

Expatriates' Career Moves in Japan

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Expatriates' Career Moves in Japan|||Introduction, key-concepts, and definitions|||The goal of this paper is to advance our understanding of the different types of foreigners who pursue part or whole of their careers in Japan. To do this, we consider their career moves, or more exactly, the absence of such moves, that is tenures of 5 years or more in a specific organization.||In this paper, expatriate refers to any foreigner working in Japan. Careers are lifelong sequences of jobs, that is successions of moves across domains. The domains investigated in the present research are geography and organization. A geographic career move is a career move in or out of Japan. An organizational career move refers to a move across organizations. Organizational characteristics analyzed are nationality, size, age, ownership / control, industry, and growth.|||Sample, methodology, and results|||13 case studies have been used as the first step of a mixed-method research design. The goal of this exploratory phase was to develop explanations that can be later tested through a larger size survey.||These 13 cases are (expatriate, organization) pairs selected from the 569 entries for the letter A in the nominative lists of the directories of the French Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Japan for the years 2000 to 2016. We selected foreign sounding names among the individuals with tenures of 5 years or more in the same organization. ||The companies of the 13 cases are local companies founded by expatriates (Albert Abut Architecture, PMC, TMT), subsidiaries of privately held foreign company (Baron Philippe de Rothschild, Kerneos, Servier, Questel), and subsidiaries of very large MNEs (KPMG, Danone, L'Oréal, Michelin, Pernod Ricard, and BNP Paribas). ||In a second phase, data about the individuals and the organizations were collected through a wide spectrum of cross-checked sources to increase the reliability and internal validity. |||Propositions and discussion|||The analysis of the 13 cases induced the development of the following 4 propositions. | |Proposition 1: Foreigners working in Japan tend to stay longer in the same organization if this organization has a large size. | |Proposition 2: Foreigners working in Japan tend to stay longer in the same organization if this organization is privately owned and family controlled.||Proposition 3: Foreigners working in Japan tend to stay longer in the same organization for some specific industries such as the professional services (e.g.: legal) or banking. | |Proposition 4: Foreigners working in Japan tend to stay longer in the same organization when they have developed both an industry and a country-specific expertise (e.g.: proficiency in Japanese

language).|||Limitations and further research|||With the aim of quantitatively testing the external validity of our initial findings, our next step is to conduct a full survey of the directories: over the whole alphabet and over the whole period back to 1985 (the oldest directory available to us), that is a period of more than 30 years. Such a survey is expected to bear about 500 cases of people with a 5+ organizational tenure in Japan. |