Rocke, 2017).

The study is vital to investigate the shared experiences of expatriates, including the human resource management team at Transnet Port Terminals in identifying challenges and propose alternatives that is aligned to world class standards based on existing literature. This study

examines the entire expatriation process from start to finish through the perceptions and experiences of expatriates and human resource managers at Transnet Port Terminals.

1.2 Background of the study

South African state owned logistics freight transport company, Transnet Port Terminals (TPT) is an operating division of Transnet SOC Limited. Transnet Port Terminals owns and manages a total of sixteen terminal operations in seven ports across the country. Their operations are divided into various sectors which include the automotive sector, break bulk, bulk and the container sector. Transnet Port Terminals plays a pivotal role globally by enabling the movement of cargo amid South Africa and countries all over the world (Transnetportterminals.net, 2018).

In 2016, TPT extended its reach into West Africa by signing a contract with Societe Bennoise Des Manutations Portuaires (SOBEMAP), Port of Cotonou Benin, in line with Africa strategy. The project was known as the Benisa Maritime Project with the aim of sharing skills and expertise in Benin. The contract would run for five years with the goal of developing process optimisation, a terminal layout plan and configuration of a new container yard to facilitate the volume of growth. The other deliverables entailed creating a safety culture mind-set, introduce standard operating procedures and operationalize the General Cargo Operating System (GCOS) system. Employees at SOBEMAP were up-skilled through personalised training provided by Transnet's Academy's Maritime School of Excellence. The project required the skills of TPT management employees, where a team of six managers where internationally assigned to Benin for a period of twelve months. The expatriates' skills and sound knowledge requirement included years of experience in port operations, consulting in continuous improvement strategies, safety culture, planning and lean six sigma methodology. The aim of the project was to diversify from an income perspective and pursue new business opportunities not limited to South Africa but in sub-Saharan Africa (Transnetportterminals.net, 2018).

Transnet Port Terminals vision is to grow Africa, link economies and develop people. The mission of the organisation is to fuel Africa's growth and development as the leading provider of innovative supply chain solutions. In 2017 Transnet launched a new company known as Transnet International Holdings (TIH), a R100 million capital investment. The purpose of the investment was to diversify by facilitating various projects that include, gas, multiple pipeline, rail and port operations projects into the rest of Africa through Transnet's new strategy known as Transnet 4.0, Forth Industrial Revolution (The Nerve Africa, 2018). Chief Executive Officer

at TPT plans to lead the organisation through the strength of all its employees to greater heights as “top five in five” that is, being one of the top five freight logistics companies in the world in five years. The four strategic thrusts, being the pillar of the organisation are to be **digital** (evolve or die), **agile** (fit and focused in a volatile world), **admired** (trusted, innovative South African brand) and **united** (together we succeed) (Africa, 2018).

Although the Benisa Maritime Project proved to be a huge success, the expatriates and the managers in human resources responsible for global mobility, faced numerous challenges along the way. Due to the pre-mature return of employees and various obstacles during the Benisa Maritime Project, this study will investigate the possible process challenges and offer recommendations to improve existing processes to successfully manage expatriates at Transnet Port Terminals going forward. It becomes imperative for the human resource department at Transnet Port Terminals to be at the forefront of international assignments, to manage the entire expatriate process from start to finish whilst offering the expatriate continuous support and robust open communication in conjunction with the organisations strategic objectives. In support of TPT’s strategic intent of being top ‘five in five’, it becomes crucial that the expatriate process and management of expatriates are clearly defined, aligned to the business objectives, and that the human resource department are at the fore in executing expatriation processes successfully (Africa, 2018).

1.3 Definitions of Terms

International human resource management: International Human Resource Management involves managing all aspects of a the global workforce that contribute to organisational outcomes (Stahl, Bjorkman & Morris, 2012). International human resource management is more complex and can be ascribed to six factors that include increased human resource activities, a more holistic perspective, greater involvement in the personal lives of the employee, exposure to risk, wider influence of external factors and greater synthesis of foreign workers as well as locals (Dowling, 2013).

Expatriate: An expatriate is an employee that is assigned to a position in foreign operations and resides in the host country temporarily (Dowling 2013). Expatriates are “employees or business organisations who are sent overseas on a temporary basis to complete a time-based task or accomplish an organisational goal” (Shaffer, & Shrinivas, 2004) cited in (Takeuchi, 2017, p.2).

Globalisation: “The convergence of political, economic, social and technological trends over the last few decades” (Truss, Mankin & Kelliher, 2012, p. 4).

1.4 Research Problem

Expatriate failure is the pre-mature return of an employee from an international assignment (Dowling 2013). Another derailment factor is that expatriates’ may return because the goals and objectives of the assignment may not have been accomplished as expected. Expatriate failure can negatively impact the employee’s career in the future due to their pre-mature return. The termination of the assignment has serious consequences that can limit future career opportunities within the organization or may even lead to a dismissal (Holt 1998). According to Phokarel (2016) expatriate failure are common and creates tension in business. There several reasons for expatriate failure, most common being inability to adjust in the new country, poor selection of expatriates, home sickness, being away from family and spouse, poor performance, lack of motivation, language and cultural barriers and discontentment with compensation and benefits (Phokarel, 2016).

Expatriates are costly and organisations need to ensure that the assignments are carried out through proper planning, guided by processes and policies to successful implementation and control. This study is critical for Transnet Port Terminals as it may assist in identifying current expatriation process challenges and offer valuable insights to better manage global mobility. The success of expatriates benefits the organisation through the transfer of new skills, improving the stock of knowledge and gaining return on investment, it also benefits the expatriate through increased motivation, improved business skills and possible career development in the future. This study is beneficial to Transnet Port Terminals as it allows the organisation to zoom in on their current method of managing expatriates and to create an opportunity to improve their current expatriate process for future international assignments.

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions forms the basis for the objectives of the study.

- What are the perceptions of Transnet Port Terminals expatriates on the selection criteria used for international assignments?
- What are the perceptions of Transnet Port Terminals expatriates on pre-departure training?

- What are the perceptions of the on-assignment support activities received by expatriates?
- What are the perceptions of Transnet Port Terminals expatriates on repatriation?

1.6 Research Objectives

The purpose of the study is to investigate the expatriate process challenges at Transnet Port Terminals (TPT) by analysing the perceptions and experiences of expatriates including the Human Resources Managers who played a pivotal role administering the entire expatriate process. The aim of the study is to achieve the following objectives.

- To analyse the perceptions of Transnet Port Terminals expatriates on the selection criteria used for international assignments
- To ascertain the perceptions of Transnet Port Terminals expatriates on pre-departure training
- To establish the perceptions of the on-assignment support received by expatriates of Transnet Port Terminals
- To determine the perception of Transnet Port Terminals expatriates on repatriation

1.7 Ethical Consideration

To meet ethical requirements to conduct the study, permission was obtained through a memorandum and gate keeper's letter from the Chief Executive Officer and Human Resource General Manager at Transnet Port Terminals. Important ethical factors is maintained in this study. To maintain human dignity, the researcher provides adequate information and knowledge about the study to allow the respondent the decision to participate in the study willingly. Other ethical factors such as informed consent from participant's privacy, confidentiality and anonymity is maintained at all times.

1.8 Limitations of the study

The results of the study is only applicable to Transnet Port Terminals and not the other operating Divisions of Transnet, therefore generalisation of this study is limited. There is also lack of research on expatriation at Transnet Port Terminals. An additional limitation identified by the researcher was the non-representation of female expatriates for the Benisa Maritime Project at TPT, therefore gender comparison was not possible. Cross-cultural comparison was also a limitation because the study focused on South African expatriates at TPT and did not

include expatriates from other countries of the world, as a result generalisation of this study is limited.

1.9 Conclusion

In this Chapter the researcher provided the background and purpose of the study, highlighting specific research questions, objectives and its limitations. To acquire a deeper understanding of the expatriation processes in managing global mobility in organisations, an analysis of existing literature will now be presented in Chapter two.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The review of literature on international human resource management is essential to understand the processes involved in managing global expatriates. The area of focus in this chapter are selection criteria of expatriates, pre-departure training, on-assignment support, repatriation and diversity management.

The objective of literature review is to collect and outline best practices conducted by other researchers on the management of employees on international assignments. By utilizing existing literature, the research questions presented in the subsequent chapter aims to explore the magnitude by which Transnet Port Terminals adopts International Human Resource Management best practices in South Africa. Organisations movement outside domestic boundaries into a world of international business environment is growing rapidly through globalization. Markets are no longer stable and the business arena is seen as the ‘battlefield’ since organisations are faced with many challenges including the aggressive need for market share against its competitors locally and internationally (Dowling et al., 1999).

An effective Human Resource expatriation strategy plays a pivotal role in international expansion and development due to the added stress placed on employees to adapt and succeed abroad. Human Resource Management is an important function that impacts the performance and success of expatriates and adds competitive advantage by acquiring and retaining skilled employees (Dowling et al., 2013; Webber, 2015; Shutte, 2016; Sarkiunaite & Rocke, 2017).

2.2 The role of Human Resource Management

Traditional human resource management include activities initiated by an organisation to effectively manage and utilize their employees (Dowling et al., 2013). These activities include planning of human resources, recruitment and selection, performance management training and development, remuneration and benefits and employee relations. Human Resource Management in the domestic environment considerably differs to that of human resource in the global landscape. There is a need for strategic awareness of international human resources and the cognizance of its diverse human resource accountabilities in organisations. Human Resource Management play a key role providing strategic competitive advantage by attracting and retaining talented individuals and providing training and development (Walsh & Schyns, 2010; Truss, Mankin & Kelliher, 2012; Dowling et al., 2013; Webber, 2015). To manage global

mobility, Human Resource professionals are expected to understand global trends and provide broad Human Resource interventions that would be value adding to organisations (Truss, Mankin & Kelliher, 2012). Table 2.1 provides a list of International Human Resource characteristics and activities of managing international assignments (Dowling et al., 2013).

Table 2.1: International HRM Characteristics and Activities

International HRM characteristics	Activities
Additional Human Resource actions	International taxation, foreign relocation and orientation, administrative activities, manage host government relationships, language translation, arranging for pre-departure training, immigration and travel, housing, medical care, kids schooling, discussion on compensation and payment of salaries whilst abroad and international assignment allowances.
Holistic perspective required	Greater perspective on international expatriate benefits
Greater immersion in employee's personal lives.	It is the responsibility of the HR Department to ensure that the expatriate understands the living conditions in the host country such as the housing, medical care, salary package including cost of living allowances and taxes. Multi-national organisations have a services department that specializes in managing international assignments by coordinating various functions such as arranging home visits, administration, banking and investments.
Risk exposure	Requires the HR department to develop a comprehensive evacuation procedure for emergency situations such as foreign locations subject to malaria, epidemic crisis like influenza, terrorist attacks and cases of political instability.
Greater external influences	International human resource management is influenced by external factors in the host country. These factors include the government, the economy and the accepted practices when doing business in host countries. The HR manager is required to administer benefits like housing and education and other required services (Dowling, 2013).

Source: Adapted from, Dowling et al., 2013, p. 4-8, International Human Resource Management, Cengage Learning

The selection of suitably qualified staff, pre departure training, on assignment support and repatriation are key aspects of international human resource management (Dowling, 2013). Human Resource Management will be responsible for arranging logistics prior to relocation, providing international support to the employee and their family with regards to housing, transportation, schooling medical aid, career support and re-entry. Other support streams initiated by Human Resources are crucial for expatriate success such as frequent communication and support. This suggests that the support of the human resource department cannot be overstated to ensure a successful international assignment from conception to repatriation (Dowling et al., 2013; Sarkiunaite & Rocke, 2017).

According to Dowling, et al (2013), an international assignment is an important and significant training and development tool adopted by organisations to equip employees to acquire a broader perspective as global operatives. Through international assignments, expatriates are also considered to be trainers by transferring valuable knowledge and skills between various organizational units. Expatriates are required to train, develop and impart their skills and knowledge to the host country nationals and ultimately ensure that systems as well as processes are implemented and functional (Dowling, et al 2013).

The processes and systems must also be scrutinized by the expatriate to be able to assess if the performance of the host country national is effective and operational. Employees that are exposed to international assignments are developed to become future leaders and managers that acquire a holistic and global mindset (Dowling, et al 2013). The foremost reason that organisations require expatriates varies from organisation to organisation and is largely dependent on business strategies. The need for expatriates could be related to movement into new foreign markets, mergers and acquisition, transfer of skills, technology and innovative ideas (Bitencourt & Gallon, 2014, as cited in Rocke, 2017, p 452).

2.3 International Human Resource Management

According to Dowling et al. (2013) international human resource management can be attributed to the following characteristics and activities:

2.4 Definition of Expatriate

According to Reiche & Harzing (2009) the term expatriate means “any employee who is working outside of his or her home country” (Reiche & Harzing, 2009) cited in (Webber, 2015, p. 19). According to Dowling et al. (2013) an expatriate is a person that works in a foreign environment who is either a junior employee or a senior manager. In organisations, an expatriate is an employee who is assigned internationally by the company to work in foreign operations (Becker, 2018).

An expatriate assignment however can be defined as “an employee’s time limited move to a country beyond the borders of his or her home country, with the intent to return at the conclusion of the specified assignment” (Ritchie et al, & Logsdon, 2015, p. 325) cited in (Martin, 2017, p.325).

2.4.1 Types of Expatriates

Expatriates can assume three different forms that include parent-country nationals (PCNs), host-country nationals (HCNs) and third-country nationals (TCNs) (Briscoe et al., 2009; Snell & Bohlander, 2010 cited in Webber, 2015).

2.4.1.1 Parent-Country Nationals

Parent-country nationals (PCNs) are “citizens of a country in which the enterprises headquarters are situated” (Snell & Bohlander, 2010) cited in (Webber, 2015, p.53). These expatriates are employed by head office and are assigned to a foreign subsidiary temporarily with the responsibility of transferring skills and knowledge that is firm-specific (Dowling, et al., 2013; Colakoglu & Caligiuri, 2008 cited in Webber, 2015).

2.4.1.2 Host-Country Nationals

According to Tung (1982) host-country nationals (HCNs) are defined as “citizens of the country of foreign operation” (Webber, 2015, p54). These employees are assigned from the host country to parent country and are usually unfamiliar with parent country culture (Dowling et al., 2013; Shutte, 2016).

2.4.1.3 Third-Country Nationals

Third-country nationals are expatriates’ who are assigned to different foreign subsidiaries, these subsidiaries are owned by the same organisation (Dowling et al., 2013; Webber, 2015). According to Cascio & Aguinis (2011) when organisations “hire citizens of a country other than

the parent or subsidiary countries to work in a foreign subsidiary, that expatriate is known as third-country nationals” (Cascio & Aguinis, 2011) cited in Webber, 2015, p.55).

2.4.2 Expatriate Failure

According to Araci (2015), the most common and costly problem facing multinationals in doing business in overseas countries is the high failure rates of expatriates. The following barriers in expatriate failure have been identified in literature (Economist, 2010) cited in (Araci, 2015).

- Cultural variances: Araci (2015, p 995) confirm that expatriates are able to successfully adapt to the host country by “value similarity, verbal and non-verbal similarity, second language competence, and one’s own self-concept”. The greater the expatriate managers cross cultural ‘fit’ between the expatriate and the host country the greater the managerial ability.
- Language barrier: Language barrier is one of the biggest contributors of expatriate failure. Language training in the home country is often neglected and should form part of the process for expatriate preparedness.
- Miscommunication between expatriate and local employees: Cultural interpreters are essential to enhance the quality of international teams, solve problems, serves as a bridge between different cultures for effective communication harmony among teams.
- Mismanagement of expatriates: Successful expatriation requires a balance between adequate delegation and support from the home country to motivate expatriates during their international assignment. It is suggested the home country prepare expatriates for host country living conditions
- Support from spouse and family: Adequate support from employee’s spouse is crucial to ensure that the assignee adjusts, adapts well and attains successful completion of the foreign assignment (Economist, 2010); (Lin et al., 2012) cited in (Araci, 2015).
- Adaptability: Selecting the right candidate for foreign assignments is an important factor that Human Resource Management must consider, because it is the responsibility of the expatriate to adapt to the host country. According to Ren et al. (2014), adaptation skills of the expatriate include “sufficient knowledge, job satisfaction, self-confidence, interpersonal skills perception skills, interest in the host country and past experience” (Ren et al., 2014) cited in (Araci, 2015, p. 996).

The following factors identified in literature contribute to expatriate failure (Dowling et al, 2013; Webber, 2015; Polon, 2017).

- Personal discontent with experience either the employee or by the family members
- International business relationships that were damaged
- Poor execution of duties by the expatriate
- The employee was not adequately absorbed and utilized
- Difficulty accepting host country nationals
- Inability to recognize internal business growth opportunities
- Adequate support offered to the expatriate
- Timeframe of the assignment
- Focused only on technical skills and abilities

The Economic Intelligence Unit report confirmed that based on 418 participants from various countries, 70% found cultural sensitivity to be the most important characteristic for an expatriate (The Economist, 2010), cited in (Araci, 2015, p. 996). According to Lain (2013, p. 6) “expatriate failure rates being as high as 40%, it is no doubt that being aware of these factors is crucial and requires a lot of attention by any company willing to tap in foreign markets”. Due to the high risks and high costs associated with international assignments mentioned above, organisations are required to adequately prepare expatriates to avoid expatriate failure. It is important that organisations take cognizance of factors contributing to expatriate failure and be proactive in preparing and supporting them throughout their international assignment (Dowling et al., 2013; Shutte, 2016; Webber, 2015; Polon, 2017).

2.4.3 Expatriate Success

The success of international assignments is dependent on the expatriate’s ability to adapt to the new environment which comprises of home and work circumstance (Takeuchi, Yun, & Tesluck, 2002) cited in (Martin, 2017). Literature suggests that expatriates’ skills, cultural diversity and cultural ‘toughness’ contribute to success of international assignments (Matrose, 2014). The perceived support from organisations in the home country or host country also contribute to expatriate success (Karticka & Lee, 2014; Polon, 2017).

The success of an expatriate process is attributed to a combination of elements including, individual, organizational related and context related elements (Canhilal & Shemueli, 2015) cited in (Rocke, 2017). Other factors that contribute to expatriates’ success in international assignments include the following:

- Cross cultural proficiency
- Support from spouse
- Emotional intelligence
- Previous international exposure and experience
- Language competence
- Social skills
- Recruitment and selection practices
- Cultural differences

According to Kartika & Lee, (2014) the following factors positively impact the success of expatriate adjustment in the host country:

- Assignee's emotional and cultural intellect
- Previous international experience
- Support from family and family adaptability in a foreign country
- Parental demand
- Social capital

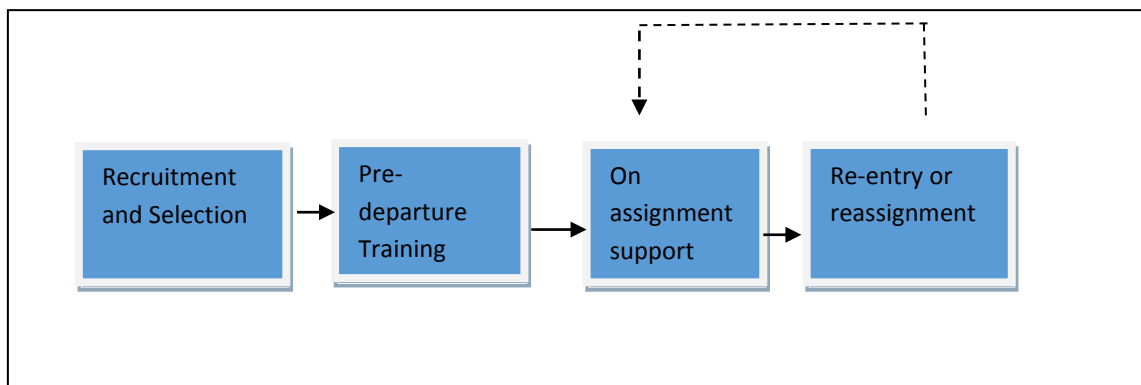
Expatriate training and support are also considered valuable contributors of expatriate success (Matrose, 2014). The success of foreign assignments are also dependent on the successful management and support of expatriates by international human resource management (Kartika & Lee, 2014); (Araci, 2015); (Webber, 2015); (Shutte, 2016). In a previous study of Australian expatriates by Sagiadellis et al. (2004) it was confirmed that role clarity had an impact on expatriate success by reducing the level of uncertainty in a foreign environment. Role clarity of expatriates also helps with the process of adjustment in the host country by providing clear guiding principles about the job including the status and chain of command (Sagiadellis et al., 2004) cited in (Lain, 2013).

Literature thus confirms that personal characteristics of the expatriate such as spouse and family circumstances, skills and knowledge, including the support from home country, cultural variance between the home country and host country, role clarity, environmental influences in the host country and previous international exposure have an impact on the productivity and success of expatriates (Lain, 2013; Van Renen, 2015; Araci, 2015; Webber, 2015).

2.5 Expatriate Process Cycle

According to Dowling et al. (2013) there are four distinct phases in the expatriate process that contribute to a successful expatriation assignment. These phases include recruitment and selection, pre-departure training, on-assignment support and re-entry or reassignment. To effectively manage international assignments requires implementation of all for phases (Dowling et al., 2013). The phases are further discussed affirming the importance and relevance of each phase in international assignments.

Figure 2.1 Expatriation Process Cycle



Source: Adapted from, Dowling., et al 2013, p. 190, International Human Resource Management, Cengage Learning

2.5.1 Phase 1: Recruitment and Selection

To sustain competitive advantage in a volatile business environment requires employees who are equipped with adequate skills and knowledge to effectively achieve business objectives. Organisations are required to hire candidates that are future leaders who are able to deliver results required to remain competitive. Employees should be flexible to diagnose problems and understand complex issues, understand different cultures better than their competitors do (Bratton and Gold, 1999) cited in (Pokharel 2016,).

According to research undertaken by Pokharel (2016), selecting an employee with previous international experience is advantageous than an employee who is new to international assignments. Literature also suggests that domestic performance of employees may not adequately have a bearing on how they will perform internationally, therefore technical competence although highly important may not be the only determining factor for success for

expatriates (Holt, 1998). Expatriates' are also expected to adapt to different cultures and have ability to work internationally are considered key elements for success that cannot be over emphasized (Dowling et al., 2013; Webber, 2015; Becker, 2018). The employee's ability to adapt means that they have the ability to demonstrate resilience to unfamiliar surroundings and to culture shock. Potential candidates for international assignments are required to handle stressful situations, adapt swiftly to new cultures and work effectively. Research has shown that when selecting a candidate, there should be a balance between being able to adapt to cultures and respond to problems in the host country and remain resilient to effectively carry out their responsibilities abroad (Dowling et al., 2013). Tung (1998) in earlier research and Dowling et al. (2013) in recent studies have confirmed the importance of screening the families and spouses of employees because their inability to adapt to new environments and cultures may result in expatriate failure which is categorized the leading cause of failure.

According to Stone, (1991) the rank order of selecting a candidate for an international assignments include:

- The expatriates' ability to assimilate to foreign culture
- Spouse and family members' ability to assimilate to foreign culture
- Candidates technical capability and knowledge for the international assignment
- Human relations (ability to accept foreign culture, interpersonal skills and behave appropriately)
- The candidates' aspiration and motivation to work in a foreign country
- The cultural and societal awareness of the host country
- Previously significant international experience
- Candidates academic qualifications and credentials that are job related
- Skills and literacy required in the host country
- The understanding of society and culture in the home country

In selecting suitable candidates, it is suggested that three vital elements are considered for international assignments (Sullivan & Tu, 1993) cited in (Ntshona, 2007).

- Technical proficiency and the ability to make decisions
- Personal traits and characteristics

- Family circumstances

The above factors indicate the importance of selecting the right candidate for expatriate assignments due to the high failure rates associated with global mobility. It is important that human resource manager take cognizance of these factors and select candidates with right attributes who will add value and contribute to the success of international assignments.

2.5.2 Selection criteria for expatriates

Determining the most appropriate selection criteria for international assignments poses a challenge for the selection committee. Research has shown that selection of a suitable candidate is a two-way process between the organisation and the candidate. Due to expatriate failure, the selection criteria is the most critical international human resource issue in organisations (Dowling et al., 2013; Matrose, 2014; Webber, 2015)

Research study undertaken by Vogel (2006) discovered that the most commonly used criteria used for selecting candidates for international assignments include following:

2.5.2.1 Candidate's ability to adapt to cultural changes: International managers must be able to adapt to changes in the host country to avoid culture shock and possible frustration and confusion that are common during the initial few months of the assignment. Organisation may consider the following characteristics to determine if the potential candidate is able to adapt to cultural changes:

- History of overseas travel
- Previous work experience with diverse cultures
- Foreign language proficiency
- The ability to integrate with different types of people, organisations and cultural backgrounds
- Ability to solve problems at different levels
- Ability to be culturally sensitive in the host country including individual differences
- Manage international operations with flexibility and minimal support and information

2.5.2.2 Self-Reliance: International managers are required to be self-reliant in host countries due to home country counterparts being unavailable to offer technical support and leadership.

Previous experience on special projects, field experience, assignments, or hobbies are some elements of self-reliance that organisations may consider as selection criterion for international assignments (Dowling et al., 2013).

2.5.2.3 Physical and emotional wellbeing: Employees are expected to be physically fit to take on an international assignment and require the mental capacity to deal with culture shock and many challenges associated with international assignments (Vogel, 2006).

2.5.2.4 Education: According to Vogel (2006), some multi-national organisations believe that a suitable candidate for an international assignment is someone that has a graduate degree but the best combination would be a candidate that has a graduate degree and a Master of Business Administration degree from a recognized school of business (Rugman & Hodgetts, 2003; Rugman & Luthans, 2003 cited in (Vogel, 2006).

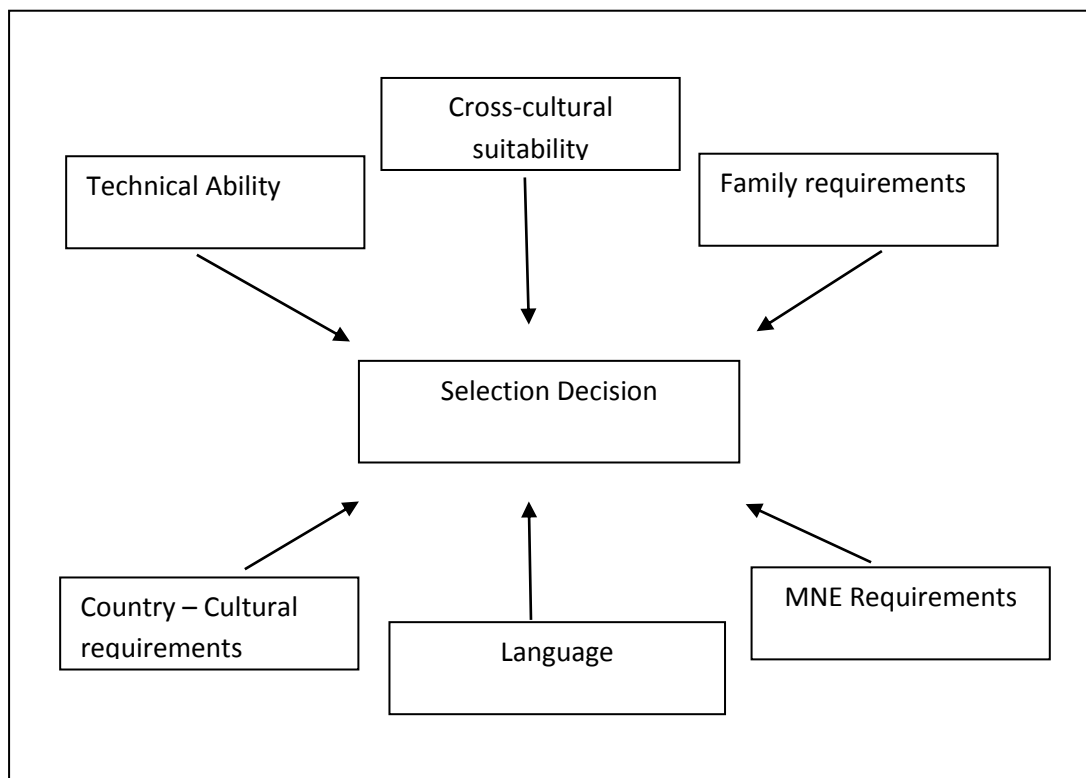
2.5.2.5 Motivation for international assignments: Employees are expected to have the desire to work in a foreign country. Employees who seek a sense of adventure and thrive on improving their economic wellbeing and chances of an internal promotion are acceptable reasons to want to go overseas (Vogel, 2006).

2.5.2.6 Family and Spouse: The employee's family and spouse are an important criterion to consider when selecting an employee for international assignments (Dowling et al., 2013; Tiwari, 2013; Borici & Celepija, 2014; Webber, 2015). The expatriate manager often performs inadequately resulting in the pre-mature return from the assignment or may leave the organization altogether if their family and or spouse are unhappy. In a previous study that included 324 international assignees from 46 different countries it was discovered that the amount of support the employees perceive they are receiving from work and family sphere a direct impact on the employee's decision to stay or leave the organization (Vogel, 2006, p. 55). Due to the impact of family and spouse, most organisations would interview the potential employee and their spouse before approving the international assignment because it focuses on the significance and importance of family (Dowling et al., 2013; Tiwari, 2013; Borici & Celepija, 2014; Webber, 2015).

2.5.2.7 Leadership Ability: An employee with strong leadership ability and maturity are prerequisite for international assignments. Leadership ability is required to influence and direct the behavior of diverse groups of people and to achieve organizational goals and objectives

(Dowling et al., 2013; Webber, 2015). Organisations search for specific leadership traits in candidates that include emotional intelligence, level of maturity, communication skills, innovative, being independent and someone with good overall health. These attributes need to be present as the potential candidate would have demonstrated their leadership abilities in the home environment (Rugman & Hodgetts, 2003; Rugman & Luthans, 2003) cited in (Vogel, 2006).

Figure 2.2 Factors in Expatriate Selection



Source: Adapted from, Dowling et al, 2013, p. 129, Factors in expatriate selection, Cengage Learning

Figure 2.2 depicts the various factors to consider when selecting employees for international assignments. Selecting employees for international assignments are dependent on individual and situational factors. The individual factors consist of the employee's technical ability, cross-cultural suitability and family requirements. The situational factors are host country or cultural requirements, language and the multi-national enterprise (MNE) requirements (Dowling et al., 2013); (Webber, 2015).

2.5.2.8 Individual factors

(a) Technical ability: Refers to the employee's ability to execute tasks assigned to them and is considered an important selection criterion for international assignments. The technical and specialized skills including managerial skills are essential selection requirements (Dowling et al., 2013; Webber, 2015; Shutte, 2016).

(b) Cross-cultural suitability: The ability of expatriates to adjust to foreign cultures are considered important selection criteria to work in diverse teams internationally. The importance of assimilating and adapting to foreign cultures allows and expatriate to function effectively (Dowling et al., 2013). The 'Cultural Intelligence' model can be used to test and evaluate the potential candidates' cross-cultural ability for successful adaptability in the foreign country (Moulik & Mazumdar, 2012) cited in Webber, 2015).

(c) Family requirements: Expatriates who are assigned to international assignments move to environments that are unfamiliar to them and without the support of family and friends. Expatriates may reject an offer due to aging parents or because the acceptance of the offer may affect the lives of their children. Not having support from spouse, family and friends are considered factors for expatriate failure (Dowling et al., 2013; Webber, 2015).

2.5.2.9 Situational factors

(a) Country-cultural requirements: Changes to government legislation and immigration laws may affect transfer of expatriates to foreign destinations. It is suggested that Human Resource personnel keep abreast of international legislation (Dowling et al., 2013).

(b) Language: The expatriate's language skills are important selection criteria that has a direct impact on performance. Providing pre-departure language training is imperative to improve cultural awareness and to support the performance of the expatriate by enabling them to converse in the language of the host country (Webber, 2015; Shutte, 2016).

(c) Multi-national enterprise requirements (MNE): Refers to the selection decisions of international assignees that are directly influenced by the situation of the host country multi-national enterprises. Some organisations may require hiring third-country nationals or parent-country nationals or consider local employees (Dowling et al., 2013).

2.5.3 The use of tests in the selection criteria

Personality tests and psychological test are used in the selection process but the efficacy of such test are questioned in terms of the predicting if the candidate is able to culturally adjust (Dowling, 2004). Willis, (1984) cited in Holt, (1998) postulates that if tests are going to be used

in the selecting criteria, the validity and reliability of the tests must be considered because there can be limited correlation between the test result and the actual performance of the expatriate. Gertsen, (1989) cited in Holt, (1998) points out that personality traits don't necessarily predict intercultural competence because these traits are not evaluated the same way in comparison to different cultures. Personality traits are however important as it can be applied in the selection process but not to be relied on in terms of the candidate's internal work record.

2.5.4 Four Dimensional approach

Mendenhall and Oddou (1987), cited in (Dowling & Welch, 2004) propose a four dimensional approach that endeavors to connect specific behavioral propensities to possible international performance of the expatriate:

- Self-oriented dimension: The extent to which expatriate displays an adaptive concern for self-enjoyment and mental hygiene
- Perceptual dimension: The degree to which the expatriate is able to precisely understand why the host country nationals behave in the manner they do.
- Others orientated dimension: The extent to which the expatriate shows concern and need affiliation toward host country nationals.
- The cultural toughness dimension: Recognizing the incongruence between host country and home country culture (Dowling & Welch, 2004).

The employee's strengths and weaknesses on four dimensions including cross cultural abilities and expatriate behavior complement the technical aptitude assessment (Dowling & Welch, 2004).

2.6 Phase 2: Pre-Departure Training

When the organisation has selected a suitable candidate for an international assignment, pre-departure training is the next step to ensure that the expatriate is well equipped for the assignment (Dowling et al., 2013). Training is described as a mechanism of changing employee's attitudes and behavior to increase their possibility of achieving goals and objectives of the organisation (Hodgetts, 1993). As a prerequisite, effective training programs aim to improve the performance of expatriates and reduce the possibility of failure (Katari & Sethi, 2013). The aim of training is to improve current skills and behavior in the work place. The objective of pre-departure training is to support the expatriate to prepare, adapt to the demands

of working and living in a foreign location so that they adjust well, remain productive and are able to cope whilst abroad (Dowling et al, 2013); (Webber, 2015).

Previous reports by Bookfield in 2011 discovered that out of 118 multi-national enterprises that were studied, only 74% provided cross-cultural training. (Dowling et al., 2013, p. 177). Brookfield surveys also confirmed that in terms of the value attributed to cross cultural training, 79% of companies found it to be “good or great value” and provided benefits to expatriates. The survey also discovered that 2% of companies found cross cultural training to have little or no value add and 19% reported a neutral value add to expatriates (Dowling, 2013, p. 185).

Pokharel (2016) affirms that pre-departure training received by expatriates should encompass the following three areas:

- Language training: Language skills to communicate effectively with host country locals
- Training related to the job: Activities related to the expatriates’ job to perform efficiently
- International Training: To understand the culture and dynamics in the host country

Expatriates should be exposed to the diverse cultures, laws and the political situation of the host country as this information will be useful to adjust to their new and unfamiliar environment. Expatriates also need to understand their job related responsibilities and how they are to be fulfilled. It is crucial that expatriates are provided with ample knowledge and information about the host country and services that will be offered to them. Expatriates’ also need to be familiar with the people that they will be working with whilst abroad to foster great working relationships (Pokharel, 2016).

The importance of pre-departure training confirmed by literature cannot be overlooked. Pre-departure training ensures that expatriates are prepared ahead of time to support organizational goals and objectives.

2.6.1 Cross-Cultural Adjustment

Expatriates’ who are able to adapt to new working environments are more likely to succeed in international assignments than those who have difficulty assimilating. Cross-cultural adjustment is a process where an expatriate adapts to working and living overseas with emphasis on foreign culture. It refers to the perceived extent of psychosomatic comfort and awareness an expatriate adopts living and working in the new cultural environment (Black et al., 1991), cited in (Okpara

& Kabongo, 2011, p24). Cultural training is an important element in minimizing the severity of culture shock in the host country and the time required to adapt (Ronen, 1989) cited in (Katari & Sethi, 2013).

There are three dimensions of expatriate adjustment in international environments (Okpara & Kabongo, 2011).

- Work adjustment: Comprises of supervision, duties, responsibilities and expatriate performance
- Relational adjustment: The interaction and communication with people in the host country
- General adjustment: The living conditions experienced by the expatriate.

The expatriates' ability to adjust on all three dimensions allows the expatriate to cope and adapt well in unfamiliar surroundings, effectively execute their duties and interact with host country nationals (Okpara & Kabongo, 2011).

2.6.2 Cross-Cultural Training

The objective of cross-cultural training is to reduce uncertainty and educate expatriates on culture to be able to communicate and interact effectively to allow for rapid adjustment in the host country (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1991) cited in (Okpara & Kabongo, 2011). Cross-cultural training is considered to be one of the most researched topics in expatriation (Everett & Cathro, 2008; Osman Gani & Rockshuhl, 2009) cited in (Wurtz, 2014).

According to Wurtz, (2014) the social learning theory distinguishes between pre-departure cross-cultural training and in-country cross-cultural training. Pre-departure cross-cultural training occurs in the home country before the commencement of the international assignment while in-country cross cultural assignment occurs in the host country when the international assignment has already begun.

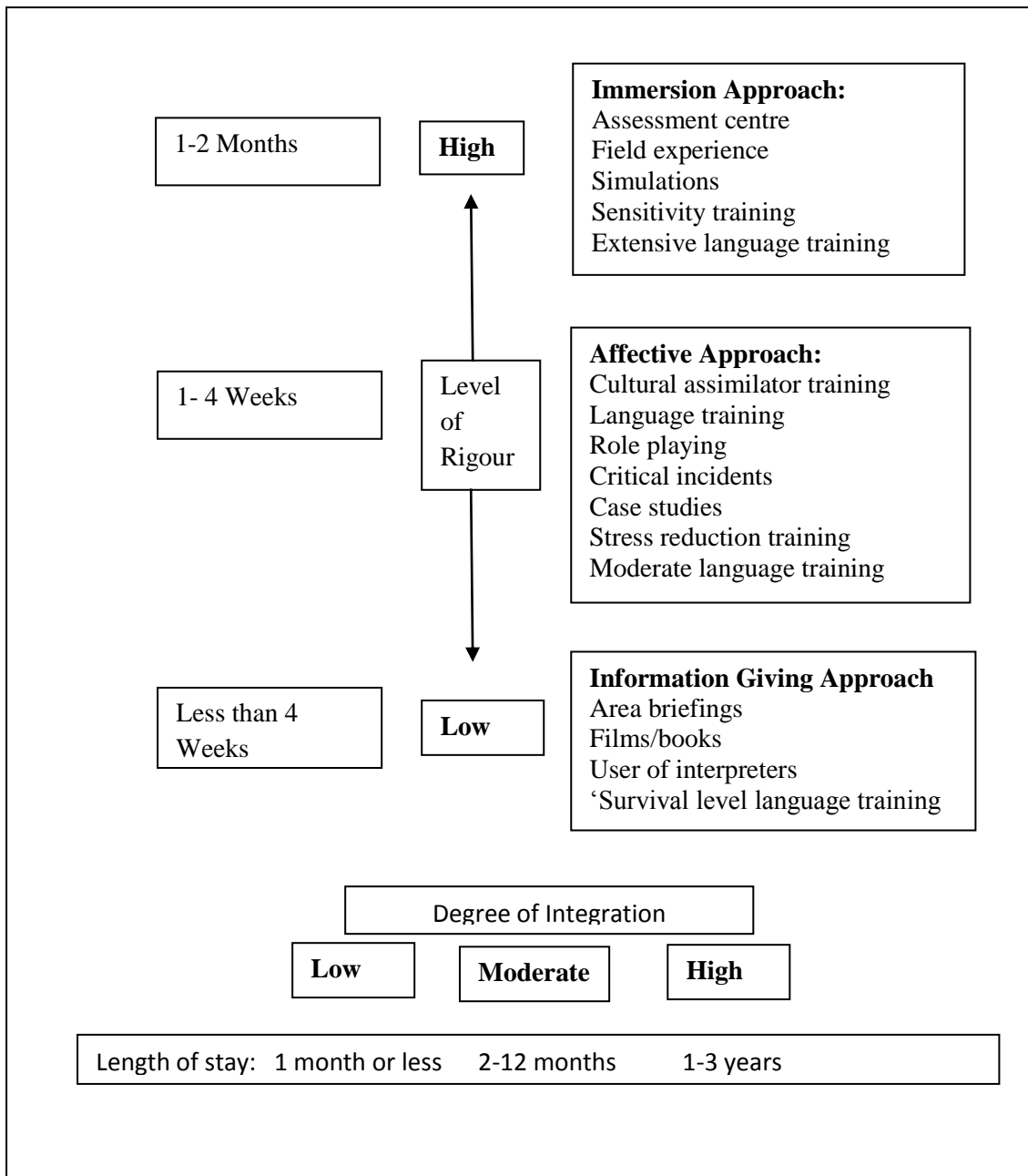
Mendenhall et al, (1987) cited in (Tiwari, 2013), differentiates between three approaches to training in terms of the level of rigor:

- Information giving approach: Low level of rigor. These may include, area briefings, the use of language tutors and basic level of information required by the expatriate for survival on international assignments.
- Affective approach: Medium level of rigor that deals with expatriates' feelings and 'facts'.
- Immersion approach: High level of rigor that include in depth training such as sensitivity training, field experience and extensive language training.

Training is meant to reduce any uncertainty that the expatriate may be experiencing in the new role. An expatriate that is on a long term assignment will benefit from in-depth training during cultural immersion. The technique adopted by Japanese companies is to place expatriates and their family with foreign host country families (Holt, 1998). The rationale for this technique is for the host family to provide cultural integration and actual living experiences for the expatriate and their families. This technique allows the expatriate an opportunity to test their limits before committing themselves to the long term assignment. Through cross-cultural training, issues such as ethical conduct, security, health and sustenance, education, political and legal aspects about the host country are discussed (Holt, 1998); (Dowling et al., 2013).

Training programs are formulated to improve interpersonal skills and are considered crucial for the overall performance of the expatriate during international assignments. In-depth training motivates and encourages the expatriate to socialize and pursue activities that will allow the new stress factors abroad become more bearable (Mendenhall et al. 1987) cited in (Chew, 2004). Training develops the appropriate behaviors needed for expatriates wellbeing and self - confidence.

Figure 2.3 Pre-Departure Training Approaches



Source: Adapted by Tiwari, 2013, p. 358, *Managing Human Resources in International Organisations*, Research India.

Mendenhall, Dunbar & Oddou, (1987) developed pre-departure training approaches that defines training requirements based on the expatriates' length of stay. The length of stay determines the

degree of training integration indicating the level of rigor which may either be low, moderate or high (Tiwari, 2013).

An expatriate who is assigned for one month or less will be provided with one-week training known as information giving approach. These include area briefings, use of interpreters, books and survival level language training. Assignments that are two to twelve months requires one to four weeks of training known as affective approach. The affective approach includes cultural assimilator training, language training, role play, case study exercise and stress reduction training. Lastly, assignments that are between one to three years require training of one to two months known as immersion approach. The immersion approach consists of training at an assessment center, field experience, simulations, sensitivity training and extensive language training (Ntshona, 2007; Tiwari, 2013).

According to Dowling et al. (2013), an acceptance and understanding on part of the expatriate regarding the host country culture is required or they are expected to face many challenges during the assignment. Research by Dowling et al. (2013) confirm that cultural awareness training is the most common type of pre-departure training. Organisations that provided language training confirm that there was huge improvement in the performance of expatriates because it allowed them to integrate well with host country nationals and culture which created a positive image of the host company (Rugman & Rodgetts, 2003) cited in (Vogel, 2006).

Tung (1998) cited in (Dowling et al., 2013) recommends the following attributes when decisions are made about pre-departure training.

- Training should be for the purpose of continuous life-long learning and not a program that will last for a short period.
- Greater provision for foreign language skills and training
- An emphasis in the area of communication ability, the expatriate is expected to be bicultural and multi-lingual.
- Cross-cultural training adds value by supporting diversity management
- To facilitate effective performance in the host country, the expatriate's position should be realistic

2.6.3 Practical Assistance

It cannot be overstated the importance of providing practical assistance to the expatriate prior and during the international assignment. The human resource department plays a pivotal role in ensuring a smooth process is followed and maintained to assist expatriates through their journey as international assignees.

In a study of 31 expatriates in Asia found that expatriates who have no support from home country had resulted in a supposed breach of psychological contract between the expatriate and the organisation that also left a negative impact on the return of investment (Dowling et al., 2013, p. 182). The study also found inadequate support from human resources such as absence of mobility proficiency and poor attitude toward the international assignees from human resource staff. The study found that human resource department assisted only at the beginning of the assignment. Another issue found in the study was expatriates did not know who to contact to seek information or advice whilst abroad. Expatriates' would seek assistance from various departments which was inconvenient and cumbersome (Dowling et al., 2013).

Expatriates' must be given sufficient training to acquire the necessary skills that will assist them to deal with pressures of culture shock in the host country. Training alleviates other challenges expatriates will face during the assignment and may avoid their pre-mature return (Shay & Tracey, 1997) cited in (Vogel, 2006).

2.6.4 Culture Shock

Expatriates exposed to a new environment and work culture produces multiple reactions known as 'culture shock' (Oberg, 1960) cited in (Nikolaeva, 2010; Naeem et al, 2015). These may consist of the following reactions:

- Feeling confused
- Anxiety and stress
- Frustration
- Feeling isolated
- Depressed
- Displaying inappropriate social behavior

The exposure to foreign environments can create a sense of unpleasantness, or surprise that is not welcomed. The reason for this feeling is attributed to preconceived expectations about the country that did not correspond with the expatriates' actual experiences or reality (Oberg, 1960) cited in (Naeem et al, 2015). Various researchers redefined the term culture shock as confirmed by research conducted by Naeem et al, (2015). The term 'culture fatigue' was preferred by Guthrie (1975), Smalley (1963) described the term as 'language shock' referring to communication barrier and Bock, (1970) suggested a feeling of anxiety by the inability to comprehend and control the behavior of other people (Naeem et al., 2015).

2.6.5 Phases in Culture Shock

Culture shock can be described in the form of a 'U Curve', moving from a feeling of excitement to a downward curve due to the feeling of not being able to adjust (Barsoux, 2003) cited in (Naeem et al., 2015).

- Phase 1: Initial stage known as the 'honeymoon' stage. Expatriates are excited and optimistic about being in a new environment and have positive feedback (Dowling, 2004); (Webber, 2015).
- Phase 2: Second stage is fraught with frustration and irritation; the expatriate finds difficulty in executing their tasks.
- Phase 3: The third stage refers to 'fight or flight' syndrome (Barsoux, 2003). The expatriate complains about the host culture and expresses dissatisfaction.
- Phase 4: The final stages represents a feeling of joy and acceptance of the new environment and culture. The expatriate adjusts to the new culture and environment (Naeem et al., 2105).

To adequately support the expatriate in the journey of international assignments, cross-cultural training is critical to prevent 'culture shock'. Training is not the determining factor of success or failure, the expatriate must also demonstrate the impetus to learn and acquire new skills to gain an advantage whilst being in unfamiliar surroundings. Pre-departure training is crucial to the overall result of the international assignment because it prepares the expatriate for many challenges in the host country. Apart from the stress and frustration of being in a foreign environment, expatriates are expected to achieve goals and objectives of the organisation and execute their duties diligently and efficiently (Dowling et al., 2013; Naeem et al., 2015).

2.7 Phase 3: On-Assignment Support

Continuous support and constant communication with expatriates about changes and developments in the home and host country are key factors for success in international assignments agreed by many researchers (Chowanec & Newstrom, 1991), cited in (Vogel, 2006; Ntshona, 2007; Dowling, 2013; Kartika & Lee, 2014; Webber, 2015). Training should thus be continuous process and not limited to pre-departure training. Expatriates are faced with numerous challenges during international assignments and reality sets in upon arrival in the host country. Challenges such as communication problems directly related to the host country language and culture shock refer to ‘acculturation’ (Abbott et al., 2006), cited in (Mnengisa, 2017). The circumstances and challenges experienced by the expatriates are seldom understood by Head Office who set unrealistic expectations in terms of productivity and time of delivery (Dhrampal, 2013) cited in (Mnengisa, 2017). Researchers suggest that an on-site mentor will improve expatriates experience in the host country. (Osman-Gani, 2000; Feldman & Bolino, 1999 cited in (Mnengisa, 2017). According to Woo (2017) the role of a mentor is to provide international assignees with vocational and psychosocial support whilst abroad.

2.7.1 Expatriate Management

Human resource management play a pivotal role ensuring that expatriates adjust to the host country environment and successfully completes the international assignment. According to Kong & Wu (2016, p. 11), “expatriation is considered as a process from the perspective of international human resource management (IHRM)”. The success of the assignment is dependent on efforts of the organisation and expatriate. The perceived direct support from the organisation is important to encourage concerted efforts from expatriate’s to successfully adapt to their new environment. If expatriates do not perceive support from the organisation, they may not feel that it is necessary to extend efforts to adjust to the host country environment (Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010).

The following recommendations were made on effectively managing expatriates during global mobility (Barton & Brishko (1998) cited in Vogel (2006):

- The use of mentors to keep expatriates informed which creates a support structure
- Use technology to keep in touch with expatriates (web links, video conferencing, emails)
- Provide expatriates with career counselling

- Build strong in-country relationships
- Provide support with spouse employment in-case of long term assignments
- Particular attention should be given to spouse and children
- Source assimilation mentors
- Scrutinize global mobility policies and procedures

The organisation and expatriates are impacted by tax laws with regards to frequent trips back home and the expense of maintaining dual property. The human resource manager needs to decide on the number of home trips required as well as the duration of leave (Vogel, 2006). Support should also be provided with regards to completing tax returns on behalf of the expatriate. The organisation should be in contact with the expatriate on a frequent basis (Webber, 2015). Literature also suggests that an expatriate should be contacted telephonically on a weekly basis for the first two months and on a monthly basis thereafter for the first year to maintain support and communication (Fitzgerald & Turner, 1997) cited in (Vogel, 2006). The Global Expatriate Study suggests that organisations must relieve expatriate fears regarding increasing political pressures in the world so that their attention is focused on increased productivity during the international assignment. Employees do not have a sense of mental security and are less productive when they do not receive adequate information about health and safety concerns in the host country. According to the study, to create a sense of security, expatriates expect their organisations to keep them abreast of any changes or information surrounding adverse host country conditions through the use of security notices, contingency plans and guidelines regarding emergency situations (Britt, 2002) cited in (Vogel, 2006).

2.7.2 Diversity Management

According to Gotsis and Korte (2015) “cultural diversity in the workplace reflects the existent demographic, social and cultural differences on a societal level” (Gotsis & Korte, 2015) cited in Mateescu, 2017, p. 23). Global organisations are culturally diverse and require the ability of international managers to accommodate differences among a variety of people. Diversity management is considered a strategic process used as a mechanism to manage a diverse workforce. These attributes may include addressing certain stereotypes in the workplace, people’s perceptions, and assumptions to enable the organisation to manage attitudes, behavior and ultimately reduce barriers to achieve the benefits through people (Danullis et al., 2004).

Diversity comprises of various human traits such as race, gender, age, language, religion, ethnicity, cultural values and the socio-economic status. Other characteristics include an

individual marital status, their sexual orientation, physical ability and political affiliations. An increase in globalization and the ever changing organizational structures, forms the catalyst for managing a diverse workforce in a turbulent environment. The ability to effectively manage a diverse workforce can be considered one of the biggest challenges faced by organisations (Sonnenschein, 1997) cited in (Danullis et al., 2004).

According to Pralica, (2004) an organisation that adapts diversity strategies can be noticed when the following traits are implemented (Danullis et al., 2004):

- Diversity forms an integral part of the strategic goals and objectives within the organisation
- Diversity is regarded as a factor that contributes to the effectiveness of the organisation
- Diversity that consists of people from different backgrounds that are employed in all sections within the organisation
- Diversity is a long term organizational strategic investment that can be complex and involves constructive conflict situations
- Diversity drives organizational behavior through the values instilled
- Objectives of diversity is the role of top management that is shared to all at grassroots level within an organisation.
- Employees are accountable for their actions
- Employees recognize that the organisation is known for setting the standard for best practices with regards to diversity in the workplace.

Employers recognize the importance of recruiting a diverse workforce to align to the changing demographics locally and internationally. According to Lambert (2000), cited in Dessler (2013), culturally diverse organisations have a positive impact on productivity. Organisations need to develop voluntary diversity management programs to encourage a multicultural and dynamic workforce. According to Richardson (2005) “it is necessary for companies to make diversity a constituent of the corporate culture and having a ‘global mindset’ is essential in order to manage cultural diversity” (Richardson, 2005) cited in (Aspvik, 2017, p. 10).

According to Dessler (2013), there are five distinct set of activities that organisations can implement to improve diversity management:

- Provide highly effective and strong leadership: Requires a leader who models a change agent and encourages the need for change in a managing diversity. Competitive advantage is gained through employee diversity.
- Evaluate the current situation: Asses current employee perceptions, behavior and attitudes with regards to diversity management by using tools such as surveys and employee evaluation.
- Diversity training: Employee education and training forms an integral starting point for managing diversity in the workplace.
- Organizational culture and management systems: Performance based appraisals for managers should include their ability to reduce intergroup conflict as a criterion for success.
- Asses the diversity management program: To evaluate if the diversity management program improved employee attitudes by using employee attitude surveys as a measure.

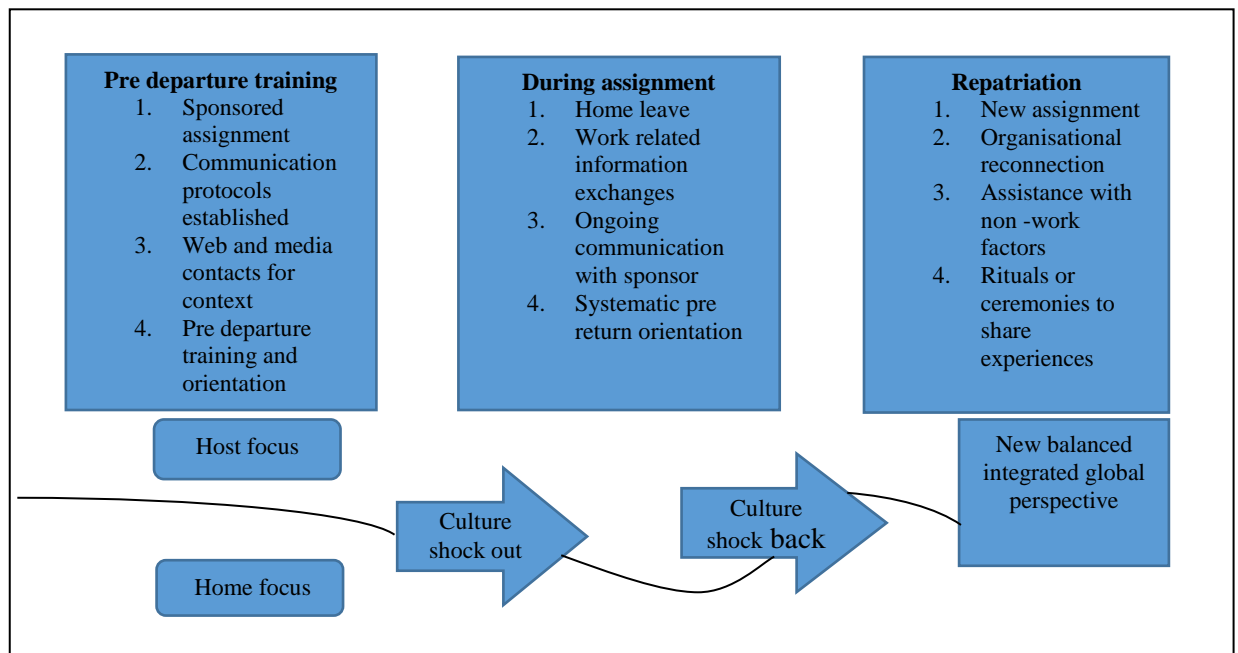
Organisations that manage diversity receive internal and external benefits (Urwin et al., 2013) cited in (Rohwerder, 2017). According to Wright, (2014) the “internal benefits can improve creativity and problem solving, results in better decisions, innovation and greater flexibility” (Wright, 2014) cited in (Rohwerder, 2017, p. 4). The external benefits include “reduced costs, improved resourcing of talented personnel, better products and services, and enhanced corporate image” (Wright, 2014) cited in (Rohwerder, 2017, p. 4).

2.8 Repatriation

Expatriation includes repatriation which refers to the re-entry of expatriates into the home country (Dowling et al., 2013); (Tahir & Azhar, 2013) cited in (Diemer, 2016). Repatriation, also known as reverse culture shock, can be more difficult for the expatriate than initial departure to the host country. Repatriation needs to be managed well by organisations because it affects the ability to attract expatriates in the future (Dowling et al., 2013). According to Clague & Krupp (1978), repatriation is seen as insignificant due to the unspoken assumption of “Well they’re coming back home aren’t they?”, therefore expatriates should not encounter any adjustment issues or difficulties in a familiar environment (Clague & Krupp, 1978), cited in (Ntshona, 2007, p. 39). The assumption denotes that some organisations may not initiate repatriation strategies due to the perceived idea that employees are going to a familiar

environment and repatriation is not necessary in an expatriation process. To enable the effective control of transfers globally and retain repatriates, effective repatriation is of paramount importance (Kang & Shen, 2013). An ineffective repatriation process can be very costly for organisations and the international assignee. Employees may be concerned about their future within the organisation and fear being displaced including possible career stagnation (Kang & Shen, 2013). Organisations need to appoint mentors and assign them to expatriates to facilitate employees work expectations and minimize stress upon repatriation. (Arojan & Brewster, 2007) cited in (Kang & Shen, 2013). According to Vogel, (2006), repatriation should be viewed as the last link that integrates the four phases of the expatriate process from selection, cross cultural training and support including successful completion of the international assignment and lastly the reintegration of the expatriate to their home country. When expatriates are abroad, they are remunerated well, occupy senior positions and assume high status but upon repatriation they face the reality of returning to their old positions. Organisation may not know how to utilize their new skills or reap the full benefit of the investment made for employees. To become a global organisation and one that continuously learns, requires the right employee for international assignments, adequate pre-departure training and employees that are repatriated with utmost care. It is also imperative that employees are valued for their contribution in terms of new skills and to transfer new skills in the home country (Vogel, 2006).

Figure 2.4 Repatriation activities and practices



Source: Adapted from, Dowling et al., 2013, International Human Resource Management, Cengage Learning

Figure 2.4 depicts the various repatriation activities and practices that organisations manage for international assignments. According to Dowling et al. (2013), a successful repatriation consists of three phases. The phases include, pre-departure training, activities during assignments and repatriation.

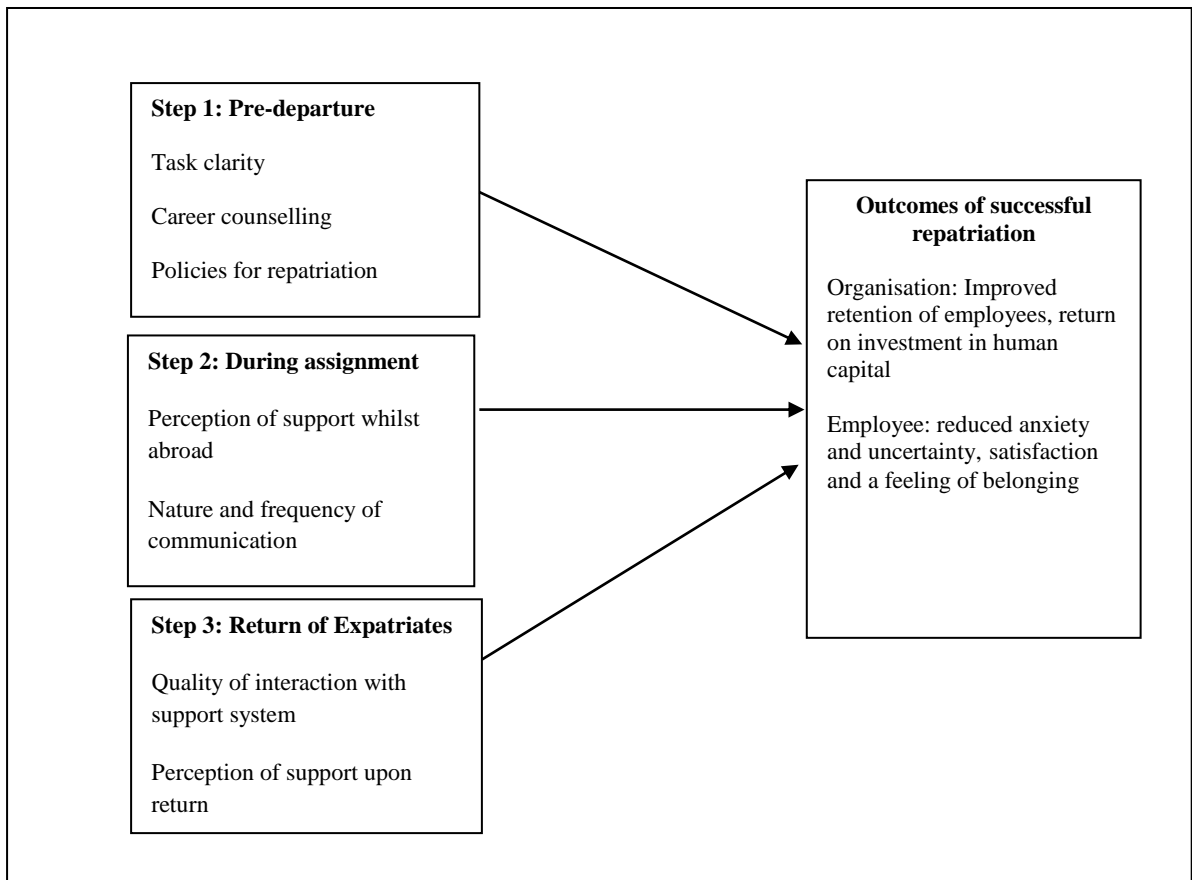
2.8.1 Three phases in repatriation

- Phase 1: Organisations may assign a mentor to the expatriate before the assignment. The mentors are held accountable for staying in touch with the expatriate to share and update them on the overall situation of the home country. Communication is vital and it may either be formal or it may be informal. Organisations may offer web based information and media links to expatriates to keep updated with circumstances in the home country.
- Phase 2: Periodic return to the home country, continuous communication, information exchange about work can expedite a warm return. Periodic return helps the expatriate and their family to reconnect with colleagues, friends and families.

- Phase 3: Adjustments to the organisation, family, job related factors and career level.

The objective of repatriation is ensuring successful amalgamation of the home environment to the host environment experiences to prevent re-entry problems (Dowling et al., 2013). In a study conducted by GMAC-Global Relocation Services in 2011 confirmed that “the average annual turnover for all employees was 8%” (Dowling et al., 2013, p. 192).

Figure 2.5 Model for effective repatriation



Source: Adapted from, Jassawalla et al., 2004, Model for effective repatriation cited in Sulaymonov, 2017, p. 2

According to Jassawalla et al. (2004), an effective repatriation model includes three distinct steps. The model (Figure 2.5) recognizes steps that are taken prior to departure, during the international assignment and upon return of the expatriate for an effective repatriation to the home country (Jassawalla et al., 2004) cited in (Sulaymonov, 2017).

Step 1: Pre Departure

In the first step, factors such as clarity of task, career counselling and repatriation policies reduce stress and anxiety whilst the employee is abroad. It also allows the expatriate to ease transition back into the home country. To reduce negative expectations performance expectations, need to be clearly communicated (Jassawalla et al, 2004; Dowling et al., 2013).

Step 2: During assignment

Regular communication with expatriates is important to improve the moral and ensures that they are kept well informed about company changes. Communication also allows the employee to feel a sense of belonging and connectedness to the organisation when they are abroad (Dowling et al, 2013).

Step 3: Return of expatriates

The last step has a major impact on how the international assignment ends and includes the quality of communication and the perception of support by the organisation to the expatriates. Support provided to employees to the very end of the assignment affirms that employees are valued when they are in foreign land or in their home country.

2.8.2 Requirements for successful international assignment

According to Swaak (1997), the following requirements for successful international assignments are recommended:

- Organisations need the support and involvement of senior management in developing a succession plan on a global scale.
- Select candidates to form part of the management development process
- Ensure that mentors are well trained and knowledgeable to execute their function
- The expatriate should be part of their own career development process
- Expatriates must be treated as an investment within the organisation. Expatriates are also able to share their knowledge among other employees upon repatriation (Swaak, 1997) cited in (Sulaymonov, 2017).

According to Vogel (2006), a repatriation agreement from the inception of the international assignment should be development. The repatriation agreement is between the organisation and the expatriate to create a re-entry process, assist in managing objectives, goals and expectations. (Frazee, 1997 & Allen et al., 1998) cited in (Ntshona, 2007).

2.8.3 Expatriation impact on career

According to Stahl et al, (2002), evidence suggest that expatriates are dissatisfied with organizations repatriation systems and processes and feel that returning to their old job is inadequate. This may also lead to decrease in the employee's motivation at work (Stahl et al, 2002) cited in (Reiche et al., 2008). Expatriates' anticipate better job opportunities when they return to make use of their newly acquired skills obtained abroad (Riusala et al., 2000) cited in (Ntshona. 2007). Expatriate's often occupy more senior positions with authority but return to their old position lacking status and authority which results in feelings of despair. It is compulsory to support and retain human capital upon repatriation (Ntshona, 2007).

2.8.4 Repatriation Strategies

Repatriation strategies should be defined before an employee accepts an international assignment to reduce any expectations of career advancement upon conclusion of the assignment (Vogel, 2006). The following specific questions must be addressed before an expatriate accepts an international offer:

- Will I get a good job when I return? Will my career be enhanced?
- Will my newly acquired skills and perspective be valued and well utilized in the home organisation?
- If I do my best to serve my assigned affiliate will I burn bridges with future potential bosses back home because of frequent conflict arising between the affiliate and headquarters? (Allen & Alvarez, 1998) cited in (Vogel, 2006, p. 83)

The purpose of the questions is to prevent expectations among expatriates upon repatriation other than what is agreed between the expatriate and management prior to accepting the offer. (Allen & Alvarez, 1998) cited in (Vogel, 2006).

2.9 Knowledge Transfer

According to research there are five categories of repatriate knowledge (Fink et al, 2005) cited in (Dowling et al., 2013).

- Knowledge that is market specific: The social, political and economic local system, local language and various localized customs.
- Personal skills: The ability to make spontaneous decisions, being flexible, confident, tolerant and multi-cultural knowledge.

- Job specific management skills: Problem solving, project management and communication skills
- Network knowledge: Networking by meeting diverse people such as suppliers, host country personnel, clients and other international assignees.
- General management capacity: Greater accountability and exposure to other areas of the organisation.

Research suggest that it is imperative for organisations to develop support programs for expatriates to retain valuable skills and knowledge gained through international assignments and to expedite repatriation processes to gain competitive advantage (Bennett, 1993) cited in (Ntshona, 2007).

2.10 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to review existing literature to meet the objectives of the study. The objective of the study was to analyze the perceptions of expatriates and HR managers at Transnet Port Terminals based on expatriation challenges. Existing literature identified the importance of incorporating an effective expatriation process consisting of four phases that include selection criteria of suitable candidates, pre-departure training, on-assignment support and repatriation, to successfully manage global mobility. The contributing factors affecting expatriate failure and expatriate success were also analyzed confirming the importance of an effective expatriate process. The importance of cross-cultural training and diversity management were also explored in managing expatriates on international assignments.

The following research questions will be answered based on the review of literature explored in this chapter:

- What are the perceptions of Transnet Port Terminals expatriates on the selection criteria used for international assignments?
- What are the perceptions of Transnet Port Terminals expatriates on pre-departure training?
- What are the perceptions of the on-assignment support activities received by expatriates?
- What are the perceptions of Transnet Port Terminals expatriates on repatriation?

In Chapter three, the researcher discusses the methodology used in the study to answer the research questions and objectives.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

There is no agreement on the definition of research itself as it may mean various things to a diverse group of people (Amaratunga, et al, 2002) cited in (Ntshona, 2007). The following definitions of research are identified in literature (Rajasekar, 2013, p. 2)

- Research is known as an investigation, analysis or a process of enquiry
- Research is systematic process and methodical in nature
- Through research, knowledge is increased

According to Rajasekar (2013) basic research is an analysis to understand a particular process, behavior or phenomenon and is also known as theoretical research. The main objectives in research is to gather information, determine the cause and effect relationship between an event, phenomenon, processes, discover new and intriguing facts, develop scientific mechanisms, theories and concepts to understand problems (Dowling et al., 2013).

3.1.1 Research Methods and Research Methodology

Research methods are described as several procedures, patterns and systems used in conducting research. In a research study, the various methods used by the researcher are known as research methods. The researcher is able to collect samples and data to assist in solving a problem or phenomenon. Research methods are considered scientific in nature, are planned and include theoretical processes and techniques (Creswell, 2013). Research studies based on scientific methods requires explanations based on collected facts, substantiated by experimentation and observation and not only on reasoning (Rajasekar, 2013).

Research methodology allows for problems to be solved systematically and is considered a science of studying how a research study is going to be implemented. The procedures used by a researcher to in describe and predict a problem or phenomenon is known as research methodology (Creswell, 2013; Rajasekar, 2013; Chonco, 2014).

The aim of research methodology in this study is to define research methods that will be implemented to prove or negate the research intention. The literature review in the previous chapter has implied that the selection, pre-departure training, on-assignment support for expatriates and repatriation are pivotal best practices in the area of International Human

Resource Management. The objective would be to test the concept against the research findings from Transnet Port Terminals international assignees and human resource personnel to determine the level of compliance as per global best practices identified in literature. The research findings from the questionnaire will further test the proposition.

3.2 Types of Research

According to Creswell (2013), there are three broad research approaches, qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. Qualitative and quantitative studies signify completely different ends on a continuum because a study may either be more qualitative than quantitative or vice versa. Mixed research method however lies in the middle and integrates elements of both quantitative and qualitative research approach. Quantitative and Qualitative research methods are further discussed below.

3.2.1 Quantitative Research

Quantitative research is an approach that is used to test theories by evaluating the correlation between variables, and data is analyzed through statistical measures (Creswell, 2013). Quantitative research allows the researcher to test theories through the means of statistical analysis (Webber, 2015). A quantitative method is also known as a scientific method that focuses on gathering information from a large population size, generating statistics but the feelings and emotional context of individuals are ignored. (Creswell 2013; Rahi, 2017). A qualitative method however is used to gather in-depth information of individual's feelings and emotions that is important to interpret which is ignored in a quantitative study (Rahi, 2017).

3.2.2 Qualitative research

The aim of qualitative research is to explore and understand the meaning that an individual or group of people ascribe to a problem which is either social or human in nature (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative research is beneficial in ascertaining the importance people attribute to an event that they experience (Boghan & Biklen, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln 2000) cited in (Dodge, 2011). Semi-structured questionnaires are used by researchers to characterize qualitative analysis that allows for an in depth understanding of the participant's deep seated feelings and thoughts about the area of study (Rovai et al., 2013) cited in (Diemer, 2016). Qualitative research allows the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the way expatriates view the world according to their lived experiences (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015) cited in (Bol & Peter, 2017). Qualitative research, "allows for rich and in depth analysis of data being researched and as it is the participant's interpretation of reality that accounts for much of the variation in the phenomenon

of interest, the data of interest should arise from the participant's point of view" (Bailey 2004) cited in (Ntshona 2007, p.48). Due to the lack for theories in various disciplines, qualitative methods requires research that generates theory instead of empirical testing (Boosen, 2015) cited in (Salomaa, 2017). According to Moustakas (1994) "qualitative research results in specific knowledge and personal stories that add depth and yields a rich description of human experiences that cannot be extracted from objective measures" (Moustakas, 1994) cited in (Rawls, 2016, p. 37).

The strength of qualitative research is that it occurs in a natural environment (Doolen, 2012) cited in (Moodley, 2014) and requires exploration (Stake, 1995) cited in (Dodge, 2011). Due to the characteristics of qualitative research and the small sample size, the researcher selected qualitative method because the aim is to collect in-depth data by exploring and interpreting the perceptions and experiences of expatriates' and Human Resource Managers.

3.3 Research Design

Research designs are known as forms of investigation within qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approach that creates the direction for processes in research design. Research designs are also known as 'strategies of inquiry' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) cited in (Creswell, 2013). There are five different qualitative designs, (narrative, grounded theory, ethnographies, case study and phenomenology (Creswell, 2013). The researcher chose case study as most suitable for this study. The reasons for selecting case study are further discussed below:

3.3.1 Case Study

In the field of psychology, case studies were the first type of research design used dating back to the 19th century (Mills, 2010) cited in (Starman, 2013). Although there is immense debate regarding the validity and accuracy of qualitative research, case study as a research method is receiving much credibility and suitability (Thomson, 2004) cited in (Chonco, 2014). Case studies are associated as qualitative research methodology, however may also be quantitative or consist of a mixture of qualitative and quantitative research approach. Qualitative research is associated with an interpretative paradigm that is characterized by individual experiences and meaning attributed to an individual. The researcher's subjective interpretation on a certain topic or situation plays a pivotal role in the results of the study (Starman, 2013).

The purpose of a case study is to apprehend how and why phenomena takes place through different perspectives, by zooming in on a specific aspect of a larger system (Bol & Peter,

2017). Case studies are also unique in that they provide the basis for story-telling (Bassey, 1999) cited in (Chonco, 2014). Data that is generated, contain valuable information that may be unnoticed by other research methodologies (Yin, 2003) cited in (Chonco, 2014).

According to (Yin 2009), there are five components for an effective design of a case study. These components consist of research questions, purpose of the study, unit analysis, linking data to the study and criteria used to interpret the findings. The components are discussed further:

3.3.1.1 Research questions

The first component is the type of questions the researcher will ask in the study. The questions may vary between “what”, “where”, “how” and “why” as it determines the appropriate research strategy that the researcher will adopt (Yin, 2009; Ponelis, 2015).

3.3.1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this case study is to understand the experiences and perceptions of Transnet Port Terminals international assignees that were based in Benin. This study will further understand the expatriate process challenges and determine Transnet Port Terminals adherence to processes on expatriation, underpinned by best practices available in literature.

3.3.1.3 Unit Analysis

According to Wessels and Thani (2014,) a unit analysis denotes the ‘what’ of a study. Confusion may arise as to what the term ‘unit’ may mean. Literature suggest that a ‘unit’ refers to the case of subject matter being researched the object that influence a case mutually. (Thomas, 2011) cited in (Sturman, 2013). Unit analysis thus refers to the object, phenomenon, process, entity, event or concepts (Babbie & Mouton 2001) cited in (Zongozzi, 2015). In this study, the unit analysis is the concept of ‘case study’, within the scope of expatriation process challenges at Transnet Port Terminals in Durban.

3.3.1.4 Data collected to the purpose of the study

The purpose of this component is to link the data collected to the purpose. Themes in the study emerge during the collection of data using the questionnaire. The researcher interprets that data and endeavors to match patterns from the data and link it to the purpose of the study.

3.3.1.5 Criteria used to interpret the findings from the study

The researcher interprets that findings by coding the data before developing themes. Once the themes were formulated, the researcher was able to deduce meaning from the data and suggest recommendations at Transnet Port Terminals for application and future research.

Researchers in a case study collect ample information using various data collection techniques and procedures that span over a period of time. In this study the researcher collected data using a semi-structure questionnaire through in-depth interviews and reviewed Transnet Port Terminals global mobility policy.

3.4 Population and Sample

The population, sample and sampling method used in the study are now discussed.

3.4.1 Population

The population is the entire collection of units or people in a given area the study will be conducted. A population consists of all objects of interest in a study (Bailey 2004) cited in (Ntshona 2007). According to Rahi (2017) a population is inclusive of all people or items a researcher wishes to interpret. In this study, the size of the population is ten and was determined by the total number of expatriates assigned to Benin including the HR managers who facilitated the entire expatriation process at the time of engagement.

3.4.2 Sample

A sample is a sub-set of the entire population selected to participate in a study (Dowling, 2013); (Diamantopoulos & Schlegelmich, 2004) cited in (Chonco, 2014). The total sample size for the study were ten participants that included international assignees to Benin and human resource management team involved in the expatriate process. The choice of ten participants was due to the limited number of expatriates as well as the limited number of HR managers based at TPT HQ. Due to the relatively small number of expatriates assigned to Benin and HR Managers responsible for global mobility at TPT HQ, the entire population of ten is the sample size.

3.4.3 Sampling Method

According to (Rahi 2017), sampling is a process of selecting a fragment of the population for purpose of an investigation. Non-probability sampling is applied in qualitative analysis. There are four distinct types of non-probability sampling methods namely, convenience sampling, snowball sampling, quota sampling and purposive or judgmental sampling (Creswell, 2013). The researcher has selected purposive sampling as the most suitable sampling method. Purposive sampling is defined as a process where the selection of individuals to participate in a study is dependent on the judgment of the researcher. Individuals that are selected are people who know about the phenomena being investigated. Purposive sampling is convenient and cost effective sampling technique (Creswell, 2013); (Rahi, 2017).

3.5 Research instrument

Research instruments provides a platform to collected data for the entire research study (Leedy & Ormrod 2010) cited in (Chonco, 2014). The researcher opted for an instrument that sufficiently addressed the research problem and objectives. The researcher chose to interview participants using a semi-structured questionnaire to answer critical questions for the case study.

3.5.1 Questionnaire

The researcher developed a semi-structured questionnaire that would be used to extract in-depth information to achieve the objectives of the study. Semi-structured questionnaires consist of close ended and open ended questions to allow the researcher to probe and yield in-depth information (Creswell, 2013). The research questionnaire in this study consisted of biographical, open ended and closed ended questions to extract in-depth information from all participants to meet the objectives of the study. The questionnaire consisted of two parts, section A and section B. The reason for two sections was to target the perceptions of the expatriate and the perceptions of Human Resource Managers regarding the expatriate process at Transnet Port Terminal and obtain a more holistic overview. Section A was development for expatriates and section B was developed for the Human Resource Managers.

Interviews were arranged with every participant and the researcher documented every response on the questionnaire. The data obtained from the pilot study provided a framework and a starting point which was used to develop final interview questions. The sample of the questionnaire is made available in **Appendix D**.

3.6 Interview Method

To meet the objectives of the research study, a semi-structured interview was applied. Semi-structured interviews are the most common and effective method in qualitative research studies. It entails predetermined questioning that are guided by themes to stimulate elaborate responses from participants (Aslvesson and Deetz, 2010), cited in (Chonco, 2014). The objective of the questionnaire is to discover the perceptions of each participant and this method was deemed most appropriate as it would understand the participant's perspectives and experience. Through face to face interviews, the researcher is able to build rapport, trust and collaboration from the participants (Leedy and Ormod, 2010) cited in (Chonco, 2014). The data obtained from the questionnaire was analyzed by the researcher qualitatively.

3.6.1 Interview technique

The researcher was able to probe and drill down for further clarity to understand the perceptions of expatriates and managers on expatriation challenges. The interview questions were open ended to gather sufficient information as possible. The questionnaire also consisted of biographical questions for background analysis, questions that provoked practices, perceptions, and opinions and questions that prompted recommendations for improvement.

3.7 Study site

The study site for the collection of data was Transnet Port Terminals Head Office in Durban. All interviews were conducted in meeting rooms free from distractions and interruptions. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather in-depth information. The researcher made appointments with all participants and scheduled specific dates and times at Transnet Port Terminals premises to conduct the interview. When a participant was not present for the interview, a telephonic conversation using the questionnaire was used. Participant's that were unavailable due to time constraints answered the questionnaire and emailed the responses back to the researcher.

3.8 Data reliability and validity

According to Saunders & Lewis (2012) it is imperative that findings in a research study be reliable, valid and free from factors that may hinder the credibility and reliability of the findings. To maintain data reliability and validity the research questionnaire and semi-structured interview were pilot-tested by the researcher. Pilot testing is used when it is difficult to presume how participants in the study will interpret the interview questions (Becker, 2018). The researcher required two participants to participate in the pilot test. The participants were managers at Transnet Port Terminals and were selected by the researcher using the convenience sampling method. The inclusion in the sample is dependent on the judgment of the researcher and the participants of the pilot test were selected based on their close proximity to the researcher at Transnet Port Terminals. According to Creswell (2013), participants selected in convenience sampling are based on the judgment of the researcher. The objective of the pilot test was to determine if the questions were easy to interpret and where necessary would serve as a benchmark to construct the final questionnaire for the study. By initiating a pilot test, the various questions that would be included in the final questionnaire will be validated.

3.8.1 Methodology used for the pilot test

3.8.1.1 Questionnaire

The semi-structured questionnaire was used to interview two participants and face validity was maintained by requesting an employee from the Information Technology Department at Transnet Port Terminals to comment on the questionnaire. The researcher required two participants, participant one, to respond to section A of the pilot test pertaining to expatriates and participant two responded to section B pertaining to Human Resources Managers. The interview was conducted in advance. Each participant was sent a meeting request and upon acceptance of the meeting the participants were interviewed and their responses to the questions were noted on the questionnaire. The participants were in agreement that the proposed questionnaire would provide valid and reliable data from expatriates and Human Resource Managers.

3.8.1.2 Structure and results of the questionnaire (Section A)

Transcripts for the pilot test are available in **Appendix C**.

(a) Biographical information: The biographical consisted of information that would generate data about the expatriates' level of position at TPT, gender, marital status, number of children, duration of the assignment and age.

(b) Semi-structured questions: Questions were constructed based on the expatriate process cycle derived from literature. The researcher constructed questions based on the selection criteria, pre-departure training, on-assignment support and repatriation based on the objectives of the study. The participant understood all the questions and stated that the questionnaire would provide valid information based on the four phases of the expatriate process cycle. The participant did however suggest some adjustments to the questionnaire to answer pertinent questions not included in the pilot test. The adjustments are discussed in the pilot interview report in section 3.9.1 below.

3.8.1.3 Structure and results of the questionnaire (Section B)

The questions in the pilot test consisted of general questions about the administration of the expatriation process within the Human Resource department. The questions focused on the strengths and challenges experienced by Human Resource Managers responsible for administering the expatriation process. It also explored opportunities for improvement and probed if Human Resources Management adequately prepared expatriates for international assignments. The participant understood all questions and stated that no adjustments were

needed as the questions were easy to interpret and would yield the desired information from Human Resource Managers.

3.9 Pilot Test: Semi-structured Interview

The researcher conducted the pilot test interview face to face using the semi-structured questionnaire. The face validity was determined by a participant from the Information Technology Department. There was consensus from both participants that the questions were easy to interpret and not insensitive because it did not consist of questions about religion or cultural traditions. To respect anonymity and confidentiality of the pilot test participants, their names were not revealed, instead they would be known as participant one and participant two.

3.9.1 Pilot Interview Report

Participant one, suggested amendments to the questionnaire (Section A) to answer pertinent questions. The following questions were added to the final questionnaire:

- Question 14 on cross-cultural training
- Question 32 on advice to potential expatriates
- Question 33 on expatriate opinion of current global mobility process and policy
- Question 34 on success of the assignment
- Question 35 on additional comments

The above questions were added to the final questionnaire to gather in-depth data to achieve the objectives of the study. The option of audio taping was not considered because some of the interviews would be telephonic or the questionnaire would be completed by the participant and emailed back to the researcher due to the risk of the participant not being available. The recording of the information would also restrict open communication and may create tension among participants who did not wish to be recorded.

The objective of the pilot test was to collect valuable information and determine if amendments was needed to produce the final questionnaire. The pilot test being the initial research instrument and the final questionnaire with suggested amendments, was considered a reliable and a valid measure for the purpose of the study.

3.10 Data analysis

The data obtained was analyzed to allow the researcher to suggest appropriate themes emanating from the study so that possible solutions, recommendations or answers to the research questions could be reached (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative research analysis is considered the most challenging characteristic of research methods (Sofaer, 2002 & Basit 2003), cited in (Mnengisa 2017). To allow the researcher to make sense of their experiences and process challenges of participants, thematic analysis was the most suitable way to analyze the data. Thematic analysis will now be discussed below.

3.10.1 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is described as a method used to methodically identify, organize and understand various patterns or themes that create meaning throughout the entire data by analyzing the participant's collective experiences (Braun, Clark & Terry, 2014) cited in (Mnengisa, 2017).

3.10.2 Five steps in Thematic Analysis

There are five steps in thematic analysis (Braun et al, 2014), as cited in (Mnengisa, 2017). To make sense of the data collected, the researcher applied the following five steps in the study.

Step 1: Understand and familiarize the Data

In step one, the researcher will peruse the data several times to understand the gist of the data and to make notes on specific points of interest by breaking them down into smaller parts (Braun et al., 2014) cited in (Mnengisa, 2017).

Step 2: Coding

Coding is a process of assigning a brief tag or short phrase to highlight important elements and key ideas of the data, and to convey the information to the researcher (Mnengisa, 2017). Aggregating of visual data and texts into smaller groups of information is a process known as coding. (Creswell, 2013) as cited in (Mnengisa, 2017).

Step 3: Searching for themes

In this step, the researcher discovers possible themes from the data by grouping the various codes together. By identifying themes in the data the researcher is able to describe what was found through the interview process (Hossain, 2011; Creswell, 2013) cited in (Mnengisa, 2017).

Step 4: Review of themes

During this stage the researcher will establish if the themes from the data correlate with the coded information from the previous step (Braun et al., 2014) cited in (Mnengisa, 2017). This can be achieved by going back to the coded information and creating a story for every theme. According to Creswell (2013), the researcher may want to evaluate the individual experiences of each participant and the framework for each experience. In this instance the researcher reviewed the various process challenges experienced by the expatriates and Human Resource Managers and the context related to each of the process challenges.

Step 5: Define and name the themes

The researcher develops an overall analysis through thorough analysis of each theme from the data (Braun et al., 2014) cited in (Mnengisa, 2017). The aim of this stage is for the researcher to create definitions for each theme identified from the data. An example of such theme may be 'pre -departure training'. In this step the researcher is able to interpret the information received from the data (Creswell, 2013).

Once the five steps have been implemented, the researcher produces a report through thematic analysis. (Braun et al., 2014) cited in (Mnengisa, 2017). The researcher will unpack the data using texts and tables. The information documented will relate back to the research questions to formulate a complete academic manuscript.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Informed consent form: The researcher received written consent to conduct the study from all participants at Transnet Port Terminals. The participants were provided an opportunity to participate in the study willingly and were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time during the study should they wish to do so.

Confidentiality: The researcher assured all participants confidentiality and anonymity of the study. Each participant shared their personal experiences and perceptions, therefore confidentiality was maintained at all times. The participants would also be informed of any potential risks of the study. All data collected in the study will be anonymous and kept securely.

3.12 Conclusion

In this chapter the researcher has documented the research design and research methodology used in the study and highlighted the reasons for the chosen method. The chapter also detailed how data will be collected, the instrument that will be used and confirmed how the data will be analyzed by the researcher to meet the objectives of the study. In the preceding chapter the

researcher presents the findings of study and provides an overview of the various themes identified during research.

Chapter 4 Presentation of Results

4.1 Introduction

In this Chapter the results of the findings are presented. The researcher applied thematic analysis to gather information from participants in response to the semi-structured interviews. The researcher identified themes and sub-themes derived from the all research questions during data analysis. The study identified twenty themes and sixty four sub themes listed in tables 4.1 to 4.5. Responses to the research questions by each participant are listed verbatim. The demographic profile of the expatriates and themes will now be presented.

4.2 Demographic Profile of Expatriates

The following demographic data of expatriates were obtained from questionnaire.

Figure 4.1 Gender

Figure 4.1 represents gender profile of the expatriates in the research study.

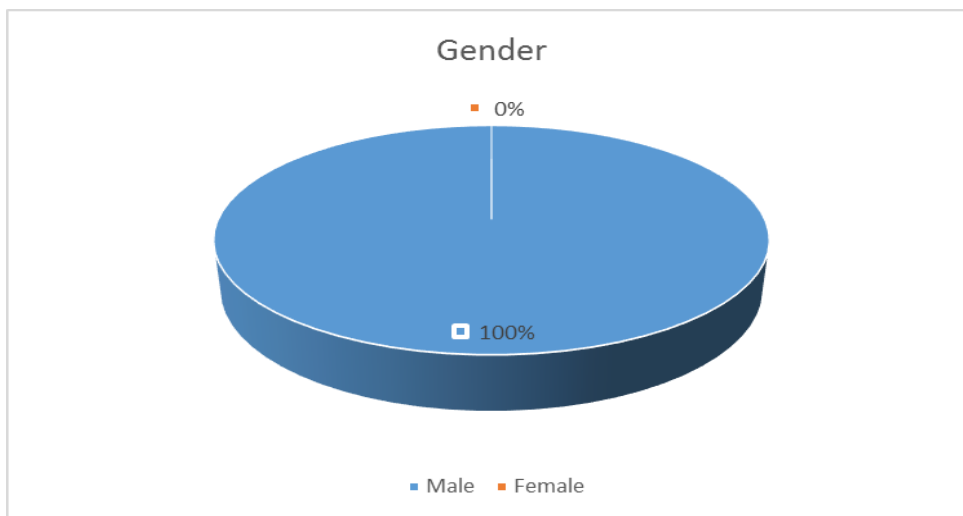
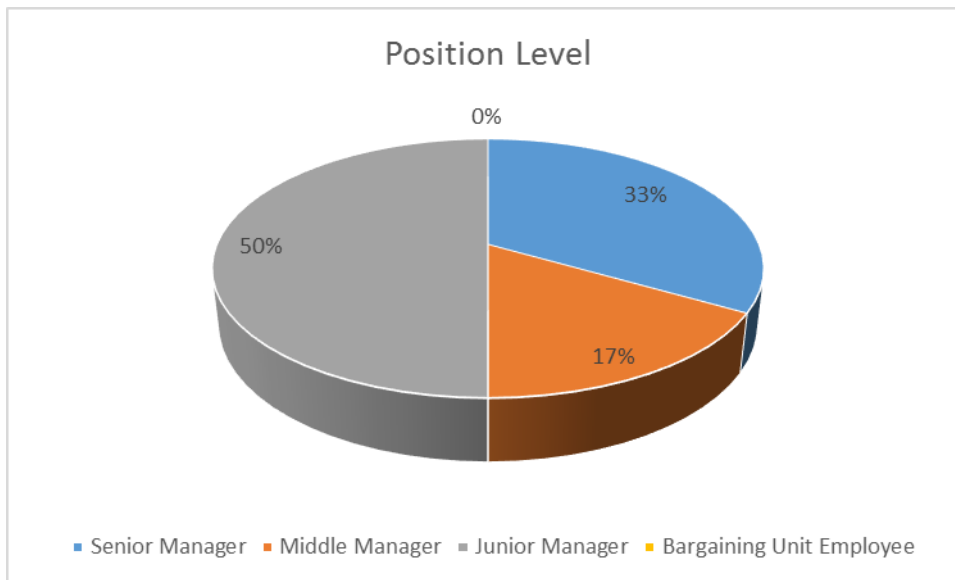


Figure 4.1 confirms that 100% of the expatriates in the research study were male only.

Figure 4.2. Position Level

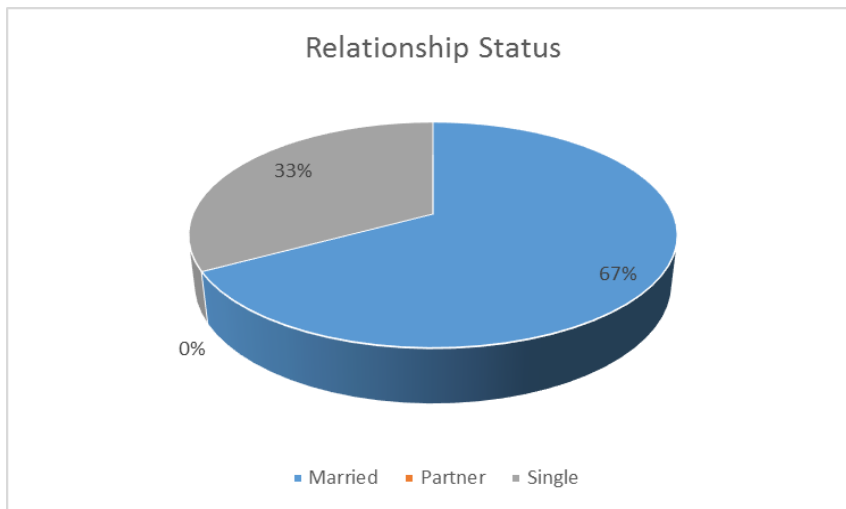
Figure 4.2 represents the various positions held by the expatriates in the home country



According to the results, 50 % of the expatriates were Junior Managers, 33 % were Senior Managers and 17 % were Middle Managers. The study also confirmed that Bargaining Unit Employees also known as Junior Officers at TPT, were not assigned to international assignments.

Figure 4.3 Relationship Status

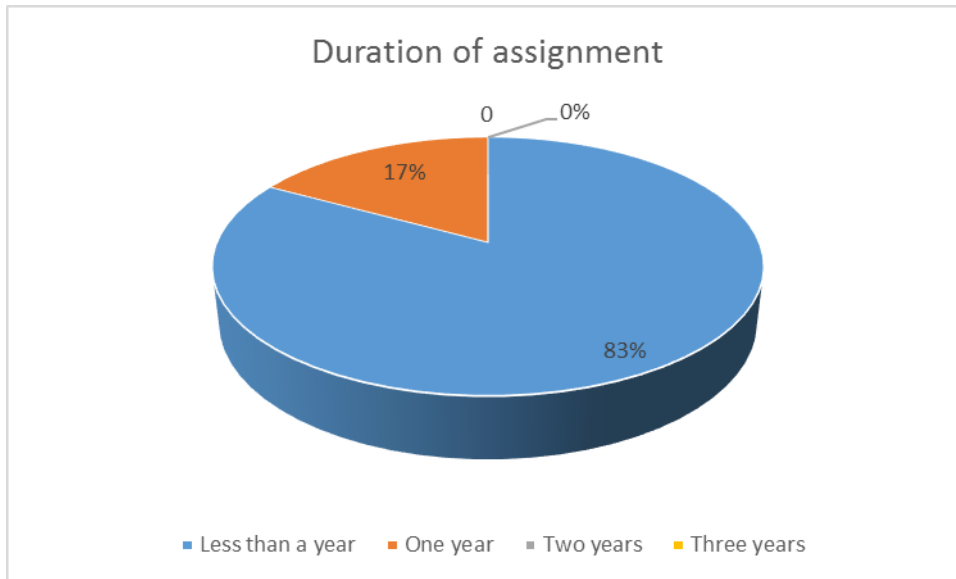
Figure 4.3 represents the relationship status of all expatriates in the study.



According to the results, the study confirmed that 67% of the expatriates are married and 33 % were single.

Figure 4.4 Duration of Assignment

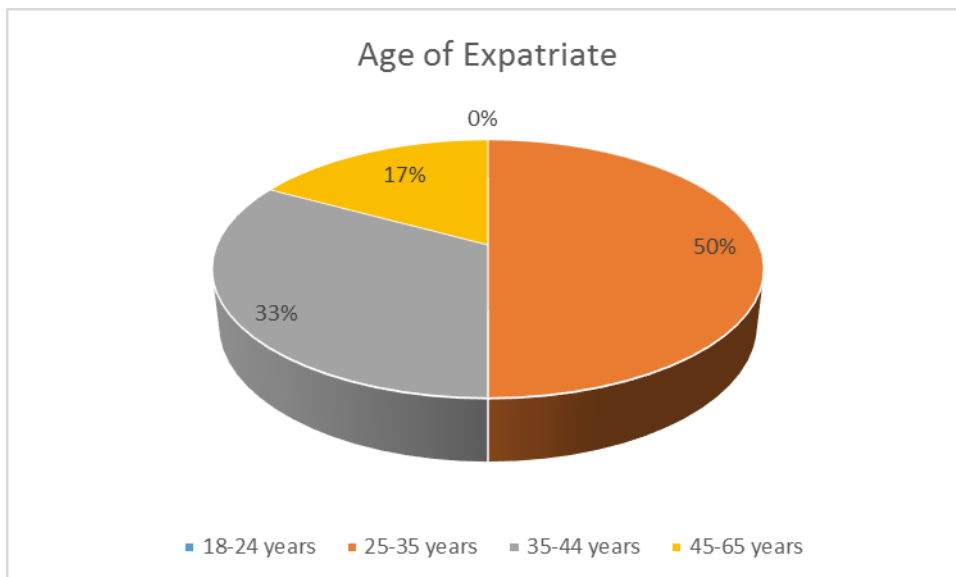
Figure 4.4 represents the total duration spent by each expatriate in Benin.



The study confirmed 83% of expatriates spent less than a year in Benin whilst 17% spent one year.

Figure 4.5 Age of Expatriate

Figure 4.5 represents the age category of each expatriate assigned to Benin



According to the study 50% of expatriates are between the ages of 25-35 years, 33% are between the ages of 35-44 years and 17% are between the ages of 45-65 years.

4.3 Themes and Sub-Themes: Selection Criteria

The following themes and sub themes were identified in response to question one of the study. What are the perceptions of the selection criteria used by Transnet Port Terminals for international assignments?

Table 4.1

Themes	Sub-Themes
History of international assignment exposure	No sub-theme
Selection criteria used by Transnet Port Terminals	Shortlisting
	Discussion of the Project during interview
	Medical examination (fit for duty)
	Previous experience (technical and operational)
	Position advertised
	Informal discussion
Psychological tests or assessments	No sub-theme
Involvement of family during interview (spouse/partner)?	No sub-theme
Level of satisfaction regarding the selection process	Satisfactory
	Not enough information provided about the host country

Table 4.1 presents five themes identified in the study on expatriate perceptions of selection criteria used at Transnet Port Terminals. The themes consisted of data regarding history of previous international exposure, selection criteria used by TPT, the use of psychological assessments, involvement of family and the level of satisfaction of the selection process. Each theme produced a sub-theme listed in table 4.1. The researcher also discovered that psychological assessments, involvement of family and previous history of international exposure were not part of the selection criteria and is denoted by 'no sub-theme'.

4.3 Themes and Sub-Themes: Pre-departure Training

The following themes and sub-themes were identified in response to question two of the study. What are the perceptions of Transnet Port Terminal expatriates on pre-departure training?

Table 4.2

Themes	Sub Themes
Pre-departure training	Prior training
	Training program
Cross-cultural training	No theme
	No training
Importance of cross cultural training	Understanding the climate
	Lifestyle
	Different cultures
	Language
	Food

Table 4.2 presents three themes identified in the study on pre-departure training for expatriates. These themes identified are pre-departure training, cross-cultural training and importance of cross-cultural training. Each theme produced a sub-theme as listed in table 4.2. The researcher discovered that cross-cultural training did not form part of the expatriate process at Transnet Port Terminals.

4.4 Themes and Sub-Themes: On-Assignment Support

The following themes and sub themes were identified in response to question three of the study. What are the perceptions of on-assignment support received by international assignees?

Table 4.3

Themes	Sub Themes
Assistance with remuneration	Dissatisfaction
	Inadequate
	Allowance was capped
	Not enough to cover essentials
	Stipend
	Not enough money provided before departure
Medical Aid	No medical aid
	Own expense
	Aon cards provided but not fit for purpose
Support with food, housing, transport and contact with family members	No assistance with food
	Transport provided
	Limited contact with family
	Contact with family at own expense
	Poor internet connection
Communication: Being informed with changes in the organisation	Emails
	Internal alert
	No special attention given to the project
	No formal contact from Head Office
Level of satisfaction regarding admin activities	No due diligence
	Not enough attention provided
	Timecard done at Head Office
	Admin done locally
Perception of managing expatriates'	Rushed process
	Improvement required
	Not impressed
	Not enough support
Frustrations of assignment	Lack of support from Head Office
	Medical aid issues
	No delegation of authority
	Language barrier
	No calls from Head Office
	Food
	Time delays

Table 4.3 presents seven themes identified in the study with regards to on-assignments support provided by Transnet Port Terminals. Themes identified are assistance with remuneration, medical assistance, food and support from family, housing, transportation, communication, level of satisfaction regarding administration, perceptions of managing expatriates and the frustrations of the assignment. Each theme produced a sub-theme as listed in table 4.3.

4.5 Themes and Sub-Themes: Repatriation

The following themes and sub themes in table 4.4 were identified in response to question four of the study. What are the perceptions of the repatriation process?

Table 4.4

Themes	Sub Themes
Promotion	No theme
Accepting another assignment	Discussion of terms and conditions
	Subject to conditions and a plan
	Demotivated
Support of a mentor	No mentor
Repatriation support and training	No support
Level of satisfaction with the repatriation process	No repatriation process
	Poor
	Average
	satisfactory
	Requires improvement

Table 4.4 presents four themes identified in the study with regards to repatriation provided by Transnet Port Terminals. Themes identified were promotions, accepting other assignments, support from mentors, repatriation support and training and level of satisfaction with the repatriation process. Each theme produced a sub-them as listed in table 4.4.

4.5 Perceptions from Human Resource Managers: Themes and Sub-Themes

The following themes and sub-themes were identified in Section B of the questionnaire.

Table 4.5

Human Resource Managers	
Themes	Sub-themes
Biggest strengths of the expatriation process	No strengths
	Opportunity for TPT to expand its global footprint
	Cultural integration
	Training capacity
	Payroll process
Biggest challenges	No remuneration guidelines
	Little known within TPT regarding expatriation processes
	Stipend allowance not adequate
	Medical aid
	Language barrier
Suggestion for improvement	Talent pool
	Proper recruitment and selection criteria
	Examine competitor environment
	Provide language training
	Pre-visits
Preparation and support provided to expatriates	No support
	No feedback
	New territory for TPT
	HR involved in the process for the first time
	Accommodation was a problem
Improvement of current processes	No 'current' process in place
	Benchmark comparator groups
	Update expatriate policy in terms of cell phone usage and codes of conduct
	Greater involvement from Human Resources

Table 4.5 presents five themes identified in the study that represent the perceptions of the Human Resource Managers on the expatriate process at Transnet Port Terminals. The themes

identified include biggest strengths of the expatriate process, biggest challenges, suggestions for improvement, preparation and support provided to expatriates and improvement of current processes. Each theme identified produced a sub-theme as listed in table 4.5.

4.7 Research Question One: Selection Criteria

In response to previous international experience, all expatriates with the exception of one said that it was their first international assignment.

4.7.1 Psychological tests and assessments

The researcher probed on selection criteria adopted by TPT and if psychological tests and assessments were conducted. The study revealed that no psychological tests and assessments were used. The responses to the question revealed the following:

Participant 1: *“Assessed on technical ability in relation to the assignment, questions around ability to living abroad...the general manager had asked those questions.”*

Participant 2: *“Selection based on experience and number of service years...most strategic operating procedures were conducted by me at the Durban Container Terminal...the company required someone with that experience and no other testing done”.*

Participant 3: *“I was just picked...Project needed different skill sets, (operational skills and process skills) ...The company required a process, operations as well as a planning person...No questions around about being able to work in a foreign country”.*

Participant 4: *“Just an interview, the experience and capability, medical examination and about the current function I was doing.”*

Participant 5: *“The position was advertised, shortlisted and interviewed and I was successful...discussion about the project took place, had to do vaccines”.*

Participant 6: *“The position was advertised, called for a panel interview with strategy team and operations executive, informal discussion, looked at my curriculum vitae and capabilities, no psychological assessments or tests”*

4.7.2 Involvement of family members (Spouse or partner)

The study revealed that none of the participant's family members were included in expatriation selection process at Transnet Port Terminals.

4.7.3 Level of satisfaction regarding the selection process

The responses revealed mixed feelings about the selection process with majority indicating a satisfactory experience. The participant's responses to the research question are as follows:

Participant 1: *"Quite satisfied, fine...benefit was the general manager worked with me on previous projects, track record based and involved in other projects which played a major part"*.

Participant 2: *"For me, it was to give back to the business all the experience gained, satisfied with the selection process"*.

Participant 3: *"There were no competitors, it was just for me to say yes or no...project was known before 2016, selection process was haphazard and not planned...No advertisement for the position but people were chosen to go, and not enough information provided about the country"*.

Participant 4: *"Satisfactory...poor planning from deciding we were going to when we actually went, change management not up to scratch"*.

Participant 5: *"Fine, same process that I know, people are appointed based on skills and competence"*.

Participant 6: *"Satisfactory, given the task at hand and what they were looking for"*.

4.8 Research Question Two: Pre- Departure Training

In response to pre-departure training, the study revealed that majority of the respondents did not undergo training in preparation for the international assignment. The responses are presented below

Participant 1: *"None"*

Participant 2: *“The only training I received was language training, very rushed and time was limited...three week training.”*

Participant 3: *“No training, nothing”. “No language training.”*

Participant 4: *“Yes, French lessons.”*

Participant 5: *“No, told that there will be language training but never took place.”*

Participant 6: *“It was the very first task for TPT, no prior training done...promised classes for French, nothing was done, language barrier a big challenge.”*

4.8.1 Cross-Cultural Training

In response to cross-cultural training, the study revealed that no cross-cultural training was provided by Transnet Port Terminals. The responses from participants reveal the following:

Participant 1: *“None...Attended a one week pre assessment of the project in Benin which was six to eight months before I left to Benin.”*

Participant 2: *“No Training provided, a video was shown about Benin, the country and the Ports... little about the culture, my selection was done in October, training in December and departed in January”.*

Participant 3: *“No training given, they called the ambassador of Benin, a fifteen minute conversation at Umhlanga...nothing about the culture, we did not know the country practiced ‘vudu’.”*

Participant 4: *“Nothing much, meeting with ambassador, no formal training, just a formal discussion with ambassador.”*

Participant 5: *“No training provided.”*

Participant 6: *“None, I had to learn on my own.”*

4.8.2 Importance of cross-cultural training

All participants shared similar characteristics and perceptions on the importance on cross-cultural training. The perceptions of the expatriates reveal the following:

Participant 1: *“Very critical to give the candidate a clear indication of what to expect...cultural element is important not to insult the client due to misunderstanding... understand things like food, people get sick, language is important...you need to understand the cultural background and language...in this case it was French.”*

Participant 2: *“It is important, we to different environments... different foods...not the same here in Durban...no beef, only chicken and fish, I don’t eat chicken and fish...prior knowledge would be great, language in different.”*

Participant 3: *“It is very important, the people that you dealing with, example ‘shaking hands’... they respect you by what you wear...management wear suits, as a manager you must have a man servant which is an assistant...they call you ‘master’...you feel that it’s not right, it’s a different culture, shaking hands all the time...when a senior comes, you ‘stand up’...important to be sensitized about the culture and language...language was an option...school in Benin.”*

Participant 4: *“Yes, definitely, it prepares one or you get an understanding of the behavioral aspect not just the job...understand cultural dynamics, example ‘shaking hands’, don’t look in their eye...modes of transport mostly motorcycles, important to know so you not overwhelmed.”*

Participant 5: *“Yes, you go to a different country, they have different ways of doing things...I would have been prepared and better understand them...language training is important to be able to communicate.”*

Participant 6: *“It is important, the environment in South Africa is different to the other African continents... mindset is different, the lifestyle, food, culture shock, belief system, hot climate, humidity, mosquitos...training must be done to understand the different zones, SADAC regions and it must be intensive...create a clear picture, language lessons is important to do business with.”*

4.9 Research Question Three: On-Assignment Support

The overall perception from the participants was consensus that on-assignment support from Head Office required vast improvement.

4.9.1 Assistance with remuneration

The following responses reveal the perceptions of the expatriates with regards to assistance with remuneration in Benin:

Participant 1: *“Remunerated in terms of policy, however the organisation took the decision to cap the value at a certain amount....suggestion for improvement: the value should not be capped, it should be paid according to the policy guideline...no guidance around medical aid and internet....the value was not adequate to cover essential needs.”*

Participant 2: *“Received a stipend....no remuneration regarding the added responsibility of being overseas....was paid acting, the only allowance I got...what was promised and actual was a different scenario.”*

Participant 3: *“HR, HR....prior going, there was a dummy pay slip, looked nice....There is a policy, was not applied...flights were booked and I was not reimbursed on time, no money given before departure...Stayed for ten days without money, eventually got paid with international passport card, used for three months...South African bank cards can be used by chance (FNB etc)...issues with payment, money promised was not being paid, very frustrating.”*

Participant 4: *“The way it was handled was not professional or closed in terms of how much we going to get...company was not forthcoming especially having to use your own phone, expensive roaming charge at own cost...an alternative would be to use 3G cards.”*

Participant 5: *“Period of stay was an overkill...three months....money provided was not adequate....you are stuck, money to survive only...I will not take another assignment based on the above...recommendation is six week stay and come back or increase the pay.”*

Participant 6: *“I fought many battles, I got to a stage where I said I am tired of this....we need to fulfill our promises, and conditions were unbearable.”*

4.9.2 Medical Treatment

The researcher discovered that the expatriates experienced great difficulties and challenges with regards to medical treatment in Benin. The participant's perceptions and responses to medical treatment are as follows:

Participant 1: *"We were provided with medical policy, however none of the medical facilities in Benin accepted the AON card....upfront payment was required for treatment."*

Participant 2: *"Aon cards were not recognized....I had to pay cash in Benin if I fell ill."*

Participant 3: *"Yoh"....No...Benin does not use any card facility, no one researched that...Aon cards could not be used....cash based only, and medical aid was a challenge."*

Participant 4: *"Also very important, we were given a card, valueless having that card...I fell ill and had to pay from my own pocket."*

Participant 5: Responded to say that no medical aid assistance was provided.

Participant 6: *"Aon card not fit for purpose, it never worked."*

4.9.3 Food, Housing, Transportation and Family Support

The study revealed that assistance with transportation and housing were not an issue. Food was not provided, the expatriates bought food with the subsistence allowance they received from the company. The biggest challenge was contact with family members back home. Expatriates' contacted their family members at own cost which was perceived to be very expensive.

Table 4.6

Table 4.6 provides the biggest challenges as perceived by expatriates that included high cell phone costs and poor internet connection which also highlighted the need for support from expatriates' families back home.

Participants	Food	Housing	Transport	Contact with family members
Participant 1	<i>None</i>	<i>"We were provided with an apartment with assistance from the client."</i>	<i>"Provided with a driver to shuttle the team during working hours."</i>	<i>"Contact through Wats aap, skyp, cell phones...it was at own cost, obtained a sim card, data and wifi at apartment was unstable...no assistance from company about being in contact with family members."</i>
Participant 2	<i>"Did not agree with me, limited in buying and cooking...supermarket food was expensive."</i>	<i>"Accommodation provided was furnished."</i>	<i>"Transport Provided"</i>	<i>"Able to contact family (email, wats app), no issues."</i>
Participant 3	<i>"We were not assisted"</i>	<i>"Hotel, but electricity, we had to buy our own electricity and keep receipts...it was a fight."</i>	<i>"Asked to get international license...the way they drive, no robots or lines, we didn't drive, transport was not an issue...driver would take us to work"</i>	<i>"We could call home, expensive via roaming...The country manager was changed and said to call family at own cost, R2000 to R3000 per month with no more reimbursement...Wifi connection was bad, would be down for three days...data is very expensive, everything is expensive, some employees could not call home, no support."</i>
Participant 4	<i>None</i>	<i>"Housed in a hotel for the first month and a half, then moved into apartments."</i>	<i>"Was provided"</i>	<i>"Catch 22, if you phone it was expensive at own cost...only via wats app, facetime and email...signal was bad."</i>
Participant 5	<i>"Not assisted with food, money given was used for food."</i>	<i>"Transnet paid for accommodation."</i>	<i>"Combi was provided for work and visits."</i>	<i>"Dependent on wifi, or buy own airtime...I had a bill of R1000 which was not reimbursed...had to pay out of my own pocket."</i>
Participant 6	<i>"Had to buy own food, we were given a stipend."</i>	<i>"Provided"</i>	<i>"We were assisted with."</i>	<i>"Quite costly, used wats app, roaming was expensive...put in submissions for reimbursements but it was challenging."</i>

4.9.4 Contact with other expatriates in Benin

All participants with the exception of participant two said that they were not introduced to other expatriates in Benin. Participants four and five had no comments. The responses are as follows:

Participant 1: *“I initiated that, found an expat group online, that saved my life...helped me find places for food, doctors, social events...was a saving grace...my life completely changed after interacting with locals...showed me where the gym was, I was invited to dinners....it can be extremely lonely.”*

Participant 3: *“We found them in restaurants, French restaurants...all go there for dinner.”*

Participant 6: *“Only met the ambassador in Benin, they would check on us.”*

4.9.5 Communication

With regards to communication from Head Office, the perception from expatriates revealed the following:

Participant 1: *“Via the grapevine, internal alerts via email.”*

Participant 2: *“Yes, still had access to emails, I could see what was taking place.”*

Participant 3: *“No, except via email...internal alerts....no formal contact with home country...no support provided on how we were doing...Head Office takes long to respond...to get things done we had to whatsapp general manager...there should be someone to assist with issues.”*

Participant 4: *“Yes, we were updated, we had access to information via emails.”*

Participant 5: *“Yes, via emails...no contact unless there was a work problem.”*

Participant 6: *“Emails, internal alerts...no special attention to the project happening here....quality information was shared internally about the project.”*

4.9.6 Level of satisfaction regarding administration

Participant's revealed mixed feelings around the management of administrative activities.

The responses are as follows:

Participant 1: *"Timecards and leave were fine....very straight forward...local staff cleared the timecard...nothing changed...no clocking system in Benin."*

Participant 2: *"We recorded time and attendance, no issues with leave, arranging flights."*

Participant 3: *"Country Manager, support should be given to him....timecards could have been managed better....there should have been someone coordinating timecards not us....There should be a middle man....level of satisfaction.... (Could have been planned better)."*

Participant 4: *"Level of satisfaction...poor to non-existent....would have been nice to have a central point of contact to deal with one person....Issues were not given priority....turnaround time in response to queries took too long....only communication back home was email....work related."*

Participant 5: *"Happy with this, no issues....lack of facilities and equipment such as scanners."*

Participant 6: *"Timecard and leave not an issue...only the correspondence and communication became frustrating when issues were not resolved...you're in another country and no response received within 24 hours."*

4.9.1 Perceptions on current practice of managing expatriates'

The researcher obtained various reactions from expatriates about the manner in which they were managed whilst abroad. The overall perception was improvement in this area and support from the company was needed. The response from participants are as follows:

Participant 1: *"Very bad, e.g. ventilation report, issue of black mould in apartment,... health risk, I notified the landlord...help was requested from the company but nothing was done, same with the internet and wifi....no help....There were problems regarding the project such a governance, specification, shortage of equipment...Company unable to assist tools necessary to do the job...laptop....were just left on your own."*

Participant 2: *It was a rushed process, lots of delays....nothing arranged before leaving like medical aid...paid late but eventually paid...I wanted two payments locally and overseas...eventually we got paid into two different accounts...training in French too short, we couldn't communicate but there were people in Benin that could communicate in English and translate the standard operating procedures in French."*

Participant 3: *"You guys just put us on a plane, we were responsible on our own...no one was there to offer support...Ambassador of Benin was disappointed that Transnet did not inform him that we were coming."*

Participant 4: *"I was not impressed, it was a new project ...no plan on how it was going to be done...from recruitment to pre departure training to change management...medical facilities was not clearly defined."*

Participant 5: *"Some individuals gave support some did not...When I left South Africa a laptop was given to the Gcos team, HQ, when I go to Benin there's no laptop...without a laptop for one month...people refused to give me a laptop...by the second month the laptop was received."*

Participant 6: *"We need to improve as a business... needs specific attention ...learn from this assignment in Benin and improve going forward."*

4.9.8 Frustrations in Benin

The expatriates highlighted their perceptions on issues that created frustrations in Benin

- Medical Aid: Cost of medical treat was too high, Aon cards for medical insurance were not accepted in Benin.
- Technical support: Managers with expertise were in the home country and were not able to provide technical support
- Delegation of authority was limited: Not being able to make decision work specific
- Procurement process: Laptops arrived late
- Lack of urgency of queries: Perceived lack of support from Head Office in responding to queries
- Language barrier: Language training not provided

- Food: limited choice of food available in Benin
- Mosquitos: No mosquito repellent available in the apartment
- Lack of ventilation in room: Air conditioners in the apartment did not work
- Weather: Benin was scorching hot
- Accommodation: Issues with poor internet connection
- Time delays: Purchasing of paint and yard planning
- Delays in going home when there were emergencies: Booking of flights
- Stipend allowance: Perceived to be insufficient
- Poor planning: Departure to Benin was a rushed process

4.10 Research Question Four: Repatriation

The following responses highlighted perceptions on the repatriation process at Transnet Port Terminals.

4.10.1 Mentors, promotions, repatriation support and training

The participants were asked if they were offered a promotion when the assignment was completed. The study revealed that participant one received a promotion. The study also confirmed that only one participant had a mentor. None of the participants were provided with repatriation support and training. In response to the repatriation support and training, some participants shared the following:

Participant 2: *“No, my stay was short”*

Participant 3: *“No it was like a closed chapter.”*

Participant 5: *“No support upon repatriation, came back and had to deal with current job.”*

4.10.2 Level of satisfaction regarding the repatriation process

Participants were asked to rate the repatriation process from a scale of one to five and discuss their experience. The overall perception on the repatriation process was either non-existent or inadequate at Transnet Port Terminals. The expatriates’ responses were as follows:

Participant 1: *“No repatriation process!I had to provide a country manager report and lessons learned....no training provided for me or the other team members.”*

Participant 2 and 5: *“Poor”*

Participant 3: *“We just received a plane ticket on the day to go home....we went to the airport and arranged for ourselves to get back home.”*

Participant 4: *“I rate the process a two, it needs improvement.”*

Participant 6: *“I cannot advise on the scale, satisfied with majority level.”*

4.11 General Questions

The researcher asked each participant general questions about their overall experience regarding their difficulties, likes and dislikes as an expatriate. Their responses on table 4.7 are as follows:

Table 4.7

Participants	Difficulties in Benin as an expatriate	Expatriate 'dislikes'	Expatriate 'likes'
Participant 1	<i>"The pace was much slower and difficult to adjust...language barrier was quite difficult"</i>	<i>"Exposure to malaria...trouble with my stomach."</i>	<i>"Exposure to the West African culture, music and arts...I joined the French alliance center, art exhibition, music shows were really good, restaurant's and dance...I joined that and learned about the Benin culture and French."</i>
Participant 2	<i>"Language barrier"</i>	<i>"The heat, very hot..45 degrees....we painted in the heat...we had to lead by example."</i>	<i>"Culture, hospitality of the people...made you feel at home...Benin guys were eager to learn from us which made it easier and they supported us."</i>
Participant 3	<i>"Malaria and how to deal with it...communication barrier (language in Benin and communication back home)... medical facilities, need someone with a strong heart."</i>	<i>"The weather there is bad, too hot and humid...I used the air conditioner and got sick...at the apartment itself there were informal settlements."</i>	<i>"Nice cultural things, monuments....people are friendly...historical places...Parliament...Ambassador or used to invite us to conferences...conferences were a nice time...work side, one instruction goes."</i>
Participant 4	<i>"The weather, language barrier, no night life...stuck in the apartments...weekends were very long."</i>	<i>"Nothing much"</i>	<i>"Support from the government in Benin...gave us the opportunity to interact with the ministers which we don't get here."</i>
Participant 5	<i>"Means of communication, network was bad...can't get in touch with family...local wifi was unreliable...contact with family at your own cost."</i>	<i>"Language barrier, I couldn't speak French....no response time back home, very frustrating."</i>	<i>"You realize you are fortunate in Benin, crime is minimal...you appreciate and thankful as South Africans....people are so friendly in Benin."</i>
Participant 6	<i>"Temperature, mosquitos, uncontrollable humidity....No issues with the job, did what I needed to do with a passion."</i>	<i>"Our growth in South Africa can't be compared to Benin...eye opener...learned a lot...next assignment be clear about what is needed."</i>	<i>"Ability to adapt...had a driver from work to home, apartment people, job and culture."</i>

The responses in table 4.7 revealed positive and negative experiences shared by expatriates during the international assignment. The responses indicate areas of improvement required for future international assignments at Transnet Port Terminals.

4.11.2 Advice for future expatriates

The participants shared the following advice to future aspiring expatriates based on their own experiences. The responses are as follows:

Participant 1: *“Research, research, research....read everything you can...watch you-tube videos....understand what you getting yourself into....from a work perspective, have clear documented deliverables that you are expected to deliver on.”*

Participant 2: *“Should be afforded the opportunity to visit the country before accepting the assignment...then you know if you can work in that environment....family should also be given the opportunity to visit...family was not involved in the process.”*

Participant 3: *“They must understand that they are headed for, environment, diet. Culture, work culture, understand the work culture...there should be no resistance.”*

Participant 4: *“Prepare yourself mentally, don’t have high expectations...do research on culture, environment and people.”*

Participant 5: *“I would give advice to HR colleagues, instead of understanding policies, go out there and see what it’s all about...then they will understand what’s happening.”*

Participant 6: *“Mental strength, got to have expertise....people must understand what they will be faced with...family must be aware....agree on the assignment and packages.”*

4.11.3 Perceptions for improvement on current expatriate process

Participant one, prepared a lessons learned report when the assignment was complete. The purpose of the report was to learn from current practices, acknowledge the challenges and make improvements to the expatriation process.

Participant 2: *“Timing can be improved....Benin project was rushed...language barrier, we knew what was expected from us from a work point of view...timeframe could have been*

better...uncertainties as to when we were going...told at the last minute that we were going to Benin.”

Participant 3: *“Everything is in the policy, let’s follow the policy...if we apply it everyone will be happy.”*

Participant 4: *“Remuneration side of things, benchmark on what other companies are doing...what processes they were taking.”*

Participant 5: *“Frequency of coming back home and the pay.”*

Participant 6: *“We can sit and discuss policy to suit our environment....if we can compare with other businesses on how they deal with international assignments....we need a team of specialists when it comes to these things.”*

4.11.4 Perceptions on the success of the assignment

Majority of the participants agreed that the assignment was a success despite the many challenges they encountered. The response were as follows:

Participant 1: *“Yes is was a success despite the challenges...we did what we needed to do.”*

Participant 2: *“No comment”*

Participant 3: *“For sure, we successfully delivered on our objectives at Sobmap...we improved their operational processes for improved productivity...we went there to mobilize and stabilize...practiced a safety culture ...we implemented Gcos there.”*

Participant 4: *“Yes a huge success....although there were issues we knew that we were there to deliver on goals and reached milestones.”*

Participant 5: *“Yes, with all the challenges it was a success.”*

Participant 6: *“Yes, ten out of ten, we did exceptionally well....left on a very high note....they saw a light at the end of the tunnel....issues of safety addressed.”*

4.11.5 Additional comments made by all participants

At the end of the survey the researcher probed for additional comments from each participant that may have been overlooked. With the exception of participant six who did not have a comment in closing the expatriates' responses were as follows:

Participant 1: *“Personal resilience when assessing a person for international assignments...assess the personal resilience...can they do without the internet...diva's cannot be expatriates, they will never last.”*

Participant 2: *“I wish I could be given another opportunity to share my experience and knowledge internationally.”*

Participant 3: *“They must promote us.”*

Participant 4: *“If you do this again, we need to benchmark...people should not be discouraged with nothing in it for you.”*

Participant 5: *“When people go to Benin, there should be a delegation of authority given to make decisions and to deal with travel agents....there should be a budget for entertainment, on weekends you get bored.”*

4.12 Human Resource Managers

The following results pertain to responses received from the Human Resource Managers who were responsible for global mobility at Transnet Port Terminals.

4.12.1 Theme one: Biggest strengths of the expatriate process

The responses below reveal the strengths as perceived by the Human Resource Managers in the study.

Participant 1: *“Opportunity for TPT to expand its global footprint into Africa....opportunity for TPT to impart skills and knowledge on the port operations process...TPT employees were involved in establishing processes within the terminal...cultural integration by linking us with other countries...phase two of the Benin project provided the terminal with an operating system, GCOS.”*

Participant 2: *“TPT’s biggest strength is the understanding of the market operating in...knowing the required skills sets and having a system in place...training capacity in partnership with the Transnet Maritime School of Excellence...delivering terminal specific training solutions.”*

Participant 3: *“Policy design, for an operation that has not entered /operated outside of its home country...compliance to each country requirements, both home and host country...payroll processes, to be able to process salary in the manner that the employee can split the earnings in the host country...supporting the employees continuously during the assignment....telecoms weekly to monthly on their needs and experiences....HR involved early in the project, assisted to align all process with the timelines.”*

Participant 4: *“No strengths.”*

4.12.2 Theme two: Biggest Challenges of the expatriate process

The following responses reveal the challenges as perceived by the Human Resource Managers in the study.

Participant 1: *“It was the first time that TPT had assigned employees outside of Africa...Transnet Group did not have a finalized policy to accommodate the short term assignment...the daily stipend paid to employees did not take into account the high costs of basics in Benin...the local water was not for drinking purpose and buying water on a daily basis proved that this cost was not taken into consideration...costs associated with cell phones were very high (international roaming), these costs were not taken onto consideration...proper medical cover was not available which resulted in employees taking seriously ill and having to return home under emergency conditions...employees were required to undergo a medical and receive vaccinations prior to travel, our (TPT) clinics were not equipped to provide this service and had to use external service providers who were not a vendor which meant we had to pay and claim back via the expense claim, very expensive...Benin is French speaking country, only a few team members were given the opportunity for French lessons hence the challenge with the language integration.”*

Participant 2: *“The biggest challenge was understanding the training requirements of another country, the skills levels of employees and language barrier in terms of communication.”*

Participant 3: *“Using the rate of pay as provided in the SARS schedule and the employees indicating they are living on a thin budget as we had limited information on the cost of a basket of goods...sanitation for employees in a country not familiar, exposing the health of employees negatively...rotating the assignees between the assignment and having to find alternative position to place them back in a short space of time does put pressure...Transportation, no car provided and relied on the transportation by the client and that imposed on the assignees private life...relied on the travel medical card and no medical aid cover in the country.”*

Participant 4: *“Very little is known within TPT regarding expatriation processes...internal recruitment not done in time for Benin start up despite knowing about it six months in advance...no remuneration guideline regarding expatriates for Benin project...compensation and benefits non-existent...basics not in place(cell phones, drinking water etc).”*

4.12.3 Theme three: Suggestions for improvement

The following responses highlight the perceptions by Human Resource Managers for improvement of current expatriate process at Transnet Port Terminals

Participant 1: *“Most large companies that expand into Africa have a dedicated team that visit the country to understand the environment, culture etc...this equips them with first-hand knowledge of the issues that need to be taken into consideration when assigning employee on assignments...accommodation provided could have been in a better location...the accommodation provided was in a newly built building, however the surrounding area had poor sanitation, sewage, drainage and unpaved roads...prior to such assignments, all relevant parties need to have a joint meeting to discuss the process involved and the risks associated.”*

Participant 2: *“Training employees on foreign languages, have a process for travelling medicals by extending the scope of Life Clinic to cover travel medicals.”*

Participant 3: *“Pre-visits by the assignee.”*

Participant 4: *“Have a talent pool for expatriates...train potential expatriates in difference languages e.g., French and Portuguese way ahead of time...proper recruitment and selection criteria for expatriate assignments...an HR steering committee relating to all the HR touch points for the Benin expatriates...we should have examined the competitive environment and comparator groups (APMT/Bollere/DPW/ICTSI) and see what they have done.”*

4.12.4 Theme four: Preparation and support provided to expatriates

In terms of providing the necessary preparation and support to the expatriates, the researcher received the following responses from Human Resource Managers.

Participant 1: *“No, this was new territory for TPT with HR being involved in such a process for the first time...there was no policy available and to improvise...we did not anticipate the challenges that the employees would face in Benin as we (HR) were not familiar with the country....The selection of employees who were to be assigned on the Africa project was done in a rush, therefore there was insufficient time to provide all team members with French lessons, also there were many changes to the team members which did not allow sufficient time for HR to prepare the individuals...Our lack of understanding of the benefits applicable to the expatriates meant that we were not in a position to provide them with adequate information.”*

Participant 2: *“Yes, I am aware French lessons was arranged at the end of the finalization of the expatriates offer...proposal to be done earlier.”*

Participant 3: *“Accommodation and car hire seemed to have been a problem and that can be improved.”*

Participant 4: *“No...poor, no communication between HR HQ and the expatriates...no feedback mechanism established between candidates of HR.”*

4.12.5 Theme five: Improvement of current process

When asked if improvement of current expatriate processes were necessary, the Human Resource Managers said following:

Participant 1: *“Yes, definitely, HR need to be involved upfront when Africa opportunities are being explored...TPT need to partner with companies that are already established in Africa to learn from their experiences....We need to improve on the selection of candidates, projects of this nature require an individual who are mature and can uphold the image of the company.”*

Participant 2: *“Clearer polices in terms of allowances and cell phone usage, code of conduct, support to employees in terms of visits back to the country and luggage costs.”*

Participant 3: *“Yes it can only improve as we operate in different countries as the experiences will differ, and whilst other fundamental principles may not change, certain offerings have to align with country specific compliance requirements.”*

Participant 4: *“There is no ‘current process’ in place to improve upon!” We need to start from scratch, benchmark comparator groups, recruit and select properly, train ahead (French, Portuguese), link talent management pool with expatriate pool.”*

4.13 Conclusion

This chapter presented the analysis of results from expatriate demographics to outlining core themes identified in the research study received from expatriates and Human Resource Managers. All ten participants consisting of six expatriates and four participants from the HR management team shared their experiences about the expatriate processes at Transnet Port Terminals. The results reveal mixed feeling pertaining to the four phases in the expatriation process cycle that is, recruitment and selection, pre-departure training, on assignment support and repatriation. The results were also presented by providing themes identified in each research question.

Chapter 5 Discussion of Results

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this research study was to examine the current expatriate process at Transnet Port Terminals and explore the experiences of the expatriates including the perceptions of the Human Resource Managers that administered the process from start to finish. This chapter focuses on the discussion and analysis of the results based on the research questions and themes identified in the research study. It also provides a brief conclusion of each theme and concludes this study with recommendations.

5.2 Research Question One: What are the perceptions of Transnet Port Terminals expatriates on the selection criteria used for international assignments?

This discussion pertains to question one of the study. The aim was to identify the selection criteria used for the international assignment. The results of the study revealed the following:

5.2.1 Selection Criteria

According to the study, Transnet Port Terminals selected their expatriates based on technical abilities and operational experience. According to participant one, the assessment was based on technical ability, participants two and three also confirm the importance of operational experience in the selection process. Research conducted by Vogel (2006) confirmed that multinational organisations mostly depend on one important selection criteria for international assignments that is, technical competence. The disadvantage according to Vogel (2006) is that although technical competence is important, it is not the only skill required for international assignments. If organisations relied mainly on technical competence, the expatriate may not be adequately prepared for a successful assignment. Two participants (five and six) said that their positions were advertised and they were selected based on a successful interview and majority of the expatriates did not have previous exposure to international assignments. According to research done by Pokharel (2016), selecting an employee who has had past experience as an expatriate is a better option than to consider an employee who is new to the experience. Previous research confirmed other important factors to consider that contribute to a successful expatriate process that is, cross-cultural proficiency, support from family and spouse, emotional intelligence, previous international exposure, language skills and social skills (Kartika & Lee, 2014); (Canhilal & Shemueli, 2015) cited in (Rocke, 2017). The study revealed that important criterion for selection of suitable candidates was not incorporated in the selection process at

Transnet Port Terminals. The researcher discovered that the selection was based solely on strong technical and leadership abilities whilst other factors were not taken into consideration confirmed by literature. These factors include candidate's level of maturity, diversity, resilience, emotional intelligence, language ability, academic background as well as support from family and spouse.

Research conducted by Nikoaeva (2010) revealed that managers do not consider the complexities of domestic assignments in comparison to foreign assignments and are not paying attention to these differences when selecting employees for international assignments. Participant three said that he was "just picked". Participant two said that he was selected because he had vast experience in the industry. According to Dickman et al. (2008) an employee that performs well in the home country is not an indicator that they will perform well internationally Managers are also under pressure to select the most suitable candidate and these circumstances does not result in the best selection of candidates for international assignments (Dickman et al, 2008) cited in (Nikoaeva, 2010).

This study also revealed that no psychological tests or assessments were conducted at Transnet Port Terminals. Family members were not part of the process during any phase of the expatriate process. According to a study by Vogel (2006) it is important to involve family and spouse in the process as this may affect the performance of the expatriate abroad. One of the attributes to expatriate failure was lack of support from family and spouse and therefore deemed crucial for the expatriate to adapt in a foreign country (Araci, 2015). The perception of satisfaction levels on the current selection criteria was a combination satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Participant one was quite satisfied with the process whilst participant three and four said that there was not much planning done from the outset. Participant three mentioned that although prior knowledge was known about the project in advance processed was carried out without proper planning and execution.

5.2.2 Conclusion

The study concluded that Transnet Port Terminals conducted the expatriate process without a plan or a clearly defined expatriate process. The perception among expatriates highlighted during data analysis in Chapter four confirmed that prior knowledge about the Benisa Maritime Project was known by the management team therefore there was ample time available to adequately prepare expatriates for the international assignment ahead of time. Although some of the positions were advertised as confirmed through data analysis in Chapter four, the study revealed that not all expatriate positions were advertised. The major selection criterion used at

Transnet Port Terminals was mainly technical ability whilst other attributes were not considered and the employees did not have previous exposure to international assignments. The study confirmed that the Benisa Maritime Project was TPT's first international project managed by Human Resource Management at Head Office. The Human Resource Management team are encouraged to understand and identify the gaps and challenges experienced during the project to allow for improvement of the current expatriate process.

5.3 Research Question Two: What are the perceptions of Transnet Port Terminals expatriates on pre-departure training?

The discussion pertains to question two of the study. The aim of the research question was to investigate if pre-departure training were provided. The results for research question two are now discussed.

5.3.1 Pre-departure Training

The results revealed that only two expatriates were provided French lessons, the other expatriates were not provided with any training at all. Literature in Chapter two confirm that effective training programs aims to improve the performance of the international assignee and reduce the possibility of failure (Katari & Sethi, 2013). The objective of pre-departure training is to adequately prepare expatriates for their international journey, so that they are able to adapt to the new culture and cope with challenges (Dowling, 2013).

The researcher discovered that language barrier was one of the biggest challenges among the expatriates at TPT. Participant five indicated that although he was advised that training would be available, no training was provided by Transnet Port Terminals. In response to cross-cultural training, participant one indicted that he attended a one week pre assessment in Benin. The results revealed that Transnet Port Terminals did not invest in adequate pre-departure training for expatriates'. The employees' were not sensitised about Benin's culture except for a short video that was shown to them about the country and its Port operations. The participants' shared their perceptions on the importance of pre-departure and cross- cultural training.

According to the perception of participant one, cross-cultural training is *“very critical to give the candidate a clear indication of what to expect...cultural element is important not to insult the client due to misunderstanding... understand things like food, people get sick, language is important...you need to understand the cultural background and language...in this case it was French.”*

Participant 3 said cross-cultural training is *“very important, the people that you dealing with, example ‘shaking hands’... they respect you by what you wear...management wear suits, as a manager you must have a man servant which is an assistant...they call you ‘master’...you feel that it’s not right, it’s a different culture, shaking hands all the time...when a senior comes, you ‘stand up’...important to be sensitized about the culture and language...language was an option...school in Benin.”*

Pokharel (2016) affirms that pre-departure training should encompass language training, that is language skills of the host country for better communication with co-workers and locals, training related to the job which include activities related to the expatriate’s job to enable to perform efficiently and international training, to better understand the culture in the host country. According to Ntshona (2007), an expatriate that is able to converse in the language of the host country is at an advantage than those expatriates who lack the ability to speak the language.

5.3.2 Conclusion

It is evident from the study that Transnet Port Terminals did not sufficiently equip their expatriates with proper pre-departure training required to support their employees in a foreign country. The expatriates’ experienced culture shock and struggled with the language barrier, were unable to communicate with locals which could have been alleviated had they been provided with necessary language training and cross-cultural training. Pre-departure training is an essential part of the expatriate process as confirmed by literature, not providing pre-departure creates a risk to the business and performance that may lead to expatriate failure.

5.4 Research Question Three: What are the perceptions of the on-assignment support activities received by expatriates?

The discussion pertains to research question three. The aim of the question was to understand expatriates’ perceptions on the level of support provided by Transnet Port Terminals during the international assignment. The results of the study are now discussed.

5.4.1 On-assignment support

The researcher discovered that little or no support had been provided to the expatriates once they had been assigned to Benin. The expatriates’ shared common dissatisfaction towards the HR department related to the delayed payment of their subsistence allowance in Benin. The perception from expatriates’ revealed in the study was a lack of support from Head Office

Human Resource department and lack of available remuneration whilst abroad caused deep seated frustration. According to participant three TPT had inconvenienced them, the response was: *“Stayed for ten days without money, eventually got paid with international passport card, used for three months...South African bank cards can be used by chance (FNB etc)...issues with payment, money promised was not being paid, very frustrating.”* Participant six was extremely disappointed with the process and said, *I fought many battles, I got to a stage where I said I am tired of this....we need to fulfill our promises, and conditions were unbearable.”* According to participant four, Transnet Port Terminals handled the issue of remuneration very unprofessionally.

The researcher also discovered that the expatriates experienced great difficulties and challenges with regards to medical treatment in Benin. None of the expatriates had proper medical aid cover and had to pay out of their own pockets when treatment was needed. Transnet Port Terminals issued expatriates with Aon cards, the internal cards were allocated for medical emergencies and treatment, but the study revealed the cards were not accepted in Benin. Expatriates were unable to receive proper medical treatment and said that they were left out of pocket and had to pay cash for treatment and medication. Participant two said, *“Aon cards were not recognized....I had to pay cash in Benin if I fell ill.”* Participant four said, *“Also very important, we were given a card, valueless having that card...I fell ill and had to pay from my own pocket.”*

The majority of expatriates were satisfied with accommodation and transportation but felt that food should have been at TPT's cost and not out of their own pockets. The biggest challenge for the expatriates was the issue of internet connection to communicate with family members back home. The expatriates said their apartment had poor internet connection and the communication network was unreliable. Contact with family members was at their own cost and also proved to be very expensive. Participant two did not experience any issues contacting family. Participant one said, *“Contact through wats app, skype, cell phones...it was at own cost, obtained a sim card, data and wifi at apartment was unstable...no assistance from company about being in contact with family members.”* Participant 4 said, *“Catch 22, if you phone it was expensive at own cost...only via wats app, facetime and email...signal was bad.”* Participant five said, *“Dependent on wifi, or buy own airtime...I had a bill of R1000 which was not reimbursed...had to pay out of my own pocket.”* According to participant six, connecting with family members was extremely challenging and expensive, he tried to obtain reimbursements for the cell phone expense incurred but was unsuccessful.

The study revealed that the communication from TPT Head Office with expatriates in Benin was poor. Although the expatriates had access to a laptop, they received the general internal alerts shared with all TPT employees. Data analysis in Chapter four confirmed that TPT did not contact the expatriates regularly to check in and offer support during the assignment. According to participant three, Transnet Port Terminals did not provide support or check on how they were doing, if expatriates were coping abroad or if they were experiencing any challenges. Participant six said that no special attention was provided by TPT with regards to the project. The expatriates did not experience any challenges with the local staff with regards to work tasks. Literature confirmed that foreign assignments are extremely challenging, compounded by culture shock. Continued support and open communication with expatriates are vital key success factors in international assignments (Dowling, 2013). If expatriates do not perceive support from the organisation, they may not feel that it is necessary to extend efforts to adjust themselves (Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010).

The perception of managing expatriate's revealed that huge improvement was required. The participants' felt that there was no planning or a blue print process on managing the assignment from start to finish. Participant one was not impressed with the accommodation or internet connection and said *"Very bad, e.g. ventilation report, issue of black mould in apartment, ... health risk, I notified the landlord...help was requested from the company but nothing was done, same with the internet and wifi....no help....There were problems regarding the project such a governance, specification, shortage of equipment...Company unable to assist tools necessary to do the job...laptop....were just left on your own."*

Participant three shared the following, *"You guys just put us on a plane, we were responsible on our own...no one was there to offer support..."* Participant four said *"I was not impressed, it was a new project ...no plan on how it was going to be done...from recruitment to pre departure training to change management...medical facilities was not clearly defined."* Research also suggests the use of a mentor to improve the experience of the expatriates in the foreign country offering continued support and communication (Mngengisa, 2017 & Woo, 2017). The organisation should be in contact with the expatriate on a frequent basis. The expatriate should be contacted by the home country telephonically on a weekly basis for the first two months and on a monthly basis thereafter for the first year. (Fitzgerald & Turner, 1997); (Chowanec & Newstrom, 1991) cited in (Vogel, 2006).

5.4.2 Conclusion

The study confirmed mixed feelings about communication and management of expatriates. The perceptions received by participants' reveal that Transnet Port Terminals did not offer support specifically related to the expatriates' wellbeing unless it was a work related problem and did not make adequate contact with expatriates' or respond to their concerns timeously. It is evident that the not must research was conducted by TPT about the host country with reference to housing, medical aid, language barriers, contact with family members, cell phone usage, and timeous payment of subsistence allowance. One of the biggest frustrations expressed was the lack of support from Head Office. The lack of planning and inefficient administration process confirms that TPT needs to go back to the drawing board with regards to their current expatriate practices and processes and align to best practice suggested by previous researchers.

5.5 Research Question Four: What are the perceptions of Transnet Port Terminals expatriates on repatriation?

This discussion pertains to question four of the study. The results of the study are now discussed.

5.5.1 Repatriation

Dhrampal (2013), suggests that South Africa Multinational Enterprises are failing with regards to repatriation that is the return of the expatriate upon completion of the international assignment (Dhrampal, 2013) cited in (Mngenisa, 2017).

Participant three said that "*returning home was like a closed chapter.*" According to participant five, "*No support upon repatriation, came back and had to deal with current job.*" All participants with the exception of participant six, were in consensus that the process was either poor or did not exist and felt strongly about the need for improvement. To enable the effective control of transfers globally and to retain repatriates, an effective repatriation is of paramount importance (Scullion & Collings, 2006) cited in (Kang & Shen, 2013). The results of the study confirm repatriation did not exist. Literature suggest the use of mentors to assist expatriates to assist with employee needs, expectations and deal with stress upon repatriation (Kang & Shen, 2013). Communication is key and needs to be embedded from the outset including repatriation as it forms part of the expatriation process. Employees' need to feel appreciated, valued and understand that their contribution to the business is important for the success of organizational goals and objectives. Expatriates' returned from their senior roles in Benin to their previous managerial roles with the exception of Participant one who shortly thereafter received an internal promotion. Expatriates' felt demotivated because their return home meant they were

back to their old positions with no prestige, sense of worth, stature or respect that they received in their international positions. Most expatriates' return from the assignment with an expectation that their new skills and international experience will be appreciated by the home country (Vogel, 2006). Participant three said "*they must promote us*" reveals the perception that international assignments leads to a promotion. According to Vogel (2006) the organisation may assign expatriates to special organizational projects after their international exposure were they have an opportunity to apply and share their skills and expertise. Assigning expatriates to lead special projects would encourage positive behaviors and self-esteem without feeling discouraged and demotivated.

5.5.2 Conclusion

The study confirmed that Transnet Port Terminals did not have a repatriation process in place. TPT does not have a team dedicated to coordinate the activities required for repatriation which created frustration and uncertainties among the expatriates'. The international assignment created the expectation of internal promotion which left the expatriates feeling demotivated and discouraged. The participants' also proudly confirmed that the international assignment was an absolute success, they had a goal in mind and knew that they were selected to achieve those goals and represent TPT as brand ambassadors. The study also revealed that the expatriates' at TPT are passionate about what they do, despite all the challenges they faced in Benin, they would still consider accepting another international assignment.

5.6 Human Resource Managers

To gain deeper insights into the expatriate process at Transnet Port Terminals, the researcher deemed it important to understand the challenges from the perspective of the HR management team who were responsible for the global mobility process. The results of the study confirm the following:

5.6.1 Theme one: Biggest strengths of the expatriate process

The HR Management team shared mixed views about Transnet Port Terminals biggest strengths. Participant one said that it was an opportunity for TPT to expand its global footprint and impart various skills with the team in Benin. The other strengths as indicated by participant two was delivering terminal specific solutions abroad. According to participant three, the HR department provided continuous support to the expatriates whilst in Benin. Participant four believed that an 'expatriate process' did not exist at TPT. According to data analysis in Chapter four, majority of the HR Management team shared positive views on the perceived strengths

during the expatriate process. The strengths were based on the expatriates' knowledge, skills and abilities as well as from an HR administrative support structure.

5.6.1.1 Conclusion

The study revealed that having highly skilled expatriates' were not enough for a successful international assignment, TPT needed a proper global mobility plan aimed at comprehensively supporting their expatriates' throughout their international journey.

5.6.2 Theme two: Biggest challenges on managing expatriates

According to the HR management team, TPT experienced numerous challenges during the expatriation process. The following list summarizes the numerous challenges perceived by HR Managers:

- It was the first international assignment into Africa: The management of the global mobility was a first for HR managers at TPT Head Office and it was the first time that employees were assigned internationally into Africa.
- No clearly defined global mobility policy: The perception that the global mobility policy did not provide clear guidelines and specifications with regards to phases in the expatriate process.
- Stipend allowance was not enough for basic essentials: The perception from employees that the stipend allowance was not adequate because they had to pay for electricity and medical bills
- No medical cover: (The premature return of one of the expatriates due to ill health who was unable to receive medical care in Benin)
- Communication between expatriate and their families was limited due to high costs and poor internet connection: Numerous complaints on high costs of cell phone usage.
- Language barrier: Language training was not provided timeously to employees prior to departure.
- Recruitment of expatriates were conducted too late despite having prior knowledge of the project. Lack of communication from the Operations Department about the Benisa Project. HR did not have a pool of readily available candidates for international assignments.
- No remuneration guidelines: Perception that the global mobility policy needed to be specific about the remuneration of expatriates.

- Compensation and benefits not in place: Perception that the global mobility policy needed to be clear on benefits received for international assignments.
- Lack of a clearly defined process on the use of cell phones for expatriates: The use of cell phones and cell allowances need to be clearly defined in the global mobility policy.
- Little knowledge known by TPT about an expatriation process: The Benisa Project was a new experience for HR managers at TPT Head Office who were responsible for managing global mobility.
- Pressure: Rotation of employees during the international assignment and having to find alternative positions to place them back in a short space of time meant greater pressure in HR.
- Limited information on the cost of a basket of goods in Benin: Lack of research done about the host country.

5.6.2.1 Conclusion

The challenges expressed by the HR management team during data analysis indicate that TPT had undertaken the expatriate process without a global mobility plan with insufficient time required to recruit expatriates for the project. According to data analysis in Chapter four, there was not enough research done by TPT with regards to medical aid, which posed a huge health risk to the wellbeing of one expatriate who unfortunately returned home pre-maturely. The concern over cell phone usage and poor internet connection affected all expatriates' negatively as they were not able to communicate with their families due to the high costs and insufficient network connection. The study also revealed a lack of research by TPT with regards to accommodation, remuneration and benefits, food and communication barriers due to lack of language and cross-cultural training prior to departure.

5.6.3 Theme three: Suggestions for Improvement

The study confirmed a positive consensus among all participants from the HR management team, that improvement on the current expatriate process was needed. Being mindful about these challenges would be beneficial to TPT as it would highlight all impeding factors in the current expatriate process and align to "best practice" as indicated by previous literature in Chapter two on managing expatriates.

The suggestions for improvement by the HR Managers at TPT include the following:

- Ensure that there is a dedicated team assigned that manages the expatriate process to understand the environment, culture and all information required to make informed decisions about the assignment
- Language training for expatriates prior to the assignment: Provide the necessary training required in advance to ensure that expatriates are adequately prepared.
- Provision for medical aid for international assignments: The perception that expatriates need to receive adequate health care.
- Pre-assignment visits to host country: Expatriates to be given an opportunity to visit the host country before accepting the international assignment.
- Talent pool of expatriates available on standby for future international assignments: HR is able to secure international based positions ahead of demand to support business needs.
- Language training provided well in advance: Adequate training to be provided prior to departure so that employees are able to adapt to the host country successfully.
- Introduction of an HR steering committee managing and leading the expatriate process cycle: To ensure a smooth process on managing global mobility going forward.
- Benchmark comparator groups: To learn and improve our global mobility process.

5.6.3.1 Conclusion

The HR management team openly shared their insights on how to improve and overcome the challenges experienced during the Benisa Maritime Project. It is clear from the participant's responses that TPT needed to revisit their expatriates process, practices and policies to develop a global mobility plan that is designed to achieve excellence in managing international assignments in the future. The HR Managers are confident that the much needed room for improvement would make a positive and lasting impact on the business and the mindset of future TPT expatriates'.

5.6.4 Theme four: Preparation and Support

The HR management team shared mixed thoughts with regards to the magnitude of preparation and support provided to the expatriates. Their perception are as follows:

Participant one said *“No, this was new territory for TPT with HR being involved in such a process for the first time...there was no policy available and to improvise...we did not anticipate the challenges that the employees would face in Benin as we (HR) were not familiar with the country....The selection of employees who were to be assigned on the Africa project was done in a rush, therefore there was insufficient time to provide all team members with*

French lessons, also there were many changes to the team members which did not allow sufficient time for HR to prepare the individuals...Our lack of understanding of the benefits applicable to the expatriates meant that we were not in a position to provide them with adequate information.” Participant two said that French lessons were provided to the expatriates prior to departure but also suggested that the lessons be provided much sooner. Participant three suggested improvement was necessary in the area of accommodation and car hire whilst Participant four said, *“No...poor, no communication between HR HQ and the expatriates...no feedback mechanism established between candidates of HR.”*

5.6.4.1 Conclusion

According to the perception of the Human Resource Management team, TPT did not adequately prepare and support the expatriates for the international assignment because managing expatriate at Head Office level was new territory. Regular communication and support from HQ HR is required for international assignees, most felt isolated and unable to have their needs met when faced with challenges. Literature in Chapter two suggest that expatriates need to feel that they are not alone and that they have the full support from HR catering to all their needs in real time.

5.6.5 Theme five: Improvement of Current Processes

The researcher’s objective was to probe and delve deeper for participants to share their thoughts on the need for improvement of TPT HR’s expatriate process. Participant four said, *“There is no ‘current process in place to improve upon!’ We need to start from scratch, benchmark comparator groups, recruit and select properly, train ahead (French, Portuguese), link talent management pool with expatriate pool.”* The study concluded that all participants believed improvement of the current expatriate was definitely required.

The perceived suggestions for improvement by Human Resource Managers include:

- Improve selection of suitable candidates because international assignments require individuals who are mature and who can uphold the image of the organisation.
- HR needs to be involved upfront when future international assignments are being explored by Transnet Port Terminals.
- Clearly defined policies that makes reference to cell phone usage, code of conduct, support to employees in terms of visits back to the country and luggage costs.

5.6.5.1 Conclusion

The study confirmed that the HR management team strongly support the need for drastic changes to their current global mobility process due to the challenges experienced during the Benisa Maritime Project. According to data analysis in Chapter four, HR Managers perceive that there is a huge disconnect on the current process causing frustrations and delays among expatriates'. The area of focus was to make provision for a pool of candidates who would be readily available for international assignments in the future. The suggestion from HR managers was for HR to be at the forefront of all projects on global mobility from an administrative and strategic perspective to support the overall business needs and objectives.

Chapter 6 Recommendations and Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This Chapter provides the overall outcome of the research study. It presents the recommendations, limitation of the study, suggestions for further research and conclusion.

The purpose of the study was to investigate the expatriate process challenges at Transnet Port Terminals (TPT), examine the perceptions and experiences of expatriates including the managers in the Human Resources department who played a pivotal role administrating and managing the entire expatriate process. Through the rapid expansion of globalization, organisations are in constant competition for the most experienced and talented employees to undertake international assignments. To remain competitive in the market place, organisations are required to possess an effective global mobility process by selecting suitable candidates for international assignments, developing and nurturing their skills, provide ongoing support and maintaining retention strategies.

The recommendations of this research study will benefit the following stakeholders at Transnet Port Terminals:

- Human Resource Management responsible for managing the expatriate process
- Current expatriates at Transnet Port Terminals
- Future expatriates of Transnet Port Terminals

The following recommendations have been suggested for Transnet Port Terminals to effectively manage their expatriate process.

6.2 Research Question One

What are the perceptions of Transnet Port Terminals expatriates on the selection criteria used for international assignments?

Selecting the right candidate for an international assignment is an important decision for organisations as it may be confronted by the pre-mature return of expatriates proving to be costly and may threaten international business objectives. Chapter four of the study confirmed that perception among the participants regarding the selection process was satisfactory indicating mixed emotions. The study revealed that technical ability and years of service were dominant factors in the selection process. The study confirmed that other factors such as

involvement of family members, maturity levels of the candidate, previous international experience, assessments and psychological tests did not form part of the selection process at TPT. The following recommendations are made regarding the selection of expatriates:

6.2.1 Recruitment and Selection

Transnet Port Terminals may have more opportunities in the future, such as Transnet International Holdings (TIH) to venture into the rest Africa or other parts of the world. It is therefore imperative that the human resource senior managers are proactively involved at the inception of new assignments to ensure that the strategic and administrative functions are timeously met. TPT must ensure that their existing global mobility policy and processes support the success of the international assignment by taking into consideration the four phases of the expatriate process that include the selection of suitable employees, pre-departure training, on assignment support and repatriation.

It is recommended that the recruitment department in conjunction with the talent department make provision for a talent pool of employees who would be available to take on future international assignments ahead of demand. The study revealed that only male employees were assigned to Benin, it is recommended that female employees are also afforded the opportunity to be assigned and manage international projects to nurture and develop the skills of women at TPT. Selecting the most suitable employees for international assignments is one of the most important decisions for any organisation confirmed by literature, therefore appropriate attributes for selection criteria must be considered. TPT must ensure that the selection of suitable candidates is based on various attributes that include technical knowledge, maturity level, academic qualification, resilience, leadership ability, support from spouse and family, cultural diversity, high emotional intelligence, ability to adapt, the zest for international exposure, positive attitude, cultural sensitivity and psychological assessments.

Literature confirmed that the involvement of spouse and family early in the process cannot be overstated, as support from family is crucial for the success of the international assignment. The remuneration and benefits need to be clearly defined before employees accepts the international offer. HR need to address all expatriates' questions about their career progression before acceptance of the offer to avoid any expectations of promotion when they return from the international assignment. Pre-assignment visits to be arranged so that the employee has the opportunity to make an informed decision before embarking on the international assignment due to high rate of expatriate failure and the exorbitant cost associated with it. HR Management

team are required to be knowledgeable about tax implications so that employees are not worse off once they have accepted the offer. On a positive note one of the processes that TPT must continue with is the pre-assignment medicals as this ensures that the expatriates are healthy and fit for duty locally and internationally.

6.3 Research Question Two

What are the perceptions of Transnet Port Terminals expatriates on pre-departure training?

Literature review in chapter two including the analysis and results of the research study in chapters four and five confirm the importance of providing expatriates with adequate pre-departure training. The expatriate's perception in the study confirmed that pre-departure training did not form from part of the expatriate process at Transnet Port Terminals. The participants expressed their dissatisfaction, challenges and difficulties with reference to the language barrier and culture shock experienced in Benin highlighted in Chapter four of the study. The following recommendations are suggested with regards to pre-departure training:

6.3.1 Pre-Departure Training

Language training must be provided to all expatriates in advance prior to departure, to adequately equip them with skills to execute their duties efficiently and communicate with locals without challenges. Insufficient knowledge about the culture of the host country or the inability to speak the host country language lead to frustration and pose a negative impact on the productivity levels during the assignment. It is recommended that cross-cultural training also be implemented so that expatriates' have a better understanding of host country culture, its people, customs, currency, government regime food, climate, value system, crime rate, schools and beliefs. The importance of cross-cultural training is to prevent culture shock so that the expatriate can quickly assimilate to the new environment, follow a routine and fit in as naturally as possible to achieve organizational objectives.

6.4 Research Question Three

What are the perceptions of the on-assignment support activities received by expatriates?

Literature review in Chapter two and results in the study have revealed the importance of providing ongoing support and communication to expatriates during an international assignment. Human Resource Managements role in continuously providing support is of paramount importance to expatriates emotional wellbeing. Literature review in Chapter two confirm that being in a foreign country can be an overwhelming and stressful experience,

therefore the need of support from Head Office is critical. The inability to speak the foreign language further exacerbated challenges experienced by expatriates' in the research study. The data analysis and discussion of results in Chapters four and five in the study reveal that perception from expatriates was that they did not receive adequate support from TPT during the international assignment. The lack continuous communication, challenges with internet connect at the apartment, high costs of cell phone bills, food and medical expenses were some of the challenges experienced by expatriates'. According to the Global Mobility Policy at Transnet Port Terminals, expatriates are provided with assignment allowance also known as subsistence allowance. It is recommended by the researcher that TPT create a process whereby expatriates are educated around the use of the subsistence allowance. It's further recommended that the subsistence allowance monetary value currently allocated are analysed by TPT to identify if the perceptions raised by expatriates in the study are covered within the parameters of the subsistence allowance. According to the results in Chapter four, one of the biggest challenges experienced by the expatriates was the lack of support received from Head Office. The researcher thus makes the following recommendations on providing on-assignment support to expatriates during an assignment.

6.4.1 On-assignment Support

It is recommended that an on-boarding process be introduced in the host country that allows for information sharing about the culture and values, meet host country counterparts to create a smooth transition into the new environment. Another pertinent issue identified in the study was medical treatment which was considered to be one of the biggest challenges among expatriates during data analysis in Chapter four. It is recommended that expatriates receive similar quality health care treatment in the host country as they did in their home country. Although local managers are not provided with medical aid as a benefit confirmed TPT's Management Policy, some managers have medical aid at their own expense locally. The study revealed that the Aon cards provided to expatriates to assist with medical treatment were not accepted in Benin which posed a threat to the health and wellbeing of expatriates. It is recommended that enough research is conducted by TPT about the validity of the Aon health insurance and in which countries they are accepted so that expatriates receive medical treatment when required.

The study confirmed that expatriates expressed their frustrations and dissatisfaction on not being able to make regular contact with family members due to poor internet connection and high cellphone costs. It is recommended that thorough research is done on accommodation facilities abroad. Query resolution processes with turnaround times are recommended that

include expatriate education around these processes to overcome the negative perception of query turnaround time whilst abroad.

It would be an added advantage to expatriates' if they are provided with a contact list of reputable health care professionals like doctors and dentists available in their area of residence. It is recommended that Transnet Port Terminals make provision off allowing expatriates the opportunity to join a fitness club or sports facility to build relationships, remain fit, network and socialize as this would also encourage greater adaptability in the host country and prevent boredom or feelings of isolation. Communication also allows the employee to feel a sense of belonging and connectedness to the organisation when abroad. Literature review in Chapter two and data analysis in Chapter four confirm that support from family is critical for the success of the international assignment. Expatriates' in this study felt that there was not enough support and contact from Human Resources in Head Office upon their arrival in Benin. It is therefore recommended that weekly contact with the expatriates takes place showing genuine care and concern over the wellbeing of expatriates and address challenges including overall performance in achieving organizational goals. Transnet Port Terminals is encouraged to have a dedicated global mobility team to support, manage and administer all four phases of the expatriate process to maintain customer centricity, efficiency, due diligence, ethical standards, and professionalism through transparent communication channels.

6.5 Research Question Four

What are the perceptions of Transnet Port Terminals expatriates on repatriation?

Literature has confirmed the importance of repatriation in the expatriation process cycle. The results in the study confirm that repatriation did not form part of the expatriate process cycle at Transnet Port Terminals highlighted during the data analysis in Chapter four. Literature review in Chapter two suggest that a non-existent repatriation process creates expectation for promotion. When expatriates return to the home country with expectations not being met, employees feel demotivated which negatively affects morale. The following recommendations are made with regards to repatriation as part of the expatriation process cycle:

6.5.1 Repatriation

It is recommended that TPT introduce a repatriation strategy and implement an induction program to reverse culture shock that allows for a smooth transition back to their respective home country position to ensure business continuity. Retaining and nurturing talent within the organisation is critical for return on investment and to maintain competitive advantage in the market place. TPT must ensure that the newly acquired skills of expatriates are fully utilized

internally by allowing them to lead special projects to boost their self-confidence, self-worth to benefit the organisation and aspiring international assignees in the future.

6.6 Limitations in the study

The following limitations were identified by the researcher during the study as highlighted in Chapter one:

The results of the study are only applicable to Transnet Port Terminals and not the other operating Division of Transnet, generalisation of this study is therefore limited. There is also lack of research on expatriation at Transnet Port Terminals. An additional limitation identified by the researcher was non representation of female expatriates at Transnet Port Terminals, therefore gender comparison was not possible. Cross-cultural comparison was also a limitation, the study focused on South African expatriates at Transnet Port Terminals and did not include expatriates from other countries of the world.

6.7 Suggestions for further research

The following suggestions for further research have been identified by the researcher:

- Transnet Port Terminals to bench mark against cross-cultural comparator groups in South Africa and abroad
- Gender based comparison on the perceptions of expatriate process challenges
- Research to be extended to other operating divisions of Transnet and not only limited to one division (Transnet Port Terminals)

Further research is important because it allows for deeper understanding of the phenomenon being investigated, keeps abreast of current trends and add to the existing body of knowledge on expatriation.

6.8 Conclusion

The following research objectives are reiterated to conclude this study:

- To analyse the perceptions of Transnet Port Terminals expatriates on the selection criteria used for international assignments
- To ascertain the perceptions of Transnet Port Terminals expatriates on pre-departure training

- To establish the perceptions of on-assignment support received by expatriates of Transnet Port Terminals
- To determine the perception of Transnet Port Terminals expatriates on repatriation.

The existing body of knowledge and the results identified in this study have confirmed the importance of managing global mobility through implementing four phases in the expatriate process cycle. The four important phases in the expatriate process cycle identified in literature include selecting suitable expatriates, providing pre-departure training, on-assignment support and repatriation of expatriates. The study revealed that the lack of a clearly defined expatriate process was the biggest challenge at TPT. In order for TPT to continuously thrive in a competitive global economy requires progressive management through greater adaptation and alignment of Human Resource Management practices. The results of the study revealed the need for improvement of existing global mobility practices on all four phases of the expatriate process at TPT to successfully manage international assignments. The support provided by human resource management play an integral role in implementing expatriate processes and strategies. The inferences from literature in chapter two and the results from this study should be considered by Transnet Port Terminals HR Management team to develop appropriate expatriation practices and blue print processes to effectively manage global mobility in future. Other initiatives supported by literature include proactive planning, robust communication and nurturing of talent which serve as building blocks to successfully manage global mobility.

In conclusion, the study contributes to the existing body of knowledge due to the constant need for expatriates attributed by globalization of South African organisations and organisations worldwide. The study confirmed that although the operational business objectives of the Benisa Maritime Project was successfully achieved by expatriates at Transnet Port Terminals, the Human Resource Management function needed to align itself to support the overall business objectives by adequately preparing the expatriates for international assignments through an effective expatriate process. The results of the study hope to inspire aspirant expatriates at Transnet Port Terminals to make more informed decisions about undertaking international assignments. In conclusion the researcher also hopes that the results in the research study support TPT by improving their existing expatriate process through incorporating and embedding four phases of an expatriate process suggested by literature. The implementation of a successful expatriation process would facilitate and support the achievement of Transnet Port Terminal's objective of becoming 'top five in five' freight logistics companies in the world.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethical Clearance Letter



04 October 2017

Ms Shanel Sewnarain (21607259)
School of Management, IT & Governance
Westville Campus

Dear Ms Sewnarain,

Protocol reference number: HSS/1385/017M

Project title: An investigation of expatriation challenges: A case study of Transnet Port Terminals in Durban

Approval Notification – Expedited Approval

In response to your application received on 04 August 2017, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Dr Sheneka Singh (Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Dr LN Govender
Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor Isabel Martins
Cc School Administrator: Ms Angela Pearce

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

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Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL For research with human participants

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date: 12 June 2017

Greetings,

My name is Shantel Sewnarain, employed at Transnet Port Terminals Head Office within the Human Resource Department and my contact and email is 0313618021, shantel.sewnarain@transnet.net

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research (Investigating the expatriate process challenges at Transnet Port Terminals). The aim and purpose of this research is to (understand the current expatriate process challenges in comparison to international best practice). The study is expected to include (Ten participants in total, including Benin expatriates and Human Resource Business Partners). It will involve the following procedures (answering a questionnaire based on the expatriate processes and or experiences in Benin). The duration of your participation if you choose to participate and remain in the study is expected to be (30 minutes). The study is funded by (Transnet Bursary Fund).

There are no risks or discomforts during the study. We hope that the study will create the following benefits (understanding current gaps and challenges in the expatriate process at TPT and derive improvements to existing processes. This study also hopes to better equip employees for international assignments). The research will not involve any risks.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number_____).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at (provide contact details) or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

Mrs Mariette Snyman
Humanities and Social Science Ethics (HSSREC) Research Office,
Govan Mbeki Building, Westville Campus, Private Bag X54001, DURBAN 4000
Tel: 031 260 8350 Snymanm@ukzn.ac.za
Researcher: Name (Telephone number)
Supervisor: Name (Office Telephone number)


Your participation in the study is voluntary and by participating, you are granting the researcher permission to use your responses. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time with no negative consequence. There will be no monetary gain from participating in the study. Your anonymity will be maintained by the researcher and the School of Management, I.T. & Governance and your responses will not be used for any purposes outside of this study.

All data, both electronic and hard copy, will be securely stored during the study and archived for 5 years. After this time, all data will be destroyed.

If you have any questions or concerns about participating in the study, please contact me or my research supervisor at the numbers listed above.

Sincerely,

Shantel Sewnarain


(Researcher name and signature)

Appendix C: Pilot Test Questionnaire

Pilot Test

International Assignment - Benin

Biographical and Organisational Information

1. What is your current Position?
 - Senior Manager
 - Middle Manager
 - Junior Manager
 - Bargaining Unit Employee

2. What is your gender?
 - Female
 - Male

3. What is your marital status?
 - Married
 - Partner
 - Single

4. Number of children?
 - 0
 - 1
 - 2
 - 3
 - Other

5. What was the length of your assignment in Benin?
 - Less than a year
 - One year
 - Two years
 - Three Years

6. What is your age?
 - 18 - 24
 - 25 - 34
 - 35 - 44
 - 45 - 65

7. Where you an expatriate assigned to Benin? If Yes go to **Section A**, if no got to **section B**
 - Yes (go to section A)
 - No (go to section B)

Section A
(Benin Expatriates)

Theme 1: Selection Criteria

8. Is this your first international assignment? Give details

- Yes
 No

9. What selection criteria was used for your appointment to Benin?

TECHNICAL SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE OF INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY AND CURRENT ICT SYSTEMS AT TPT.

10. Was your spouse, partner or family at the interview?

- Yes
 No

11. What was your level of satisfaction regarding the selection process?

ADEQUATE

Theme 2: Pre assignment Training

12. Did you undergo pre assignment training? Please provide details

THIS WAS NOT APPLICABLE FOR THE WORK I WAS
ASSIGNED TO DO.

13. What cross cultural training did you undergo?

NONE

✘ NOTE & ADD MORE QUESTIONS TO UNPACK ✘

Theme 3: Expatriate on- assignment Support

14. How were you assisted in being remunerated? What would you recommend as improvement?
I WAS NOT REMUNERATED FOR MY PERIOD OF STAY.
AS MY WORK WAS A WEEK OF REVIEW.

15. How were you assisted with medical aid?

- Yes
 No NOT APPLICABLE FOR MY PERIOD OF STAY

16. How were you assisted with food, housing and transportation & contact with family members back home? Please elaborate.

- Yes WE WERE PROVIDED WITH AN ALLOWANCE FOR FOOD AND OTHER PERSONAL NEEDS.
 No WE WERE PUT UP IN A HOTEL.
WE HAD A DRIVER AND VEHICLE ASSIGNED TO US.

17. Were you introduced to other expatriates in Benin?

- Yes
 No ONLY THE TEAM I WENT WITH AT TPT.

18. Were you informed and updated of any changes with-in the organisation?

(Structural or other)

NO - NOT APPLICABLE

19. Were you informed about administration related to leave and timecard and remuneration?

- Yes
 No

20. Please indicate your level of satisfaction with regards to administration activities such as timecards and leave and what could have been done to ensure a smoother process?

I WAS SATISFIED WITH SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE FOR THE WEEK THAT I WAS THERE.

21. Describe the current practice of managing expatriates whilst on assignment in Benin?

NOT APPLICABLE TO ME.

22. What were your frustrations whilst in Benin?

NONE

Theme 4: Repatriation:

23. Where you offered a promotion upon your return from the assignment

- Yes
- No

24. Would you accept another international assignment? Please explain

YES

25. Where you allocated a mentor in Benin and upon your return to South Africa?

- Yes
- No NOT APPLICABLE

26. Where you provided repatriation support and training?

NOT REQUIRED FOR MY STAY

27. Describe the repatriation process and rate the process (1= poor, 3= fair, 5= excellent)

FAIR

General Questions:

28. What did you find most difficult in Benin?

FOOD OPTIONS.

29. What did you dislike in Benin?

NONE.

30. What did you like as an expatriate living in Benin?

THE CULTURE AND THE WORK

* NOTE & ADD ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS TO FURTHER UNPACK. *

Pilot Test

Section B

(HR Professionals –HR Business Partners)

1. What were our biggest strengths with regard to the expatriation processes?

NONE: IT WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT HR HAD TO MANAGE EXPATRIATES AT HEAD OFFICE.

2. What were our biggest challenges?

NO PROJECT PLAN.
EXPATRIATES DID NOT RECEIVE SALARIES IN ADVANCE.
MEDICAL TREATMENT IN BENIN WAS A PROBLEM.
AON CARDS NOT ACCEPTED IN BENIN FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT

3. What could have been done differently?

MORE RESEARCH DONE BY HR.
HR SHOULD HAVE DONE AN ANALYSIS OF THE ENVIRONMENT.
PROACTIVE PLANNING

4. Did we adequately prepare and support our expatriates for this assignment. If not how so?

NO WE DID NOT.
WE DID NOT PROVIDE PRE-DEPARTURE TRAINING.
IT WAS A RUSHED PROJECT.

5. Do you think our current process needs improvement? If so, please explain

YES: PROPER RESEARCH DONE ABOUT THE HOST COUNTRY CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT.
WE NEED TO HAVE A PROPER EXPATRIATION PROCESS IN PLACE TO ALSO PREPARE EXPATRIATES FOR THEIR RETURN.

Appendix D: Final Questionnaire

International Assignment - Benin

Biographical and Organisational Information

1. What is your current Position?
 - Senior Manager
 - Middle Manager
 - Junior Manager
 - Bargaining Unit Employee

2. What is your gender?
 - Female
 - Male

3. What is your marital status?
 - Married
 - Partner
 - Single

4. Number of children?
 - 0
 - 1
 - 2
 - 3
 - Other

5. What was the length of your assignment in Benin?
 - Less than a year
 - One year
 - Two years
 - Three Years

6. What is your age?
 - 18 - 24
 - 25 - 34
 - 35 - 44
 - 45 – 65

7. Where you an expatriate assigned to Benin? If Yes go to **Section A**, if no got to **section B**
 - Yes (go to section A)
 - No (go to section B)

Section A
(Benin Expatriates)

Theme 1: Selection Criteria

8. Is this your first international assignment? Give details
- Yes
 - No
9. What selection criteria was used for your appointment to Benin?
10. Was your spouse, partner or family at the interview?
- Yes
 - No
11. What was your level of satisfaction regarding the selection process?

Theme 2: Pre assignment Training

12. Did you undergo pre assignment training? Please provide details
13. What cross cultural training did you undergo?
14. Do think cross cultural training is important? If so why?

Theme 3: Expatriate on- assignment Support

15. How were you assisted in being remunerated? What would you recommend as improvement?

16. How were you assisted with medical aid?

- Yes
- No

17. How were you assisted with food, housing and transportation & contact with family members back home? Please elaborate.

- Yes
- No

18. Were you introduced to other expatriates in Benin?

- Yes
- No

19. Were you informed and updated of any changes with-in the organisation?

(Structural or other)

20. Were you informed about administration related to leave and timecard and remuneration?

- Yes
- No

21. Please indicate your level of satisfaction with regards to administration activities such as timecards and leave and what could have been done to ensure a smoother process?

22. Describe the current practice of managing expatriates whilst on assignment in Benin?

23. What were your frustrations whilst in Benin?

General Questions:

29. What did you find most difficult in Benin?

30. What did you dislike in Benin?

31. What did you like as an expatriate living in Benin?

32. What advice would you give someone before they embark on an international assignment?

33. What in your opinion can be improved about the current expatriate process and policy?

34. Would you say that this assignment was a success? Please explain

35. Would like to add any additional comments no mentioned in this survey? Please discuss

Section B
(HR Professionals –HR Business Partners)

1. What were our biggest strengths with regard to the expatriation processes?

2. What were our biggest challenges?

3. What could have been done differently?

4. Did we adequately prepare and support our expatriates for this assignment.
If not how so?

5. Do you think our current process needs improvement? If so, please explain