

More Than Friends, Chingus 친구: The Different Experiences of International Professional Mobility

Mais que Amigas, Chingus 친구: Diferentes Experiências de Mobilidade profissional no Exterior


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ABSTRACT


This teaching case presents the story of Olivia, a young Brazilian professional who was invited by the company where she works to take on the main role in the new unit to be set up in South Korea. The aim is to provide students with contact with the reality of those who face the challenge of moving to another country for professional reasons and, as a result, need to be able to analyze the challenges inherent in the process, ways of preparing for this experience, the process of intercultural adaptation, as well as the role of the Human Resource Management in different forms of international mobility. The case presents two different forms of mobility (professional expatriation and self-expatriation), using as data sources information collected from websites and social networks (Youtube and Instagram) about Brazilians who have moved to another country for professional reasons and interviews with two Brazilians who went to work in South Korea. The case can be used in undergraduate and graduate courses in International Relations, Foreign Trade, Management and related areas. It can be used in subjects that deal with the process of internationalizing companies, international human resource management, career, intercultural administration, among others.

Keywords: International mobility; Expatriation; Self-expatriation; Intercultural adaptation.

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RESUMO

Este caso de ensino apresenta a história de Olívia, uma jovem profissional brasileira que foi convidada pela empresa onde trabalha a assumir a principal função na nova unidade a ser criada na Coreia do Sul. O objetivo é proporcionar aos alunos o contato com a realidade de quem enfrenta o desafio de mudar de país por motivos profissionais e, diante disso, precisa ser capaz de analisar os desafios inerentes ao processo, formas de preparação para esta experiência, o processo de adaptação intercultural, bem como qual é o papel da área de Gestão de

RESUMO

Pessoas nas diferentes modalidades de mobilidade internacional. O caso apresenta duas diferentes formas de mobilidade (expatriação profissional e autoexpatriação) tendo como fontes de dados as informações coletadas em sites e redes sociais (Youtube e Instagram) sobre brasileiros que mudaram para outro país por motivos profissionais e entrevista com duas brasileiras que foram trabalhar na Coreia do Sul. O caso pode ser usado nos cursos de graduação e pós-graduação de Relações Internacionais, Comércio Exterior, Administração e áreas afins. Ele pode ser trabalhado em disciplinas que tratem sobre o processo de internacionalização de empresas, gestão internacional de pessoas, gestão de carreira, administração intercultural entre outras.

Palavras-chaves: Mobilidade Internacional; Expatriação; Autoexpatriação; Adaptação Intercultural.

Introduction

Olívia was born in São Paulo and moved to Fortaleza when she was just seven years old. The move was a big challenge, and it took her a long time to get used to the differences in climate, accent and, above all, being away from her cousins and grandparents, who saw each other almost every day. As she is very shy and has trouble making friends, the adjustment was even more difficult. Classroom presentations and group work were real nightmares for little Olivia. However, as the days went by, she loosened up and managed to make friends with a few girls, including Amanda and Marcella, who were her best friends until she started university. The challenges contained in this experience enabled Olivia to learn to read her surroundings and adapt to different situations when interacting with people from different cultures.

As Olivia has always been curious, she learned a lot of the English language almost on her own by watching make-up tutorials on YouTube. This helped her when she went on her first exchange to England in her second year of high school. That experience made her realize that she really enjoyed learning new things and now also about different cultures. Soon after graduating from college, she went to work for a Brazilian fish import and export company, located in the city of Navegantes in Santa Catarina State. The company, which has been on the market for over 40 years, is one of the sales leaders in Brazil and abroad with a catalog of

many species of national and imported fish that are sold to restaurants and stores throughout Brazil.

It was there that Olivia learned a lot more about how import and export processes work, made many friends and sought to develop more and more professionally. She has always been zealous about her career and has attended various courses, regardless of whether the company would pay for them or not. She had already overcome the traditional career vision, centered on the company's guidelines, and knew that her development to differentiate herself in the market was more focused on actions seen as a protean career, managed by the professional themselves. Her work colleagues, realizing the results of this vision of career self-management, did not fail to register their admiration and respect:

– What's up Olivia, any news? Apparently, you're taking another course? What new skills do you want to develop? You know you're my yardstick for building a more solid career - asks Verônica, your work colleague.

– Olivia is an example of a dedicated professional who knows the skills that need to be developed in different positions and is well prepared to move around the organizational structure. I remember well when you started working here as a foreign trade assistant, you went through various import and export sectors and now you are the key person in monitoring import and export processes and follow-up with clients. Congratulations on your efforts!!! – praised Leonardo, from Human Resource Department.

Olivia's efforts were also being noticed by senior management. During the last strategic planning process, the company's owner and managers, after much study and using the tools used to analyze the internal and external environments, decided to adopt the strategy of growth through internationalization, and South Korea was the country chosen. So, one of the first steps was to define, together with the Human Resource manager, the design of the structure of this new unit and the respective occupants of the positions. It came as no surprise when Olivia was put forward for the top job at the new unit.

– Olivia, given the profile of the position of operations coordinator and considering your performance over time in the company, having held different positions in the structure and the set of skills acquired in internal development programs and on your own initiative, we are considering your name to coordinate the operations

of our internationalization project for South Korea. We understand that this process will be a great boost and differentiator in your career. After a period of organization here in Brazil, you will go to South Korea to coordinate the project *on site*. In three months, you will need to move there indefinitely. What do you think? Do you accept this opportunity? -proposes the company owner, enthusiastically.

Olivia, despite working on her career development, which included the prospect of an international career, is surprised and stunned: “I’ve always been looking for this moment, but when I see it, I’m speechless!” At the same time as being flattered by the great opportunity and the promotion of her career, on the other hand, moving to another country for good was not in her plans!!! Especially to a country so different from Brazil! So, what now? What should she do? This proposal will affect her entire future and leave Olivia with many questions in her head, the biggest of which is: how will she adapt to a culture so different from her own? How can she prepare for this change and who can help her?

The Case

GIHOE, 기회 - OPPORTUNITIES

The company, which specializes in national and imported fish, was founded in the 1980s in the state of Santa Catarina, in the city of Navegantes. Its founder and current CEO had always worked in artisanal fishing and had a dream of turning this activity into a formal business. In its early years, the company only sold fresh fish to fishmongers, small distributors, and street vendors in the region. Today, it has been on the market for more than four decades and is a consolidated company with a high processing capacity, with a total area of more than 35,000 m², guaranteeing products of international quality. Approximately 10 years ago, the company implemented a quality program that is the best and most suitable for food processing, approved by ISO 9001.

The CEO is a very conservative person when it comes to change, especially when it comes to his company. However, he was becoming more susceptible to listening to new ideas since, even though the company was consolidated in the market and had a stable operation, it was starting to fall behind because many competing

companies were investing in new developments both inside and outside Brazil. One of the projects on the board's agenda was a project to increase the company's turnover through exports and with a second choice of product varieties to offer. When it came to strategic planning, several countries were mentioned, but after analyzing the environment and having many contacts and partners, the country chosen to receive a subsidiary was South Korea. The plans included in the project were to expand fish exports to South Korea and surrounding countries and to export to Brazil the varieties of seafood and different species of fish that exist in this region of Asia.

To succeed in this operation, it became clear that they would have to structure the Human Resource department, giving it an international vision with skills development and international career programs to support the professionals of an internationalized company, specifically thinking about this initial function responsible for setting up the new unit abroad. A profile of an international professional, with the knowledge and skills to set up and work in multicultural teams, be able to make international negotiations and have mastery of the export and import processes for the company's products, both in the Brazilian and international markets. In addition, Human Resource department will be responsible for the tax and immigration regularization processes in Brazil and South Korea, to structure the necessary procedures for this activity as much as possible. It is also up to the sector to offer all the necessary guidance to the professional, including career development expectations, clarification of rights and benefits and support before, during and on their return to the country.

When it came to defining the organizational structure, the first name that came to mind was Olivia - a proactive, well-communicated and interested person who was clearly shaping her career by improving herself more and more. In addition, Olivia related well to employees, suppliers and clients, and was very dedicated to her activities, which were seen as key characteristics for managing the project, as well as having done a student exchange program that gave her international experience, albeit brief.

ONSESANG-I NAEJIB, 온세상이내집 - THE WHOLE WORLD IS MY HOME

After the conversation with the company's president and now at her parents' house, Olivia tells them the news, nervous and excited:

– So, they called me into the meeting room and I was terrified, but in the end they offered me a promotion!

– Daughter, that’s great. And what will change in your day-to-day work? – asks your mother.

– All mom! They want me to lead the project in South Korea, specifically in Seoul.

– WHAT? – your parents shout in unison.

– It will be a great opportunity for me, both professionally and personally! At first, I’ll be working for a partner company and researching the market so that we can then start expanding.

– Your father and I are very happy for you, but sad that we’ll be so far away from our little girl. You’ve always had incredible potential and it’s good that you saw it soon, we’ll help you with whatever you need – reflects your mother.

– But think about it, daughter, such a sudden change can be very difficult. Remember when we moved to Fortaleza and you talked about going back to São Paulo every day? Just imagine in a country so different from ours! – says your father.

Still nervous about the news, Olivia doesn’t know what to do. As she likes to have as much information as possible at her fingertips, she decides to search through her contacts. She remembers Amanda and Marcella, who were her childhood friends, and the last time she spoke to them a while ago, they were living in South Korea. Olivia gets in touch with the girls and they arrange a video call. After the initial conversations and the normal business of friends who haven’t spoken for a long time, Olivia decides to tell them about the offer she received and her possible move to South Korea. Amanda replied immediately:

– I loved the experience! It was so good that I decided to stay here! I’ll wait for you at the airport! – exclaims Amanda excitedly, clapping her hands.

Marcella’s experience was different:

– I hated it! I’ll never live there again, God forbid! I wouldn’t recommend it to anyone.

– Oh, girls, you’re not helping me! In fact, you leave me with even more doubts. One loved it and the other hated it! Please tell me everything in as much detail as possible about your experience in South Korea!

CHINGUS, 친구- FRIENDS - THE EXPERIENCE OF FRIENDS AMANDA AND MARCELLA

Amanda was born in Fortaleza, and when she turned twenty, she had the opportunity to choose which country she would like to go on an exchange to. As she had always been interested in Asian culture, she chose an exchange to South Korea. One of the things that helped her make the choice was to improve her language skills, as she had been studying on her own for some time but wanted to become fluent. Amanda chose to spend a few months studying at Seoul National University (Figure 1), experiencing the new culture.

Figure 1. Seoul National University Library.



Note: Seoul International University (2023). Accessed in 2023. Retrieved from: <https://en.snu.ac.kr/>.

When Amanda passed through immigration, still in Brazil, she met up with Marcella, a childhood friend she hadn't seen for a long time. Marcella was also born in Fortaleza and moved to Brasilia as a teenager. As her parents had already promised her an exchange when she turned twenty, she didn't think twice and chose South Korea right away, because she loved that culture and dreamed of seeing the sights she had seen in her favorite dramas and music videos. The two friends were

more than excited to have met and even more so when they found out that they were going to study and live in the same place!

The girls took the opportunity to miss each other and re-plan all the routes that would now be followed in pairs. The trip was excellent and served to strengthen their friendship and reinforce their love for such a different and enchanting country (Figure 2). They fell in love with every corner of the cities they visited, every coffeeshop, building, temple, museum and park they saw and the exchange gave them a deeper understanding of the local culture and customs. It was really exciting!

Figure 2. Songdo international business district in Incheon.



Note: Kource: Korea Net (2023). Accessed in 2023. Retrieved from: <https://www.korea.net/NewsFocus/FoodTravel/view?articleId=229517>.

After returning to Brazil, they decided that they would like to live in such a different and interesting country. Over the next few years, they planned everything, applying for scholarships, sending CVs to companies, contacting friends and teachers from their exchange days to help them on their adventure. Then one day it all worked out and they moved to South Korea. At the time, they were both 26 years old.

Working and living in another country was not an easy task for either of them. Amanda had graduated from law school in Fortaleza and applied for a scholarship for a postgraduate exchange program in Tourism and Culture at *Kyung Hee University*. She had to go before Marcella, as classes were due to start the following month. Arriving in Seoul, now to live there indefinitely, Amanda's stomach churned, but the lights, the buildings and the university fascinated her in a different way than the first time she set foot there. During the weeks she spent waiting for her friend to arrive, she took advantage of her free time to get to know the local culture, going out in the neighborhood and around the university and enjoying the evening with her new Korean friends.

As for Marcella, finally, the company she was applying for hired her and she could pack her suitcase and go straight to her new home. When she arrived in Seoul and met Amanda, the city brought her the same happiness and butterflies in the stomach as the first time she had set foot there. Only this time, the excitement was much greater, as she was going to live there indefinitely. The two friends spent the first weekend together, decorating the apartment and planning how the week would go and what places they would see. The days went by and turned into months. Everything enchanted the girls, even the smallest things. It was as if they were in a trance, the city moved as if in slow motion. They were really in love with the country. The customs were totally different from Brazil and they loved every detail. Even when they walked down busy streets or couldn't find a restaurant with slightly less spicy food, they didn't care. All that mattered to Amanda and Marcella was that they were fulfilling a dream and they could count on each other's friendship to enjoy the experience.

Initially, as a hobby, they began to show their daily lives and their new life on social networks, mainly Facebook. With the success of the profile page on this social network, they also created a profile on Instagram and a YouTube channel until, due to great demand, they finally created a website called OhMyFriend (Figure 3) to provide information about their experience in South Korea. With the success of the site, they started providing courses and consultancy for those going through the same situation as them: adapting to a new country.

Figure 3. Oh My Friend!



Note: OhMyFriend(2023). Blog for consultancy and advisory services. Accessed in 2023. Retrieved from: <https://www.ohmyfriendtv.com.br/>.

Amanda had already adapted well at university, but sometimes she had a few communication breakdowns. Written language was her biggest difficulty, but her classmates always helped her by translating into English or even explaining the meaning of words through mimes, which ended up in a lot of laughter. They encouraged her to try to ‘make it’ on her own, which she did. As well as online language courses, she also sought out face-to-face courses to learn more about the local customs and culture, so as not to make any gaffes or, worse still, offend her hosts. She went on to take courses in make-up and fashion, since Koreans place a high value on aesthetics and Amanda didn’t want to stand out from her new friends. There she discovered that wearing a tank top was considered inappropriate. On the recommendation of a work colleague, she also went to a gastronomy group where she learned the basics of Asian cuisine.

It was more complicated for Marcella. In her first week at work, she was super excited and brought some Brazilian sweets to give to her colleagues. However, her attempt to “break the ice” was frustrated, as only the supervisor came to greet her and barely spoke to her. Pointing to her desk with his hands, he quickly explained her role and told her that more information would be on the system. The rest of the team barely looked up from their computers to say good morning. Marcella felt very out of place. Her desk was a little far from the others, which didn’t help communi-

tion. During the break, she tried to strike up a conversation with her colleagues in the office, but she didn't have much success. They spoke to each other in Korean and she understood little or sometimes nothing. For basic things like using the restroom and getting coffee or water, she had to watch the others to see where they were. The office offered lunch and she couldn't eat anything, everything was too spicy for her taste! Most of the food she couldn't identify what it was and was afraid of trying it and becoming ill during the working day.

As the days went by, Marcella had a little hope that it would soon get better and she would progress in relation to her colleagues, but only the workload increased and the feeling of not belonging lasted for several months. Not to mention the gaffes she made, which only made her situation worse. One day, a customer brought a gift for the employees in the department and when it was Marcella's turn, she held out one of her hands and received the package, thanking him effusively. The customer was visibly embarrassed and ignored her completely. She didn't understand and when she got home, she told Amanda what had happened.

– Friend, how did you receive the gift?

– I held out my hand and took the gift.

– I think you've made a big mistake. Koreans interpret it as rude to give or receive things with only one hand!!! You should always stand in front of the person and hold out BOTH hands. I thought you knew, friend, or I would have warned you.

– Oh my God, what a shame!

Another mistake was at Amanda's colleague's house. Marcella went there to meet her and get to know the people. As soon as her colleague opened the door, she walked in, introduced herself and struck up a conversation, and when they were already in the living room with the others, Amanda whispered to her:

– Marcella, for God's sake, take off those shoes! You can't go into people's houses with your shoes on!!!

Embarrassed, Marcella went back to the door and removed her shoes from her feet. She had known about this custom since her exchange days, but that day she had completely forgotten about it!

Over the weeks, Marcella tried to talk to her classmates, explaining that customs are different in Brazil and that she might not behave properly, but her classmates didn't listen. On the contrary, they made a point of speaking quickly so that

she wouldn't understand, and Marcella began to get angry and not feel like she belonged there.

The friends always chatted when they got home and Amanda tried to cheer Marcella up in every way possible and helped her look for other jobs, but no media or marketing company wanted to hire a foreigner. The website and social networks required a lot of work, and the friends divided up the tasks, but Amanda noticed that Marcella wasn't as excited as she used to be.

Amanda, on the other hand, felt well-integrated into the country and didn't feel like a stranger. She was already able to assimilate the behaviors and had sufficient mastery of that environment and culture and had no desire to return to Brazil. Marcella felt very bad and couldn't find herself there. She decided it would be better to go back to her country and think about what she really wanted to do. They were both very sad, but they knew it was necessary. Marcella chose to return to Fortaleza and left her friend Amanda with the promise that she would come back to visit her one day.

HIMNAESEYO, 힘내세요- GO FOR IT!

Olivia was very excited about the opportunity she had received from her company, but she was very worried that she wouldn't adapt to such a different culture. She spent several days putting the pros and cons on paper, talking to her parents and especially her childhood friends, Amanda and Marcella, who had the experience of not only living in another country, but that country being South Korea.

Olivia recalls how Amanda adapted very well and met incredible people who always helped her. She loved the city, its beauty and its culture. Many of the local customs were already incorporated into her daily life and she couldn't see herself ever returning to Brazil, except to visit her family. Marcella, on the other hand, had a very different experience. The company she worked for didn't welcome her and her colleagues made a point of excluding her from all company events. Although at the beginning she had many good memories with other people she met during those years, in the last few months she didn't feel she would fit in and decided to return to Brazil.

Faced with such diverse experiences, Olivia felt even more confused and needed to think things over. The problem was that the time had come to give her answer. At that moment, she found herself in front of her boss and team, who said:

– Now it’s time to decide. So, Olivia, do you accept this opportunity? – asks the company president.

What’s next? What to do?

Teaching Notes

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDED USE

The main objective of the case is to provide students with contact with the reality of those who face the challenge of moving to another country for professional reasons and, as a result, to be able to analyze the challenges inherent in the process, what the phenomenon of intercultural adaptation is like and what the role of the People Management area is, depending on the type of international mobility undertaken. The case allows reflection on two different forms of mobility (professional expatriation and self-expatriation) and the process of intercultural adaptation.

The case can be used in undergraduate and graduate courses in International Relations, Foreign Trade, Management and related areas. It can be used in subjects that deal with the process of internationalizing companies, international people management, career management, intercultural administration, among others.

DATA SOURCES

The case is fictitious and was based on elements of real events. The data sources used were, firstly, secondary, with a search on websites and other social media channels (Youtube and Instagram) for people who have moved to another country and recounted their experiences of adapting to different cultures. As a result of this search, we found the website Oh my friend (<https://www.ohmyfriendtv.com.br/>) belonging to Amanda and Marcella, Brazilians who reported on their experiences of living in South Korea.

After consulting the reports on the website, a semi-structured interview was conducted with Marcella and Amanda in mid-2022, in which both reported their experiences and confirmed some of the points on the website. The case was based on Amanda and Marcella’s story, however, various fictional elements such as Olivia’s story, everyday situations in Korea and the outcome of Marcella’s experience

in South Korea were incorporated into the case to broaden the possibilities for analysis and debate on the subject.

LESSON PLAN AND APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

To prepare the teacher for the planning and application of this teaching case, we suggest some reading:

- Zago, A., Domingues, C. R., & Silva, A. M. D. S. (2019). International Professional Mobility: A Bibliometric Review. *Revista de Gestão e Secretariado*, 10(1), 119-140 - with this review article, it will be possible to understand the research panorama on the subject in Brazil and obtain more references that can be used in a complementary way with those suggested or replace them, depending on the objectives with the class and the profile of the students.
- Black, J. S., & Mendenhall, M. (1991) The U-curve adjustment hypothesis revisited: A review and theoretical framework. *Journal of International Business Studies*, v. 22, p. 225-247 - this article is important because it is one of the seminal works on the process of intercultural adaptation and the organizational environment and it formed the theoretical framework of reference for the preparation of the case and the teaching notes.
- Bueno, J. M., Domingues, C. R., Vaz, A. C. C., & Ferreira, N. H. (2022). Voluntary international mobility lived in laughter, crying and resignification: experiences of Brazilians shared on YouTube channels. *Revista Organizações & Sociedade*, v. 29, n. 103, p. 681-706 - this article is an example of the application of intercultural adjustment theories to different types of international geographic mobility, based on the analysis of YouTube channels of Brazilians living in different countries.

To apply the case in class, we recommend that students read the articles beforehand:

- Suggestion for undergraduate students: Lima, D. F., & Domingues, C. R. (2021). International mobility with local contract: impacts on International Human Resources strategies and actions. *Revista Ciências Administrativas*, v. 27, nr. 1, p. 1-13. DOI: 10.5020/2318-0722.2020.27.1.10427

- Suggestion for graduate students: Scherer, L. A.; Prestes, V. A. & Grisci, C. L. I. (2019). Uses/disuses/abuses of terms on international mobility and labor: possible dialogues between management and anthropology. *Revista de Ciências da Administração*, v. 21, n. 5, p. 8-20.

After reading the case, students should first be encouraged to identify and analyze the differences and similarities between organizational expatriation (demanded by a company) and self-expatriation (an individual decision by a professional to work abroad indefinitely). And then on the different behavioral stages that the characters in the case (Amanda and Marcella) went through during their period of intercultural adaptation, namely: “honeymoon”, culture shock, adaptation and mastery, associating them with the three different types of social environment (general, work and interaction). The classroom activity could be divided into two stages of around 120 minutes each, with the following suggested script shown in Figure 4:

Figure 4. Script for classroom activities.

Stages	Contents	Duration (minutes)
Stage 1- Mastering concepts	Reading the case	20
	Drawing up a dictionary identifying the concepts in the article.	20
	Discussion in small groups, with the aim of identifying the contributions and attributions of the People Management area in the international context.	30
	The groups will compile a summary of these duties and responsibilities.	20
	Presentation of the arguments and discussion with the large group.	30

Stage 2 - Ability to extrapolate theory to analyze a case	Discussion in small groups, with the aim of identifying the differences and similarities in preparation for and during the experience of organizational expatriation and self-expatriation.	30
	Discussion in the same small groups, with the aim of analyzing the differences and similarities in intercultural adaptation during a process of organizational expatriation or self-expatriation.	30
	Presentation of the arguments and discussion with the large group	30
	Closure by the teacher.	30

In the case of two lessons a week, the teacher can comment on the elements mentioned, identifying concepts that have not been covered or improving concepts that are simplistic. If the subject has been taught in four lessons, start Stage 2 on the same day after the break.

A suggestion for conducting the discussion and then closing the activity is to use the summary table, shown in Figure 5, about the moments Amanda and Marcela experienced in their intercultural experience, correlating them with the phases of intercultural adaptation in a self-expatriation process and what would be different in the case of Olivia, who would be doing an organizational expatriation, relying on the support of her company for the different stages of international mobility:

Figure 5. Stages of Amanda and Marcella’s Intercultural Adaptation.

Phases	Amanda	Marcella
Honey-moon	<p>From the moment she set foot in Korea, Amanda was enchanted by every place she went.</p> <p>She was really in love with the city and everything seemed like a movie and not reality. All that mattered to Amanda was that they were fulfilling a dream and she was with her best friend to enjoy everything they could.</p>	<p>When she landed in Korea, Marcella felt very happy and had butterflies in her stomach. The little things like the rain touched her, the city moved like slow motion, they were really in love with the country, even when they walked on busy streets, or when they couldn't find a restaurant with food that was a little less spicy or a little more Brazilian, she didn't mind.</p>
Culture Shock	<p>Amanda had minor communication problems at university, but because she got on well with her classmates, these were quickly overcome.</p>	<p>Ever since she started her job, Marcella felt out of place. Her colleagues wouldn't talk to her, wouldn't call her to lunch, and made a point of speaking quickly so that she wouldn't understand. Marcella struggled with food and made a few mistakes that only made the situation worse.</p>
Adaptation	<p>Amanda wanted to get to know Korean culture better by interacting with her classmates and taking courses. She tried to take part in as many activities as possible to bond with her local colleagues.</p>	<p>Marcella couldn't adapt and feel part of the new reality, she felt excluded and wanted to return home</p>
Domain	<p>Amanda felt like she belonged there and didn't want to go back to Brazil, Korea is her home.</p>	<p>Marcella couldn't fit in, she couldn't get used to the language and the very different culture, she felt very bad and wanted to go back home to Brazil.</p>

In addition, some questions are suggested that are pertinent to the topic and the case, which can be discussed with the students about possible ways of dealing with Olivia’s situation.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CASE ANALYSIS

Questions for discussion:

1. Describe the differences between the main types of international geographic mobility. Next, analyze which benefits of organizational expatriate mobility could help Olivia decide on the proposal to move to South Korea.
2. Given the type of international mobility Amanda and Marcella went through, and their respective experiences, how can the process of intercultural adaptation be analyzed?
3. How can Olivia prepare in advance for her international mobility so that she can get through the cycle of intercultural adaptation?

CASE ANALYSIS AND CONNECTION WITH THE LITERATURE

1. **Describe the differences between the main types of international geographic mobility. Next, analyze the role of people management and the benefits of organizational expatriate mobility that could help Olivia decide on the proposal to move to South Korea.**

Geographical mobility for work and career purposes can take place in different ways: traditional organizational expatriation, immigration and self-expatriation are the best known and most dealt with in academic literature in the field of management (Bueno et al., 2022; Kelly & Conroy, 2023). Each of them can meet different objectives and impact different stakeholders, such as the individuals involved, organizations (of different sizes and legal configurations) and support institutions (public authorities, educational institutions, consultancies, among others) (Zheng & Smith, 2019).

The main differences are that traditional organizational expatriation generally occurs when companies try to expand into new markets. Companies choose to move their professionals to other countries because of the need for trusted people to take control of the subsidiaries, management development, the need for complementary knowledge in the team to carry out new projects, innovation management and to control or strengthen the organizational culture (Freitas, 2010; Andresen et al, 2014; Mello, Suutari, & Dickmann, 2023). As it is in the interest of companies, this type of international mobility often involves organizational support in preparing for expatriation, during and on return to the country of origin (Andresen et al, 2014), also because it involves high costs and risks for them (Zheng & Smith, 2019).

From the professional's point of view, the main advantages of traditional expatriation are the possibility of financial gain, career growth within the company itself, the prospect of internationalizing one's career, and the opening of new personal and professional horizons through contact with new cultures (Freitas, 2010; Bueno et al., 2022; Mello, Suutari, & Dickmann, 2023).

Immigration, on the other hand, is a specific type of geographical mobility in which the individual chooses to leave their country to live in another, permanently, for different reasons, but which involve a life choice and not just a question of work and career, as they understand that in the destination country they will have more opportunities for themselves and their family, as well as issues of security and living conditions, in general. The difference between this type of mobility and traditional expatriation is that this is a permanent decision on the part of the individual, assuming the country of destination as their new country, seeking to obtain citizenship and returning to their country of origin for visits and vacations (Freitas & Dantas, 2011).

In order to more accurately differentiate between traditional expatriates and (sent abroad by the organization) immigrants and self-expatriates, some authors use criteria to determine whether or not a professional is a self-expatriate: (a) the transfer between the country of origin and the destination country must be voluntary and self-initiated; (b) employment in the destination country must be regular and secure (unlike occasional jobs which are more associated with the immigrant during their experience abroad); (c) there must be an intention to stay temporarily; and (d) the individual must be qualified or hold professional qualifications (Ellis, Thorn & Yao, 2020).

There can also be other forms of mobility that combine the previous types, generating new names and classifications (Scherer, Prestes & Grisci, 2019), such as organizational expatriation with a local contract (Lima & Domingues, 2021). It is like traditional expatriation because the professional is already part of the company's staff, the difference is that vacancies are opened for international positions (in company units in other countries) and the individual applies for one of these vacancies, i.e. it is a voluntary choice, receiving support and accompaniment to a lesser extent for the displacement. Their contract in the country of origin is terminated and a new contract is signed in the country of destination, under the labor laws of that country, with no fixed duration and no possibility of returning to their previous position

in the country of origin, with responsibilities and risks like self-expatriation (Lima & Domingues, 2021; Brewster, Suutari, & Waxin, 2021).

In Olivia's case, the invitation is for traditional organizational expatriate mobility, with the financial and career benefits that this entails. There is also support and monitoring from the company, usually through the People Management department, which helps and coordinates the preparation stages (documentation, legal procedures, intercultural training), monitoring during mobility (help with finding housing, offering airline tickets to visit family, psychological support, among others) and negotiating repatriation at the end of the international mission, when this is in the interests of the professional and the company (Gallon & Antunes, 2015). Friends Amanda and Marcella, on the other hand, undertook self-expatriation-type international mobility, one for work and the other for study, so they had no support from their organizations and took full responsibility for their intercultural adaptation.

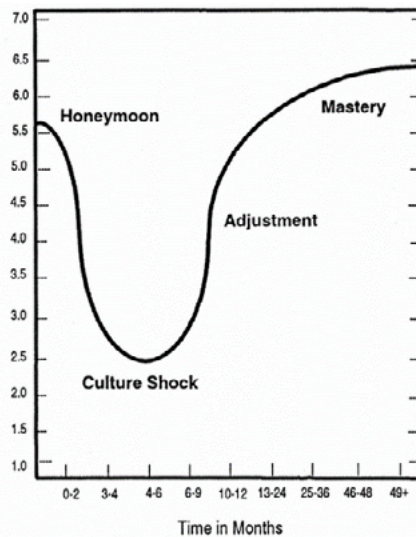
There are several factors that contribute to the duration and success of the international mobility experience, such as issues related to the individual and their power of choice, and external factors such as the redirection of organizational strategies or global crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which can even lead to early return to the country of origin (Kelly & Conroy, 2023). Regarding this stage of return to the country of origin, it differs when it is an organizational expatriation from a self-expatriation (Gallon & Antunes, 2015). In the case of company-demanded expatriation, the return date is usually already planned and negotiated even before the transfer procedures begin, culminating in the completion of the international mission. For self-expatriates, it is an individual decision and the end of a work contract abroad does not mean an immediate return to the country of origin; the professional can decide to take part in selection processes for other companies in the current country or transfer to another country, without returning to their country of origin.

2. Given the type of international mobility that Amanda and Marcella went through, and their respective experiences with the process, how can the process of intercultural adaptation be analyzed?

The U-Curve Theory of Intercultural Adaptation is based on other preliminary empirical studies, as commented by Bueno et al (2022), but it was from this theory by Black and Mendenhall (1991) that this approach caught the attention of manag-

ers and academics in the field of business management. The theory presents the adaptation of individuals in four stages: the honeymoon, culture shock, adaptation and mastery (Black & Mendenhall, 1991). Although these stages are discussed in sequence, they can occur in a non-linear way, depending on the individual and the place they are going to, and the type of mobility. Figure 6 shows the U-Curve with its four stages.

Figure 6. U-shaped curve of cultural adaptation.



Source: Black, J. S., & Mendenhall, M. (1991) The U-curve adjustment hypothesis revisited: A review and theoretical framework. *Journal of International Business Studies*, v. 22, p. 225-247.

The honeymoon stage is characterized by fascination and enchantment with the new environment, culture and people, and can last for weeks or months depending on the process (Black & Mendenhall, 1991). In her second experience in South Korea, the impression is that Amanda is continuing the honeymoon phase that had begun during her student exchange, as she continues to have the feeling that she was fulfilling a dream, everything that happened around her enchanted her, it was even hard to believe that it was true. In Marcella's account, this phase is also evident from the moment she lands in the country for the second time, she has butterflies in her stomach from how happy and excited she feels.

After this initial honeymoon period, individuals begin to feel a sense of strangeness, as well as disappointment and frustration at not finding the same things as in their country of origin (services, food, climate, ways of socializing, etc.) in addition to missing their family and friends, which characterizes the beginning of the culture shock phase (Black & Mendenhall, 1991). In Amanda's account, it is possible to identify this phase when she is at university and has some communication problems and difficulties. Written language was her biggest difficulty, according to her account. Marcella, on the other hand, felt much more out of place, especially in the workplace. Her desk was a bit far away from the others, which didn't help with communication. As she was a self-expatriate, there was no support from the company for her integration, nor any kind of intercultural training for her and her colleagues, let alone specific support from her manager. This led her to experience various situations of isolation, embarrassment and frustration in the workplace. And having made some cultural gaffes in other environments made her even more insecure and frustrated, with a sense of defeat and regret.

When the individual manages to overcome this phase, which can be traumatic, they move towards the adjustment phase. This phase takes place when the individual begins to assimilate the behaviors of the new culture, when they can recognize aspects of the place and social behavior and no longer feel like a total stranger. This phase is slow and cycles of crisis and adaptation are common during this process (Black & Mendenhall, 1991). In Amanda's account, it is possible to see how she tried to overcome the situation of strangeness by learning more about the new culture and getting along with her colleagues to adapt to local customs. She also relied on the help and goodwill of her colleagues who always helped her by translating into English or even explaining the meaning of words through gestures. In addition to the online language courses, she took face-to-face courses to learn more about the local customs and culture, so as not to make any mistakes and offend her hosts. In Marcella's account, this stage was not reached because she didn't feel like she belonged and ended up returning to Brazil while still in the culture shock phase.

The last stage, called mastery, occurs when you have sufficient control over the environment and the new culture. It doesn't mean that the culture of origin has been abandoned or that the person has completely changed their identity and be-

havior, but that they are able to adapt to the new environment and behave according to the standards of the new culture (Black & Mendenhall, 1991). Amanda's account shows that she seems to be entering this new phase by trying to incorporate the country's culture, making her feel like she belongs and not wanting to return to her country of origin.

In addition to this temporal analysis of intercultural adaptation, it is possible to analyze how this adaptation process occurs in different socialization spaces, which is an important contribution of the study by Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991), as pointed out by authors such as Bueno et al (2022). In this sense, intercultural adaptation can be easier or more difficult, faster or slower, depending on the experiences and interactions in the general environment, the work environment and the social interaction environment. In Amanda's case, she was in an academic environment (not the traditional work environment) which is usually more prepared to receive people from other countries, which facilitates the transition between the stages of adaptation and resembles, at least in part, the support given by companies to the traditional expatriate. In addition, this environment bridged the gap with the social interaction environment, as she made friends with her university classmates, thus creating a new network of friends who helped and encouraged her to get to know and experience the new culture. Marcella, on the other hand, did not have this support in her work environment; on the contrary, she found an unprepared and hostile environment, which also affected her experiences and interactions in other environments, generating frustration and embarrassment.

Just as there are differences between the traditional expatriation process (organizational expatriates) and the self-expatriation process, it must also be considered that intercultural adaptation can occur in different ways and with different intensity between these two types of mobility. More recent studies have analyzed some of these variations with a focus on adaptation and how it can influence decisions about returning to the country of origin for organizational expatriates and self-expatriates, such as the work of Ellis, Thorn and Yao (2020) and Kelly and Conroy (2023). These studies point to other important factors for intercultural adaptation than those originally pointed out by Black and Mendenhall (1991), such as information technology, the attractiveness of countries, personal characteristics and mental health (Ellis, Thorn & Yao, 2020; Derksen et al., 2023).

It's also important to relate these choices and experiences to their professional career paths. Both Amanda and Marcella chose to design their careers themselves, moving away from traditional career thinking, guided and determined by the company, towards career management by the professional themselves, the protean career. Baruch and Sullivan (2022) characterize the traditional career as one of vertical ascent in the structure, the result of financial and status nods from the company and mediated by the company's interests, in an objective and planned way. The protean career, on the other hand, is led by the professional and not by the company, with different aspects of subjectivity involved.

It requires a certain amount of commitment and maturity and can be facilitated by the support of a senior professional. With the changes in labor relations, Amanda and Marcella were encouraged to rethink their jobs and their employability. International mobility boosts careers, providing promotions and new opportunities, regardless of whether it is organizational expatriation or self-expatriation, as the study by Mello, Suutari and Dickmann (2023) points out.

3. How can Olivia prepare in advance for her international geographic mobility in order to get through the cycle of intercultural adaptation?

Another important contribution of Black and Mendenhall's work (1991) is the discussion on the importance of anticipatory adjustment which, in short, means that individuals can anticipate intercultural adaptation by knowing and observing what people do in other cultures before they go through this experience (Bueno et al, 2022). As forms of anticipatory adjustment, Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991) suggest the different types of intercultural training and previous international experience (such as tourism trips, student exchanges, among others) which could increase knowledge and retention of important information that can shorten the time of the honeymoon and culture shock phases, anticipating the adjustment and mastery phases.

In Amanda's case, the student exchange did a very good job of helping her anticipate intercultural adaptation when she went to South Korea for the second time. In Marcella's case, previous experience helped at first, but it wasn't enough, either because of the difference between the environments (study and work) experienced, or because of the specific type of international mobility, self-expatriation,

which places more responsibility on the shoulders of the individuals on the move than on the host organization and colleagues.

When Olivia goes in search of reports from people who have been through a similar experience to the one she may face, she demonstrates that she has taken the initiative to look for the anticipated adjustment that can make all the difference to her choices and preparation for this experience. And obtaining information from different, even opposite, experiences can be of great value in understanding that intercultural adaptation takes place in different spaces and at different times, requiring patience and understanding of the process, as well as different strategies and behaviors depending on the adaptation phase or environment. They can also count on the support of the company, in the Human Resource department, which usually offers some kind of intercultural training and information about the country and the work routine that can help at this time (Domingues, 2011; Gallon & Antunes, 2015).

In addition, she can search for YouTube channels and social media profiles of Brazilians living in South Korea. According to Bueno et al (2022), this has become an increasingly common and accessible way of preparing for international geographic mobility in advance. Alternatively, it is possible to look for places in Brazil where there are many Koreans, such as the Bom Retiro neighborhood in São Paulo, which is the cultural hub of Korean traditions in the country, to familiarize yourself with the customs. For example, you could try going to traditional restaurants to get used to the cuisine, going to bookstores and bookstores to look for books to get used to the writing, or taking an online course or a course with your friends to learn the basics of the language.

Once in the new country, Olivia should ask for your company's support, both to help her with locating a place to live, legal procedures and other issues, since she will be a traditional organizational expatriate. And as she will be setting up her new team and the entire structure of the company's unit abroad, she can hire (with the company's consent) a local consultancy to help her with the recruitment and selection process, as well as issues of finding a good location for the physical installation of the subsidiary.

From the point of view of intercultural adaptation itself, one way Olivia can adapt to the new culture is to try to get to know and interact with the local com-

munity in the three types of environments (general, work and social interactions) by gradually taking part in activities around her, exploring the neighborhood where she will be living, etc.

In addition, the People Management area will have to act in a more sophisticated way when it becomes international. According to Cieri, Fenwick and Hutchings (2005), one of the strategies concerns diversity management, the formation of global teams and the development of global awareness. Freitas (2010) states that the international experience of people management professionals helps them to be more sensitive to the situations experienced by expatriates and their families, enabling them to deal with them more assertively. This means that the area should initially support the expatriate professional and, whenever possible, experience the internationalization process.

International People Management, according to Cerdin and Sharma (2014), has two primary functions: a) to identify and attract individuals interested in international work and b) to stimulate and retain people with international executive talent. This leads to international career management, which must recognize, plan and develop policies aimed at different professionals, which is an essential component of the area, through joint work between the organization and the individual themselves (Domingues, 2011).

CASE CLOSURE

The case is fictional with some real elements incorporated into the plot. Olivia was a character created to illustrate a situation of international mobility of the organizational expatriation type. Amanda and Marcella are real people who have been living in South Korea for over ten years. Amanda is currently on a scholarship from the Korean government and is studying for a master's degree in Tourism and Culture at Kyung Hee University, while Marcella works for a company that promotes Korean culture and tourism to foreigners. Both provide consultancy and advice on exchange and tourism for foreign visitors through the website they created Oh, My Friend! (<https://www.ohmyfriendtv.com.br/index.html>).

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