

The potential of virtual expatriation – current state and future directions

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced organizations to change from the existing working model to a hybrid or fully virtual. The need to handle the pandemic constraints together with a growing trend of more flexibility in global mobility has prompted companies to review their policies around international remote working and establish some new rules. Employees will still travel to the host country, however, less frequently and for a shorter duration. This new model of work, called virtual expatriation, is becoming an alternative to the traditional expatriation and in the next years, it will become the main topic of human resource management (HRM). In this article, we attempt to examine virtual expatriation as the most emerging form and where virtual assignments are combined with other forms of international assignments (short-term assignments, business travels). The virtual expatriation work supported by the HR practices model is developed and verified empirically. Data for the verification obtained using qualitative methods: structured interviews. A structured standardised interview script are used and built through guidance provided by a classification matrix, with a sample collected from organizations from Europe (Poland, Portugal), Asia (India, China) and North America (USA). Only international HRM practitioners from selected countries have been interviewed. The own collaboration network has been used to reach the respondents (10-15 from each indicated continent. The interviews were conducted online, recorded and the transcript will be made by the researchers and available apps (Google). The coding method will be used to analyse the data obtained from the interviews. Moreover, systematic review of the literature has been applied. Multiple research databases has been used to answer formulated questions. The systematic review followed a defined plan in which the criteria has been stated before the review has been conducted.

Keywords: Expatriate Effectiveness, Virtual Expatriate, Human Resource Practices, Virtual Assignment