

Expatriation Management: The Role of Psychological Contracts

Module Description:

MIBS-6480

Content of research project:

Topic

Multinational corporations are increasingly relying on expatriates to either complete a time-based task or organizational goal, to redress the shortage of skilled labor or to pursue career and development opportunities. Although the use of expatriates is not a new concept to MNCs, their value and application continue to rise. According to the latest Brookfield Report on Global Mobility Trends, 88 percent of the surveyed companies expect their international assignment population to either increase or stay the same in the next two years. While these assignments can be of great value if they succeed, they may cause significant costs to both the MNC and individual if they fail. In response to high failure rates of expatriate assignments, there has been significant demand for research on interventions and individual factors that could increase the likelihood of successful assignments. Past research has identified cross-cultural training, individual factors such as personality and cultural intelligence as well as adaptation strategies as important means. One underexplored area in the expatriate literature relates to expatriate expectations and perceptions of psychological contract breach that arises from two sources - the home and host organization. The psychological contract captures expatriate's beliefs about terms and conditions of the exchange relationship with the employer. If the employer fails to fulfill his obligations, a perception of contract violation is created, which adversely influences the assignments outcomes regardless of whether the perception of the expatriate is justified or not.

Aims and Scope

The aim of this research project is to explore the role of psychological contracts of expatriates during their assignment as well as surveying the effectiveness of current measures taken by the MNC in this regard. Students will support the department in conducting a state-of-the art empirical study. They will be involved in the data collection process, have the possibility to make experiences in different data analysis methods and to deduce managerial recommendations on how to improve the assignment conditions from these findings.

During the entire research process students will be assisted by members of the department.



Participation and ECTS credits

The research project is worth 5 ECTS credits. It can be taken by students in the MIBS program as an elective course in semester 1, 2, 3 and 4. Students acquire knowledge and competencies in the field of international management research. Students are able to identify and to critically reflect critical problems in the area of international management and apply advanced methods of empirical research to develop innovative solutions. The assessment of the course will be based on a short thesis, which has to be submitted until the end of the semester.

Timeline

There will be only a fixed kick-off meeting at October 23rd, 2pm in room 5.212 to introduce all interested students to the topic and to provide them with the necessary information. Apart from the kick-off meeting, personal meetings during the semester can be individually arranged with the supervisor. Submission deadline of thesis can also be arranged individually.

Interested students have the possibility to contact PD Dr. Tassilo Schuster (tassilo.schuster@fau.de) in advance to gain more information or in order to schedule a personal appointment.

Language:

English

Literature:

Kumarika Perera, H., Yin Teng Chew, E., & Nielsen, I. (2017). A psychological contract perspective of expatriate failure. *Human Resource Management, 56*(3), 479-499

Alcover, C. M., Rico, R., Turnley, W. H., & Bolino, M. C. (2017). Understanding the changing nature of psychological contracts in 21st century organizations: A multiple-foci exchange relationships approach and proposed framework. *Organizational Psychology Review, 7*(1), 4-35.

De Ruiter, M., Lub, X., Jansma, E., & Blomme, R. J. (2018). Psychological contract fulfillment and expatriate intrinsic career success: the mediating role of identification with the multinational corporation. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 29*(8), 1426-1453.

Pate, J., & Scullion, H. (2009). The changing nature of the traditional expatriate psychological contract. *Employee Relations, 32*(1), 56-73.