Master's thesis

Double degree program "Innovation Management and Entrepreneurship"

FACILITATING EXPATRIATES' CREATIVITY

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Abstract

In a frequently globalized work environment organizations increasingly consider employing expatriates due to their positive influence on creative, innovative outcomes. However, literature on the topic of how to facilitate their creativity is missing. The aim of this paper was to provide with an overview of critical factors affecting expatriates' creativity and innovativeness, as well as implications on how managers could stimulate expatriates' creativity. 16 expatriates from various countries working in professional service industries, namely, governmental, communication, consultancy and art; and 1 expert from the European Commission Directorate-General for Research and Innovation were interviewed in Brussels, Belgium. The findings suggest that non-hierarchical organizational structure; open communication and knowledge exchange; team diversity; equal treatment and social justice; clear long-term and short-term goals; expatriates' personal traits are a few of the most important factors that affect expatriates' creativity. Findings also reveal factors influencing expatriates' creativity that are surprising, either contradicting (lack of resources; adjustment and integration only to a certain extent) or adding (expatriate status) to the existing theory and previous research. Several recommendations for managers who seek for expatriates' creativity are presented, namely, non-work related guidance, mentoring and training programs, and manager's international experience and awareness. At the end, limitations and directions for future research are presented.

Keywords: facilitating, management practices, expatriates, creativity, innovativeness.

Foreword

First, I would like to sincerely thank Michel Ehrenhard for his extensive help throughout this project. As Michel was operative and flexible, he provided with the relevant support in the beginning, and especially in the later stages despite the distance that limited our communication. I thank him for the collaboration, and sharing his knowledge and experience with me which made it possible to reach the best possible final results of this thesis.

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Rūta Stasiūnaitė

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1   Introduction

The majority of organizations desire to achieve a competitive advantage, which is often related to creativity[1] and innovation[2] (e.g., Kandampully & Duddy, 1999). Creative or innovative performance involve own idea development, as well as application of new ideas, technologies or services. The competitive advantage can be acquired by international knowledge and experience of expatriates (Dickmann & Harris, 2005) due to communication and knowledge exchange between specialists with varying backgrounds and expertise which are crucial for creative and innovative performance (Kratzer et al., 2004). Therefore, companies scout for talents not only domestically, but also internationally.

In the last years, expatriate involvement in creative and innovative occupations became a generally accepted and commonly spread norm. However, expatriates have to adjust to the new country's as well as organization's culture, and often face difficulties when working abroad. Therefore, changes, contrasts and issues may be distinctly more dramatic for the international movers than those changing jobs domestically (Louis, 1980; Bonache, 2005). For example, expatriates usually experience more pressure and uncertainty. They may face a loss of status, and a lack of respect towards their acquired skills. On the other hand, they often get more challenging tasks, greater autonomy, variety and responsibility (Bonache, 2005).

Since expatriates are known to be facing more complicated situations than their local co-workers, team leaders and managers have to find the right way to positively influence their creative, innovative performance. Team leaders or managers can behave differently towards their diverse subordinates, thus applying various management practices. Leadership, which team leaders and managers apply, is "a process of social influence in which one person is able to enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task" (Chemers, 2000, p. 27). Therefore, team leaders or managers have to focus their social influence and management practices on expatriates in an appropriate way.

Overall, due to the expatriates' cultural and experiential differences, as well as the issues they face working in another country, managers likely have to act differently towards expatriates in comparison with the local employees. As organizations desire to achieve the competitive advantage by employing expatriates, they have to apply appropriate management practices to facilitate expatriates' creative performance.

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[1] Creativity is procuring useful ideas (Amabile, 1983, 1998; Amabile et al., 1996).
[2] Innovation is a successful implementation of new ideas (Amabile, 1983, 1998; Amabile et al., 1996).

1.1 Literature suggests directions for future research: academic and practical implications

In the last years, there has been research on personality traits (e.g., Peltokorpi & Froese, 2012), adjustment (e.g., Peltokorpi & Froese, 2012; Cole & McNulty, 2011; Selmer & Fenner, 2009b; Koo Moon et al., 2012; Sanchez et al., 2000), performance and work outcomes (e.g., Selmer & Fenner, 2009a), assignment effectiveness (e.g., Kim & Slocum Jr., 2008), motives (e.g., Selmer & Lauring, 2010), job embeddedness (e.g., Shen & Hall, 2009), intercultural communication (e.g., Peltokorpi, 2007), training (e.g., Koo Moon et al., 2012), expatriate failure (e.g., Harzing & Christensen, 2004), repatriation (e.g., Suutari & Brewster, 2003) and institutional injustice (e.g., Forstenlechner, 2010) towards expatriates who either choose to work abroad (i.e. self-initiated), or are assigned by their company to a subsidiary in a foreign country (i.e. company-assigned).

However, research on three concepts, namely, expatriates, creativity, and management, in one context has been ignored. Researchers have focused on expatriates' creative performance; management for creativity; and management towards expatriates. These three issues bundled together opened space for identifying a gap within existing literature. Moreover, several studies suggested it as a direction for future research.

The recent literature review and interviews of international human resource managers conducted by McEvoy & Buller (2013) offered that more research on assignment acceptance, training attractiveness, career impact, compensation equity, repatriation processes, and expatriate job performance would enhance the knowledge of how to deal with expatriates. The needed focus on job performance was especially highlighted. Thus, research on creative and innovative expatriates' performance would enhance the knowledge of their managers. Next to this, Doherty (2013) offered to look at the integration of various talents of expatriates, which might help managers when choosing appropriate strategies, policies and practices. One of the possible talents in this context might be creativity.

The review paper by Dabic et al. (2013) suggested studying how to deal with and take advantage of hiring expatriates. They stated that the research on relationship between hiring expatriates and creativity, innovation is missing: "additional research is called for to assess the impact of expatriates on several performance indicators, most of them related to any type of intangible outcomes (e.g., innovativeness)" (p. 17). "Evolving research on strategic management calls for including additional variables […] such as knowledge management issues, creativeness, innovativeness or entrepreneurial orientation" (p. 18).

As suggested by previous studies, a research on aspects of management when seeking for expatriates' creative, innovative outcomes would enhance the academic field. The research findings on this topic might give new insights for international human resource management, performance management and other potential areas of expatriates working in creative and innovative environments.

From the practical point of view, findings of this research would especially be beneficial for managers and team leaders working in MNCs, companies operating in creative, innovative, hi-tech business fields, and companies simply employing people from abroad. Senior executives might also find suggestions on what kind of rules, policies and management practices should be implemented towards expatriates, and what overall climate within the company is beneficial. Finally, it might be of interest to expatriates themselves, since they can "realize having a responsibility to demand leadership from their managers" (Interview 1). In this case, expatriates might inform the managers of what would motivate them to be more creative.

1.2   Research goal and research question

Although there was a wide spectrum of research on expatriates, creativity and management separately, the current study was based on the identified gap in the scientific literature, and suggested research directions. This study investigated the factors influencing expatriates' creativity, and management practices which can be applied by the managers when seeking for expatriates' creative and innovative performance. The **research goal** was:

To explore which factors have to be considered by managers when seeking for expatriates' creative performance from the perspective of expatriates working in professional service industries in Brussels.

To achieve this goal the **central research question** was formulated:

Which factors should be considered by managers in order to positively influence expatriates' creative performance?

Further, the following **research sub-questions** were developed:

1. Which factors do expatriates find important for their creative, innovative performance?

2. Which management practices do expatriates find beneficial for their creative, innovative performance?

The research questions were approached in an exploratory nature due to the gap within the topic of facilitating expatriates' creativity. In order to answer the research questions the thesis contains of theory and research, methodology, findings of the research, discussion as the analysis of the findings in the context of the theory and research, conclusion and practical implications as the summarized recommendations for managers, as well limitations and future research. Relevant existing theory and research are presented in the following chapter as the basis for the data analysis.

2   Theory and Research

Existing theory and previous research provide with knowledge of which factors managers should take into account when seeking to facilitate expatriate subordinates' creativity. Shalley and Gilson (2004) divided the relevant factors enhancing employees' creativity into individual-, job-, team- or work group-, and organizational-level factors based on Amabile's (1996) and Woodman's (1993) studies. In the current research this categorization is applied in the context of expatriates due to the similar aim of the study, as Shalley and Gilson (2004) also discuss practical implications for managers who seek for employees' creativity. Therefore, the factors facilitating expatriates' creative, innovative performance are divided into three groups, namely, organization-, management-, and expatriate-related factors. Important to notice, that expatriate-related factors of the current study represent the individual-level factors in the context of expatriates. Management-related factors of the current study stand for job- and team- or work-level factors since they represent actions which managers can apply when seeking for employees' creativity (Shalley & Gilson, 2004). Due to the undiscovered topic, there likely are more factors that can be applied to expatriates but are not yet discovered by researchers.

2.1   Organization-related factors

Organization-related factors reflect on the organizational work environment as organizational-level factors, such as policy and structure, that influence individuals' creativity (Amabile, 1996). Regarding cultural differences identified by Hofstede's dimensions (2001), in low power distance societies production of innovations is higher. Therefore, if expatriates adjust to less hierarchical organizational structures, they are more likely to perform creatively. As Shalley and Gilson (2004) state, "a high bureaucratic organization may not encourage employees to try new ways of doing their work, whereas a flatter structure with wider spans of control may be more conducive to employee creativity" (p. 45). Thus, creative and innovative initiatives are often hindered due to the hierarchical structures. For example, Windrum and Koch (2008) highlight two main issues related to employee creativity that companies operating in public sector usually face due to more hierarchical structures. First, under-reporting, or the lack of incentives and rewards for local initiatives which occur due to the far less attention to bottom-up innovations. Second, policy, or when the actors who play important roles in the creation and development of innovations have to be recognized to provide them with necessary resources and responsibilities. In more hierarchical companies that operate in public sector recognition of these actors is more complicated. The

private sector companies, on the other hand, may have fewer issues related to their hierarchical structure as the important actors are then recognized faster and easier; and these actors are motivated and rewarded accordingly (Shalley & Gilson, 2004).

With reference to the knowledge mentioned above it can be assumed that expatriates find a less hierarchical organizational structure important for facilitating their motivation to be more creative. Important organization-related factors influencing expatriates' creativity may be highlighted by expatriates due to the cultural differences and expatriates' traits. Consequently it is postulated that organization-related factors create influences that operate on expatriates to influence their creativity.

2.2 Management-related factors

Management-related factors include "management at both the level of the organization as a whole and the level of individual departments and projects" that influences individuals' creativity (Amabile, 1996, p. 10). As "individuals rarely come up with intuitive ideas and insights without external support" (Berson et al., 2006, p. 581), management is one of the main domains responsible for ensuring an appropriate atmosphere, and considering factors needed for creative, innovative outcome. It has been found that, for example, transformational (Jung et al., 2003; Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2009), transactional (Jung et al., 2001), authentic (Rego et al., 2012) leadership, as well as positive leadership styles (Cameron, 2012) are positively influencing employees' creativity. Empowering and supportive leadership styles are found to have positive effects on creative process engagement (Zhang & Bartol, 2010) by, for example, assisting and supporting the team's work (Tierney & Farmer, 2004; Zhou & George, 2003; Basu & Green, 1997). Support and feedback can come from team leaders and/or managers. They can encourage creativity by supporting activities required for the development and implementation of new ideas, and by recognizing creative efforts (Mumford & Gustafson, 1988). Although managers, in most instances, cannot provide with outcomes associated with resources or financial rewards, they can provide with outcomes, such as, encouragement for and constructive feedback on creative efforts (Farr & Ford, 1990). For outcomes to be effective in promoting creative behavior, a reward system should be characterized by recognition and equitable reward for creative behaviors (regardless of the outcomes) - particularly in the exploration stages of the creative process (Abbey & Dickson, 1983; Lind & Mumford, 1987). Moreover, creative performance of expatriates is found to be

increasing when there still is a similarity between motivation factors (e.g., rewards) and cultural values (Eisenberg, 1999).

Managers have to create flexible structure, provide with adequate resources and enriched jobs to encourage innovation (Livingstone et al., 1997). Flexible structures are associated with increased autonomy and the belief that new ideas will be accepted (Kanter, 1984). Enriched jobs enhance creativity because autonomy gives job holders more opportunities to make decisions themselves. Considering Hofstede's dimensions (2001), in high degree individualism societies production of innovations is higher. Enriched jobs are more challenging and require more complex mental activities. They are also more meaningful to the person, and thus motivate the person to continually improve his or her performance (Livingstone et al., 1997). Research indicates that individuals who are encouraged to be creative at work have higher levels of job satisfaction, and are more satisfied and more fulfilled than individuals with fewer opportunities for creativity (Nicholson & West, 1988). On the other side, Atwater and Carmeli (2009) state that more enthusiastic and energized individuals are likely to be more creative because "without energy, creative abilities will not be optimized and the employees are less likely to be creatively involved in work" (p. 266). Moreover, joy is also found to encourage pushing limits and being creative (Spreitzer et al., 2005).

Creativity and innovativeness are known to be influenced by employee's satisfaction and thriving at work. Thriving at work is "the psychological state in which individuals experience both, a sense of vitality[3] and learning" (Spreitzer et al., 2005, p. 545), "which communicates a sense of progress or forward movement in one's self-development" (Spreitzer et al., 2005, p. 538). It has been found that thriving at work enables more proactive and risky behaviors which bring new ideas. There is an indirect relationship between trust and thriving through connectivity; as well as between connectivity and innovative behavior through thriving (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009). Therefore, connectivity between co-workers "involves seeing the value of relationships for learning new things, generating new ideas, and seeking opportunities to explore and grow" (p. 174). Connectivity is an important factor influencing individual's thriving, which facilitates innovative behavior. Carmeli and Spreitzer (2009) suggest to promote thriving at work (namely, the two composing elements: learning and vitality) to enable innovative outcomes, instead of offering expensive alternatives such as highly priced gourmet meals.

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[3] Vitality means a positive feeling of having energy available (Nix et al., 1999).

Based on the socially embedded model of thriving at work (Spreitzer et al., 2005), individuals are more likely to thrive and learn when they work in a decision-making discretion, broad information sharing, and a trustful and respectful context. Similarly to thriving at work, desired climate for creativity reflects a person's need for a social environment that promotes creativity, e.g., through challenge, mutual trust, free flow of ideas, encouragement from leaders and peers (Anderson & West, 1998). These characteristics are also mentioned as factors for creative performance (e.g., Leenders et al., 2003). Since expatriation can often be seen as a mechanism of knowledge transfer, the knowledge complexity enhances the strategic importance of knowledge transfer through expatriates (Bonache & Brewster, 2001). "The personal relationship-development capability of an expatriate can be an important factor which can affect the knowledge transfer process" (Choi & Johanson, 2012, p. 1151). Hence, for expatriates it is essential to build relationships with co-workers, as it creates a well-communicated atmosphere.

Regarding employees' communication with employers, according to the leader-member exchange theory, leaders often act differently towards their subordinates and develop contrasting relationships with each of them (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Such relationships are built upon trust and connectivity, which are important for increasing the emotional space needed for creativity (Losada, 1999). It has been proven that leader-member exchange positively relates to involvement in creative work (Atwater & Carmeli, 2009; Basu & Green, 1997). As Amabile (2012) states, individuals need creativity supporting environment for a creative work, which in part means an effective leader-subordinate communication. Moreover, expatriates are more likely than other employees to have a relational rather than a transactional contract with their employers (Baruch & Altman, 2002). Therefore, personalized communication between the manager and subordinate based on the leader-member exchange theory might be of benefit for expatriates. Having more willingness to build relationships and trust-based communication allows an easier exchange of knowledge; and brings more creative, innovative ideas at the end.

As desired by companies, team diversification may be an effective way to improve communication (Özbilgin & Tatli, 2005); achieve varied ideas, wider perspectives, knowledge and skills (Polzer et al., 2002); and enhance innovation and problem-solving (Ely & Thomas, 2001). Therefore, managers are keen to diversify their staff in job-related and demography/background-related manner (Ely & Thomas, 2001). It has been found that the number of expatriates within an MNC has a positive effect on the scope of the knowledge transferred (Björkman et al., 2004). Therefore, the knowledge exchange within diverse teams increases the creativity. On the other hand,

Hülsheger et al. (2009) found a negative relationship between background diversity and innovation. However, two members of the same cultural group can differ dramatically in terms of perspectives and their underlying complexity (Tadmor et al., 2012).

Overall, without a management that fits the expatriates' background and experiences, expatriate failure can occur that has been explained as "a broad range of themes such as premature return, low performance, adjustment problems, etc." (Harzing & Christensen, 2004, p. 616). As a result, for example, company-assigned expatriates "may quit their assignment and leave for better job offers outside the organization, they might get transferred to other positions within the organization, and some might get fired because they do not perform according to expectations" (Harzing & Christensen, 2004, p. 619). To avoid such failures, Harzing (2001) argues that expatriate management should not be seen as a one-size-fits-all function. As claimed by Wu & Ang (2011), "a system's approach to expatriate supporting practices is essential for expatriate adjustments and outcomes" (p. 2696). Thus, as recently suggested by Bonache & Noethen (2014), "organizations cannot simply rely on expatriation 'best practices', but should analyze which type of assignment [guardian or star[4]] they are faced with, and then adapt management of the expatriate, along the expatriate cycle, accordingly" (p. 1966).

Considering the aforementioned factors and management practices enhancing employees' creativity it can be assumed that management-related factors and practices are beneficial for expatriates' creative and innovative performance. In addition, there likely are several management-related factors which are important for expatriates' creativity that are not yet found by researchers. Therefore, specific management-related factors and management practices facilitating expatriates' creativity are expected to be discovered as an addition to the already established knowledge in the theory and research.

2.3 Expatriate-related factors

Expatriate-related factors represent influences at the individual level that operate towards expatriates' creativity. Previous studies by Arthur and Bennett (1995), and Teagarden and Gordon (1995) suggest that expatriates are often sent abroad without the skills necessary to successfully carry out their assignments, particularly in terms of cross-cultural and language skills. Cultural sensitivity, which means being confident, open-minded, nonjudgmental, socially relaxed and open

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[4] A star job - when „a bad performance isn't too bad, but a good performance is very good for the firm" (Baron & Kreps, 1999, p. 27), whereas a guardian job refers to when „a bad performance is a disaster, but a good performance is only slightly better for the firm than an average performance" (Baron & Kreps, 1999, p. 27).

to experiences, plays an important role in expatriates' creative performance (Zhao, 2002). As Dabic et al. (2013) state, "it is expected that expatriates are open-minded individuals because of their international experience" (p. 9), thus expatriates may assist in some key factors for competitiveness, e.g., innovation and entrepreneurship. According to Dabic et al. (2013), "hiring expatriates in innovation teams may make a difference" (p. 16), because "an experienced and highly knowledgeable expatriate can understand and identify market signals at a higher rate of effectiveness" (Choi & Johanson, 2012, p. 1150). However, expatriates do not only have to be cross-culturally aware, and be able to recognize individual and situational affects, but also understand the fit between demands for creativity and own abilities for creativity, which are related to lower strain and higher job satisfaction (Livingstone et al., 1997).

Similarly to aforementioned importance of cultural sensitivity for creative, innovative performance, Wu & Ang (2011) claim that companies should consider selecting expatriates with higher efficacy-based CQs (cultural quotient (or cultural intelligence) - the ability of individuals to acquire, store, and use cultural knowledge) (Earley & Ang, 2003). "Such individuals are likely to further enhance their adjustments in order to respond to the high level of support provided as they tend to set ambitious goals and are motivated to work toward these goals, which include both adjustment and performance goals. Therefore, companies could try to set challenging goals for this group of expatriates and provide them with the necessary support to encourage them to reach further toward their goals" (Wu & Ang, 2011, p. 2698).

As mentioned by Galinsky and Maddux (2009), working abroad boosts the degree of creativity through the effort of adapting to a new culture. Therefore the creative superiority of expatriates increases their penetration within organizations (Agor, 1990). Expatriates are interested in the new environment while penetrating within the organization and culture. Through this interest they broaden "perspectives by creating the urge to explore" (Spreitzer et al., 2005, p. 544). On the other hand, some researchers claim that expatriates have to already be successfully adjusted (Lee & Sukoco, 2010) and effective in the cultural manner (i.e., being able to interact and communicate with local co-workers) (Holopainen & Björkman, 2005) to bring new ideas. Therefore, there might be different correlations between the stages of adjustment and creativity of expatriates.

In this context it can be derived that expatriate-related factors and management practices are beneficial for expatriates' creative, innovative performance. Moreover, as the topic of expatriates' creativity is barely discovered, new insights are expected to be found. In this case the new aspects would add to the already established theory and research.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research design

Due to the identified gap within scientific literature on the topic of facilitating expatriates' creative and innovative performance, qualitative research design has been chosen (Thompson & Walker, 1998). Qualitative research is a tool for bridging the gap between theory and practice, as well as between academic and practical contexts (Darlington & Scott, 2003). Instead of testing hypotheses or variables from existing literature, exploration of variables is important to capture new factors in this uninvestigated topic (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Qualitative research is mainly beneficial because of "its ability to study phenomena which are simply unavailable elsewhere" (Silverman, 2013, p. 97). Since there was no evidence on how the expatriates should be managed for their creative, innovative performance, there were almost no available variables for a quantitative testing. "Qualitative research can use naturally occurring data to find the sequences ("how") in which participants' meanings ("what") are deployed" (Silverman, 2013, p. 97). Therefore, an inductive nature of the research can provide with ideas on how expatriates' creativity ("what") may be facilitated.

Due to the inductive nature of the research, the thesis was partially based on the grounded theory. Particularly, open, axial and selective coding techniques were used (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). However, because constructs were applied from established literature, it was not completely 'grounded' in the data. The aforementioned theory was used as the basis for exploratory approach of the study. The theory helped to make a comparison with real life situations of management towards expatriates' creative, innovative outcomes.

The interpretivistic approach is important when trying to capture people's perspectives in the context of the conditions and circumstances of their lives (Ritchie et al., 2013). It serves as a balance between the inductive and deductive approaches because of the analysis and interpretations of the data. The research design was built upon the existing theory and previous research. Then the focus switched onto exploring new aspects by obtaining as much detailed information as possible. At the end, the findings of the research were "put back into the context of [...] theories or existing knowledge" (Ritchie et al., 2013, p. 22).

To obtain qualitative data individual interviews were conducted. The value of interviews "is founded on the belief that participants are individuals who actively construct their social worlds and can communicate insight about it verbally" (Ritchie et al., 2013, p. 55). Interviewing is

considered as a core, and effective method for collecting qualitative data. The main strength of this method is the depth of focus on the individual: "they provide an opportunity for detailed investigation of each person's individual perspective, for in-depth understanding of the personal context within which the research phenomenon is located, and for very detailed subject coverage" (p. 56). Importantly for the current study on facilitating expatriates' creativity from the perspective of expatriates, interviews were suited for exploring impacts and outcomes (Ritchie et al., 2013). Since the participants had to display their attitude towards their managers, individual interviews were more suitable due to the confidentiality (Ritchie et al., 2013). To motivate the desire of interviewees to participate, interviews were based on research ethics framed by Graham et al. (2006) (see Table 1). To ensure the stated research ethical points, interviewees had to sign the participation in an interview consent forms.

Table 1. Map of research ethics.

Before the interview	During the interview	After the interview
Unpressured decision to participate	Being able to skip the question or not answer so in-depth	Confidentiality
Research is independent and legitimate	Unpressured pace, time to think given	Unbiased and accurate reporting
Knowing why they were selected	Comfortable, respectful, non-judgmental atmosphere	Opportunity for feedback on findings
Clear and worthwhile objective and purpose	Opportunity for self-expression and own views	Use is actually made of the research for social benefit
Knowing what to expect	Clear, relevant and not repetitive questions	
Openness, honesty and ability to correct misunderstandings	Left without negative feelings about participation	

(Graham et al., 2006)

To elicit new aspects, semi-structured interviews were conducted (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008). "Semi-structured interviews unfold a conversational manner offering participants the chance to explore issues they feel are important" (Longhurst, 2003, p. 103). In this way expatriates were encouraged to reveal how their managers might motivate them to be creative, and how their

experiences with managers differ in home and host countries. Semi-structured interviews are beneficial due to the flexibility in designing and refining the interview guides, and in actually conducting the interviews (Humphrey & Lee, 2004). Therefore, semi-structured interviews were chosen in order to allow a degree of freedom to explain expatriates' thoughts, as well as to enable certain responses to be questioned in greater depth by probing questions.

To capture the importance of management and beneficial management practices for expatriates' creative and innovative work outcomes, as well as to ensure the level of validity of the research, the triangulation process was applied. The data triangulation is based on the sample which contains expatriate interviewees as well as 1 expert interviewee to gather data from different social contexts, and from variety of people (Denzin, 1970).

3.2 Sampling

For the study site Brussels has been chosen due to the cultural variety within the city. As Brussels is the capital of European Union, it attracts a high-skilled, experienced and talented labor from all over the world. Although Brussels is not considered as the most creative or innovative city, there are occupations which can be defined as creative or innovative. The research participants were involved in the four most active professional service (Von Nordenflycht, 2010) industries of Brussels, namely, governmental, communications, consultancy, and art. Organizations operating in these industries vary in many ways, for example, organization's ownership style, hierarchical structure, size, etc. Therefore, the chosen industries represent different nature of business and operations, and likely various perspectives of expatriates.

A purposive (non-probability) sampling method with a few inclusion criteria was applied to ensure a sufficiently diverse sample (Symon & Cassell, 2012). The research sample is shown in the table (Table 2), and indicates interview number, nationality, gender, position, and industry (or organization) of each participant. The sample was composed of foreign people living in Brussels for at least 3 months and hired for a long-term position to better detect their attitudes and to ensure that they had time to experience management systems within particular organizations. Interviewees working in creative and/or innovative environments in small- and middle-sized, as well as large-sized for-profit and non-profit organizations were selected. Creative and innovative positions involved own idea development, as well as application of new ideas, technologies or services. Expatriates were from various countries, including the Netherlands, Sweden, Italy, France, Romania, USA, Colombia, etc.

One of the participants holding an adviser's position in the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation of European Commission (Interview 3, see Table 2) has been selected due to the knowledge, experience and expertise in the creative and innovative environment. As the participant's position was not entirely comparable to the rest of the sample due to the differing tasks and objectives given, as well as a higher level of expertise within research and innovation field, he has been called an expert to indicate the important distinction. Valuable adding or verifying insights were expected from this participant due to the likely differing perceptions mainly based on the expertise.

Table 2. Research sample.

Interview No.	Nationality	Gender	Position	Industry (organization)
1	Swedish	Male	International service developer	Service/art
2	Dutch/French	Female	Communication specialist	Service/art
3*	French	Male	Adviser	(European Commission)
4	American	Male	Digital marketing consultant	Digital communication consultancy
5	Latvian	Female	Legal consultant	Communication/PR
6	Italian	Male	Project manager	Communication/PR
7	German	Male	Desk officer	Governmental
8	German	Male	Scientific officer	Governmental/science
9	Finnish	Female	Web editor	Governmental
10	Spanish/Italian	Female	Digital marketing consultant	Digital communication consultancy
11	Slovenian	Female	Digital marketing consultant	Digital communication consultancy
12	German/Spanish/ /Filipino/Chinese	Female	Editor	Digital communication consultancy
13	Columbian	Male	Project coordinator	Digital communication consultancy
14	Dutch	Male	Lobbyist	Governmental
15	Romanian	Male	Innovation consultant	Consultancy
16	Italian	Female	Team and project manager	Digital communication consultancy
17	British	Male	Policy officer	Governmental

* expert

All the interview participants were contacted directly via personal emails, or (if not possible) via corporate emails. The contacts were found online via a search engine. The requests for

participation in the research contained the abstract of the research, information of the relevance of the current study, and requests for confirmation on fitting the defined inclusion criteria. Several interviewees were identified and contacted using the snowball sampling method, when research participants recommended potential interviewees who may fit the inclusion criteria (Goodman, 1961).

To reach theoretical saturation (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) the number of interviews has been kept flexible. From the initiated 15-20 interviewees, 17 sufficient in-depth and phenomenological interviews from the sample were used for the research, because no more new insights were captured (Thompson & Walker, 1998; Symon & Cassell, 2012).

3.3 Data collection

The previous research mostly focused on expatriate managers which might have not captured essential points of what is necessary for employees' motivation to be more creative. This study aims to explore the topic from the subordinates' point of view. For sufficient interviewing of the sample, two interview guides were developed: interview guide for expatriates, and interview guide for the expert. The first interview guide was designed to comprise expatriates' experiences, the role of creativity in their daily work, and experiences with their managers in the context of striving for creative and innovative performance. The interview guide contained of 16 questions (excluding the sub-questions and probing questions) (Appendix A). The second interview guide intended to capture expert's knowledge and experience on how managers should behave towards their expatriate subordinates to encourage their creative, innovative performance; and what is important in the context of different cultural and personal background. This interview guide contained of 14 questions (excluding the sub-questions and probing questions) (Appendix B).

The questions were based on the literature review, and developed in the way that interviewees are not restricted when answering them. Thus, the questions were as open as possible to best explore the topic and avoid bias (Broom, 2005). Throughout the data analysis the interview questions were adjusted according to identified codes and disconfirming evidence (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Due to higher rate of openness and lower rate of skepticism of the participants, easier reporting, possibility to keep interviews longer, no loss of nonverbal and contextual data, face-to-face interviews were the priority (Novick, 2008). At the end, all 17 interviews were face-to-face. Each interview lasted from 30 to 60 minutes. To ensure a valid and in-depth analysis, interviews were taped; then transcribed within up to 3 days. In this way the nonverbal and

contextual data was better captured and used in the data analysis. Since participants expressed their thoughts on creativity and innovativeness using various phrases, they were asked to confirm the statements to be referring to the exact constructs of creativity or innovativeness during the interviews. To reach theoretical saturation, the data analysis was conducted throughout the data collection process. When there were no more new insights discovered, data collection has been stopped.

3.4 Data analysis

Techniques from grounded theory and template analysis were used to sort the data. The obtained data was coded using open, axial and selective coding techniques, which means discovering, naming and categorizing data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The open coding process started immediately after conducting the first 3 interviews. First, the transcripts were broken down into short phrases and these phrases were named (or coded). A priori codes were derived from the aforementioned literature. As suggested by King et al. (2004), too many codes might blinker the analysis and prevent from discovering more pertinent ideas. However, too few codes can lead to a complex and rich data. Thus, the codes in this study were kept as clear and accurate as possible to ensure the optimal complexity (King et al., 2004). Then, the core concepts were identified among the codes and categorized by using axial coding technique. The frequency and distribution of codes were used as means of categorizing the data (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). Finally, categories were integrated and connections between them identified by using the selective coding technique. Effects of the concepts on each other were discovered.

After successful coding processes, new captured aspects within the topic were discovered. To ensure usefulness of the research, exploratory investigated topic was mutually enhanced with theoretical insights (Ritchie, 2013). The analysis of coded and categorized data continued by endorsing it with existing theory and previous research. The explored important points of management for expatriates' creativity were explained and verified. However, some rich and valuable results were found to be adding or even opposing previous academic findings.

3.5 Reliability and validity

Reliability and validity lead to objectivity and credibility of the research. Without these two factors, qualitative research loses its value (Morse et al., 2008). First, reliability refers to accuracy and inclusiveness of recordings. A greater reliability is expected from similar occasions: "one

cannot expect answers on one occasion to necessarily replicate those on another, because they may emerge from different circumstances of production" (Silverman, 2010, p. 154). Therefore, reliability is often referred to stability and consistency (Morse et al., 2008).

Validity, on the other hand, refers to "testing the truthfulness of the analytic claims that are being made about these recordings" (Silverman, 2010, p. 366). It "concerns the interpretation of observations" (p. 367); and "involves correspondence between theoretical paradigm and the observations made by the researcher" (p. 371). The aim of the qualitative research is to ensure apparent validity: convincing and transparent true (Silverman, 2010).

Generalizability of the research (or extent to which the results of the research can be applied to other situations) is highly dependent on external validity (Saunders et al., 2009). The sample of the current study was composed of expatriates from different home countries, working in different industries, and holding different creative, innovative positions. Regarding the four industries included into the sample, the internal organization and nature of production of digital communication consultancy and communication/PR companies may differ in important ways from consultancy and governmental organizations. Therefore, the limits of generalizability are hard to define (Von Nordenflycht, 2007). Moreover, long experience and variety of gender, age and competences contribute to the external validity. However, due to the small sample the study can hardly be considered as generalizable.

As suggested by Morse et al. (2008), five verification strategies ensure reliability and validity. These strategies, namely, methodological coherence (see 3.1), appropriate sample (see 3.2), concurrent collection and analysis of data (see 3.3 and 3.4), theoretical thinking (see 3.4), and theory development (see 5), were applied. Thus, the current study can be claimed as reliable and valid.

4 Findings

After open and axial coding clear patterns of data were identified on the topic of facilitating expatriates' creativity. There were 9 categories discovered and named. These categories contained of several codes, and defined the main factors influencing expatriates' creative, innovative performance. In each category the reasons why interviewees believe them to have impact on expatriates' creativity were explained, and suggestions on how the managers may benefit from it were given. The majority of the findings were found to be supporting the existing theory and previous research. However, a few categories, such as available resources, expatriate status, adjustment and integration provided with contradicting and/or new insights which were further discussed in the discussion chapter (see 5). All the findings were illustrated by citations from the conducted interviews. During the selective coding categories were grouped into 3 overarching themes as in the theory and research chapter (see 2), namely, organization-related factors (4.1), management-related factors (4.2), and expatriate-related factors (4.3).

4.1 Organization-related factors

4.1.1 Non-hierarchical organizational structure

The conducted interviews revealed that organizational structure is an important factor influencing expatriates' creativity. 9 interviewees stated that a more democratic decision-making and a less hierarchical structure are needed to be motivated to deliver creative outcomes as expatriates have a feeling of appreciation and recognition. According to the interviewees, the de-motivation to be creative grows with the level of rejected ideas which usually occurs due to the strong hierarchical barriers. If the employees feel that their input is not recognized or valued but rather hits a barrier, they do not dare to put effort into generating new ideas anymore:

"Often the manager destroys it rejecting the idea. That de-motivates a lot" (Interview 2).

"You need to have a feeling that what you do is valued and considered. If you don't have this feeling, your creativity is going down the grain, because you're just performing in a rather linear and mechanical way" (Interview 8).

Organizations with more bureaucratic and hierarchical organizational structures more commonly apply decision-making way that may discourage employees from proposing creative ideas. However, the way of decision-making often differs among countries. Interviewed expatriates identified differences in decision-making between their home and host countries. Expatriates

might get less (or more) motivated to be creative according to the differing decision-making process from their home country. For example, some cultures are more democratic, thus, more willing to accept ideas from all the team members:

"The Swedish way of making decisions is weird for people in Belgium. I am used to a more democratic decision-making, and that motivates me more" (Interview 1).

As the expert claimed, the more hierarchical the structure of the company is, the more difficult it may be for the company to integrate the expatriate and the more difficult for the expatriate to adapt. The underlying reason for this idea is a closer interaction in less hierarchical organizations, where expatriates can easier adapt due to a higher level of interaction with the management. The degree of difficulty to adjust and integrate likely depends on the match between expatriate's home and host cultures (considering the Hofstede's power distance cultural dimension in this case (Hofstede & Bond, 1984)). However, there are certain tools to reduce the impact of bureaucracy and hierarchy. To make this hierarchical barrier smaller, companies have to create a space for informal communication, for example:

"People are looking for ways to overcome bureaucracy, and ICT is a key enabler" (Interview 17).

"Wiki-based tools stimulate willingness to exchange ideas" (Interview 3).

According to the expert, informal communication can be established by providing employees with wiki-based tools which allow communication avoiding hierarchical barriers. Hence, it would encourage the knowledge and information exchange among all members of an organization despite their status, background or role in the hierarchy.

4.1.2 Available resources

Resources have been mentioned as a factor for creative performance of expatriates. According to some interviewees, sometimes they are not provided with necessary tools to work. For example, employees are presented with tasks, but the information or tools to achieve it are not present. Therefore, they have to find creative ways to accomplish the task:

"The absence of tools gave me the freedom to invent new ways of doing what I had to do" (Interview 2).

However, sometimes the lack of resources can be frustrating and de-motivating to perform creatively. When an employee has an idea but cannot implement or further develop it, it might be

harmful for the creative performance in the later stages. Moreover, managers have to be aware of the need to inform the employees about the latest information. The up-to-date resources (ideas, technologies, etc.) have to be presented to the employees to encourage their creativity:

"Managers always provide with information and access to it, as well as access to necessary resources. And that inspires us" (Interview 4).

Opposite to this approach, one interviewee claimed not believing in the lack of resources in the current world at all. According to the interviewee, the Internet is the biggest resource for new idea generation:

"I don't think that the lack of resources boosts creativity. Nowadays it's not the case. In the Western countries the biggest resource is Internet. So you can get everything there. Everybody has a laptop, everybody has an access to the Internet. If you have that access, you have billions of creative inputs" (Interview 4).

As nowadays most of the creative, innovative works to a certain extent involve information, which may be defined as a resource, it is important to allow and encourage employees to use any tools available for getting new, inspiring and creativity-stimulating information.

4.2 Management-related factors

4.2.1 Open communication and knowledge exchange
Open communication and knowledge exchange within the team were identified as components leading to expatriates' creative performance. According to nearly all interviewees, communication with the co-workers and managers on daily basis enhances knowledge exchange between each other, and thus stimulates creativity. As everyone learns from each other due to the varying points of view, informal communication is essential to foster this knowledge exchange:

"Often I just hang out with my colleagues and open my ears in the meetings. I constantly learn from others. I think everybody feeds off each other which keep their gears moving" (Interview 4).

To stimulate informal communication, managers are suggested to organize dinners, team building events, or other off-desk activities. Such activities would help to break the borders, and facilitate communication and learning from each other later on. As the expert claimed, a free circulation of information has to be ensured to encourage employees to talk. However, employees from abroad often face language barrier or other culturally-related issues, and thus can only partially

participate in discussions and overall interaction with local co-workers and managers. Therefore, managers have to take care that expatriates would not be singled out. Often, local employees already have a more or less established network, while expatriates usually do not:

"As an expat you don't have a social network, so you spend more time to build it" (Interview 11).

In such cases managers should help expatriates by encouraging them to participate in discussions, events; bringing expatriates by hand to relevant people and introducing them to each other. Communication and relationships should be based on trust because then expatriates feel more comfortable in sharing their ideas with others. Communication is important not only among employees, but with the managers as well:

"My manager is quite empowering because he appreciates, respects my work. That makes me want to work harder, innovate more, be more creative. He bases everything on communication, good interaction. He just takes care of us" (Interview 7).

As the manager creates good basis for a trust-based communication with his or her expatriate employees, they feel more comfortable, respectful and trustful to share their ideas. Openness within an organization creates an atmosphere that is beneficial for employees' creative performance. Organizational openness is the basis for establishing connectivity, interaction and knowledge exchange. If employees are aware that their ideas are valued and highly appreciated, they feel more motivated to be creative and to deliver, present creative ideas. Open environment allows a free flow of information and stimulates communication:

"What constantly helps me being more creative is being in this open and creative environment" (Interview 4).

Free flow of ideas, organizational openness and respect towards each other's ideas are essential for any employee's motivation to be creative. Employees have to know that they are welcome to speak which makes them feel comfortable to share the ideas they come up with:

"In this company nobody is blocked to come up with new ideas, actually they are rather stimulated to always suggest whatever comes into their heads" (Interview 10).

Managers have to bear in mind that a closed atmosphere would discourage employees to speak and operate, because the level of comfort in such cases is low.

4.2.2 Team diversity

Interviewees claimed that expatriates' creative, innovative performance depends on the level of diversity within the organization or the department. The higher the diversity within the team, the bigger creative outcome can be achieved. 9 interviewees believe that diversity increases their creativity due to the learning effect:

"In this company people are from everywhere. I love that here. We are all in the same team to achieve the same goal from such different backgrounds. I think that really can't help but inspire creativity" (Interview 4).

"If I was a CEO or an HR manager I would insist to recruit as many expatriates as possible. I think expatriates deliver more value for most of the times. Although nowadays people travel more, so the local people might also have good knowledge about different things. But I would search for expats. They know more about other cultures. With the current globalized world it will always be an additional value to have expatriates in your team. I don't think there will be times when managers will prefer locals" (Interview 4).

Important to mention, that there were no interviewees claiming that team diversity and knowledge exchange do not stimulate their creativity. Working in such diverse teams actually helps expatriates to feel comfortable as everyone has different backgrounds, and, as mentioned above (see 4.1.2.), the expatriate status does not exist anymore. Expatriates do not feel treated any differently from the local employees, thus, their creative performance is more stimulated by freedom. Therefore, in more homogeneous organizations creativity and innovativeness are often restricted by social norms and common mindset within that particular culture:

"Your creativity is stimulated in a diverse company because you are not restrained by the society" (Interview 5).

Managers have to understand the diversity and may have to work accordingly by dealing with cultural differences, such as, different decision-making, language-related misunderstandings, etc. Awareness and management of diversity within the team and organization is essential for a good performance. Achieving that is a hard process:

"Managing diversity is a big issue because the leaders have to put together in coherence many cultures of the subordinates as well as the culture of the manager himself. Trying to optimize it to reach creative goals is a big challenge" (Interview 3).

Even if the diversity is seen as an advantage due to the varying backgrounds when seeking for creative outcomes, as mentioned above (see 4.2.1), the diverse knowledge has to be encouraged to be exchanged among the team members. As expert suggests, one of the techniques to manage diverse teams is application of diverse communication (including the body language). Likely, expatriates should neither be treated differently from the locals (e.g. provide same social securities, incentives for creative performance), nor get significantly more attention, recognition and support:

"If I were a manager of a diverse team, I would not treat expatriates any differently. I would rather remind them and the rest of the team that they have information and knowledge that can help us" *(Interview 4).*

However, few interviewees claimed that treating everyone equally might reduce the creative potential of expatriates. According to them, expatriates are unique and this is why they may deliver more creative outcomes, and thus this advantage should not be suppressed. Overall, diversity is seen as an advantage for an organization that is seeking for creative, innovative outcomes, and should not be restrained.

Manager's international experience and awareness

According to the expert, the role of the manager is bigger if the gap between the local culture and the expatriate's culture is bigger. As the expert suggested, managers should be trained how to manage multi-cultural teams:

"The leadership is perhaps established when people are aware of the need to respect the diversity and to understand it. Managers would have to have some kind of training on the diversity and working with different cultures" (Interview 3).

International experience of a manager might positively influence the creativity of an expatriate. Managers with international experience likely have higher awareness of possible cultural differences between expatriates and local employees as well as the manager himself. Managers might be tempted to mismanage such differences if they have never dealt with them in the past. Such managers might not know how to interpret certain things:

"Managers who have worked elsewhere probably have an understanding that there are cultural differences that need to be explicitly spoken about. Domestic manager likely does not have this in mind" (Interview 1).

Therefore, managers with international experience might find better solutions on how to deal with the occurring cultural issues. Having international experience can also encourage learning about the expatriate's culture and, thus, helping expatriates to adjust to the local culture easier and faster. As internationally active people are more open minded and inquisitive, they tend to learn on their own interest. According to the expert:

"Managers can learn how to manage an expatriate coming from one or another culture by widening their knowledge about that particular culture" (Interview 3).

However, managers who have international experience have to share their knowledge with others. They have to be aware of the importance to explicitly speak about the possible differences. On the other hand, one interviewee did not agree that manager's international experience is important. According to the expatriate, managers build their understanding of how to manage different people and cultures by developing their skills and experiences over time.

4.2.3 Perceived equality and social justice

7 interviewees mentioned social justice and feeling equal in comparison with the other employees as important factors for their willingness to perform creatively. According to them, expatriates have to feel that what they do is equally important to what the others do:

"The lack of social justice as of cultural background de-motivates for sure. Knowing that anyone in the team, no matter which background he or she has, can have an opinion which is actually valid, would motivate me to be more creative" (Interview 2).

Such a sense of justice motivates to work creatively as it is being recognized and valued no matter which cultural or other kind of background one has. The interviewees mentioned basic rules and guidelines as helpful management practices leading to the sense of equality. As expert stated, one of the techniques to manage equality would be monetary incentives for creative performance:

"Rules have to be clear enough so that the employees know what they might achieve by their performance. They have to know how they will be awarded" (Interview 3).

As highlighted by nearly half of the interviewees, setting basic rules that are very clear would not leave a room for own interpretations:

"We have guidelines and rules which we have to follow, which makes us all equal. It creates consistency that everyone needs" (Interview 4).

Although organizations employ people from different countries with different backgrounds, everyone has to be treated equally as then expatriates feel comfortable and confident in what they do.

4.2.4 Clear long-term and short-term goals

A few interviewees stated that a clear organizational strategy is important for their motivation to be more creative. If the company does not have, or does not deliver, present clear long-term objectives, it is not clear for the employees *why* do they have to do what they are told to do. Therefore, more information, higher level of awareness and transparency circulating within the organization were seen as factors for a more creative environment. However, the lack of information might also be motivating, since it becomes a challenge to create the strategy by the employees themselves:

"There was no clear strategy, no clear way which we were going. There was no clear direction. But because of that I had an open road" (Interview 2).

The interviewees mentioned that when the strategy is clearly defined and communicated, employees are stimulated to be one particle of the whole mechanism that makes them feel satisfied, loyal and valuable. Clear long-term goals have to be followed by short-term goals that allow employees to feel important and motivated to perform creatively as it adds to overall well-being of the organization. 5 interviewees claimed that applying such management practices as giving tasks, objectives and challenges is important for their motivation to be creative. Clear stimulation towards creative outcomes enhances creativity through the need to accomplish what is necessary. However, it is important to leave space for choosing the way of accomplishing tasks:

"If I were a manager, I would set clear objectives but still leave the freedom to achieve it the way the employee wants" (Interview 2).

With the freedom to achieve the given goals employees likely come up with more creative solutions. As every individual has own ways of working, it can lead to surprising and unexpectedly creative outcomes. 5 interviewees claimed that they would appreciate some degree of coordination, monitoring and control when given the clear goals. Control should be based on responses, feedbacks and reviews by the manager that would facilitate the feeling of being on the right track. Such practices make expatriates feel the progress and involvement. As a few

interviewees stated, the effectiveness of creative outcomes is greater when it is combined with manager's input:

"When my manager challenges me, it motivates, because I get some awareness and recognition that I exist" (Interview 1).

Managers have to understand their role and act accordingly: manage subordinates, and try to stimulate their willingness to perform as best as they can. Some expatriates realize having a responsibility to demand leadership from their managers, because unclear activities and management strategy might discourage from performing creatively.

4.3 Expatriate-related factors

4.3.1 Expatriates' personal traits

As mentioned by many researchers as well as interviewees, personal traits are important when seeking for creative performance. A few interviewees mentioned being intrinsically motivated to deliver creativity as it is their natural being:

"Creativity is just who I am, because ideas naturally come into my head" (Interview 9).

Everyone has different personal characteristics, thus, even two expatriates from the same country can significantly differ. However, a few expatriates described themselves as more open minded and socially active than their local co-workers. As expatriates had courage to leave their home countries, they are seen as more proactive:

"You have to bear in mind that expatriates have left their own countries, thus they had to have a certain mindset to do that. This mindset is based on flexibility, adaptability, open-mindedness, willingness to learn new languages, discover surroundings" (Interview 7).

Overall, expatriates' personal traits are seen as more creativity-, innovativeness-related as they are more prone to learn, change, and be open and flexible. According to interviewees, expatriates are prone to bring value to the organization by their performance to whichever activity they are involved into.

4.3.2 Expatriate status

Expatriate status is found to be playing an important role when seeking for creativity of employees from abroad. Depending on a corporate and national culture, expatriates are often *"left behind",*

as they are seen as "aliens" in the company. Therefore, expatriates might get a certain level of autonomy due to the lack of intervention. Thus, there is a lack of understanding on how to deal with them:

"As an expatriate I have very little intervention with the others, because I am seen as a stranger"

(Interview 1).

Such autonomy may positively influence expatriates' creative performance as they are given the freedom. Opposite from the local employees, expatriates feel allowed and accepted to be strange. Therefore, they dare to say things that might sound weird and would not appear among the local employees. That gives a wider spectrum of playing with ideas:

"Expatriate status allows me, gives me space to be more creative. They don't expect me, but they allow me to be more creative" (Interview 1).

On the other hand, expatriate status might pressure to perform better than the locals. Managers might select expatriates hoping to get a more creative performance than a local employee would deliver. Being more creative would then be expected due to the employment of a person from abroad rather than domestic regions:

"I used to work in a company where everybody was French. I was the only Italian. So I knew I had to compensate certain things in a different way, most of the times it was being creative" (Interview 6).

"As an expatriate you likely get more pressure... I have a feeling that I should perform more creatively because of my expatriate status. It does not mean that I have to, but I feel like I should. The perceived pressure is higher" (Interview 8).

According to 5 interviewees, this pressure to perform more creatively is usually just a personal perception. Managers might not necessarily expect or directly ask for a better performance, but an expatriate is intrinsically motivated to deliver it as they perceive that they should be better than the local employees:

"As an expatriate you feel that you have to give a bigger "thank you" for getting hired. So you try to perform more creatively" (Interview 15).

On the other hand, being an expatriate encourages realizing your advantages, assets that attracted the company for selecting you. A few interviewees mentioned feeling no actual or

perceived pressure to perform more creatively but rather becoming more confident and feeling valued:

"Being hired as an expatriate makes me confident, because they chose me. That stimulates my creativity and pro-activeness" (Interview 14).

However, in more multi-cultural organizations the influence of an expatriate status is perceived as being lower due to the international nature of an organization. According to one interviewee, when an organization employs the majority of expatriates everyone becomes more equal, thus, the expatriate status does not exist anymore. In such a case expatriates do not perceive themselves as expatriates anymore.

4.3.3 Adjustment and integration

A few interviewees identified a tendency of expatriates hanging out together and not enough involving themselves in interaction with local employees. It has been suggested that managers should try to involve the expatriates within the team, and help them adjust faster to foster learning and knowledge exchange. However, it is very important to keep the balance between adjustment and expatriate's uniqueness which is an advantage when seeking for creative outcome. 5 interviewees claimed that adjustment and integration actually comforts them:

"I want to integrate. But it does not detract from uniqueness, experiences, creativity. It actually gives you that comfort to still maintain who you are" (Interview 12).

"I don't think that adaptation, integration decrease my creativity and uniqueness. Because when you get to the point where you feel completely adapted, you feel comfortable" (Interview 13).

A few interviewees claimed that adjustment and integration stimulate their creativity because then they do more various things. Through the new experiences and getting to know the local culture expatriates widen their horizon:

"I think integration in the local society actually stimulates my creativity because it is much more interesting to do something what the locals do, than those basic standard things which are adapted to foreigners. These adapted things are mainstream and less diverse" (Interview 16).

However, it has been stated that too much adjustment might decrease expatriates' creativity due to a smaller difference between the local culture and their own culture. It is possible that after some years expatriates perceive things more similarly to the local people:

"After living in Brussels for 8 years I started feeling that I am not very surprised about things so much anymore, I am more used to everything here. And this maybe makes me less creative because I already feel slowly getting bored by the surroundings" (Interview 16).

"If an expatriate blend in too much within the local culture and becomes a part of the dominant culture, he might lose the innovative potential. Therefore it's good if expatriates stay with each other" (Interview 7).

This idea is based on the belief that outcomes from team members with different backgrounds, experiences and approaches are more creative and innovative. Overall, it is a question how long expatriates stay creative in a new environment. In the beginning the ideas that are brought by an expatriate are likely more different, creative, and innovative. However, after a while he adjusts in the local environment and the level of creativity likely goes down.

Non-work related guidance

For faster adjustment and integration of expatriates, non-work related guidance provided by the managers or co-workers marks one possible solution. For recent arrivals, it is essential that they feel welcomed and that the social acclimation process is as smooth as possible. Faster adjustment to their new settings allows expatriates to faster focus more easily on work issues without sacrificing performance. Since expatriates arrive, in many cases, in a significantly new environment, any assistance is likely to be seen as a welcomed event. Thus, managers might help by providing initial advice and information:

"When you're taken care of you definitely feel welcomed, you're not on your own anymore. It makes you feel secure, comfortable and confident. You don't feel as unsettled. I think when you don't feel unsettled, you feel comfortable in coming up with creative ideas and speaking your mind. Because you know that you can trust these people" (Interview 12).

Useful advice and encouragement from management and colleagues helps expatriates to feel more secure, comfortable, and encourages them to be active at work. 6 interviewees suggested that managers should not only give advice for settling in, but also build atmospheres based on trust and respect in order to make the arrival process as agreeable as possible, indirectly promoting more expeditious creative outcomes among the newly arrived:

"The expatriate is already giving up his country, family, and friends. Having a manager who really takes care and tries to make the expatriate feel comfortable at a social level can be an advantage when seeking for creativity" (Interview 8).

Overall, managers may seek to communicate with expatriates in a relatively informal manner, showing warmer and more genial interactions to defuse any latent or apparent stress on the part of an expatriate. However, managers face a significant balancing act of encouraging their new employees to develop and deliver their creative abilities, while finding the level assistance to offer. While integrating the newly arrived expatriate into the surrounding business and social environment, the discerning manager must also strive to assure the expatriate of their appreciation and respect for their own culture and lifestyles. As such, more efficient and durable integration is possible through necessary and adequate transmission of appropriate information to the expatriate; encouraging and not forcing them to integrate at their own pace and level of comfort.

Mentoring and training programs

Regarding work related adjustment and integration, mentoring and training programs were highlighted as important for expatriates' creative performance. According to 6 interviewees, such programs help expatriates to faster adjust to the organization's culture, and understand the organization's needs. As the expert claimed:

"Companies have to help expatriates by setting a mentoring and training program. A faster way to let the expatriate adjust in the company is helping him or her by advising, teaching, getting acquainted" (Interview 3).

After mentoring and training programs expatriates may focus on their tasks earlier, and thus perform more creatively in earlier stages. As the mentoring and training programs provide with the introduction into the work environment and basic description of the nature of work, expatriates do not have to waste their time and energy on it but rather start working right away. Therefore, training programs can help expatriates integrate in the sense that you have a better knowledge of the work environment that you are going to work in. However, the expatriates have to still be encouraged to stay unique, because that is what drives the creative performance. In this case expatriates have to know their tasks and goals, but are stimulated by the freedom of accomplishing tasks from the early beginning of working in the organization.

5 Discussion

The displayed findings of the current research opened doors for a better understanding on how expatriates should be facilitated when their creative, innovative performance is desired. As Ritchie et al. (2013) suggested the research findings were put back into the context of existing theory and previous research. Therefore, the categorized data was endorsed by academic knowledge to formulate trustworthy recommendations. In order to get a better picture, all the identified influencing factors and management practices for expatriates' creativity were depicted in a scheme (Figure 1). Several findings, such as manager's international experience and awareness, non-work related guidance, enrich the academic field as recommendations for managers when seeking for expatriates' creative, innovative performance, as well as by opening roads for future research.

Organization-related factors

- Non-hierarchical organizational structure
- Available resources

Management-related factors

- Clear long-term and short-term goals
- Perceived equality and social-justice
  →Clear tasks and objectives
- Open communication and knowledge exchange
- Team diversity
  →Manager's international experience and awareness

Expatriate-related factors

- Expatriate status
- Expatriates' personal traits
- Adjustment and integration
  →Non-work related guidance
  →Mentoring and training programs
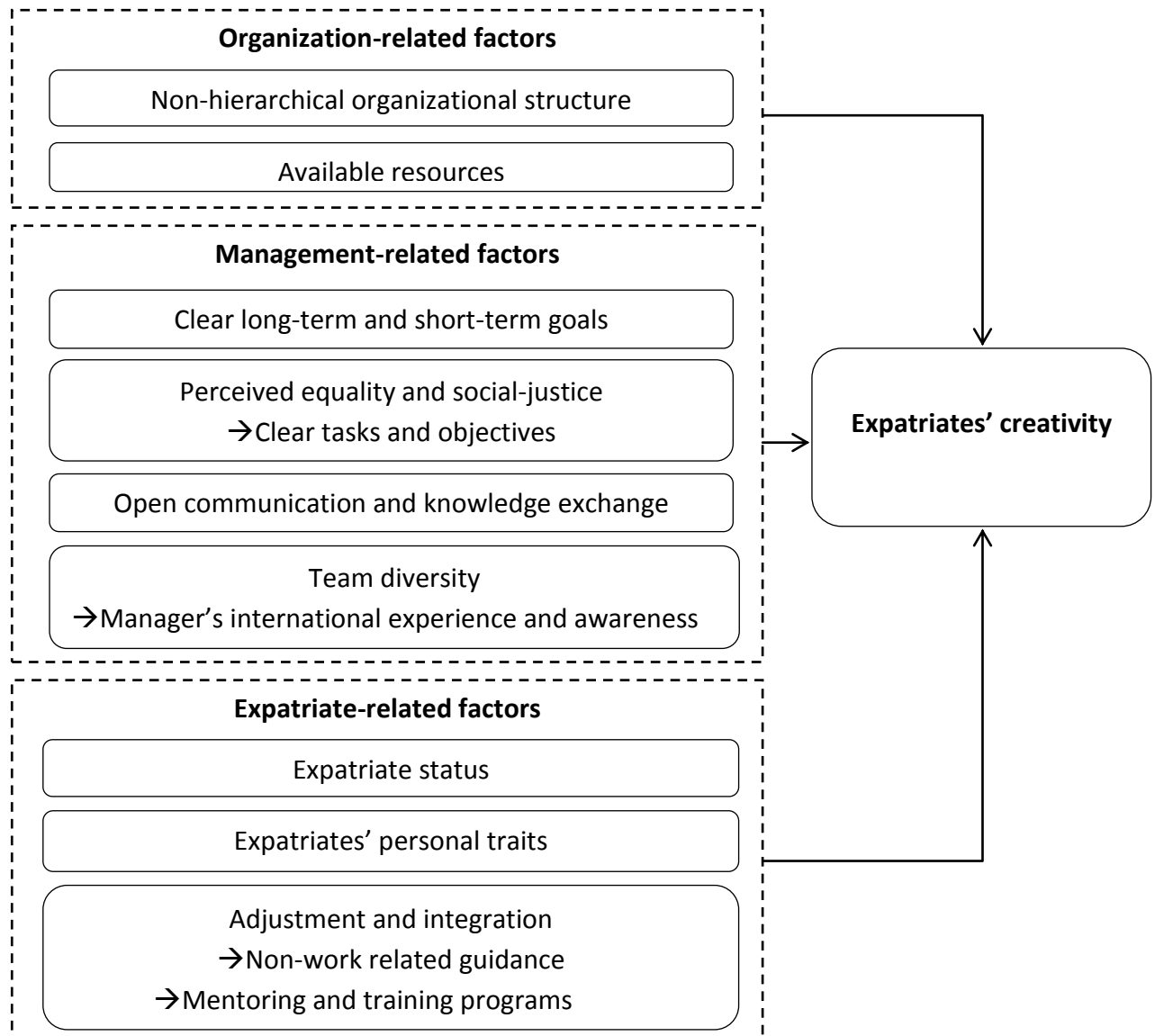
Expatriates' creativity

Figure 1. Scheme of factors and management practices influencing expatriates' creativity.

As expected, non-hierarchical organizational structures, flexibility, and discretion of decision-making (Cummings, 1965) were found to be important factors when seeking for creative, innovative performance of expatriate employees. The importance of organizations' non-hierarchical structures was highlighted by expatriates working in the public sector exclusively. Expatriates working in the private sector, on the other hand, occur to experience fewer issues to be motivated to work creatively due to flatter organizational structures. After an in-depth data analysis it can be inferred that, regarding Hofstede's power distance dimension (2001), the underlying reason of expatriates from various cultures entirely appreciating non-hierarchical structures may lay in their open-minded, flexible personalities and open mindset (Zhao, 2002).

As the findings demonstrate, the presence of relevant resources is needed to perform creatively (e.g., Amabile, 1996; Shalley & Gilson, 2004). Expatriates find available relevant resources important for their creative performance as it provides with the needed means to achieve their goals. However, opposing to the existing literature, the lack of resources has been found to also help stimulating employees' creativity, since they have to be creative to achieve what they are told to with the means they are given. Moreover, it has been highlighted that all the needed resources for creativity nowadays are based on the Internet, therefore are easily available.

One of the most important factors positively influencing expatriates' creativity has been found to be communication and knowledge exchange. Interviewees of the current research found it essential to work in an open organizational climate (e.g., Shalley & Gilson, 2004), and share ideas with co-workers with diverse backgrounds and skills as it has been found by Polzer et al. (2002). However, in addition to the existing literature, often expatriates tend to hang out together, and, thus, the interaction with the local team members has to be stimulated. Here wiki-based tools and informal communication might encourage diverse team members to share their thoughts more freely. Moreover, as suggested by the interviewees the network of expatriates should be established with the help of managers, since the local employees likely have a better basis for networking when entering an organization.

At the individual level, expatriates' adjustment positively influences their job performance because they can finally focus on the tasks given (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). The findings of the current study endorse that it is important to contribute to a fluent adjustment and integration of expatriates to help them feel comfortable and settled which then likely leads to creative, innovative performance. On the other hand, an opposing idea has been revealed suggesting that the level of expatriates' creativity might decrease due to the assimilation with the local culture.

Although expatriates are usually more open-minded, flexible, confident, etc. (Zhao, 2002), after living in one place for a certain period of time they may lose interest in the local environment. Therefore, as the findings suggest, expatriates may adapt their perceptions and attitudes to the local culture, thus, losing the creative, innovative potential.

To make the adjustment and integration of expatriates faster, mentoring and training programs, as well as non-work related guidance are recommended to apply. The findings of the current research support the study by Mezias and Scandura (2005), who claim that mentoring and training programs may fasten expatriates' adjustment and integration. Moreover, as highlighted by the interviewees, managers or other employees may help expatriates by giving personal tips and advises about the local issues (ie., non-work related guidance). Therefore, it can be inferred that a relationship-based communication in the first weeks would build trust and make the expatriate feel comfortable to share their ideas, as well as faster focus on work instead of personal issues related to their recent arrival.

According to Van Vianen et al. (2004), expatriates have less difficulties adapting to the new environment if they perceive that others also endorse such values as helpfulness, protection, loyalty, equality, and social justice. Therefore, expatriates appreciate equal treatment and overall social justice as any other employee. As Shalley and Gilson (2004) state, social justice and fairness climate ensures that employees can focus on their work instead of worrying about how individuals will be treated. In this context, social justice and fairness for expatriates is an important issue due to their perceived differences with the local employees. To guarantee the sense of equality and social justice findings suggest setting clear tasks and objectives, and clear long-term and short-term goals. These management practices provide with a consensus and transparency within diverse teams. Although monetary incentives are not found to be important for employees' creativity, the interviewees of the current study indicated that social justice can also be assured by a clear rewarding system.

Since perceived equality and social justice are essential ingredients for a creative performance of expatriates, it is of challenge for managers to reach that when managing diverse teams. Therefore, the findings reveal that managers have to explicitly speak about the advantage of having expatriates in the team and implement a common understanding of the need to be open about the diversity within the team. As inferred from the findings, this can be easier accomplished if the manager had previous international experience, and/or was aware of possible cultural differences and difficulties arising from that. Moreover, managers have to know that expatriates might have

certain perceptions on their expatriate status. In this case, expatriates either feel pressured to perform better, more creatively; or feel more confident and, thus, naturally deliver higher quality, creative performance. Therefore, it can be concluded that it is essential to take advantage of it by letting expatriates feel comfortable and confident.

The findings of the current research on the topic of facilitating expatriates' creativity reveal that to a certain extent they are influenced by the same factors as any other employee (e.g, non-hierarchical organizational structures, available resources, clear long-term and short-term goals, etc.). Additionally, expatriates' creativity can be stimulated by creating a welcoming atmosphere and building trust-based relationships with newly arrived expatriates; encouraging expatriates to feel comfortable and confident about their expatriate status; fastening their adjustment and integration, and doing it only to a certain extent in order to keep their creative potential; as well as ensuring a climate of social justice and perceived equality. These factors add knowledge to the undiscovered topic on facilitating expatriates' creativity.

6   Conclusion and practical implications

The current study aimed to discover which factors are important to bear in mind when seeking for expatriate subordinates' creativity, as well as to give insights on which management practices are conducive for their creative performance. As several factors were found to be applicable in the expatriate context, the main expatriate-specific recommendations for the managers are as follows:

1. Support and encourage an open communication and knowledge exchange within teams as it brings to a wider spectrum and more creative ideas.

2. Diversify teams in demography/background-related manner; and perceive, address team diversity as an asset. This brings diverse knowledge into coherence, and thus increases chances to devise more creative ideas. Manager's international experience and/or awareness are helpful in managing diverse teams.

3. Ensure social justice and perceived equality in diverse teams as it allows expatriates to feel recognized and valued. To establish that, managers may apply basic rules and guidelines that would be equal to every employee.

4. Realize the role of expatriate status that may either pressure expatriates to perform more creatively, or make them feel more confident. Essentially, managers should encourage expatriates' confidence.

5. Fasten expatriates' adjustment and integration to a certain extent to make them feel settled and comfortable. Managers may provide expatriates with non-work related guidance, for example, advising them about the best neighborhood to live, the most reasonable banking services, the best schools for children, etc. Furthermore, mentoring and training programs are helpful in job-related adjustment.

As expatriates are unique and beneficial for any organization who desires creative and innovative outcomes, their uniqueness has to be stimulated and seen as an advantage. Regarding expatriates coming from different cultures with various backgrounds, experiences and personal traits, the identified influencing factors and management practices may not bring the same outcomes in every situation. Therefore, the usage of management practices towards expatriates has to be considered in each context individually. Overall, if applied in an appropriate manner, the suggested implications may bring fruitful results for both, organizations and their expatriate employees.

7   Limitations and future research

Although the current study aimed to ensure reliability, validity, and generalizability, there are several limitations that should be explicitly addressed. First, the sample included only expatriates living in Brussels, Belgium, and working in professional service industries. Therefore, interviewing people working in creative, innovative environment in other host countries, as well as more various industries, companies might have made a difference. Second, the interviewed expatriates originally were from various countries. Since cultures differ enormously, the management and common management practices used to stimulate expatriates' creativity might differ among countries. Third, creativity and innovativeness are often perceived differently, thus, a more clear distinction from this perspective might provide with new insights. Fourth, as the research focused on the expatriate subordinates, the findings from the perspective of team leaders or managers managing expatriate employees would likely differ as well. Fifth, the research focused on the effects on expatriates' creativity, while organizations also desire performance. Therefore, a distinction between these two constructs and deeper look into creative behavior and effective performance of expatriates is needed. Sixth, it might have been difficult for expatriates to answer interview questions due to the language-barrier. Although they all work in international environments, thus speak well English, and the interviews were held in accordance with the research ethics suggested by Graham et al. (2006), they might have felt more comfortable answering the questions in their native languages. Finally, the coding, categorizing and identifying the relationships between categories have been done by a single investigator, thus, the results might occur to be biased without explicit intent as there is a degree of interpretation in contextual settings and personal idiosyncrasies among those interviewed. To counter this limitation, the interviews were held face-to-face to capture nonverbal and contextual data, interviewees were also asked to confirm their statements to avoid any misinterpretations when coding. Overall, the mentioned limitations open roads for future research.

The findings of this paper entice future research as they can be used as the basis for quantitative studies on expatriates' creativity. Therefore, the future research may examine how expatriates' creativity is affected by the identified organization-related (e.g., the lack and abundance of available resources), management-related (e.g., expatriates' adjustment and integration; non-work related guidance; manager's international experience and awareness), and expatriate-related factors (e.g., expatriate status). With the use of the proposed research items, expatriates

may be surveyed to test which discovered influencing factors are the most important, how do they affect expatriates' creativity, and what are the relationships between them.

Additionally, it may be beneficial to further examine strategic practices that managers can apply to facilitate expatriates' creativity. Moreover, research on the factors which are detrimental for expatriates' creativity would enrich the literature. Influencing factors and management practices that are not beneficial should be researched and tested, thus giving contributions on how to avoid de-motivation of expatriates to be creative. Furthermore, indication of which leadership styles are beneficial when seeking for expatriates' creativity would provide with a deeper understanding of how to manage expatriates. Therefore, examining one or a few particular leadership styles in the context of expatriates' creativity would enrich the academic field.

There are several potential research questions related to cultural differences and expatriates' adjustment that might be of interest to investigate. *To what extent the gap between expatriate's, local employee's and manager's cultural differences should be reduced (if at all) to achieve expatriate's creative performance? To what extent the equality and social justice should be implemented within diverse teams, and how? Which elements should mentoring and training programs for expatriates involve to enhance their creativity? What are the elements of non-work related guidance positively influencing expatriates' creativity, and how does it affect expatriates' creativity?*

Overall, there is a wide range of directions for the future research on the topic of facilitating expatriates' creativity. As expatriates are more often involved in organizations' daily work, the management towards them has to be more deeply investigated.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Interview guide for expatriates.

1. **Expatriation:**

    1.1. What is your country of origin? Have you worked in your home country? If yes, for how long?

    1.2. How long have you worked in Belgium now? Is it the first time you moved here?

    1.3. Have you worked elsewhere abroad before?

    1.4. What is your position? How long do you hold this position?

    1.5. Who is your direct manager? Which nationality he/she is?

2. **Creativity:**

    2.1. What role does creativity or innovation play in your daily work (developing and/or applying new products, services, technologies, work processes or ideas)?

    2.2. What (if anything) in your workplace has helped you to be creative or innovative?

    2.2.1. Can you please give a recent example from your workplace (a project or situation) when you were creative or innovative?

3. **Leadership:**

    3.1. How does your manager or team leader stimulate you to be creative or innovative? Can you please give an example?

    3.2. How does your manager or team leader inhibit you from being creative? What do you think the manager does wrong?

    3.2.1. How do you think your manager could better stimulate your creativeness?

    3.3. Does your manager or team leader apply any empowering and supporting techniques (e.g. giving encouraging feedbacks) to foster your creative, innovative performance?

    3.3.1. If yes, do you think they are useful? What (if at all) would you do differently?

    3.4. Which other techniques (if any) are used by your manager or team leader to foster your creative, innovative performance?

    3.4.1. Which techniques do you think could/should be used instead or next to the current ones?

3.4.2. Do the techniques your manager or team leader uses differ from the ones common in your home country?

3.5. Have you experienced any culturally related misunderstandings or challenges with your manager or team leader? What were the underlying reasons? What do you think the manager could/should do to avoid such misunderstandings?

3.6. Have you ever been promoted by your manager or team leader? What do you think led him/her to such a decision?

3.7. Do you think the management style of your manager or team leader is beneficial for your creative, innovative performance? If yes, why? If no, why not?

3.7.1. What could/should be done better and how?

1. **Expertise, knowledge and experience:**

    1.1. What is your position?

    1.2. How long have you been involved in dealing with international issues?

    1.3. What role does creativity or innovation play in your daily work?

    1.4. How is management in creative, innovative environments involved in your workplace?

2. **Creativity:**

    2.1. Why do you think companies are more commonly diversifying the teams? What do expatriates bring into the team?

    2.2. What can help to be more creative or innovative in the workplace? And how?

    2.2.1. Which other factors do you have in mind for fostering creative, innovative performance?

3. **Leadership for expatriates' creativity:**

    3.1. Do you think leadership is important when seeking for expatriate subordinates' creative, innovative performance? Why?

    3.2. Do you think leadership towards expatriates should differ from the one towards non-expatriates? Why?

    3.2.1. How (if at all) leadership towards expatriates should differ from the one towards non-expatriates?

    3.3. Which factors are important when stimulating specifically expatriates' creative, innovative performance?

    3.4. How can a manager or team leader stimulate expatriates to be more creative or innovative?

    3.5. How can empowering and supporting methods (e.g. giving encouraging feedbacks) foster expatriates' creative, innovative performance?

    3.6. Which techniques (if any) could be used by managers or team leaders to foster expatriates' creative, innovative performance?

    3.7. How should a manager or team leader deal with cultural differences of expatriates?

3.8. What do you think the manager could/should do to avoid culturally related misunderstandings or challenges?