'Strength lies in differences, not in similarities' – Stephen R. Covey

Advice concerning OC Prod HR Consulting's integration process of the expats and the client-relation

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Declaration of own work

I hereby declare that:

- I am fully informed about the Thesis C assessment criteria;
- all the work I have conducted to fulfill these criteria is entirely my own;
- I have not been assisted by any other person, except the coaching offered within HBS guidelines.

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Preface

During these past six months, while writing my thesis project, I learned a lot of things, such as being a responsible person, how to manage my time wisely, how to learn from my mistakes, how to improve myself, and that what seems easy and quick to do, in reality, is by far not how I imagined.

The beginning of this thesis project was harder than I expected because I could not find my words to fill up a blank page. I could not see where the beginning is, not to mention that seeing the finish line seemed like something impossible to achieve. So, I took each step on its own, thinking about how it is better to do, how to write down my ideas, and all the information that I absorbed. Of course, I did not only encounter difficulties, but I also had the opportunity to find kind and helpful people with whom I worked along. I learned meaningful things, I was introduced to the field of Human Resources, I got to see how it feels to be on the other side when having an interview, and that working hard has its rewards.

I would like to thank all the people that I met and especially both of my examiners, Mrs. Cora van Triest and Mrs. Paula Cromme for all their support, patience, and guidance. They both helped me see the things I was not aware of, they showed me that taking my time and being sure of what I was writing is what counts the most. Also, they showed me that hurrying things up does not really mean quality; thinking, doing, and re-doing written pieces of work will turn out to be more impactful and deliver more quality in the end.

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Bucharest, Romania, March 2020

Summary

The company with which I have collaborated for this thesis project is OC Prod HR Consulting. This is a well-known company for recruiting sharp profiles for worldwide projects. The company operates in six countries: Canada, Morocco, Vietnam, China, France, and Romania. OC Prod HR Consulting is playing the role of the 'middle-man' between the clients they have (Assystem, GAP, Areva, DHL, Renault, Saint-Gobain, etc.) and the expats, which the consultants of the company find suitable for an available job position.

After discussing with one employee working in Administration, it became clear that OC Prod HR Consulting is facing problems regarding the integration of the expats to a new working culture and country when being confronted with differences between the cultures. Also, the company is facing problems regarding the communication between the consultants and the expats during the integration process. These situations led to affecting the relationship with their clients as well; when the expats are dissatisfied, they tend to not perform their job at their full potential, which then leads to lower performance and higher turnover of the expats. As a consequence, this leads to the decision of the expats to leave the company. The management problem formulated is: *'How can OC Prod HR Consulting company increase expats' retention and quality of client-relation by improving the integration process of the expats in the client's company?'*

To gather as much useful information about the issues mentioned above, literature review and research needed to be done to come up with a suitable HR advice for OC Prod HR Consulting. This will then be translated into developing a new chapter of the existing HR policy plan of the company. On one hand, interviews with the expats and with the employees from OC Prod will be conducted after putting together an interview guide based on the literature review. On the other hand, information on the topics of the integration process and cultural differences will be gathered by doing document analyses. There will be made use of previous research publications made on the topics of 'organizational entry process' and 'relational demography'. Also, information about the experiences of several expats going to work in a different country, experiencing the cultural differences, and the integration within the organization will be analyzed and reviewed as well.

It has been found that the expats are encountering difficulties with the language barrier because the only means of communication is through English or learning French. Most of the workers there either do not know English nor French, and due to the language barrier frustration and miscommunication arise as well. The communication process involves three parties: the employees from OC Prod HR Consulting, the client, and the expats. After the expats are sent abroad, it is up to the Administration employees to keep the communication between the expats and the client. Moreover, it was pointed out, more than once, that the employees from OC Prod HR Consulting choose to verify and be well informed about the client's company environment, the kind of work performed, and about the working conditions of the expats.

A piece of suitable advice that could contribute to solving the management problem formulated, namely *'How can OC Prod HR Consulting company increase expats' retention and quality of client-relation by improving the integration process of the expats in the client's company?'* is to develop a

‘New Employee Onboarding Workshop’ as an additional chapter of the exiting HR policy of OC Prod. On one hand, the retention of the expats could be increased by making the expats feel more engaged, relaxed, and comfortable towards their future organization. They will be informed about the important aspects of being abroad in an ‘unfamiliar environment’. On the other hand, the relation with the client will be improved because the expats will be well-prepared regarding the company values, what is expected of them, and how they should fulfill their role within the company.

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1. Introduction

Starting with the chapter 'Introduction', this will contain background information about the client for which the thesis project is intended to, OC Prod HR Consulting Company. Following, the reason, relevance, and the management problem will be elaborated on. After, the objective of the advice and the management problem will be illustrated. Then, the objective of the research, the research questions, and the corresponding sub-questions will be presented. Lastly, a reading guide which will contain information about the remaining steps needed to be further followed will be displayed.

1.1 The client

OC Prod HR Consulting is a well-known company for recruiting sharp profiles for worldwide projects. This is due to an experience of over ten years in international recruitment. The company currently operates in six countries: Canada, Morocco, Vietnam, China, France, and Romania. The company is specially designed for Consulting, Research, and International Selection of candidates, being comprised of a team of 45 specialists. They are analyzing and adapting to all types of customer needs, whether temporary or permanent recruitment. In the year 2014 alone, there was an amount of 2,400 sourced profiles and 723 recruitments (OC Prod HR Consulting, 2014). The company's most recent Net Profit is €482,656 (Lista Firme, 2019). There are two core recruitment poles at the base of the company, namely Engineering and IT. The recruitment processes set by OC Prod consist of defining the position, the profile target, doing research, selection, and support during the integration phase. Also, the company values concentrate around three words: Listening (the fundamental key to OC Prod's success, since listening is the starting point), Ethics (working under strict confidentiality and by the rules and principles of people), Efficiency (the cost service is based on the results; if there is no good service delivered then no compensation will be received) (OC Prod HR Consulting, 2019).

OC Prod is playing the role of the 'middle-man' between the clients they have (DHL, Renault, Saint-Gobain, etc.) and the expats, which the consultants of the company find suitable for an available job. By 'clients' it is meant the companies that have a contract with and come to OC Prod with a certain open job position that requires a specific profile of an employee. By 'expats' it is referred to the possible suitable candidates for the job offered by the client. The HR consultants of OC Prod scan and have the first interview with the expats. Following, the HR consultants share the information gathered in this process with the client. In the end, the employment decision remains up to the client.

1.2 Reason and relevance

To be able to give reasons for writing the thesis project and answer to what the current situation is, it can be said that OC Prod is facing problems regarding the integration of the expats to a new working culture and country, when facing differences between the cultures (M. Butnaru, personal communication, September 11, 2019). Currently, there is a team of thirty Romanians sent to France and a team of six Romanians sent to Belgium to work for various companies. The ones that are sent to France encountered many more difficulties adapting to the new culture, integrating at the working place, and avoiding being marginalized. These difficulties arose because of the dissatisfaction of the expats with the accommodation offered, with the salary differences, integration process, and the fact that they are being marginalized by the others. Moreover, OC Prod is also facing problems regarding the communication within the integration process of the expats. The expats are being contacted by the

OC Prod's consultants, but many of them do not want to answer to them or to tell them how it is going on with their integration process. In the event of something bad going on with them, it is in their disadvantage that they refuse to reach out or to accept the contact with the consultants from OC Prod (M. Butnaru, personal communication, September 11, 2019).

These situations, the integration of the expats and the communication process between OC Prod and the expats, are affecting the relation with the clients. When the expats are dissatisfied, they have a tendency of not performing their job to the fullest. As a result, it leads to lower performance and higher turnover of the expats, which then leads to the decision of the expats to leave the company. From the perspective of the expats going abroad to work, the problem described is affecting their integration process, it creates frustration among the employees, and defensive behavior. When looking from the perspective of the relationship with the clients and OC Prod, it represents an issue because in the future there might not be made any other contracts between these due to negative attitudes, misunderstandings, or disagreements (M. Butnaru, personal communication, September 11, 2019).

Referring back to the company's values stated above (Listening, Ethics, Efficiency), to accomplish them it is necessary to look deeper into the similarities in experiences arising from different demographic perspectives (age, gender, race, and nationality). Then, research how cultural differences are affecting the individuals, but most importantly to research how the success of an organization depends on a good structured integration process. The conclusions that will be resulted from doing research are useful to come up with an HR advice, translated into an additional chapter of the existing HR policy plan of OC Prod. This will include the steps needed for a proper integration process which will be available for all HR consultants. This will help making sure that the relations with the clients will not be damaged, and will increase the value of the services offered by OC Prod. The expats will benefit from this also, because they will make sense of the new organization, what is expected of them, with what they can contribute to in return, and how they can build successful relationships at the working place.

1.3 Management problem

As stated above, the management problem is represented by the expats encountering difficulties adapting to a new culture, integrating at the workplace, and avoid being marginalized. This leads to jeopardizing the relationship between OC Prod and their clients; if the expats are dissatisfied with the working conditions or with the working environment, then their performance levels will be low, and they will be more prone to exiting the company. Here, hospitality plays an important role because the relationship between the clients and OC Prod should not be just a business relationship, but one that implicates care and looking after their needs and wants as well. Being hospitable towards the clients boosts the value of the services, which can exceed the clients' expectations and achieve effective interpersonal relations ('Why CRM is considered as the backbone for any hotel business', 2019).

1.4 Advice objective

The objective of the advice is *'To develop an additional chapter of the existing HR policy of the company, in order to improve the integration process of the expats and the relationship with the clients'.* The advice objective aims to improve the integration process of the expats and the relationship which OC Prod has with its clients.

1.5 Management question

The management question formulated to come up with an HR advice at the end of the thesis, which will be translated into an additional chapter of the existing HR policy of OC Prod is: *'How can OC Prod HR Consulting Company increase expats' retention and quality of client-relation by improving the integration process of the expats in the client's company?*

1.6 Research objective

The objective of this research is: '*To gain deep insight into understanding the meaning and impact of cultural differences of the expats and collecting information about a concise integration process, in order to advise on a structured integration process of the expats, which will be translated into an additional chapter of the existing HR policy of the company'*. This way, the quality of the relation with OC Prod's clients will be intensified and the retention of the expats will be an increased.

1.7 Research- and sub-questions

The purpose of the upcoming research questions is to fill in the void between the current and the preferred circumstances between OC Prod and their clients. Also, it is vital to find out the steps needed to be done to have a successful integration process for the expats and a clear image of the impact cultural differences have within work organizations. Having a good integration process and a clear vision of the cultural differences are linked to increasing the client-relation and expats' turnover. The research objective formulated can be achieved by answering three central questions. The first question focuses on the expats' experience regarding the cultural differences within the work organizations. The corresponding sub-questions formulated for this central question are meant to gain more information about the international working environment and the preparation offered towards understanding the cultural differences. The second central question formulated focuses on gaining information about the integration process offered by OC Prod to the expats. Here, part of the integration process could be the working conditions offered and the communication between the expats and the HR consultants. These aspects have been translated into sub-questions. To answer these two central- and sub-research questions, there will be made use of field research, mainly conducting interviews. The last main question focuses on the relationship between the cultural differences and the integration process. Through this question, it is important to find out the important factors within differences between the cultures and of the integration process. Again, these aspects are included in the below formulated sub-questions. More will be elaborated by doing desk research, mainly examining previous research papers done on these topics.

1. *How do expats experience the cultural differences?*

- How do expats experience the international working environment?
- How do expats experience the preparation regarding differences within cultures?

2. *How do expats experience the integration process?*

- How do expats experience the working conditions offered?
- How do expats experience the communication with OC Prod's consultants?

3. *What is the relationship between the cultural differences and the integration process?*

- What are important factors in differences between cultures?
- What are important factors of the integration process?

1.8 Reading guide

The thesis project is composed of different parts which will individually be discussed in the upcoming sections. Following the 'Introduction' as chapter one, in the second part of the thesis, the 'Theoretical framework' will be elaborated on. Within this chapter, the search methods, the literature review which includes a discussion of the core concepts and the corresponding definitions, and the operationalization of the core concepts will be described. After, there is the chapter 'Research', which includes an elaboration of the research strategy used for the project, choice of data collection methods, data selection sources, and data analysis methods. The following chapter is 'Results', where a discussion of both sources used, followed by overall insights from both sources will be illustrated. At the end of this chapter, the conclusions and an elaboration on the validity and reliability will be made. The last chapter will be the 'Advice'. Here, the alternative solutions, the evaluation of the solutions, and the choice of the most suitable solution will be presented. Within the same chapter, the implementation plan, the financial implications, and a conclusion will be displayed. At last, the 'Afterword' chapter, which includes the day to day reflection and the value of this thesis project will be described.

2. Theoretical Framework

Within this second chapter, an introduction, an explanation of the research methods used, an elaboration on the core concepts based on the literature review of the core concepts, and the operationalization process will be displayed.

2.1 Introduction

The objective of the research formulated in the beginning was: *'To gain deep insight into understanding the meaning and impact of cultural differences of the expats and collecting information about a concise integration process, in order to advise on a structured integration process of the expats, which will be translated into an additional chapter of the existing HR policy of the company'*. To achieve the research objective, three main questions have been formulated, each followed by sub-questions.

1. *How do expats experience the cultural differences?*
- How do expats experience the international working environment?
- How do expats experience the preparation regarding differences within cultures?

2. *How do expats experience the integration process?*
- How do expats experience the working conditions offered?
- How do expats experience the communication with OC Prod's consultants?

3. *What is the relationship between the cultural differences and the integration process?*
- What are important factors in differences between cultures?
- What are important factors of the integration process?

2.2 Search methods

To gather as much relevant information as possible, certain search engines were used. These include Google, Google Scholar, Google Books, Saxion Online Library, and the Research Gate database. When looking back at the above-mentioned management question: *'How can OC Prod HR Consulting Company increase expats' retention and quality of client-relation by improving the integration process of the expats in the client's company?',* certain search terms were used to disclose the core concepts. The searching process started with the term 'cultural differences', which resulted in over four million hints. After carefully reading through the publications, another term turned out to be useful for this topic, namely 'cultural diversity'. By further reading the next publications, the search led to discovering the term 'relational demography', which was looked up for on different search engines. The caption *'relational demography'* serves as the most appropriate core concept; when the terms 'cultural differences' and 'cultural diversity' were searched for, the information found was too extensive and vague for the thesis report. Afterward, the term 'relational demography' was searched in combination with the term 'work organization', which then led to coming across other relevant publications. Going through these, the term 'integration of employees' was searched for on Google Scholar and it had over four million hints. By carefully screening the publications at hand, the term *'organizational entry process'* was unraveled. It turned out that the term 'integration of employees' is part of the organizational entry, which is a process in itself. Ultimately, a combination of the two core concepts

'relational demography AND organizational entry' was looked up for. The choice for picking and gathering the most applicable information was based on meaningful titles and on the abstract preview text displayed. It was important to check whether the article, publication, or report seemed suitable. It was necessary to examine the academic source at hand, meaning verifying if the author was named, if the date was mentioned, and if the topic was useful for discussion. To be able to determine and examine the reliability of the framework results, the AAOCC method was used. According to Kapoun (1998), Accuracy, Authority, Objectivity, Currency, and Coverage are to be identified as essential for ensuring the validity and reliability of different types of literature articles. An overview of the applied AAOCC criteria can be found in Appendix A.

2.3 Literature review

Taking a step closer to answering the management question: *'How can OC Prod HR Consulting Company increase expats' retention and quality of client-relation by improving the integration process of the expats in the client's company?'*, this needed to be split up into concrete core concepts. As seen above, there are two different core concepts: 'relational demography' and 'organizational entry process', which will be individually defined through literature review.

2.3.1 Organizational entry process

When employees are entering into a new organization, they are jumping into a 'strange new world' (Lundberg & Young, 2016). As a consequence, it has been made clear that the process of organizational entry should not be ignored, nor left out when an employee is entering into a new organization. Lee, Ashford, Walsh, and Mowday (1992) said that 'during this period the individuals are believed to form or fail to form a basic attachment to the organization'. At the moment of entry into a new organization, individuals are seeking for clues or information regarding what the organization is about and how they should act in terms of roles, values, norms, and beliefs (Lundberg & Young, 2016).

Of course, the process of organizational entry is interpreted in many different ways by each individual entering a new organization. For example, Ashford and Black (1996) described the term organizational entry as 'a period of uncertainty… entry into an organization as a job transition that thrust(s) one from a state of certainty to uncertainty, from knowing to not knowing, from familiar to unfamiliar'. The authors are outlining that when a new employee is entering an organization, he/she is confronted with unfamiliar aspects and situations. For instance, entering into an organization where relationships have been already formed and the environment is new, may indicate that the individual is finding himself/herself out of the comfort zone. Reason for which, a newcomer should be made to feel that he/she is part of the team and should be shown both concern and caring within this 'strange new world' that he is part of. Additionally, Ashford and Black (1996) characterized the entry experience for a multitude of individuals as 'one fraught with frustration, anxiety, and stress'.

Coming close to the statements of Ashford and Black, Wanous (1993) mentioned in one of his articles that 'a newcomer to a job may have left school or college and may have moved geographically, both of which cause considerable stress'. Furthermore, Wanous (1993) states in the same publication that 'the entry of new employees into organizations has been described as a dual-matching process between the individual and the organization'. On one hand, the individual is faced to show what his/her

capabilities and abilities are to match with the job requirements of the organization that is entering in. On the other hand, there is a need for a match between the needs and wants of the individual in concerning the climate and culture of the company. There might be outcomes resulted from both matchups. For the first instance, the individual is being assessed on his/her job performance by showing his/her capabilities and abilities to perform a given task. For the second instance, based on the environment and climate of the new organization, the individual will express his/her attitudes upon whether or not he/she is satisfied with the job, feels committed to the organization, and/or has the will of remaining part of the organization. Within both instances, the individual might feel the need of being appreciated, recognized upon his/her performance, and even shown interest.

Another publication that took the matter of organizational entry into account is the one of Holton and Russell (1999). Here, the authors outline that 'organizational entry and subsequently new employee development processes are typically designed to accomplish two critical management goals: increase the likelihood that employees will achieve at targeted levels of performance and stay with the organization'. With this statement, it is meant, the same as in the one by Wanous (1993), that two ideal scenarios should be met during the entry process in a new organization. Firstly, the individual will perform at his/her best the tasks given, and secondly, he/she will be more prone to not exiting the company. A certain aspect that helps to achieve these ideal situations is the interaction of the new individual with his/her co-workers. If the new individual is actively making the efforts of socially interacting with his/her colleagues, building, and maintaining relationships, then this will lead to social acceptance and support given throughout the entry into the organization. Moreover, an individual's efforts to adapt to the new work organization will contribute to lowering employee turnover, organizational commitment, and satisfaction of performing the job. In other words, the 'unfamiliar' will become 'familiar'.

In conclusion, new members of organizations must take into account which obstacles to jump through and which to avoid. As mentioned above, when entering into a new organization, the newcomer is faced with an 'unfamiliar' scenario. Within this scenario, he/she is trying to seek information to understand and accept the requirements of their new role within the organization. They will learn about the sort of system they will be working in and what will be expected of them (Lundberg & Young, 2016). One must take into consideration the importance of hospitality within the entry of a new member into an organization. A newcomer should be made to feel that he is part of the team, he should be shown concern, caring, the need of being appreciated, recognized upon his/her performance, and shown interest.

Considering all the definitions specified above, the term 'organizational entry process' can be defined as *'the integration process where a newcomer should be made to feel that he is part of the team and he should be shown both concern and caring in the 'strange new world'. This by keeping in mind the dual-matching process: if the newcomer is satisfied with the job performed and with the working environment, then he/she is more likely to remain within the organization'.*

2.3.2 Relational demography

Nowadays, within the composition of almost all organizations, there is a mix of different cultures. Employees are working in diverse environments and each of them consists of individuals who are

different in a multitude of personal characteristics. Managers of the organizations observe the cultural differences when they become aware that people with different cultural backgrounds behave differently, and those differences influence how their company functions (Arora & Rohmetra, 2010). Riordan, Schaffer, and Stewart (2005) suggested that these personal characteristics consist of age, sex, sexual orientation, religion, and nationality. In many publications found, the terms 'diversity' and 'cultural differences' have been associated with the phenomenon of *'relational demography'*. This term raised a lot of interest due to its importance in understanding the meaning and impact within the work organizations.

After carefully reading several publications done on the subject of 'relational demography', the author Riordan (2002) defines this concept as the 'construct of demographic similarity that characterizes the degree to which an individual's demographic attributes are shared by other members of a social unit'. This can be seen as, when an individual is possessing different personal characteristics, such as age, race, sex, or nationality, in comparison with a group of individuals who are similar in personal characteristics, then the individual is finding himself/herself in minority. As a consequence, this will lead to the individual at cause being judged and evaluated upon these different personal characteristics by the majority group of people. When this happens, it can lead to several different factors which then influence the individual's organizational commitment, his/her intention of exiting the organization, higher absenteeism rates, as well as an influence on job satisfaction. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that diversity should be embraced and acknowledged, as these diverse individuals help generate revenue and profits for the organization (Arora & Rohmetra, 2010).

In other words, the more alike an individual is in his/her personal characteristics, then the more positive his/her work-related attitudes, mindset, and behavior will be. As a result, if an individual is finding himself/herself in a minority within a social group, then the individual will have lower performance levels and will be more prone to leaving the organization. One might keep in mind that 'similarity cannot be assessed without taking into account the demographic characteristics of others in the group'. As a result, the need to deal effectively with people who have diverse cultural backgrounds has become essential for guaranteeing success in business. One way of doing so is to understand the needs of these diverse individuals and to try and meet their cultural expectations as well. Another way is to make them feel welcomed within the organization they are being a part of. This because, the individuals from all sectors of the organization belong to different cultural backgrounds and are working together to ensure a business's success (Arora & Rohmetra, 2010).

In another article found, Tsui, Egan, and O'Reilly (2011) are also pointing out that similarity cannot be determined without considering the demographic attributes of others in the group. They stated that the phenomenon of relational demography focuses on the attitudes of the individuals as 'influenced by perceptions of the similarity or dissimilarity of others, index by demographic attributes.' These may include age, education, tenure, race, and sex, as well as occupational and functional categories. In the same article, it was unraveled that these demographic characteristics have been linked to outcomes such as performance, hiring and promotion decisions, and turnover. As an indication of these aspects, there was a link made between the difference in age and turnover in top-management. The differences in age can influence communication and active participation with other team members or the management teams. In the event of an individual being most distant from other individuals into the

group on personal characteristics, he/she will be the least socially integrated in the group. Subsequently, the individual is most likely to exit the company. In other words, if individuals are having similar attributes compared to each other's, then there is a higher chance of attraction and forming relationships between these individuals.

In conclusion, globalization has made the world seem smaller and 'flat' in many ways, but still, both cultural differences and diversity continue to be a challenge to be faced by people and organizations. As mentioned above, one must understand the needs of these diverse individuals and try and meet their cultural expectations, as well as making them feel welcomed within the organization they are being a part of. The managers of organizations cannot reach their goals unless they are receptive and sensitive to the cultures of their employees (Arora & Rohmetra, 2010).

Taking into account all the definitions mentioned above, the term 'relational demography' can be defined as *'the challenge encountered by organizations where there exist individuals with different and similar cultural backgrounds'.*

2.3.3 Relationship of the core concepts

Today, in almost every organization there is a combination of different nationalities and cultures. As a result, when the employees are entering into a new organization, they are joining a complete 'strange world'. Each individual has different expectations and cultural backgrounds at the moment of entry into a new organization, so the individuals are seeking for clues or information regarding what the organization is about and how they should respond in terms of roles, values, norms, and beliefs. As seen above, it is of utmost importance that diversity should be embraced and acknowledged, as these diverse individuals help generate revenue and profits for the organization (Arora & Rohmetra, 2010).

The two core concepts that are part of this report, 'organizational entry' and 'relational demography', represent important aspects that cannot be ignored. As mentioned in the literature review, if not handled correctly, both can lead to negative outcomes, such as low-performance levels and turnover (the intent of exiting the company) of an employee. On one hand, the period of entry of a newcomer into an organization defines whether or not he/she is fitting within the organization. So, the importance of hospitality at the moment of entry of a new member into an organization needs to be taken into consideration. Meaning, a newcomer should be given the feeling that he/she is part of the team, should be shown both concern and caring, the need of being appreciated or recognized upon his/her performance, and shown interest. On the other hand, the personal characteristics of a newcomer concerning the other members of the organization define whether or not he/she will fit among the other employees. In this case, one must understand the needs of diverse individuals and try to meet their cultural expectations, as well as making them feel welcomed within the organization they are entering. Otherwise, the managers of organizations cannot reach their goals unless they are receptive and sensitive to the cultures of their employees. Additionally, in a publication made by Cable and Judge (1996), it was pointed out that 'people select environments that fulfill their needs … prefer organizations that have the same 'personality' as they do'. The same authors found out that the individuals who are similar in personal characteristics (age, race, gender, socioeconomic status, etc.), turn out to enjoy important benefits, such as improved communication and liking, which ultimately

affects job attitudes and organizational outcomes. So, the process of organizational entry is influenced and/or determined by the personal characteristics of each individual.

2.4 Operationalization

After elaborating on the two core concepts, 'organizational entry' and 'relational demography', the operationalization of these will follow. The result of operationalization will be translated into three tree diagrams. The core concept 'organizational entry' will be addressed to both stakeholders, employees of OC Prod HR Consulting and the expats. The second core concept, 'relational demography', will be addressed only to the expats. All the aspects and sub-aspects mentioned below can be found in Appendix B.

Firstly, as it can be concluded from the literature review, part of the 'organizational entry process' are the aspects of proactive activities in which a newcomer is engaged to. These include providing help and/or feedback through the means of consultations and meetings. Secondly, there is the aspect of organizational orientation, where the company is offering information to the newcomer regarding the organization's mission and hierarchy, but also offering them training. Thirdly, another aspect is the organizational environment, which includes adequate internal conditions and hospitality. When mentioning adequate internal conditions, these include the necessary working tools and the proper conditions offered to a newcomer. Lastly, the aspect of hospitality plays a very important role when a newcomer is entering an organization. The term hospitality is very broad, but here it is referred to how a newcomer is being received and welcomed in the organization, and how their needs and wants are taken into account. If these are being met, then there is also the chance of performing the job at higher levels. Part of the same core concept, but this time in relation to the newcomer herself/himself, are the proactive activities in which he/she engages. Primarily, these include asking and/or receiving guidance, asking for help and/or feedback, and socialization. One of the most important aspects is building relationships by interacting with co-workers and spending time together. Finally, there is the climate or atmosphere of the workgroup, and whether or not the newcomer has feelings of comfort, safety, and job performance satisfaction.

Moving on to the last core concept, 'relational demography', it can be derived from the literature review that part of this is the aspect of personal characteristics of an individual. These consist of differences in age, sex, race, nationality, and occupational categories, which include the functions and job titles individuals previously had. Another aspect is the employee commitment. This includes the satisfaction with co-workers, communication process, affective organizational commitment ('employees' perceptions of their emotional attachment to/or within the company', Williams, 2004), task conflict (when two parties are unable to move forward on a task due to differing needs, behaviors, or attitudes, What Is Task Conflict? - Definition & Explanation, n.d.), and interpersonal conflict (disagreement in some manner which can be emotional, physical, personal, or professional between two or more people, Interpersonal Conflict, n.d.).

3. Research

An overview of the research- and sub-questions can be found on page 14. These were set up while keeping in mind the research objective. To gather as much information as possible, the research strategy of the thesis was divided into two parts. Afterward, a description of the data collection methods, data selection sources, and data analysis methods will be illustrated.

3.1 Research strategy

As mentioned above, the research strategy was divided into two distinct parts. In the first part, there will be an elaboration on the choice for making use of qualitative research for the first two central and sub-questions. In the second part, for the last research- and sub-questions, there will be made use of quantitative data, specifically of secondary data from analyzing the conclusions of previous research papers done on the subjects of 'organizational entry' and 'relational demography'.

3.1.1 Qualitative research

The choice for qualitative research came from the fact that the type of research at hand is focusing more on an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon within its natural settings. In other words, there was a need to construct knowledge. The knowledge could be gathered through the means of conducting interviews with both stakeholders, employees of OC Prod and the expats, which might express different points of view. The phenomenon of the research was 'relational demography' on the 'organizational entry process'. The type of case and the natural environment was within OC Prod. The strategy of a single case study was adopted because OC Prod is facing a problem and research will be done on the matter stated above. To be able to determine which type of case study was the most suitable, a comparison was made between intrinsic- and instrumental case study. According to Harling (2002), an intrinsic case study is done to learn about a unique phenomenon on which the study is focusing. Whereas an instrumental case study is done to provide a more general understanding of a phenomenon using a particular case. Within this case, the focus was laying more on the intrinsic case study because the phenomenon was important in the context of the client, OC Prod.

3.1.2 Quantitative research

Moving on, the choice for quantitative research came from the fact that this type of research was more data-oriented, objective, and the results achieved were logical, statistical, and unbiased. In other words, there was a need to discover knowledge. The choice for quantitative research was considered because within OC Prod there was no previous data gathered on the topics of cultural differences, organizational entry, or about the dissatisfaction of the expats. Therefore, there was a need for gathering secondary data from previous research papers and publications. Through gathering secondary data, the conclusions of the research papers found on the topics of 'organizational entry process' and 'relational demography' were discussed. In doing so, previous research findings were reviewed to gain a broader understanding of the two core concepts mentioned.

3.2 Data collection methods

The chosen data collection method for the thesis report were individual interviews with selected participants as a source of primary data collection. The choice of conducting interviews came from the need of getting the story behind a participant's experiences. During the interviews, in-depth

information about the topic at hand could be persisted on. The most striking aspect of choosing this type of data collection method was that during the interviews there was the chance to probe and ask follow-up questions to the respondent (Valenzuela & Shrivastava, n.d.). The interviews were one-to-one and were recorded with the permission of each respondent. Afterward, these were transcribed in English (where applicable) to ensure credible evidence. To approach the selected interviewees, there was made use of the relations within OC Prod. With the help of the Administration department, the participants for the one-to-one and telephone interviews were reached out to. The approach of the respondents within OC Prod was done face-to-face. Since the expats were working abroad, they were reached out to by phone. In the event of encountering a language barrier, the interviews were to be held in Romanian and after translated in English. The interviews with the employees of OC Prod were held face-to-face in English and Romanian.

The interviews were conducted as semi-structured, an interview type that was in between open and structured. This format of interview allowed to prepare a set of questions to be answered by the respondents but also allowed to ask additional questions during the interview to clarify and further extend particular topics of discussion. It also allowed for the interview to develop into a natural conversation, where the respondents could explore areas that they felt were important (Cope, 2016). During the interviews, there was made use of a topic list. The interview guides, which were based on the operationalization process of both stakeholders, employees of OC Prod HR Consulting and expats, can be found in Appendix C.

For the second research strategy, the qualitative research, the data was collected by putting together and analyzing information from previous research papers and publications made on the topics of cultural differences and integration process of the expats. This was done rather by doing desk research and the information found was analyzed and put in the form of an elaborated literature review.

3.3 Data selection sources

The participants chosen to be part of the research began with the Operations Director from OC Prod, which had an overall view of the entire recruitment process of the expats and she was in contact with the client. In doing so, the non-probability sample was chosen, more specifically the snowball sampling. To gather as much information as possible on the subjects of 'organizational entry' and 'relational demography', the stakeholders of expats and the employees of OC Prod were difficult to select, especially in the case of expats where approximatively thirty expats were in France. 'In other words, the snowball sampling method is based on referrals from initial subjects to generate additional subjects. Therefore, when applying this sampling method, members of the sample group are recruited via chain referral' (Dudovskiy, 2018). In the case at hand, the pattern of exponential non-discriminative snowball sampling was chosen. This means that the first subject recruited to the sample group provided multiple referrals. Every new referral was investigated up until the moment when primary data from a sufficient number of samples was accumulated (Dudovskiy, 2018). The Operations Director proposed two Administration employees and the HR Team Leader of OC Prod. There were only two Administration employees in the company who were handling the process of the expats. Both were considered experts in the field. One of them was in contact with the expats and the other one was in contact with the client. The choice of interviewing them both seemed appropriate because they were taking care of different parts of the process with the expats. Then, the HR Team Leader was involved

before in the recruitment process of the expats alongside with the Administration department. Then, the Administration employees came up with three expats which were employed in France. Their ages differed from 20 years to 50 years old. The decision for interviewing these came from the fact that they might experience the cultural differences and the integration process differently from each other. One factor being the difference in age, which might influence their perspectives upon these two subjects. In this case, there were only male employees.

As a result, seven interviews were conducted. During the interviewing process with the selected respondents, it would be clear if there was a need for interviewing more or fewer individuals, as long as the saturation of the topics had been reached. When the respondents were starting to give similar answers, the saturation moment had been reached and the interviewing process would be stopped. In the event of interviewing all the participants selected and these did not provide enough information, then more respondents would be recruited to conduct further interviews and gather more data.

When referring to document analysis, there was made use of previous research publications made on the topics of 'relational demography' and 'organizational entry'. The conclusions of different researches conducted about the experiences of some employees working within different cultures, experiencing the relational demography, and the integration within the organizational entry process, were analyzed and reviewed.

3.4 Data analyze methods

After conducting the one-to-one interviews, data needed to be retrieved and analyzed. Firstly, a transcript of each interview needed to be translated into English, following the recordings made. The next step was the process of open and axial coding. This came after carefully reading over and understanding the transcribed interviews. At first, there was the open coding process, where certain relevant fragments of the interviews were coded. The selected fragment received a label accordingly and written down a certain meaning of the idea. In other words, the process of open coding was based on what conclusions were withdrawn from the interviewee's statements. Afterward, there was the axial coding process. Here, groupings were made between the resulted open codes. The different topics were categorized under one main theme that covered the associated ideas. These were given an 'umbrella' term which led to setting up axial codes. After the process of axial and open coding was fulfilled, new tree diagrams were made. If three tree diagrams resulted from the operationalization in section 2.4, then also other three tree diagrams resulted from doing open and axial coding. These tree diagrams can be found in Appendix D. These will serve as the basis for summarizing the labeled topics for developing the results and conclusions of the thesis. Within these sections, the most relevant topics will be discussed to answer the research questions formulated in section 1.7. The final step would be to ensure the validity and reliability of the data analyzed.

When analyzing and reviewing the previous research papers and publications done on the topics of 'organizational entry' and 'relational demography', the information retrieved was gathered together per each topic. Comparisons between the similarities and differences noted by distinct authors were elaborated on, and own critical input was done as well.

4. Results

The upcoming section of this chapter will have to do with the elaboration and findings of both research strategies used. Firstly, there will be an elaboration on the primary source used per each stakeholder. Secondly, there will be an elaboration on the secondary source used and a general conclusion from both sources. Lastly, an overall conclusion of the results section, which will include the answers to the research questions will be done, as well as a discussion on validity and reliability. A full transcript of all seven interviews, the coding process, and the audio recordings can be found in the email of both examiners. Each interview was given a number from R1 to R7 to guarantee a clear overview. After doing the transcripts, the process of open and axial coding, and the resulted tree diagrams, one entire tree diagram was developed per each stakeholder: one tree diagram for the employees of OC Prod and respectively two tree diagrams for the expats. These can be seen in Appendix E.

4.1 Discussion of primary source

The information gathered from conducting and analyzing the interviews was split into different subjects/codes per each stakeholder, the employees of OC Prod HR Consulting and the expats. The discussion of primary data used will begin with the first stakeholder, employees of OC Prod, followed by the second stakeholder, the expats. The summaries can be found in the email of both examiners.

Stakeholder 1 – Employees of OC Prod HR Consulting → Organizational Entry Process:

The following subject/codes: *organizational details*, *proactive activities*, *integration process*, *providing information*, *communication process*, *client relationship*, *departmental collaboration*, *internal conditions*, *providing feedback*, *providing training*, *hospitality*, *encountering difficulties* will be discussed within this section.

<u>Organizational details</u>

R2 pointed out more than once that the consultants prefer to check and be well informed about the company environment where the expats will work, but also about the type of job they will do. (R2.129-131: *'Well, in general, we do in the commercial discussions, before taking a specific role, we tend to be very well informed about the working conditions, the environment, what the workers should do, what to expect'*). Also, the consultants and the Administration employees are researching the specific place where the expats will work, to be able to tell the expats further what to expect once they arrive in France (R2.131-136). Moreover, the same respondent pointed out that depending on the company size, employees of OC Prod will either look up themselves information about the company where the expats will work, or they will rely on the information already provided by the client. This because OC Prod does not have the means to do all (R2.161-163). R2 mentioned the importance of correctly understanding the specific needs of the client and informing whether or not the client's expectations can be fulfilled accordingly (R2.79-85).

<u>Proactive activities</u>

Within the proactive activities carried out during the organizational entry process of the expats, R1 stated that the client is providing some visual material concerning the type of activity required for a certain type of role, but also about the type of activity of the client itself: *'Yeah, and also the client sends us some photos regarding the type of activity required for this role'*. (R1.130), *'Then, some clients are transmitting to us some photos or some videos, for example, with their activity, to explain*

to the candidates and to show them the activity and to see if they're compatible with this type of mission' (R1.222-224). Afterward, R4 mentioned that the employees of OC Prod are explaining the benefits of the contract and how things are going to be once they arrive in a foreign country. (R4.72-73: *'We explain to them exactly the salary, the benefits they have from this contract. Also, once they get there, how it is going to be like'*, R4.47-48: *'So, afterward we asked them if they really want to come, we get in contact with them to see, in fact, instruct them about the next steps'*). R4 added that they are getting the expats comfortable with the working place (R4.22-23). It became obvious that both R1 and R3 are aware that the expats are representing their responsibility (R1.279-281). On one hand, R1 stated that they committed to support and to be in a good relationship with the expats since they are part of OC Prod's team as well. On the other hand, R3 said that during the departure of the expats they are checking if expats are reachable on WhatsApp (R3.380-381).

Integration process

Regarding the integration process of the expats, both R1 and R2 said that they are in contact with the expats to make sure they understood correctly what they are about to do and the environment they will be in. R2 mentioned that she has more of an overall view of the integration process, so she needs to verify whether or not the expats understand what their activities and role will be (R2.60-68). R1 said that she checked with some older candidates whether or not they were open to the possibility of working with people of different nationalities and ages, *'I've had some candidates, some aged candidates, not so aged, but. I've validated with them if they are open to work with young people, French young people, or other nationalities, that are involved in that team'* (R1.157-159). Also, R2 said that the Administration employees are often keeping in touch with the expats to check if everything is fine, if they need any information, or if the communication process goes smoothly with the client, and to make sure whether or not the expats accommodated well (R2.117-119).

Providing information

All four respondents (R1-R4) stated during the interviews the activity of the client. R1 said that it is important to provide the expats with information regarding the activity of the client, while R2 said that it is all about how much information the client is willing to offer to the employees of OC Prod: 'It is important to give them some tips and tricks, some information regarding the activity of our clients' … '*I understand the question, but it also depends on the information that the client is giving to us and on how much he is willing to give'* (R1.194-195, R2.160-161. R4 said that there is a Website with all the necessary information about the client, but the expats will not look over it to inform themselves, so the employees of OC Prod need to inform them about all these necessary details (R4.91-94). Talking about the activity of the client, R1 and R2 also mentioned that within the job descriptions which the client is sending to them, these contain information about the team, mission of the project, requirements, and useful key points which will help them find suitable candidates (R1.220-222, R2.163-165). Also, to communicate further to the expats *'It is very useful for me, as a recruiter, to transmit then the information to the candidate, (quoting) the environment is this or that, the team is young or not'* (R1.231-232) *and 'we are explaining to him the working conditions'* (R3.78). To make the expats feel more comfortable with the thought of going to another country *'Give him all information that he needs so he can feel comfortable because he's leaving for a foreign country, where he has no idea about anything'* (R3.269-270). Furthermore, R3 pointed out that they received questions from the expats regarding who will they work with, either the same or different nationality (R3.78-79).

Communication process

The communication process involves three parties, employees of OC Prod, expats, and the client. Regarding the communication between the employees of OC Prod and the expats, R4 said that they maintain communication with them also after the moment they left abroad, if they have difficulties or if they need something either from them or from the client (R4.27-29). Then, R2 added that the expats inform the employees from OC Prod if they encountered situations when it is dangerous to work, they do not have the tools, or if there is something wrong with the accommodation (R2.192-193). When these happen, the ones from OC Prod are contacting the client to discuss the difficulties encountered by the expats to check what is there to be done (R2.193-197). Although, R1 stated that if they did not give some details and updates to the expats regarding the feedback transmitted from the client, then they assume that the OC Prod's employees are against them and will choose another recruitment company (R1.326-328). In comparison with R1, R3 said that in most cases the expats are not encountering any problems. Both R3 and R4 said that they have an internal group on WhatsApp where the expats and employees of OC Prod communicate with each other and informing about any problems (R3.232-234, R4.344-345). Regarding the communication between the expats and the client, R4 said that they are the ones that need to keep the communication between them. This because some of the client's employees are speaking French and the majority of the expats do not know how to speak French. Once the expats are being sent abroad, OC Prod is the communication point (R4.73-75, R4.104.105). R4 also expressed the fact that this situation represents a difficulty, because they need to look after the expats, but also to keep the client satisfied (R4. 384-386).

Client relationship

R1 and R2 expressed the importance of having a good relationship with the client, to check if they are satisfied with the type of candidates they have been sent to work for them, or if there have been any accommodation problems: *'Our purpose is to have a good relationship with the clients and be transparent and to avoid the situations with them, avoid also the problems with them after the moment of integration in the team'* … *'And also, with the clients. The girls discuss very often with the clients to check if their accommodation is good, if they have some problems, if they are aware of all these conditions with the accommodation and all the stuff'* (R1.176-178, R1.292-294). R2 said that they check with both the client and the expats if everything is going well (R2.119-121). R2 also said that OC Prod believes in trust and long-term partnerships with their client (R2.141-144).

Departmental collaboration

Regarding the departmental collaboration between the HR consultants and the Administration employees from OC Prod, R1 said that they are in a strong and efficient relationship with each other (R1.169-171). As mentioned by R1 and R2, the Administration department is the principal point of communication between the expats and the client, since the majority of them do not know French, so it represents a difficulty to express themselves: *'Yes, the admin staff is in charge of communicating with expats, as well they communicate on a daily basis if this is needed'* … *'They are expats in another country, most of them don't know French, it is a little bit difficult to express their, I don't know, their needs, their complaints, and we are the principal point with them, with their families if they have some, I don't know, family or personal problems'* (R2.235-236, R1.269-272). Also, issues came up late in the evenings and the Administration department was available to help the expats in need (R1. 267-269).

Internal conditions

R1 said that their role is to understand the needs of the expats and to find a good match between the expat's profile and the requirement sent from the client: *'It is very important to show them that we understand their needs and we are here to make a good match between their profile and our requirements from the client. I think these are important, the internal point, if I can say'* (R1.314-317). R2 and R3 talked about the accommodation of the expats. R2 said that the accommodation process of the expats is not going very easy, because they need to leave fast from a place to another. Although, until now she did not have a situation where the expats were not accommodated good (R2.389-391). On the other hand, R3 mentioned that the accommodation places are set by the client itself and most of the time the expats are encountering problems with it since these places are not the best. In the event of the accommodation places not being appropriate for the expats, then the Administration employees will arrange for them to stay at a hotel until the problem is fixed. (R3.207-209).

Providing feedback

Regarding the feedback given to the expats, R2 and R3 said that most of the times the feedback is sent by the client to the employees of OC Prod, which then transmit it further to the expats: *'Okay, so, in the majority of the cases, these expats will be working in teams, which are managed, in this case, by French managers … Those French managers report to the team manager with whom we are in contact every week for example.'* … *'but usually the feedback is transmitted to us'* (R2.177-180, R3.157). On one hand, R3 said that the feedback could also be given directly to the expats on WhatsApp. (R3.156-157). On the other hand, R4 said that there is a lack of communication between the OC Prod's employees and the client when it comes to giving feedback to the expats: *'Most of the times it should be, but is not exactly, so sometimes there is a lack of communication regarding the feedback. I do ask for feedback most of the times, but sometimes the customer doesn't come back'* (R4.157-159).

Providing training

When asked about providing training to the expats, R2 and R4 said that the client has the obligation to provide the expats with at least a training about the work safety, where certain dangers about the job are explained to them. If this is not happening, as R2 mentioned, then the expats should tell the employees from OC Prod. R4 said that she is not sure that this type of training is even presented to the expats in the first place (R2.185-192, R4.229-231). R2 stated that the type of training offered to the expats is more of an accommodation training, where expats should get used to the environment and type of activity of the company (R2.253-256). R1 stated that the expats had shown their interest in having a period of training, *'because it is useful for them to understand, to learn new things, new, I don't know, new tools used by the clients, different probably from this'* (R1.249-251). R2 said that one of their Belgian clients offers French language training to the expats working there, to improve the communication process and to make the expats feel more confident and comfortable (R2.256-260).

Hospitality

When being asked about what hospitality means to her when an expats is entering a new company, R2 said that it is important to know the other team members, the role, tasks, what the rules are, but also getting to know the managers, so the company functions properly (R2.367-369, R2.369-372). She added that knowing the company culture and what is expected from a new employee should be communicated from the beginning (R2.372-374). Moreover, both R2 and R3 said that they are trying to

make the integration process for the expats a pleasant one, to not make them feel like strangers; by being friendly, kind, offering them support, and telling them what to expect. (R2.385-389, R3.268-269). R3 said that there was a situation when one of the expats had to go to his home country to solve a problem, and the client took care of both his departure and accommodation (R3.269-299).

Encountering difficulties

R4 stated that the expats are encountering difficulties during the weekends as well, but the employees of OC Prod do not work during these days, so it is hard for them to find a balance (R4.345-349). She also said that the client does not put an accent on being hospitable with the expats, nor is it in their nature to be welcoming towards other nationalities. Additionally, she said that they do not make sure if the expats are well or if they need anything (R4.319-323, R4.331-332, R4.336-338). Moreover, she added that expats are having difficulties communicating with the people from there because of the language barrier. So, it is up to the employees from OC Prod to keep things moving (R4.105-106).

Stakeholder 2 - Expats → Organizational Entry Process:

The following subject/codes: *encountering difficulties*, *providing information*, *administration*, *communication process*, *working conditions*, *necessary working means*, *team set-up*, *training*, *receiving feedback*, *hospitality* will be discussed within this section.

Encountering difficulties

When asked about the integration process, R5 and R7 mentioned that they had difficulties when communicating because of the language barrier. On one hand, R5 said that the expats need to comprehend that they need to work with people of different nationalities than them. The only means of communication would be through English or learning French. He was in situations when he worked with French employees and they could not communicate with each other due to the language barrier (R5.58-62). On the other hand, R7 also mentioned that he had difficulties with the language barrier already from his first day at work (R7.32). Moreover, R7 said that he had some miscommunication due to the French language when he was asked to do something (R7.52-53). R6 said that the employees cannot go out somewhere far away from their accommodation because these are located outside the city and they cannot afford to go elsewhere (R6.128-131). Also, he mentioned that only the people from the same team as him are accommodated in the same place, whereas the other workers are accommodated in other places, so they do not know each other (R6.137-138). R7 said that he had difficulties with the team coordinator which had French nationality. He said that this person worked against him and he brought the situation up to both OC Prod and the French client, and with a lot of work, he was able to have another team coordinator (R7.377-382).

Providing information

When asked about the information that had been provided to the expats before leaving to work in France, R5 said that the expats were participating in the 'working protection' program (R5.46). R6 said that the expats were informed about the accommodation places where they will stay at and that these will differ depending on the address of the job sites where they will have to be at (R6.73-74, 252-253). R6 added that the expats are informed by the company about certain dangerous situations, such as: in the event of the roof being wet, then nobody can go and work on it, or in the event of raining outside,

then certainly nobody will work. He said that being a team coordinator comes with being aware of the dangerous situations as well (R6.174-178).

Administration

Discussing the administrative details, R5 said that the disputes with the consultants were clear and consisted in offering details about the salaries, accommodation prices, and any information needed. R6 also said that all the things were offered to them: transportation, accommodation and anything else needed: *'The discussions with them were very clear, to the point. There were no concerns because the only things we are discussing with the ones from OC Prod are the salaries, the accommodation prices, basically they are sending us all the information that we need'* … '*Yes, everything was offered to us, talking about transportation, accommodation, everything that we needed'* (R5.156-158, R6.152-153).

Communication process

About the communication process between the expats and the ones from OC Prod, R6 stated that whenever there is a problem to be solved or there is something that needs to be communicated from each side, they call each other (R6.188-189). Also, the same respondent said that they are in contact with the employees from OC Prod once a week to discuss the events of the upcoming week; where they will work and where will they be accommodated (R6.189-191).

Working conditions

R6 expressed his opinion about the working conditions offered to the expats with regards to working in a foreign country, saying that: *'The conditions are good; I have nothing to say against it'* (R6.157).

Necessary working means

Talking about the necessary working means, R5 and R7 stated that on one hand, they received tools, a car, and a tanking card from the company in France, and on the other hand, they had the equipment assured from OC Prod: *'Yes, directly from France. They gave us tools, a car, a card used for tanking the car. So, yes, we got all the necessary then and now also'* … '*what can I say, from the ones from OC Prod we had the equipment assured'* (R7.310-311, R5.230).

Team set-up

R7 stated the employees from OC Prod communicated to them that the teams will consist of two, three, or four persons of both French and Romanian nationality (R7.107-109). Either there will be only Romanian workers in the team or teams of Romanian workers with a French team coordinator. After this, an email was sent to a representative of the client in France (R7.118-120). On the other hand, when asked about the team set-up, R5 said that he chose and composed his team by his friends, all of them work and live together (R5.96-98).

Training

R5 specified that the expats received safety training from both OC Prod and the company from France. During the 'working protection' program they were told about protection on heights and all the safety measures as well*: '…I received, that time when I told you, the 'working protection', 90% from the speech was about protection, which is obvious, and when we arrived here, basically from the working site manager we received the same'* (R5.265-268, 273-275).

Receiving feedback

When discussing the subject of receiving feedback, R7 mentioned that he had done a project from scratch and he felt the need to receive feedback on the job done, no matter if the feedback was good or bad: *'Yes, I felt the need to receive an opinion from someone, because not long ago I did a project, from 0. I felt the need for someone to tell me that I did a good job, or if something was not done good. It didn't matter if the opinion was good or bad'* (R7.217-219).

Hospitality

When the subject of hospitality was discussed, R6 said that all the things seemed surprising and that he had a very welcoming team coordinator who explained to them what there is to be done (R6.36-39). R6 also mentioned that there are French employees at the company where he was working and that there are both kind mean persons. The important thing is how they can integrate themselves between other nationalities because if they are not talkative the other might look strangely at them (R6.59-62). Moreover, in the past R6 had a personal problem that required him to come back to Romania and everyone was understanding with him and they let him go without making a problem out of this (R6.214-216). On the same subject, R5 said that when they arrived in France there were no surprises encountered. The ones from OC Prod assured their accommodation for the night of their arrival, and the coming day they got to go to the office in France, from where they were given the address of both working sites and the accommodation places where they needed to be (R5.246-250).

Stakeholder 2 - Expats → Relational Demography:

The following subject/codes: *personal characteristics*, *socialization*, *employee commitment* will be discussed in this section.

Personal characteristics

When discussing the personal characteristics as part of relational demography, the aspect of nationality was brought up during the interviews with R6 and R7. On one hand, R6 said that on the job sites, there are also electricians whose nationality differs, one being Polish. On the other hand, R7 said that he had been working with different nationalities as well, such as Portuguese, Czechs, and French people '*Of course. It is not only us, there are also the electricians and their nationalities differ. For example, at the moment, the ones that are doing the electrical part on the same site are Polish'* … *'Yes, I had. I had a Portuguese, that seemed fine to me from all points of view, Romanians, I worked with someone from the Czech Republic, who was a very nice person, and the French people'* (R6.102-103, R7.24-48). Although, R7 mentioned that they have been told only about working with French workers (R7.137).

Socialization

Coming across the subject of socializing with other nationalities, R5 and R7 stated that they are interacting with people who are French, English, Portuguese, Ukrainian, and Italian. R7 said that he interacted very well with the Italian workers, because he knows very well the language, while with the other nationalities he was communicating in French (R5.187-189, R7.259-262). R5, R6, and R7 expressed their perception of feeling comfortable in the presence of other colleagues. R5 said that it is pointless to go out with people with whom they do not feel pleasant around. R7 added that he felt good around some people who were friendly and communicative towards him, while R6 told that he had been working with other people before and that it is not difficult for him to adapt to working with

different cultures: *'Of course, that if you are not feeling well in the presence of somebody, there is no point in going out'* … *'there were some persons very friendly and communicative when I felt very comfortable around them'* … *'Yes, I have no problems with it … I have worked with people before and it is not hard for me to adapt with things like these'* (R5.193-194, R7.295-295, R6.143-148).

Employee commitment

During the interview with R5, he affirmed that the procedures and services towards them will entirely be followed since both OC Prod and the ones from the company in France do not want to push away the workers there. He also added that is pleased with what he earns and with the work done, but there is space for improvements as well. Although, R7 mentioned that nothing was offered to him, especially language lessons. He was working alongside French employees as well and they were only talking in French with him, so he was not able to understand them. Little by little he learned the language by himself while hearing some similar things every day (R5.86-87, R5.290-294, R7.73-77).

4.2 Discussion of secondary source

Following, the discussion of the secondary source used will be presented. This will contain the analysis of relevant insights from previous research papers done on the topics of 'organizational entry' and 'relational demography'. The summaries can be found in the email of both examiners.

In a research paper done by Ashford and Black from 1996, they mentioned that the tolerance for the ambiguity of an employee entering a new environment could cause them to be more proactive during the process of organizational entry. This, to minimize the uncertainty and ambiguity associated with the new work setting. What is meant here is that, if a newcomer is perceiving their new working environment as an attractive one, then this reaction could result in being more proactive in the course of organizational entry and reduce both uncertainty and ambiguity. Also, the authors found out that a person's efforts of general socializing and developing relationships and at the working place contributed to job satisfaction.

On the same topics of discussion, Tsui, Egan, et al. (2011) mentioned in their publication the ignorance of other researchers upon the reaction of the majority group of people to the presence of minorities within working groups. They pointed out that 'just a few O's can make the X-majority people uncomfortable'. By this, it is meant that when there is a larger group of individuals who are sharing the same attributes, these might feel awkward if entering their group there are some individuals who do not share the same attributes as they do. In the same publication, another matter brought up was the importance of interaction among the individuals who are demographically dissimilar than the others who are similar. Within the heterogeneous groups there exists both benefits and costs. As benefits these are 'beneficial for tasks requiring creativity and judgment' and as for costs 'they can also decrease cohesiveness and increase turnover'. Moreover, they pointed out that the managers of a company where the heterogenous groups exist, he/she confronts with 'a difficult balancing act, paying attention to the negative effects of diversity on individual attachment and turnover, while simultaneously attempting to capture the benefits of heterogeneity'. What is meant here is that, as a manager within a company where there are heterogeneous groups of individuals, he/she must keep in mind both the negative aspects of diversity and the benefits that come with heterogeneity. Furthermore, in another version of the same article by Tsui, Egan, et al. (n.d.), it was stated that if there

is a major difference in an individual's age, gender, and race compared to the other members of the group, then the individual has a lower attachment to the organization he/she is part of.

In a research from 1989, the authors O'Reilly, Caldwell, and Barnett gave their opinion on the topic of relational demography. They stated that high demographic similarity is linked with greater social integration. This means that the individuals from an organization who associate with other individuals from their group might be less determined to leave the organization. They mentioned that when a member of the organization is not integrated among the other members, then socialization may appear as more difficult, lower satisfaction will arise, and increased turnover will be a more likely result. Additionally, they stated that the individuals who have similar attributes to each other are more inclined to communicate with each other, than with the individuals who do not share the same attributes. As a result, this action '*may lead to a higher probability of continued group membership than when similarity and involvement are lower'*.

The authors Harrison, Price, and Bell (1998) come closest to the affirmations of O'Reilly, Caldwell, et al. (1989), in one of their publications. They argued that demographic diversity is decreasing both workgroup and organizational devotion. As a consequence, the risk of members exiting the company and turnover is increased. Moreover, the authors pointed out that heterogeneity within a group of people is seen as delivering negative outcomes. What is meant here is that, if in an organization there are groups of individuals who have similar, but also dissimilar attributes to the others, then negative outcomes will arise as well.

An interesting statement was given by the author Goldberg (2001) in one of his research publications, saying that the recruiters are seen by the applicants as the illustration of the wider organization. Meaning that these represent the organization for which they are trying to employ other people. The author noted that the factor of race similarity between the recruiter herself/himself and the candidate had influenced the perception of candidates towards both the recruiter and the job itself, even more than the factors of age or sex similarity. This means that if the recruiter is sharing the same racial attributes as the applicant, then his/her decision is altered against the recruiter and the job he/she is being interviewed for.

4.3 Overall insights

Within this part, an overall insight from both sources used above will be given. There will be a discussion on both similarities and dissimilarities found to capture different dimensions of the topics of discussion, organizational entry and relational demography.

Integration process

As mentioned above, Ashford and Black (1996) said in one of their research papers that to diminish both uncertainty and ambiguity, which are associated with the work setting of an employee, he/she should be more tolerant towards the ambiguity of entering into a new environment. Doing so could cause them to be more proactive during the process of organizational entry. Expat R6 stated that once he came to the company in France, all the things seemed surprising and he had a welcoming team-coordinator who explained to them what there was to be done. Moreover, he added that amongst his colleagues there were also French workers. As he stated, these could be both good and mean people;

the important thing is how the expats could integrate themselves between other nationalities. If they were not talkative, then the other workers might look in a strange way to them. What was outlined here is that if a newcomer is perceiving his/her new working environment as an attractive one, then this reaction could result in being more proactive during the organizational entry.

Socialization

In the same research paper, it was pointed out that, a person's efforts of developing relationships and general socializing at the working place could contribute to their job satisfaction. When coming across the subject of socialization, expats R5 and R7 stated that they are interacting with people who have French, English, Portuguese, Ukrainian, and Italian nationality. One of the expats knew very well the Italian language, so it was easy for him to communicate with the other Italian employees, while with the other workers he was communicating in French. Furthermore, all the expats that were interviewed (R5, R6, R7), expressed the importance of feeling comfortable in the presence of other colleagues. One saying that it is pointless to go out and spend time with people with whom they do not feel comfortable around. Another one pointed out that he enjoys being around some colleagues who were friendly and communicative with him, whilst the other expat said that he had been working with people of different nationalities and that it was not difficult for him to adapt to working with them.

Personal characteristics

Coming across the publication of Tsui, Egan, et al. (2011), they made an interesting remark: 'just a few O's can make the X-majority people uncomfortable'. Meaning, when there is a larger group of people who are sharing similar attributes, these might feel uncomfortable when entering their group, there are some people who do not share the same attributes. For example, expats R5 and R7 said that they had struggles communicating with the other colleagues of different nationalities due to the language barrier. One expat encountered difficulties when working with a French employee because they could not communicate with each other about certain aspects. These difficulties already appeared from the first day of work, since there were only French employees working with this expat. As a consequence, miscommunication arose as well. Additionally, R7 affirmed that he was frustrated by his French team coordinator. As he said during the interview, the team coordinator was working against him and with a lot of effort, he was able to have this person replaced. Another statement made by the same authors was the importance of interaction among the individuals who are demographically dissimilar than the others who are similar. Although above was stated that the expats are interacting with different nationalities (French, English, Portuguese, Ukrainian, and Italian), expat R6 said that the employees cannot go out too far from their accommodation places, because these are located outside the city and they cannot afford to go elsewhere. He added that only the colleagues from the same team are sharing the same accommodation place, while the other employees are accommodated in other places.

Providing information

In another version of the same article by Tsui, Egan, et al. (n.d.), they stated that if there is a considerable difference in a person's age, gender, and race compared to the other members of the group, then the person has a lower attachment to the organization that he/she is part of. A consultant (R1) stated that she checked with some older candidates whether or not they were open to the possibility of working with people who have different nationalities and ages than them. Also, another

employee from OC Prod (R3) mentioned that they have had questions from the expats regarding whom they will work with, either persons of a same or different nationality.

Team set-up

When going over the article of O'Reilly, Caldwell et al. (1989), they suggested that high demographic similarity is linked with greater social integration. Also, individuals who have similar attributes to each other are more inclined to communicate between them, than with the individuals who do not share the same attributes as they do. For example, expat R7 said that the teams will consist of two, three, or four persons of both French and Romanian nationality. There will be either only Romanians in the same team or teams of Romanians with a French team coordinator. Another expat (R5) said that he chose and composed his team only by his friends and all of them live and work together. O'Reilly, Caldwell, et al. (1989) also stated that when a member of the organization is not integrated among the other members, then socialization may appear as more difficult, lower satisfaction will arise, and increased turnover will be a more likely result. As expat R7 mentioned during the interview, nothing was offered to him, especially French language lessons, since he was working alongside with French employees who were only talking in French with him. He was not able to communicate with them at all so, little by little he learned the language by himself. Also, Price and Bell (1998) stated something similar to the ones of O'Reilly, Caldwell, et al. (1989). In their publication, they pointed out that demographic diversity is declining both the workgroup and organizational attachment. As a result, the risk of members exiting the company and turnover is increased. They also mentioned that heterogeneity within a group of individuals is seen as delivering negative outcomes.

Proactive activities

Goldberg (2011) mentioned an interesting statement in one of his publications, saying that recruiters are seen by the applicant as the illustration of the wider organization. Two employees from OC Prod (R3, R1) stated that they are aware that the expats represent their responsibility since they are also part of the OC Prod's team. Additionally, R1 said that their role is to understand the needs of the expats and to find a good match between the expat's profile and the requirements sent from the client. During the interview with R5, he said that the procedures and services towards the expats will be entirely followed since both the client and OC Prod do not want to push away the workers. R2 said that both the Administration department and the consultants are researching the company's environment where the expats will work, to be able to tell them further what to expect once they arrive in France. Consultant R1 said that the client is offering some visual material concerning the type of activity required for a certain type of role and the type of activity of the client itself.

4.4 Conclusion

This paragraph consists of a conclusion where the research- and sub-questions will be answered. First of all, the formulated research question *'How do expats experience the cultural differences?'* will be answered through its correspondingly sub-questions.

How do expats experience the international environment?

While conducting interviews, it came out that the consultants want to transmit the exact information that comes from the client to the expats as well. This information consists of giving details about the environment where the expats will work, the team which they are going to be part of, and the working

conditions. All of these are done to make the expats feel more comfortable about the idea of going to work in a foreign country, an unfamiliar place for them. One expat said that once he arrived in France, he was welcomed very well by a representative from the company in there. Even though it has been said that there are friendly people, there are also unkind people. The important thing is that the expats know how to socialize and integrate themselves among individuals with a different nationality than them. The expats said that there are not only Romanians working on the job sites, but they also work with Portuguese, Czechs, Polish, and French people with whom they get along well. Although, the expats have been told by the ones from OC Prod that they will only work with French employees. Moreover, the expats stated that not only they work with all these different nationalities, but they also interact with them on the job sites and outside the working hours. Also, it had been brought up that they feel comfortable around their presence and that they are friendly and communicative towards each other. Despite all these positive points revealed during the interviews, there were a couple of expats who encountered difficulties with the language barrier. The moment the expats arrived there, it needed to come to their realization that they are about to work with people who have a different nationality than them and the only means of communication is through English or learning French. On one hand, it was revealed that most of the workers there either do not know English or French or even both. On the other hand, due to the language barrier frustration and miscommunication arose as well.

How do expats experience the preparation regarding differences within cultures?
As discussed during the interviews with the consultants, they mentioned that they are clarifying with the expats how the situation will look like once they arrive in a foreign country. Then, the consultants make sure that the expats are convinced of their decision to leave and work in France. When further elaborating on the subject of the type of activities carried out during the organizational entry of an expat, it became clear that the employees from OC Prod are getting the expats familiar with their future working place. Also, it has been validated with the expats if they are prone to working in the same team with people who have different nationality or age, and if these understood what their activity and role will be. Also, one of the employees from OC Prod stated that they offer more of an accommodation training to the expats; meaning getting used to the environment and type of activity of the company in France. It was mentioned that a Belgian client of OC Prod is putting at the disposal of the expats a French language training, to make the communication process better between the employees, but also to make them have a sense of comfort and confidence. Moreover, it has been communicated to the expats that there will be teams of two, three, or four individuals of Romanian and French nationality working together. Even though the expats were working with French, they have not been offered any French language lessons. So, they were not able to communicate properly with each other. There was a situation where one of the expats had to communicate with his French colleagues, but they could not because of the language barrier, so he started learning French all by himself.

Coming back to the main research question: '*'How do expats experience the cultural differences?'* it can be said that, the expats have been informed by the employees of OC Prod that they will be only working with French employees, but on the job sites there were also Portuguese, Czechs and Polish workers. Even though the expats feel comfortable around other individuals of different nationalities, they also met unkind people. Also, the expats were confronted with the language barrier once they arrived in France. From the beginning, it had to come to their realization that they will be working with people of different nationalities and they could only communicate through English or learning French.

As a consequence of the language barrier, frustration and miscommunication arose as well in the case of an expat. He had to communicate with his French colleagues, but they could not do so because of the language, so he started learning French all by himself.

The next part deals with the second research question: '*How do expats experience the integration process?'*, which will be answered for the main sub-questions.

How do expats experience the working conditions offered?
As retrieved from analyzing the interviews, it was pointed out that the employees from OC Prod choose to verify and to be well informed about the client's company environment, the kind of work performed, and about the working conditions of the expats. Another aspect that is part of the working conditions offered, is the accommodation provided to the expats. This is arranged by the client in France and as revealed from one interview with an employee from OC Prod, the accommodation places are not the best and often the expats encounter problems with these. As a result, the expats are booked a hotel to stay at until the Administration employees are solving the issue. Also, the workers must leave and work from a place to another, so the accommodation places also change, resulting in a not so very smooth process for them. It has been said that the workers are not able to go out anywhere else, other than within the surroundings of their accommodation places, because these are located outside the city and this does not allow them to go somewhere else. The subject of providing training was also discussed during the interviews. It has been brought up that the client should provide the expats with at least a work safety training, where particular dangers regarding the job performed should be told to the employees. In the event of this not happening, the expats must inform the Administration department from OC Prod. Despite this, one Administration employee stated that this type of training might not even be given to the expats in the first place. Even though, the workers had previously made clear their interest in having a certain period of training, to understand and to learn new things and tools. Also, it was said that it is not like the French individuals to be hospitable towards their employees. These do not make sure whether or not the expats are in need or want anything. The only persons who make sure about the well-being of the expats are the employees from OC Prod. The expats revealed as well that they participated in the 'working protection' program, both before leaving for France and when they arrived there. They were told about particular dangerous situations that might be encountered when fulfilling a certain job there and about protection on heights since most of the time they need to work on heights. Moreover, the expats said that they have been provided with everything they needed from transportation, working tools, equipment, tanking card, accommodation, to anything else they requested. Other expats strengthen these affirmations saying that all the procedures and services towards the workers will fully be followed. This, because OC Prod and the client want the workers to be happy with their services and not to feel pushed away by them. Despite this, he told that even though he is pleased with the work done and the salary offered to him, there is still a place for improvement.

How do expats experience the communication with OC Prod's consultants?
The communication process involves three parties: the employees from OC Prod HR Consulting, the client, and the expats. After the expats are being sent abroad, it is up to the Administration employees to keep the communication between the expats and the client, because most of the expats do not know how to speak French and most of the client's employees only communicate in French. If in the event of workers encountering issues or they need certain things from the client or them, then the

Administration department is the communication point between these two parties. During the interviews, this aspect came up as an impediment for the Administration employees because they need to look out for the expats, but also maintain a good relationship with the client. Also, the expats are facing difficulties during weekends and it is hard for the employees of OC Prod to find a balance between helping the expats who are facing an unfamiliar environment and their free time. Also, the expats stated that they had misunderstanding issues with the people from France due to the language barrier. So, it is up to the Administration employees to solve these communication impediments. Furthermore, the employees from OC Prod and the expats have an internal WhatsApp group where they keep each other updated about any problem encountered. The expats said that if they encounter a difficult situation that needs to be solved or there is something that must be communicated from either side, then they simply call each other and discuss the matter at hand.

The second main research question was: '*How do expats experience the integration process?'*. From the answers given above to the sub-questions, it can be said that the workers must leave and work from a place to another, so their accommodation places also change a lot. This will result in a process that is not very smooth for the expats. Additionally, the expats are not being able to go out anywhere else, other than within the vicinity of their accommodation places because these are located outside the city. Furthermore, it had been said that the expats are interested in having a period of training to understand and learn new things and tools. The only training provided by both OC Prod and the company from France is work safety training. Moreover, from the moment the expats are sent to France, the Administration employees from OC Prod are the ones keeping the communication between the workers and the client since the majority of the expats do not know French and most of the client's employees communicate only in French. It has been brought up that, previously the expats have had misunderstanding issues with the people from France, because of the language barrier and it was up to the Administration employees to solve these communication issues. Within their answers, the expats said that all the procedures and services towards them will entirely be followed because neither OC Prod nor the company from France wants to push away the workers. Besides this, they want the expats to be happy with the services offered to them. Regardless of this, one expat mentioned that even if he is pleased with the job done and the salary offered, there is still a place for improvement.

The following part will have to do with the third and last research question formulated *'What is the relationship between cultural differences and the integration process?',* which again will be answered for the main sub-questions.

What are important factors in differences between cultures?

When talking about the differences between cultures, an important factor is knowing the language of the country where an individual is working in. As mentioned above, the expats stated that they had difficulties communicating with each other due to the language barrier. They said that they were not offered any French language lessons so, they had difficulties from their first day being in France. As a result, miscommunication and frustration appeared as well. Since the expats had to continue working with the other workers, one of the expats said that he learned French on his own. Tsui, Egan, et al. (2011) stated in their publications that among heterogeneous groups there are both benefits and costs. The advantage of this would be creativity and judgment within the required tasks, while the downside of this would be the decreasing of cohesiveness and increasing turnover. Furthermore,

Harrison, et al. (1998) mentioned a similar thing in their publication: demographic diversity is lowering both the organizational devotion and the workgroup of the employees. As a consequence, the risk of members leaving the company and turnover is increased. Additionally, the authors indicated that heterogeneity within a group of individuals is seen as delivering negative outcomes.

What are important factors of the integration process?

Referring to the integration process of the expats, the consultants from OC Prod mentioned that they are trying to make the integration process for the expats a pleasant one, trying not to make them feel like strangers. This by being friendly, kind, offering them support, telling them what to expect and making sure that these understood correctly what they are about to do and the environment they will be part of. A curious statement was given by Goldberg (2001). He said that the recruiters are seen by the applicants as the representatives of the organization for which they are trying to employ other people. One employee from OC Prod stated her opinion about the entry of the expats in a new environment, saying that it is important to know the other team members, the role, tasks, what the rules are, and getting to know the managers. She also said that knowing the company culture and what is expected from a new employee should be communicated from the beginning. Ashford and Black (1996) outlined in their publication that if a newcomer is perceiving his/her new working environment as an attractive one, then this reaction could contribute to being more proactive in the course of organizational entry and minimize both uncertainty and ambiguity. Also, the authors found out that a person's efforts to developing relationships and general socializing at the working place contributed to job satisfaction. Similar to this statement, all the expats mentioned the awareness of feeling comfortable in the presence of other colleagues. One expat said that it is pointless to go out with people with whom they do not feel pleasant around. O'Reilly, Caldwell, et al. (1989) said that when a member of the organization is not integrated among the other members, then socialization may appear as more difficult, lower satisfaction will arise, and increased turnover will be a likely result.

The last main research question was: *'What is the relationship between cultural differences and the integration process?'.* It can be said that an important aspect is knowing the language of the country where an expat is working in. Harrison, Price et al. (1998) said that demographic diversity is lowering both the organizational devotion and the workgroup of the employees. As a result, the risk of members leaving the company and turnover is increased. So, it is important to know the other team members, the role, tasks and what the rules are, getting to know the managers, knowing the company culture, and what is expected from a new employee should be communicated from the beginning, to have proper functioning of the company. Additionally, O'Reilly, Caldwell, et al. (1989) said that when an individual of the organization is not integrated among the other individuals, socialization may occur as more difficult, lower satisfaction will arise, and increased turnover will be a more likely result.

4.5 Validity and reliability

Firstly, there is the 'construct validity' which refers to whether or not the operationalization covers the underlying concepts, namely the 'organizational entry process' and the 'relational demography'. This can be assessed as 'high' or 'low'. Here, the construct validity can be considered rather high because the primary research strategy used, qualitative research was based on the operationalization which was initially established. The operationalization was the outcome of the two core concepts which were revealed earlier in chapter 2 'Theoretical framework'. Within chapter 2, it has been made use of

relevant and specific literature which increased the construct validity and it covered the underlying concepts mentioned above. Also, the interview guides were designed by extensively motivating with references from the literature. Since the coding process is part of the operationalization, this represents a strong argument regarding the construct validity of the qualitative research done.

Secondly, there is the 'internal validity' which refers to whether or not the conclusions drawn are true. When referring to the interviews conducted, these were held face-to-face, and the coding process is an indicator of high internal validity; since it was done after translating and transcribing all the interviews. Keeping in mind the research and management problem, specific questions were asked to gather all the statements of each respondent, which were later needed to build the conclusions and answer the research questions. During each interview, audio recordings have been made and kept, which indicates that proof is given. Because of this, the results could be re-examined again if needed. When referring to the quantitative research, namely doing desk research, the internal validity can be considered high because the information retrieved from the research was based on outcomes of previous research papers and publications. As part of the internal validity of the research done, triangulation was done as well. At first, there was a discussion of the primary source used, after there was a discussion of the secondary source used, and then the overall insights from both sources had been gathered and compared. When elaborating on the conclusion, information from both sources was used to answer the research questions. Moreover, another aspect of the internal validity was the member validation of the conclusions made. These were checked and verified with the first examiner. A downside of the internal validity would be the peer debriefing. Meaning, the conclusions were not checked by other researchers.

Thirdly, there is the 'external validity' which refers to the extent to which it is plausible that the conclusions of the research study could be generalized to situations other than the case of OC Prod. The findings could be generalized and applied to small-medium HR consultancy companies that have within their composition foreign clients or the companies are dealing with the same issues, integration process and cultural differences. The results might differ, since the company structure, the way it operates, its stakeholders, and the goals differ from company to company. Therefore, external validity could be considered rather limited. Although, the cultural differences play a major role in most companies, so this could be considered a plus for external validity.

Lastly, there is the 'reliability' of the research done which means that there are no random mistakes and if the research would be repeated, it would lead to similar outcomes. If the approach to qualitative research would be done the same, meaning the same respondents within the same circumstances would be chosen and interviewed again, then the same outcomes would result. The stakeholder employees of OC Prod are considered experts in the field, so their statements would be the same. As for the other stakeholder 'expats', if the circumstances and situations would be the same then they would give the same statements and have the same opinions about the topics discussed. Moreover, all the audio recordings and the transcripts are being saved and stored, thing which indicates higher quality. A downside of the reliability would be that some interviews, especially the ones with the expats, were held through the phone. This indicates that some of the information might have been misunderstood, emotions, and body language could not be observed or interpreted. Another downside of the reliability would be that if desk research would be done again, the research papers and publications elaborated on above, could be outdated or the information might be changed or updated.

5. Advice

The following chapter will deal with the final part of this report, namely the advisory part. Firstly, the objective of the advice and the management question, formulated in the beginning, will be repeated. Secondly, an evaluation of alternative solutions to the management problem will be done, which will then result in choosing the best alternative solution. Thirdly, a suggestion on how to implement the advice, in the form of an implementation plan will be done, and an illustration of the PDCA cycle will be shown. Following, there will be an elaboration of the costs and benefits. Lastly, there will be a conclusion in which the main pieces of advice will be listed once more.

5.1 Introduction

The objective of the advice formulated in the beginning was: *'To develop an additional chapter to the existing HR policy of the company in order to improve the integration process of the expats.'* The management problem developed was: *'How can OC Prod HR Consulting Company increase expats' retention and quality of client-relation by improving the integration process of the expats in the client's company?'.*

5.2 Alternative solutions

Within the first chapter of the thesis, it has been mentioned that the type of report delivered at the end will be an HR advisory report in the form of an additional chapter to the existing HR policy of OC Prod. This additional chapter will refer to the integration process, or how it was named in the theoretical framework, 'organizational entry process'. As a result, it will aim at improving the quality of client-relation and the expats' retention. Additionally, it will be intended for the consultants of OC Prod, which will then benefit the expats as well. Three options might be suitable:

→ an additional chapter consisting of a Feedback & Counseling procedure;
→ an additional chapter consisting of a Newcomer Procedure Manual
→ an additional chapter consisting of a New Employee Onboarding Workshop.

<u>Feedback & Counseling procedure</u>

The first option focuses on a feedback and counseling procedure between the consultants of OC Prod and the expats. As it could have been seen in the chapter of Theoretical Framework, Lee, Ashford, et al. (1992) declared that, during the period of organizational entry, individuals are believed to form or fail to form, a basic attachment to the organization. Meaning, the moment of organizational entry represents a critical moment for a newcomer because they can either feel attached or fail to form a basic attachment to their new organization. Moreover, Ashford and Black (1996) described the organizational entry experience for the majority of the newcomers as 'one fraught with frustration, anxiety, and stress'. In this period of uncertainty, it is important for the expat to feel appreciated, recognized and shown interest. Within the Results chapter, one of the consultants said that the Administration employees are in contact with the expats to check on them, see if they need anything, if there is something wrong, or if they accommodated well. An option to make the process of organizational entry easier for the expats could be the development of a feedback and counseling procedure. Within this procedure, the consultants of OC Prod and the expats would have an online or telephonic conversation. One conversation will take place in the first month of the expats being abroad, where they would discuss certain aspects that have happened during their first month abroad

and how they accommodated themselves. Following, every three months there will be a periodic meeting, each of 20 minutes, where there will be five main points of discussion: their activity, issues encountered, their performance, needs and wants, and lastly, any attention points that need to be looked at. On top of these, the expats will also address their additional questions to the consultant.

Newcomer Procedure Manual

The second option is focusing on the method of developing a manual for the newcomers, as part of the existing HR Policy of OC Prod. This will be a hard copy handed-out to the expats at the moment when they sign the contract. The newcomer procedure manual will contain detailed answers to the most frequent questions asked by the previous expats, contact details of the consultants from OC Prod, mission, vision, details about the company, and details about their work. The contained information from the newcomer manual applies equally to all employees. As mentioned in the Theoretical Framework chapter, Lundberg and Young (2016) indicated that newcomers are searching for clues and/or information regarding what their future organization is about, and how they should perform in terms of roles, values, norms, and beliefs. Additionally, in the same chapter, the consultants of OC Prod said that it is important to offer the expats information regarding the activity of the client, details about the job performed, information about the team, mission of the project and certain requirements. Moreover, through outlining the most important details in the newcomer procedure manual, the future expats will feel more cared about and welcomed within the organization they will be part of. On top of this, the value of developing a newcomer procedure manual is that future employees can understand what is expected of them and what they can expect back from the company. Also, the employees from OC Prod gain more flexibility in updating the newcomer procedure manual since this is an additional chapter to the HR policy of OC Prod. Having an adequate newcomer procedure manual means that, the employer should allocate time to determine what is important to their organization. One important aspect is to keep the employees happy and the other important aspect is to accomplish the objectives of the organization. As it was mentioned on OC Prod's website, the company values concentrate around three words: Listening, Ethics, and Efficiency (OC Prod HR Consulting, 2019).

Furthermore, within the same chapter, it has been mentioned that the communication process between the client and the expats is maintained by the employees of OC Prod because some of the client's employees are speaking French and the majority of the expats do not know how to speak French. So, once the expats are being sent abroad, OC Prod is the communication point between these two parties, which comes as a difficulty for the expats, because these cannot express themselves. Within the answers of the expats, it has become clear that the French language represents an issue since most of the expats do not know, nor have they been offered any French language training. Another expat pointed out that, what matters the most is knowing how to integrate themselves among other nationalities, because if they are not communicative with each other, then the other individuals might look strangely at them. As a result of these statements, it would be wise to add a language program to the newcomer procedure manual, which could contain the details needed to follow French language training. Within this manner, it would be up to every expat whether or not they want to follow a French language course. Also, by following a language course the expats might feel more comfortable around the other workers and the communication process would be improved.

New Employee Onboarding Workshop

The third option is suggesting the development of a workshop entitled to the onboarding of the new employees, before the leaving of the expats abroad. It was mentioned by Ashford and Black (1996) in the Theoretical Framework that, the period of organizational entry is a period of uncertainty, where the individuals are faced with an unfamiliar environment. Moreover, while doing desk research an interesting statement by Goldberg (2001) was found. He said that the recruiters are seen by the applicants as the illustration of the wider organization. Meaning that these represent the organization for which they are trying to employ other people. Additionally, he said that the factor of race similarity between the recruiter herself/himself and the candidate had influenced the perception of candidates towards both the recruiter and the job itself. Within the chapter Results, it has been mentioned that the consultants together with the Administration department are researching the place where the expats will work, to be able to tell them further what to expect once they arrive in France. Also, it has been said that the client is sending some visual material to the consultants of OC Prod, concerning the type of activity required for a certain type of role, but also about the type of activity of the client itself. Furthermore, when referring to the period of entry of the expats into the new organization, one consultant mentioned the importance of getting to know the other team members, the role, tasks, what the rules are, but also getting to know the managers, so as there is proper functioning of the company. It was also mentioned that knowing the company culture and what is expected from a new employee should be communicated from the beginning. OC Prod should give to the expats the best start possible to their new journey with an interactive onboarding workshop. Within the workshop, one consultant from OC Prod can go through offering details concerning the company history, both OC Prod and the company from France, company values, the mission of the company, presenting the visual material given from the company in France concerning the type of activity required for a certain type of role, but also about the type of activity of the client itself, details about the team members, tasks, and rules. All these aspects should be mentioned at the new employee onboarding workshop to the expats, so these will be well informed about all the necessary details when being abroad. By making use of the new employee onboarding workshop, the expats will feel engaged, relaxed, and more comfortable towards their new future organization.

Additionally, within the Theoretical Framework chapter, it has been mentioned that people are working in diverse environments, each of them consisting of people who are different in a multitude of personal characteristics. As Tsui, Egan, et al. (2011) said: if the individuals within an organization are sharing the same attributes compared to each other's, then there is a higher chance of attraction and forming relationships between these individuals. So, on top of these details that should be included in the workshop, the consultants from OC Prod should arrange a Skype meeting with an expat that is or has been already abroad, working for the same client in France. This way, the expat can answer from his own experience to the questions of the future expats.

5.2.1 Evaluation of options

To choose which of the three options mentioned above is the most suitable for the client, it is important to determine some criteria for evaluation. There have been six chosen criteria: feasibility, time, costs, resources, ease of implementation, and risk. These criteria have been chosen after carefully analyzing what each option requires if one of them would be put in practice. When discussing with the client, this mentioned that she does not have any preferred criterion for evaluating the

options, so it was up to the student to come up with suitable criteria to evaluate the three options mentioned earlier. This was done based on previous insights that were gathered during the course of 'Business Model Dynamics' from the third study year.

The criterion of **'feasibility'** refers to the practicability of the alternative. The idea behind this criterion is how useful and doable the option will be for the organization. Also, the 'feasibility' is important to take into consideration, because it forces to examine the big picture first and then think it in smaller steps. The criterion of **'time'** refers to the time needed to plan and implement the option since the company also needs to budge the alternative. Also, this criterion was chosen because it needs to be assessed how soon the plan can be realized. The criterion of **'costs'** has been chosen as it expresses the costs needed to realize the implementation of the alternative. This criterion also expresses if the change is affordable or not. The criterion of '**resources'** refers to whether or not the company has the necessary resources for the realization of the alternative and/or shows how many resources are needed if the alternative is to be implemented. This includes both employees and physical resources. The criterion **'ease of implementation'** refers to how easy or difficult it is to implement the plan. It also shows how much effort is being put considering the alternative. Lastly, the criterion of **'risk'** was chosen because it is the main cause of uncertainty in any company. So, scoring on the criterion of risk will help to diminish the uncertain future aspects of implementing the alternative. Also, this will attempt to minimize and identify the vulnerabilities which could pose a threat to the organization. The higher the score, the lower the risk will be. Below there is a table with the listed criteria and the three alternative options. The scoring for the criteria **time, costs, resources, ease of implementation, and risk** will be done from 1 to 5, 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest score. The criterion '**feasibility'** will be scored double, because this is the most important criterion as it offers the chance to find out if the option will be doable before allocating time, money, and resources to an option that might not be as useful as initially planned, causing the company to invest even more to correct the flaws or make improvements.

Table 1 Evaluation of alternatives

Criteria	Option 1 (Feedback& Counseling procedure)	Option 2 (Newcomer Procedure Manual)	Option 3 (New Employee Onboarding Workshop)
Feasibility (*2)	6	8	8
Time	1	2	3
Costs	2	3	3
Resources	2	3	4
Ease of implementation	4	4	4
Risk	5	3	5
Total Score:	**20**	**23**	**26**

Looking at the **'feasibility'** of all three options mentioned above, the last two options scored an 8 because these give useful information to the future expats before they leave for France. The first option scored a little lower because it helps the expats only after they arrived in France.

For the criterion of **'time'**, score 1 was given to the first option because it is time-consuming for the consultants since they need to have personal calls with the expats. The second option scored a 2

because it takes time to design and update the newcomer procedure manual. As mentioned above, having an adequate newcomer procedure manual means that, the employer should allocate time to determine what is important to their organization. The last option scored a 3 because it takes time to set up the presentation and to get one of the current expats to be available for the presentation.

Next is the criterion of **'costs'**, where the first option scored the lowest because it takes a lot of time from the consultants to have these conversations with the expats. The second option scored a 3 because it does take time to develop and update the newcomer procedure manual. For the last option, a 3 was given because it takes some time to give the workshop for future employees.

The criterion **'resources'** was scored a 2 for the first option because it requires a lot of time for a consultant to have these conversations. For the second option, this criterion was scored 3 because it takes time from the consultants to make the updates and develop the newcomer procedure manual. The last option was scored also a 4 because one consultant needs to be available to lead and supervise the presentation.

Following is the criterion of **'ease of implementation'**, where the first option scored a 4 because the only preparation needed is making planning for having the individual conversations with the expats. The second option also scored a 4 because it only needs to be designed and added to the existing HR policy of OC Prod. The last option scored a 4 because it requires a plan for the workshop and the availability of an expat.

The last criterion is **'risk'**, which was scored on taking into consideration the possible risks that might arise if the option will be implemented. The first option scored the maximum points because there are no risks since both the conversation is optional. The second option scored a 3 because the newcomer procedure manual might not be updated, so the information may remain outdated and it gives false information to the expats. Furthermore, the information contained in the manual might not give all the information wanted by the future employees, so these will not know how to get through some encountered difficulties. The third option scored a 5 because there is no risk of having a workshop for future employees.

5.2.2 Choice of solution

Based on the evaluation of the criteria mentioned above, it can be concluded that the third option, the 'New Employee Onboarding Workshop', would be the most suitable to implement for OC Prod. The only points where this option scored a little bit lower than the maximum amount are feasibility, time, and costs. As mentioned above as well, this option helps the expats prior their departure to France offering them details concerning the company history, both OC Prod and the company from France, company values, the mission of the company, presenting the visual material given from the company in France concerning the type of activity required for a certain type of role, but also about the type of activity of the client itself, details about the team members, tasks, and rules. As for the criteria of 'time' and 'costs', it does take time to prepare, give, and host the workshop for future employees.

As seen within the Results chapter, the consultant together with the Administration department are researching the place where the expats will work. This way, they can tell them further what to expect

from the moment they will arrive in France. Also, it has been mentioned that the company from France is sending visual material to the consultants from OC Prod regarding the type activity required for a certain type of role, but also about the type of activity of the client itself. Moreover, one consultant mentioned that it is important to get to know the other team members, the role, tasks, and what the rules are, but also getting to know the managers, so as there is proper functioning of the company. It was also mentioned that knowing the company culture and what is expected from a new employee should be communicated from the beginning. All these aspects should be made available and clear during the 'New Employee Onboarding Workshop'. This way, the expats will feel engaged, relaxed, and more comfortable towards their new future organization. Additionally, as mentioned in the Theoretical Framework, nowadays people are working in diverse environments, each of them consisting of people who are different in a multitude of personal characteristics. Tsui, Egan, et al. (2011) suggested that the individuals who are sharing the same attributes compared to each other's results in a higher chance of attraction and forming relationships between these individuals. Reason for which, the consultants from OC Prod should arrange a Skype meeting with an expat that is or has been already abroad working for the same client in France, so as he can answer from his own experience to the possible questions of future employees.

Moreover, at the end of the workshop, there should be added questions that will review if the expats understood the information received from the consultant, give the expats the chance to ask questions, and test them on the company knowledge presented to them. At the end of the test, five aspects should be revealed:

1. Did you find the workshop helpful enough?
2. Did you find the workshop clear and did you understand the information presented?
3. What information you feel is missing from the workshop?
4. What would you like to add to the workshop?
5. Do you feel more comfortable about going into a new environment?

This option could contribute to solving the management problem formulated at the beginning of the report, mainly '*How can OC Prod HR Consulting Company increase expats' retention and quality of client-relation by improving the integration process of the expats in the client's company?*'. On one hand, the retention of the expats could be increased by making the expats feel more engaged, relaxed, and comfortable towards their future organization. They will be informed about the important aspects of being abroad in an 'unfamiliar environment'. By making sure the expats completed the tests at the end of the workshop, five important aspects will be revealed concerning: if the expats found the workshop helpful, clear, if they understood the presented information, if they feel like something is missing from the workshop, if they have any additions to it, and if they feel more comfortable about going into a new environment. On the other hand, the relation with the client will be improved because the expats will be well-prepared regarding the company values, what is expected of them and how they should fulfill their role within the company.

5.3 Implementation plan

It is now time to translate it into a suggestion on how to implement the advice in the form of an implementation plan. Firstly, there will be an illustration of the actual implementation plan, then an elaboration on the PDCA cycle and lastly, an elaboration on the costs and benefits of the plan. In 'Table

4.2' the necessary steps needed for the implementation are illustrated. These steps are the person responsible, the activity needed to be done, the frequency, the time, and the content of the activity.

Table 2 Execution process

Person responsible	Activity	Frequency	Time	Content
1 Consultant and 1 Administration employee -each employee will be given a list with all the future expats that are about to leave abroad, and this list will be split evenly to each employee to arrange a meeting with these	Arranging meeting with the future expats	1x/month	8h x 2 employees	Making phone calls once a month to plan a gathering with all the expats that will leave together for the next mission
1 Consultant and 1 Administration employee -both employees are brainstorming about what information should be included in the presentation, based on previous experiences with the expats. Afterward, one employee will develop a PowerPoint presentation.	Developing the presentation for the workshop (creating the content for the workshop and creating a PowerPoint presentation which will include the necessary information)	1x/6 months	8h x 2 employees	Add the visual material sent from the company in France, details about the company mission, role, tasks, rules, team member and management, create a PowerPoint presentation
1 Consultant	Checking the presentation	1x/month	2h x 1 employee	Checking the presentation to see if all the details are included, if there are any mistakes, or additions that need to be made
1 Consultant	Hosting the workshop	1x/month	2h x 1 employee	A consultant responsible for leading the workshop
1 Administration employee	Arranging a Skype meeting with an expat	1x/month	4h x 1 employee	Making phone calls to find an available and willing expat to participate in the presentation
1 Consultant	Analyzing the outcomes	1x/month	8h x 1 employee	At the end of the workshop, each participant will take that small test, where their knowledge gained during the presentation will be tested. Afterward, these answers will be analyzed and see where there needs to be made improvements

5.3.1 PDCA cycle

The 'Plan-Do-Check-Act' (PDCA) cycle is a four-step model developed for carrying out change. This cycle is helping organizations solving problems and implementing solutions rigorously and methodicaly (Mindtools, 2020). The PDCA cycle includes the following phases (Matsuo, 2013):

- A problem is identified and analyzed during the planning phase (P)
- Solutions are implemented in the doing phase (D)
- Solutions are evaluated in the checking phase (C)
- New routines are developed in the acting phase (A)

Moreover, the same author mentioned that the quality of the improvements made will be effective if these start with a good plan, the activities needed to achieve the plan are implemented, and the results are being checked to understand the causes of the results. Finally, the actions are taken to help the method (Matsuo, 2013).

Plan

The first stage of the PDCA cycle is the 'planning phase'. Within this, a problem is identified and analyzed. The problem of OC Prod is the integration process of the expats, which influences the retention of the expats and the relation with their client. When evaluating the options above, it became clear that OC Prod should go for implementing the 'New Employee Onboarding Workshop' as part of the existing HR policy plan. The 'New Employee Onboarding Workshop' will focus on the information requirements of the future expats. The general information given in every workshop should include the following aspects:

→ information about the other team members and the managers
→ information about the specific role performed within the organization
→ information about the tasks that need to be fulfilled by the expats
→ the rules of the organization
→ details about the company culture
→ what is expected from the expats
→ the visual material sent from the client

As part of the workshop, a Skype meeting with one expat, which is/was at the company in France will take place. This person can answer to the potential questions of the future expats, so they will feel engaged, be more relaxed, and comfortable towards their new future company. The details from the above-mentioned enumeration will be presented in a presentation.

Do

The second stage of the PDCA cycle is the 'do phase'. Here, the potential solution, the 'New Employee Onboarding Workshop' is implemented. Firstly, is important that the employees from OC Prod get a clear overview of the problem at hand, analysis, and advice. At the moment, the company is not working and managing according to numbers, statistics, trends, or developments, reason for which the consultants need to completely understand each step from the project. This, to successfully implement the workshop for the new employees. To find out what information the expats require, a sample size of five expats per workshop will be asked the following questions:

1. Did you find the workshop helpful enough?
2. Did you find the workshop clear and did you understand the information presented?
3. What information you feel is missing from the workshop?
4. What would you like to add to the workshop?
5. Do you feel more comfortable about going into a new environment?

Check

Within the 'checking phase', the solutions are evaluated. OC Prod will evaluate the results of the five questions mentioned above. If new information requirements arise from the answers of the expats then, these requirements will be evaluated by a consultant and check if these previously occurred. As a result of this comparison, it can show whether or not any changes need to be made and what is there to be improved according to the needs and wishes of the expats. Also, it is very important to check whether or not the expats had a positive response to the last question mentioned.

Act

During the last phase of the PDCA cycle, new routines are developed. In this case, OC Prod will implement the 'New Employee Onboarding Workshop' as an additional chapter to the existing HR policy of the company. Also, it is important that after each workshop presented OC Prod will compare, evaluate, and analyze the results with the previous ones, to assure the effectiveness of the implemented option regarding the management problem. If questions occur multiple times and a consultant evaluated these, then these should be added to the next workshop presentation. Also, if the information presented was not clear and concrete enough then some elements within the workshop have to be maintained, verified, and updated, so the information offered within the workshop will not remain outdated, giving false information to the expats. 'Table 5.3' shows an illustration where an overview of the actions within the 'acting phase' is mentioned.

Table 3 Actions within the 'acting' phase

Activity	Person Responsible	Time Frame
Actively offer the workshop to the new employees	1 Consultant	1x/month
Obtain the results from the future employees	1 Consultant	1x/month
Update the information from the workshop presentation	1 Consultant	Checking it 1x/month and update it where necessary

5.4 Financial implications

Implementing a change within a company requires time, attention, and financial investments. Within the first part of this paragraph, the general costs that occurred will be illustrated. Within the second part, the benefits of implementing this change to the organization will be shown.

5.4.1 Costs

The budget of OC Prod needs to be controlled and invested in the right project. The solution of developing a 'New Employee Onboarding Workshop' as an additional chapter to the existing HR policy plan of the company, implies a few direct costs that are important to the organization. The workshop will include printing costs as well because the HR policy of the company needs to be printed out again with the additional chapter of the workshop. The table below gives an overview of the staff costs arising from the 'New Employee Onboarding Workshop' and the printing costs of the HR policy. The hourly payment and the effort of the employees expressed in time are derived from own experience while working for OC Prod. 'Table 5.4' indicates an overview of the staff costs. The steps mentioned are the activity, the person responsible, the time frame, the payment per hour, the frequency, and lastly, an overview of the total costs a month is shown.

Table 4 Overview of staff costs

Activity	Person Responsible	Time Frame	Hourly payment	Frequency	Total/month
Create the print material	1 Consultant, 1 Administration employee	8h x 2 employees	3,90 €	1x/month	62,40 €
Check the print material	1 Consultant, 1 Administration employee	4h x 2 employees	3,90 €	1x/month	31,20 €

Check readability, understanding, and format of the printing material	1 Consultant	4h x 1 employee	3,90 €	1x/month	15,60 €
Arranging meeting with the future expats	1 Consultant, 1 Administration employee	8h x 2 employees	3,90 €	1x/month	62,40 €
Developing the presentation for the workshop	1 Consultant, 1 Administration employee	8h x 2 employees	3,90 €	1x/month	62,40 €
Check the presentation	1 Consultant	2h x 1 employee	3,90 €	1x/month	7,80 €
Hosting the workshop	1 Consultant	2h x 1 employee	3,90 €	1x/month	7,80 €
Arranging a Skype meeting with an expat	1 Administration employee	4h x 1 employee	3,90 €	1x/month	15,60 €
Analyzing the outcomes	1 Consultant	8h x 1 employee	3,90 €	1x/month	31,20 €
Total costs	→	→	→		**296,40 €**

The total cost for developing the 'New Employee Onboarding Workshop' is €296,40. Within these costs, every step from designing and adding it to the existing HR policy plan of OC Prod are included. All the costs are done once a month since every month there might be groups of expats leaving for a new mission in France. So, the workshop needs to be given per each expat group that is leaving to work in France and there might be arising changes within the information, from contact details to any changes done within the role, tasks, and rules. Once a month the costs will be €296,40. Moreover, the average monthly salary of an employee from OC Prod is €625 (What Is the Minimum and Average Salary in Romania in 2020?). The average weekly salary is €156 (€625/4 weeks) and the hourly payment is calculated at €3,90 (€156/40h). These costs are derived from own experience while working for OC Prod and from the source cited above. Both the consultants and the Administration employees have the same average monthly salary, the only difference is that the consultants also receive a commission that is given per employment done.

5.4.2 Benefits

At the beginning of this report, the management issue was formulated: '*How can OC Prod HR Consulting Company increase expats' retention and quality of client-relation by improving the integration process of the expats in the client's company?'*. The option of developing the 'New Employee Onboarding Workshop' can contribute to a solution for the management issue stated. Ashford and Black (1996) said that the period of organizational entry is a period of uncertainty, where the individuals are faced with an unfamiliar environment. When implementing a workshop specially designed for future employees who are going to work in an 'unfamiliar environment', will help to guide the employees towards what to expect when being abroad. This workshop will contain details about the other team members, the role, tasks, what the rules are, and getting to know the managers. R2 mentioned that knowing the company culture and what is expected from a new employee should be communicated from the beginning. Moreover, Tsui, Egan, et al. (2011) said: if the individuals within an organization are sharing the same attributes compared to each other's, then there is a higher chance of attraction and forming relationships between these individuals. Reason for which OC Prod should add to the workshop a Skype meeting with an expat that is or has been already abroad working for the same client in France. This way, the expat can answer from his own experience to the questions of the future expats. By doing so, on one hand, the retention of the expats could be increased by making the expats feel more engaged, relaxed, and comfortable towards their future organization. They will be

informed about the important aspects of being abroad in an 'unfamiliar environment'. By making sure that the expats completed the tests at the end of the workshop, five important aspects will be revealed concerning if the expats found the workshop helpful, clear, if they understood the presented information, if they feel like something is missing from the workshop, if they have any additions to it, and if they feel more comfortable about going into a new environment. On the other hand, the relation with the client will be improved because, the expats will be well-prepared regarding the company values, what is expected of them, and how they should fulfill their role within the company.

To check whether or not the implementation of the advice had proved to be successful, this needs to be measured. For this, there is the need of mentioning two important indicators that are specific for this project. One indicator can be the 'expats satisfaction'. After the implementation of the 'New Employee Onboarding Workshop' as an additional chapter to the existing HR policy of OC Prod, a group of twenty expats will be chosen to grade their satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 10. When the workshop had been in place for three months, the same group of twenty respondents will be asked again to grade their satisfaction on the same scale. This way, there will be a visualization of the grades which they gave at the beginning of the implementation, and the grades they gave after three months since the implementation of the 'New Employee Onboarding Workshop'. Another indicator of the 'expats satisfaction' will be the answer to the last question mentioned in the 'do phase' (Do you feel more comfortable about going into a new environment?). The other indicator can be related to the 'client-relation'. After the workshop had been implemented, once a month OC Prod should be in touch with the clients, whether through the means of phone, face-to-face, if possible, or skype. During this meeting, two important points should be discussed, mainly whether or not the clients are satisfied and if any unusual events happened. By 'unusual', it is mean for example if there was a high rate of absenteeism or irregularities in job performance.

5.5 Conclusion

Within the conclusion part, the main pieces of advice will be listed once more, and the management problem will be answered.

Within the first chapter of the thesis, it has been mentioned that the type of report delivered at the end will be an HR advisory report in the form of an additional chapter to the existing HR policy of OC Prod. This additional chapter will refer to the integration process, or how it was named in the theoretical framework, 'organizational entry process'. As a result, it will aim at improving the quality of client-relation and the expats' retention. Additionally, it will be intended for the consultants of OC Prod which will then benefit the expats as well. The advice should answer to the management problem with which OC Prod is facing difficulties: '*How can OC Prod HR Consulting Company increase expats' retention and quality of client-relation by improving the integration process of the expats in the client's company?'.*

The outcome of conducting the interviews with both the expats and the employees from OC Prod is that the consultants from OC Prod want to transmit the exact information that comes from the client to the expats as well. This information consists of giving details about the environment where the expats will work, the team that they are going to be part of, and the working conditions. All of these are done to make the expats feel more comfortable about the idea of going to work in a foreign country, an unfamiliar place for them. The outcome of elaborating on the terms 'organizational entry process' and

‘relational demography’ in the Theoretical Framework indicated that when employees are entering into a new organization, these are jumping into a ‘strange new world’ (Lundberg & Young, 2016). As a consequence, it has been made clear that the process of organizational entry should neither be ignored, nor left out when a newcomer is entering into an organization. As Lee, Ashford, et al. (1992) declared in one of their articles, ‘during this period, individuals are believed to form, or fail to form, a basic attachment to the organization’. At the moment of entering into a new organization, individuals are seeking for clues or information regarding what the organization is about and how they should act in terms of roles, values, norms, and beliefs (Lundberg & Young, 2016). By implementing a workshop for the onboarding of the new employees, these can already be informed and be well-prepared about the environment which they are about to enter in. So, the ‘unfamiliar’ will become ‘familiar’ and the expats will feel more cared about and attached to the organization.

6. Afterword

Within this chapter, two points will be discussed. On one hand, a reflection of the day to day practice will be presented and on the other hand, the added value for the industry, of this thesis project, will be elaborated on.

6.1 Day to day reflection

Looking back at the thesis semester, I believe that I learned so many things, such as: being responsible, realizing that something that seems easy and quick to do is not always like this, and maybe the most important thing that I have learned is how important it is to manage my time wisely. In the beginning, I was very stressed about the amount of information that I needed to absorb and then translate it into words on a blank page. At first, I did not even know where to start and seeing the finish line was something so far away, but here I am writing the last chapter of this thesis project. I concluded that the hardest part is to start the project, but where was the start even?

I walked into the office on my first working Monday and I had a talk with the team leader of OC Prod HR Consulting, and to my surprise, she told me that they do not really face with any difficulties at the moment and that I should just pick something to write about. As easy as it might sound, it was not. I panicked for a few minutes, thinking what I am supposed to write about if they do not encounter any difficulties whatsoever?! I knew that the company is working with foreign clients and that they sent people to work abroad, so I walked to one of the Administration employees and asked her how everything is going with the people that are sent abroad. It came as a huge relief when she told me that they encountered so many difficulties with the expats that are being sent to work in France. So, here it was the start of my thesis project, the management problem.

I was working from Monday to Wednesday for OC Prod HR Consulting and even though I had an assigned mentor within the company, she told me that she does not know all the details about these expats working abroad and that I should simply talk to every consultant that has been in contact with these, and especially to talk to the Administration employees since these are the ones that are in contact with the expats most of the times. The first weeks being at OC Prod brought me a lot of frustration and stress, because when I told them what my management problem is for this project, and I asked for details of previous researches, or statistics, and numbers, they simply told me that they never did such thing regarding the expats that are sent to work abroad. So, once again it was up to me to find out information about this issue and find publications and research papers done on the topic of expats working abroad and the integration process.

I was lucky to have Mrs. van Triest assigned as my first examiner because she always knew what to tell me to get rid of the stress and frustration and just keep writing. She always supported me, when she saw I am having difficulties with writing, she would advise me to look and search for certain information that will eventually guide me. I was also lucky enough that she is a Research teacher, a thing that helped me a lot with doing qualitative and quantitative research because she would always pinpoint the most important aspects that I need to pay attention to and what should be changed or improved. Reason for which, I chose to make use of only one meeting with the assigned Research

teacher, Mr. van Merle. I found the first meeting with him quite confusing because he would talk a bit beside my points of interest and when the meeting ended, I only got to have one question answered to.

Other than the communication with the assigned Research teacher, I believe that the communication with my first examiner went well, we planned when and what I want to have sent for feedback, and then to plan a FaceTime meeting to elaborate further on the feedback received from her. The most feedback I got from Mrs. van Triest was about my structure and style of writing, which helped me a lot to develop these skills. For example, she would say that she finds my sentences long and difficult to read. This helped me be aware of these aspects and I managed to be better at it. During these six months, we only had one meeting with all three parties, me, my first examiner, and my company mentor, because every two weeks I had an evaluation at the office with me and my mentor, where we would discuss my progress and I would ask questions that I needed answers to write my thesis. Besides this, whenever I needed answers regarding certain aspects of my thesis, I could always go and ask the other consultants or the Administration employees.

In the beginning, I mentioned that the most important thing I learned during the past months is the importance of managing my time wisely. I am saying this because, right before emailing my two examiners my Thesis Proposal Defense, I ran out of time and I was not able to have it all finished in time. Because I did not finish it in time, information was missing from the document and I was not so sure of myself talking about it during the oral exam. Both my examiners and I concluded that I need to focus more on the information needed and that I would do better during the retake. Said and done. I was quite glad that I did not pass the TPD exam from the first time, because I received constructive feedback from them, and I felt more prepared writing it for the next TPD exam. Also, I became aware that I need to make more use of my first examiner's feedbacks sessions because until then I thought I had it all under control and I do not need that much guidance and feedback. Since then, I made the most out of the feedback sessions with Mrs. van Triest. Any question that would pop in my mind, I would just email it or WhatsApp it to her and depending on her time, I would have my answer, but every time she was quick to answer me. Moreover, if it was to write this thesis project again, I would plan my overall time better, because most of the time I left everything to be done at the last minute, and sometimes I simply ran out of time. I would plan the time for conducting the interviews better because I did not see that each respondent might not be available to have the interview with me at the dates planned by me, or that certain events might arise, and they would re-schedule the interview. Also, I would plan my time better when it comes to analyzing and transcribing the interviews because it took me almost a month to have them ready.

In conclusion, looking back at my day to day practice, I can say that during this past semester not only I learned how to conduct research, but I also learned how to overcome difficulties, adapt to certain situations, how to use people's help, and how to plan my time wisely. Even though sometimes I could not see the finish line, I had the ambition and will to overcome the stress and frustration, to successfully finish the thesis project and graduate in time alongside with my classmates.

6.2 Value of thesis

The outcomes of this thesis project are not helpful only for OC Prod HR Consulting company, but also for similar companies, within the Human Resource field, which employs people to work for a foreign client.

Nowadays, people work within diverse environments and each organization should create a culturally appropriate work environment. In return, this can increase the effectiveness and productivity of the employees. As one might know, people are the most important resource of any company. One of the biggest challenges with which the organizations are faced these days is how to correctly apply the knowledge, skills, commitment, and energy needed to have an environment that will fuel successful outcomes from understanding and managing the cultural differences (Byrd& Scott, 2018). If culturally diverse people are not included among the other members of the organization, then these people might feel left out and unwelcome in the new organization. From the moment of entry into a new organization, the employer should understand the importance of culturally diverse people that are part of his/her organization. Once this is done, they are already a step closer to having a good functioning organization. Proper integration will make the newcomer adaptation easier to the professional standards, work-life, assimilation of the rules of conduct of an organization. As mentioned above, each organization should take care that the process of integration of a new employee will be considered and treated as important activities. Also, these should allocate sufficient resources, such as human, energy, time, and/or financial (Florea, 2014). This thesis project is dealing with the integration process of the expats into a new working environment, and with the cultural differences encountered once being abroad. The moment of entry of a new employee into an organization represents a difficult matter because he/she is faced with his/her expectations and reality. Within this thesis project, the aspects mentioned above have been researched, evaluated, analyzed, and elaborated upon. Most of the times new employees are faced with issues like: having little realistic information during the recruitment procedure, having conscious and unconscious expectations from one's personality, unexpected working conditions, a mismatch between personal goals and objectives of the organization, and cultural shock (Nekoranec& Nagyova, 2014).

In conclusion, this thesis projects contributes to the mentioned challenges with which the other organizations are faced, by becoming aware of the importance of the integration process of a newcomer into an organization and about the sensitiveness of the differences between the cultures. Not only the organizational environment will be improved, by having happy, satisfied, and proactive employees, but the relationships among the employees will be better as well. Throughout this entire report, it has been shown that hospitality plays an important role. Well, being hospitable towards your employees, welcoming them in your company, showing care, and looking after their needs and wants, will visibly make a change in anyone's company. More than this, being hospitable towards your clients, will show improvements in the relationship an organization has with its clients, simply by taking into account what is currently happening in their company, how are the employees behaving towards each other and how are they handling the tasks given. Being proactive in listening and taking care of the needs and wants of both employees and clients, will come as an advantage for any organization.

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8. Appendix list

Appendix A – The AAOCC criteria

Lee, T. W., Ashford, S. J., Walsh, J. P., & Mowday, R. T. (1992):

→ **Authority** – T. W. Lee is an associate professor of Engineering, at Ira A. Fulton Schools (IAFSE). He has done up to 61 scholarly works. S. J. Ashford holds the Michael and Susan Jandernoa Professorship of Management and Organizations at the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan. J. P. Walsh is a sociologist and a Professor of Public Policy at Georgia Institute of Technology. R. T. Mowday has numerous research papers done on different topics of interest.

→ **Accuracy** – The article is specific and clear with a lot of information done on the organizational entry topic.

→ **Objectivity** – The source is objective as although all authors are invested in the writing of the article, they do not gain anything from it but pure spreading of knowledge.

→ **Currency** – Although this article dates since 1992, it can still be considered relevant in the context that it is used for, mainly providing with a definition and information about the topic.

→ **Coverage** – This article provides strong information about what organizational entry consists of.

Wanous, J. P. (1993):

→ **Authority** – J. P. Wanous is a Professor at Ohio State University, in Columbus. The areas of his writings are Industrial Psychology and Personality Psychology.

→ **Accuracy** – The article is specific and clear with a lot of information done on the organizational entry topic.

→ **Objectivity** – The source is objective as although all authors are invested in the writing of the article, they do not gain anything from it but pure spreading of knowledge.

→ **Currency** – Although this article dates since 1993, it can still be considered relevant in the context that it is used for, mainly providing with a definition and information about the topic.

→ **Coverage** – This article provides strong information about the topic of organizational entry.

Ashford S. J., J. S. Black (1996):

→ **Authority** – S. J. Ashford holds the Michael and Susan Jandernoa Professorship of Management and Organizations at the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan. J. S. Black is the author or co-author of over 100 articles and cases. This article was published in the 'Journal of Applied Psychology'.

→ **Accuracy** – The article is specific and clear with a lot of information done on the organizational entry topic.

→ **Objectivity** – The source is objective as although all authors are invested in the writing of the article, they do not gain anything from it but pure spreading of knowledge.

→ **Currency** – Although this article dates since 1996, it can still be considered relevant in the context that it is used for, mainly providing with a definition and information about the topic.

→ **Coverage** – This article provides strong information about the proactivity during the organizational entry process, outlining how each individual is perceiving different aspects during organizational entry process.

Cable, D. M., & Judge, T. A. (1996):

→ **Authority** – D. M. Cable is a Professor of Organizational Behavior at London Business School. T. A. Judge is a Professor at the Ohio State University and has written several research papers.

→ **Accuracy** – The article is specific and clear with a lot of information done on the process of relational demography.

→ **Objectivity** – The source is objective as although all authors are invested in the writing of the article, they do not gain anything from it but pure spreading of knowledge.

→ **Currency** – Although this article dates since 1996, it can still be considered relevant in the context that it is used for, mainly providing with a definition and information about the topic.

→ **Coverage** – This article provides strong information about the relational demography and its importance.

Holton III, E. F., & Russell, C. J. (1999):

→ **Authority** – E. F. Holton III is a distinguished Professor of Human Resource, Leadership and Organization Development at Louisiana State University. C. J. Russell is currently a Professor of Business Administration at the University of Oklahoma. This article was published in the Human Performance Journal.

→ **Accuracy** – This article is specific, and it clearly explains the organizational entry process from its early stages. It is also a published article, a fact that adds to its accuracy.

→ **Objectivity** – The source is objective as although all authors are invested in the writing of the article, they do not gain anything from it but pure spreading of knowledge.

→ **Currency** – Although this article dates since 1999, it can still be considered relevant in the context that it is used for, mainly providing with a definition and information about the topic.

→ **Coverage** – This article provides strong information about the organizational entry constructs.

Riordan, C. M. (2002):

→ **Authority** – C. M. Riordan is Executive advisor, Provost, and Professor of management at the University of Kentucky. This article was published in Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management.

→ **Accuracy** – This article is specific, and it clearly explains what the relational demography is. It is also a published article, a fact that adds to its accuracy.

→ **Objectivity** – The source is objective as although all authors are invested in the writing of the article, they do not gain anything from it but pure spreading of knowledge.

→ **Currency** – The research was conducted and published in 2002 and although it is older than 10 years it can still be considered relevant in the context that it is used for. Also, it is an update to a previous research from 1997 made by the same author.

→ **Coverage** – This article provides strong information about the relational demography and its importance in the workplace.

Riordan, C. M., Schaffer, B. S., & Stewart, M. M. (2005):

→ **Authority** – C. M. Riordan is Executive advisor, Provost, and Professor of management at the University of Kentucky. C. M. Schaffer is a Professor at the University of Pennsylvania. M. M. Stewart is a Professor at University of Hull.

→ **Accuracy** – This article is specific, and it clearly explains what relational demography is. It is also a published article, a fact that adds to its accuracy.
→ **Objectivity** – The source is objective as although all authors are invested in the writing of the article, they do not gain anything from it but pure spreading of knowledge.
→ **Currency** – Although this article dates since 2005, it can still be considered relevant in the context that it is used for, mainly providing with a definition and information about the topic.
→ **Coverage** – This article provides strong information about the relational demography.

Arora, P., & Rohmetra, N. (2010):
→ **Authority** – P. Arora is a full Professor and Chair in Technology, Values, and Global Media Cultures at the Erasmus University Rotterdam. N. Rohmetra is the first woman director of the Indian Institute of Management (IIM).
→ **Accuracy** – This article is specific, and it clearly explains the interface of cultural differences. It is also a published article, a fact that adds to its accuracy.
→ **Objectivity** – The source is objective as although all authors are invested in the writing of the article, they do not gain anything from it but pure spreading of knowledge.
→ **Currency** – This article was published in 2010 and being only published exactly 10 years ago qualifies the information to still be current.
→ **Coverage** – This article provides strong information about the cultural intelligence and the international hospitality industry.

Tsui, A. S., Egan, T. D., & O'Reilly, C. A. (2011):
→ **Authority** – A.S. Tsui is Adjunct Distinguished Professor of Management and Organization at Mendoza College of Business. T. D. Egan is an associate professor of applied behavioral sciences at Graziadio Business School. A. O'Reilly III is the co-author of three books and a number of case studies.
→ **Accuracy** – This article is specific, and it clearly explains what the relation between relational demography and organizational attachment. It is also a published article, a fact that adds to its accuracy.
→ **Objectivity** – The source is objective as although all authors are invested in the writing of the article, they do not gain anything from it but pure spreading of knowledge.
→ **Currency** – This article was published in 2011 and being only published less than 10 years ago qualifies the information to still be current.
→ **Coverage** – This article provides strong information about the effects of demographic diversity in organizations on an individual's psychological and behavioral attachment to the organization.

Lundberg, C. C., & Young, C. A. (2016):
→ **Authority** – C. C. Lundberg is a researcher who wrote about the organizational culture and different other topics.
→ **Accuracy** – This article is specific, and it clearly explains what the relation between relational demography and organizational attachment. It is also a published article, a fact that adds to its accuracy.
→ **Objectivity** – The source is objective as although all authors are invested in the writing of the article, they do not gain anything from it but pure spreading of knowledge.

→ **Currency** – This article was published in 2016 and being only published less than 10 years ago qualifies the information to still be current.
→ **Coverage** – This article provides strong information about the newcomers socialisation and the critical incidents in hospitality organizations.

Appendix B – Tree diagrams from Operationalization

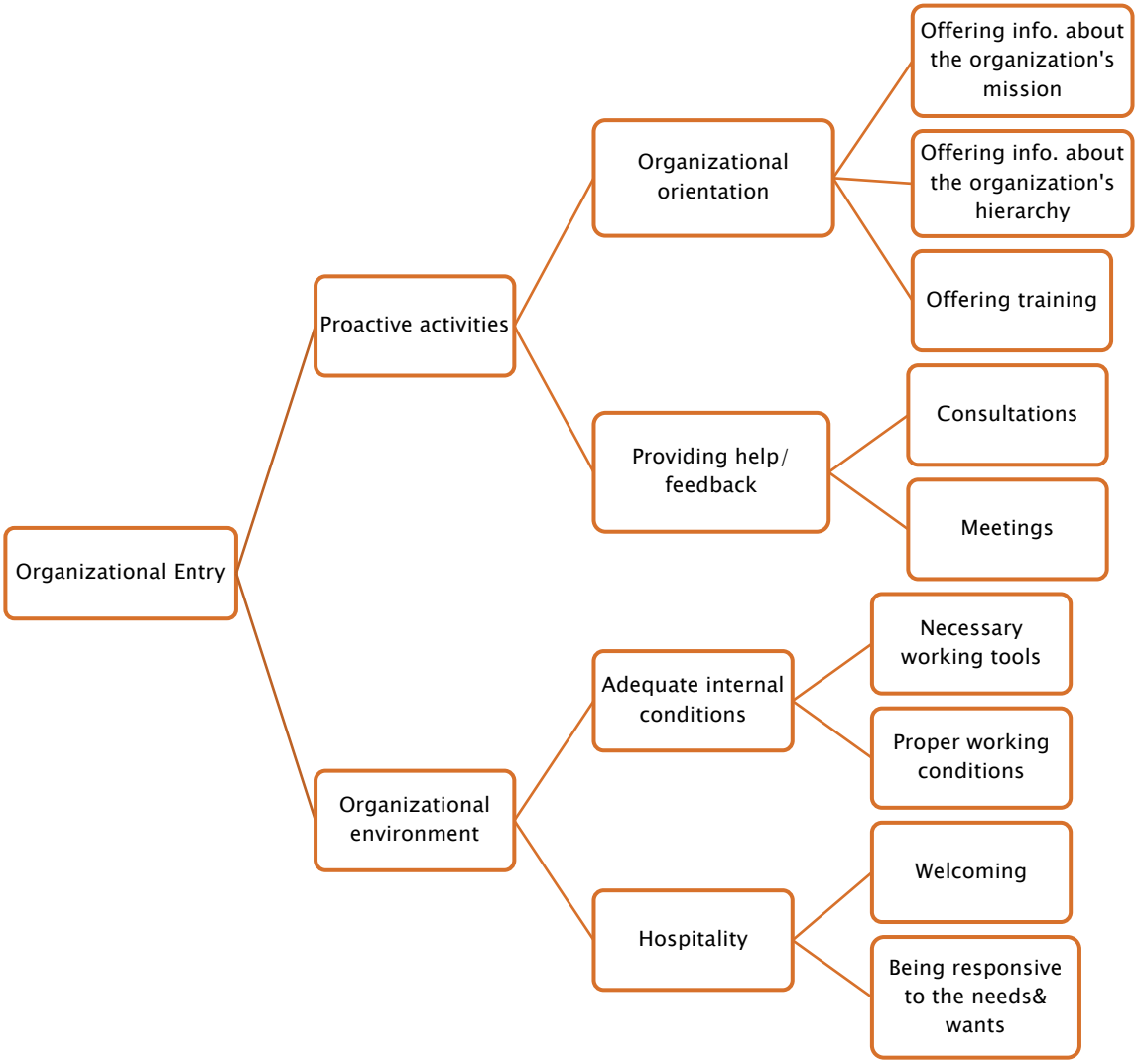

Figure 1 Organizational Entry aimed for OC Prod HR Consulting

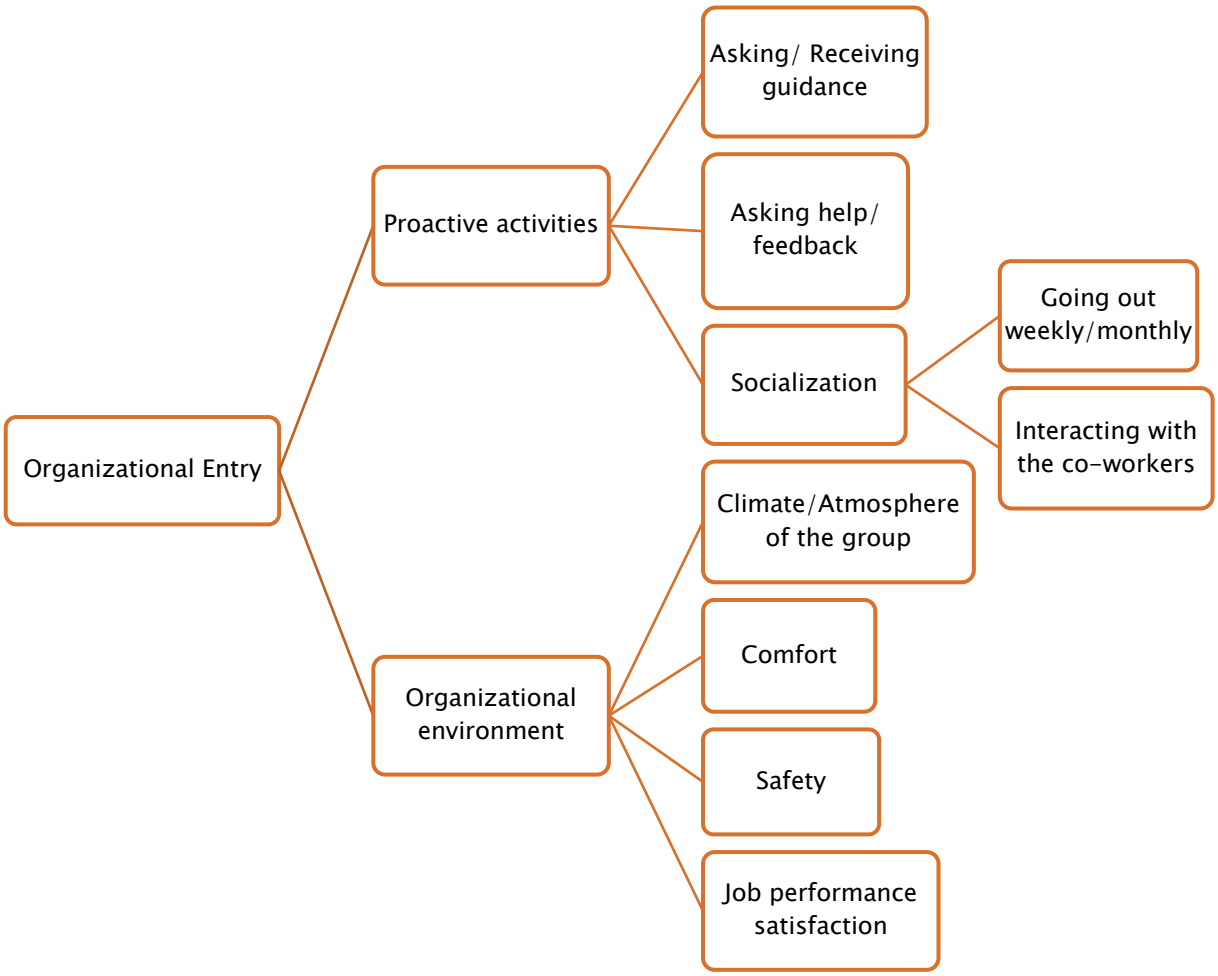

Figure 2 Organizational Entry aimed for the expats

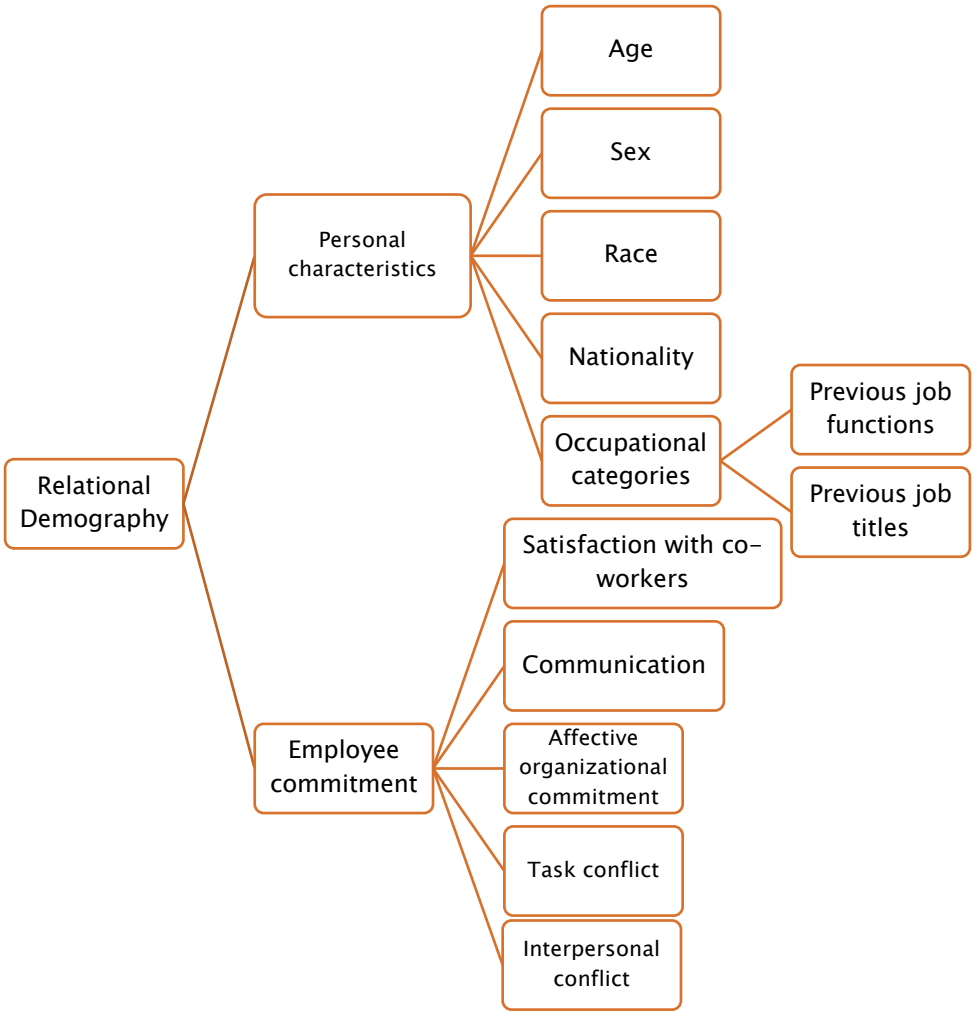

Figure 3 Relational demography aimed for the expats

Appendix C – Interview guides

Interview Guide – OC Prod employee

Name interviewer: Maria Cotorceanu
Company name: OC Prod HR Consulting
Name interviewee:
Position interviewee:

Goal of the interview: The goal of this interview is to gain insight into the procedure followed by the employees of OC Prod HR Consulting within the integration process of the expats. What is your role as a team leader at OC Prod in the integration process of the expats?

Introduction:
Introduce myself:
Introduce the goal of the interview and the core topics:
Mention that the interview will be recorded, and the outcomes knowledge will be used for research purposes.

Small talk:

- Mrs. …, to begin with, I would like to ask you what your function is within OC Prod HR Consulting?
- If it is to say, how would you describe your daily tasks?
- What is your role when talking about recruiting the expats?

Core topic list:
Initial open question:
Mrs. …, during this interview today, I would like to discuss with you about the *proactive activities* carried out within the *organizational entry process* of an expat.

What are the activities carried out when employing an expat for a client of OC Prod?

→ ***Organizational orientation*** as part of the ***proactive activities*** carried out within the organizational entry process. 'How do you make sure that the expats are going to be well informed about the company that they are about to work for?

Attention point: Try to keep the focus only on the expats that are being employed abroad.

Follow up topics: (What can you tell me about?)

a. Offering info. about the organization's mission
b. Offering info. about the organization's hierarchy
c. Offering training

→ ***Providing help/ feedback*** as part of the ***proactive activities*** carried out within the organizational entry process.

What do you do, as a consultant, to make sure that you provide help and feedback to the expats?

In what form are the expats provided with help and feedback?

Follow up topics:

a. Consultations
b. Meetings

When talking about consultations, for example, are there individual consultations with the expats? How often are these consultations happening?

When talking about the meetings, what is the frequency of these? And in what form are these? (face-to-face/ email/ phone?)

<u>Initial open question:</u>
Mrs. …, in order to move forward with our interview of today, I would like to discuss with you about how the expats are treated within the *<u>organizational environment</u>*, as part of the *integration process.*

→ ***Adequate internal conditions*** as part of the ***organizational environment*** within the process of organizational entry.

What are adequate internal conditions in your opinion?

Attention point: Try to keep the focus on the environment within the company that the expat is being employed at.

Follow up topics:

a. Necessary working tools

When talking about the necessary working tools, what can you tell me about this?
With what are the expats provided with?
Do they know about all these in advance?

b. Proper working conditions

What can you tell me about the working conditions of the expats working for the foreign client?
In what do these consist of?
Is there enough room for everyone?
How does their working space look like?
How are they being set up in teams? What are the criteria's?
What is are is their working schedule?
Is there enough time to rest?

→ ***Hospitality*** as part of the ***organizational environment*** within the process of organizational entry.
What does hospitality mean to you, when a newcomer enters a company?

How do you, as consultant of OC Prod, make the expats feel welcomed at their new working place? Or how are they being welcomed at the client-company?

Follow up topics:

a. Welcoming

How would you describe their first week at their new company?
How are they being informed about everyone in the company?
Is there a guide or a manual, where they find a hierarchical tree diagram of the employees?
How about the welcoming packages?

b. Being responsive to the needs& wants

How do you make sure that the newcomer can have his needs and wants listened to?
How do you make sure that the newcomers can reach out to you whenever they are in need?

<u>Interview Guide – expats</u>

Name interviewer: Maria Cotorceanu
Company name: NTD Montage France
Name interviewee:
Position interviewee:

Goal of the interview: The goal of this interview is to gain insights into the opinions of the expats with regards to the integration process and the aspects of cultural differences.

Introduction:
Introduce myself:
Introduce the goal of the interview and the core topics:
Mention that the interview will be recorded, and the outcomes knowledge will be used for research purposes.

Small talk:

- Mr. …, to begin with, I would like to ask you what your function is within NTD Montage France?
- If it is to say, how would you describe your daily tasks?

Main Question:

- How did you experience the integration process and the cultural differences?

Core topic list:
<u>Initial open question:</u>
Mr. …, during this interview today, I would like to discuss with you about the *<u>proactive activities</u>* carried out during the *organizational entry process* of a newcomer.

- Describe to me the first day at NTD company
- What information was provided to you with regards to this company?
- How about the colleagues?
- What can you tell me about the international working environment?
- Was information given to you with regards to what an international working environment is?

- What can you tell me about the team that you are part of?

- What are their ages?

- In front of who do you need to respond?

→ ***Asking/ Receiving guidance*** as part of the ***proactive activities*** carried out during the organizational entry process.

- Were you in a situation when you needed guidance?
- How did things develop when you needed guidance from the company?

Attention point: Try to keep the focus only on how the expats are experiencing this process within the company that they are employed at.

→ ***Asking help/ feedback*** as part of the ***proactive activities*** carried out during the organizational entry process.

- When you needed help, to whom did you go?
- How did this person help you?
- Was there a time when you needed feedback?
- How did you receive this feedback?
- In what from?
- What was the frequency of it?

→ ***Socialization*** as part of the ***proactive activities*** carried out during the organizational entry process.

- What can you tell me about your team/ colleagues?
- How do you get along with the ones in your team?
- What are their ages?
- Do you use to go out with your team?
- How often?
- Do you only get out with the ones from your nationality or also the others?
- When you entered this company, were you interested to interact with the other nationalities?
- Do you think that the age or nationality is influencing the socialization process at your working place?
- How is the communication process within your team?

Follow up topics:

a. Going out weekly/monthly
b. Interacting with the co-workers

Initial open question:

Mr. …, in order to move forward with our interview of today, I would like to discuss with you about how, you, as an expat are feeling within the *organizational environment*, as part of the *organizational entry process.*

Attention point: Try to keep the focus on the environment within the company that the expat is being employed at.

→ ***Comfort*** as part of the ***organizational environment*** within the process of organizational entry.

→ ***Hospitality*** as part of the ***organizational environment*** within the process of organizational entry.

- How did you experience the hospitality when you entered the company?
- How were you welcomed?
- How was your first day at the company?
- Did you keep in touch with the ones from OC Prod?

→ ***Safety*** as part of the ***organizational environment*** within the process of organizational entry.

- Did you feel safe with the ones around you?
- Do you feel like you can count on your colleagues/ consultants/ company?

→ ***Job performance satisfaction*** as part of the ***organizational environment*** within the process of organizational entry.

- How do you feel about your current job?
- Are you satisfied with what you are doing?
- Do you think that there is room for improvement?
- What would you wish to change at your working place?

→ ***Personal characteristics*** as part of the ***cultural differences*** within the working environment.

Attention point: Keep continuous focus on the characteristics of the expats.

Follow up topics:

a. Age
b. Sex
c. Race
d. Nationality
e. Previous job functions

→ ***Employee commitment*** as part of the ***cultural differences*** within the working environment.

Follow up topics:

a. Satisfaction with co-workers
- Are you satisfied with your colleagues?
- Are you satisfied with the team you are part of?

b. Communication
- What can you tell me about the communication process with the company and with OC Prod?
- What can you tell me about the communication process with your co-workers?
- How are news being communicated?

c. Affective organizational commitment (attachment to the organization)

d. Task conflict (unable to move forward due to differences in behaviours and attitudes)
- Whenever you have a task to fulfill, can this be done due to differences between cultures/ ages?
- Has it ever happened to you to not be able to fulfill a task because you were in conflict with someone else?

e. Interpersonal conflict
- Were there situations when you could not fulfill a task due to interpersonal conflict?
- Was someone interfering within this process, who intentionally wanted you not to succeed?

Appendix D – Tree diagrams from Open& Axial coding

- Interview 1: Catalina Dobre (R1)
- Interview 2: Silvia Tanase (R2)
- Interview 3: Lavinia Mutu (R3)
- Interview 4: Monica Butnaru (R4)
- Interview 5: Manuel Mihalache (R5)
- Interview 6: Marinel Plai (R6)
- Interview 7: Ionut Potoroaca (R7)

1. Code tree 'Organizational Entry' – Stakeholder 1 – Employees of OC Prod HR Consulting:

Core Concept:	Axial Coding:	Open Coding:	Sub-terms:	Fragments of Interviews:
Organizational entry	Organizational details	Being well informed		R2.129-131
		Company size		R2.161-163
		Doing research		R2.131-136
		Calibrating candidate's profile		R2.79-85
	Candidate's profile	Country integration		R1.153
		Team integration		R1.152
		Openness to work with other nationalities		R1.152-153
		Working commitment		R1.159-162
		Openness to work with people of different ages		R1.157-159
		Level of motivation		R1.173-176 R1.108-110
		French language knowledge		R1.102-105
		International experience		R1.114-115
		Working experience		R1.121-122

		Showing interest Future aspirations		R1.199-205 R1.211-212
	Proactive activities	Seeking experience Splitting tasks Renewing contract Filtering candidates Obtaining proper documentation Conducting different recruitment process Validating working experience Sending visuals Being transparent Discussing work experience Employee commitment Searching suitable candidates **Screening candidates**		R1.148 R1.149-151 R1.162-164 R1.168-169 R1.171-173 R3.51-60 R2.107-110 R4.21-22 R1.105-106 R1.115-118 R1.130, R1.222-224, R1.232-234 R1.193-194 R1.197-199 R1.279-281 R2.86-89 **R2.89-93**
			Verifying technical skills	

			Validating motivation & behaviour	
		Choosing suitable candidates		R2.104-107
		Editing candidate's profile		R2.97-100
		Providing documentation		R2.107-110 R4.21-22
		Checking WhatsApp number		R3.380-381
		Handling accommodation		R3.295
		Handling transportation		R3.295-296
		Taking care of expat's departure		R3.64-68
		Selecting candidates		R4.20-21
		Talking about benefits		R4.72-73
		Acquiring candidate with company		R4.22-23
		Going for recommendations		R4.45-47
		Instructing about next steps		R4.47-48
	Integration process	Contact person		R2.381-383
		Verifying delivered info		R2.60-68
		Checking-up on candidates		R2.117-119
				R1.157-159

		Openness to work with people of different ages Getting in touch with different cultures		R2.324-325
	Providing information	Activity of client Team Manager Job description Working environment Providing concrete info Offering general information Info regarding accommodation Info regarding stores Info regarding free time Info regarding period of stay Working on heights Salary conditions Responsibilities Type of colleagues		R1.194-195 R2.160-161 R3.73-74 R4.91-94 R1.196 R1.196 R1.220-222 R3.73 R1.231-232 R1.309-311 R2.163-165 R3.269-270 R2.271-272 R3.80-81 R2.272-273 R2.273 R2.274-275 R3.200-202 R4.94-95 R3.81 R3.78-79 R3.79-80

		Working conditions Sending visuals for equipment		R3.78 R3.222
	Communication process	Transparent communication Continuous communication Continuous updating Informing about inconsistencies Verifying circumstances After recruitment communication Finding a balance Internal WhatsApp group Daily communication Agreeing on working terms Maintaining communication		R1.304-409 R1.321-322 R2.150-153 R1.326-328 R2.192-193 R2.193-197 R4.27-29 R4.328-331 R4.384-386 R3.232-234 R4.344-345 R4.371-376 R4.305-308 R4.73-75 R4.104-105
	Client relationship	Avoiding conflicts Checking-up on clients Trusting partnership		R1.176-178 R2.119-121 R1.292-294 R2.141-144

		Checking client's needs & wants Discussing issues with client		R4.43-44 R4.188-192
	Departmental collaboration	Being in contact with Admin department Providing continuous support Understanding relationship Admin department as principal point of communication		R1.169-171, R1.263-264 R2.235-236 R1.149-151 R1.267-269 R1.272-275 R1.269-272
	Internal conditions	Providing bank holidays Maintaining good relationship Showing understanding Shared accommodation Getting paid for working overtime		R1.311-312 R1.313-314 R1.314-317 R1.355-357 R4.287-289
		Discussing accommodation Accommodation places Changing accommodation		R2.114-116 R3.207-209 R2.389-391
	Team set-up	Good technical skills Good English level		R1.363-364 R2.311 R1.364

		Good French level		R1.364-367 R2.311-312 R4.249
		Coordination skills		R1.368-370
		Combination of nationalities		R1.370-372 R3.95-96 R4.112-113
		3-4 people 1 team leader		R2.312-314 R4.249-251
		Driver skills		R3.101-103
		Possibility of choosing team members		R3.106-107
		Expressing preferences		
		Insufficient team members		R3.103-106
		Additional team member		R3.118-119
		Romanian team members		R4.262-263
		French manager		R4.263-265
	Working schedule	Varying working hours		R2.335-338
		Normal working hours		R2.338-339
		Working overtime		R2.339-346 R3.243 R4.281-282
		Working weekends		R2.351
		Fulfilling deadlines		R2.355-358

		Working 8-15 Working Monday to Friday Recovering unworked days Emergency cases 8-hour schedule		R3-238-239 R3.252 R3.252-254 R3.258 R4.281
	Necessary working means	Adequate equipment Cars Working tools		R3.197-200 R4.65-66 R4.95-97 R4.202-209 R3.217-218 R4.255-256 R2.289 R4.218-220
	Providing feedback	Constant feedback Direct feedback Indirect feedback Occasional feedback Verbal feedback Face-to-face feedback Daily feedback Final feedback Positive feedback Negative feedback		R2.197-199 R2.213-217 R3.150-151 R3.157 R3.173 R2.214-216 R3.156-157 R2.221-222 R2.228-231 R2.236-238 R2.238-239 R3.177-180

				R3.131-135
		Feedback from client		R3.131
		Transparent feedback		R3.135-136
		Weekly reporting		R2. 177-183
		Lack of transmitting feedback		R4.157-159
		Individual feedback		R4.173-174
		Collective feedback		R3.162-167 R4.174-176
	Providing training	Learning process		R1.249-251
		One-month training		R1.241
		Three-month training		R1.241-242
		Doing work inspection		R2.275-277
		General training		R2.249-253
		Accommodation training		R2.253-256
		Offering French language training		R2.256-260
		Lack of providing training		R4.229-231
		Obligation to offer training		R2.185-192
	Offering help	Obligation to offer necessary tools		R2.183-185
		Finding solutions		R2.207-208
		Asking client for help		R4.349-354

		Offering help during weekend Reaching out Helping out with language Solving problems Different means of providing help		R4.354-357 R2.398-401 R4.120-121 R4.121-123 R4.134-136 R4.142-144 R4.148
	Reaching out	Providing Admin phone number Providing Admin email address Providing team leader phone number Providing team leader email address Permanent communication Permanent availability		R2.398-399 R2.399-400 R2.400-401 R2.401 R3.389-390 R3.394-395
	Hospitality	Welcoming person Getting to know colleagues Getting to know company culture Getting to know manager Accommodating process		R2.269-271 R2.367-369 R2.372-374 R2.369-372 R2.385-389

		Receiving help from colleagues		R2.375
		Receiving help from team leader		R2.374-375
		Pleasant integration		R3.268
		Being gentle		R3.268
		Offering support		R3.268-269
		Building confidence		R3.271-274
		Building trust		R3.274-276
		Talking as equals		R3.281
		Showing understanding		R3.296-299
		Finding solutions together		R3.303-304
		Quick problem solving		R3.324
	Encountering difficulties	Choosing words correctly		R4.380-383
		Miscommunication		R4.376-380
		Difficulties in finding common ground		R4.361-362
		Problems during weekend		R4.345-349
		Lack of hospitality		R4.336-338
		Lack of work-life balance		R4.301-305
		Unwelcoming		R4.331-332
		Neglecting		R4.319-323

		Implication of multiple parties Distance between countries Having issues with accommodation Language barrier		R4.194-196 R4.136-138 R4.80-85 R4.105-106

2. **Code tree 'Organizational Entry' – Stakeholder 2 – Expats:**

Core Concept:	Axial Coding:	Open coding:	Fragments of Interviews:
Organizational entry	First impression	Unsatisfaction Adaptation process	R5.33 R5.52-54
	Encountering difficulties	Cultural difficulties Language barrier Going out impediment Different accommodation Distance Encountering difficulties with a colleague Difficult integration process	R5.34-36 R5.142-145 R5.58-62, R7.32, R7.52-53 R6.128-131 R6.137-138 R6.121-122 R7.295-296 R7.377-382 R7.27-34
	Satisfaction	Job satisfaction Team satisfaction Company satisfaction	R7. 340-341 R7.285-288 R7.349-350

	Providing information	Working protection program Training process New project Providing info about accommodation Providing info about internal matters Providing info about team Providing info about external matters Providing info about dangerous situations	R5.46 R5.50-52 R5.137-142 R6-73-74 R6.252-253 R6.83-85 R6.253-254 R6.174-178
	Administration	Administrative details Assured plane tickets Having all the necessary offered	R6.196-199 R5. 156-158 R6.203-204 R6.152-153
	Communication process	Transmitting ideas further Checking-up on employees Different means of communication Being in contact once a week Discussing work related details Constant communication	R5.115-117 R5.126-131 R5.196-200 R6.246-247 R6.189-191 R6.107-108 R6.188-189

		Consulting with each other Communicating with the team	R6.258 R7.167-170
	Working conditions	Good working conditions	R6.157
	Necessary working means		R7.310-311 R5.230
	Taking safety measures		R5.256-260 R6.167-169
	Team set-up	French & Romanian team Pre-made teams Setting up teams Choosing own team	R7.107-109 R7.114 R7.118-120 R5. 96-98
	Training	Safety training Working protection Offering training regarding missions	R5.265-268 R5.273-275 R5.230-231
	Receiving guidance	Reaching out for help Solving problems Receiving help Finding a solution	R6.113-116 R7.204-209 R6.120-121 R6.182-183 R7.399-400 R5.145-147
	Receiving feedback	Feeling the need to receive feedback Positive feedback Face-to-face feedback Negative feedback	R7.217-219 R7.219-220 R7.224-225 R7.233-234
	Hospitality	Welcoming team Being understandable	R6.36-39 R6.214-216

		Welcoming process Team integration	R5.246-250 R6.59-62

3. Code tree 'Relational demography – Stakeholder 2 – Expats:

Core Concept:	Axial coding:	Open coding:	Sub-term:	Fragments of Interviews:
Relational demography	Personal characteristics	Age	Age impediments Varying ages Putting accent on young generation Age as an impediment Willingness to work	R5.304-309 R5.102-104 R6.90-92 R6.224-225 R7.363-364 R7.179-180
		Nationality	Working with other nationalities Working with French people	R6.102-103 R7.24-48, R7.137 R.137
	Socialization	Going out occasionally Going out with different nationalities Feeling comfortable around others Forming friendships Companionship		R5.175-181 R5.187-189 R5.193-194 R6.143-148 R7.294-295 R5.109-110 R6.128 R5.299 R7.151-153

		Interacting with other nationalities Offering help to colleagues		R7.271-272 R7.259-262 R7.284-285
	Employee commitment	Employee retention Improving points Being promoted Job satisfaction Overcoming obstacles Learning a foreign language		R5.86-87 R5.290-294 R6.225-229 R7.238-249 R5.285-286 R6.208-209 R7.340-341 R7.61-65 R7.73-77

Appendix E – Tree diagrams of Stakeholders

Figure 4 Stakeholder 1 – Employees of OC Prod HR Consulting

Figure 5 Stakeholder 2 – Expats

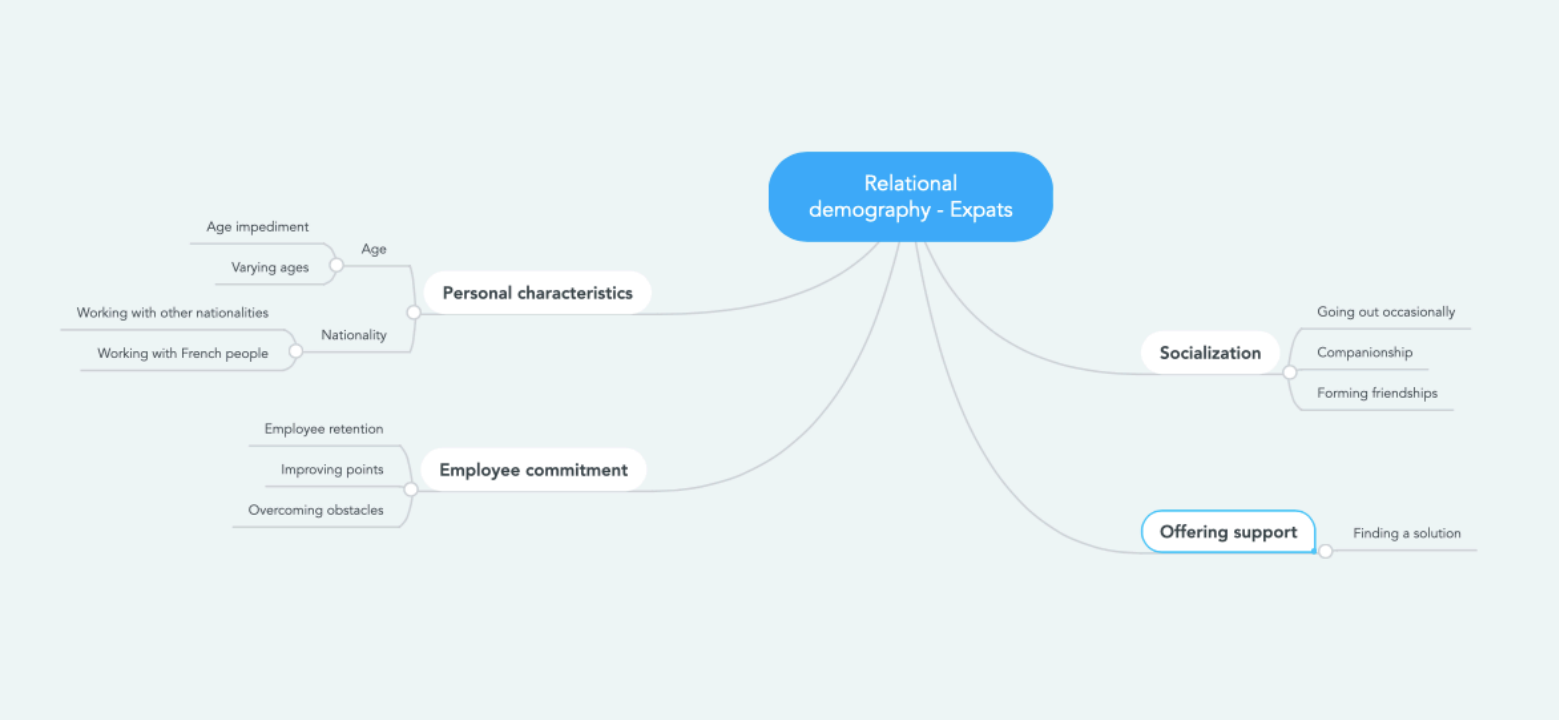

Figure 6 Stakeholder 2 – Expats