Factors That Motivate Women to Work Abroad

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Management Summary

Within the department of Global Employment and Expat management of Deutsche Telekom, the task is to prepare new expats for their work abroad. Recently the company has noticed that 68% of the expats are men with an overall female quota in 2019 of 35%. Although literature has shown that women are on average successful on their expatriate assignments, women's progress into international business has been limited (Mayrhofer & Scullion, 2002). This is an issue because participating in an international assignment is an important step forward in career development. Deutsche Telekom would like to know what the antecedents are for women to work abroad and how to increase international mobility among women. The research question therefore is: What are the factors that motivate women to work abroad?
To answer this question the following variables have been investigated concerning motivation to work abroad: age, children, perceived spouse support, perceived career impact, organizational support, leadership motivation, and self-efficacy.

Method

The sample consisted of 107 women who have not been abroad yet while working within Deutsche Telekom. 60% of the data was collected in Germany and 40% was collected in other European countries. The survey consisted of six different and validated questionnaires in relation to motivation to work abroad, spouse support, perceived career impact, perceived organizational support, leadership motivation and self-efficacy. Additionally, several open-ended questions have been asked related to motivation to work abroad. Based on the results, recommendations to Deutsche Telekom are given to increase global mobility and to re-shape their product to attract more women to work abroad.

Results

The results of the study indicate that women show a moderately high motivation to work abroad. Specifically, it is significant that women are more motivated to work abroad if they perceive an international assignment as being beneficial for their career. Furthermore, it is likely that motivation to work abroad decreases with age.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Perceived career impact appears to be the most significant variable predicting motivation to work abroad. Therefore, integrating international assignments into logical career paths seems to be most critical in facilitating motivation to work abroad (Stahl, Miller, & Tung, 2002). To

facilitate career pathing, the organization should provide career-path information, and ongoing mentoring. Mentoring is consistently associated with an upward career path (Harvey & Wiese, 1998).

Particularly, within the organizational career development programs, the link between benefits for the career and working abroad needs to be discussed thoroughly. In the development programs employees need to be encouraged to work abroad and they need to see the importance of international work experience. This is especially important for female employees because they are more likely to exclude themselves from international assignments. In comparison to men, women often have a more passive approach towards their career development and are less likely to work abroad (Fischlmayr, 2002). Specifically, the company's leadership must demonstrate that it values international experience and such experience will enhance one's career advancement (Lazarova & Caligiuri, 2001).

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Abstract

The goal of the current study is to find the factors that affect women's motivation to work abroad. It has been investigated whether there is a relationship between motivation to work abroad, perceived career impact, leadership motivation, self-efficacy, perceived spouse support, organizational support and the life phase. In total 104 women who are working at Deutsche Telekom and who have not been abroad within the company yet, filled out an online questionnaire. There has been no relationship found between leadership motivation, self-efficacy, perceived spouse support, organizational support, life phase and the motivation to work abroad. The most important finding is that perceived career impact has a positive relationship with motivation to work abroad. Women who perceive a link between career benefits and motivation to work abroad are more likely to accept an international assignment. The findings contribute to a better understanding of motivations to work abroad, especially for women. Further recommendations and practical implications can be found in the last part of the study.

Keywords: motivation to work abroad, career benefits, theory of planned behavior, female expatriate

Introduction

1.1 Cause

With increasing globalization and internationalization, the demand for employees working abroad has grown rapidly. Companies operating in multiple countries need employees that are willing to move and work abroad to stay competitive (Remhof, Gunkel, & Schlaegel, 2014). Employees leaving their home country to work in a host country are called expatriates. An expatriate is defined as a person who does not live in his or her home country and his or her task is to support and help carrying out critical business activities abroad (Shaffer, Kraimer, Chen, & Bolino, 2012). The stay abroad can either be a short- or long-term assignment. A short-term assignment usually lasts between 3 – 12 months and a long-term assignment lasts between 12 - 36 months.

International experience is not only relevant for companies but also for employees. On average more men choose to work abroad than women (Berry & Bell, 2012). This is striking because women are on average successful on their expat assignment. In comparison to men, women show more personality characteristics associated with expatriate success, like cultural adjustment, emotional sensitivity and preference for working in teams (Cole & McNulty, 2011). Nevertheless, women's career advancement into the international business has been

limited (Mayrhofer & Scullion, 2002). Companies need to grow their talent pools, especially for women, to stay competitive. To attract more women to work abroad, it is important to investigate the antecedents of their intention to work abroad.

1.2 Theory of Planned Behavior

The decision to move abroad is a complex process and the Theory of Planned Behavior (Figure 1) explains how behavioral intentions develop in contexts of motivational decisions (Montano & Kasprzyk, 2015). According to Ajzen (1991) the execution of a behavior is dependent on the motivation or intention of a person, in this case the motivation to go abroad. The intention to show a certain behavior is dependent on three factors. 1. Attitude towards the behavior, 2. Subjective norms and 3. Perceived behavioral control. The attitude towards the behavior refers to how people appraise and feel about a certain behavior. This can either be favorable or unfavorable. The second factor, subjective norm, describes how the behavior is influenced by significant others like family or friends. The third factor, perceived behavioral control, includes the person's competence to show a certain behavior and the ability to show the behavior. According to this theory, these three components form the intention to work abroad.

On average 39% of the expatriate intention is predicted by the Theory of Planned Behavior (Armitage & Conner, 2001). The framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior is not only based on personal factors but also on social factors and is well suited to explain the intention to work abroad. Therefore, the antecedents of motivation to work abroad investigated in this study were selected based on the assumptions of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Engle, Schlägel, Dimitriadi, Tatoglu, & Ljubica, 2015). The following factors are discussed in relation to the motivation to work abroad: life phase, perceived spouse support, perceived career impact, organizational support, leadership motivation and self-efficacy.

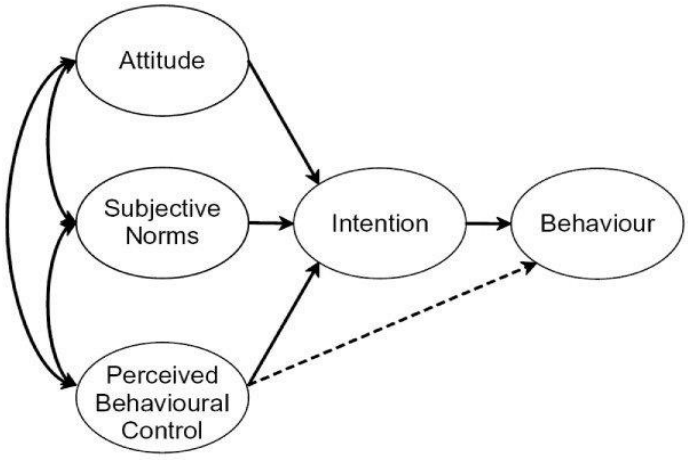

Figure 1: *Theory of Planned Behavior* (Ajzen, 1991)

1.3 Motivation to work abroad

International assignments are beneficial for the personal and professional development, for both men and women (Doherty & Dickmann, 2012). Employees who choose to work abroad, are more likely to be promoted, have higher incomes and show higher career intentions (Andresen, Biemann, & Pattie, 2015). International companies tend to promote employees with international experience. Nevertheless, less women choose the opportunity to work abroad (Berry & Bell, 2012). It is already known that women perceive glass ceilings and restrictions in the corporate world which hinder them from gaining experience abroad (Insch, McIntyre, & Napier, 2008). With low numbers of women working abroad, they do not have the possibility to gain international experience, which is needed for higher level positions (glass ceiling, (Bruning & Cadigan, 2014)). Therefore, it is important to understand the motivation or intention to work abroad. To understand the factors that motivate women to work abroad the following research question is proposed: What are the factors that motivate women to work abroad?

1.4 Life phase

Accepting an international assignment requires a great life adjustment for employees. Research has shown that younger employees are more open to change and major life adjustments (Brett & Stroh, 1995). Younger employees are faced with less hindering factors to go abroad, as opposed to their older colleagues. For example, younger employees are less likely to be hindered by a spouse, family factors, or children (Lavonen, 2011). In particular, women experience these factors as hindering. They are more likely to stay at home, take care of children and work part-time (Varma & Russell, 2016). Consequently, younger female employees might be more motivated to work abroad. In the current study this will be measured with the factor life phase. Life phase will be operationalized with age and the existence of children. Then the relation between age, children and motivation to work abroad will be analyzed. The first two hypotheses therefore are:

Hypothesis 1: There is a negative relationship between age and the motivation to work abroad.

Hypothesis 2: There is a negative relationship between having children and the motivation to work abroad.

1.5 The role of spouse support

The life phase is not the only potential factor to influence motivation to work abroad. Support from a life partner (spouse support) may also be a source of influence. It has been shown that the influence of an expatriate assignment on the work-family balance influences the decision to go abroad (Konopaske & Werner, 2005). In particular, the spouse or significant other is taken into consideration when accepting an international assignment. According to Konopaske, Robie and Ivancevich (2005) the higher the willingness of the female spouse to move, the higher the motivation for men to work abroad. This has not been investigated for male spouses yet but it is very likely that women are more motivated to accept an international assignment if their partner supports them which leads to hypothesis number three:

Hypothesis 3: There is a positive relationship between the perceived spouse's willingness and the motivation to work abroad.

1.6 Perceived career impact

Another factor influencing the motivation to go abroad could be the perceived career impact. Having participated in an international assignment, benefits the career. It is therefore important to investigate whether women in the current organization perceive a link between their career and motivation to work abroad. Women who see such an assignment as an important step in their career are more likely to choose to move and work abroad (Stahl, Miller, & Tung, 2002). This generates hypothesis number four:

Hypothesis 4: There is a positive relationship between the perceived career impact and the motivation to work abroad.

1.7 Perceived organizational support

Additionally, it has been shown that employees are more likely to accept an international assignment when they feel supported by their organization (Jawahar & Hemmasi, 2006). Perceived organizational support is defined as the belief an employee develops about how much the organization values them (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Organizational support includes aspects like offering help to the employee in stressful situations and caring about the individual's well-being. Perceived organizational support should be even higher when accepting an international assignment because the employee needs even more support and guidance (Varma & Russell, 2016). It has been shown that perceived organizational support guides female employees to express interest in working

abroad (Varma & Russell, 2016). Therefore, it is important for the female expatriate to perceive organizational support as high in order to accept an international assignment. Consequently, motivation to work abroad might be only high, when perceived organizational support is high, which generates hypothesis number five:

Hypothesis 5: There is a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and the motivation to work abroad.

1.8 Leadership motivation

Another motivating factor for accepting an international assignment could be the motivation to lead. Literature has shown that employees choose to go on an international assignment in order to get a leadership or management position after their return (Konopaske, Robie, & Ivancevich, 2009). Leadership motivation is relevant for both genders. Promotion to a leadership role might be even more relevant to women because they are experiencing more barriers compared to men when they want to be promoted (Insch et al., 2008). The motivation to lead could therefore be an antecedent for the motivation to work abroad. Hypothesis number six therefore is:

Hypothesis 6: There is a positive relationship between leadership motivation and the motivation to work abroad.

1.9 Self-efficacy

Personality factors can also affect the motivation to work abroad. Self-efficacy is an important factor that needs to be considered. It is defined as the confidence in one's own abilities to perform well at a challenging task (Betz, 2000). In the context of an international assignment, employees who score high on self-efficacy are more likely to believe in their skills to deal with a challenge and therefore they have a higher likelihood to succeed (Miluwi & Rashid, 2012). Consequently, this means that employees who score high on self-efficacy might be more motivated to work abroad because they believe in themselves. This leads to hypothesis number seven:

Hypothesis 7: There is a positive relationship between self-efficacy and the motivation to work abroad.

Method

2.1 Participants

Participants were female employees from Deutsche Telekom who have not yet worked abroad. After a priori power analysis with multiple regression as statistical test and seven

predictors, the aim was to approach at least 103 women to have 80% power for detecting a medium effect size when applying the .05 criterion of statistical significance. In total 107 female employees from Deutsche Telekom participated in the survey. Participation was voluntarily, and participants did not receive any reimbursement for their participation.

2.2 Materials

The study was cross-sectional. An online survey containing six different questionnaires was used to measure the different constructs mentioned above. Additionally, the questionnaire also included other constructs, the company was interested in, but they were not relevant to the current study. Parts of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

Intention to work abroad was measured by 5 items adapted from Sheeran and Abraham (2003). An example of an item is "I will definitely work abroad in the future" to be answered on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). In previous research the internal consistency was 0.93 (Sheeran & Abraham, 2003).

Self-efficacy was measured with the "Allgemeine Selbstwirksamkeit Kurzskala" (Beierlein, Kovaleva, Kemper, & Rammstedt, 2012). The scale consists of three items (e.g.: "I am able to solve most problems on my own") and answers were made on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (applies completely) to 5 (doesn't apply at all). The internal consistency for this scale was between 0.81 - 0.86 in previous research (Beierlein et al., 2012).

Perceived spouse support was measured with six items adapted from the "Quality of Relationship inventory" (Reiner, Beutel, Skaletz, Brähler, & Stöbel-Richter, 2012). An example item is: "To what extent could you turn to this person for advice about problems?" Answers were made on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (definitely true) to 5 (definitely false). In previous research the internal consistency was 0.84 (Reiner et al., 2012).

Perceived organizational support was measured with 8 items from the "Perceived organizational support" questionnaire (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). An example for an item is "The organization cares about my general satisfaction at work" to be answered on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). Four items had to be reversed. In previous research the internal consistency was 0.89 (Eisenberger, Rhoades, & Cameron, 1999).

Leadership motivation was measured with the "affective-identity motivation to lead" consisting of 9 items (Chan & Drasgow, 2001). An example for an item is "I am the type of person who is not interested to lead others" and answers were made on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (applies completely) to 5 (doesn't apply at all). In total four items had to be

reversed. In previous research the internal consistency was between 0.84 - 0.91 (Chan & Drasgow, 2001).

Perceived career impact of the international assignment was measured with 5 items adapted from research on expatriate career support (Heijden, Van Engen, & Paauwe, 2009). Participants had to answer the question how likely they think working abroad for at least three months has an impact on their career. An example for an item is "Advancement within the company" and answers were made on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (extremely likely) to 5 (slightly unlikely). In previous research the internal consistency for perceived career success was between 0.74 - 0.93 (Heijden et al., 2009).

In addition, female employees were asked several open questions related to their motivations to work abroad. A sample item asked them what the company could do to make it possible that more women are working abroad. This was relevant to give additional recommendations to Deutsche Telekom to increase global mobility and to re-shape their product to attract more women to work abroad.

2.3 Procedure

Before contacting female employees of Deutsche Telekom, a pilot study was done. The pilot study consisted of an interview with three female employees of Deutsche Telekom to make sure that the questions in the survey were understandable. Based on the pilot study, small adjustments were made, and the final version was sent out to the target group. 60% of the data was collected in Germany and 40% was collected in other European countries in sub companies of Deutsche Telekom. This was done because the majority of the employees work in Germany and European countries. Women working in sub companies in Europe received an email with an invitation to fill in the online survey (Appendix A). Women in Germany were contacted by email and asked to participate in a telephone interview and to fill in the survey. The telephone interview (see Appendix A) was a standardized, structured interview, necessary to receive additional information regarding what is already known about international assignments. The survey consisted of six different factors which measured the motivation of women to work abroad and every factor was measured with a reliable and validated questionnaire mentioned above. Taking part in the survey took approximately 20 minutes.

2.4 Design and Preliminary Analysis

The design of this study is a cross-sectional questionnaire. The collected data were analyzed with the statistical program SPSS. After missing values were identified they were replaced by mean. This was done for the spouse support scale when the participant indicated that they were single. Before conducting the main analysis, reliability needed to be checked. The internal consistency with the sample of this study is acceptable for all variables except for the variable perceived career impact (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The reliability for this scale was 0.6. To identify violation of assumptions a descriptive analysis was used. In the spouse support scale there were three outliers which were analyzed with the standardized z-scores. Outliers were removed when the standardized value was plus or minus 3.29 standard deviations (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The final data set consisted of 104 participants.

The final data were analyzed using a hierarchical regression with motivation to work abroad as the dependent variable and self-efficacy, perceived career impact, perceived spouse support, leadership motivation, organizational support, age and children as the predictors. To analyze the main effects a two-step hierarchical analysis was used. In the first step of the model the variables age and children were used and in the second step self-efficacy, perceived career impact, perceived spouse support, leadership motivation, and organizational support were added.

Results

3.1 Demographic variables

Table 1 describes demographic and work-related variables for female employees in numbers and percentages regarding the following variables: age groups, children, position within the company and the years worked in the position. The 104 participants can be divided into four age groups. The age group 31 – 40 is the largest (42). Out of the 104 women, 36 have children and 68 do not have children. Participants come from a diverse range of functions. Human Resources shares the biggest portion (28.8%) and TK shares the smallest portion (1.9%). The majority have worked between 2 – 5 years in their position (42.3%).

Table 1: *Demographic and work-related variables (N=104)*

	Number	Percentage (%)
Age Groups		
Up to 30	30	28.8
31 - 40	42	40.4
41 - 50	25	24
Over 51	7	6.7
Children		
Yes	36	34.6
No	68	65.4
Position/Function		
IT	18	17.3
TK	2	1.9
Service	7	6.7
Sales	18	17.3
Human Resources	30	28.8
Finance	5	4.8
Others	24	23.1
Years on position		
Less than 2 years	37	35.6
2 – 5 years	44	42.3
More than 5 years	23	22.1

3.2 Descriptive Statistics, Alpha Coefficients and Bivariate Correlation

An overview of the relationships between the variables, the descriptive statistics, alpha coefficients and correlations can be found in Table 2. Participants reported having relatively high motivations to work abroad and to lead. Additionally, they are showing relatively high self-efficacy and perceived career impact.

Correlations were computed between the variables: motivation to work abroad, perceived career impact, leadership motivation, self-efficacy, organizational support, perceived spouse support, children and age. Notable findings are that there is a significant positive correlation between leadership motivation and motivation to work abroad, and perceived career impact and motivation to work abroad. Additionally, there is a significant

positive correlation between leadership motivation and self-efficacy. Furthermore, age is negatively related with motivation to work abroad in a significant way.

Table 2: *Descriptive Statistics, Alpha Coefficients and Bivariate Correlations for Motivation to Work Abroad, Perceived Career Impact, Leadership Motivation, Self-efficacy, Organizational Support, Perceived Spouse Support, Age and Children (N=104)*

Variables	Mean	SD	alpha	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
1. Motivation to work abroad	3.41	1.12	.92	1							
2. Perceived career impact	4.3	.55	.61	.31**	1						
3. Leadership motivation	3.55	.67	.81	.23*	.1	1					
4. Self-efficacy	4.34	.46	.72	.08	.06	.34**	1				
5. Organizational support	3.8	.7	.84	-.08	-.05	-.06	-.05	1			
6. Perceived spouse support	4.6	.34	.71	.01	.03	-.01	.1	-.01	1		
7. Age	36.26	9.03	-	-.2*	-.3**	-.06	.14	.04	-.07	1	
8. Children	1.64	.48	-	.04	.33**	-.02	-.15	.06	.14	-.62**	1

Note. **p < .01 level (2-tailed)
*p < .05 level (2-tailed)

3.3 Main analysis

To investigate the effects of the variables on the motivation to work abroad, a two-step hierarchical regression analysis has been done. The results can be found in Table 3. The overall model 1 for motivation to work abroad is not significant ($F(2, 101) = 2.85$, $p > .06$). With the addition of the predictor variables in Model 2, the model is significant ($F(7, 96) = 2.81$, $p < .01$). and the prediction of the model rises from 5.3% to 17% ($\Delta R^2 = .12$). The change in R^2 is significant ($F(101, 96) = 2.7$, $p < .03$). Therefore, the variables added in model 2 predict 12% of the motivation to work abroad. Furthermore, table 2 shows that perceived career impact is significantly related to motivation to work abroad.

Table 3: *Regression analysis: Motivation to Work Abroad, Perceived Career Impact, Leadership Motivation, Self-efficacy, Organizational Support, Perceived Spouse Support, Age and Children (N=104)*

Variable	B	SE	β	t	p
Motivation to work abroad Model 1					
Children	-.33	.29	-.14	-1.16	.25
Age	-.04	.02	-.29	-2.36	.02
Motivation to work abroad Model 2					
Children	-.45	.29	-.19	-1.57	.12
Age	-.03	.02	-.22	-1.84	.07
Leadership motivation	.32	.17	.19	1.89	.06
Self-efficacy	-.02	.25	-.01	-.08	.94
Perceived career impact	.57	.20	.28	2.8	.01*
Organizational support	-.06	.15	-.04	-.41	.67
Perceived spouse support	.1	.32	.03	.3	.77
Model 1					
R^2	.05				
ΔR^2	.05				
F for change in R^2	2.85				
Model 2					
R^2	.17				
ΔR^2	.12				
F for change in R^2	2.7*				

Note. *p < .05 level (2-tailed)

3.4 Outcome Hypotheses 1 – 7

The variables perceived spouse support (T = .3, $p > .77$) children (T = -1.57, $p > .12$) and age (T = -1.84, $p > .07$) are not significantly related with motivation to work abroad. The hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 can therefore be rejected. There is no negative relationship between the life phase (age, children) and the motivation to work abroad for women. Additionally, there is no positive relationship between perceived spouse support and the motivation to work abroad.

Perceived career impact (T = 2.8, $p < .01$) is significantly related to motivation to work abroad and therefore hypothesis 4 is confirmed. It can be concluded that women who perceive a high career impact are also more motivated to work abroad.

Organizational support (T = -.41, $p > .67$), leadership motivation (T = 1.89, $p > .06$) and self-efficacy (T = -.08, $p > .94$) are not significantly related with motivation to work abroad. The hypotheses, 5, 6, and 7 can therefore be rejected. There is no positive relationship between perceived organizational support, leadership motivation and self-efficacy with the motivation to work abroad for female employees.

Discussion

The goal of the current study was to investigate the factors that affect women's motivation to work abroad. It has been investigated whether there is a relationship between motivation to work abroad, perceived career impact, leadership motivation, self-efficacy, perceived spouse support, organizational support and the life phase of female employees.

The results for hypotheses 1 and 2 are not significant. In the current study there seems to be no relation between having children and the motivation to work abroad nor between age and the motivation to work abroad. This is contradictory to the hypothesized effect but can be explained by a study from Baldridge, Eddleston, and Veiga (2006). They found that age was not related to the willingness to move abroad but rather to the life phase of the children. Women are more likely to stay at home when they have younger children. Children who are younger, especially children of pre-school age, are more dependent on their parents and therefore they decrease their mother's motivation to move abroad (Baldridge, Eddleston, & Veiga, 2006). In the current study the age or life phases of the children were not specifically looked into. Therefore, it might be more important to consider the life phase of the children when looking into the motivation to work abroad for female employees. Furthermore, the operationalization of life phase (age, children) is not a specific definition of life phases (Medley, 1980). Participants were not asked in which phase they find themselves in. Therefore, it might be more important to look in the specific life phase of the employee.

Hypothesis 3 was not confirmed. Women are not more motivated to work abroad if they perceive spouse support as high. This result is striking, because literature suggests that spouse support is an important factor when thinking about going on an international assignment (Konopaske, Robie, & Ivancevich, 2005). The current result points in another direction. It might be that women are not considering spouse support when intending to work abroad. Research has shown that spouse support is more relevant during the work abroad and

a critical factor in the success of an assignment (Noor, 2002). Therefore, women might underestimate the factor of spouse support when intending to move abroad.

Hypothesis 4 was confirmed. Women are more motivated to work abroad when they perceive a high career impact. This is in line with research on benefits of expatriate assignments (Stahl et al., 2002). If a woman perceives an international assignment as beneficial, she is more likely to work abroad. This is especially important for female employees because in comparison to men, women often have a more passive approach towards their career development and are less likely to work abroad (Fischlmayr, 2002). Therefore, it is important that the company links the benefits of an international assignment to the career development to increase motivation of women to work abroad.

The results for hypothesis 5 were not confirmed. High organizational support is not related to motivation to work abroad. A possible explanation is that organizational support in general was measured and not specifically organizational support in relation to working abroad. In practice preparing an international assignment is a long bureaucratic procedure. Female employees might be demotivated by the fact that they do not see the organizational support from their supervisors that they would need in order to accept an international assignment (Varma & Russell, 2016). Furthermore, organizational support is defined as giving help and security to employees (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Female employees need to feel more secure than their male counterparts (Polson, 2016). Further research should look into the effects of safety and security in relation to motivation to work abroad.

Leadership motivation is not positively related to motivation to work abroad and therefore hypothesis 6 was not confirmed. This is contradictory to the finding of hypothesis 4. In general employees choose to be on an international assignment as a career step to get into a leadership or management position after their return (Konopaske et al., 2009). For women this is not always possible because often they experience the glass ceiling effect. This means they are not able to reach a higher position for example due to stereotypes (Insch et al., 2008). If the female employee perceives this effect, leadership motivation is not relevant because they believe the organization does not value their experience (Bruning & Cadigan, 2014). Therefore, women do not choose to grow within the organization or try to rise to leadership. Additionally, women show less power motivation than men (Schuh et al., 2014). It seems that women do not perceive leadership as a positive enough career impact and therefore, do not see it as a motivator to work abroad.

Hypothesis 7 was also not confirmed because there is no positive relationship between self-efficacy and motivation to work abroad, women are not more likely to work abroad if

they show high self-efficacy. There might be no effect of self-efficacy on the motivation to work abroad if employees do not expect positive outcomes to outweigh costs (Tharenou, 2002). Furthermore, this might indicate that the questionnaire of general self-efficacy needs further specification, for example expatriation self-efficacy (Tharenou, 2003). Looking into the specifics of expatriation self-efficacy might make women more aware on the positive outcomes of an international assignment. Further research should investigate whether expatriation self-efficacy leads to the expected results regarding the intention to work abroad.

4.1 Strengths and Limitations

Investigating the factors that influence motivation to work abroad in women has led to new insights into the field of expatriate management. Personal factors as well as external factors have been investigated. Looking into both fields makes it possible to give a more representative picture on motivation to work abroad in female employees (Berry & Bell, 2012).

The overall sample is representative of the organization. Participants were women from different age groups, different countries and departments, with children and without children, and a varying amount of work experience. Therefore, it is possible to generalize the results and project them onto the rest of the female employees in the company. Additionally, statistical analyses were used, which lead to recommendations based on empirical results.

Next to the strengths of the survey, there are also some limitations. The reliability scale for perceived career impact did not reach the acceptable alpha of 0.7 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Therefore, it cannot be considered good and the results need to be interpreted with caution. The lower number of Cronbach's alpha can be explained with the low number of items on the scale (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). A different questionnaire for perceived career impact should be used in future research to see if more reliable results are found.

Additionally, during data collection there has been a world-wide health crisis which is a limitation in the study. During crisis situations people experience higher uncertainties and more anxiety during economic decision making (Hartley & Phelps, 2012). The health crisis has been a negative and disturbing factor. During data collection going on an international assignment was not an option because of travel restrictions and closed borders. Furthermore, people might have associated travelling with more anxiety and risks, because there was the possibility of being stranded in another country. It is very likely that this could have been perceived as a barrier by the participants when answering the survey.

4.2 Future research

Despite the limitations of the study, it also gives new impulses for future research. The current study is correlational in nature and causality cannot be assumed. In the future the hypothesized effects could be studied over time. For example, motivation to work abroad can be measured on actual expatriation behavior and possible causal biases would be excluded.

Only women who had not been abroad yet participated in the study. In the future it would be interesting to compare different groups. For example, the current sample could be compared to men who have not been abroad yet or to women who have already been abroad. The new insights could lead to more specific results which can be used to positively influence the factors that motivate women to work abroad.

Furthermore, non-work-related issues such as work-family balance are important but have not yet been studied extensively regarding female employees. For example, women are still more likely to stay at home and take care of the children, work part time or accompany the partner on an international assignment (Berry & Bell, 2012). Future research would benefit from a closer look at work-family variables that enhance or constrain motivation to work abroad.

4.3 Practical implications

From the results it becomes clear that perceived career impact is really important for female employees. If women perceive an international assignment as a benefit for their career, they are more likely to work abroad. Therefore, integrating international assignments into logical career paths seems to be the most critical variable in facilitating motivation to work abroad (Stahl et al., 2002). To facilitate career pathing, the organization should provide career-path information, and ongoing coaching and mentoring. Mentoring is consistently associated with an upward career path (Harvey & Wiese, 1998). It would be beneficial for female employees to exchange experiences with women who have already been abroad. Additionally, organizing participation in networking activities allows women to understand the processes of international assignments and makes them more likely to be chosen for these assignments (Insch et al., 2008).

Particularly, within the organizational career development programs, the link between benefits for the career and working abroad needs to be discussed thoroughly. This is especially important for female employees because they are more likely to exclude themselves from international assignments. In comparison to men, women often have a more passive approach towards their career development and are less likely to work abroad

(Fischlmayr, 2002). Specifically, the company's leadership must demonstrate that it values international experience and such experience will enhance one's career advancement (Lazarova & Caligiuri, 2001).

If the organization expresses a clear link between the benefits of international assignments and career development, women would be more motivated to work abroad. For the organization this career advancement does not necessarily mean that women want to get into leadership positions. The current study has shown that women are not necessarily more motivated to work abroad when they are motivated to lead. For women, career steps can also be perceived as personal development, like becoming more confident and gaining experience, balancing work and family, and developing a network (Shapiro, Ingols, & Blake-Beard, 2008). Therefore, the organization should realize that career pathing is different for women than for men.

4.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, the study gives insights on the motivation of women to work abroad for Deutsche Telekom. The survey shows that perceived career impact relates to motivation to work abroad. It can be concluded that women who perceive a higher career impact are also more motivated to work abroad. In order to motivate more women to work abroad it is recommended that Deutsche Telekom should give a clear link between the career benefits and working abroad. In the development programs women need to be encouraged to work abroad and they need to see the importance of international work experience for their career advancement. The organization should keep in mind that women want to work abroad because they want to advance their careers and that for women career advancement is not necessarily linked to leadership positions.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Survey including Information letter and Informed Consent

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Q1 **Information letter**
concerning a survey for my Master Thesis: Factors that motivate women to work abroad
I want to investigate the antecedents of women who have not been abroad yet to accept an international assignment. I would like you to fill in the following questionnaire. It will not take longer than **20 minutes.** The information that I collect will be anonymously processed. If you indicate that you want to participate in this study, I will ask you to sign an informed consent form. By signing this form, you indicate that you are sufficiently informed about the study and that you want to participate in the study and that you voluntarily do so.

Kind regards,
Sophie Gerdel (sophie.gerdel@telekom.de)
Student Master Thesis
Psychology Programme
Radboud University

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Q2 **Consent form** for participation in a survey for my Master Thesis: **Factors that motivate women to work abroad**

I hereby confirm that
- I was satisfactorily informed about the study and I have read and understood the written information on the study.
- I was informed that the current study is conducted by a psychology student as part of their graduation internship
- I was allowed sufficient time to consider whether to give my consent.
- I participate of my own free will.

I understand that
- I have the right to withdraw my consent at any time without having to give a reason and that withdrawing my participation has no further consequences.
- my information will be processed anonymously.

○ I agree to participate (1)

○ I do not agree to participate (2)

Q4 Have you ever worked abroad **for DT**?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Have you ever worked abroad for DT? = Yes

Q5 To which part of the board of management do you belong to?

- ○ T-Systems(1)
- ○ Human Resources and Legal Affairs(2)
- ○ Europe(3)
- ○ Germany
- ○ Finance
- ○ Data privacy, Legal Affairs and Compliance
- ○ Technology and Innovation

Q5 Which cluster does your individual function describe the best?

- ○ IT (1)
- ○ TK (technical service center) (2)
- ○ Service (3)
- ○ Sales
- ○ Human Resources
- ○ Finance
- ○ Others

Q5 How long have you been working **for DT**?

- ○ less than 2 years (1)
- ○ 2 - 5 years (2)
- ○ more than 5 years (3)

Q6 In which country is your current department located?

_____

Q7 How many years are you working in your current department?

- ○ Less than 2 years (1)
- ○ 2 - 5 years (2)
- ○ more than 5 years (3)

Q8 Do you work part-time or full-time?

- ○ Part-time (1)
- ○ Full-time (2)
- ○ Other, namely: _____(3)

Q9 How old are you?

_____

Q10 What is your nationality?

_____

Q11 What is your living situation?

- ○ Single (1)
- ○ In a relationship (2)
- ○ Married (3)

Q12 Do you have children?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

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Q13 How much do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree (1)	Somewhat agree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat disagree (4)	Strongly disagree (5)
I intend to work abroad in the future (1)	○	○	○	○	○
I will try to work abroad in the future (2)	○	○	○	○	○
I will definitely work abroad in the future (3)	○	○	○	○	○
It is very likely that I will work abroad in the future (4)	○	○	○	○	○

Q14 According to you how likely is it working abroad for at least 3 months would help you with the following?

	Extremely likely (1)	Moderately likely (2)	Slightly likely (3)	Neither likely nor unlikely (4)	Slightly unlikely (5)
Advancement within the company (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Career opportunities among other employers (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Development of intercultural skills (4)	○	○	○	○	○
Development of professional or managerial skills (5)	○	○	○	○	○

Q15 The following statements may apply more or less to you. To what extent do you think each statement applies to you personally?

	applies completely (1)	applies mostly (2)	applies somewhat (3)	applies a bit (4)	doesn't apply at all (5)
I can rely on my own abilities in difficult situations (1)	○	○	○	○	○
I am able to solve most problems on my own. (2)	○	○	○	○	○
I can usually solve even challenging and complex tasks well. (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q16 The following statements may apply more or less to you. To what extent do you think each statement applies to you personally?

	applies completely (1)	applies mostly (2)	applies somewhat (3)	applies a bit (4)	doesn't apply at all (5)
Most of the time, I prefer being a leader than a follower when working in a group (1)	○	○	○	○	○
I am the type of person who is not interested to lead others (2)	○	○	○	○	○
I am definitely not a leader by nature (3)	○	○	○	○	○
I am the type of person who likes to be in charge of others (4)	○	○	○	○	○
I believe I can contribute more to a group if I am a follower rather than a leader (5)	○	○	○	○	○
I usually want to be the leader in the groups that I work in (6)	○	○	○	○	○
I am the type who would actively support a leader but prefers not to be appointed as leader (7)	○	○	○	○	○
I have a tendency to take charge in most groups or teams that I work in (8)	○	○	○	○	○
I am seldom reluctant to be the leader of a group (9)	○	○	○	○	○

Q17 Listed below are statements that represent possible opinions that you may have about working at your current employer. Please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement:

	Strongly agree (1)	Somewhat agree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat disagree (4)	Strongly disagree (5)
The organization values my contribution to its well-being. (1)	○	○	○	○	○
The organization fails to appreciate any extra effort from me (2)	○	○	○	○	○
The organization would ignore any complaint from me (3)	○	○	○	○	○
The organization really cares about my well-being (4)	○	○	○	○	○
Even if I did the best job possible, the organization would fail to notice (5)	○	○	○	○	○
The organization cares about my general satisfaction at work (6)	○	○	○	○	○
The organization shows very little concern for me (7)	○	○	○	○	○
The organization would support me if I work abroad (8)	○	○	○	○	○

Q18 When answering the following questions think about your partner or significant other. If you are single continue to the next question.

	Definitely true (1)	Probably true (2)	Probably false (3)	Definitely false (4)
To what extent could you turn to this person for advice about problems? (1)	○	○	○	○
To what extent could you count on this person for help with a problem? (2)	○	○	○	○
To what extent can you count on this person to give you honest feedback, even if you might not want to hear it? (3)	○	○	○	○
If you wanted to work abroad and accept an international assignment, are you confident that this person would be willing to go with you? (4)	○	○	○	○
To what extent can you count on this person when you would work abroad? (6)	○	○	○	○
To what extent can you really count on this person to support you if you work abroad? (7)	○	○	○	○

Q19 What would be reasons for you **NOT** to choose to work abroad? Rank the following motives according to your reasons (most hindering (1) least hindering (5))

_____ Language barrier (1)
_____ Family (2)
_____ No safety in the host country (3)
_____ Different culture in the host country (4)
_____ No job safety in the home country after return (5)
_____Children (6)
_____ No interest in going abroad (7)

Q20 What in your view, could the company do to make it possible that more women are working abroad?

_____

Q21 Within DT, in general there are relatively more men than women working abroad in an international assignment. In your view, what are the main reasons for this?

_____

Page Break

Q22 This was the last question. Thank you very much for your time! If you have any questions or comments, please use the space below.

_____

End of Block: Default Question Block