Challenges related to Female Expatriation
- the effect of organisational culture on the job satisfaction of female expatriates

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Afra Ramazani
Charikleia Katsavria
Supervisor: Christine Holmström Lind
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ABSTRACT

In today’s globalised business environment, females are underrepresented in expatriate positions. The lower numbers of females in international assignments results from the glass-ceiling that is established within the organisational culture of MNCs. What happens however, when the organisational culture is renowned for diversity, a strong ethical code of conduct and operates in a female-focused industry? We have therefore decided to investigate: “How does the organisational culture of Alpha cosmetics affect the job satisfaction of female expatriates?” and “What are the challenges related to female expatriation?”

The study will attempt to answer the research questions by exploring the themes of organisational culture, job satisfaction and female expatriation. A qualitative research method involving semi-structured interviews, with ten female expatriates working for Alpha Cosmetics, was conducted.

Based on our results, Alpha Cosmetics possesses a clan culture which is commonly associated with high levels of job satisfaction. That appears to be the case in the beginning, however, the dark side of the culture surfaces when the expatriate glass-ceiling is identified in the organisation. This ceiling makes females self-initiate their expatriation without receiving any of the organisational benefits accompanied with traditional expatriation. This situation signifies the negative impact of the organisational culture on the job satisfaction of female expatriates.

Keywords: Female expatriation, organisational culture, job satisfaction, glass-ceiling, clan culture, self-initiated expatriation.
1. Introduction

*In this section, an understanding of the significant representative themes of this paper will be provided: female expatriation, organisational culture, and job satisfaction, and the interrelations between these. After that, the problem statement will be discussed following the thesis purpose and research question.*

1.1 Background

During the last two decades, there has been a shift towards global markets where globalisation has forced the nature of business to change (Forsgren, 2013). Given the highly competitive business environment, there is no denying that multinational businesses are struggling with the battle to adapt to the constantly changing business environment in order to attain a global competitive advantage. With this fierce competition, many businesses have had to gradually internationalise their operations. During phases of expansion, but also later on, the need for international managers rises as organisations continue to globalise their operations and undergo certain consolidation periods. The rapid technological advances and the advent of artificial intelligence urge organisations to select the very best people available to deliver knowledge (Brynjoldsson and McAfee, 2016; Stone et al., 2016). To support global strategies, many multinational corporations (MNCs) have an acute need to develop international expertise in their management pool for such activities where local talent is insufficient. Often, this experience can only be fully developed through expatriate assignments (Insch et al., 2008; Larsen and Edwards, 2019).

Stimulated with the rise of global economy, the number of international managers that MNCs are sending abroad on international assignments, referred to as expatriates, has been growing gradually (Adams and van de Vijver, 2015). In every multinational organisation, expatriates, or expats, play a very important role. They are used for a variety of reasons but mainly to “manage international projects, transferring knowledge and technology, starting up new operations, managing business expansion, developing employees, and increasing home-country oversight of host-country business” (Larsen and Edwards, 2019, p. 5). Expatriates represent their organisations abroad by creating an image of the organisation’s head office and its perspective towards the foreign market, their assignments rest on knowledge transfer from home to their foreign subsidiaries but, also bringing knowledge of what they have learned abroad back home to their colleagues in their head offices (Selmer and Leung, 2002; Lazarova and Tarique, 2005).
Usually, the international experience gained by expatriates is used to prepare high-performance managers for senior positions within the organisation when they return back home (Speranza, 2017). For the majority of MNCs, foreign assignments are a stepping stone to higher-level management positions (Insch et al., 2008). According to Selmer and Leung (2001) the majority of expatriates, 96 per cent, come from a managerial position. On the other hand, women are still under-represented in managerial positions; in the 2018 Fortune 500 list of multinationals, only 24 female CEOs led the companies that make up the list (Mejia, 2018; Zarya, 2018). The increase of the participation of females in the global labour market is one of the most significant factors but, entering the workforce does not directly mean that they reach the highest management positions. Research within this field has mostly emphasised on women in managerial positions on national boards. On the other hand, less attention has been given to women’s equal opportunities to men to extend their careers beyond national borders (Insch et al., 2008). In fact, there is a striking disparity between the number of female and male managers in the home country operations and more notably, female and male expatriates. There are still very few women who are undertaking an international assignment. According to Frith (2016), there is a huge gender gap for international assignments. Almost all organisations, 97 per cent, have a higher number of male expatriates than females. For the majority of MNCs, foreign assignments are a stepping stone to higher-level management positions and the typical expatriate tends to be male despite the fact that women are investing in higher education to have increased access to mid-to-senior level positions (Linehan, 2002; Insch et al., 2008). Selmer and Leung (2001) also stated that the majority of expatriates come from managerial positions and that is why there remains a solid disparity between female and male expatriates overseas since women are still under-represented in higher managerial positions. Women will continue to lack the opportunity to acquire one of the critical competencies required to become international managers as long as they remain under-represented in international assignments (Tung, 2004). Not only do organisations lose the opportunity to benefit from a diverse managerial team, but women also miss the potential to advance their career progression quicker.

PwC released a research survey report in 2016 - *Modern mobility: Moving Women with Purpose* - where the study found that there is a glaring disconnect in female’s expectations and businesses’ approaches to female international assignments. The PwC research found that females still only make up a meagre 20 percent of the expatriate population. These figures once again underline the need for MNCs to realise the misconception that the demands for
international assignments are solely male based, as it creates an international signee population being permanently skewed towards men. An important note is that the demand for international assignments by females has never been higher. Research shows that 71 percent out of 9,000 questioned female millennials in over 70 countries, stated their desire to work outside their home country during their career. Additionally, 84 percent of the women in this survey stressed international experience as a critical factor to further their career progression (PwC, 2016). The option of limiting international management to one gender has become archaic. Hence, the numbers illustrate that the population of international signees does not fully capitalise nor reflect on the demographics of the modern workforce of today. The lack of diversity among members of top management teams leads to too much homogeneity which may in turn lead to poor decision making (Insch et al., 2008).

Research indicates that the absence of female expatriates has been referred to as the invisible barrier, known as the glass ceiling, that limits female managers from reaching the pinnacles of the business world. Research has shown that women face barriers that are not faced by their male counterparts (Bastida, 2018). As mentioned earlier, an international experience is a key factor for career advancement but, due to the layer of glass, female managers may lack the professional opportunity and experience necessary to compete with their male counterparts in senior positions in order to move up the career ladder in an organisation (Speranza, 2017; Bastida, 2018). Insch et al. (2008) make it clear that studies have shown that there are no differences in the expatriate effectiveness between male and female. The issue is that lower-level female managers’ opportunities to reach senior management are limited because of a lack of international experience. If females do not feel that they are given the opportunity for international assignments, this may dampen their desire and motivation to compete for upper-management positions (Fischlmayr, 2002; Selmer and Leung 2001). The rising challenge faced by MNCs is the need to differentiate their presence by capturing the value of diversity and multiculturalism in their organisations. Hence, by limiting women’s opportunity for international experience, corporations are adding a layer of glass which creates an obstacle to their career progress. As a result, this gives rise to a self-defeating cycle with increased turnover rates as competent lower-level female managers leave the organisation due to the lack of opportunity for advancement to higher levels of management (Insch et al., 2008; Bastida, 2018).
1.2 Problem Discussion and Focus Area

The central notion is the under-representation of females in top managerial positions and international assignments. This issue is created by MNCs themselves, which deprive their organisations from diversity, by adding an invisible barrier for women that is hard to break through (Insch et al., 2008; Tharenou, 2010). This barrier created by MNCs, has to be based on the organisational culture of the corporations. Therefore, we decided to investigate a leading MNC within the beauty and cosmetics industry. In an industry of female-oriented products like cosmetics, one could make the assumption that women would have more seats at the table and in decision-making roles. The organisation, Alpha Cosmetics, was not only chosen based on the fact that it is one of the largest beauty companies in the world and that it operates in a female-focused industry but also due to the organisational culture that they possess. The organisation has positioned itself as one of the most ethical actors in this industry. It has received a great deal of attention in the media for its ethical behaviour and holds strong ethical principles that contributed to build its reputation of diversity. This whole era of ethical commitment and philosophy of dealing with the right principles, which is at the heart of the organisation, creates an ethical climate identified with positive outcomes such as great collaboration and trust within the organisation but, also an improved social standing point (Alpha Cosmetics, 2019). The culture of Alpha Cosmetics entails strong values in regards to how the company treats its employees and society alike, so it would be interesting to investigate the expatriate situation within such a culture.

Expatriation is of importance to many females, who are driven and ambitious to reach higher level positions through acquiring international competence. That is the reason why expatriation issues are inevitably going to affect them. Since the PwC study demonstrated such a large disparity in the numbers of males and females in expatriate assignments, we understand that the majority of females are faced with challenges in their expatriation attempts and situation. By investigating a female-focused organisation in particular, are the challenges going to be less? And how does this seemingly positive organisational culture affect the job satisfaction of female expatriates.

1.3 Purpose and Research Question

The purpose of this study is to shed light on the challenges that females face when undertaking an international assignment. Furthermore, since the challenges are created by the organisations, the study aims to find out how the organisational culture affects the job satisfaction of female expatriates. Does a “positive” organisational culture indicate a positive relationship with job
satisfaction or do the challenges outweigh the positive aspects of the culture. All these issues and concerns led us to our research questions:

- “What are the challenges related to female expatriation?”
- “How does the organisational culture of Alpha cosmetics affect the job satisfaction of female expatriates?”

1.4 Contribution
The gap that this study tries to fill is the job satisfaction of female expatriates that has not been largely researched. Many studies focus on the topic of expatriation but, female expatriation in particular has not been largely researched either. All companies are interested in the job satisfaction of their employees as this impacts the organisation as a whole. By shedding light on the challenges and struggles that female expatriates face, MNCs can take action and improve the processes and situation for females interested in an expatriate role. Taking measures and improving the situation of females will make the organisation evolve. The choice of an MNC with a seemingly positive organisational culture that preaches for diversity and appears to have strong ethical codes of conduct, attempted to demonstrate that challenges can be detected in such cultures as well. If such large MNCs as the organisation chosen and which stand for diversity, start of by tackling the challenges and issues for female expatriation, then more and more organisations will follow.
2. Theoretical Framework

In this section, a theoretical discussion of the basic concepts of this thesis will be examined. Emphasis is given to existing literature on female expatriation, organisational culture and job satisfaction. Moreover, it focuses on the interrelations between the terms and how it has been conceptualised in research.

2.1 Expatriation

Employees who are sent to work overseas from their home country for an extended period of time, usually anywhere between six months to five years, are commonly referred to as expatriates. The work of expatriates inherently involves working across national and cultural boundaries (Bastida, 2018). The need for international experienced managers rises as organisations continue to globalise their operations. With the expansion of companies outside their home markets, expatriate managers represent the emergence of international managers.

2.1.1 Organisational Expatriates and Support

Based on the literature of international relocation, financial compensation, career assistance, family assistance, training and general assistance, seem to have a significant importance as employees assess their future relocation intentions (Larsen and Edwards, 2019, p. 7). Financial support is a concern for both the expatriate and organisation alike. This is mainly due to the expensiveness of expatriate assignments, which usually cost the organisation two or three times the yearly home-country salary of the employee (Larsen and Edwards, 2019; Baruch et al., 2016). The costs of compensation include elements like tax equalisation and compliance, housing, and allowance for maintaining living standards. It is noteworthy that financial ramifications is the primary concern, and in some instances a significant determinant, for the majority of expatriates in regards to the decision to accept an international assignment. This is a major considerable factor for expatriates who will be forgoing the spouse/partners second income. Furthermore, it can be seen as a sign to expatriates that the organisation committed to support their performance during the assignment which is a signal that their work is valued. Career support, such as career planning and being well-informed, before and upon returning back to the home country plays a crucial role in the career development and advancement upon completing an international assignment. The consequences of the lack of career support can lead to frustration as the skills and knowledge in the international assignment may not have been fully utilised. Studies have shown that poor repatriation planning where career benefits
do not match expectations can result in high levels of turnover (Baruch et al., 2016; McEvoy & Buller, 2013). Larsen and Edwards (2019), further argue that training provided by the organisation is another key factor in the preparation of an international assignment as it consequently has an effect on the intentions of relocation. The training usually consists of providing information regarding the overseas position and the culture in which the job is located. This information supplied typically occurs prior department. Cross-cultural training is a crucial aspect for the elements of preparation as it has been shown to have an effect on the expatriate’s success in the assignment.

2.1.2 Glass-ceiling Phenomenon

The term glass ceiling was introduced in 1986 and used as a metaphor to describe what was occurring in the corporate world and it refers to the unseen artificial barriers that inhibit women from top executive jobs (Insch et al., 2008). The authors Insch et al. (2008) further argue that it is a similar problem now that exists in expat assignments in MNCs, in many MNCs, promotion to the highest levels of management comes from the pool of middle-level managers who have had international assignment(s).

In many organisations, international assignments have been “masculinised” and subtly deemed inappropriate for female candidates. This is in line with Adler’s (1994) research which has been central in several studies within this field. Adler’s (1994) three myths holds the most common “myths” to why so few women hold positions within international management. The first myth explains that women are not interested in being international managers due to family reasons. Results from her survey, investigating over 1,000 graduating MBA students, revealed no significant difference in the interest of pursuing international careers. The myth that women are not as willing to expatriate for work as men has been dispelled (Adler, 1994). Women and men have an equal interest in expatriate assignments at some time during their career. Adler investigated the second myth to whether organisations are reluctant to recruit female expatriates. This myth turned out to be, in fact, true as many organisations were found hesitant, if not outright resistant, to send female managers on international assignments. At last, Adler examined the third myth which claimed that foreigners’ prejudice against women renders them ineffective as female expatriates. Her results found that host country nationals were not as reluctant to female managers as previously estimated. As so has the myth claiming that host-country managers do not want female expatriates, been declined.
According to Adler (2002), evidence shows that women are in fact less likely to be selected as international managers than comparable men because of unfounded bias towards females by home-country selectors. According to the author, the skills and knowledge gained by the professionals through expatriating will result in gaining higher levels of jobs and higher pay for the international competencies that they have acquired.

Research has shown low numbers of female expatriates (Janssens et al., 2006). There has been an underrepresentation of women in expatriation for a long time (Fischlmayr, 2002; Adler 1984). Despite women’s increased investment in higher education to enter lower- and middle-level managerial positions in response to the rapid increase in global activity and global competition, the growth rate of female expatriates continue to be slow (Linehan, 2002; Speranza 2017). According to Bastida (2018), a managers’ international experience in MNCs seems to be essential for the advancement of the company’s internationalisation strategy. Managers with effective intercultural skills, are relevant assets, for companies that compete in a borderless world. It is argued that it is a prerequisite to have international experience in order to obtain higher managerial positions in MNCs.

Due to the limited number of females assigned overseas, many authors refer to expatriate assignments as the second layer of glass, the glass ceiling, that refers to the invisible barrier that limits female managers to advancement to higher managerial positions. Due to the lack of these professional opportunities faced by women, they may not be able to acquire the international experience necessary to compete with their male counterparts in managerial positions and move up the career ladder in an organisation (Speranza, 2017). Research has highlighted that there are no differences in the expatriate effectiveness of male and female (Bastida, 2018). Considering the fact that women have proven that they are equal to their male peers, overseas’ opportunities remain infrequent and the responsibly has been placed on both multinational organisations as well as female managers to break this second glass ceiling.

Many following studies conclude that the lack of women in international assignments seems to be related to the organisation. According to Acker (1990), gender is embedded in organisational forms and decisions and therefore gender and organisations might be seen as integrated. Taking this into consideration, the perception of an organisation’s structure, culture and assumptions have long been shaped, built and adapted to a male perspective. As such, females have long been placed in male contexts. Gender differences in organisations were not caused by the characteristics of individuals, but due to its organisational structure (Kanter, 1977). Tharenou (2010) claims that women are underrepresented in managerial positions and
company international assignments due to gender discrimination. The author argues that there is a lack of fairness in treating men and women equally in their selection, assignment and promotion process, as well as not assigning comparable women and men equally in higher management positions and postings abroad. Women acquire managerial roles less often than their comparable men and are usually lower in the managerial hierarchy.

There is extensive literature about the glass ceiling in one’s home country as well as the glass ceiling faced by women who want to pursue careers in international management. Barriers prevent female managers from progressing to senior managerial positions in domestic and international management. Barriers include the obligation to balance home life and career, isolation and loneliness, constantly being aware of being a woman in a man’s world, having to prove themselves to others, and having to work harder and be better than their male counterparts. The glass ceiling still exists in expatriate assignment opportunities, in fact, the expatriation glass ceiling is identified to exist by many organisational-level causes. According to Insch et al. (2008), the glass ceiling in the home country is a contributory factor to the low participation rate of women in expatriate assignments. The lack of mentoring and networking relationships was among the most significant barriers facing women managers in their pursuit of careers in management. In terms of career development, many activities by organisations that are available to men are less available to women, hence, women managers who desire expatriate assignments must be more proactive in managing their careers. The role of the MNCs plays an important role in breaking the barriers that still exist for women seeking international experience. Walsh and Schyns (2010) argue that the responsibility for the employee’s career is more in the hands of the organisation than the individual. Companies should provide career opportunities for their employers where career development opportunities will be beneficial for the organisation alike. Until both parties in this dilemma face this problem, the expatriate glass ceiling will remain strong.

2.2 Organisational Culture

There are various definitions of the term organisational culture in the existing literature. Many of the definitions do not give an accurate description of the actual meaning of organisational culture itself, but rather relate or reflect it to the more general definition of culture (Schein, 1987). It is described as “the shared values, beliefs, or perceptions held by employees within an organisation or organisational unit.” (Tsai, 2011, p. 1). Every organisation has a culture and is formed on the basis where all members of an organisation should share common principles
in order to be successful. Organisational culture can influence how the members of an organisation set their personal and professional goals, perform tasks and administrate resources to achieve them. In addition, it also has an effect of how employees consciously and subconsciously think, make decisions, makes them feel, perceive and act (Schein, 1990). Schein (2004) outlined that organisational culture holds a set of structures, routines, rules and norms that guide or constrain behaviour and can be described as the cluster of values which are dominating in a particular organisation. These values are generated by myths, anecdotes and stories from the organisation’s history. Hence, culture is the underlying reason for how members of an organisation work together (Farrell, 2018; Schein and Schein 2016). This is what makes an organisational culture complex and not easy to capture or define (Rajala et al., 2012).

In line with Alvesson (1956; 2002), who argues that the culture of an organisation is a complex term due to its central aspect of an organisational life, the author further states that senior organisational members are the ones who always underscore the importance of what is more or less important by framing and managing the culture. This means that the culture of an organisation can be expressed and reproduced in formal organisational structures, strategic plans, administrative systems and so forth (2002, pp. 26-28). Therefore, it is important to understand the presence and significance of organisational culture as it is an amalgam consisting of values, codes, and morals, which in turn, influence all areas of a business, such as the management, business concepts, strategies, management control and marketing. It also reflects an organisation’s mission and the idea of it to develop a shared mindset about how to perform and interact with each other and with clients (Asif, 2010). The organisational culture grows over time by the personalities of the members of an organisation and can be reflected in various operational aspects such as in the dress code, office set up, income, hiring decisions, business hours. Schein further states that with time and shared learning we come to share how we talk, what we perceive in our relevant environment, what we think about it, and what makes us feel good (2016, p. 9).

The longer the organisation has existed, the more thoughts and emotions of the members come to be alike.” In other words, the culture of an organisation reflects the attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and values that are shared by the employees (Muls et al., 2015). Organisations strive to establish the “right” culture to promote effectiveness and ethical values. The “right” culture emphasises and by promoting the right culture, organisational performance is aligned with the overall organisational objectives and purpose.
2.2.1 Competing Values Framework

In order to classify and understand the culture of the organisation of our choice, the Competing Values Framework (CVF) is adopted in this study to measure the organisational culture. The conceptual framework was developed in the early 1980s by Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983) to integrate criteria of organisational effectiveness and aimed at assessing organisational culture. The CVF model is widely accepted framework among researchers due to its validation by an increasing number of researchers as a model of culture and measurement instrument for other organisational phenomena (Al-Shammari and Al-Am, 2018; Trivellas and Dargenidou, 2009; Quinn, 1988). Furthermore, CVF is also used as a tool to map organisations’ culture based on four types of culture and conducting comparative analysis. The model consists of a four-cell model which emphasises on the competing tensions and conflicts across two axes (see Figure 1).

As shown, the two primary factors on each axis are based on the degree of control versus flexibility and whether there is an internal focus or external orientation. The intersection of the two axis defines the following four quadrants of organisational culture: clan, adhocracy, hierarchy and market (Trivellas and Dargenidou, 2009; Quinn and Rohrbaugh, 1983). On the right side of the model, the clan culture is characterised by a high degree of flexibility and an internal focus whereas a hierarchical culture has a high degree of control and is internally focused. On the left side of the circle, an adhocracy culture has a high degree of flexibility but is externally focused while a market culture has a high degree of controlling behaviour as well but is externally focused.

*Figure 1. CVF Model*

*Source 1. Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983)*
(1) Organisations with a clan culture value employee commitment, openness, loyalty, empowerment, teamwork, flexibility, morale and personal involvement to name a few. The term clan culture is used as it is similar to a family-type environment as it emphasises an internally focused organisation that seems more like an extended family rather than an economic entity. Clan cultures are related to a high level of trust and leaders within such cultures can be approached very easily by employees who usually have a lot in common. On the other hand, they constrain conflict and are resistant to change (Zammuto and Krakower, 1991; Ali Shurbagi, 2015).

(2) The adhocracy culture is externally focused and flexible and characterised by innovation. It stresses entrepreneurship, creativity and proactiveness. This type of culture reflects organisations that are in the direction for growth and in discovering new market opportunities. The organisational members within this culture entail a very flexible, adaptable and external oriented characteristic (Al-Shammari and Al-Am, 2018).

(3) Hierarchy cultures are very formal and structured. A hierarchical culture focuses on order, uniformity, certainty, stability, and control. Rules and regulations are applied to make sure that the organisation runs smoothly. Other deeply embraced values in hierarchy cultures are centralisation of decision making, reliability, responsibilities, standardisation of procedures, measurements and dependability. Employees are not allowed a lot of freedom and need to follow procedures (Trivellas and Dargenidou, 2009; Cameron and Freeman, 1991).

(4) A market culture is mostly concerned about results and getting the job done. It focuses on productivity, task accomplishment, profitability. Market culture emphasises goal achievement, planning and setting objectives and efficiency (Trivellas and Dargenidou, 2009). Furthermore, market cultures reflects an external oriented focus and favours stability and control. It is a competitive culture and the focus lies on achieving goals.

2.3 Job Characteristics Model
A fundamental model used in the job design literature is the model introduced in 1976 by organisational psychologists, Hackman and Oldham (1976) referred to as the Job Characteristics Model (JCM). The theory has been a dominant approach to explain how job
satisfaction, motivation and work performance are affected by job design and it has been used for job redesign and workplace involvement where organisations can optimise the fit between the employees and the job (Goštautaitė and Bučiūnienė, 2010; Hackman and Oldham, 1976). When organisations are facing downsizing or restructuring, the JCM can be used to redesign jobs, maximise motivation, and improve the organisation’s overall capability to compete in the global marketplace (Casey and Robbins, 2010). The JCM has been shown by many studies to be a widely-accepted taxonomy of five job characteristics and valid across various establishment in several industries (DeVaro et al., 2007). According to Goštautaitė and Bučiūnienė (2010), the model has yielded results linked to various personal job outcomes, including intrinsic work motivation, job satisfaction, lower absenteeism, work quality, less turnover and productivity to name a few.

As the model indicates (see Figure 2), the JCM comprises of six areas which is the focus of the study. The five core dimensions of the model consist of skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback which are presented below. These five characterises stimulate three different psychological states which are the determinants of various work-related outcomes (Syukrina et al., 2014; Casey and Robbins, 2010; Champoux, 1980).

Figure 2. The JCM

Source 2. Hackman and Oldham (1976)
(1) **Skill variety**—relates to the extent to which a particular position requires diverse skills from an employee. The skills incorporated would, therefore, lead to the employee’s acquisition of additional skills. By making use of a variety of skills in one’s job, the employees are less likely to experience monotony and will more likely find meaning in their work.

(2) **Task identity**—refers to the completion of whole tasks by an employee from the beginning stage of the task and with an end-result. In order for the employee to be satisfied, they should be in charge of the whole process of the assignment and strive for an outcome by the end of the project. Being part of the whole process, would attribute meaning to the outcome.

(3) **Skill significance**—refers to projects that would positively impact the well-being of other people, either within the organisation or in the world. Working with a task that would make others feel better emotionally or physically, increases motivation.

(4) **Autonomy**—is linked to the degree of freedom that an employee has in order to complete a particular task. It stands for the “how” the control over procedures to be used to complete tasks, and the “when” which includes the scheduling of the tasks. The more independent an individual is, the higher the level of responsibility the person has and as such, the more engaged will the worker be.

(5) **Feedback**—is the degree to which the worker obtains direct and clear information of the results and effectiveness of the performance of the work activities performed by the individual. The role of feedback is to appraise employees when doing a good job and when that is not the case, to make them improve (Hackman and Oldham, 1976; Casey and Robbins, 2010; Goštautaitė and Bučiūnienė, 2010; Allan et al., 2018).

The second section of the JCM is composed of the Critical Psychological States which include the experienced meaningfulness of the work, experienced responsibility for outcomes of the work, and knowledge of the actual results of the work.
The first state, experienced meaningfulness of the work, relates to how the work can take personal meaning and how the work accomplishes something. This is influenced by the experience of the work being important, valuable and worthwhile. The three factors that affect this variable are skill variety, task identity and task significance.

The second one, experienced responsibility for outcomes of the work, refers to the variables that generate a sense of personal responsibility for the work outcomes. In other words, the worker must personally be responsible and accountable for the results of the work carried out. This particular variable is impacted by the primary factor autonomy, which can increase or decrease the level of this variable.

The third variable, the knowledge of the actual results of the work activities, links the results of an individual’s work with the knowledge of the work performed. This is affected by the core job characteristic of feedback as it deals with the extent of understanding of the effectiveness of the work activities by the individual on a regular basis (Hackman and Oldham, 1976; Loher et al., 1985, Johari and Yahya, 2016).

If the aforementioned job characteristics that lead to some critical psychological states are fulfilled then the outcome would be a highly effective and satisfied employee. This is supported by other research findings (Chen and Chiu, 2009) which imply that workers who assume that their work is important and meaningful tend to display high levels of job satisfaction and are likely to display greater work involvement and be more confident at work without the need of supervision or request. On the other side of the spectrum, there are some grey aspects known as moderators.

These include knowledge and skill, growth need strength, content satisfaction which relate to overall motivation. Some drawbacks include that not all employees will have the same response, especially if they lack the necessary knowledge and skills, the need to accomplish work-related aspects or if the external aspects of the job such as wages, colleagues and job security, are not fulfilled (Casey and Robbins, 2010 ; Allan et al., 2018). This model incorporates different aspects that might, as a whole, lead to job satisfaction. This study used the Job Characteristics Model as the underlying theory as it does not base the satisfactions of the employees on one sole variable. The different aspects that it comprises of, allow for a deeper analysis and a closer look inside various characteristics of the job positions of the people interviewed.
2.4 The relationship between Organisational Culture and Job Satisfaction

The relationship between organisational culture and job satisfaction has received considerable attention from academics and practitioners. Research has shown that there is a significant relationship between the two factors (Ali Shurbagi, 2015). Job satisfaction is a vital element to the success of an organisation. As organisations are continuously striving to improve their overall operations, the level of their employees job satisfaction is an imperative component to achieve organisational goals and objectives (Hosseinkhanzadeh et al., 2013). According to Morris and Bloom (2002), the level of a person’s job satisfaction can be greatly influenced by the culture that is present in their organisation. Studies have shown that certain types of cultures in an organisation result in higher levels of job satisfaction and that certain biographical characteristics such as age and gender, as well as other attributes like years of experience and educational background, are important aspects that affect the levels of job satisfaction (Bellou, 2010). It should be noted, however, that in MNCs, the concept of national culture plays a vital role since the impact of the local values and assumptions, influences the organisational culture in the subsidiary of a multinational organisation. This in turn, creates a multi-facet environment for MNCs (Din and Ghetany, 2016).

The level of job satisfaction varies greatly across the four cultural types of organisations. For instance, it is argued by various studies that a clan and adhocracy culture provide the highest levels of job satisfaction. This means that members of an organisation are influenced by cultures that emphasise on one goal and mutual consideration (Hosseinkhanzadeh et al., 2013; Nam and Kim, 2016).

Carvalho et al. (2018)’s study suggests that a clan culture has a significant effect on the dimensions of job satisfaction. In their study, the adhocracy culture had a relationship with job satisfaction as well. On the other hand, a hierarchy culture presented significant negative relations with job satisfaction, and a market culture had a weak or non-existent relationship with job satisfaction. Moreover, the authors note that the degree of job satisfaction varies between gender, companies, region, country and profession.

Based on Al-Shammari and Al-Am (2018)’s recent research investigating the relationship between organisational culture and job satisfaction in an organisation using the competing values framework, their results indicated that the most dominant culture type related to job satisfaction is the clan culture (the preferred culture). The employees emphasised a strong satisfaction within their jobs within this culture which in turn resulted in higher levels of productivity, commitment, well-being and loyalty, and lower levels in turnover rates.
This is in accordance with the findings of Din and Ghetany (2016), who also found that the clan culture has a positive effect on job satisfaction. Based on the authors research, the results indicated a positive and significant correlation between the clan organisational culture and the level of job satisfaction. Whereas there was a significant negative relationship between the market culture and job satisfaction. An important note is that their research was conducted within an oil and gas sector, however, despite the fact that the market culture was dominant in that particular organisation and industry, the employees were seeking and preferring a clan culture in order to receive higher levels of job satisfaction.

2.5 Summary of Theories

This study aims to investigate the effect of organisational culture on the job satisfaction of female expatriates working for Alpha Cosmetics. In order to investigate this relationship, it is important to first, identify the type of organisational culture that Alpha Cosmetics possesses. For this identification, the competing values framework was used. Then in order to understand the level of job satisfaction of the respondents, we used the job characteristics model. Since we are solely, focusing on expatriation, we provided an overview of what being an expatriate means and how the organisation treats them. More specifically our focus is female expatriates and that is why we went into the theory of glass-ceiling and mentioned the blockages that females find in their journey to expatriation.

Overall, the model shows that there is a logical connection among all the theories used in this section. The organisational culture of Alpha Cosmetics is going to impact on the
satisfaction of employees interested in expatriation assignments and more specifically, female employees that decide to expatriate.

3. Methodology

This chapter presents how the study was realised and the approaches used in order to conduct it. We describe in detail, our selection, how the interviews were conducted and how the data was analysed.

3.1 Research Design and Approach

This study emanates from an exploratory research design was used in this study since we believe that there is a gap in the literature and our topic is relatively unexplored. This research design allows us to change the course of our study based on the findings and the responses provided during the interviews (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 171).

We deemed appropriate to use an abductive research approach for this study, as it allows for in-depth insight into the empirical phenomenon (Dubois and Gadde, 2002). Since there has been little research conducted on the subject, this research approach focuses on developing already existing theories, instead of forming new ones (Dubois and Gadde, 2002). Through abductive reasoning, logical inferences are made to build theories about the empirical world. This reasoning moves freely between empirical data and theory and it overcomes the shortcomings associated with inductive and deductive reasoning (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

3.2 Choice of Method

As our topic aims to investigate the job satisfaction of female expatriates, it means that we are going to focus on the different, individual perspectives. When trying to fathom and investigate a phenomenon through individual assumptions, a qualitative study is used. A quantitative strategy would not allow us to focus on the interpretations of the social actors in depth and that is why we considered a qualitative research strategy more suitable for the particular study that we aim to conduct (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Moreover, since not knowledge is known in our area of focus, a qualitative approach will be the most suitable in order to get a deeper understanding of the subject (Jacobsen, 2010; Yin, 2014).

In order to respond to our research question, we used a qualitative data analysis. According to Bryman (2004), analysing qualitative data is not very straightforward as it can be quite messy due to the large number of textual documents. It is very important to transcribe the
data before the analysis begins, as the responses incorporate a lot of different aspects that need to be read through multiple times, to be understood and then attribute meaning to them. Transcribing is a proper method to acquire data without missing out on important information and it is done by recording the responses of the respondents. All the interviews were recorded in order to prevent biases and to not miss any important data and content during the interview. Additionally, the recorded interviews will be transcribed afterwards. Taking notes during the interview can be very distracting for the respondent and runs the risk of missing out on some aspects mentioned that might be of importance during the analysis. After the interview is complete, the researcher listens to the recording and then writes down everything that was said in detail. Even though this process requires a lot of time, it is very helpful for the researcher as he can review the data and code them before continuing with the analysis. Once the transcription is completed, coding takes place. Coding is a process that allows to efficiently navigate through the data and divide it in themes. When the data is divided, the different theories that are outlined in the literature review are finally applied to the data so as to attribute meaning to the overall study. Lastly, similarities and differences in the responses need to be identified in order to gain a deeper understanding and answer to the research question (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

3.3 Data Selection

The selection process was based on a non-random, explorative sampling. It was considered that the most appropriate sampling design for our study would be a combination of convenience sampling and judgemental or, otherwise called, subjective sampling. Both sampling designs are considered non-random. A convenience sampling suggests that the researcher makes the selection of individuals between the ones that are on his/her disposal. When a phenomenon is investigated in depth, a judgemental or subjective sampling design is used (Bryman and Bell, 2015). The respondents are selected based on their characteristics and the relevance they have for the study.

In our case, the first selection was made using subjective/judgemental sampling in which we selected potential interviewees from female expatriates that are working for Alpha Cosmetics. The second selection was a convenience sampling, as we chose the first ten who responded to our request. Alpha Cosmetics in particular was used in our study due to the feminine identity it possesses being one of the most renowned, beauty and cosmetics companies in the world. The nature of the organisation, in combination with the high number
of female employees working for the company, made it interesting to investigate whether the organizational culture and values of such a company would promote female competence and have a large number of females sent on international assignments.

Bryman and Bell (2015) stated that the samples selection should be selected based on their appropriateness. In line with the research question, the category of people being selected are female managers. For selecting our ten respondents, we established four criteria so that the sample for our interviews is representative for our study. All ten needed to be females, as the study focuses on them and be part of at least one international assignment within the first so as to be considered expatriates. They needed to be within the ages of 25 and 40, so that we get mixed individual perspectives, both from fresh employees that recently started and more advanced. Lastly, they needed to hold a graduate and a postgraduate degree as based on Adler (1994), employees that are commonly eligible for expatriate positions, attain a high level of educational background.

We contacted the respondents via email and LinkedIn, a social communication platform for working individuals, where we explained the purpose of our assignment and kindly requested them to be part of our investigation. Those that accepted, were provided with a brief description of our objectives and our interview guide. We wanted to give them some time in advance, so that they could reflect on the questions and provide us with responses that would help us reach a deeper understanding. The ten respondents that were selected, were placed on six different geographic locations, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Melbourne, London, Paris and Milan. We wanted to have diversity in the offices so that we can spot similarities and differences across borders. Having a wide selection of locations, allows us to acquire a better insight in the organisational culture and whether it upholds across different offices.

3.4 Interviews

The study incorporates primary data that were gathered through the interviews. This form of data is of utmost importance as the different responses provided by the respondents, give purpose to the theories used and support us in answering the research question and reaching a conclusion.

The topic we decided to investigate, called for a semi-structured interview format. This type is a combination of a structured and an unstructured interview, as it provides a specific structure so as to not stray from the point and acquire all the valuable data, but at the same time gives freedom to ask follow-up questions based on the response that the respondent provided.
This allows the interviewer to receive more detailed perspectives and gain a better understanding (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Four of the interviews were conducted in person and the rest were made possible through Skype or telephone, depending on the preference of the respondent. The interviews varied in their duration as each respondent had different experiences to share and adaptations were made on some questions based on the sayings of the respondents. The average duration was 45 minutes and the longest one lasted 90 minutes.

3.5 Operationalization

While conducting our semi-structured interviews, we used an interview guide that was prepared before the interviews as a tool to support us throughout the interviews. The same interview guide was applied to all ten interviews and incorporated thoroughly planned questions so that we get an insight in the respondents personal views and experiences on the investigated topic. Our guide commences with some profile questions to be absolutely certain that the respondents fulfil the criteria we have established for our data selection. Then it is divided in three themes with seven to thirteen questions in each theme, excluding the follow-up questions posed during the interviews. The first theme concerned female expatriates, the second was about job satisfaction and the third about organizational culture.

The first theme of the interviews was about female expatriates and it aimed to gain an insight on how the female respondents feel in the organisation in terms of value, their challenges regarding getting the expatriate position and their hardships that they faced when moving to their new location. Furthermore, we wanted to know about their views on the glass-ceiling phenomenon and whether they had experienced it. The second theme looked into the job satisfaction of the female expatriates and its purpose was to find out more details about the characteristics of their job position, their favourite and least favourite aspects of it and how these aspects impact on their level of satisfaction. For that we created a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being very dissatisfied, 2 being dissatisfied, 3 being neutral, 4 satisfied and 5 very satisfied. We did that to understand their level of satisfaction in relation with their job characteristics.

The third and last theme, addressed organisational culture and it attempted to provide us with information so that we can classify the type of organisational culture that is prevalent within the offices Alpha Cosmetics. We also wanted to compare and contrast the culture among the different offices that the respondents have worked in to understand whether the same organisational culture was present across borders within the same organisation. Last but not least, we were interested in finding out the inclination of the organisation to promote
competence so as to combine it with the culture behind expatriation processes and understand how that might impact the job satisfaction of female expatriates.

3.6 Criticism of Interviews
The interviewer effect is a main criticism made towards the interview format. This effect takes place when the interviewer allows for his own bias to surface during the interview and influence the responses of the interviewee (NE.se, 2017). So as to avoid having such an impact, we constructed the questions in a way that would not lead the interviewees towards a certain direction, but instead allow their personal opinion to shine through. Body language plays an important role and it can affect the interviewee. We tried to eliminate it as much as possible so that we do not influence their responses in any way. The surroundings are very important as well. We allowed the interviewees to choose the location where the physical interviews would be conducted so that they are comfortable.

3.7 Ethical Research Aspects
When conducting an interview, a researcher needs to keep in mind some ethical considerations so as to protect the identity of his respondents and provide them with all the necessary information. Five ethical considerations mentioned by Bryman and Bell (2015) were followed before, during and after the completion of the ten interviews with the female expatriate of Alpha Cosmetics. These considerations are consent, demand of information, confidentiality, avoidance of misleading information about the study and utilisation.

All the respondents provided us with their consent to use the data from the interviews in our study. We answered all their questions about the purpose of the study with honesty and without misleading them into thinking something else. We sent the interview guide to them beforehand, so they knew about the information that we are requesting in advance. We further decided to maintain the anonymity of the respondents. This allowed them more freedom to express themselves and make any comments they wanted when asked questions. By protecting their identity, they were comfortable to provide us with more insights in the company and we were able to gain more information for our study.

We decided to establish anonymity for the organisation we are investigating as well. We named them Alpha Cosmetics to keep their identity hidden and not disclose important organisational data that they potentially are unwilling to share with the public. Despite that, we did send our study to all the respondents working for the organisation and even to the manager
of the HR department so that they are aware of our findings and maybe help them improve in some aspects and make their organisation even better.

4. Empirical Data  
*In the following chapter, the responses of the ten female expatriates interviewed presents.*

4.1 Female Expatriates

- The first question posed to the respondents was whether they feel valued in the organisation and if so to what they attribute that. All respondents said that they feel valued more or less, to a certain extent. R1 said that “I feel valued enough...this is the top position I can get in the company”. But she does not feel fully valued as she continues “there is still this trend where I think men get more management positions”. Three respondents (R7, R9 and R10) expressed their feeling of being valued based on the support they get from the organisation. R10 stated: “I would say very valued based on the support and opportunities that I get from the company”. R8 was the employee who felt the less valued and commented “I feel quite valued, but sometimes I feel like my work is not as much appreciated” and she would like to receive more feedback in order to understand better how valued she is. R5 stated “it is quite difficult when you are working for a big corporation to feel valued as an individual...so getting this feel of being valued takes time...valued more and more now cause people get to know me”. R6 also, supports this claim by saying that “this comes with time”.

- In terms of equality, the majority of the respondents described the organisation as pretty equal. R1 and R2 ranked the organisation pretty high in comparison to the rest. R2 stated “It’s very equal” and R1 ranked the organisation with 8 out of 10. On the other hand, nine respondents stressed the inequality between men and women in the organisation. There are too many women in the organisation and few men, but there are too few women in the top management positions and few men in the lower junior positions. R5 stated “it is a concern in this company due to the fact that there are so many women so you can’t avoid the fact that you need to talk about equality and especially gender equality in this type of environment and this type of industry. And I think that the organisation does a good job talking about it and putting information out there...if you go all the way to the management committee, there is a lot of men.” Furthermore, she stated that there is an “almost 70, sometimes 80-20 ratio, of men and women in the company.” Both R7 and R9 mentioned that it is an important aspect in
the organisation and work is done towards the issue. R9 commented that “they are working towards hiring more men in the lower positions”. R8 stated that there is only one female senior manager out of four at the top of each division.

- Everyone except R1 was familiar with the glass-ceiling phenomenon. R10’s thoughts regarding the phenomenon were that “you set the glass barrier where you want it to be yourself, so I wouldn’t let it stand in my way. And I have not experienced it.” R7 believes that it can be experienced when you reach higher positions but, it also depends on how you face it, it should not affect your career progression if you do not let it. Additionally, none of the respondents, except R7, had experienced it. According to R1’s experience, it is more a question of nationality rather than gender. She believes that the fact she is not French stops her from reaching higher positions within the company and not that she is a female. She continued by saying that for her nationality, she has reached high enough. R2 believes that the organisation is trying to tackle it and set the example for others. R5 had experienced another kind of glass-ceiling in the company as she mentioned that “we have more of a function ceiling within our own function”. Some functions have a specific path that is paved out for them but some others are unclear about their development. R7 stated she had kind of experienced it as she had applied to an expatriate role in Asia and her male counterpart got the position despite having less experience than her. “He had less experience and years in the company than me right, but regardless of that, he is abroad to HK as an expatriate doing the same job as I am currently doing here in London but.. with the support from the organisation”. She believes that men are prioritised when it comes to different job roles in the organisation as they are so few. Instead, she got sent abroad as an internal transfer without any support whereas “the company helped him to prepare with all the paperwork, documents, accommodation and flight ticket prior to moving”.

- All of the respondents believed that the organisation is open for female expatriates and it’s view of a person’s suitability for an expatriate role is not gender based. R7 however, believes that “men sometimes are more prioritised as expats in the company as they are so few within the organisation”. R2 stated that she thinks that the organisation is very gender neutral “They are looking more for intellectual diversity rather than gender diversity so people have equal chances to come into the team.”. R8 mentioned that HR focuses more on who would fit the best in the position. An important note by R5 was
that she is an expatriate by all means but not in the eyes of the organisation. She stated that: “those are expensive so that's why usually its senior position. I remember when I asked my boss about it and I wanted to move, I was expecting to end up in one of those categories and he said, you are too junior, the group will not finance like they would for a senior position.” R6 said that “the seniority level makes you suitable or unsuitable.”. R3 and R4 agree on suitability being based on seniority.

- When asked about if the organisation is supportive in regards to the different life roles of a woman all respondents believe the organisation is supportive to help women achieve a better work-life balance, expect R5 and R6. They could not say whether the organisation is supportive or not. R5 stated, “it's a difficult question for me to answer because I am single with no kids.” R5 and R7 mentioned that the organisation has to adapt to the country’s culture. R7 said that “I do find the organisation supportive to the different life roles of a woman...and especially in Sweden...I also, think that the company is open with the maternal leave in Sweden in comparison to other countries”. R5 mentioned that the working from home system that was implemented with success in Denmark, was just at the beginning when she moved to Australia. For R8 whether it is supportive or not depends on the manager “if your manager is a man that does not have children he would understand your situation less”.

- When asked about how they were given their current position, whether they were promoted or requested it, only three respondents (R1, R4 and R8) were promoted. The rest of the respondents requested their roles. R5 stated that she requested the role from her manager in Denmark as she wanted to be sent abroad.

- When asked whether they believe that there are barriers or issues for female expatriates depending on which position and role she has none of the respondents based the barriers and issues on gender, except R3. R3 believes that “The barriers come based on the life role of the woman. A married woman with kids would have a harder time being an expat, especially if her husband was unable to follow her in the new location”. R2 stated that “You need to have been in a higher position in order to be eligible for an expat position and it has nothing to do whether you are a male or barriers and issues. These are factors such as there a female.”. R5 said that she thinks that there are other factors that are more related to duration of the stay, the willingness of being sent abroad,
and the possibility to be sent abroad in regards to visa requirements. For R5, the barrier was the immigration status. Even if her manager would like to promote her, she would not be able because maybe something goes wrong and she has to depart immediately. So that makes her move vertically every time she decides to make a move and even if she wants to keep moving she needs to think about the progression of her career.

- The following question was in regards to how they experienced the first period of their move to their new location and whether it was hard to adapt. Seven respondents (R1, R2, R4, R5, R6, R8 and R10) found it more difficult with the move to the new location. A repenting objective by the three respondents R5, R6 and R10 was the clash and difficulty to understand the new culture. R2, R5 and R8 did not feel like they received the support needed from the organisation for them to adjust more quickly to the new office. R2 stated: “The organisation wasn’t that good....I didn’t really have the support from them when I started...So I think the move abroad for them are a bit complicated still...So it was hard for them to understand when we negotiates the terms of the contract. I feel it’s something that they don’t really realise, I can also tell one and a half year after I had signed my contract, we are still talking to them about it. So I feel this is something they really need to improve on, understand everything that comes with a new country, so the way of living, the cost of living”. R4 faced a similar problem. “I was not supported when I moved to the new location as I had expected. I had to figure out everything by myself. Find a place to stay, deal with the bureaucracy. The organization simply offered me the position and expected me to be there on the date I started but I did not have any guidance about my move”. She further mentioned that adapting to the new office was a bit hard as well “the culture in the office was quite different. I think the national culture plays a role here. Swedes are a bit more laid back in comparison with French people”. R6 supported the claims of the aforementioned respondents by saying “it would be the lack of support from the company in my move. Imagine having to take care of everything by myself...It was a lot of bureaucratic stuff that needed to be done. The company did not help with any of that”. Whereas R7, R9 and R3 were the only ones who experienced the least difficulty. R7 had lived in the country before so she was familiar with the culture, she also had support from her old friends. However, she did find it a bit hard to get used to the society again. R3 said “I can’t say it was hard to adapt since I lived here before I moved to London...the difficulties I was faced with was barely getting used to
the new office”. In the case of R9, she moved back to her home country Italy from Denmark. She did not find it difficult to adapt to the new office as she was familiar with the way of working. R1 said that the difference between the two offices was visible. “I think Sweden’s overall culture at Alpha Cosmetics is less stressful versus Ukraine….Somehow I felt a little bit lonely for example because people around my team they were a little bit suspicious who is this person and what can she do…But it’s more on the personal level, not work culture because everyone was quite welcoming in the business”.

- When asked if they would do anything different with their move, four respondents (R1, R3, R8 and R9) said no. The rest of the respondents (R2, R4, R5, R6, R7 and R10) would have done things differently prior to moving. R2 stated that “I would have been a bit more strict when I moved on the terms of the contract… I would try to make things much clearer or try at least to come to the country and get my knowledge of how things work here to feedback directly to the persons involved”. R7 also, supported that she would negotiate the transfer in terms of support better. For R4 “I would want more guidance. I would hope the organization would be more supportive and full of advice”. Additionally, she would plan her move better to adjust faster. R5 said that she would have done the move differently. She doesn’t regret it but she is concerned about her pension. The fact that she is moving to different countries, does not allow her to contribute to her pension fund in France which makes her lose a lot of money. Those that are expatriates by design do not have such issues but it is something she needs to think about, especially when she decides to get married and have children. Lastly, R10 would not change anything about her office but she would want to understand the different divisions and the national cultures better, before moving.

4.2 Job Satisfaction

- When asked to describe a day in their daily work life, the answers were quite similar in regards to tasks consisting of checking and answering a lot of emails and regular meetings.

- When asked about the favourite aspect of their job, a repeating objective within the respondents (R1, R3, R4, R6, R7, and R9) was the people in the organisation. R1’s other favourite aspects are communication and activities with her team. What R2 loves
most about her job is the diversity and the fact that she is really involved and gets to manage a variety of aspects. R4 stated that “I like how no day is the same in my job”. Additionally, “I like how close we are all in the team...it is people that I collaborate perfectly”. R5’s favourite aspect is “this possibility to talk to absolutely anybody in the organisation and to potentially work with absolutely anybody in the organisation, I love that!”. Other than working with great people and teams as a favourite aspect, R7 enjoys interacting with clients and optimising market opportunities. R8’s favourite aspect is “everything that I do is visible for the consumers...it is nice to see all your work in stores during launches”.

- When asked about the least favourite aspects, three respondents (R2, R3, R10) stated administrative tasks. R2 stated “it's something that is very time consuming, and it's not something that is gonna bring anything to anyone if I can say so. Its when you have to handle holidays, expenses stuff like that. It's not the most exciting part.” R1 said that her least favourite part was presenting while R4 said that her least favourite aspect is the constant meetings “They serve a purpose but they are too many.” Due to R5’s specific job role she stated “I hate that I am so dependent on the rest of the organisation to do my work...if it doesn't come my way, I don’t see it, then there is a problem”. For R8, her frustration is constantly having to send reminders to different partners, suppliers, and colleagues in different offices because they have yet not answered important emails. R6 dislikes the pressure while R7 and R9 stated that due to heavy workload, she has to work from home outside working hours which can be very tiring and frustrating.

- Regarding the three factors that they consider the most important when it comes to how satisfied they are with their jobs, a common trend was the importance of having a positive and good team environment. R1, R3, R4, R6, R5 and R8, all raised the importance of people and office atmosphere in their responses. Three respondents (R1, R7 and R6) highlighted the economic factors as being important. For R1, written results are also of importance. R2 said “we are in the heart of the business, that’s the first...Second of all, i would say is really the human contact with the clients, you get a lot of energy from that and from our teams. This relation is very very valuable and the third one, I would say may again it’s really the diversity of the job. Having all those different projects and being involved in such a broad range of topics.” For R3, feeling
appreciated and being positively challenged are linked with job satisfaction. R4 said “my job itself. I personally really enjoy what I am doing and all the tasks that I have to take care of”. R5 said that she needs to feel challenged, having a social aspect on her work and also the need for recognition, feeling that she is valued. For R8, constructive feedback, team activities, as well as training and development are linked with her job satisfaction.

- Job satisfaction was assessed using a scale of 1-5 with 1 as very dissatisfied, 2 dissatisfied, 3 neutral, 4 satisfied and 5 very satisfied. When asked about how pleased the interviewees are with their job role, no respondent rated their satisfaction below two. The highest rankers where R1, R3, R4 (4 out of 5) and R2 (4-4.5 out of 5).

What makes R1 so satisfied with her job is “this is the highest in my career, the top position I ever had...I have a team to manage who I also like very much and enough responsibilities to keep me motivated”. For R2, the rating is so high as “we are a very strong team...there is a very good collaboration between all of us...the job is very exciting and that is the biggest part”. R3 also provides a high rating based on that she really likes the Swedish office even though it is smaller from what she was used to. R4 said that she is satisfied, but the missing one point is because there is always room for improvement.

Five respondents (R6, R7, R8, R9 and R10) ranked the organisation with a 3 from a 1-5 scale. R6 said that she gives a 3 because her salary pleases her. R7 gave that ranking as she feels very challenged and progressing in her role. For her to put 5, she would want to have a bit less work load, hence wanting to have more people in her team to divide the workload to. R8 said “I feel that my job in comparison to other job roles is less visible. And also, it is a lot of work here...so I have less of a good work-life
balance”. R9 said that she would want to have a larger compensation for the amount of work she does as she feels a lot of pressure and works long hours. R10 stated “I am not challenged that much and I am in my comfort zone so it becomes repetitive... for me if I put a 5 it would mean that I am out of my comfort zone and working with things that I never worked before”.

The lowest ranking was from R5 at 2.5, who said that “you are hired to do one thing but you end up doing something else”. She clarifies that by saying that the job description is very fluid because, things are changing fast and you need to be adaptable. In Denmark her workload was constantly increasing and when she moved to Australia she felt underused. She says that defined expatriates come with a description of what they are good at and their expertise, but she as an internal transfer was to be deemed by her manager in Australia through one interview and she currently does not feel that she is doing as much as she would like.

- R1, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, R9 and R10’s positions did not require them to make any lifestyle adjustment for their private life and career to function. R1 stated that on the contrary “my current position allows me to have a lifestyle that I am having now after changes in my private life like having a baby... I don’t think that if I had another, like a lower position, I would have been able to spend enough time with my family”. R3 is certain that this will change in the future when she has children. R6 commented “Thankfully not. On the contrary the position I have now helped me continue my relationship”. That happened because, her partner needed to move from France to Australia and that’s why she requested to be relocated and is happy that she did. R10 stated “I have more of a private life now than I had in my previous position”.

On the other hand, the two respondents, R2 and R8, had to make lifestyle adjustments for their current roles. In fact, R2 had to make a lot of adjustments when moving since her boyfriend could not move with her due to professional reasons. Also, the high cost of living in London that made her have roommates was a change for her. R8 said “I have more responsibility and workload in comparison to before, and I need to sacrifice my social life to get work done”.
Regarding what influences their meaningfulness at work, four of them (R2, R3, R4 and R6) responded that being part of something great and working for a company that does good is very important for them. R2 quoted “Then on a more global level, I think Alpha Cosmetics is a company that is trying to do a lot of good by having several projects...I think it is the company that is trying to do good, they are also big so it is kind of a duty as the beauty leader”. She continued by saying that her team that has a lot of passion influences her as well, and with her shared the same view, R7, R8 and R9. R7, R8 and R9 said that economic benefits are of great importance and of them, R7 and R9 added that credibility is important as well. What influences R1 at work is proper planning. She considers that if that would be to change, her meaningfulness would decrease. She adds that her people skills are very important and interacting with respect towards all stakeholders. What influences R5 is that her potential is used to the fullest and she hopes that will be the case soon in the Australian office. The characteristics that influence R10 are “complexity, pressure, that is outside my comfort zone so I would be learning a lot, it needs to be a bit new, more difficult, more challenging”.

When asked about the three main aspects that would motivate them towards an important assignment, six respondents (R2, R3, R5, R6, R9 and R10) said that they are motivated by doing something meaningful for the company that will be beneficial and have an impact. R5 said “Something that would be meaningful for the company, in terms of impact, that it would change something”. R2, R4 and R10 are motivated when they feel that their project would lead to something as then they have a specific goal to reach and are striving for a good result. R3, R4, R2 and R6 are motivated through collaboration with the people they work with, their team, and R5 is motivated when she works with experts on the field as she acquires new knowledge. R8 and R9 are also, very motivated when they notice that they are developing through an assignment as they acquire more and more knowledge. R5 needs to work with something new that she has not worked on before to feel motivation and at the same time R7, R8 and R10 need to feel challenged. R3, R6 and R7 need to feel valued and respected and that their efforts are recognized. R6 stated “gaining more respect after the project is complete. I mean that people recognize my effort and see how good I managed”. Three respondents, R7, R8 and R9, need to feel supported by their managers. R4 said that she is motivated by the assignment itself. Last but not least, when R1 gave an example of taking up a whole division in the organization by herself after her manager left. She had to do double the
work without her salary increasing. She requested a bonus and only when they offered it to her she felt valued.

- All ten respondents said that they are quite responsible in their positions. Some of them are responsible when they take on projects while others such as, R1 and R2, are responsible for a big division and many different aspects within it. R1 would be held accountable in front of the hub, for all the decisions made on behalf of her team and all the development and performance of mass categories. The amount of responsibilities she has make her feel quite autonomous, but her decisions still need to be in alignment with the hub. The same opinion is supported by R2 that says that even though she is autonomous most of the time and based on the project, someone higher in the hierarchy needs to approve of her decisions. R3, R4, R5, R6, R8 and R9 all share the same view and all feel autonomy on their daily tasks, but for bigger projects they need to consult and receive validation from someone in a top management position. R7 and R10, do not comment on the approval needed by someone more senior and only state that there is autonomy on their daily tasks which makes them feel independent and entrepreneurial.

- When asked about the feedback cycle, seven respondents (R1, R2, R3, R4, R6, R7 and R10) refer to two feedback cycles that the organization has. R3 stated “We have two cycles of feedback, one in the middle of the year and the other one at the end”. R6 also, said that there are small feedback sessions within the teams on a regular basis. Contrary to them, R8 stated “not a particular feedback cycle...the swedish office is better with feedbacks but, then also they are dealing with less people”. R9 said that they are better with feedback in Italy than in Denmark and that her current manager also has smaller status meetings with her on a regular basis for check ups on projects, tasks, but also overall happiness. R5 commented that when it comes to feedback people need to be able to receive it. “We need to give good feedback, and with good feedback I am referring to constructive feedback and people need to be able to receive it”. She also, remarked on her manager not always understanding what she attempts to say “can be an issue if your manager cannot take feedback...so we had a loss in translation in terms of giving feedback, she was understanding something else and I was saying something else”. R6 mentioned something similar by saying “people need to be delicate with what
they are saying. You need to support everything you are saying and not be harsh because, people can be hurt”.

• Seven out of ten respondents, believe that feedback is crucial for development and especially constructive feedback. As R8 said “Feedback is the key for personal and professional development. I cannot stress more about how important I believe constructive feedback is, especially for junior professionals like myself who really want to constantly keep growing and get better.” R1 on the contrary, is a person that does not take feedback well and is most likely to remember the negative rather than the positive. Feedback makes her take action but leaves her upset at the same time. R5 said that she likes receiving feedback but, not in the form of blaming that sometimes happens in the group in general. She needs to get constructive feedback so that she knows how to become better instead of just comments with no explanation.

Five respondents (R1, R3, R4, R6 and R10) would not like to receive more feedback. R4 even said “I think without feedback we cannot become better...I can’t say that I would want more. Cause then I would feel like I am doing something wrong all the time. The amount I am getting is good”. R6 and R2, frequently have small feedback sessions within their teams and that is why they do not need more. R7, R8 and R9, had a different opinion, and would like to receive more feedback. R8 supported the claim by saying “I believe it is very important with feedback to know what you could have done better and also, in order to improve for next time”.

• Half of the respondents (R1, R2, R4, R6 and R7) stated that they use a diversity of skills in their role. The same respondents said that they feel positively challenged by their position. The other half are not as challenged and their recurrent response was that they are quite comfortable and in their comfort zone at the moment. Only R5, did not seem pleased by not using diversity in her daily skills and expressed negative feelings. She hopes to be more challenged by her manager in the future.

4.3 Organisational Culture

• When asked to describe the office culture all the respondents used similar adjectives such as positive, good, amazing and with a pleasant vibe. R1 said that people try to
avoid stress in the Swedish office and R2 mentioned how the London office is more relaxed in comparison to the Paris headquarters and how satisfied employees are due to the good work-life balance that is established. R10 described the culture as open and chill while on the contrary, R4, R5, R6, R7 and R8 all referred to the busy periods that can create a stressful and frustrating atmosphere and a hectic environment that arouses negativity at times. R6 stated “It is only during some periods that it can get very stressful and frustrating”. R5, R7 and R9 described the culture as social and friendly, while R4, R3, R2 and R10 emphasized on the great people they work with and the collaborative, team spirit that is prevalent. R5, R7 and R9 also used the word passionate in order to describe their office culture, as well as opportunistic. Last but not least, R10 said “without a big hierarchy. The hierarchy is low so quick decision making”.

• When asked to describe the organization in terms of flexibility all respondents started of by saying that it is flexible. However, the level of flexibility that each respondent attributed to the organization was quite different. Seven of the respondents, namely R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6 and R8, all said that even though the organization is flexible, there is still a certain level of control from the headquarters or people in higher positions. R2 stated “In the London office there is still a hierarchy, they are still decision makers. But, often with the title you have, with the scope you have, you are going to be able to make decisions by yourself. And also a scope where you are going to have to talk to hierarchy and have other people kind of approving for you. So the hierarchy is still present and obviously I think it is quite strong in this company but this does not mean you cannot collaborate. There is still a collaboration part but maybe not the one that you are going yo take the final decision.” R5 comments that one can start new projects and create processes but then they have to go through a long approval process that can take a very long time and be frustrating. On the other hand, R7, R9 and R10 support that there is a lot of freedom and a low hierarchy that makes decision making quick and flexible.

• There was a variety of responses when the respondents needed to describe the organizational culture. Six of the respondents (R1, R2, R3, R4, R8 and R9) agreed that a team spirit full of collaboration expresses the culture. Four of them (R1, R3, R4 and R6) said that there is an air of positivity in the culture. R1 and R3 also, said that respect describes the culture. Interestingly enough R1 and R3 used the same aspects to describe
the organizational culture. Four respondents (R5, R6, R7 and R9) said that the culture is passionate. Two, R7 and R10, used the word opportunistic. R2 used “sociality is really important in this company. And I would say visibility, the more visible you are the further you get”. R4 used diversity as her last description and R9 innovation strategy. Both R6 and R7 said that there is ambition and drive incorporated in the culture. R5 stated that it is fast paced and sometimes confusing. R8 suggested entrepreneurship and that it is strategically focused. Lastly, R10 described the culture as “agile and open”.

- All ten respondents agreed that the organization is internally focused and currently trying to be more external. R5 said “we used to be internally focused and focused on how amazing our products are - they are great. But now it’s more working on: “Wait! We need to focus on consumers and what they want us to do. So I think, there has been a massive shift of the organization to be externally focused.”. R7 and R9 also support that it is a mix between the two. R7 stated that the workplace heavily focuses on the people but, it’s true competencies are also to satisfy its consumers’ needs. R9 also noted that it is the strong passion of the people working that makes the company attempt to be externally focused and create value for the consumers.

- When it comes to whether the organization is promoting female competence, most respondents argued that the company does not promote gender based competence and it is competence in general they are promoting. R6 stated “they are promoting seniority, so if you are in a senior position you will be more visible”. R8 and R9 responded that the organization does not promote female competence. R8 said “not really, or at least it is something that is externally obvious”. R10 is baffled in her response “yes because, we are so many women but, also no cause they are trying to recruit more men so they are focused on them”. Contrary to the other respondents, R2 supported “yes definitely! I think it is something they have been working on and that is today implemented”.

- When asked about the most obvious differences among the different offices that the respondents have worked in, R1, R3 and R4, said that the Swedish is less stressful in comparison with the other locations. Olena stated “less stress and less rivalry. Not so much competition between each other and less group pressure”. R6 said “well I came from the headquarters so you can imagine the differences. Both offices can get stressful
but, I will not compare the French office with the Australian”. R7, R9 and R10 commented on the size of the Swedish office being smaller and more local compared to the international air the other offices they worked in have. R10 said “The Swedish office is much more open and local and Denmark was more international, bigger and more closed”. R8 supported “better work-life balance in Sweden. And also, we do more team activities in Sweden in order to improve the relationship between colleagues”. R2 stated that because her managers are situated in the headquarters in France and she is in London “I have thanks to my position much more flexibility, I would also maybe say that is more transparency”. Four respondents (R1, R2, R4 and R5) stated that the national culture differences have an impact and it those country culture differences that make organisational culture differences arise in the offices. R5 stated “So the differences are mainly in country culture and market more than company culture”.

- Regarding the apparent similarities between the offices, eight out of ten respondents said that the overall organizational culture is similar in the offices they have worked. As R2 quoted “The Alpha Cosmetics culture is quite everywhere. I think there are a lot of similarities also in all, I mean in the organization in itself, so how it is organized in Paris is going to be the same in London. They might do things differently but the entire, also the professional organization is the same.” She continues by saying that the values they seek in people are going to be the same everywhere in the world. For R3 and R10, the way of working is the same as well. R5 and R6, both mentioned that the language they use is the same. For R1, R7, R8 and R9, the similarity lies in the passion and ambitiousness of the people working in the organization. R1 mentions that both the Ukrainian and the Swedish office had the same level of influence by the headquarters. R6 commented on the similar structure of the divisions and R5 remarked that it is the same frustrations within the groups.

- Last but not least, when asked what they would change if they had the chance, R1, R3 and R6 said that they would not change anything in particular. R2 would want to know where her manager sees her in the future. “Something I would appreciate is to know where my manager thinks, how far they see me going. This is something I don’t have great visibility on”. R4 said “I would change the way they deal with moves or transfers of employees. I was not supported when I moved and I would really like to have more guidance”. R5 would like that the company takes action on things that are discussed.
She says there are some issues that they keep talking about and that they have the means to accomplish but, do not take action to deliver on the big promises. R7 would want the organisation to be more open to international opportunities. She thinks that a multinational company like this one has the possibility to send employees abroad. Her final note was that she wants the organisation to be supportive in regards to international assignments but, also transfers. R8 said “do my own research prior to moving. Such as speaking to other colleagues that have been or are there to get a better understanding and advice”. R9 would want the organisation to change in regards to being more rewarding and promote better work-life balance. And also, to have more objective employee evaluation. R10 stated that she would want the organisation to “become more client focused. More externally focused”.

5. Analysis

In this chapter, we analyse the responses of the interviewees and combine them with the theories used in the theoretical framework so as to reach an understanding.

5.1 Clan Organisational Culture of Alpha Cosmetics

In order to answer our research questions regarding the challenges of female expatriates and the relationship between the organisational culture and their job satisfaction, it is important to identify the organisational culture that prevails in Alpha Cosmetics. By basing the responses of the female expatriates interviewed, on the competing values framework by Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983), it is easily inferred that Alpha Cosmetics has a clan organisational culture overall. A clan culture is characterised by a high degree of flexibility and an internal focus (Trivellas and Dargenidou, 2009; Quinn and Rohrbaugh, 1983). All ten respondents, agreed on the organisation being internally focused and most of them continued by saying that it is currently attempting to be more external but, it is not there yet. Regarding the degree of flexibility of the organisation, all respondents agreed that Alpha Cosmetics is a flexible organisation. Inevitably, being a big multinational corporation, there is a level of control and the final decisions for big projects are still made by people higher in the hierarchy. As R3 stated “I feel that is normal. It is a big corporation and we need to strive for a common vision”. This supports that the level of hierarchy that might exist in important projects is not as high to take away the flexible nature of the organisation. In addition, all respondents identified themselves
as autonomous, especially when it comes to smaller projects or daily tasks. In such projects the decision-making is quick and flexible.

The most recurrent words when asked to describe the culture of the organisation, were positive with a high team-spirit, collaboration and passion. The team spirit and collaborative atmosphere that is present in the organisation, among the different offices, is a clear indication of what constitutes a clan culture. In such cultures, a family-like environment is prevalent, with good collaboration among the employees, who usually have similar attributes and characteristics (Zammuto and Krakower, 1991; Ali Shurbagi, 2015). This is supported by R2’s statement “The values they seek in people are going to be the same” meaning that the organization searches for particular values in its employees and that is the same in every office around the world. Another characteristic of a clan culture that can be spotted in Alpha Cosmetics is the fact that the leaders can be easily approached (ibid). Audrey mentioned in her interview that sometimes she had very open and heated discussions with her manager. That level of comfort with a superior supports the previously mentioned argument. Last but not least, clan cultures support unofficial feedback sessions within the teams (ibid). Such a behaviour is mentioned by R2 and R6 who stated that they frequently exchange feedback within their teams so as to help each other improve. R2 stated “it is often when we discuss, we talk a coffee at the office in the morning and talk about our work”.

Based on the findings from the interviews, the overall organisational culture is the same in the different offices that the respondents have worked in, namely London, Paris, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Melbourne and Milan. The respondents support that the organisational language, the ways of working and the way that the different divisions are structured is also very similar. Even though the dominant organisational culture is similar across the different locations, there are some differences that are inevitably created by the influence of the national cultures. It is common that subcultures are created within large organisations, and those either strengthen the dominant culture or sometimes even oppose it if the assumptions and values are not in accordance with those of the dominant culture. The two functions that subcultures fulfill are, create constructive conflict through employees questioning some decisions and help the organization evolve through new insights (McShane et al., 2014). The differences that the respondents referred to, stem from the national culture differences. Most of the respondents directly incorporated the effect of the national culture when talking about the most prominent differences among the offices. R5 also remarked that the market culture plays a role in why the offices might have to operate in a slightly different manner. All in all, similarities and
differences included, we concluded that the organisational culture of Alpha Cosmetics is that of a clan culture.

Based on various studies, discussed in the literature review part, clan culture has a positive effect on job satisfaction (Din and Ghetany, 2019). This positive relationship is established due to the family-like environment, the strive for one goal and mutual consideration (Nam and Kim, 2016). With regards to job satisfaction, a clan culture is considered the “preferred” culture (Al-Shammari and Al-Am, 2018). The positive impact the organisational culture has is supported by the respondents when the majority stated that they feel quite valued within the organisation. Another potential reason to why Alpha Cosmetics’ clan culture can be associated with job satisfaction is due to the fact that the organization supports their different life roles as females. Having the ability to work from home, leave earlier at times and feel respected in the organization, makes the job satisfaction of employees increase. The financial incentives, are also a strong motivator as many respondents mentioned. Having an adequate compensation, would further increase job satisfaction.

5.2 Job Satisfaction of Female Expatriates

Deriving from the literature and some claims of the respondents, it is supported that clan cultures positively affect job satisfaction. However, in order to put the level of job satisfaction to the test, we used the job characteristics model by Hackman and Oldham (1976). After basing the answers of the respondents on the model, there was an overall positivity around the topic of job satisfaction. After analysing the transcribed data, it is clear that skill variety - the first characteristic that leads to a psychological state of meaningfulness, was accomplished by most employees that stated that their jobs are very diverse and challenge them positively. The two respondents, that do not feel this variety in their roles, are R3 that says that she is currently in her comfort zone and R5 that considers being underused by her manager at the moment and would like to be more challenged. When asked what influences the meaningfulness of the respondents at their job, many respondents referred to doing something of value and that will have a positive impact. R2 even said that she is very motivated when she feels that what she does at her job, increases the well-being of women using cosmetics. Respondents even said that they are motivated when they are tackling a project and striving for a good result. All these aspects, tie back to what the model states about employees feeling that their positions produce meaningful outcomes. Regarding autonomy, all the respondents feel autonomous in their positions and they are responsible for their projects. Only during big projects, they are not
completely autonomous. However, they seem very satisfied with the level of autonomy that the organization allows them. Lastly, feedback received controversial responses, with some respondents being very pleased and even wanting to receive more and the rest not interested in receiving more and commenting that it needs to be constructive and people should be delicate with what they are saying.

Based on the model, all the criteria that would lead to a satisfied employee are fulfilled and this indicates a high degree of job satisfaction among our respondents. This assumption is further supported by the ratings that the respondents provided. The lowest rating was 2.5 out of 5 and that because, one of the criteria of the job characteristics model was not fulfilled. In particular, it was R5 and she felt that there is not enough skill variety in her current role as the manager does not use her at her full potential. The rest either ranked their job satisfaction with 3 which is neutral with a positive predisposition, or 4 that signifies satisfaction.

The overall outcome with regards to the job characteristics model and the ranking of the respondents, implies an adequate level of job satisfaction and further supports the literature claim that clan cultures have a positive relationship with job satisfaction.

5.3 Dark Side of Organisational Culture

However, there are always two sides to the same coin and some claims by the respondents did not portray the organisational culture in such a positive light. A recurrent response about the equality of the organisation, was that men dominate top management positions. R6 stated “there are a lot of males on top management position. There might be a lot of women working in the company in general but, the top management is kind of dominated by men”. R5 was puzzled with the fact that an organisation operating in a female-focused industry and with the largest number of employees being females, has mostly men occupy the high seniority positions. She claimed “it is a little bit strange when you have an almost 70, sometimes 80-20 ratio, of women and men in the company”. There is a large difference in the numbers between female and male employees working in Alpha Cosmetics and it is quite interesting how even though women establish the majority, they are still underrepresented in higher level positions. This situation makes us directly think of the glass-ceiling phenomenon, an invisible barrier that hinders women from reaching higher level positions (Insch et al., 2008). Nine out of ten respondents were aware of it and as R2 said “it’s been a hot topic in a lot of companies” but, nobody claimed that they have experienced it in its traditional sense.
5.4 Expatriate Glass-ceiling

According to Insch et al. (2008), a glass-ceiling is not only present for reaching top managerial positions but, it exists for expatriate assignments as well. This means that women are hindered from receiving international assignments in comparison to their male counterparts. Considering the expatriate glass-ceiling and applying it to the responses of the ten respondents, we infer that they are going through a similar situation themselves. From their responses regarding them not having experienced the glass-ceiling phenomenon, we can infer that they are unaware of the fact that they have experienced the phenomenon in the expatriation form. The organisational culture has established barriers for acquiring an expatriate role and these barriers construct the ceiling for female expatriates. The barriers are in the form of seniority level, based on the responses of the employees. “The seniority level makes you suitable or unsuitable”, said R6. R5 similarly commented “what the organisation calls an expatriate are usually people on senior position that have been sent out at a direction”. Most respondents supported that one needs to hold a senior position in order to be given the opportunity to be sent on an expatriate assignment. An interesting claim was made by R7 “men sometimes are more prioritised as expats in the company as they are so few within the organisation”. Furthermore, she talked about how she applied for one position together with a male counterpart and “he had less experience and years in the company than me right, but regardless of that, he is abroad to HK as an expatriate doing the same job as I am currently doing here in London but..with the support from the organisation”. This ties back to the large numerical difference between male and female employees and also, the statements that men dominate senior positions. It means that men, who are already the majority in senior positions, and holding such positions is one of the requirements that the organisational culture has established for expatriate assignments, not only receive the expatriate role due to their seniority but, they are also prioritised in comparison to females. Portrayed through this statement, the organisational culture appears to have a certain amount of prejudice towards females, even though nobody discusses it or is willing to admit it either. This barrier constructs a ceiling for female expatriates that is hard to break through.

Deriving from the aforementioned, the dark side of the organisational culture unravels. The expatriate glass-ceiling exists in the organisation even though the respondents are not aware of experiencing it. Since the organisation is renowned for upholding and supporting strong values (Alpha Cosmetics, 2019), the respondents have identified with these values and are blinded in terms of the ceiling. These strong values that the organisation prides itself on
and portray a strong clan culture that positively affects job satisfaction, attempt to cover up the dark features that are present in the organisational culture as well. All these values, such as positivity, collaboration, passion and diversity, are recurrent in the responses of the female expatriates when describing the organisational culture. This means that they have strongly identified with the positive aspects of the culture and even though they are aware of the negative aspects, and are not hesitant to take them up in their responses, they still cannot see the ceiling that is right in front of their eyes. They disregard it either because, they do not want to accept that their “exemplary” organisation, as supported in the reports (Alpha Cosmetics, 2019), has such a ceiling or because, they paved another path to expatriation and eventually accomplish their ambitions of reaching a top management position.

5.5 Self-initiation of Expatriate Assignment

Larsen and Edwards (2019) talk about the organisational benefits that expatriates get. They receive financial compensation, career assistance, family assistance, training and general assistance from the organisation. The same benefits are reaped by the organisational expatriates of Alpha Cosmetics. As R5 stated “within the group you have different levels and in the highest, the company sends you there and they pay for you to move, they pay for a number of things, like the school of the kids, the apartment, whatever”. In the case of our ten respondents, none of the aforementioned benefits apply, not even for the three respondents that were promoted to their current position. R5 mentioned that there are different categories of expatriation within the organisation “you have those I would call the expatriates plus plus plus and then you have plus plus and then plus. I am in none of those categories, because this is something where the move is a 100% coordinated by the group”.

Expatriates are important for the organisation and its development, but at the same time they are expensive. They cost the organisation two or three times the yearly home-country salary of the employee (Larsen and Edwards, 2019; Baruch et al., 2016). In order to avoid these costs, the organisation sets very high criteria for expatriation in the form of the different categories that R5 mentioned. These criteria cannot be easily reached by females, especially if they don’t hold a senior position, which is probably held by a male based on the respondents’ sayings of men dominating top positions. In addition, so as to avoid paying for the expenses of expatriates and investing on their training, the organisation changes the name of expatriates to internal transfers. R5 stated “I am not an expatriate in the eyes of the company, I am just an internal transfer so these bits are for you to figure out, it’s not up to us, we don’t have
responsibility to give you advice on this. These are the packages we can give you to help you do this transfer and it’s restricted to that”. As R7 previously mentioned, she does the exact same job as her male counterpart but, since she is handled as an internal transfer she does not receive any support. Basically, the organisation reaps the benefits of expatriates but, by referring to them differently, it reduces costs. This tactic might save the organisation some money, but it has a negative impact on female expatriates.

The organisation takes advantage of the strong desire of certain females to become expatriates. Their drive leads them to create their own path and request international assignment positions when they realise that it is hard to reach the scale and be an organisational expatriate, in the sense of complete organisational support. What they do instead is self-initiate their expatriation. This means that they request the expatriate position even though they will not receive support and guidance by the organisation. The role will be by all means similar to that of an organisational expatriate, but the level of support will be different. R4 commented about the difficulties in her expatriate situation “I was not supported when I moved to the new location as I had expected. I had to figure out everything by myself. Find a place to stay, deal with the bureaucracy. The organisation simply offered me the position and expected me to be there on the date I started but, I did not have any guidance about my move”.

These comments clearly depict the dark side of the organisational culture of Alpha Cosmetics. Even though the organisation has a clan culture, that is supposed to have a positive effect on job satisfaction, the dark side cannot be hidden and the negative impact on job satisfaction is inevitable. The organisation was portrayed in an overall positive light by the respondents because, the dark side of the culture created by the expatriate ceiling, is overcome the hard way. The respondents disregarded the glass-ceiling because, they found a way into the expatriate assignment using self-initiation. However, even though self-initiation opens the door for them to the expatriate assignment, which is what they truly want, their job satisfaction is negatively affected by the deep-rooted issues in the organisational culture. That particular culture, that the respondents describe with positive affirmations, establishes the challenges they face during their expatriate situation. The barriers to reach the organisational expatriate position and the barriers during the assignment, undoubtedly affect the female expatriates.

6. Concluding Discussion

Firstly, we identified that Alpha Cosmetics has a clan organisational culture. As aforementioned, this type of culture is associated with job satisfaction in a positive way meaning that organisations which incorporate this culture have satisfied employees. At a first
glance, the answers of the employees demonstrate an adequate level of satisfaction and picture the positive aspects that a clan culture is all about. However, after looking deeper the dark side of the organisational culture within Alpha Cosmetics surfaces. The dark side of the culture is associated with the glass-ceiling that exists for female expatriates.

Based on the respondents, it is hard to assume an expatriate position that would be supported, financially and emotionally, by the organisation. The level of seniority deems the suitability of an employee to take on an expatriate assignment. However, senior positions are mostly acquired by men, even though the organisation operates in a female-focused industry and the majority of employees are women. Previous studies, have discussed the glass-ceiling phenomenon within organisations in terms of females not reaching higher positions. In this case, the issue is even before that. There is a ceiling before reaching expatriation. Since females are unable to expatriate with the support of the organisation, they find another way to go on international assignments. The path they create is through self-initiating their expatriation, by either requesting the position from their manager or accepting the position without receiving certain benefits that come with traditional expatriation.

From the responses, it is evident that a glass-ceiling is prevalent in the organisation but, it is interesting that the respondents denied having experienced it. This means that they are unaware of the fact that their situation of self-initiating was created because, of the existence of the glass-ceiling. Alternatively, they do not want to believe that they have experienced it and attribute their self-initiation to other factors.

Even though, they appeared to be unaware of the expatriate ceiling that exists within the organisation, most of them made comments about males dominating the top positions and even men being prioritised for expatriate assignments since they are so few in the organisation. This shows that respondents contradicted their own claims. They all described the organisational culture in a positive way and appeared to be satisfied with their jobs but, comments of the sort of not receiving support and guidance from the organisation in their expatriate situation, show something different. The responses they provided that helped us reveal the dark spots of the organisational culture, do not seem to satisfy them either. Directly, a negative relationship between organisational culture and job satisfaction in terms of expatriate situation, appears to exist.

The model that we created attempts to summarise the aspects that create the dark spots in the organisational culture and that negatively impact female expatriates. It is demonstrated that only senior level positions are eligible for expatriation due to their competence that leads to even more competence after their expatriation. At the same time expatriation leads to
competence that might lead to seniority. Since there is a glass-ceiling for female expatriates, they are taking a different path, that of self-initiation, to acquire competence and reach senior level positions. The fact that women, need to take the hard way, reveals the dark side of the organisational culture that is well-hidden behind the mask of the family-like, diverse and flexible clan culture that the world and the employees presume they have.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, going back to our research questions of “what are the challenges related to female expatriation?” and “how does the organisational culture affect the job satisfaction of female expatriates?” we found that the main challenges are created by the organisational culture itself as it is indirectly, to a large extent, only allowing female expatriation through the path of self-initiation as a way to acquire the competencies necessary to reach seniority and without being provided any support by the organisation. Initially, the impression was that the clan culture in the organisation generated a positive impact on job satisfaction, however, once we digged deeper into the expatriate scenario, the observations made it clear that there are two sides to the coin where the whole situation appears to be different than its illustration. The expatriate situation provides an inside glance into the dark side of the organisational culture and all the challenges that the organisation has put female expatriates through. This side of organisational culture has a negative impact on job satisfaction that cannot be overlooked. The issue is deep-rooted and the glass-ceiling that female expatriates do not believe exists, is
prevalent. The major problem is that the organisation is either unaware of the situation that their culture has created or turns a blind eye on it and tries to cover it up with the positive aspects of the culture that they preach for, leaving the employees and the world blinded to the actual issue.

7.1 Managerial Implications
Another contribution of the study, is to the actual organisation. Even though, we decided to maintain the anonymity of the organisation and its respondents, we did send our study to the respondents and the HR manager in Sweden. The study aims to contribute to the organisation by shedding light on a serious issue that they do not know they have. By bringing the issue to the surface, they are able to take action and work on the negative aspects so as to make the organisation even better.

7.2 Limitations and Future Research
An understanding of the limitations and its possible impact on the results and conclusion is important in order to better understand the issues that have been investigated. There are several cautions relating to the study that are noteworthy. To begin with, the results may only apply to female expatriates in Alpha Cosmetics. The limitations of this study are related to the research sample, the data was collected from a low sample size and carried out in only one particular organisation. Therefore, the results may not apply to other female managers in other organisations and/or industries. Secondly, considering the research of this study being very specific, broader research should be carried out about the representativeness of the research sample in order to increase the generalisation of the results with greater confidence. One suggestion for further study would therefore be to analyse the population using different methods and to conduct this study across several industries. In addition, the self-initiation aspects where negatively correlated with perceptions of organisational support in terms of financial compensation, career assistance and training. This could be due to the fact that the financial aspects remained the same in comparison to those colleagues who remained back home. Hence, this is an area for future exploration.

8. Quality Criteria
Critique of methodology
Reliability and validity are the most common criteria for evaluating a study. According to Bryman and Bell (2015), these criteria should be used for quantitative studies. When it comes
to qualitative studies, as this one, the criteria used are authenticity and trustworthiness that is made up of four sub-criteria; credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

**Credibility**
Credibility can be created either by making sure that the research is carried out based on particular rules that apply to it or by disclosing the results to the interviewees so that they are able to look through them and verify that the interviewers understood what they said and did not make any false assumptions (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Ethical and academical rules were applied through the whole duration of the study and the interviewees were asked whether they would be interested in obtaining the study and verifying that their sayings were clearly perceived.

**Dependability**
In order to create high dependability, a method called auditing is used. This requires preparing a report that incorporates every detail of how the study was administered (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Since this method can be unrealistic because of the workload, we tried to create transparency by explaining in detail the choices that were made in this study.

**Transferability**
Qualitative studies usually try to describe a specific phenomenon and cannot be generalized with as much ease as a properly conducted quantitative study. The transferability of a study indicates how transferable the results are to another context (Bryman and Bell, 2015). We investigated the job satisfaction of female expatriates in a clan culture of a particular MNC. This MNC has a set of processes when it comes to expatriation that other companies might not have, even if they share the same organisational culture. That needs to be taken into consideration when attempting to transfer the results of this study to a similar organisation.

**Confirmability**
It is very hard to achieve objectivity in a qualitative research, as it relies on the hermeneutic ability of the researcher. In order to make a study unbiased, confirmability is measured. It suggests that researchers should act in good faith without letting their personal beliefs infiltrate in the study (Bryman and Bell, 2015). The topic investigated is very sensitive, as it raises some
matters regarding gender equality. As we are both females, we tried to consciously eliminate out bias and present facts when doing our analysis so as to be as objective as possible.

**Authenticity**

Five criteria are considered when trying to ensure the authenticity of a qualitative study. Fair depicture, Ontological authenticity, Pedagogical authenticity, Catalytic authenticity and Tactical authenticity (Bryman and Bell, 2015). These criteria make sure that the interviewees are portrayed in the right light, without exaggeration or false statements and that they understand the phenomenon that is investigated. Before and during the interviews, we provided very clear descriptions of the phenomenon to make sure that everyone understands the purpose of our study. As aforementioned, after the completion of the interviews, the respondents had a chance to review their statements, to make sure that a correct interpretation was made.
9. References


Alpha Cosmetics (2018). *Sharing Beauty With All*: Alpha Cosmetic’s commitment to sustainability. 2017 PROGRESS REPORT.


Tsai, Y. (2011). Relationship between Organizational Culture, Leadership Behavior and Job Satisfaction. BMC Health Services Research, 11(1).


* Covered in order to protect the identity of the MNC that we investigated.
# Appendix 1 - Interview Guide

- Age
- Education
- Work experience
- Time of employment within the company
- Country/ countries of international assignment
- Position before the international assignment
- Position during the international assignment
- Current occupation and position
- Length of international assignment
- Civil status/family situation

## 1. Females Expatriates

1.1 How valued do you feel in the organisation? And based on what do you attribute that?

1.2 Where would you place the organisation in terms of equality?

1.3 Are you familiar with the glass ceiling phenomenon? (It refers to an invisible barrier that prevents women from reaching higher positions within a company).
   - What are your thoughts on it?
   - Have you ever experienced it

1.4 What do you believe is the organisation’s view of female’s suitability for an expatriate role?

1.5 Do you find the organisation supportive in regards to the requirements of different life roles of a woman?

1.6 How were you given your current position? Were you promoted or did you request it?

1.7 Would you say that there are barriers or issues for female expatriates depending on which position and role she has?

1.8 Describe how the first period was when you moved to your new location?
   - How hard was it to adapt?
   - What were some other difficulties that you were faced with?
   - Were you comfortable in your new office?
   - If it was up to you, what would you change?
   - Thinking back, would you do anything different?

## 2. Job Satisfaction

2.1 Describe a day in your work life?

2.2 Name the favourite aspects of your job?
2.3 Which are the least favourite?

2.4 Can you name three factors that you consider the most important when it comes to how satisfied you feel with your job?

2.5 From a scale of 1 to 5, how pleased would you say you are with your job position?
   - Can you please expand on your rating? What is it that makes you so satisfied/dissatisfied?

2.6 Did your current position require you to make any adjustments in your lifestyle for your private life and career to function together?

2.7 What are the characteristics that would influence your meaningfulness at your work?

2.8 Can you name three main aspects that would motivate you towards an important assignment?

2.9 What is your level of responsibility when completing a particular task?

2.11 Do you believe that you have the freedom to feel autonomous as you perform your daily tasks? - How do you believe this affects your motivation and satisfaction at your job?

2.12 How does your company handle the cycle of feedback?
   - Is there a designed/particular feedback cycle that your company is following?

2.13 Can you explain what role feedback plays for you?
   - Is it something you prefer to have?
   - Would you like to receive more feedback?

2.14 Does your job position incorporate a variety of tasks that make you use your different skills?
   - Do you feel positively challenged by your position?

3. **Organisational Culture**

3.1 How would you describe the culture in the office?

3.2 How would you describe L’Oreal in terms of flexibility? - Do you have freedom when it comes to decision-making or do you experience a level of control from people higher up in the hierarchy?

3.3 If you could choose three words that accurately demonstrate the organisational culture based on your perception, what would these be?

3.4 Do you consider the organisation internally or externally focused? (Provide clarification if needed)
3.5 Do you believe the culture is promoting female competence in the organisation?

3.6 What are the most obvious differences in the culture compared with the office you used to work in? - What are the apparent similarities?

3.7 If you could change something, what would it be?

- **Final note** - would you like to add something? Do you feel we missed on asking you some important aspects of your role?
## Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>R1</th>
<th>R2</th>
<th>R3</th>
<th>R4</th>
<th>R5</th>
<th>R6</th>
<th>R7</th>
<th>R8</th>
<th>R9</th>
<th>R10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Senior category leader for skin and hair</td>
<td>Regional manager (travel)</td>
<td>Regional manager (travel)</td>
<td>Market brand manager</td>
<td>Domain manager (managing retail categories)</td>
<td>Sales manager</td>
<td>Marketing Manager</td>
<td>In-store activation manager</td>
<td>Marketing and sales manager</td>
<td>Market brand manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Bachelor and Masters degree</td>
<td>Bachelor and Masters degree</td>
<td>Bachelor and Masters degree</td>
<td>Bachelor and 2 Masters degrees</td>
<td>Bachelor and Masters degree</td>
<td>Bachelor and Masters degree</td>
<td>Bachelor and Masters degree</td>
<td>Bachelor and Masters degree</td>
<td>Bachelor and Masters degree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time of employment within company</td>
<td>13 years</td>
<td>3 years in total (1,5 years as intern)</td>
<td>2,5 years</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>2 years and 8 months</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>2,5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous country</td>
<td>Ukraine - Kiev</td>
<td>France - Paris</td>
<td>UK - London</td>
<td>Sweden - Stockholm</td>
<td>Denmark - Copenhagen</td>
<td>France - Paris</td>
<td>Sweden - Stockholm</td>
<td>Denmark - Copenhagen</td>
<td>Denmark - Copenhagen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration of interview</td>
<td>47 min.</td>
<td>75 min.</td>
<td>45 min.</td>
<td>52 min.</td>
<td>90 min.</td>
<td>55 min.</td>
<td>50 min.</td>
<td>55 min.</td>
<td>50 min.</td>
<td>45 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of interview</td>
<td>Phone interview</td>
<td>Phone interview</td>
<td>In person</td>
<td>Skype interview</td>
<td>In person</td>
<td>In person</td>
<td>Phone interview</td>
<td>Phone interview</td>
<td>Phone interview</td>
<td>In person</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 3 - Summary of Respondents (Female Expatriate)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R1</th>
<th>R2</th>
<th>R3</th>
<th>R4</th>
<th>R5</th>
<th>R6</th>
<th>R7</th>
<th>R8</th>
<th>R9</th>
<th>R10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Valued by the organisation</strong></td>
<td>Valued but, not fully (men on higher positions)</td>
<td>Valued (visibility)</td>
<td>Valued</td>
<td>Valued</td>
<td>Valued (comes with time)</td>
<td>Valued (comes with time)</td>
<td>Not very valued</td>
<td>Valued</td>
<td>Valued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Equality in organisation</strong></td>
<td>Equal but, mostly men on top positions</td>
<td>Very equal</td>
<td>Equal but, mostly men on top positions</td>
<td>Equal but, mostly men on top positions</td>
<td>Grey zone (mostly men on top positions but, more women on lower)</td>
<td>Equal but, mostly men on top positions</td>
<td>Not very equal but, working on it</td>
<td>Not equal since mostly men on top positions</td>
<td>Not very equal but, working on it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Glass-ceiling</strong></td>
<td>Unaware</td>
<td>Aware - not experienced it</td>
<td>Aware - not experienced it</td>
<td>Aware - not experienced it</td>
<td>Aware - function ceiling in the organisation</td>
<td>Aware - not experienced it</td>
<td>Aware - not experienced it</td>
<td>Aware - not experienced it</td>
<td>Aware - not experienced it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suitability for expatriation</strong></td>
<td>Based on qualities</td>
<td>Based on qualities</td>
<td>Based on seniority</td>
<td>Based on seniority</td>
<td>Expatriate by all means but, treated as internal transfer</td>
<td>Based on seniority</td>
<td>Men more prioritised</td>
<td>Based on qualities</td>
<td>Based on qualities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisation's support of life roles of women</strong></td>
<td>Very supportive</td>
<td>Very supportive</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>Unsure (based on the location of the office)</td>
<td>Uncertain but, thinks supportive</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>Supportive (depended on the manager)</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current position</strong></td>
<td>Promoted</td>
<td>Requested</td>
<td>Requested</td>
<td>Promoted</td>
<td>Requested</td>
<td>Requested</td>
<td>Requested</td>
<td>Promoted</td>
<td>Requested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Barriers for female expatriates</strong></td>
<td>No extra barriers</td>
<td>General barriers for expatriates</td>
<td>Barriers if married</td>
<td>No barriers</td>
<td>Barriers based on the duration of stay</td>
<td>Barriers for internal transfers</td>
<td>Barriers for internal transfers</td>
<td>General barriers</td>
<td>General barriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adaptation period</strong></td>
<td>Hard (cultural differences)</td>
<td>Hard (no support by organisation)</td>
<td>Not hard</td>
<td>Hard (no support by organisation)</td>
<td>Hard (cultural differences and no support)</td>
<td>Hard (cultural differences and no support)</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>Hard (getting to know people)</td>
<td>Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New office</strong></td>
<td>Welcoming business culture (outsider however)</td>
<td>Very welcoming culture</td>
<td>Very welcoming culture</td>
<td>Welcoming but, needed getting used to national culture differences</td>
<td>Very welcoming culture</td>
<td>Very welcoming culture</td>
<td>Welcoming culture</td>
<td>Welcoming but, could be better</td>
<td>Welcoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Changes to be made</strong></td>
<td>No changes</td>
<td>Stricter with terms of contract</td>
<td>No changes</td>
<td>More guidance by organisation</td>
<td>Treat her move differently (expatriates by design not faced with same issues)</td>
<td>Be more informed before moving</td>
<td>Would want more support</td>
<td>Would want a welcoming week to meet people</td>
<td>No changes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Female Expatriates
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Favourite job aspects</th>
<th>R1</th>
<th>R2</th>
<th>R3</th>
<th>R4</th>
<th>R5</th>
<th>R6</th>
<th>R7</th>
<th>R8</th>
<th>R9</th>
<th>R10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team communication and activities</td>
<td>Diversity, being involved and managing various aspects</td>
<td>People she is working with</td>
<td>Collaboration with team, diversity</td>
<td>Ability to talk to a lot of people in the organisation</td>
<td>Being surrounded by people and communicating</td>
<td>Her team, interacting with clients, optimising opportunities</td>
<td>Her work being visible for the consumers</td>
<td>Working for a great company, great people</td>
<td>Building cases</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Least favourite job aspects | Presenting | Administrative tasks | Administrative tasks | Constant meetings | Being dependent on the organisation to do her job | Pressure | Heavy workload and late nights | Send reminders | Work from home outside working hours | Administrative tasks |

| Factors associated with job satisfaction | Written results, positive vibes, salary | Involvement, contact with clients, diversity | Office environment, feeling appreciated, being positively challenged | People, atmosphere, job position in general | Being challenged, social aspect, need for recognition | Communication with people, office atmosphere, salary | Economical factors, team, credibility | Constructive feedback, team activities, training and development | Team, environment, vibes | People, collaboration, support |

| Scale 1-5 for job satisfaction | 4/5 | 4-4.5/5 | 4/5 | 4/5 | 2.5/5 | 3/5 | 3.5/5 | 3/5 | 3/5 | 3/5 |

| Reason for level of satisfaction | Highest position she can get | Great collaboration with the team | Really likes her current office | Satisfied but, room for improvement | Fluid work description | Her salary satisfies her | Desires less workload | Less work-life balance in current office and less visibility | Wants higher salary, is pressured, long-working hours | Would like to feel more challenged |

| Adjustments made for work-life balance | No adjustments | Many adjustments | No adjustments | No adjustments | No adjustments | No adjustments | Some adjustments due to heavier workload | No adjustments | No adjustments | Complexity, pressure, being outside her comfort zone |

| Characteristics influencing job meaningfulness | Proper planning, people skills | Her team, meaningful project, important message | Being part of something great | Company involved in projects that did good | Her potential being used to the fullest | Doing s.th. that will have a positive impact | Credibility, team-work, salary | Relationship with co-workers, salary | Credibility, salary, team work | Challenge, specific goal to reach, feeling valued |

| Motivation aspects | Received bonus for her extra work tasks | Collaboration, being part of something beneficial, a project that would lead to something | Her team, doing s.th. important, feeling respected | The assignment itself, the people, striving for a good result | Working with s.th. new and s.th. that will have a positive impact, working with experts to gain knowledge | Being challenged, valued, support | Development, support, feeling challenged | Support from managers, making a difference, learning something new | Challenge, specific goal to reach, feeling valued |

| Level of responsibility | High - but decisions need to be in alignment with top management | High - but decisions need to be supported by someone higher in the hierarchy | Quite responsible - always need to be in alignment with the hierarchy | Quite responsible - still needs validation from her manager | Quite responsible - still needs validation from her manager | High - this makes her feel independent and entrepreneurial | Quite responsible - less on bigger projects | Quite responsible - feels independent in performing tasks |

| Role of feedback | Important but, not fond of it | Important to learn and evolve | Important to improve - not wanting more | Important to improve - not wanting more | Important but, needs to be constructive | Important - not interested in receiving more | Crucial for career progression - would like to receive more | Key for career development - would like more | Important - would not like to receive more |

| Challenged in current position | Slightly in a positive way | Positively due to the diversity | Not very challenged | Quite challenged based on the period | Not as challenged as she wants | Positively challenged | Challenged | Challenged | Challenged | Not challenged enough |
## Appendix 5 – Summary of Respondents (Organisational Culture)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R1</th>
<th>R2</th>
<th>R3</th>
<th>R4</th>
<th>R5</th>
<th>R6</th>
<th>R7</th>
<th>R8</th>
<th>R9</th>
<th>R10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Office culture</strong></td>
<td>Positive with pleasant vibe, people avoid stress and act with respect</td>
<td>Collaborative atmosphere, good work-life balance</td>
<td>Positive, team-spirit</td>
<td>Positive but, stressful at times</td>
<td>Social, passionate, challenging but, high pressure at times</td>
<td>Positive but, busy at times</td>
<td>Positive but, extremely stressful at times</td>
<td>Amazing but, extremely stressful at times</td>
<td>Good, friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisation in terms of flexibility</strong></td>
<td>Flexible with a certain level of control to it</td>
<td>Flexible but, decisions need to go through the hierarchy</td>
<td>Flexible enough, still approval needed from the top</td>
<td>Flexible with a certain level of control</td>
<td>Flexible but, approval necessary</td>
<td>Quite flexible, needs to report higher in the hierarchy</td>
<td>Very flexible with a low hierarchy</td>
<td>Flexible with a certain level of control</td>
<td>Flexible with a lot of freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisational culture</strong></td>
<td>Respect, positive vibe, team-spirit</td>
<td>Collaboration, sociality, visibility</td>
<td>Team-spirit, positive environment, respect</td>
<td>Positivity, diversity, team-spirit</td>
<td>Fast-paced, passionate, confusing</td>
<td>Positivity, passion, ambition</td>
<td>Positive, opportunistic, driven</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship, team-work, strategically focused</td>
<td>Passion, innovation strategy, team-work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internally or externally focused</strong></td>
<td>Internally focused</td>
<td>Internal, attempting to be more external</td>
<td>Internally focused</td>
<td>Internally focused</td>
<td>Internally focusing</td>
<td>Internally focusing</td>
<td>Internally focusing</td>
<td>Internally focused</td>
<td>Both internally and externally focused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promotion of female competence</strong></td>
<td>Not gender based competence</td>
<td>Working on promoting female competence</td>
<td>Not gender based competence</td>
<td>Not gender based, focused on qualities</td>
<td>Promotion due to the many women working for the organisation</td>
<td>Seniority competence</td>
<td>Not gender based competences</td>
<td>Not promoting female competence</td>
<td>Not promoting female competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Differences between offices respondent worked in</strong></td>
<td>Less rivalry and stress in current office (stem from national culture differences)</td>
<td>More flexibility and transparency in current office</td>
<td>Swedish office less stressful</td>
<td>Differences based on national culture differences</td>
<td>Based on the national culture and the market</td>
<td>HQ busier and more formal</td>
<td>Smaller office, lacks international vibe</td>
<td>Previous office had better work-life balance</td>
<td>Smaller, more local office, lacks international vibe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Similarities between offices</strong></td>
<td>Both influenced by HQ, inspiring people</td>
<td>Overall organisational culture is the same</td>
<td>Overall culture, way of working</td>
<td>Overall culture, organisational culture</td>
<td>Overall culture, language, way of dealing with the group</td>
<td>Overall culture, language, structure of divisions</td>
<td>Overall culture, passion within work</td>
<td>Passion, ambitiousness</td>
<td>Passion in work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Changes to be made</strong></td>
<td>No change in Swedish office</td>
<td>More visibility of her career</td>
<td>No changes</td>
<td>Moves and transfers require more guidance</td>
<td>Take more action on topics discussed</td>
<td>No changes</td>
<td>More open to international opportunities, more support</td>
<td>More research before moving</td>
<td>More rewarding organisation, promotion of better work-life balance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>