



**Cross-Cultural Adjustment of Expatriate Academics in  
Selected Higher Education Institutions  
in the United Arab Emirates**

التأقلم بين الثقافات للمغتربين الأكاديميين في مؤسسات مختارة من التعليم العالي في

دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة

by

**DAVID KWAME QUANSAH, M.I.B.**

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION**

at

**The British University in Dubai**

**Dr. Abdulai Abukari  
May 2017**

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**Title of the thesis in Arabic**

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## ENGLISH ABSTRACT

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This study investigates the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics in selected higher education institutions (HEIs) in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The focus is on cross-cultural adjustment across three facets of adjustment: general, work, and social interaction. The study is based on the frameworks of Black et al. (1991), Miller's (2009) Identity Development Trajectory, and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's Seven Dimensions of Culture model (1998). These frameworks are successfully applied through questionnaire and face-to-face interviews. A total of 324 expatriate academics employed in three HEIs in the UAE responded to the questionnaire, and 57 of them participated in face-to-face interviews.

The results obtained through this study affirm, to a large extent, the findings of previous studies which are discussed in the literature review. The model devised by Black et al. (1991) is found to be applicable to the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE. This finding justifies the development of a model that explains the process of cross-cultural adjustment among the expatriate academics. Factors such as gender, family status, language, prior overseas experience, and cross-cultural training are found to be the strongest determinants of the expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment. Anticipatory adjustment significantly contributes to their cross-cultural adjustment. Social adjustment, family-related factors and financial factors are found to be the major contributors to the expatriate academics' intent to stay longer in the UAE or in the organization. The most important area of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and experiences that were identified by the respondents as the prerequisite for expatriate academics to successfully adjust, consist of the following components; professional, demographic, individual personality, social and intercultural, organization, and country. Most respondents also indicate that their employers have adopted a

“swim or sink without help” approach with regards to their cross-cultural adjustment. Based on the findings from this research, the researcher has been able to gain more insight into the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE and the need for HEIs to ensure a smoother cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics. Although the purpose of this study is not to generalize, the researcher suggests future research involving host country nationals, students, recruitment specialists, and cross-cultural training specialists or consultants. By expanding the sample size and including various parties or stakeholders including different methodologies for data collection, this topic can be explored further, and the range of issues discussed in this thesis can be expanded.

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## ARABIC ABSTRACT

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هذه الدراسة تقوم بفحص التأقلم بين الثقافات للمغتربين الأكاديميين في مؤسسات مختارة من التعليم العالي في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة ، مع التركيز على ثلاثة جوانب للتأقلم ، وهي العام ، العمل والتفاعل الاجتماعي

هذه الدراسة تقوم على الأطر العملية لبلاك وآخرون (1991) ، مسار تطور الهوية لميلر (2009) و نموذج الأبعاد السبعة للثقافة لترومبينيارس و هامدن تيرنر (1998)، وقد طبقت هذه الأطر بنجاح من خلال الإستبيان والمقابلات الشخصية.

وقد استجاب للإستبيان ما مجموعه 324 من المغتربين الأكاديميين الذين يعملون في ثلاثة من مؤسسات التعليم العالي في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة، 57 منهم قد تمت مقابلتهم وجها لوجه، وقد أيدت نتائج الدراسة إلى حد كبير نتائج الدراسات السابقة والتي تمت مناقشتها في عرض الأدبيات.

وقد وجد أن النموذج الذي ابتكره بلاك وآخرون (1991) يمكن تطبيقه للتأقلم بين الثقافات للمغتربين الأكاديميين الذين يعملون في مؤسسات التعليم العالي في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة ، هذه النتائج تعلق تطوير نموذج يشرح عملية التأقلم بين الثقافات للأكاديميين المغتربين، بالإضافة إلى أن عوامل الجنس ، الوضع العائلي ، اللغة ، الخبرة السابقة في خارج الدولة والتدريب على التأقلم بين الثقافات قد وجدت بأنها عوامل قوية في التأقلم بين الثقافات للأكاديميين المغتربين.

التأقلم التوقعي يسهم بشكل ملحوظ في تأقلمهم بين الثقافات ،بالإضافة إلى أن عوامل التأقلم الاجتماعي ، العوامل المتعلقة بالأسرة ، والعوامل المادية قد وجدت بان لها اسهامات أساسية في رغبة الأكاديميين المغتربين للبقاء أطول في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة أو في المؤسسة ، وقد عرف المستجيبين بأن المعرفة ،المهارات، الأسلوب والخبرة أساسية للتأقلم مع المكونات التي تتالف من المهنة ، الديموغرافي ، الشخصية الفردية ، الاجتماعي والثقافي ، المؤسسة والدولة.

معظم المستجيبين اشاروا إلى أن أصحاب العمل قد تبنوا منحى "اسبح أو اغرق من غير مساعدة" بالنسبة إلى تأقلمهم بين الثقافات، وبناء على نتائج هذا البحث، فإن الباحث قد أصبح ذو بصيرة أكثر بالتأقلم بين الثقافات

للأكاديميين المغتربين في مؤسسات التعليم العالي في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة بالإضافة إلى ضرورة أن  
تحرص مؤسسات التعليم العالي على تيسير التأقلم بين الثقافات للمغتربين الأكاديميين .  
على الرغم من هذا فإن الغرض أو الهدف ليس التعميم ، ولكن الباحث يقترح أن تتضمن الأبحاث المستقبلية  
مواطنين البلد المضيف ، الطلبة ، أخصائين التوظيف و اخصائين التدريب لبيان الثقافات أو المستشارين.  
بواسطة التوسع في حجم العينات بحيث تشمل مختلف الشركاء أو أصحاب المنفعة ، وتبني طرق البحث  
المختلفة لجمع البيانات عندئذ يمكن لهذا الموضوع أن يستكشف بشكل أكبر و التوسع في طرق اقضايا التي  
تم مناقشتها في هذه الأطروحة.



---

## DEDICATION

---

I dedicate this thesis to  
my wife, Stella Quansah and my beloved children,  
McKeown, Kaylah, and Davina,  
for their constant support and unconditional love.

*I LOVE YOU ALL.*

---

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---

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First and foremost, I would like to thank God the Almighty for blessing me with the gift of life and the passion to pursue my dreams.

My profound gratitude also goes to my advisor and supervisor, Dr Abdulai Abukari for accepting to be my supervisor. I would also like to thank him for his guidance, support, scholarly advice, and insightful criticisms.

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Words cannot express my gratitude to my family and friends. I would like to express my appreciation to my beloved wife, Stella Dawu Quansah, who supported me and encouraged me to strive towards my dream. I can honestly say that it was only her constant

encouragement that ultimately made it possible for me to see this thesis through to the end. A special thanks to my brother, Steve Quansah, who has been a constant source of inspiration, who believed and invested in me. To my parents (Samuel and Mary Quansah), thank you for everything. I would also like to express my thanks to all of my friends and people who have supported and encouraged me throughout these years.

I would also like to thank all the HEIs that granted me permission to collect data. My sincere gratitude goes to the expatriate academics who participated in this study, thank you for sharing your time and thoughts with me.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
CAA	Commission for Academic Accreditation
CCA	Cross-Cultural Adjustment
CCT	Cross-Cultural Training
CIA	The Central Intelligence Agency
EA	Expatriate Academic
EAs	Expatriate Academics
EAP	Expatriate Academics' Profile
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Countries
GIZ	The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
HEI	High Education Institution
HRM	Human Resource Management
IHRM	International Human Resource Management
ILO	International Labour Organization
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
MOHESR	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
OTT	Oversea Trained Teachers
SIE	Self-initiated Expatriates
SPSS	Statistical package for the social sciences
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN/DESA)
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division

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### Introduction and Contextualisation

#### 1.1 Introduction

*The greatest use that can be made of wealth is to invest it in creating generations of educated and trained people. - His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan (UAE Interact, 2013)*

Higher education plays a pivotal role in the national development of any country and enables a country to become globally competitive (Kirk & Napier, 2010). Universities constitute the engines of national development (Etkowitz, 2008). There has been a rapid expansion within the higher education sector over the past two decades (Altbach and Knight, 2007). This sector has become one of the most rapidly growing sectors of the world economy today (Badry and Willoughby, 2015) with an increased mobility of academics, yet few research studies have investigated their experiences (Knight, 2011, 2013). In addition, the rapid increase of the transnational higher education market over the past two decades has also led to an increase in an international mobility of academics (Altbach and Knight, 2007; Knight, 2011, 2013). The rise of a more global economy has also increased the expatriation levels (Brewster & Harris, 1999; Selmer, 1999).

Over the years, the Gulf Cooperation Council countries have experienced a rapid growth in their higher education sector. For example, the UAE is currently hosting the highest percentage of the world's international branch campuses (Clarke, 2015). Unfortunately, this tremendous growth is not matched by the number of available national citizens qualified as academic staff in the region (Tripathi and Mukerji, 2008). According to the Asian Development Bank (2011), the expansion of the higher education system, growing student-teacher ratios, and the lack of an adequate number of local qualified academic staff has

necessitated the recruitment of expatriate academics. The overwhelming demand for higher education in the UAE from both Emirati citizens and expatriates, and the simultaneous lack of qualified academics, has also led to the recruitment of expatriate academic staff (Badry and Willoughby, 2015; Clarke, 2015; Knight, 2011, 2013). According to MOHESR (2014), the faculty population at UAE's federal and CAA-licensed institutions is highly diverse with only 6.32% Emirati academic staff. This demographic fact confirms the role of expatriate academics in achieving the UAE's national development and global competitiveness targets. It also indicates that the higher education institutions are going to have to deal with cross-culture issues. Most importantly, it highlights the crucial importance of cross cultural management and expatriate adjustment studies to the UAE in the field of higher education. This situation (shortage of academics) is not unique to the Gulf Cooperation Council countries but other countries like the United Kingdom (Miller, 2009; 2010), Taiwan (Liao, 2010), Hong Kong (Chan, 2010; Chu, 2009) have resorted to the recruitment of expatriates.

Besides filling the vacuum created by the lack of qualified local talent, hiring expatriates possesses other benefits. Expatriates allow the transfer of technical expertise and management know-how which serves as an appropriate means for the diffusion of tacit knowledge to organisations (Kühlmann and Hutchings, 2010). Hofstede (2001) also adds that a cross-cultural workforce in any sector can be an asset if managed well since a culturally diverse workforce encourages knowledge and technology transfer and creates a favourable environment for creativity and innovation.

Despite the highlighted benefits of hiring expatriates, the whole expatriation process is not without challenges to the undertaker and or the host organisation (Mahrous and Ahmed, 2010; Miller, 2009, 2010; Richardson, 2000; Selmer and Luring, 2011). Generally, adjustment is one of the toughest challenges facing all expatriates (Clarke, 2015; Miller,

2009, 2010; Richardson and McKenna, 2002; Sabban, 2004; Ward et al., 2001). The decision to relocate to a different country or transfer from one institution to another comes with many challenges (Sanderson, 2014). Residing in another country generates acculturation problems for the expatriate (Mehdizadeh & Scott, 2005; Miller, 2009, 2010). Being cut off from one's familiar social networks while simultaneously trying to acclimatize to a new host culture and job situation nurtures a sense of isolation and causes stress (Berry, 2005; Bhugra & Jones, 2001; Miller, 2009). Anxiety, depression, and apathy are also other symptoms of expatriate stress (Miller, 2009, 2010; Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, Jaakkola, & Reuter, 2006; Swagler & Ellis, 2003). At the individual level, the neglect of expatriate adjustment issues can lead to expatriate maladjustment (Olsen & Martins, 2009). At the organisation level, expatriate maladjustment can lead to conflict, financial loss, poor job performance, lack of job satisfaction, less organisational commitment, high turnover, and early return to home country (Black and Stephens, 1989; Bennet et. al., 2000; Hofstede, 2001; Miller, 2009). Time is often lost when organisations seek replacements because finding out how to secure vacant positions is difficult (Musselin, 2004).

Just like "traditional" expatriates, expatriate academics encounter widespread difficulties in their new environment (Miller, 2009, 2010; Selmer and Luring, 2011). In regard to expatriate academics in the UAE, recent research has shown that the expatriates encounter a series of difficulties in their new environment (Altbach, 2016; Clarke 2015; Knight, 2011, 2013; Miller, 2009, 2010). Academics working abroad suffer under certain constraints such as their accustomed teaching pedagogy which may differ from that of the host culture and language barriers (Chapman and Austin 2002; Clarke 2007; Hofstede 1986; Miller, 2010; Nieto and Booth 2010; Richardson and McKenna 2003; Selmer and Luring 2011). According to Richardson and McKenna (2002) and Miller (2009, 2010), some the challenges faced by the newly arrived expatriate academics include facing their students in class for the

first time, setting up home, interacting with locals, and settling down in the new environment. Haslberger, Brewster, and Hippler (2014) also add that it is better for expatriate academics to adjust “as quickly as possible and to ensure that the time to proficiency is short” (p.1). Hence, the researcher is of the opinion that, as the number of international academics continues to increase globally and in the UAE, research in expatriate adjustment and cross cultural management becomes increasingly relevant.

In regard to the UAE, only a limited number of studies have been completed on the adjustment of expatriate academics in higher education (Clarke, 2015; Isakovic and Whitman, 2013; Sanderson, 2014). The observations above raise the question as to whether working as an expatriate academic in the UAE is indeed challenging and demanding or not. This thesis therefore aims at filling this gap in order to adequately cover both the positives and negatives of expatriation with regards to expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE.

## **1.2 The Research Problem**

Expatriate management constitutes an extensive area of academic research interest (Forster, 1997, p.4; McNulty and Selmer, 2017). However, much of what is known about expatriate academics “is still largely based on the expatriate assignment of corporate executives” (Clarke, 2015; Inkson et al., 1997, p.353; Selmer and Luring, 2011). In comparison to business expatriates, expatriate academics remain a group about which relatively very little is known particularly their lived experiences (Kreber and Hounsell, 2014; Potts, 2004; Selmer and Luring, 2011; Sanderson, 2014). Unfortunately, despite the known increases in the mobility of academics nationally and internationally, very little effort has been made to investigate their experiences (Knight, 2011, 2013). With regards to the UAE, only a limited number of studies have been completed on expatriate adjustment in higher education (Clarke, 2015). Isakovic and Whitman (2013), Knight (2013), and Sanderson (2014) also argue that

more research is required in order to assess and evaluate the challenges, complexities and environment the foreign academics in the UAE are facing. McNulty and Selmer (2017) and Richardson and McKenna (2000) explain that most studies on academic expatriation seem to ignore the individual level. In fact, Knight (2013), Potts (2004) and Richardson (2000) recommend that more research work should be conducted in order to understand the challenges, complexities and the environment experienced by the expatriate academics. Cross-cultural adjustment can affect job satisfaction, work life balance and people's individual characteristics, which constitute the basic issues that significantly affect the faculty turnover rate (Roseer, 2004). It can therefore be asserted that if individual academics have unmet expectations with their jobs and faces issues in their new environment (social interaction with host country nationals and new work environment), it is likely to end in voluntary turnover. Based on the above arguments and the fact that a majority of the academics in the UAE are expatriates, new research related to the adjustment of expatriate academics in the HEIs constitutes a matter of considerable interest and relevance.

### **1.3 Purpose and Objectives**

According to McNulty and Selmer (2017), the most needed research on expatriates is not necessarily more incremental studies but rather to uncover the often-brutal reality of expatriates's everyday existence. Hence, a section of this thesis is devoted to investigating the cross-cultural adjustment (related to work, social/interaction, and general) of expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE and its relationship between with their intention to continue working in the country or the organisation. The main purpose of this research is to examine the process of cross-cultural adjustment within the context of expatriate academics in the UAE higher education sector. The aim is also to develop a model that explains the process of cross cultural adjustment among expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE.



### 1.3.1 Objectives

Objectives of this thesis are as follows:

1. To identify current process/models/approaches of cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE.
2. To examine the relationship that exists between the expatriate academics' cross-cultural adjustment across three dimensions (the general environment, social interaction with host country nationals and work environment), and their intention to stay in the UAE.
3. To identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to improve cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics in the UAE.
4. To make recommendations for intervention to improve expatriate academic adjustment.
5. To determine the applicability of the model developed by Black et al. (1991) on expatriate academics in terms of the general environment, work environment and social interaction in HEIs in the UAE.

### 1.4 Research Questions

The present study is based on five research questions:

1. Which factors contribute to the expatriate academics' cross-cultural adjustment across three dimensions (the general environment, social interaction, and work environment) in the UAE?
2. What influences the expatriate academics' anticipatory adjustment including previous cross-cultural experience, cross cultural training and their intention to stay in the UAE?

3. What influences the expatriate academics' cross-cultural adjustment in terms of their intention to stay in the UAE?
4. What are the participants' opinions on the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for expatriate academics to successfully adjust to working and living in the UAE?
5. What were the recommendations given by the expatriate academics for improving the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics?

The sources used to answer the research questions presented in this thesis are shown in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1 Research questions and sources of answers**

<b>Research questions</b>	<b>Sources to answer questions</b>
1. Which factors contribute to the expatriate academics' cross-cultural adjustment across three dimensions (the general environment, social interaction, and work environment) in the UAE?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature review</li> <li>• Mean</li> <li>• Standard deviation</li> <li>• One-way between groups ANOVA</li> <li>• Independent samples t-test</li> <li>• Analysis of interview data</li> </ul>
2. What influences the expatriate academics' anticipatory adjustment including previous cross-cultural experience, cross cultural training and their intention to stay in the UAE?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature review</li> <li>• Pearson product moment correlation</li> <li>• Multiple regression analysis</li> <li>• Analysis of interview data</li> </ul>
3. What influences the expatriate academics' cross-cultural adjustment in terms of their intention to stay in the UAE?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature review</li> <li>• Pearson product moment correlation</li> <li>• Multiple regression analysis</li> <li>• One-way between groups ANOVA</li> <li>• Analysis of interview data</li> </ul>
4. What are the participants' opinions on the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for expatriate academics to successfully adjust to working and living in the UAE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature review</li> <li>• SurveyMonkey's text analysis</li> <li>• Analysis of interview data</li> </ul>
5. What were the recommendations given by the expatriate academics for improving the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature review</li> <li>• Analysis of interview data</li> </ul>

See chapter five, six, and seven for discussion and analysis of the research questions and the answers found during the study.

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

Undertaking and presenting an empirical investigation related to the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics in the UAE contributes significantly to the overall debate and also informs policy makers, higher education institutions and expatriate academics in the UAE on ways of improving cross-cultural adjustment. This study contributes to the body of academic knowledge and to human resource practices.

In terms of scholarly knowledge, the topic of cross cultural adjustment of expatriate academics in the UAE has been under-researched and a model of cross-cultural adjustment for expatriate academics within the context of higher education and the UAE fills the current gap in cross-cultural studies. Secondly, the thesis adds to the limited but growing field of expatriate academic adjustment studies and cross-cultural management in the UAE. It also applies theories of cross-cultural adjustment to explain the situation of expatriate academics in unfamiliar environments, particularly in the UAE. It serves to explain why adjustment works or does not work effectively. The contribution to the human resource profession and practices includes insights into the key issues of cross-cultural adjustment as experienced by the participants, in order to increase the success of expatriate academics. Other valuable insights for human resource practitioners are given in terms of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for an expatriate academic staff to successfully adjust to working and living in the UAE. It assists human resource practitioners in improving their cross-cultural orientation and training programmes and identifying factors regarding cross-cultural

adjustment that can help expatriate academics in the UAE to better cope with cross-cultural challenges and thus lower the turnover rate of expatriate academics in the country.

## **1.6 Limitations**

Due to the perceived “sensitivity” of the topic by many institutions of higher education, the fear of losing face (in case of organisations), and the fear of losing their jobs (in case of the participants), a considerable number of employees and HEIs in the UAE were not willing to participate in the study. Getting approval from the universities, particularly government institutions, was a challenge. One HEI requested that its identity be kept undisclosed. In all cases it was difficult to get details on the demographics (e.g. gender, nationality, religion, etc.) from the sample sites. However, these details were captured in the survey and interviews. Another limitation relates to the findings of this study as they are limited to a few HEIs in the UAE and, therefore, the results may not be applicable to other organisations in the UAE and other countries in the Gulf region, although any generalization is not intended.

## **1.7 Researcher’s Positionality**

According to Selmer and McNulty (2017), arguing about the “objectivity” in the investigation of cross-cultural issues is the function and status of the one undertaking the research work. This raises the question whether one needs to be neutral in order to be objective or not. Wolcott (1995) claims that it is inappropriate to pose a question like this when assessing objectivity in research work. Rather, he stresses the necessity to possess a genuine interest in a group or people as a requirement for generating the requisite energy for the research activity. He argues that “whatever constitutes the elusive quality called ‘objectivity’; mindlessness is not part of it” (Wolcott, 1995, p.163-6). Additionally, Medawar (1963, p.230) states that “there is no such thing as unprejudiced observation” since every inquiry of scientific nature begins with some sort of expectation. Irrespective of the

objectivity that a researcher conducts a study with, he or she will come with an “interest”, a “curiosity”, which Stenhouse (1979, p.14) considers as “the impulse behind all research”. An interest is expressed in a propositional form or as a situation that needs to be investigated or a question demanding an answer or, in Wolcott's term, a “bias”. Researchers can control their bias by describing their positionality thoroughly (Griffith 1998; Jones, 2001; Wolcott, 1995). One's positionality can serve as a source of strength and is considered as an essential part of the research which should be described as openly as possible, yet without trying to control one's subjectivity (Chism, Douglas, and Hilson Jr, 2008, p.38).

In the opinion of Lave and Wenger (1991), positionality gives room for a narrative placement for researcher objectivity and subjectivity in which the researcher finds him or herself in the midst of the numerous aspects of perspective and positionality. Jones (2001) adds that as long as the objective of the research and the assumption of the researcher comes across with clarity, this kind of bias provides a meaningful contribution towards interpreting the study. Therefore, it is necessary to identify the varied reference points that the participants use, since they furnish the researcher with an insider/outsider position relative to important informants and gatekeepers and hence declare the great number of biases that are involved (Griffith, 1998; Jones, 2001; Wolcott, 1995). The expression of one's positionality generally adds to the information gathered in a research study instead of invalidating it as biased or polluted by one's personal viewpoints and social or political perspectives (D'silva et al., 2016). D'silva et al. (2016) further state that having to discuss somebody's position relative to the research work offers those who are not a part of the study but engage with the research (e.g., the reader) with a more comprehensive perspective (p.97). This sub-section serves the purpose of describe the researcher's positionality.

### **1.7.1 The researcher's background**

In the opinion of Bathmaker et al. (2005) and Sikes (2004), the positionality of the researcher is “coloured” by political allegiance, religious faith, gender, sexuality, historical and geographical location, race, social class and status, (dis)abilities and so on, which are considered as the values and beliefs the researcher is associated with. Chavez (2008), Gray and Coates (2010), and Yunong and Xiong (2012) who are scholars in this field add that other areas have to do with the personal life history and experiences of the researcher. Merriam, Ntseane, Lee, Kee, Johnson-Bailey, and Muhamad (2000) are of the view that the researcher's status relates to the accessibility, the establishment of rapport, and having to ask relevant questions to obtain the required data. According to Marshall and Rossman (2016), it is worth acknowledging the experiences, beliefs, and personal history of the researcher which may influence the research work. For this reason, the next paragraph describes the personal and professional background of the researcher.

The researcher has been raised and educated in a multi-cultural environment. Most of the researcher's post-graduate work experience has been done in the UAE. Having lived and worked in the UAE for eleven years, the researcher has served in a variety of roles, as a student, students' residence supervisor, teacher, and lecturer. He has generated a multitude of biases, which are reflected in the professional, cultural and personal filters through which the researcher has approached the study. Similarly, the respondents' perceptions of the researcher as male researcher, a lecturer, an expatriate, a Ghanaian, and an African were bound to influence their attitude towards him and consequently affected the quantity and quality of the data generated. By outlining the researcher's background, the technicalities of the research process were no longer artificially detached from the political, ethical and social arena, but included the motives, feelings and experiences of the researcher which needed to be declared and explained in a 'reflexive' manner (D'silva, et al, 2016).

### **1.7.2 The researcher's positionality**

The status of the researcher, whether insider or not, relates to accessibility, establishing rapport, and asking meaningful questions to obtain data (Merriam, Ntseane, Lee, Kee, Johnson-Bailey, and Muhamad, 2000). In this thesis, the researcher considered himself as both an insider and outsider at different levels during the research. Such instance of shifting positionality is not strange in research. Depending on the variety of shared experiences or locations one may be an insider in one context and outsider in the other, or partially insider and partially outsider (McClelland and Sands, 2002; Merriam et al., 2001). Maher and Tetreault (2001, p.164) describe it as "the idea of positionality, in which people are defined not in terms of fixed identities, but by their location within shifting networks of relationships, which can be analyzed and changed". Merton (1972) and Mercer (2007) cautions the researcher to be conscious of the perception and assumptions of power that are associated with having to shift positionality of the researcher.

### **1.7.3 Insider**

The researcher's position as an insider is defined by the researcher being an expatriate himself (non-Emirati) living in the UAE and an academic working in an HEI in the UAE. In some instances, the researcher's gender, marital status, location of family, and nationality also make him an insider. In the opinion of Chu Abella and Paurini (2013), a subjective voice is provided by an insider researcher, depending on the inside knowledge of a subject or group of people. According to Bloch (1999), Dona (2007), Hynes (2003), Jacobsen and Landau (2003), and Kosygina (2005) there are other advantages of being an insider which include building trust and having to bridge understanding on the issues of culture. Shah (2004) opines that gaining access to participants is easier for insiders. They are also in a better position and well-versed in creating an environment where people feel sufficiently comfortable and are

willing to talk freely. To be an insider enables the researcher to ask more questions which are meaningful or insightful as the insider possesses a priori knowledge (Sanghera and Thapar-Bjokert 2008 p. 556). Additionally, it makes it easier for the researcher to comprehend the language, which includes colloquial language, and non-verbal cues. Any disorientation as a result of ‘culture shock’ is removed (Merriam et al., 2001).

Jimmy-Gama (2009) is of the view that the positionality of the insider also comes with its attendant difficulties to the process of the research work and can become problematic during the data collection. According to D'silva et al. (2016), Jones (2001), Mercer (2007), and Merriam et al. (2001), researchers in this position:

- a) may innately and unconsciously demonstrate biases during interview sessions;
- b) are not likely to delve deep in understanding the matters under investigation since they perceive themselves as ‘knowers’ of the issues they are investigating;
- c) may be very close and too familiar with the culture (‘myopic view’) or are steep enough with custom and code, thus lacking the ability to raise questions that are provocative or taboo;
- d) may not have the ability to bring perspective which is external to the process due to the fact that questions which are considered as ‘dumb’ and which an outsider can easily ask, may not be able to be asked;
- e) may go through occasions in which interviewees may be reluctant in revealing information seen as sensitive than they would readily do to somebody from outside who they are sure of not having any future contact with.

Merriam, Johnson-Bailey et al. (2001) claim that people participating in research are likely to hold the assumption that the insider is “one of us” and possesses accurate insider knowledge



(which he or she may not possess) and that he or she shares the same understanding of the subject matter. The positionality of the insider may result in selective reporting or failing to recognize different forms in analyzing the data due to his or her familiarity with the community (Chavez 2008). Hence information that is “obvious” to the insider may be unlikely to be articulated or explained. Conversely, if the respondents are familiar with the values of the researcher, they may tend to respond in a manner unoffensive to the known or suspected identity of the researcher (Merriam et al., 2001). This may result in informant bias where some participants may have advertently or inadvertently said what in their view is what the researcher wanted to hear rather than coming forth with their own beliefs and opinions (Mercer, 2007). According to Kusow (2003) and Zavella (1996), the above awareness of insiderness poses a difficulty to the researcher to take full and continuous cognisance of his role as an investigator. The failure in awareness and the analysis of what is taken for granted can mean that the one undertaking the research glosses over some of the topics and thus distort the findings based on the data as important issues in the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates academics in selected HEIs in the UAE. In order to weigh against the negative effects of the researcher’s insider positionality, the researcher ensured that the findings adequately reflected the participants’ perspective (etic perspective), and not his own (emic perspective) (Anderson, 1998). Owing to his awareness of the effects of positionality, the researcher was extremely careful to minimize his influence in the research process.

#### **1.7.4 Outsider**

It should also be noted that the strengths of the insider translate into the weaknesses of the outsider and vice-versa (Merriam, Johnson-Bailey et al., 2001, p. 411). Savvides, Al-Youssef, Colin, and Garrido (2014) postulate that even though the researcher and the participants have a common connection as expatriates and academics, there should not be any assumption that all the participants shared the same gender, nationality, cultural values, beliefs, religion, and

experience with the researcher. These differences postulated the researcher's "outsiderness". Among the benefits the outsider researcher derives are manifesting the objectivity that unattachment provides by being able to be afar and come up with independent conclusions and uncover meanings not evident to the insider (Merriam et al, 2001). The outsider is accused of not understanding the subject matter as a result of detachment. Savvides, Al-Youssef, Colin, and Garrido (2014) are of the view that the lack of understanding is likely to affect the role the research process plays. In terms of contextual references regarding what is being researched, it can escape the observation of the researcher. The researcher may also be restricted in getting access to quantitative data as an outsider. An outsider may create "fear of scrutiny" in the respondent. Payne et al. (1980) in Lee (1993, p.6) suggest that an outsider is more likely to reveal what is really going on within.

The researcher's shifting positionality offered him the opportunity to investigate into matters that had not been initially planned and only brought up while interacting with the participants. The researcher stayed flexible in all stages of the research process bearing in mind that the research was a "systematic enquiry with the aim of producing knowledge" (Ernest, 1994, p.8). The positionality of the researcher did not result in the mismatch of preconceived ideas and those based on lived experience; rather the researcher remained at all times cognizant of his positionality.

## **1.8 Contextual Background - The United Arab Emirates**

The rise in oil prices in the 1970s transformed the country into a modern state (Shihab, 2001; Tanmia, 2004). In 1981, the UAE joined the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). In 2014, around 90% of its population and 95% of its workforce was made up of expatriates, thus making it one the most ethnically diverse countries in the Middle East (The Economist,

2014). The country's net migration rate stands at 21.71 which is also one of the world's highest (CIA, 2016). The UAE and Saudi Arabia host almost 8 million and over 9 million migrant workers respectively and are considered to be among the top five global hosts of international migrants after the USA, Russia and Germany (ILO, 2015). It is expected that the migrant labour demand from GCC countries will continue to increase (GIZ & ILO, 2015). In the 1970s, the UAE government introduced the Kafala Sponsorship System (a temporary guest worker program) which permits the hiring of migrant workers (Tanmia, 2004). Since the 1990s, immigration has contributed tremendously to the population growth of the country (United Nations, 2013). The reason for its migrant growth has been the country's desire to sustain economic growth, provide high standards of living and complete its grandiose building projects which necessitate both low and high skilled labour (Shihab, 2001; Tanmia, 2004).

In the UAE, Islamic tradition maintains a strong influence in the determination of all aspects of life (Peck, 1986). Nations which derive their strength from Islamic culture reflect the principles of their religion in their attitudes towards work ethics and this turns out to strengthen their faith (Ali and Al-Owaihah, 2008). Islamic principles are strongly followed by the UAE (Clark, 2015). Certain elements of the traditional local culture were removed, in particular the business culture, in order to attract international expertise, something regarded as pivotal for the economy's growth as part of the government's vision (AlMazrouei and Pech, 2015). This effort has resulted in a crossbred business culture which accommodates certain Western values to ensure cooperation with Western businesses which are found everywhere, in particular in the major business centres (Tanmia, 2004). In the smaller centres, the take-up of the Western business values is not that profound as in the major centres because in the smaller centres the traditional ways are still prevalent (AlMazrouei and

Pech, 2015). The organisational culture of some organisations are motivated by Islamic culture with its attendant strength in work ethics, supporting the principle of staff working professionally and efficiently as the principle for personal and social satisfaction (AlMazrouei and Pech, 2015). Wilkins (2001a) explains that “God controls everyday life” which results in a “relaxed attitude” towards timelines and schedules.

Arabic is the only official language of the UAE. As such it is mostly used in government, public services, education, and the media. According to Ahmed (2011), Arabic is the language of Islam and Arab identity, as such, it bears a powerful spiritual and religious symbolic value to the UAE’s national identity as an Arab and Muslim nation. “Unlike many other languages, is not just a language of communication, it is the basis of the religion which is pivotal to the whole way of life, the culture and the cultural identities of its members” (Ahmed, 2011, p. 125). English also plays an important role in the UAE, in spite of not possessing any official status. English is mostly used in business and in the private and the public services including banking, health, and education (AlMazrouei and Pech, 2015; Sanderson, 2014). In public and private tertiary educational institutions the use of English has overtaken Arabic, and most of the courses in local and foreign universities (especially management, sciences, and economics courses) are delivered in English (Clark, 2015; Isakovic and Whitman; 2013; Sanderson, 2014). Likewise, the use of English was introduced at the public tertiary educational level to reinforce the government’s determined efforts to increase the standard of the students’ English ability, and to teach sciences and technology courses (Chapman et al, 2014, Sanderson, 2014). From a sociolinguistic view, English plays an important role as it is the widely used lingua franca connecting the Arabic and the non-Arabic speaking communities from diverse parts of the world who live and work in the UAE (AlMazrouei and Pech, 2015).

### **1.8.1 Higher Education in the UAE**

UAE's higher education landscape has advanced laterally alongside the country's economic growth over the past 20 years (QAA, 2014). The strategic features of this growth is the result of several initiatives by the federal government and individual emirates seeking the diversification of their economy which has been traditionally hinged on oil revenues. This growth also depicts the need to cater for the education requirements of the increasing population which includes a huge expatriate community that accounts for almost 85 per cent of the whole population (UAE National Bureau of Statistics, 2011). The country's growing demand for higher education, its diversification initiatives, and knowledge-based economy has led to the expansion of several public HEIs and an increasing amount of private and global partnership HEIs. HEIs in the UAE can be put into three categories: Public, private, and global partnerships (UAECD, 2011). At the time of writing this thesis, there were over 100 HEIs (QAA, 2014) in the UAE. The public HEIs receive funding from the federal government and operate at a national-level via campuses in different emirates. The public HEIs account for approximately 34 per cent of total student enrolment (about 40,000 students) and provides access to Emirati citizens (about 90 per cent of the federal student body (Center for Higher Education Data and Statistics, 2012). The other HEIs are non-federal institutions, also known as private institutions and global partnerships. These HEIs receive some sort of support from the federal and local government. While most private universities serve the expatriate population, many other institutions have considerably high percentages of Emirati students relative to their total enrolments. English is the medium in which courses at both levels are conducted. The UK has the "highest sending country with nine branch campuses, followed by India with eight, and the USA with six" (The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education, 2012, p.2). The UAE currently is a host to the highest percentage of the world's international branch campuses (Clarke, 2015).

Due to the number of HEIs in the UAE and the limited number of HCNs in academia has led to an increasing demand for expatriate academics. According to MOHESR (2014), the faculty population at UAE's federal and CAA-licensed institutions is highly diverse with only 6.32% Emirati. The reliance on expatriate academics confirms the significant role that they play in enabling the country to achieve its national development goals and global competitiveness targets. The culturally diverse nature of the workforce in UAE's HEIs also indicates that higher education institutions have to deal with an increasing international academic workforce, hence the relevance of this study. It also highlights the incessant relevance of cross cultural management and expatriate academics' adjustment studies to the UAE and the GCC region as a whole.

### **1.8.2 UAE's Vision 2021**

The UAE's vision 2021 recently adopted by the government focuses on innovation and knowledge as the fundamental drivers for building a "knowledge economy". Such a knowledge economy is built on the four pillars of education and training, information infrastructure, economic incentive and institutional regime, and innovation systems (World Bank, 2014). The development of appropriate policies, institutions, investments, and coordination across the four pillars is a requirement for an economy to able to make effective use of its knowledge base (Schilirò, 2013). It should also be noted that the evolution towards knowledge economies results in "a change in the percentage of the workforce employed in knowledge-based jobs ... however, the institutional setting is also very important to achieve a knowledge-based economy" (Schilirò, 2012, p.8). In order to generate economic value, knowledge economies are contingent on the creativity and talents of its people. Building a knowledge driven economy necessitates that its people are highly-trained to produce new ideas, creativity, and new skills. Therefore it is imperative that governments pursuing a

knowledge economy encourage their populace to obtain higher education qualifications (World Bank, 2014). This ambitious policy change in the UAE's education sector has resulted in the high demand for academics in higher education, hence the need for more and more expatriate academics (Clarke, 2015; Sanderson, 2014).

## **1.9 Chapter Overviews**

This thesis is divided into eight chapters. The first chapter contains the introduction which presents the researcher's personal motivation for the study and also provides background information regarding the UAE's reliance on expatriate educators since the 1980s. It also highlights the problems and criticisms of overly relying on an expatriate workforce including expatriate academics. The aims, originality and importance of this research are also discussed in this chapter. The research problem, purpose, objectives, and the researcher's positionality are also identified in order to clarify the issues to be examined, in addition to the validity and reliability of the research. The contextual background of the study is also discussed.

Chapter two reviews the relevant literature on globalisation and labour migration, higher education, internationalisation, academic migration, policy studies, organisation culture, national culture dimensions, and literature related to expatriate adjustment. Definitions of cross-cultural adjustment and expatriate success are also presented. Theories, models and previous research on cross-cultural adjustment are reviewed. This in-depth analysis enables the writer to form a more coherent argument for the significance of this study. It also enables the researcher to fill the gap of cross-cultural studies in the context of the UAE and extend the work done in prior studies.

Chapter three presents and discusses the theoretical framework for this study.

The fourth chapter discusses the research approach and methodology of the included data collection methods. It gives the rationale for conducting this study through a mixed method approach. This chapter also describes how the data collection instruments have been designed and tested.

The fifth chapter is a presentation of results and statistical analysis of the survey instrument data. The results from the quantitative data were also discussed in the context of the literature review, in addition to the validity and reliability of the research.

The sixth chapter presents the findings from the interviews. The procedures used in interpreting the data are discussed and the findings presented using the core and key categories identified from the data and discussion are undertaken with reference to the literature reviewed in chapter two. These interviews are categorised in order to understand the expatriate academics' subjective interpretation on their cross-cultural adjustment. The analysis of the interviews also serves as supporting evidence for and triangulated with the survey.

The seventh chapter presents an analysis of the results of the study. It discusses how the results from both phases of the study answer the research questions and how they are related to the extensive literature on expatriate adjustment. A critical overview of the research objectives, methods and outcomes of the thesis is also provided, in addition to recommendations for future studies.



Finally, the eighth chapter discusses the implications for practice and implications for theory. It also presents the conclusion of the study. The limitations of this thesis are also examined within this chapter.

## **Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews the relevant areas of literature on globalisation and labour migration, internationalisation, academic migration, policy studies, organisation culture, national culture dimensions, and expatriate adjustment.

The multifaceted nature of expatriate research (Kawar, 2012) calls for an interdisciplinary research approach. Academic mobility should not be viewed as an “isolated and self-contained” occurrence and ought to be considered in a wider context (Scott, 2015). The rise of a more global economy has increased levels of expatriation (Brewster and Harris, 1999; Selmer, 1999). Present research on academic mobility across the globe can be set within the context of common and more popular literatures of globalisation, internationalization, and related trends in higher education (e.g. Altbach & Knight, 2007; Kehm & Teichler, 2007; Maadad and Tight, 2014). Certainly, the rise of a more global economy has increased levels of expatriation (Brewster & Harris, 1999; Selmer, 1999). With many HEIs focusing on internationalisation as one of their strategic goals and many ranking agencies including internationalisation as a criterion when ranking universities (Gress and Ilon, 2009), many have hired academics from other countries (Trembath, 2016). According to Top Universities (2014) many higher education institutions are hiring 25 per cent or more of their academics from other countries. According to Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley (2009) the number of academic staff moving between countries has seen a rapid increase over the past decade. However, studies on expatriate academics have remained rare (Byram and Dervin, 2008; Saltmarsh and Swirski, 2010). The research literature, particularly on management, indicates that the rise of a more global economy has increased levels of expatriation (Brewster and Harris, 1999; Selmer, 1999). Consequently, this expansion has brought an increased mobility

of academics, yet not necessarily a better understanding of their experiences (Knight, 2011, 2013).

The past five to ten years have witnessed a change in internationalisation activity in the Middle East and Asia, with a huge number of HEIs improving their global competitiveness through internationalisation by recruiting foreign academic staff (Mok, 2007; Lawton and Katsomitros, 2012). In addition, several higher education institutions, predominantly from Western countries (e.g. Australia, the UK, US, and Canada) have established branch campuses in other countries (Trembath, 2016). They run similarly to their mother institutions, with a high number of academic staff employed from outside the host country (Altbach, 2011).

Unquestionably, besides the benefits of boosting the universities' public image, faculty profile (e.g. for accreditation purposes) and research profile, the presence of expatriate academics in these individual higher education institutions may have derivative effects by positively affecting academic learning communities and the wider society (Kreber and Hounsell, 2014). Such outcomes have always been part of the rhetoric surrounding globalisation, internationalisation and higher education (Kreber and Hounsell, 2014). This indicates that the collective forces of globalisation and the marketization of tertiary education in many nations have had many effects (Trembath, 2016). As institutions of higher education seek to increase their global competitiveness, they are more likely to recruit qualified and experienced academic candidates on the global labour market (Silvanto and Ryan, 2014). Today, academics have more opportunities to experience international mobility and fewer reasons to stay committed to their home country or to a single university (Trembath, 2016).

Despite the many documented benefits of recruiting expatriate academics, studies have examined the difficulties these expatriate academics face. Adjustment constitutes one of the toughest challenges of migration (Sabban, 2004) since people from different cultures often find it difficult to communicate with each other, not only due to the language barriers, but also the different culture styles (Culturalcandor, 2016). Knight (2013) argues that in order for the challenges, complexities and the new environment encountered by overseas academics to be understood, more research work has to be undertaken. When it comes to the study of the experiences of individual academics, the literature is scarce (Altbach and Lewis, 1996; Cuthbert, 1996; Potts, 2005; Richardson, 2000). With the expected projected increases in stock of international migrant workers generally, the relevance and need for cross cultural research has become more prominent than ever. In respect to the expatriate academics, management literature indicates that the increasingly global economy has increased the levels of expatriation (Brewster and Harris, 1999; Selmer, 1999).

## **2.2 Expatriate Success**

According to Lee (2007), expatriate success is defined as the ability of the expatriate to remain until his/her period of international assignment is expired and in the process achieve the objectives of his or her performance, repatriation and the acquisition of skills and knowledge. Conversely, when an expatriate is unable to adapt or perceives that his/her skills are devalued, is unable to realise the assignment objective and fails to integrate, it is said that the expatriate has failed (Lee, 2007). Evaluating the success of an expatriate can be done using different criteria, among them cross-cultural adjustment (Black and Mendahall, 1991; Kealey and Protheroe, 1996; Van der Bank and Rothmann, 2006). At the time of posting, these expatriates usually take a longer period of time for adjustment, show unconventional

attitudes, withdraw or go back home earlier than expected or in some cases reduce drastically their assignment in an ineffective state (Forster, 1997). Those who find it difficult to adjust tend to be disruptive, align their personal and organisational goals poorly and may shun local culture and stand against local integration efforts (Hailey, 1996). The survey conducted by Singh (2012) involving 1,202 employees working in four regions of the UAE established that the adjustment of expatriates, their wellbeing and satisfaction have consequences on their output and in the end affect expatriate success.

### **2.3 Cross-cultural Adjustment**

There are various ways to define cross-cultural adjustment (Oberg, 1960; Lazarus, 1976; Church, 1982; Black, 1988). It is generally defined as the process of a variation in an individual's behaviour in order to fit in with a new environment (Ward and Kennedy, 1999; Yang et al., 2005). Berry (1997) also defines adaptation as "changes that occur in individuals or groups in response to new environment demands" (p.13). The terms "adaptation" and "adjustment" have been widely used, often interchangeably, in previous cross-cultural and intercultural literature (Liao, 2010). For example, in referring to sojourners living or working overseas, researchers use the term "cross-cultural adaptation" or "cross-cultural adjustment" to refer to the process of variation in their behaviour that enable them to function appropriately in the new environment (Liao, 2010). Matsumoto et al. (2007) defines "adjustment" as "the subjective experiences that are associated with and result from attempts at adaptation" (p.77). Several studies have identified factors or features of adjustment (Church, 1982; Black and Stephen, 1989; Aycan, 1997a; Ward et al., 2001) which are discussed in further detail below.

## **2.4 Theories of Cross-cultural Adjustment**

Oberg (1960) was the first to initially conceive the concept of cross-cultural adjustment, claiming that “culture shock” was an occupational disease that affected individuals who had been unexpectedly relocated abroad (p.177). Due to the behavioural and cognitive responses required when experiencing a new culture, individuals may suffer from culture shock (Ward et al., 2001). Some researchers use the phrases “sojourner adjustment” or “cross-cultural adjustment” to describe the cross-cultural phenomena that sojourners go through or the symptoms they might have (Church, 1982; Black, 1988). Cross-cultural adjustment is the process of modification in an individual’s behaviour in order to fit a new environment (Du-Babcock, 2000; Ward and Kennedy, 1999; Yang et al., 2005). According to Black and Gregersen (1991), cross-cultural adjustment is “the degree of psychological comfort with various aspects of a host country” (p.463).

Several theorists also contend that successful cross-cultural adjustment is the process by which feelings of uncertainty are reduced when individuals move into a new environment (Black, 1990; Nicholson, 1984). Cross-cultural adjustment is conceptualised as a psychological comfort that an expatriate has with the different aspects of the host culture (Black and Stephens 1989; Gregersen and Black, 1990). It is the psychological degree of ease and understanding perceived that is derived in the new culture or the process of adapting to living and working in a foreign culture (Black 1988). Peltokorpi and Froese (2009) state that cross-cultural adjustment involves the process of reducing uncertainty through imitation, thereby enabling harmony with the new culture. After reviewing several studies investigating the phenomenon of cross-cultural adjustment theoretically or empirically, Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991) concluded that the cross-cultural adjustment process comprised of five components: pre-departure training, previous overseas experience, organizational selection

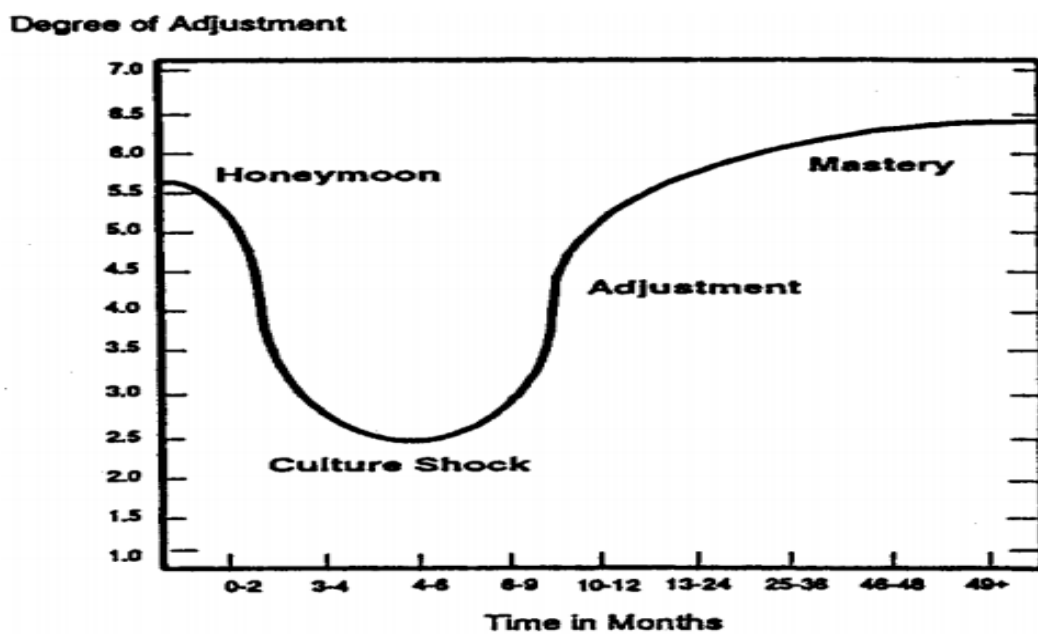
mechanisms, individual skills and non-work factors (p.293). Different cross-cultural models have been developed by other researchers, and the description of these models is provided in the sections (here) that follow.

#### **2.4.1 U-curve hypothesis**

A study conducted by Lysgaard (1955) on Norwegian students studying in the United States, claimed that cross-cultural adjustment may occur in three stages. The first stage is the introductory stage in which the expatriates observe new cultural patterns and explore the new environment. The initial feeling of joy and curiosity, however, does not last. In order to satisfy their social needs, expatriates try to fuse themselves into the host country's society which marks the second stage. The last stage occurs when the expatriates fail to integrate resulting in the development of frustration and loneliness. They also tend to accuse the host society of being hostile. He further notices that the cross-cultural adjustment process tends to present itself in form of a u-curve. The first being the honeymoon stage when most sojourners are elated about their new environment, which may last from several days to six months. Once the initial excitement has vanished, the second stage begins. The expatriates experience increased negativity and aggression while going through difficulties in the adjustment process, mostly regarding communication, transport, shopping, and housing. Should the sojourners manage to overcome all the challenges, the majority of them decides to stay. Those who are unable to overcome all the challenges, they are more prone to leave the host country. The third stage is where the sojourners seek to comprehend the differences between their mother culture and that of the host culture. Their regard for the local culture is generally positive and appreciative rather than critical. In Oberg's (1960) opinion, the sojourners complete the adjustment process by accepting the customs of the new environment and start to enjoy them. Subsequent studies have expanded the original three stage process of cross-

cultural adjustment to five to eight stages. Alder (1975) viewed cultural shock as a changing experience and defined it as “a set of emotional reactions to the loss perceptual reinforcements from one’s own culture, to new cultural stimuli which have little or no meaning, and to the misunderstanding of the new and diverse experiences” (p.13). Alder divided culture shock into five stages: contact, disintegration, reintegration, autonomy, and independence. Others such as Rhinesmith (1985) divided the cross-cultural adjustment process into eight distinct stages.

Figure 2- 1 The U-Curve Function of Adjustment



Source: Black and Mendenhall (1991, p.225)

i. Honeymoon stage.

Sojourners at this stage have entered a new environment with a new culture and are excited and curious. Greater numbers of them have already visited the host country before during their honeymoon or for short business trips and vacations. Although they may feel anxious or stressed at times, they spend the greater part of their time in contact with the locals in a very limited setting, such as in hotels, restaurants, business meetings or airports, where people are usually open and friendly to foreign visitors.



#### ii. Culture shock stage

Once the honeymoon stage has passed, the sojourners begin to experience challenges and culture shock. Some experience culture shock right upon arrival and skip the first stage. This, however, depends on their individual case. There are negative experiences coupled with difficulties that the sojourners go through, usually manifested in the areas of accommodation, transport, food and language. The foreign residents experience feelings of depression, helplessness, frustration and even anger.

#### iii. Adjustment stage

At this stage, the sojourners are able to overcome all the challenges and start accepting the new culture. This stage requires a certain extent of adjustment and adaptation. Negative thoughts give way to more positive ones, and they try to understand the differences between their own culture and that of the host country.

#### iv. Mastery stage

After successfully overcoming the challenges, the sojourners' daily life in the host country becomes more and more easy to manage. Although the U-curve theory has been used in cross-cultural adjustment studies, some scholars disagree with it arguing that those studies were weakly supported and over-generalised (Church, 1982, p 452; Hurh and Kim, 1990; Ward and Kennedy, 1996; Zheng and Berry, 1991). According to the available studies, the U-curve is not followed by all sojourners as some skip some of the stages (Becker, 1968; Forman and Zachar, 2001; Selby and Woods, 1996). Also, the time frame for adjustment depends on individual factors either related to the foreign resident or the host country. In the view of Deutsch and Won (1963), the period of each stage may range from one month to several years. Thus, the U-curve cross-cultural adjustment seems to give a representation which is far too generalized. The time frame of every individual expatriate varies and is

affected by his or her previous cross-cultural experiences, work experiences, personality and many other different variables. The purpose of this study, however, is not to test the U-curve theory or determine the time frame associated with any individual's cross-cultural adjustment.

Surprisingly, the U-curve hypothesis has received minimal support in terms of empiric evidence (Church, 1982; Furnham and Bochner, 1986). A semi-structured three-hour interview was conducted by Selby and Woods (1996) in order to determine the nature and the time frame within which 18 non-European students were adjusting to American university life. They put forth an argument that the U-curve is not followed by everyone and that some skip some of the stages. In a proposal made by Deutsch and Won (1963), the time frame of adjustment is dependent on the variables that are associated with the particular individual or the host nation. Each stage may last for one month or several years. Gullick (1988) suggested that adapting to culture is best understood as the learning process represented in cyclical or step model instead of U-shaped diagrams. The U-curve aspect of adjustment has also been criticised for its lack of flexibility (Liao, 2010).

#### **2.4.2 Black, Mendenhall and Oddou's Framework of International Adjustment**

The proposed theoretical framework of cross-cultural adjustment by Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991) has been in use for the past recent years. Their work embraces the theoretical and empirical aspects of local and international adjustment literature. Their integrated model provides a more comprehensive framework. Certain individual and organisational reasons make the expatriate anticipate adjustment which in turn relates to the host country adjustment of the expatriate. The individual reason for anticipating adjustment constitutes the previous experience in international travel and training, which allows the expatriate to develop realistic expectations in respect to his or her current assignment. Caligiuri et al. (2001) made use of a

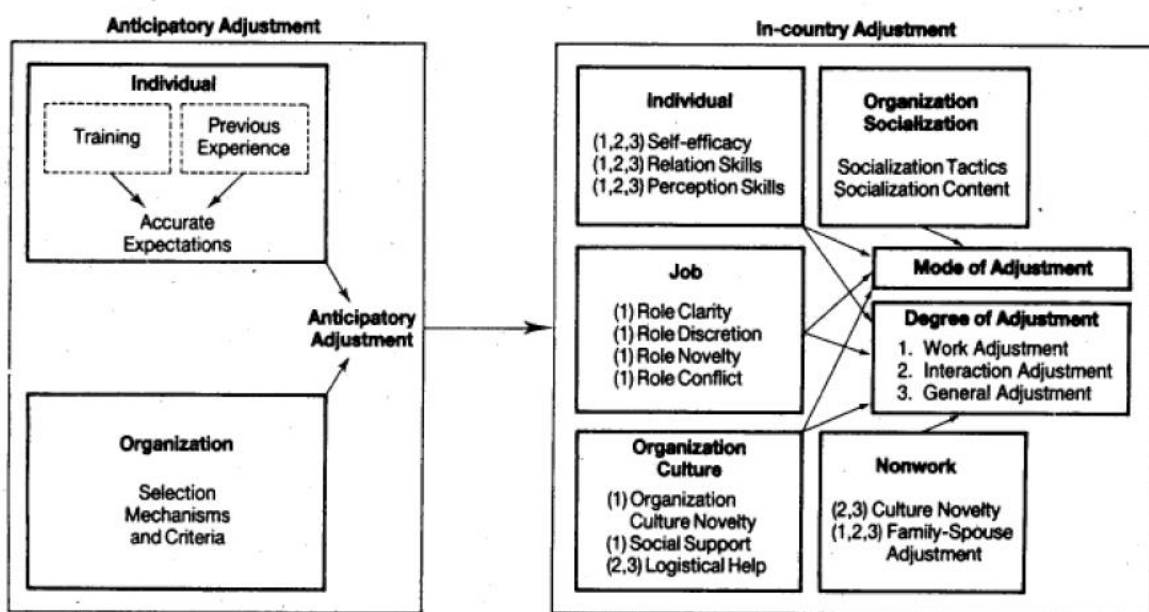
sample of 73 expatriates who responded to a questionnaire ten months after arriving in the host country. Although all the expatriates went through pre-departure training in cross-culture, the relevance of the training provided was perceived differently. Their revelation was to the effect that pre-departure CCT relates positively to cross-cultural adjustment by providing the correct expectations on the expatriate's behalf. Eschbach et al. (2001) investigated the different training methods and the outcome as perceived by the expatriates.

In a survey conducted by Shaffer et al. (1999), 452 expatriates coming from 29 different countries were assigned to 45 host countries by huge multinational companies. They found that there are diverse adjustment patterns for those with previous expatriate experience. They also found prior experiences to be related positively to cross-cultural adjustment. Adding to individual factors, organisation factors that have contributed to creating expatriates anticipatory adjustment form the mechanism of selecting and criteria. According to Black et al. (1991), expatriates who have been hired based on a wide array of major criteria are believed to adjust more easily and quickly (Black et al., 1991). According to their framework, in-country adjustment is occasioned by many factors concerning the individual's job, organisational culture and socialisation, novelty of culture and family, and spouse adjustment.

Some of the individual factors of the in-country adjustment are self-efficacy, relation skills and perception skills. Role clarity and its discretion which may decrease the associated uncertainty with work adjustment have been identified as the job factors which are important when it comes to cross-cultural adjustment (Harrison et al., 1996). Consequently, role conflict and role novelty potentially increase the uncertainty and hence work against adjustment. An expatriate's uncertainty may decrease and the adjustment enhanced by the culture of the organisation which embodies collegial social support in the host organisation and logistical

support. Being similar to role novelty, the general culture novelty of the host country has an impact on interaction and general adjustment (Palthe, 2004). The uncertainty of an improper family adjustment or a spouse may hinder the expatriate's self-adjustment as a result of the effect of spill over (Harrison et al., 1996). These factors will be discussed in more detail in the coming sections.

**Figure 2-2 Black, Mendenhall and Oddou's framework of International cross-cultural adjustment**



Source: Black et al., (1991)

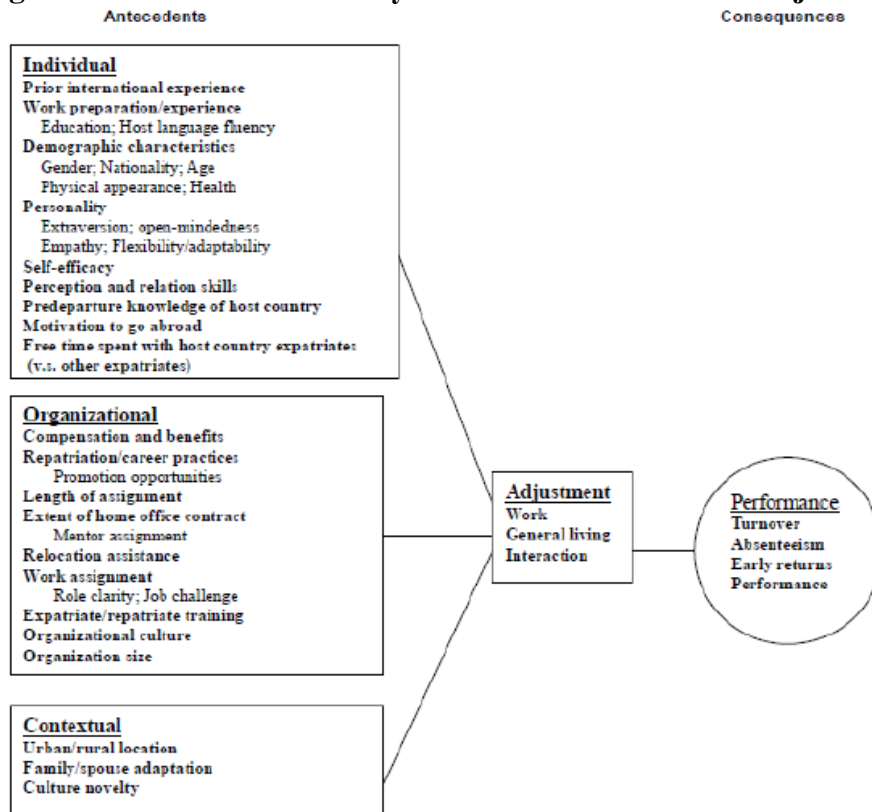
The research of Black's team on cross-cultural adjustment contributed to the knowledge that the cross-cultural adjustment process is multi-dimensional and that the degree of cross-cultural adjustment is multi-faceted (Liao, 2010). There is merit in the framework of international adjustment since it shifts from a static linear mode of adjustment to an interactive one with reference to time. The contributions of Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991) will be discussed further in sections 2.7 (dimensions of expatriate adjustment) and 2.8 (factors of cross cultural adjustment).

### **2.4.3 Parker and McEvoy's Intercultural adjustment model**

The findings of previous cross-cultural adjustment studies have been revised by Parker and McEvoy (1993). The intercultural adjustment model was developed based on the three-faced adjustment framework by Black (1988) (see figure 2.3). After developing this cross-cultural framework of adjustment, testing was partially done on a quantitative basis. 169 questionnaires were gathered from 12 countries with all the participating members either working in education, business or government organisations. Their model differs from Black, Mendenhall and Oddou by adding the dimension of the expatriate's performance at work to assess the cross-cultural and job performance relationship. The factors of organisational adjustment are related to the policies pertaining to compensation, repatriation practices and the organization size. Family or spouse adjustment and cultural novelty form the contextual variables. In order to ascertain whether all these factors affect the degree of intercultural adjustment and job performance or not, empirical research was undertaken. The model applied elements of Black, Mendenhall and Oddou's (1991) cross-cultural model and further developed them. A greater part dwelled on factors of personality and organisation. The studied expatriates had not been sent abroad by companies which made them different from other expatriates who are usually sent on overseas assignments by their companies, even against their own wish. Managers are often compelled to work in other countries. The nature of the organisation and personality variables forms a critical aspect of their cross-cultural adjustment and work performance. In sharp contrast to this are found expatriate English teachers who decide to spend a certain period of time in the UAE. Relevant here is model developed by Parker and McEvoy (1993) which is applied in this study. The variables investigated include antecedents which were based on individual issues such as work experience, characteristics of demography, prior international experience, motivation towards travelling abroad and prior knowledge of the host country. The factors of adjustment include

interaction, lifestyle in general, interaction, work, and the performance factors which highlights turnover constitute necessary elements of the study to create an in-depth pictorial view of the cross-cultural adjustment process of expatriate academics in the UAE.

**Figure 2-3 Parker and McEvoy’s Model of Intercultural Adjustment**



Source: Parker and McEvoy (1993, p.358)

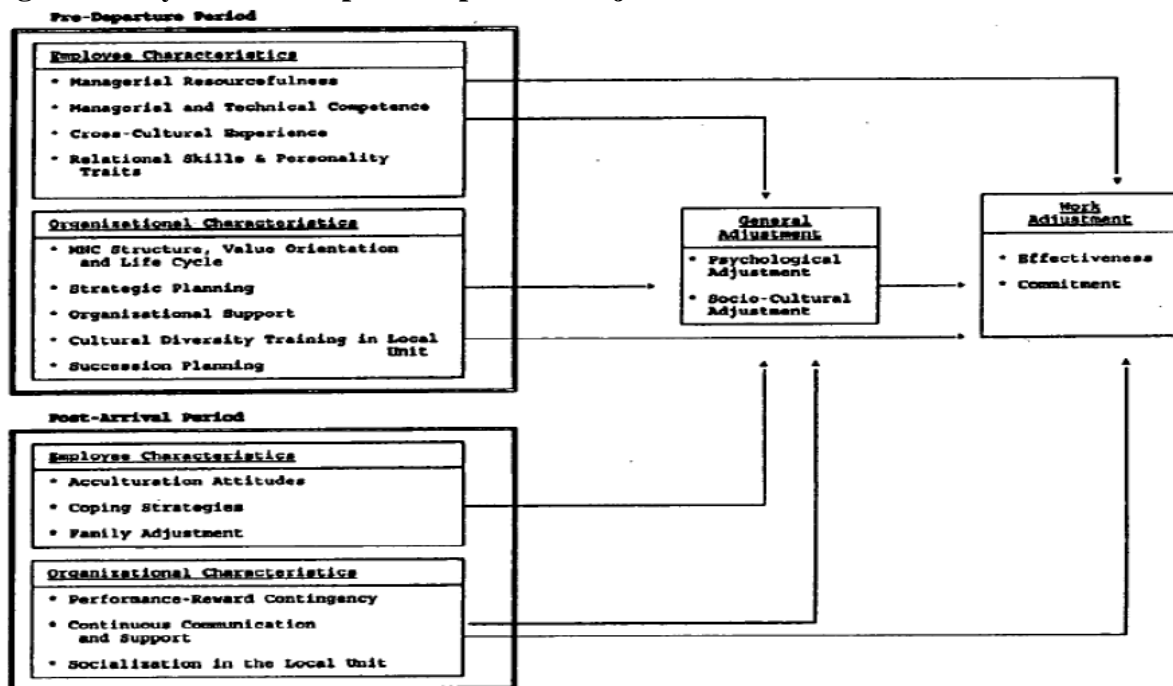
#### 2.4.4 Aycan’s conceptual model of expatriate adjustment

A conceptual model of expatriate adjustment was proposed by Aycan (1997a) (see figure 2.4). It addresses the support from the organisation (parent company and local unit) during the adjustment process of cross-culture relative to other cross-cultural adjustment models. According to him, an expatriate manager’s cross-cultural success depends not only on individual competency but on the organisation as well. Aycan goes beyond the work of Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991) on the cross-cultural framework of adjustment and

includes the concept of coping, socialisation, acculturation, performance management and International Human Resource Management (Aycan, 1997a p.435).

Aycan (1997a) divided cross-cultural adjustment into pre-departure and post departure periods and considering employee and organisation characteristics (see figure 2.4). In comparison to Black, Mendenhall and Oddou’s model (See figure 2.2), Aycan’s model emphasises on the organisational support during the pre-departure phase in addition to the mechanisms and the method of choosing managers for assignments overseas.

**Figure 2-4 Aycan’s Conceptual Expatriate Adjustment Model**



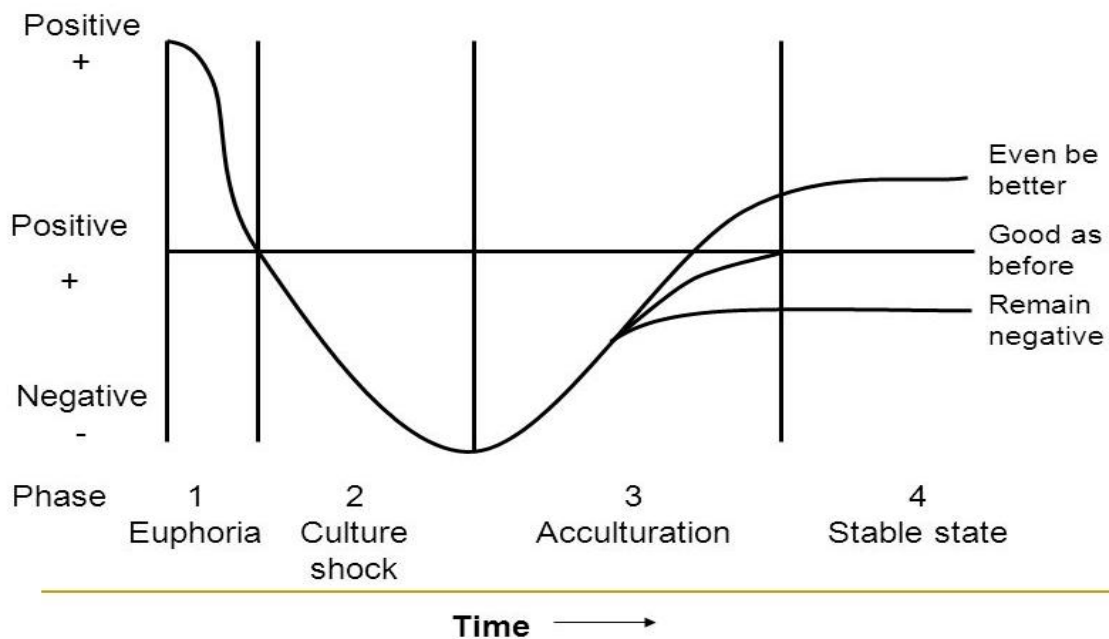
Source: Aycan (1997a, p.438)

### 2.4.5 Hofstede’s Cultural Adjustment Process

Acculturation stress has been identified by Hofstede (2001) as the major cause of culture shock. His *Culture’s Consequences* includes the study of originally 40 countries extended to over 50 countries, revised arguments and the review of the most recent research. He proposes his own version of the U-curve model which contains the four stages of euphoria,

culture shock, acculturation and stable state. According to Hofstede (2001), the expatriate adjustment has different phases at different points of time and changes across time. The U-curve model, however, does not offer an explanation of how individuals go through the different phases.

**Figure 2-5 Hofstede's Cultural Adjustment Process**



Source: Hofstede (2001)

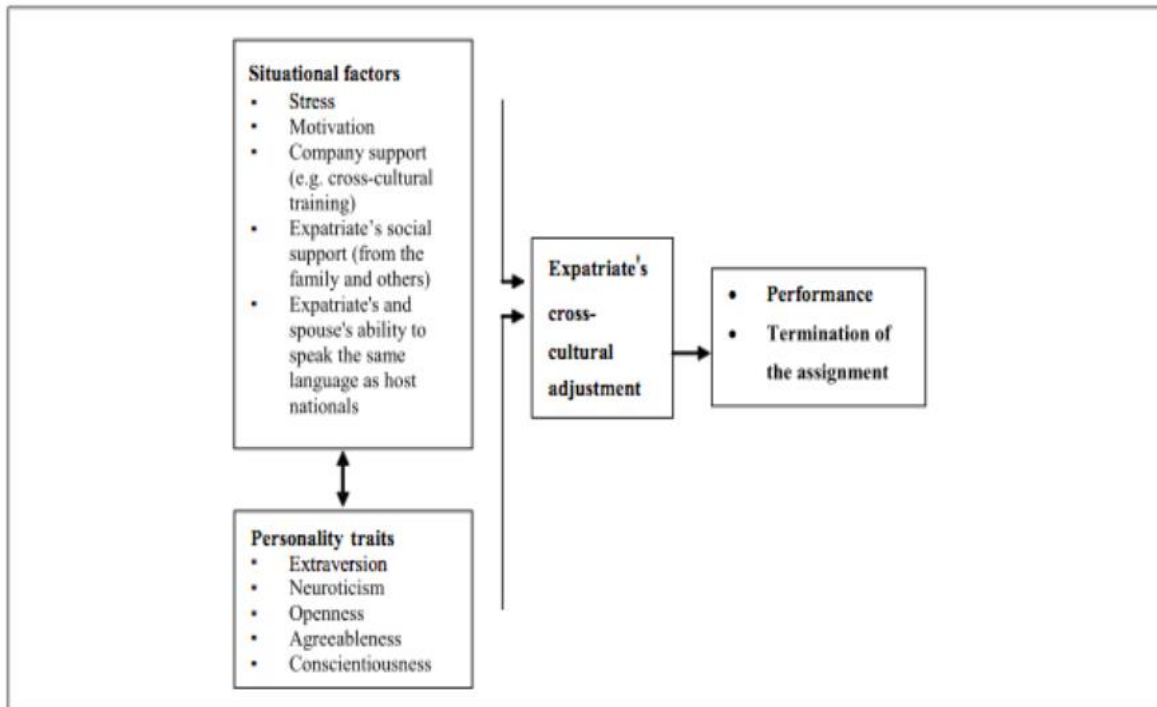
#### 2.4.6 Van der Bank and Rothmann's (2006) model of the Cross-Cultural Adjustment

A similar model is proposed by van der Bank and Rothmann (2006) who explains cross-cultural adjustment to an international job assignment as consisting of two components that affect cross-cultural adjustment: how the situation is perceived (which is conceptualised in the form of motivation, company support, stress, language and social support) and the traits of the person. In this model, both the person and the characteristics of the situation affect the adjustment. The factors of situation that impact the adjustment are stressors in the situation, support from the company social support (family and others), and being able to speak the host country's language. The traits of the person in the form of variables are comparably fixed



characteristics of the expatriate's behavioural tendency and the surroundings. They are referenced to what is available to them for their cross-cultural adjustment.

**Figure 2- 6 A Model of the Expatriates' Cross-Cultural Adjustment**



Source: van der Bank and Rothmann (2006, p.30)

According to the findings of van der Bank and Rothmann (2006), even if the individual traits of the person are weakly associated with stress, motivation and family support have to be taken into account when choosing and managing expatriates. Their findings are similar to those of Forster (1992) and Handler (1995). Caligiuri and Philips (2003), Shinn et al. (1984), and Shumaker and Bronwell (1984) also used an experimental design of two groups, the experimental group being tasked with self-assessment in the form of a realistic job preview (RJP) for assignments and the second group being the control group. The result revealed that an expatriate's expectation prior to any overseas assignment had an effect on the individual's cross-cultural adjustment. The result also showed that expatriates adjust better

when their anticipations are in congruence with the real situation found on the ground, thereby reducing their level culture shock.

#### **2.4.7 Miller's (2009) Identity Development Trajectory model**

Consistent with Erikson's (1963) and Lee's (1966) theories of migration, and Marcia's (1966) and Josselson's (1987) theories of identity, Miller (2009) proposed the "Identity Development Trajectory" model. He developed his model after studying 27 participants in London (UK), "nine overseas trained teachers (expatriate academics), six pupils, four national policy officials, three local authority teacher recruitment officials, two head teachers, one school governor, one teacher recruitment and supply agency official and one initial teacher training provider" (pg. 99). Miller's model shares many similarities with previous adaptation development models like Lysgaard's (1955) U-Curve, Gullahorn and Gullahorn's (1963) W-Curve which are linked to predictive discrete stages that begin from an initial entry into a new environment (e.g. country) or culture to either "full" adjustment or maladjustment. His model is based on a "linear narrative" progressing or regressing from one stage to another in a single series of sequential steps. Like other curve adjustment models (e.g. U curve and W curve) that depict cross-cultural adjustment on a graphical x-y axis, Miller's model also depicts the adjustment process over a effectiveness-timeframe axes with the timeline on the x-axis and "effectiveness" on the y-axis. Like the U and W curves of the other adjustment models, his model is accompanied by visual illustrations that describe and predict the typical trajectory such stressful encounters would produce and their effects on the subject's identity.

Miller's model is appears to be based on the following assumptions:

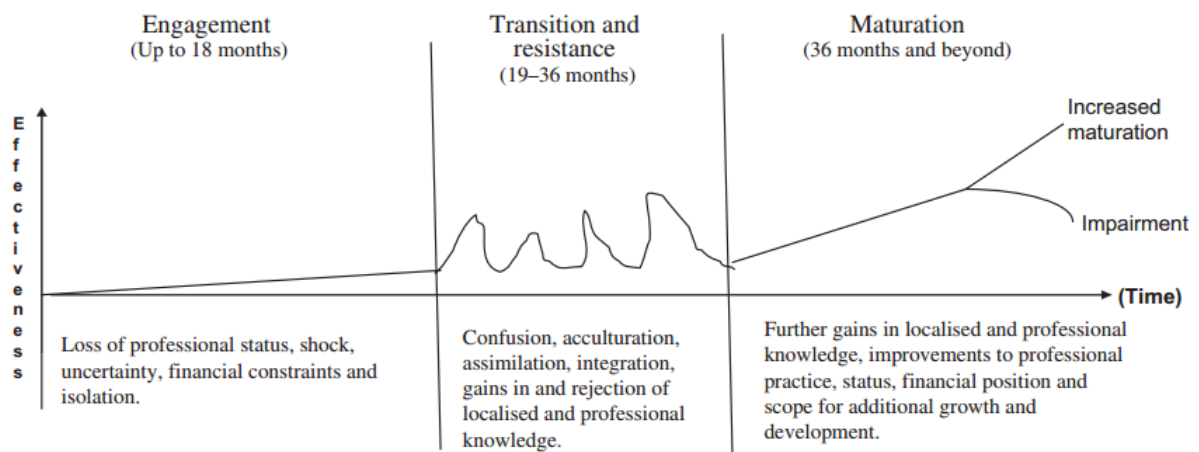
- i. There is one main pattern of adjustment that most academics in London experience
- ii. The model can be applied to various kinds of academic sojourners
- iii. There are fixed times over which the curve typically occurs
- iv. The model has empirical support

However, in contrast to previous adaptation development models that were based solely on culture shock theories, Miller (2009) added another dimension that focused on the impact this culture shock has on the professional identity of the expatriate academic. According to Erikson (1963) and Miller (2009), a person's identity cannot be alienated from the cultures that shape and construct it - in this case the host culture. He explained that a person's "identity continues to develop across his or her lifespan and involves the establishment, assimilation or integration of societal norms, values, beliefs and standards" (pg. 101 -102). Bronfenbrenner (1979) cited in Miller (2009, p. 102) stated that "identity is influenced by the intrapersonal, interpersonal, environmental characteristics and interactions of significant components of an individual's unique world". Marcia (1966) earlier concluded that "the process of "coming to identity" represents a process of creating the self through making choices and decisions; a simultaneous negotiation of deciding who one is and who one is not (cited in Miller (2009, p. 103).

In the case of cross-cultural adjustment, this takes place as the sojourner attempts to "navigate" his or her way through the new culture. According to Miller (2009), "identity is multifaceted and multilayered and can change between contexts and situations" (p.102). In the case of Miller's (2009) study, similar to cross-cultural theories (e.g. Black et al, 1991; Hofstede, 2001), "overseas trained teachers in England, 'coming to' a new professional identity involved overcoming a variety of circumstances, grasping several discourses" (p.102), thereby leading to the shifting nature of their identities in an attempt to either "fit-in" or "fit-out" in their new culture or environment. The process of adaptation involves becoming aware of and being immersed in localised knowledge, customs and ideologies (Miller 2008). Thus, this process is just like any successful cross-cultural adjustment.

Miller's (2009) findings showed that while on one hand foreign academics experience issues that undermine previously held value positions and consequentially lead to confusion, a loss of professional status, and turbulence, "on the other hand, and over time, foreign academics mastered conflicting discourses to combine past and present experiences and knowledge to produce a form of localised 'teacher identity'" (pg. 97). The central theme of Miller's (2009) model is that the identity of the sojourner is greatly influenced by his or her cross-cultural experiences and adaptation. This model stipulates that as expatriate academics resolve or manage their experiences and become imbued with the host country (which includes the local work environment) and other forms of knowledge, it also offers opportunity to successfully contribute to the growth and development of education (*Ibid.*, 97). What differentiates Miller's (2009) model from other curve adjustment models is that its final stage allows for two probable outcomes (unlike for example Lysgaard, 1955).

*Figure 2- 7 Miller's (2009) Identity Development Trajectory Model*



*Source: Miller (2009)*

Miller's (2009) model is unique in the sense that, unlike other curve models of adjustment that were developed based on data collected from either international students or business executives, his model solely focused on expatriate academics. Miller (2009) divided the

identity development trajectory into the three stages of engagement, transition and resistance, and maturation. His model seems to split Lysgaard's (1955) culture shock stage into the two separate stages of engagement and transition and resistance and combines Lysgaard's (1955) adjustment and mastery stages into maturation.

### **Engagement**

This stage is similar to the second stage of Lysgaard's (1955) U-curve in which the expatriate experiences challenges and culture shock as he or she engages with the host population. Miller (2009) adds that during this stage the expatriate experiences financial constraint, culture shock, uncertainty and isolation, and a loss of professional status. These experiences are indicative of his or her "newness" to both place and space (job and social setting). In fact, Miller's (2009) model supports the findings made in previous studies (e.g. Brown and Holloway, 2008) which state that some expatriate academics immediately on arrival experience the culture shock stage and skip Lysgaard's (1955) honeymoon stage. Searle and Ward (1990) and Ward and Searle (1991) have both stated that the U-curve hypothesis fails to document evidence of early excitement and curiosity.

### **Transition and Resistance**

According to Miller (2009), the second phase begins about halfway through the second year and is considered the most important of the three stages. It is characterised by resistance, confusion, acculturation, gains in professional and localised knowledge and the rejection of same. This stage is similar to the second stage of Lysgaard's (1955) U-curve, whereby the expatriate experiences challenges and culture shock in the host country resulting from feelings of depression, helplessness, frustration and anger. According to Miller (2009), the "transition and resistance" stage can be appropriately described as one of instability and "it is

at this stage that the expatriate academic's identity as a teacher in England begins to take shape as he or she increases localised knowledge and is confronted by a range of experiences"(p.103). It is also at this stage that the expatriate academic gives up prior teaching approaches and processes (situated knowledge) regardless of their continued relevance (ibid). Like other theories of cultural adjustment, this experience depends on the individual's choice.

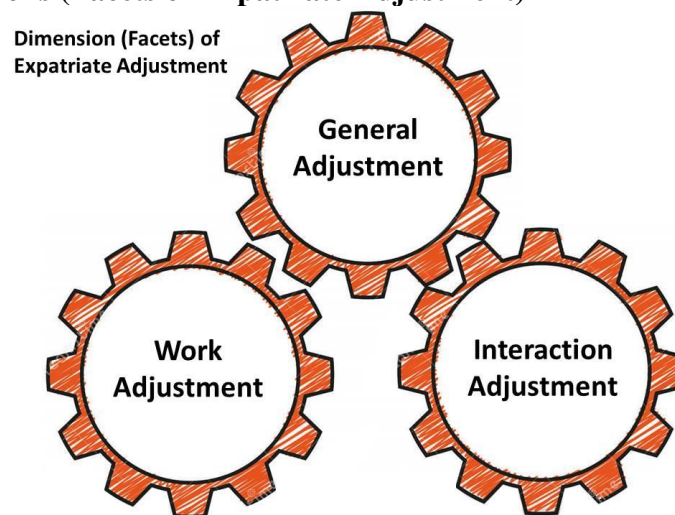
### **Maturation**

Miller's (2009) maturation stage combines Lysgaard's (1955) adjustment and mastery stages form the maturation stage. In the former's model, this stage extends the previous phase and has two probable outcomes. He states that at this stage, the overseas trained teacher achieves either "increased maturation" or "impairment". These outcomes are similar to the outcomes depicted in Hofstede's fourth and final stage (the stable stage) of the cultural adjustment process where the expatriate experiences one of three probable outcomes, notably: "even be better", "good as before", or "remain negative". According to Miller (2009), as OTTs enter their fourth year of teaching in England, they become more imbued with professional form (and other forms) of localised knowledge" (p.103). As the expatriate academic reaches maturation during the adjustment process, their local professional identity is formed. This local identity enables the expatriate academic to fit in with the host culture and organisation. This consequently leads to increased confidence in their job performance within the new environment and in turn acts as a reagent for continued contribution and growth (ibid). However, Miller (2009) adds that when "increased maturation" fails, the OTT experiences "impairment" that may result in decreased maturation or a reversion to phase two (p.103). According to him, this reversion is consistent with Marcia's (1966) cyclical process of identity development.

## 2.5 Dimension of Expatriate Adjustment

Research studies have affirmed that adjusting to an international job assignment is best described in the form of a multidimensional construct made up of three distinct dimensions of adjustment: work adjustment, interaction adjustment, and general adjustment (Black 1990a and 1990b; Black and Stephens, 1989). They also suggested that adjustment can be assessed in the context of adjustment to the general environment, interacting with host nationals, and the work situation. Black and Gregesen (1991) related different antecedents to different facets of adjustment.

**Figure 2-8 Dimensions (Facets of Expatriate Adjustment)**



*Source: Black and Stephens (1989). Black (1990a and 1990b)*

### 2.5.1 Work Adjustment

The adjustment to the new job requirement is what is known as work adjustment (Black, 1988; Black, 1992; Black and Mendenhall, 1990). In his study of 67 Northern European expatriates domiciled in China, Reegard (2011) states that work adjustment concerns with particular performance standards, supervisory responsibilities, and job responsibilities as far as the new environment is concerned. Adjustment to the job in the opinion of Black et al. (1992) constitutes the least stressful of the adjustment dimensions due the similarities in

procedures, policies and demands of the job. However, some amount of effort is required to adjust since the organisations may be different from what the expatriate is used to in his or her home country (Black, 1992; Black and Mendenhall, 1990).

### 2.5.2 Interaction Adjustment

This facet involves the comfort achieved in interacting with host nationals in both work and non-workrelated situations (Mendenhall and Oddou, 1985; Reegard, 2011). According to Black et al. (1992), the most difficult dimension of adjustment constitutes interacting with individuals whose language and customs are foreign. While interacting with the locals, differences in values, perceptions and beliefs begin to surface. Different cultures consist of different rules to guide the interactions of individuals within their various societies (Black et al., 1992; Mendenhall and Oddou, 1985). In view of all these differences, conflicts and misunderstandings are bound to crop up once the newcomer arriving in the foreign country makes direct contact. The result may be anxiety, anger, depression which prevents the adjustment. This is especially acute in the sense that values and assumptions are those aspects of culture that are only indirectly manifested to the outsiders and are thus the most difficult to comprehend (Black et al., 1992; Mendenhall and Oddou, 1985).

**Figure 2-9 Three Facets of Cross-cultural Adjustment**

General environment	Social interaction with host country nationals	Work environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Food</li> <li>● Accommodation</li> <li>● Shopping</li> <li>● Cost of living</li> <li>● Climate</li> <li>● Transportation system</li> <li>● Entertainment/recreation facilities and opportunities</li> <li>● Health care facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Making friends</li> <li>● Communicating with host country nationals outside of work</li> <li>● Talking about yourself with others</li> <li>● Understanding jokes and humour</li> <li>● Dealing with unsatisfactory service</li> <li>● Communicating with people of a different group from your own</li> <li>● Relating to members of the opposite sex</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Specific job responsibilities</li> <li>● Expected performance standards</li> <li>● Communicating with local colleagues</li> <li>● Dealing with people in authority</li> </ul>

Based on Church, 1982; Mendenhall and Oddou, 1985; Black and Mendenhall, 1990; Searle and Ward, 1990; Black, 1992; Ward and Kennedy, 1999.



Numerous studies show that those expatriates who establish close relationships with the host country nationals tend to adjust better and are more productive in their international assignments compared to those who do not enter into such friendships (Caligiuri, 2000b; Mendenhall and Oddou, 1985; Selmer, 2006). Hawes and Kealey (1981) conducted a study of 100 variables on adaptation and efficiency of technical assistance personnel working in six developing countries. They identified the best indicator of overseas effectiveness being interpersonal skills. Bell and Harrison (1996) came out with model encompassing the bicultural life experiences and effects of other constructs on expatriate adjustment and discussed the parallel themes in literature on biculturalism and on the knowledge, skills, abilities and other requirements for expatriate effectiveness. According to their findings, expatriates overcome their culture shock by successfully interacting with the host nationals. The conceptual model proposed by Aycan (1997b) illustrates the essential antecedent of expatriate adjustment and offers the explanation that expatriates interacting with the locals enables them to learn new forms of appropriate behaviour in work and non-work contexts with ease. This facilitates the expatriate's understanding of the host nationals and adjustment (Black et al., 1992; Mendenhall and Oddou, 1985).

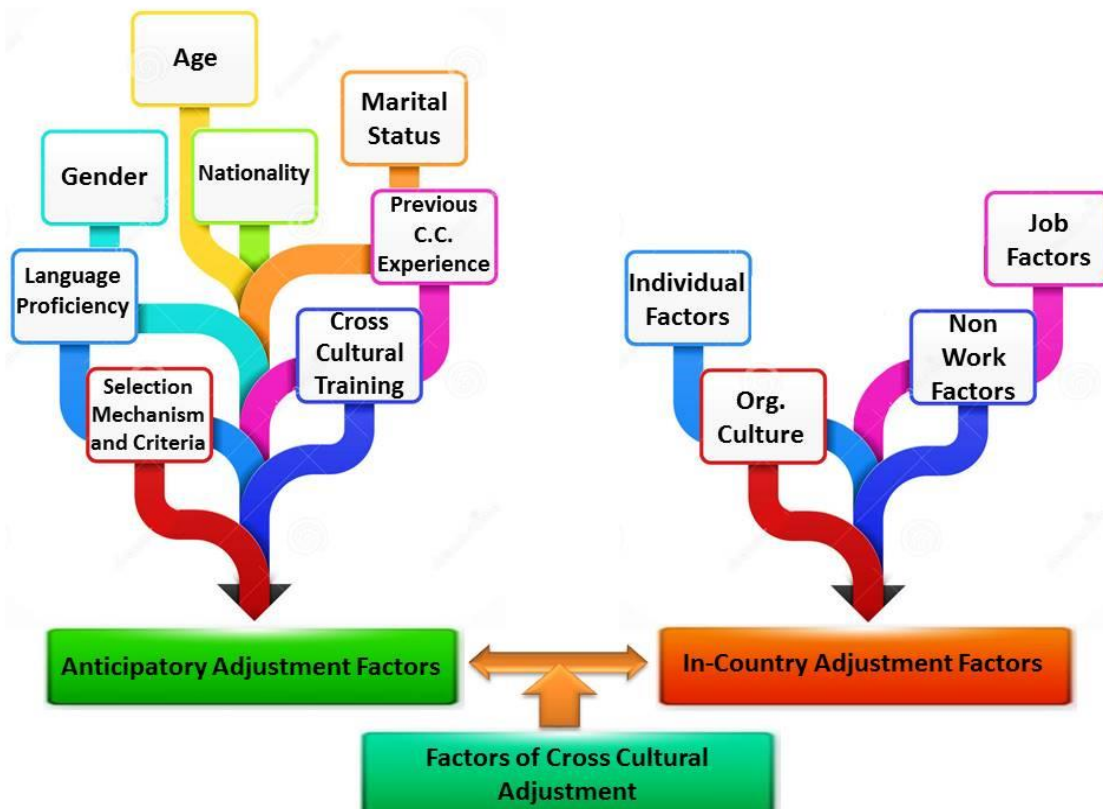
### **2.5.3 General Adjustment**

According to Reegard (2011), general adjustment can be defined as the degree of comfort the person experiences within the general living conditions of a new environment. Part of this general adjustment to the foreign culture and conditions of living abroad are aspects like food, housing conditions, living cost, entertainment, recreational facilities, shopping, and health care. In respect of difficulty, the dimension of general adjustment lies between job and interaction adjustment (Church, 1982; Searle and Ward, 1990; Torbiorn, 1982).

## 2.6 Factors of Cross-cultural Adjustment

The factors that affect cross-cultural adjustment have been given considerable attention during the past decades. Several academics (e.g. Aycan, 1997b; Black et al, 1991; Parker and McEvoy, 1993) have undertaken studies which affirmed that cross-cultural adjustment possesses a multi-dimensional factor that possibly influences the sojourners' cross-cultural adjustment and can be grouped into two categories, namely anticipatory adjustment (before departure) and in-country adjustment (after arrival in the host country). Cross-cultural adjustment factors and the processes affecting it are discussed in the sub-sections (2.8.1 to 2.8.2) that follow.

**Figure 2-10 Factors of Cross-Cultural Adjustment**



*Source: Developed from the models of Aycan (1997a), Black et al, (1991), Hofstede (2001), Miller (2009, 2010), Parker and McEvoy (1993), Selmer (2006), and Van der Bank and Rothmann (2006).*

The contributing factors to cross-cultural adjustment includes the anticipation factors (age, gender, marital status, nationality, previous overseas living and teaching experience, language proficiency, mechanisms of selection and criteria), and in-country adjustment factors (personality traits), job factors (role ambiguity and role conflict) and non-work factors (culture novelty).

### **2.6.1 Anticipatory Adjustment Factors**

#### **Age**

The relationship that exists between age and the expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment has been examined. The greater part of the findings indicate that expatriates who are younger have more social contact with host nationals compared to expatriates who are older. This view is held by Church (1982), Furnham and Bochner (1986), and Mamman (1995). Young age positively affects the expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment. There is a profound flexibility and openness on the part of younger expatriates to their new environment and culture. More mature individuals tend to encounter more difficulties in adapting to a new culture. In sharp contrast, Parker and McEvoy (1993) have suggested that job satisfaction must be considered as an integral factor in cross-cultural adjustment since younger employees tend to be less satisfied with their job.

#### **Gender**

The existing studies have hardly taken into consideration the relationship between gender and cross-cultural adjustment. In a research undertaken by Thomson and English (1964) with reference to the early return of Peace Corps volunteers in 43 countries, they discovered that the rate of return was considerably higher in females than in males. Thal and Cateora (1979) claim that in some Arab and Asian countries, women do not enjoy the same social status as

men. Herein lies an important reason why more female expatriates fail to adjust in the host country. Mendenhall and Oddou (1985) supported Torbiorn's (1982) claim that a greater percentage of female expatriates experience isolation than their male counterparts. Differences in cross-cultural adjustment among male and female expatriates may not necessarily be caused by gender issues and instead by the fact that the gender roles are fixed in the host country.

### **Marital Status**

There is empirical evidence that shows the cross-cultural adjustment of the family and spouse considerably affects the expatriate's cross-cultural adjustment (Black, 1988; Black and Stephens, 1989; Harvey, 1985; Mendenhall and Oddou, 1991; Naumann, 1992; Tung, 1982). In the model of Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991), family-spouse adjustment was added as a non-work factor. Black and Stephens (1989) had already established that spouse' cross-cultural adjustment forms a mutual relationship with the expatriate managers' cross-cultural adjustment. They also found that the willingness of the expatriate managers and their spouses to live overseas positively relates to their cross-cultural adjustment. A good family adjustment helps the expatriate in terms of social support and in coping with stress (Aycaan, 1997b; Naumann, 1992).

### **Nationality**

Previous studies have shown that there exists a relationship between the expatriates' nationalities and their cross-cultural adjustment (Church, 1982; Parker and McEvoy, 1993). Researchers such as Selmer (2001), Wang and Kanungo (2004), and Ward and Kennedy (1999) investigated the relationships between nationality and cross-cultural adjustment

pertaining to different regions and countries. Selmer's study on China (Selmer, 1999, 2001a) provided evidence that expatriates from different countries and regions exhibit different levels of adjustment. The findings indicated that while North Americans adjusted successfully in terms of the host country's socio-culture, the same is not the case with West Europeans (Selmer 2001a). According to Wang and Kanungo (2004), expatriates with different cultural backgrounds tend to establish different social networks and achieve different adjustment levels in China. Ward and Kennedy (1999) confirmed that ethnicity and similarity with the host culture reduces the socio-cultural problems encountered in the adaptation process. Their study involved Chinese expatriates living and working in Singapore who experienced fewer socio-cultural difficulties than their non-Chinese counterparts. Based on the findings of Ward and Kennedy (1999, p. 668) Malaysians and Singaporeans studying in New Zealand seemed to have greater socio-cultural adjustment problems than Malaysians studying in Singapore. In respect to this factor of nationality, comparing the distance between the home culture and the host culture can serve as a viable tool in assessing the cross-cultural adjustment process.

### **Language Proficiency**

Proficiency in a foreign language plays a critical role in successful cross-cultural adjustment (Clark, 2015; Selmer 2001a). According to Church (1982), Masgoret (2006), and Ward and Kennedy (1993), communicating effectively with locals is essential for the performance of everyday tasks and social interactions. Effective communication between the expatriates and the locals helps the former to adjust socio-culturally more easily and allows them to understand the culture of the host country better. Homesickness, social isolation and lack of self-confidence may be experienced as a consequence of the language barrier (Church, 1982; Selmer, 2006). For example, Selmer (2006) documented that the expatriates' proficiency in

Chinese was of crucial importance in their interaction adjustment in China. Yang et al (2005) also found that language ability plays a key role in the adjustment of international students in Canada. In a study involving Russian immigrants to the United States, Tsytsarev and Krichmar (2000) established that English language skills constituted a salient factor for successful adjustment. From the evidence presented in this section, it can be concluded that the foreign language ability of an expatriate positively affects the cross-cultural adjustment, specifically in terms of interaction adjustment.

### **Previous cross-cultural experience**

Many studies (e.g. Church 1982; Masgoret, 2006; Parker and McEvoy, 1993; Winkelman, 1994) have identified previous cross-cultural experience and knowledge of the country of host as factors which help expatriates cope with cross-cultural adjustment. Sojourners who are able to overcome the cross-cultural difficulties are those who possess the requisite cross-cultural experience. Black (1988), however, limits the adjustment success in consequence of previous overseas work experience to the adjustment at work and does not view it as contributing to the expatriates' overall adjustment.

According to Shaffer et al. (1999), the expatriates' prior assignments effectively moderate their adjustment. A survey conducted by Lee (2006) involved 353 individuals with previous work experience in China established that international experience constitutes a significant factor for successful adjustment, however, only in addition to their willingness to accept overseas assignments. A new method to identify important marks of entry experiences was proposed by Louis (1980) who found the indicative feature being that individuals with former transfer experiences could infer from these transfers and become thoroughly acquainted with

all its related aspects and could thus form more realistic expectations for the future transfer. According to Torbiorn (1982), anticipatory adjustment to a foreign culture is based on the sojourner's own initiative prior to their actual arrival in the host country. Their motivation to adjust supports their subsequent cross-cultural adjustment efforts.

Besides establishing the connection which exists between previous international experience and anticipatory adjustment and attitudes toward international assignments, Black (1988) and Aycan (1997b) suggested that prior international experience positively affects adjustment. According to social learning theory, an experienced individual has acquired the skills of coping with uncertainties through observation, modeling and reinforcement. According to Black et al (1991), the previous experience with a similar culture to the one that the individual is entering offers a supreme source from which accurate expectations can be formed. Shaffer et al (1999) discovered that previous assignments serve as a regulating factor on how an expatriate sees his or her co-worker and supervisor support. The co-worker support positively affects the work and overall dimensions of adjustment. Cai and Rodriguez (1996) proposed that people with overseas experience have the ability to draw from their previous experience in a new situation and hence are able to reduce stress, which in turn makes adjustment easier. Those found to possess international experience have greater realistic expectations of their future assignments (Louis 1980).

The relationship that exists between cross-cultural experience and successful adjustment has been established (Aycan, 1997b). The cross-cultural knowledge of the expatriate or the extent of the international awareness in terms of ethnic background, prior expatriate assignments skills in language and travel experience, impact the candidate's ability to adjust to a new

environment. Their success is more certain if they have international orientation, hence a number of hypotheses can be made as detailed in the next section.

### **Cross-cultural training**

Cross-cultural training is defined by Black and Mendeanhall (1990) as “the skills needed to be successful in a new culture”. According to Black and Mendeanhall (1990 p.117), three critical skills are required for successful cross-cultural adjustment, which are:

1. Skills to maintain themselves including “mental health, psychological well-being, stress reduction and feelings of self-confidence”
2. Skills implanting people in the host nations
3. Cognitive skills enabling sojourners to form the correct views of the host environment and the social system.

Many studies (Black and Mendenhall, 1990; Cerimagic, 2012; Kivrak, Ross, Arslan and Tuncan, 2009) suggested that one of the most effective methods to improve expatriate adjustment is providing cross-cultural training (CCT). Ko and Yang (2011) conducted a study on the effects of cross-cultural training on expatriate assignments in China involving eight former Vietnamese expatriate managers. It revealed that expatriate adjustment was faster when cross-cultural training focused on the local norms and regulations. It was also suggested that in order to shorten the adjustment period and to maximize the expatriate’s productivity, a pre-departure CCT program should be instituted. These results proved in agreement with what other researchers (Black and Mendenhall, 1990; Litrell and Salas, 2005; Selmer, 2005; Tung) had found. In a qualitative study involving 64 expatriate families, Cole and Nesbeth



(2014) discovered that the most common reason behind expatriate failure was insufficient organizational support during the assignment. These findings were in line with previous studies that indicated that family issues were among the causes of expatriate failure. It also showed that inadequate organizational support contributed to expatriate failure. Chu (2009, p.1) added that the existence of a “complex, differentiated and individualized view of cross-cultural adjustment which changes in individuals over time” (Chu, 2009, p.ii). The study also reported severe inadequacies in the provision of suitable preparation, induction, training and ongoing support provided for expatriate teachers with regards to cross-cultural issues. This thesis finally makes suggestions for intervention for all stakeholders particularly HEIs.

Even though several studies have demonstrated the significance of CCT (e.g. Black and Mendenhall, 1990; Caligiuri, 2000; Deshpande and Viswesvaran, 1992; Johnson, Lenartowicz and Apud, 2006; Krishna, Sahay and Walsham, 2004; Tung, 1981, 1982), the majority of organizations and their top managements still doubt its importance or deliberately neglect it. If they do provide such training, it is considered as either insufficient or incomplete (Oddou, 1991; Hutchings 2002; Osman-Gani and Rockstuhl 2009; Selmer 2000). Arthur and Bennett (1995) argued that the lack of clear and explicit knowledge of what should be the components, elements or structure of the CCT are the reasons for its absence, neglect, and ineffectiveness. Arthur and Bennett (1995) further argued that several HR administrators believed that the factors associated with successful expatriate adjustment are not known enough to be able develop comprehensive training programs. Puck, Kittler and Wright (2008) also held that for most organisations, CCT were ineffective in the way they were carried out.

Cross-cultural training can be effective depending on the host nation, the individual expatriate and the contextual factors of the foreign assignments (Selmer, 2004). Included in cross-cultural training are local language skills, environmental briefing (information about

the geography, climate, housing, schools) cultural orientation (institutions, values, assimilation) in the form of brief episodes describing intercultural encounters, sensitivities and communication skills (Tung, 1982, p.65). Tung (1981) pointed out that the cross-cultural training programme requires a certain extent of modification based on the nature of the overseas assignment and the host culture and thus meet the varying requirements and bring failure rates down. His study revealed that cross-cultural training greatly benefitted Japanese expatriates. The studies completed by Parker and McEvoy (1993) and Masgoret (2006), and more recently, Selmer (2016) have proven cross-cultural training to contribute to expatriate cross-cultural adjustment. Such trainings raise the realistic expectations of the expatriates and thus help lower their stress during the cross-cultural adjustment process. Black and Mendenhall (1990) concluded their review by stating that cross-cultural training enables sojourners to develop skills and successfully complete their cross-cultural assignments.

Caligiuri et al. (2001) tested two hypotheses to determine whether the expatriates' prior expectations (prior to arrival at the host country) affected the degree of adjustment. The results of the study supported a more specifically tailored pre-departure cross-cultural training. It also suggested that having accurate expectations regarding the future job has a positive effect on cross-cultural adjustment. It provided evidence for organizations to develop effective training that ensure the forming of realistic expectations of their overseas jobs. Cerimagic and Smith (2011) conducted a study on the importance of cross-cultural preparation for Australian project managers working in the UAE. Based on an online survey (100 Australian project managers) and a 72% response rate, the study found that cross-cultural training provided considerable paybacks to Australian project managers and the companies they worked for. The same finding was generated by Forster (2000) who argued that organisations did not "pay attention to screening, selection and training of potential

expatriate staff and the non-technical skills they should possess” (p.63). Cerimagic and Smith (2011) further argued that by adopting appropriate and adequate cross-cultural training programs, organizations could save a lot of money and improve their international standing and reputation. However, their study also revealed that in those cases in which these organisations did provide CCT, it was not relevant, out of date, and not adequate.

### **Selection Mechanism and Criteria**

Cross-cultural studies generally dwell on the individual factors of the cross-cultural adjustment process. However, additional studies have suggested that variables of organisation also play an important role in the process of adjustment. In respect to the anticipatory stage, Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991) emphasize the importance of the mechanism and criteria for selecting the expatriates. If the selection process of expatriates for overseas assignments is done in the correct manner, it helps lower the problems associated with the cross-cultural adjustment of the individual. Other organisational factors are organisational policy, promotion of overseas assignments, training that border on cross-cultural adjustment and overseas assignments, support for relocation and policy that has to do with compensation (Black et al., 1991; Parker and McEvoy, 1993). Since being an expatriate comes with changes both in one’s professional and private life, in terms of sponsors and family, there should be an organisational support to reduce the stress that the expatriate may encounter, for example in the form of providing ready accommodation and schooling for the accompanying children (Aycan, 1997a).

Concerning the selection process of the expatriates, companies are prone to adopt selection criteria which are reliant on the same stress factors as in the domestic setting (usually technical and leading competencies). Some organisations assume that those skills are across

the board and can be applied everywhere (Sparrow, Brewster and Harris. 2004). In the view of Dowling and Welch (2004), six factors affect the expatriate selection. The factors are categorised as individual (technical ability, cross-cultural sustainability, and family requirements, and situational factors (country/cultural requirements, language, MNC requirements). Most companies, however, turn a blind eye on the importance of the basic profile of candidates and the elements that serve as good indicators of succeeding in an overseas assignment (Mendenhall et al, 1987). The focus of companies has remained on professional competency while neglecting other criteria such as cross-cultural skills (Black et al., 1991) and intersocial skills (Tung, 1981).

## **2.6.2 In-country adjustment factors**

### **Individual factors**

Many studies have been undertaken to ascertain which skills individual expatriates need during the cross-cultural adjustment process. According to Mendenhall and Oddou (1985 p.39), cross-cultural success is premised on four dimensions: 1. the self-oriented dimension; 2. the other-oriented dimension; 3. the perceptual dimension; and 4. the cultural toughness dimension. The self-oriented dimension has to do with activities which support the expatriates' mental health, self-confidence, and self-esteem. The other-oriented dimension encompasses the expatriates' willingness to communicate with the locals and being able to form relationships with them. Studies have pointed out that the ability to develop long-term relationships with the host nation constitutes an essential ingredient in the overall cross-cultural adjustment (Black et al, 1991; Sanderson, 2014). The perceptual dimension involves the expatriate being able to adjust his or her behaviour to the new socio-cultural environment. It is of great importance to have the ability to evaluate the local social behaviour and what is deemed as appropriate behaviour in the host culture. The culture toughness dimension

represents the gap between the home culture of the expatriate and the host culture. If there are differences in language, daily customs, values, religion, politics and economics, this may create more challenges in the cross-cultural adjustment process of the expatriate (Black et al., 1991).

## **Job factors**

### *Role Ambiguity*

Being uncertain about the requirements of the tasks demanded in a particular job in view of inadequate information is what is known as role ambiguity (Joshi and Rai, 2000, Larson, 2004). These include directives from the company which are not clear and unspecified goals and responsibilities (Behrmen and Perreault, 1984; Rizzo et al., 1970; Schuler, 1979). Kahn et al. (1964) asserted much earlier that certain pieces of information are of crucial importance for the job holders who wish to fulfil the role expectations. They have to be informed of their rights and duties, the activities on the other part and how the activities are performed. In the other words, they must know the kind of behaviour which earns reward and that which merits punishment.

When role ambiguity is relatively high, cross-cultural adjustment transition is difficult (Harvey, 1982; Misa and Fabricatore, 1979; Pinder and Schroeder, 1987). In other words, the higher the role ambiguity the lower the individual's ability to foretell the result of different behaviours and the less the ability of the individual to make use of past success or determine acceptable new forms of behaviour. Kahn et al. (1964) found that greater degrees of role ambiguity resulted in increased tension, anxiety, fear, and hostility, decreased job satisfaction and loss of self-confidence, often also lowering the production level.

### *Role Conflict*

When two or more sets of pressure occur simultaneously, and the compliance with one renders the other more difficult, it is called a role conflict (Kahn et al., 1964). Rizzo et al. (1970) argued that role conflict takes place when an individual is taken through competition or conflicting sets of expectations and demands in the organisation. Role conflict also occurs in the case of the principle chain of command being violated or the unity of command. Rizzo et al. (1970) identified four conflict role types: person-role conflict (occurs when role expectations of others are incongruent with the orientations and personal need of the role occupant), inter-sender conflict (occurs when expectations of two different role senders towards the role occupant are incompatible), intra-sender conflict (occurs when financial resources and capabilities conflict with defined role behaviour, and inter-role conflict (occurs when a person has to play various roles at the same time, which are incongruent and incompatible).

Role conflict has been identified as being very important to expatriates (Christensen and Harzing, 2004). Role conflict can increase the difficulty of the transition into the cross-cultural assignment (Kahn et al., 1964). When an individual is given conflicting messages about expected behaviours, they are unable to determine which message to follow and which to ignore. In a new cultural setting, signals which are contradictory may heighten uncertainty as the expatriate is expected to understand conflicting signals, then to retain the important ones and at the end execute appropriate behaviours (Andreasen, 2003). An examination of the effect of job, personal, and general factors on three facets of cross-cultural adjustment using data collected from American expatriate managers in the Pacific Rim was undertaken by

Black and Gregersen (1991). Their results showed that there was a major negative relationship between work adjustment and role conflict.

### **Organisational Culture**

Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991) added organisational culture factors and organisational socialisation factors to the in-country phase. Organisational cultural factors have to do with the novelty of the organisation's culture access to support social and logistical assistance. It centres on socialisation tactics and content. In terms of the communication and socialisation support, Aycan (1997a) included performance-reward contingency in the post-arrival period and indicated that the allocation of appropriate rewards can motivate expatriates and increase their commitment level. The assumption is that the greater the gap of organisational culture between the home country and the host country, the higher the difficulty to adjust (Mendenhall and Oddou, 1985). Studies also discovered that cross-cultural adjustment is influenced by job satisfaction and job conditions, the purpose of their sojourning being related to their employment (Church, 1982). Thus, organisational factors seem to play an essential role. Organisational support is necessary for cross-cultural adjustment of the expatriate.

### **Non-work factors**

Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991) identified in their model several non-work factors such as cultural novelty, family and spouse adjustment. Previous studies (e.g. Church, 1982; Mendenhall and Oddou, 1985) have shown that the differences between the host culture and the expatriate's home culture have a considerable effect on their cross-cultural adjustment. The greater the difference between the two cultures is, the more difficulties the expatriates experience in the cross-cultural adjustment process (Aycan, 1997b; Tung, 1982).

Other studies support the theory that the family's and spouse's cross-cultural adjustment impact positively on the expatriate's cross-cultural adjustment and his or her intent to stay (Aycan, 1997b; Black and Stephens, 1989; Church, 1982; Harvey, 1985; Mendenhall and Oddou, 1985; Naumann, 1992; Tung, 1982). As mentioned earlier, marital status, good cross-cultural adjustment of the family and spouse may help the expatriates with social support and assist them cope with stress.

### **Length of residence in the new culture, and culture novelty**

It is assumed that the duration of residence in the new culture positively affects the cross-cultural adjustment of the expatriate (Miller, 2009, 2010). Ward and Kennedy (1999) and Miller (2009, 2010) suggested that expatriates usually suffer greater socio-cultural adjustment problems at the beginning, and that these problems significantly reduce with time. According to Lysgaard (1955) and Miller (2009, 2010), the cross-cultural adjustment may require a certain length of time for the expatriate to fully adjust to the new environment. Aycan (1997a) and Miller (2009, 2010) asserted that as the expatriates arrive in the host country, they are firstly likely to scrutinise the extent of similarity between the new culture and their own culture. Should the perceived differences between the home country and the host country be great, the degree of uncertainty about how to conduct oneself at work and outside work is more likely to intensify (Miller, 2009, 2010).

Cross-cultural adjustment becomes more difficult with higher cultural novelty (Black, 1990; Black and Stevens, 1989). Parker and McEvoy (1993) revised the relevant literature to present a model of intercultural adjustment depending on Black's (1988) three facet model of expatriate adjustment tested on 196 adults working abroad in 12 different countries. The



findings suggested that cultural novelty affects the intercultural adjustment. Ward and Kennedy (1992) studied 84 New Zealanders residing in Singapore and concluded that the more different a culture is to the expatriate's home culture, the more difficult it is to adjust.

Culture novelty is associated negatively with a degree of international adjustment, with specific reference to the interaction and general adjustment (Black et al., 1991; Shaffer et al., 1999). A proof through a study by Zhou and Qin (2009) of 41 Japanese and 53 American business expatriates working in China showed that cultural distance is negatively correlated with adjustment. The Japanese business expatriates exhibited a higher degree of adaptability than the American business expatriates in general adjustment and interaction adjustment, however not in work or psychological adjustment.

Reviewing the empirical literature on the subject, Black and Mendenhall (1991) and Miller (2009, 2010) observed that individuals may exhibit inappropriate behaviour even though the host culture encourages them to exhibit certain specific behaviour. In turn, this inappropriate behaviour is likely to bring about negative consequences. Torbiorn (1982) concluded that should the cultural novelty of the host culture become great, the frequent occurrence of novel situations and the likelihood of newcomers committing blunders is to be expected.

## **2.7 Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's National Cultural Differences Model**

According to Adler (2008), the behavior of individuals employed in international organizations and how individuals should behave when they work in organizations with employees and clients from many different cultures is explained in cross-cultural management. The significance of cross-cultural management lies in the continuous expansion

in co-operation amongst companies operating in different countries and in locations where problems may arise as a result of the different cultural backgrounds (Kawar, 2012).

<b>No.</b>	<b>Trompenaars cultural dimension</b>	<b>Meaning/Answers the questions</b>
1	Universalism vs. particularism	What is more important, rule or relationship?
2	Individualism vs. collectivism	Do we function as a group or as individuals?
3	Neutral vs. emotional	Do we display our emotions?
4	Specific vs. diffuse	Separation of private and working life
5	Achievement vs. ascription	How we prove ourselves to receive status
6	Internal vs. external control	Do we control our environment or are we controlled by it?
7	Sequential vs. synchronic	Do we do one thing at a time or several things at once?

After a decade of research into the preferences and values of 46,000 managers of different cultures in 40 countries, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) developed a model that describes the national cultural differences. The managers were not arbitrarily different (culturally) from one another yet varied in very particular and predictable ways. According to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, each culture has different preferences based on a variety of different factors. Each culture has its own values, beliefs, and ways of thinking. They identified the seven distinct dimensions of universalism vs. particularism, individualism vs. communitarianism, neutral vs. affective, specific vs. diffuse, achievement vs. ascription, attitudes toward time, and attitudes toward the environment. They concluded that these seven dimensions determine what distinguishes people from one culture to another.

### **Universalism–Particularism**

The universalism vs. particularism dimension refers to whether workplace behaviour is regulated by rules or relationships. According to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998), universalists are inclined to tag along with the community and work rules, whereas

particularists have a tendency to be more focused on meeting the needs of individuals especially those closest to them. Individuals in traditional and collectivist societies are likely to be more particularistic than individuals from modern individualistic societies. In universalist cultures, people believe that family, friends, or relationships are less important than rules, codes, and standards because those take precedence. However, in particularist cultures such as the UAE, individuals place more emphasis on personal relationships (Al-Rasheedi, 2012).

### **Individualism vs. Communitarianism**

The individualism vs. communitarianism dimension is comparable to Hofstede's individualist dimension (IDV) in the sense that it refers to the extent to which people are integrated into groups or prefer working individually (Trompenaars and Hamden-Turner, 2000). In an individualistic society, a person's happiness and fulfilment is given more importance, and the individual is inclined to take initiatives that will yield to self-catering. On the other hand, in a collectivistic culture such as that of the UAE, individuals have an obligation to serve the interests of other members in their group or community or society (Al-Rasheedi, 2012).

### **The Neutral vs. Affective**

The neutral vs. affective dimension refers to the level of emotion displayed at work deemed suitable in various cultures. According to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998), a neutral culture is a culture in which feelings are held in check whiles an emotional culture is a culture in which emotions are expressed naturally and openly. Emotions are easily and freely expressed in affective cultures, whereas in neutral cultures, it is important to maintain composure whenever possible. It is essential to maintain a facial expression that will not show how the person might be feeling. In neutral cultures, maintaining control over one's emotions is respected (Al-Rasheedi, 2012; Luthans and Doh, 2012).

### **Specificity – Diffuseness**

The fourth dimension of specific vs. diffuse focuses on the extent to which work and personal relationships overlap or do not overlap. For example, in specific societies, people are not expected to mix work relationships with personal relationships whereas in diffuse societies, there is a thin line between work and personal relationships which may overlap. Forming friendships and informal relationships is considered as important in order for members of the society to achieve their goals. For example, in most Arab societies, the concept of ‘*wasta*’ is found. It refers to the exploitation “of social connections to obtain benefits in work or business that otherwise would not be provided” (Mohamed and Hamdi, 2008; Willemyns, 2008).

### **Achievement vs. Ascription**

The achievement vs. ascription dimension reflects what people in a specific culture consider to be the prime cause of success. Achievement-oriented societies consider achievement and personal attributes the primary basis of success. Also, what has been achieved needs to be preserved by recurrent accomplishments over time. However, ascription societies place prime importance on the demographic background of an individual and consider that to be the primary reason for success. Hence, in ascription societies, status is a consequent of one’s birth, gender, or wealth, status not being built on what an individual has done, but on who the person is (Al-Rasheedi, 2012).

### **Sequential – Synchronous Time**

The sixth dimension of attitudes toward time refers to the extent to which certain cultures place value on past events (i.e. history) which is reflected in their literature, architecture, traditions, and music. It is a function of two variables, namely, the attributed significance that a culture places on the past, present, and future, and the culture’s approach to structuring time

(Al-Rasheedi, 2012; Trompenaars and Hamden-Turner, 2000). In most Eastern and African societies culture, fate, destiny and spirit live in these intertwined spaces and the unfolding of time is only the unfolding of stories already written, waiting to be told and retold (Al-Rasheedi, 2012).

### **Locus of Control**

The seventh dimension is based on Rotter's (1966) concept of the locus of control and refers to people's attitudes toward their internal and external environments. The criterion is how much influence they think these "forces" have on controlling their destiny. Individuals with a high internal locus of control believe that they direct their destiny, whereas people with a high external locus of control are inclined to believe that their fate is determined by destiny or other forces external to themselves. In relation to everyday life, this translates into persons trying to control and change the world around them in order to suit their needs. On the other hand, in outer-directed cultures, life is seen as being organic and uncontrollable, therefore people adapt to their environment rather than trying to alter it. According to a recent study (Yousef, 2000 in Willemys, 2008, p.4), "the UAE is relatively high in terms of internal Locus of Control, as Islam teaches that individuals should work hard to deserve their successes in life".

## **2.8 Expatriate Academic**

A review of literature on expatriate adjustment indicates a lack of clarity around the term 'expatriate academics' (EAs), even though it has been used more consistently than some of its synonyms such as "foreign academics" or "academic migrants" (Trembath, 2016). The term expatriate academics appeared rather independently of the above-mentioned debates (Trembath, 2016). Most of the earlier literature (e.g. Richardson and McKenna, 2000, 2002, 2003) using the term was published during the period when the initial discussions of self-

initiated foreign experiences were taking place (Suutari and Brewster, 2000). Through a more self-conscious manner, much broader terms such as “international academics”, “academic migrants” or “foreign academics” referred to academics who decided to leave one organisation (in one country) and moved to a new one (in another country). Richardson (2006) describes them as self-directed academics, Thorn (2009) as self-initiated aptariates and Yeo (2011) as independent academic expatriates. As Richardson (2000) points out, using the expatriate academics construct creates a “deliberate and with full awareness” attention to the specifics and scope of the definition which the others do not have, Based on the typology of expatriates and migrants developed by Andresen et al. (2014), and Trembath (2016) provides a definition summary on the expatriate academic construct. However, this definition is not without definitional constraints which shall be explored in more detail.

*Figure 2-11 The Expatriate Academic Construct*

<b>All of the following criteria must be upheld</b>	<b>None of the following are included</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have moved from dominant place of residence (i.e. on a contractual basis).</li> <li>2. Have moved across national borders.</li> <li>3. Employment is legal.</li> <li>4. Employment is time-bound (i.e. no intention to emigrate permanently).</li> <li>5. Employment is related to teaching and/or research.</li> <li>6. Employment is based in an institution of higher education.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Travellers (i.e. has not moved dominant place of residence). For example, conference attendees, FIFOs, academics on sabbatical or field work.</li> <li>2. Managers or administrators employed in universities whose employment does not include teaching or research.</li> <li>3. Educators or researchers not employed in this role at an institution of higher education.</li> </ol>

*Source: Trembath (2016)*

This following typology in Figure 2.11 describes the construct of expatriation as being particular to the intention of relocating internationally through legal employment in the new country. The construct of migration is more broadly linked with relocating internationally for any reason. The typology developed by Andresen et al. (2014) also excludes expatriates

undertaking legitimate work overseas for a period of time since they do not relocate and change their place of residence. The term “expatriate academics” refers to those in the “research and teaching profession” in HEIs. In the UAE, some higher education institutions use the term “teacher” instead of lecturer or professor. The terms “teacher” and “academic staff” are interchangeably used in this thesis.

## **2.9 Motivation to expatriate**

There is a link between an expatriate academic’s motivation to expatriate and his or her work outcomes (Lauring et al., 2014; Selmer and Lauring, 2013). According to Trembath (2016), the motivation to expatriate which is one of the precursors of work adjustment, is of great interest to researchers of expatriate academics. According to Doherty, Richardson, and Thorn (2013), Richardson and Mallon, (2005), and Richardson and Zikic (2007), academic expatriation is in general seen as being hard work, emotionally and intellectually. It is usually viewed as a risky career trend. Why do some academics decide to leave home and pursue an international work opportunity? The answers to this question are complex. Expatriate academics show homogeneous differences. Their motivations to expatriate are various and span across demographic groups, stages of career, host locations and a number of additional unknown variables (McNulty and Selmer, 2017). Earlier studies (e.g. Aycan, 1991; Osland, 2000) suggested that expatriate academics decide to go on a 'hero's journey' where they set out pursuing a worthy and probably idealistic goal. In the course of this journey they surmount obstacles, undergo personal growth and eventually return to their countries transformed by the adventure (Richardson and McKenna, 2002, 2000). Certain primary forces are at work which pave the way and are responsible for this academic mobility trend, among them the increased use of English as the primary medium of instruction in higher education all over the world, the more and more advanced means of transportation and

communication which facilitate traveling overseas and link colleagues and family, attractive salary and benefit packages, the perception of higher job security in foreign lands, and an unforgiving job market at home (Altbach, 2004b; Kim, 2009b; Lehn, 2016).

### **2.9.1 Metaphors**

Several metaphors are used to characterize the expatriate academics' reasons for leaving home to live and work abroad (Richardson and McKenna, 2002, 2003; Selmer and Luring, 2012, 2011a, 2010, 2009), for example (a) the “explorer” who embarks on an adventure and accepts an international job assignment as a means to experience and study other cultures; (b) the “refugee” who feels compelled to “flee” his or her home country in order to escape a bad academic labour market and search for a better life; (c) the “mercenary” who is inspired by the perception of high financial rewards; and, (d) the “architect” who designs and constructs his or her optimal career path through experience gained abroad. Selmer and Luring (2012, 2013) are of the view that in spite of these early forays of grouping the expatriate academics' motivations and thus providing a workable framework, research conducted later showed that the majority of expatriate academics draw their motivation from more than one of the above. According to Clark (2015), Sanderson (2014), and Shin and Jung (2013), emerging economies in Latin America and the GCC seem to offer these academics low-stress work environments where they only need to focus on either teaching or research and not both. Thus, how attractive the host country's work environment is perceived forms part of the decision-making process before expatriation. It cannot be denied that a wide of range of push and pull factors come into play when academics decide to accept jobs in GCC countries (including the UAE), which will be discussed in the next section.

### **2.9.2 Possible Motivations of Academics to Work in the GCC countries**



As there exists more than one reason for the inbound flow of academics to the GCC countries, any attempt at providing a conclusive explanation has to consist of a complex combination of push and pull factors (Austin et al., 2014; Chapman et al., 2014; Lehn, 2016). Reasons of an economic nature have emerged from the global financial crisis, the downsizing of state budgets, and freezes in university hiring. These factors push academics to venture overseas in search of lucrative even though only temporary contracts offered by the wealthy private universities in the GCC (Clark, 2015; Sanderson, 2014). According to Lehn, (2016) other push factors may be connected to deteriorating employment opportunities, the increasingly high productivity work output demanded of the research academics and unfavourable job conditions at home. There are also other the personal circumstances of the individual which need to be taken into account, such as gender, marital status, religious affiliation, ethnic background, professional experience, children and other dependents at home (aged parents who require care), spousal agreements and many other specific conditions which may either support or hinder the acceptance of employment offers overseas (Chapman et al., 2014; Clark, 2015). When it comes to pull factors, there are a number of enticing aspects that prompt individuals to lift themselves from the present environment and start looking for better employment opportunities elsewhere (Lehn, 2016; Sanderson, 2014). Some of the motivations that drive academics toward seeking or accepting GCC assignments are discussed below.

### **Financial incentives and other benefits**

Concerning pull factors in connection with migration by academics, Altbach and Levy (2005) point at higher salary schemes, better work conditions, and the scientific and scholarly centrality. Haas (1996) states that “for U.S. academics as a whole, financial considerations are the most powerful factors pushing the potentially mobile away from their current

institutions” (p. 374). Every academic in the GCC, whether Arab or non-Arab, may have some level of economic motivation to move to the GCC, however, it is unlikely that it is the only motivation they have (Lehn, 2016; Sanderson, 2014). Additionally, the enticement of untaxable income, generous benefit packages, the provision of paid places of residence, the schooling of their children, and moderate domestic assistance coupled with long holidays and government health care makes it almost impossible for many to turn down these offers (Clark, 2015; Kreber and Hounsell, 2014).

### **Cultural ties to the region**

In the opinion of Lehn (2016) and Sanderson (2014), expatriates of an Arab ethnic background or ancestry to different regions within close proximity to the GCC such as Iran, India, North Africa, Turkey, and the Philippines can become attracted by the opportunity of staying and working in countries with similar cultural practices. Academics may be interested in bringing up their children in a more distinctively Islamic or Arabic environment; attending to or caring for aging parents, siblings, or other relatives living in the region, or they may be already accustomed to the culture and find it comfortable working in such an environment (Austin et al, 2014; Kreber and Hounsell, 2014). In other instances, academics may have experienced discrimination in their home countries (Lehn, 2016). Owing to their ethnicity, some academics may have dual citizenship, are able to speak the language of the host country, and observe the same cultural practices.

### **Professional development opportunities**

Clark (2015) and Sanderson (2014) assert that some academics can be enticed by the prospect of career advancement they cannot obtain in their home country. What motivates others may be the opportunity of working as a professor at a teaching institution where there would not

be any pressure to publish (Kreber and Hounsell, 2014). According to Lehn (2016), expatriate faculty and administrators accept “moonlighting” positions in the GCC after their professional retirement at home. Lastly, some academics answer the call to lead special projects and initiatives that give them personal satisfaction, such as being heads of a new offshore program, superintending a college department or restructuring academic programs as part of an overseas accreditation initiative (Clark, 2015; Lehn, 2016; Sanderson, 2014).

### **Institutional sponsored opportunities**

Overseas appointments may involve the offer to teach abroad at an offshore branch of the home campus or at a partner institution. The academics may also be chosen to undertake a defined initiative in the form of leading a new program, department, or center (Clark, 2015; Sanderson, 2014). According to Chapman et al. (2014) and Kreber and Hounsell (2014), academics supported by their institution may decide for a non-permanent stint overseas in order to boost their professional academic experience through partaking in efforts of institutional globalization.

### **International experience objectives and/or international research interests**

The opportunity of acquiring work experience overseas, undertaking research abroad, and exploring other parts of the world by having a home-base in the GCC could inspire other academics (Austin et al., 2014; Lehn, 2016; Sanderson, 2014). Their research activities and adventures are moved and funded by attractive vacation packages and tax-free salaries (Austin et al., 2014; Sanderson, 2014). According to Sanderson, (2014) others may have come to a stage in their personal and professional life where they are free to work overseas compared to their colleagues who cannot accept positions abroad due to their family obligations, the inability or unwillingness of the spouse, the impossibility of leaving a tenure-

track position or for other similar reasons (Clark, 2015; Lehn, 2016; Selmer, Trembath, and Lauring, 2017).

## **Summary**

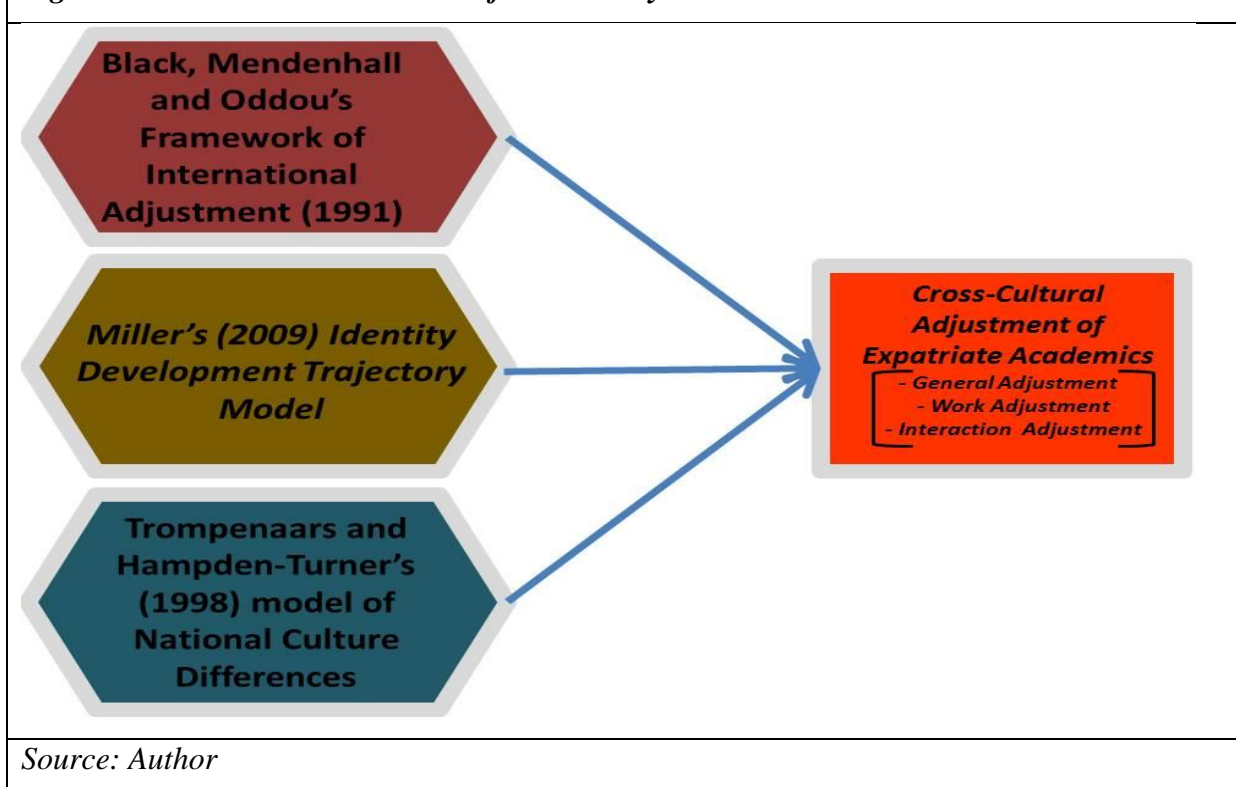
The analysis of the factors that motivate academics to work overseas evidence that usually a combination of them influence these academics. Among the various factors are embarking on adventure, travel, life transformation and escape, family considerations, the pursuit of a relationship and overall serendipity, and job-related issues and financial considerations. Clark, (2015), McNulty and Selmer (2017), and Sanderson (2014) share the view that considering the breadth and complicated nature of the push and pull factors that motivate academics to expatriate, it is clear that these factors must be examined and assessed on an individual basis. According to Kreber and Hounsel (2014) and Lehn (2016), everyone's personal and professional journey takes shape in a unique manner and hence cannot be subjected to generalisation if deliberate inquiry is not done.

## Theoretical Framework

### 3.1 Introduction

Cross-cultural adjustment theory has played a significant role in the groundwork of this study. Based on the research questions of this study (in section 1.4), the following framework (see below) is proposed. This thesis combined three theoretical frameworks. The theoretical framework adopted for the study was based on Black, Mendenhall, and Oddou's (1991) model of expatriate adjustment, Miller's (2009) Identity Development Trajectory, and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (1998) model of National Culture Differences.

*Figure 3-1 Theoretical Framework for this study*



### 3.2 Black, Mendenhall and Oddou's model (1991)

Black, Mendenhall and Oddou's model (1991) is used in this study because it is considered to be the most influential and often-cited in expatriate studies (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2004). The three dimensions model which forms the basis of Black, Mendenhall and Oddou's model

serves as a key tool in measuring adjustment across cultures and has been used in many cross-cultural studies across the globe for the last two decades (Chen et al., 2015; Ditchburn and Brook, 2015; Jyoti and Kour, 2014; Selmer and Luring, 2013; Zhang, 2012). According to Krishnan and Kirubsmoorthy (2017), the combination of the adjustment within these three dimensions determines one's ability to adjust to living in a new environment.

Black, Mendenhall and Oddou's model has been validated in a sequence of empirical studies (e.g. Black and Gregersen, 1991; Gullekson, and Dumaisnil, 2016; Okpara and Kabongo 2010; Parker and McEvoy, 1993; Selmer, 2001a; Shaffer et al., 1999). Black et al.'s (1991) model has prompted a large body of evidence (Hechanova, Beehr and Christiansen, 2003). In 2003, a meta-analytic review of 42 studies was based on the three facets of adjustment and demonstrated that his model is highly reliable (Hechanova et al., 2003). A meta-analysis conducted by Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al. (2005) using data from 8,474 expatriates in 66 studies also provided strong evidence in support of this model. Guttman (2014) examined the empirical validity of Black et al's (1991) model through meta-analysis to determine whether the antecedents of international adjustment are in accordance with the suggestion of the framework's empirical findings. Based on the data of 7,019 expatriates collected in 52 individual studies in the course of 20 years, the test provided compelling evidence for the accuracy of Black et al's (1991) model. According to Isakovic and Whitman (2013) who used this model in a similar research (in the UAE), this model also met the expectations.

### **3.3 Miller's (2009) Identity Development Trajectory**

Miller's (2009) Identity Development Trajectory was initially based on the findings from a study involving overseas trained teachers (OTT) from the Caribbean. The focus of his study and what his model depicts are similar to those in the current study. Miller's (2009) model depicts the circumstances and challenges that expatriate academics face when they migrate to

another country. Hence in order to to further articulate the experiences of expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE, the researcher choose to include Miller's model. Unlike previous adaptation development models that were purely based culture shock theories, Miller (2009) adds another dimension that focuses on the impact of this culture shock on the professional identity of the expatriate academics. Using Miller's model enabled the researcher to develop the expatriate profile (research question four). Another reason for using this model is to provide recommendations for future researchers who may fill the gaps in the body of knowledge, and universities on the management of this particular kind of internationally mobile academic. Even though Miller's model measures the adjustment of expatriates over a timeline (a "linear narrative" progressing or regressing from one stage to another in a single series of sequential steps, the researcher does not seek to do so in this study but rather use Miller's model to further understand the challenges that expatriate academics experience.

### **3.4 Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (1998) model**

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (1998) model provides a better understanding of why individuals act, how they act, and the implications of their actions. This model is recognized as a further empirical expansion of Hofstede's model of cultural dimensions, primarily by adding additional dimensions (Dahl, 2004; Magnusson, et al., 2008) making it a more comprehensive framework (Yeganeh, Su and Sauers, 2009). The researcher of this thesis used Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (1998) model in order to compare the cultural similarities and differences under the three main categories of relationships with others, time, and the environment (Al-Rasheedi, 2012; Luthans and Doh, 2012). According to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998), the process of problem solving is concerned with three important focal points which are relationship with others, relationship to time, and

relationship with the environment. The researcher found these three focal points are similar to the three dimensions of Black et al's (1991) cross-cultural adjustment model. Trompenaars model has also been found to empirically support the nature and scope of UAE culture (Willemyns, 2008).

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (1998) model also constitutes the model of choice as its seven dimensions are used extensively in management training (Lane et al., 2005) and the improvement of the said (Willemyns, 2008). This model also helps in providing recommendations to improving the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE through cross-cultural induction and training. The researcher considers his thesis to be the first phase to developing the content for a induction and training model for expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE. Therefore, further research will make use of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (1998) model to develop cross-cultural activities for induction and training programs for expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE.

The notion of "national cultures" has been criticised for being too simplified, especially in overlooking and generalising the attributes of individual cultures (Karahanna, Evaristo et al., 2005; Straub, Lock et al., 2002; Walsham, 2002). According to Myers and Tan (2002), models on national cultures do not reflect the true cultural belief present within the different nations. It also does not provide the possibility of subcultures. One of the most fundamental ethical issues cross-cultural researchers face relates to the operationalisations of culture (Matsumoto and Jones, 2008). This operationalization have the potential to falsely validate powerful stereotypes (ibid). Nationality has been used as a surrogate for culture (McDonald, 2002), the most common research approach is to make national rather than cultural comparisons (Matsumoto, 2002). For this reason. the researcher does not use Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) model as a "measure" to operationalize culture or to compare



one national culture, country, or nationality with another. Using the model questions (see table 2.1) that come with Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (1998) model, the researcher has been able to develop additional interview questions for the qualitative phase of this study. It also enables him to discuss the challenges expatriate academics face when they first arrive in the UAE.

## **Research Approach and Methodology**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the research approach selected for the study and then covers many aspects of methodology including site and subject selection, data collection methods, the role of the researcher, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

### **4.2 Research Approach**

According to Morgan (2007), the two major divisions of social science research centre on either a reality which should be subjectively constructed by individuals (constructivism) or a reality that is objective and needs to be measured by the researcher (positivism). These two divisions often coincide in research necessitating the adaptation of mixed methods (Bergman, 2007; Morgan 2007). The nature of this study calls for the use of data collection instruments from both positivist and interpretivist paradigms. For example, the quantitative phase (surveys) is based on the positivist paradigm while the qualitative phase (interviews) is based on the interpretivist paradigm. Therefore, this study uses a mixed method approach using a sequential technique, which consists of a quantitative first phase and a qualitative second phase that establishes what practices exist objectively and how people interpret them. Tucker et al. (1991) explain that diverse insights into culture are achieved when different research approaches are used. Moore (2008) also argues that by combining research approaches, an extra dimension to the research is added giving both breadth and depth of data required to answer the research questions. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) argue that this type of research approach is a “class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study” (p.17).

Mixed methods provide greater flexibility and adaptability with regard to research design (Wisdom and Crewell, 2013). The mixed method approach is commonly used by researchers studying the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate teachers or academics. For example, Liao (2010) used it to investigate the cross-cultural adjustment of EFL expatriate teachers in Taiwan. Chan (2015) used it to explore cross-cultural adjustment and job satisfaction among primary school teachers and English native speakers in Hong Kong, and Alshammari (2013) used it on the adjustment of self-initiated expatriate academics in higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia.

This approach is compatible with the theoretical frameworks used in this study. Black et al. (1991), Miller's (2009), and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) used questionnaires and interview questions to understand cross-cultural adjustment challenges encountered by expatriates. Hofstede (1984; 1997) also used surveys and interviews in over 70 national subsidiaries of IBM. Cerimagic and Smith (2011) used the mixed method approach in studying cross-cultural issues faced by project managers in the UAE. The "quantitative-first" model is compatible with one of the objectives of this study which was to test for the applicability of Black et al.'s (1991) model to expatriate academics. It should be noted that in order to test Black et al.'s (1991) model, one must use the quantitative instrument serves as the backbone of the model. While the formulation of the research problem does not distinguish between quantitative and qualitative research traditions, data collection often differs dramatically. This approach is also known as the "two-phase designs" type of mixed methods (Creswell, 1994) also called the "explanatory sequential design" (Wisdom and Creswell, 2013), By using a "quantitative-first" model, the researcher is able to identify undeveloped issues raised by the findings of a quantitative study and then uses those findings

as a basis to develop the qualitative research (interview) questions. By using the “quantitative-first” model, the quantitative results are explained in more detail through the qualitative data (Padgett, 1998; Wisdom and Creswell, 2013, p.2).

The data were collected from expatriate academics in selected HEIs in the UAE. The questionnaire instrument contained both closed and open-ended questions that provided the most valuable insight into the cross-cultural adjustment of the questioned expatriate academics. The interviews responses were not limited to changing degrees of agreement or disagreement and increased the depth of information gathered. Using both qualitative and quantitative aspects facilitated the researcher’s intention to check the consistency of the responses (Raymond and Olive 2008).

### **4.3 Methodology**

This section presents the site and subject selection and the sequence of data collection instruments.

#### **4.3.1 Site and Subject selection**

According to Flick (2004), the size of organisation, limits of access, and the use of known contacts may determine the sample size. Hence, in this study, the selection of the participants to be interviewed depended on the initial size in the quantitative phase, the number of participants who volunteered to be interviewed, and those who were actually available at the time. Therefore, the semi-structured interviews were aimed at providing a small but representative sample in order to reflect the different views of the participants in the setting (Fox, 2009). The target population of this study were expatriate academics working in higher education institutions in the UAE. Purposive sampling was used in selecting the site. The reason behind using this selection technique was due to the limited time available to conduct

the study, cost, convenience, and the difficulties in obtaining access to collect data from many of these organisations. The original plan was to select four universities representative of the higher education sector in the country: two public and two private universities. They were to be selected based on size and age, for example the largest and the oldest first private university in the UAE. However, during the data collection phase access was not granted by two universities that had been selected. One of the institutions (originally identified in the thesis proposal) that granted me access specifically requested that their institution name would not be mentioned anywhere in the study. Therefore, convenience sampling was finally used to create the site samples of the study. In order to meet the targeted number of sites, the researcher contacted additional higher education institutions. The three higher education institutions were conveniently sampled, however, one of the three participating institutions requested its name to be withheld (for confidentiality reasons). The table below indicates the site details as follows:

**Table 4.1 Site and Subject Selection**

	<b>Type of Institution</b>	<b>Nature of student population</b>	<b>Location of Institution</b>
<b>1</b>	PHEI in Abu Dhabi (PHEIA) – Male campus	Predominantly male student population consisting of host country nationals; a minority of foreign exchange students	Abu Dhabi
<b>2</b>	PHEI in Abu Dhabi (PHEIA) – Female campus	Female students who are host country nationals; minority of foreign exchange students .	Abu Dhabi
<b>3</b>	Heriot Watt University in Dubai (HWU Dubai)	Male and female students are from different countries including host country nationals.	Dubai
<b>4</b>	British University in Dubai (BUiD)	Male and female students from different countries including host country nationals.	Dubai

### **4.3.2 Setting of the Study**

As explained above, the target population of this study was expatriate academics from three HEIs in the UAE. The three HEIs were PHEIA (Male campus), PHEIA (Female campus), the Heriot Watt University in Dubai, and the British University in Dubai (BUiD). In this section is provided the profile of the HEIs involved in this study. Providing brief details on the participating HEIs is considered significant in order to understand the focus of this study. The HEIs that have recently emerged share many resemblances in terms of their mission, vision, and objectives, organisation structure, and programs offered. Some important details of the participating HEIs follow below.

Dubai, being the most densely populated city in the UAE, hosts two of the HEIs involved in this study, the Heriot-Watt University Dubai and the British University in Dubai. These two HEIs are located in Dubai International Academic City (DIAC) which extends over an area of 129,000,000 square feet and is close to the Al Ruwayyah area (DIACEDU, 2016).

#### **Heriot-Watt University Dubai**

Heriot-Watt University Dubai is a branch campus of Heriot-Watt University based in Edinburgh, Scotland. Heriot-Watt University Dubai was established in 2005 and the first campus of an overseas university to open in DIAC (Heriot Watt, 2016). Heriot-Watt University has other campuses in Great Britain and Malaysia. Its mother institution is a public university established in 1821 as the world's first mechanics' institute and it was granted royal charter in 1966. The university offers undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in the fields of management, engineering, built environment, food science, and fashion. English is used as a medium of instruction at Heriot-Watt University Dubai. According to QS World University Rankings (2016) and Times Higher Education World

University Rankings (2016), Heriot-Watt University is ranked 327 and 401-500<sup>th</sup> among the World's Top 500 universities. It is among the top 4% of universities globally (Top Universities, 2016). The university has approximately 1,300 students registered at its Dubai campus and over 30,000 students on its programmes globally (THEWUR, 2016). With regards to Heriot-Watt's impact to the local economy, Heriot-Watt's Dubai Campus delivers benefits worth AED 520.0 million (BiGGAR Economics, 2015).

### **British University in Dubai**

As the Middle East region's first research-based and postgraduate university, the British University in Dubai (BUiD) was established in 2003 by the Ruler's Decree of the Emirate of Dubai. The founders of BUiD are Rolls-Royce, Al Maktoum Foundation, Dubai Development and Investment Authority, the National Bank of Dubai, and the British Business Group. BUiD aims to contribute to the socio-economic development and technological innovation of the Arab world and beyond. Through its world class UK partners, BUiD endeavours to be a centre for excellence through research. The university's UK partners are high ranked (globally) universities such as Cardiff University, the University of Edinburgh, University of Glasgow, and the University of Manchester. The global ranking of each UK partner adds to the international recognition of BUiD's programs. According to world rankings:

- The University of Edinburgh is ranked 19<sup>th</sup> (QS, 2016) and 27<sup>th</sup> (THEWUR, 2016).
- Cardiff University is ranked 140<sup>th</sup> (QS, 2016) and 182<sup>th</sup> (THEWUR, 2016).
- The University of Manchester is ranked 29<sup>th</sup> (QS, 2016) and 55<sup>th</sup> (THEWUR, 2016).
- The University of Glasgow is ranked 63 (QS, 2016) and 88<sup>th</sup> (THEWUR, 2016).

Presently, three faculties exist within the university, the Faculty of Engineering and IT, the Faculty of Business, and the Faculty of Education. All BUiD's master and doctorate programmes are accredited by the UAE Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (BUiD, 2016). English is used as a medium of instruction at BUiD. In 2015, the university enrolled 803 students (657 master students and 146 doctorate students) (BUiD, 2015). BUiD employs 24 academic faculty staff members, all of them being expatriates (Top Universities, 2015).

### **PHEI in Abu Dhabi**

In the second most populous city and capital of the UAE, Abu Dhabi, is PHEI in Abu Dhabi (PHEIA). PHEIA was established in 1988 as one of the largest HEIs in the UAE with 17 campuses throughout the country. PHEIA is ranked 45<sup>th</sup> in the Arab region (PHEIA). The institution offers diploma, bachelor and master programs in applied communications, engineering technology, education, computer and information sciences, business, and health sciences. PHEIA's wide range of workplace-relevant and innovative programs combines theory with practice in a practical pragmatic learning atmosphere. Its programs are developed in consultation with leading industry experts and government agencies (Top Universities, 2016) and are accredited by the UAE Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. English is used as a medium of instruction at PHEIA. In 2016, the university recorded a student population of approximately 24,000 (Top Universities, 2016). PHEIA has a multicultural workforce of academic and non-academic professionals from over 50 different countries. Collectively, it has 1,209 academic faculty members, 1,142 of them being expatriates (Top Universities, 2016). PHEIA has some of the most experienced Western-educated faculty from around the world (Hatherley-Greene, 2014). The researcher was not granted access to collect data from all its 17 campuses and was granted access to only two



campuses, namely a male campus and a female campus. These two campuses are located in Abu Dhabi. The male campus has 128 academic staff while the female campus has 153, all of whom are expatriates. In 2015, the male campus enrolled 3,008 students, while the female campus 2,937 students (Top Universities, 2016).

### **Selection of participants**

The target population of this study were expatriate academics (EA). Based on the definitions of a number of sources (Austin et al., 2014; Isakovic and Whitman, 2013; Richardson and McKenna, 2000; Richardson, 2000; Romanowski and Nasser, 2014; Schoepp, 2011; Selmer and Luring, 2009), an “expatriate academic” is a person who is working in an institution of higher education in a teaching or research role employed on a fixed-term contract (Liebig and Von Haaren, 2011). This study uses Karpen’s (1993) definition of expatriate academics in the sense of international professors and non-professorial staff, the latter only as far as (they are) part of the research and teaching profession (p.42). The selection of expatriate academics was based on purposive and convenience sampling. The number of participants obtained in each selected HEI was determined by the number of full-time expatriate academics working there. The total number of expatriate academics in the selected HEIs was 409. A purposive sample was used for the quantitative phase of the study and convenience sampling in the qualitative phase. Hence, the sample size and sampling approach used in this thesis was determined by a number of factors, notably the style of the research, time available to conduct the study, cost, context and convenience (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000. p. 93; Schneider, 2003). During the quantitative phase, purposive sampling was used since the researcher had a specific group of participants in mind, in this case expatriate academics (also known as expatriate academic staff).

The table below indicates the site details and the population within each site as follows:

**Table 4.2 Selection of participants**

	<b>Type of Institution</b>	<b>Number of Academic staff</b>	<b>Nature of student population</b>	<b>Location of Institution</b>
<b>1</b>	PHEI in Abu Dhabi (PHEIA) – Male campus	128	Male students who are host country nationals	Abu Dhabi
<b>2</b>	PHEI in Abu Dhabi (PHEIA) – Female campus	153	Female students who are host country nationals	Abu Dhabi
<b>3</b>	Heriot Watt University – Dubai Campus	104	Male and female students from different countries	Dubai
<b>4</b>	British University in Dubai	24	Male and female students from different countries	Dubai
<b>Total Number of Expatriates</b>		<b>409</b>		

## **4.4 Data Collection Methods**

### **4.4.1 Self-administered Questionnaire**

The questionnaire used structured closed and open-ended questions in order to obtain information from respondents (Schneider, 2003). The questionnaire is considered a major method of data collection (Tashakkori and Creswell, 2007). According to Eiselen et al. (2005), using this method has many of distinct advantages. A self-administered questionnaire is more cost effective to administer than individual face to-face surveys since they are comparatively easy to administer and analyse (Eiselen et al., 2005).

The content of the questionnaires used in this study is based on the theoretical frameworks of Black et al. (1991), Miller (2009), and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) as well as a constructed measurement scale using Black and Stephens' (1989) sociocultural adjustment questionnaire scales as this is the most often used measurement of expatriate adjustment

(Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005) whose application has delivered significant empirical evidence on expatriate adjustment (Alshammari, 2013; Gullekson, and Dumaisnil, 2016; Guttman, 2014; Hechanova et al., 2003; Liao, 2010; Mendenhall et al., 2002). Several studies (Isakovic and Whitman, 2013; Leong, and Low, 2004; Liao, 2010; Wang and Mallinckrodt, 2006; Ward, Yang et al., 2005) have also confirmed the reliability and validity of Black and Stephens' (1989) questionnaire scales. According to Ward and Kennedy (1999), this questionnaire can be easily modified to suit the nature and characteristics of a specific study. All items in the questionnaire were modified based on the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (1998) model of national culture differences served as a guide to create open-ended questions in the last part of the questionnaire. Other empirical studies (Alshammari, 2013; Chan, 2008; Chan, 2015; Chu, 2009; Liao, 2010; Palmer, 2013) also played a major role in creating these questions. The questionnaires were not translated into Arabic since English is the medium of instruction in all the sample sites, as all academics are required to have advanced English language communicative abilities.

The questionnaire consists of seven sections designed to determine the following points:

- a) What factors contribute to the expatriate academics' cross-cultural adjustment across three dimensions (the general environment, social interaction, and work environment) in the UAE?
- b) What influences the expatriate academics' anticipatory adjustment, including previous cross-cultural experience, cross cultural training and their intention to stay in the UAE?
- c) What influences the expatriate academics' cross-cultural adjustment on their intention to stay in the UAE?

- d) What are the participants' opinions on the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for expatriate academics to successfully adjust to working and living in the UAE?
- e) What are the recommendations given by the expatriate academics in order to improve the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics in the future?

The questionnaire consisted of nine parts. The first part consisted of a cover page that explained the purpose of the study and assured the participants of the confidentiality of their responses and served as a consent form. The second part gathered basic socio-demographic information through close-ended questions, consisting of age, gender, nationality, native language(s), marital status, location of spouse, family situation (child, children or no children), location of child(ren), total time spent living and working in the UAE, prior employment before coming to the UAE, current place of work, current residence, local language ability, and intention to stay in the UAE (number of years). In the third, fourth, and fifth parts, there were 26 items in total that measured the expatriate academics' general, interactional and work adjustments in the UAE using a 7-point Likert scale. Nine items focused on adjustment to the general environment with a reliability score of 0.82 in Black et al.'s (1991) original study. Eight items measured social (interaction) adjustment with a 0.89 reliability score, and nine items focused on adjustment to the work environment with a reliability score of 0.91 in Black et al.'s (1991) original study. The sixth part of the questionnaire focused on teaching in the UAE and consisted of nine items, one of which was open-ended. The seventh part focused on cross-cultural training with nine items and several open-ended questions. The eighth part focused on the intention to stay in the UAE consisting of ten items. The last part included an invitation to respondents to be interviewed at a later date.

#### 4.4.1.2 Piloting the Self-administered Questionnaire

A pilot study was carried out in order to establish the practicality and validity of the questionnaire. The pilot study represented a small version of the full-scale study and involved specific pre-testing of the research instrument (van Teijlingen et al., 2001). The main purpose was to statistically check the reliability of the questionnaire instrument, obtain an initial perspective of the instrument in order to improve it and to assess its feasibility, and ascertain whether the instrument would produce valid results in the analysis of data (Cargan, 2007). Although the instruments had been validated empirically, it was important to establish their validity on a new population (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). The pilot study was conducted from 2nd November 2014 to December 2014 and April to 9th May 2015. The characteristics of the pilot sample were similar to those of the actual full scale sample size. The questionnaire was sent via email to 50 participants from a higher education institution. Their email addresses were obtained through their departments. According to Baker (1994), a sample size of 10-20% for the actual study constitutes a reasonable number for a pilot study. Only 38 of the 50 invited participants responded as reported in Table 3.3.

**Table 4.3 Pilot Study Responses**

<b>Questionnaire condition</b>	<b>Quantity</b>
<b>Sent</b>	50
<b>Responses</b>	45
<b>Invalid Questionnaires</b>	7
<b>Total</b>	38

The response rate was 76% consisting of 16 males (41.02%) and 23 females (58.37%) aged between 30 and 60 years (mean = 44). All expatriate academics were from Western countries, the UK (43.58%), the US (20.51%), South Africa (20.51%), Ireland (10.25%), and Canada (7.69%). They had been working in the UAE for periods ranging between seven months to 26 years, with an average of 77.26 months (SD = 65.69). Thirty (76.92%) were married and nine (23.07%) were single. 76.92% of the married participants had their spouses living in the UAE. 89.74% of the married participants either had a child or children, and 74.35% of them had their child or children in the UAE. Their prior employment before arriving in the UAE, 94.87% (n = 37) had worked in other countries besides their home country, all lived in Abu Dhabi. 41.02% (n = 16) had planned to stay in the UAE for two to three years prior to arriving in the UAE. 51.28% (n=20) planned to stay in the UAE for three to four years, and 7.6% (n = 3) of the participants prior to arriving in the UAE. However, after some time their intentions had changed: 76.92% (n = 30) of them intended to stay in the UAE for as long as possible, 7.69% (n = 3) intended to stay three to four years, 7.69% (n = 3) intended to stay two to three years, and 7.69% (n = 3) intended to stay one to two years. In terms of Arabic language skills, 7.69% claimed that they had a fair ability when it came to reading, speaking and writing Arabic, but the rest could only speak a few words. Only 10 of the expatriate academics (25.64%) indicated that they had undergone some sort of orientation or cross cultural training before or after they had arrived.

### *Reliability*

A test is considered reliable when the same result is observed repeatedly (Traub and Rowley, 1991). A survey should be conducted at two different points of time in order to test-retest for reliability (Traub and Rowley, 1991). Analysing the changes in quality or the measurement of the instruments enables one to determine the consistency of the test (Traub and Rowley,

1991). The reliability testing of the instrument on expatriate academics' general, work and interactional adjustment scale was carried out by using Cronbach's alpha. Data obtained from the pilot were analysed using SPSS Version 20. Ideally, each scale should have a Cronbach's alpha coefficients of above 0.7. Some amendments were made to increase the reliability of the questionnaire. Table 3.4 lists the original figures from the pilot questionnaire and those obtained after the modifications in order for all the scales to meet Cronbach's alpha coefficients criterion. The paragraphs within this section explain the modifications that were made.

**Table 4.4 Reliability, Mean, and Standard Deviation of Scales of Questionnaire Items in the Pilot Study. [O – Original] [AM - After modification]**

<b>Table 3.4 Reliability, Mean, and standard deviation of scales of questionnaire items in the pilot study. [O – Original] [AM - After modification]</b>								
Scale	Number of Items		Cronbach's Alpha		Mean		SD	
	O	AM	O	AM	O	AM	O	AM
Cross-cultural adjustment to general environment in the UAE	10	9	0.837	0.840	37.01	36.29	7.972	8.525
Cross-cultural adjustment to work environment in the UAE	10	9	0.897	0.899	49.18	48.27	9.622	10.685
Cross-cultural adjustment to social environment (interaction) in the UAE	9	8	0.838	0.841	44.05	46.12	8.022	9.385
Intention to continue living and working as an academic in the UAE	11	10	0.798	0.818	16.55	18.55	5.766	5.960

Even though the reliability of cross-cultural adjustment to the general UAE environment scale was high (0.837), a sub-item in item 20 that focused on traffic safety displayed a negative item-total correction. Therefore, this item was removed from the scale due to its negative contribution to the reliability of the scale. After modification, the reliability of cross-

cultural adjustment was 0.840, the mean score was 36.29, and the standard deviation was 8.525. This result compared favourably with the initial reliability results of 0.82 by Black and Stephens (1989). The results of the pilot study also revealed that expatriate academics had low scores in cross-cultural adjustment indicating that they did not have many difficulties in adjustment to the UAE.

Although the reliability results of the cross-cultural adjustment to work environment in the UAE scale exceeds Cronbach's alpha coefficients benchmark, item 22 - the education system in the UAE presented a negative item-total correction. Consequently, it was decided that this was also to be removed from the scale. After modification, the reliability to this scale was 0.899, the mean score was 48.27, and the standard deviation was 10.685. This result compared favourably with the initial reliability results of 0.91 by Black and Stephens (1989). The results of the pilot study also revealed that expatriate academics had considerably higher scores in regards to adjustment to the work environment. This result indicates that expatriate academics experienced more challenges when it came to adjusting to the work environment.

As presented in Table 3.4, the reliability estimates calculated in the expatriate academics' social/interactional adjustment scales is 0.841. Although this reliability results is slightly lower than the initial results of 0.89 by Black and Stephens (1989), it is still higher than Cronbach's alpha coefficients benchmark of above 0.7. This scale has eight instead of nine items and a reported alpha of 0.838. All the individual items on this scale displayed acceptability to strong levels of reliability. The general results of the pilot study demonstrated that expatriate academics had considerably higher scores on adjustment to the social/interaction in the country. This result indicates that the expatriate academics hardly interacted with host country nationals (HCNs).



The reliability of the intention to continue living and working as an academic in the UAE was initially higher (0.798) than Cronbach's alpha coefficients benchmark of above 0.7. Nonetheless, there was one item "To become a citizen of the UAE" that showed a negative contribution to the reliability of this scale. This item had a negative effect and it was not related to the job and the UAE did not offer citizenship to permanent residents. Hence, this item was removed from the scale to increase the reliability. After modification, the reliability to this scale was 0.818, the mean score was 18.55, and the standard deviation was 5.960. The general results of the pilot study revealed that expatriate academics had considerably higher scores on this scale, which shows that these ten factors had a positive effect on the expatriate academics' intention to stay in the UAE.

#### *Multiple regression analysis*

The instrument's reliability was also tested using a multiple regression test in order to assess the extent to which the three facets of expatriate academic's adjustment (general adjustment, social/interaction adjustment, work adjustment), the general cross-cultural experience, and cross-cultural training and orientation could predict an expatriate's intention to stay in the UAE. However, due to the sample size of 39 used in the pilot study (as compared to the sample size of 80 suggested by Pallant (2007)), this made the results of the pilot study only suggestive. Nonetheless, for a pilot study such as this one, this was deemed acceptable since all other assumptions set by Pallant (2007) were met. Certain independent variables had correlations between 0.3 and 0.7. In all cases, in relation to the collinearity statistics, the tolerance value of each independent variable was less than 0.10. Each independent variable in relation to the collinearity statistics had a variance inflation factor (VIF) value that was less than 10. Therefore Pallant's (2007) assumption was met.

Although a pilot study does not guarantee the success of the main study, it greatly increases the likelihood (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Certain items were removed from their respective scales in order to improve the validity and reliability of the data in the main study. The layout of the questionnaire and the way the sentences constructed was also improved for clarity. In the pilot study, the use of email addresses as a method for distributing the questionnaires proved to be rather limited. Therefore, in the main study, the questionnaire was developed online via survey monkey and distributed using a web link. All of these modifications were made in order to improve the instrument before it was used in the main study. The overall internal reliability or consistency of the instrument was 0.849 using Cronbach's alpha, and an instrument with a Cronbach's alpha coefficients of above 0.7 is considered acceptable.

#### *Quantitative Data Collection Procedures*

The research design permitted the researcher to invite participants who met the research criteria at the participating institutions of higher education. The questionnaire was created online using the paid subscription of survey monkey. By using survey monkey, the researcher was to generate a web link in order to enable participants to easily access the questionnaire. A total of 409 expatriate academics were invited to participate and complete the questionnaire. Due to the different dates on which the researcher received approval from the participating sites, official invitations to participants were made on the 17<sup>th</sup> of May 2015 (PHEIA), and 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2015 (Private HEIs). Using survey monkey, each selected institution was given a unique web link and the function "multiple responses" was turned off so that a respondent could only take the survey once. These measures were taken to minimise the occurrence of avoid duplicate responses from the same individual.

The invitation was made by sending an official email to the program chairs and heads of research committees in the respective institutions. The program chairs and heads of research committees then forwarded the official email invitation to all the expatriate academics within their institutions and shared them with the researcher as evidence. The official email included a plain language statement explaining the background and purpose of the study and a standardised set of instructions on how to complete the questionnaire. The cover letter in the email also included extracts of the consent form particularly pertaining to confidentiality and anonymity of participation. Hence, the participants were given additional assurance regarding the confidentiality and security of all collected data. The email also included a web link for the online questionnaire.

Participants were given a month to return the completed questionnaire. Initially, there response rate was only about 35 per cent. Therefore, the researcher extended the deadline as the academics were probably preoccupied with their duties. A follow-up reminder email was sent to the program chairs and heads of research committees a month later in order to encourage those participants who had not yet responded to participate in the study. The data collection period for the quantitative phase of the study ended in the first week of December 2015. A response rate of 79.21% was finally achieved.

#### **4.4.2 Semi-Structured Interviews (face to face interviews)**

At the end of the survey, the respondents were asked whether they were willing to participate in an interview and if so provide their contact details. In-depth interviews are most appropriate for studying in-depth issues by eliciting individual experiences through in-depth response, opinions, feelings; and getting an interpretive perspective. Therefore in this research, semi-structured interviews were used in the second phase of the study.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted after the results from the quantitative study had been analysed. Interviews provide further insight into the data from the questionnaire as well as a means to authenticate and triangulate the data (Schein, 2004; Yin, 2003). Interviews enabled the participants to describe their experiences on cross-cultural adjustment in their own words. According to Rossman and Rallis (1998), in-depth interviews enable the researcher to carry out a “guided conversation with a goal of eliciting from the interviewee rich, detailed materials” (p. 18).

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner’s (1998) model of national culture differences served as a guide to draft the interview questions. Interview guides used in other empirical studies (Alshammari, 2013; Chan, 2008; Chan, 2015; Chu, 2009; Isakovic and Whitman, 2013; Liao, 2010; Palmer, 2013) also played a major role in selecting the interview questions. The interview questions covered the four distinct areas of general adjustment, working adjustment, interaction adjustment, and the intention to continue living and working as an academic staff in the UAE. Questions were also developed according to the quantitative results of the study and the research questions.

The questions revolved around the following topics:

- i. Personal background of the respondent;
- ii. Motivation and reasons for living and working as an expatriate academic in the UAE;
- iii. General adjustment experience of the respondent;
- iv. Work adjustment experience of the respondent;
- v. Interaction adjustment experience of the respondent;
- vi. The respondent’s intention to stay in the UAE;

- vii. The respondent's advice to other expatriate academics who plan to live and work in the UAE;
- viii. The respondent's perspective on the knowledge, skills, and abilities required in order to successfully adjust;
- ix. The respondent's perspective on the role organisations can play to facilitate adjusting to living and working in the UAE

Using the above themes enabled the researcher to elicit spontaneous responses from the interviewees without prior reflection (Opdenakker, 2006). Fox (2009) opines that in case an interviewee finds it challenging to answer a question or responds inadequately, the interviewer may employ cues or prompts to motivate the interviewee to think deeper of the question. In addition, the interviews were audio-taped with the expressed consent of the interviewee.

#### **4.4.2.1 Pilot study**

A pilot study can be used as a feasibility study which is a small scale version or a trial run done in preparation for the actual study (Nunes, Martins, Zhou, Alajamy and Al-Mamari, 2010; Polit et al., 2001, p. 467). A pilot study can also be used for pre-testing a particular research instrument (Baker 1994, p. 182-3). According to Baker (1994), a sample size between 10 to 20% of the actual study is a reasonable number of participants to be considered for enrolling in a pilot study. In this study, a pilot study was carried out on 10 expatriate academics. The researcher was able to assess whether the research protocol was realistic and workable, check the wording of the survey, develop and test the adequacy of the research instrument, assess the feasibility of the full-scale interview, and identify any logistic problems which might occur during the actual interviews. The pilot study also served as

training for the researcher in as many elements of the research process as possible (Nunes, Martins, Zhou, Alajamy and Al-Mamari, 2010). Overall, the pilot study helped ensure the trustworthiness and reliability of the results in the actual interviews. A few modifications were made in the grammatical structure of the questions and the sequence in which the questions were asked. The final interview questions used during the qualitative phase of the study are contained in Appendix 3.

In conclusion, Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006) and Mason (2010) state that the sample size for projects like a PhD study is around 31 and does not need to be greater than 60. Hence, the researcher of this thesis based his selection of participants for the qualitative aspect of study on the suggestion of Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006). The researcher's stance was further solidified by Lee, Woo and Mackenzie (2002) who suggested that fewer participants are required in studies using more than one method. Lastly, due to the labour intensiveness of qualitative research, studying a large sample size is time consuming and often unfeasible (Mason, 2010).

#### **4.4.2.2 Participants of Semi-structured Interviews**

A convenience sample was used in the qualitative phase of the study. Convenience sampling is a type of non-random or nonprobability sampling where members of a particular target population are chosen based on their readiness to partake in a study (Dörnyei, 2007). At the end of the survey, the respondents were asked whether they were willing to participate in an interview and if so provide their contact details. According to Flick (2004), the size of organisation, limits of access, and the use of known contacts may determine the sample size. In this study, the selection of the participants to be interviewed depended on the initial size in the quantitative phase, the number of participants who volunteered to be interviewed, and

those who were actually available to be interviewed at the time. Therefore, in the second phase of this study, the researcher chose a size that reflected the different views of participants in the setting (Fox, 2009).

A total of 117 out of 324 participants (36.11%) agreed to participate in a follow-up interview. Although all those who volunteered to be interviewed were contacted, only 57 participants (48.71%) were readily and actually available for the follow-up interview. These 57 participants were expatriate academics of different nationalities. Pseudonyms were given to all participants in order to protect their identities.

#### **4.4.2.3 Practical Arrangements for the Interview**

Each respondent was interviewed individually. The interview period was from 5th February to 15th August 2016. All interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of the respondents. The recording time for each interview ranged between 45 minutes to 1 hour 20 minutes. All the interviews were conducted in a physical setting convenient for the participants. This was important to ensure that a relaxed and friendly environment was created in order to motivate and to make the participants feel comfortable in sharing their own cross-cultural experiences.

#### **4.4.2.4 Limitations of Semi-structured Interviews**

Even though the basic advantage of conducting interviews is that it offers sufficiently detailed information that cannot be obtained using the other methods of data collection, there are a few limitations associated with the use of the semi-structured interviews (Opdenakker, 2006). In the first place the skill of the interviewer determines the content of the interviews which include being able to think of questions in the course of the interview and the

respondent’s level of articulation. Additionally, the interviewer could unconsciously use signs or cues to direct the respondent toward the answers the interviewer is expecting. Furthermore, the extent of the quality of the information gathered may be cumbersome to analyse while generalising the findings may be challenging in view of the personal nature of the interview. An essential concern had to do with the how reliable and valid the interviews are. The reliability of interviews is not guaranteed following the difficulty of exactly repeating a focused interview. The questions are likely to be asked differently whereas they are not standardised. As a result of the interviewer not having a way of detecting that a respondent is not telling the truth, the validity is also of some concern. The respondents may not deliberately decide to tell untruths, however, they may not be able to recall information perfectly. Also, an interview may come as a “second chance” of doing an activity when time has been given for the reflection, and the interviewee often makes an effort of rationalising his or her actions. Thus, their explanation with regards to their behaviour may differ from their real feeling at the time.

#### 4.5 Data Analysis

Several data analysis techniques were used in this study summarised in the table below.

<b>Research questions</b>	<b>Sources to answer questions</b>
1. What factors contribute to the expatriate academics’ cross-cultural adjustment across three dimensions (the general environment, social interaction, and work environment) in the United Arab Emirates?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature Review</li> <li>• Mean</li> <li>• Standard Deviation</li> <li>• One-way between groups ANOVA</li> <li>• Independent Samples T-Test</li> <li>• Analysis of Interview Data</li> </ul>
2. What is the influence of the expatriate academics’ anticipatory adjustment, including previous cross-cultural experience, cross cultural training and their intention to stay in the UAE?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature Review</li> <li>• Pearson Product Moment Correlation</li> <li>• Multiple Regression Analysis</li> <li>• Analysis of Interview Data</li> </ul>
3. What is the influence of the expatriate academics’ cross-cultural adjustment on their intention to stay in the UAE?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature Review</li> <li>• Pearson Product Moment Correlation</li> <li>• Multiple Regression Analysis.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-way Between Groups ANOVA</li> <li>• Analysis of Interview Data</li> </ul>
4. What are the participants' opinions on the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for expatriate academics to successfully adjust to working and living in the UAE?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature Review</li> <li>• SurveyMonkey's Text Analysis</li> <li>• Analysis of Interview Data</li> </ul>
5. What are the recommendations given by current expatriate academics in order to improve the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature Review</li> <li>• Analysis of Interview Data</li> </ul>

#### 4.5.1 Quantitative Phase

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data obtained in the survey. The Statistical Product for Service Solutions (SPSS) version 20 for Windows was used. This software can be used to collect, tabularize, analyse and present the data in an organized manner and provide a better visualisation of analysis. An initial data exploration was carried out in order to determine if there any data were missing. Initial data exploration involves an examination of the collected data in order to determine the response rate, missing data, response bias, absence of outliers, and the required tests of statistical assumptions and descriptive statistics (Swift, 2007; Techtarget.com, 2016). Survey Monkey's online analysing tools were used to summarize the main characteristics of a dataset. The researcher was able to familiarize himself with the data with which he was working with (Techtarget.com, 2016). The initial data exploration helped the research increase the statistical conclusion validity for the tests in the thesis (Swift, 2007). A number of SPSS tests were carried out that included mean, standard deviation, pearson product moment correlation, multiple regression analysis, independent samples t-test, and one-way between groups ANOVA.

The frequency distribution was used in computing the percentage allocation of each item. Frequency distribution tables were constructed to portray the findings in tabular forms. Specifically, frequency and percentages were used in relation to demographics such as

gender, age, marital status, location of spouse, dependents (children), location of dependents (children), prior employment (country or countries worked in), current place of work (government or private), resident status, work status, and intention to stay in the UAE. Weighted means were also used in order to get the level of the answers on each item by the participants. Mean and standard deviations were also calculated where necessary.

A number of SPSS tests were carried out. First, in order to ascertain the factor structure of cross-cultural adjustment in the context of the UAE, a principal component factor analysis was conducted. In order to extract the dimensions, the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was employed by way of Varimax orthogonal rotation during the EFA procedure (Pallant, 2001). Pearson correlation test was used to determine the inter-correlation among the variables. A test for a correlation matrix for the variables was done in order to determine the correlation coefficients among the variables for factor analysis. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), the correlation coefficients among the variables to be factor analyzed should be greater than 0.3. The factorability of the data was further checked using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and the Bartlett's test of sphericity. The three facets of adjustment (general, work, and interaction) were rotated using Varimax orthogonal rotation where the suppression of loadings was set at 0.4 to help make the interpretation of factors easier. Mean, standard deviation, and ANOVA were used to test the factors that contributed to the expatriate academics' cross-cultural adjustment in the UAE. Independent t-test results were used to determine the influence of specific variables. Additionally, the Pearson product moment correlation and multiple regression were employed to examine the extent to which the subjects' intention to stay in the UAE was influenced by their anticipatory adjustment which included previous cross-cultural experience and cross-cultural training. Statistical tests provide a basis for making quantitative decisions. In the following section the

researcher enumerates and discusses the relevance of the various statistical test performed in this study.

### ***Trustworthiness, Validity and Reliability***

According to Uttl (2005), validity is defined as the extent to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. Although the research instrument had been tested, the researcher conducted a pilot study in order to support this research, maximise clarity and ensure that the survey was easily understood and free from any possible misinterpretations. In this part of the study (the quantitative phase), content validity measured the amount of coverage provided by the survey (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). In order to guarantee the content validity of the model, the survey questions were mostly retrieved from previous empirical studies in cross cultural adjustment (e.g. Alshammari, 2013; Black et al., 1991; Chan, 2008; Chu, 2009; Liao, 2010; Palmer, 2013; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998), with some additions and rephrasing from the researcher. The pilot study was conducted prior to the actual data collection. The extent to which the survey instrument measured the research variables is known as construct validity (Khadra and Rawabdeh, 2006; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). The theoretical concepts measured in this thesis have to be assessed adequately and accurately (Khadra and Rawabdeh, 2006). Factor analysis was used to test the construct validity of survey instrument. According to Chan (2008), using a correlation matrix in the factor analysis allows to determine whether the variables have high scores or are insignificant, which could point to problems in the multicollinearity between variables and the items (Chan, 2008).

Purposive and self-selecting sampling techniques are generally prone to biases and problems in terms of validity (Iden, 2014). It is possible that certain groups of respondents (e.g. a specific nationality or gender) is underrepresented or overrepresented when purposive

sampling is used, particularly if the population variation is large (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009) and generalisation impossible to achieve (Iden, 2014). It is also possible for the dataset to contain some false data as it is difficult to ascertain the motive of each participant who chooses to take the survey. Thus, it can only be assumed that all the participants have been honest and sincere in their responses. Despite these limitations, it should be noted that the prime purpose of this thesis was not to provide a generalisation of results.

In this study, some respondents either did not finish the survey or typed irrelevant information in some items. As the survey was administered online, it was not possible to avert inaccurate answers. In terms of the structure, the researcher ensured that the survey instrument was highly structured, which limited the possibility of lacking reliability (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009).

#### **4.5.2 Qualitative Phase**

As the researcher proceeded with the analysis, it was essential to continuously keep certain guiding questions in mind in order to assist the researcher in reflecting back on the purpose of the study and the research questions (National Science Foundations, 1997). The following questions (not in chronological order) guided the researcher in analysing the qualitative data:

- What patterns or common themes arise around particular items in the data and how do these common themes (or lack thereof) answer the research question(s)?
- Do the patterns or common themes substantiate the findings of other research findings related to the study?
- Do any of the emerging patterns or common themes suggest the collection of extra data, and does the researcher need to revise any of the research questions?

- What are the interesting themes that arise from the data, and how can they shed light on the broader issues within the study?
- Are there any variances from the patterns or common themes discovered? If, yes, then what are the factors that might explain these deviations?

*(National Science Foundations, 1997)*

As the researcher reflected on the above questions, it was possible to “dig deeper” into the qualitative data and use them as a means to authenticate and triangulate the data (Schein, 2004; Yin, 2003). The researcher used the content analysis approach to analyse the qualitative data. This approach is not new to qualitative studies related to the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates. Several similar studies (e.g. Chan, 2015; Chu, 2009; Li, 1999; Liao, 2010; Merilainen, 2008; Tahir and Ismail, 2007) have used the content analysis approach to analyse their qualitative data. The researcher used content analysis by organising the data into groups which were typically derived from predetermined theoretical constructs, and the areas of interest created in advance of the analysis (pre-ordinate categorisation) such as the research questions and objectives (Chan, 2015; Cohen et al., 2007, p.475). According to this method, “many words of texts are classified into much fewer categories” (Weber, 1990, p.15). Content analysis can also be used in testing existing theories against the data. According to Flick (1998, p.192), the aim is to reduce the material in different ways. Grounded theory, on the other hand, primarily focuses on the creation of a theory from the data, whereby the data are methodically collected and analysed (Chan, 2015; Strauss and Corbin, 1994, p.273). The researcher used the general inductive approach within content analysis to analyse the data. According to Thomas (2003), this approach constitutes a form of content analysis that employs an inductive approach, the combination of both reflection and interaction. Thomas (2003) further adds that in this approach the researcher analyses the patterns or common themes and explores them for further understanding and contradictions

that arise from the data and thus develops meaningful information. It is for the above reasons that content analysis was selected as the basis for the analysis of interview data. This method of qualitative data analysis has been applied in various studies on cross-cultural adjustment (Chan, 2015; Li, 1999; Liao, 2010; Merilainen, 2008; Tahir and Ismail, 2007).

As suggested by Cohen et al. (2007) and Miles and Huberman (1994), the following four step procedure was followed in order to analyse the interview data: transcription of the recordings, coding of all the transcripts in the margin, tabulation of all codes, key categories, and subcategories and re-reading all the codes, break down of the subcategories into more specific variables and re-organise the quotes. This procedure has been applied in similar studies on cross-cultural adjustment (Chan, 2015; Liao, 2010).

#### *1. Transcription of audio recordings*

For this study, each interview audio recording was transcribed according to the responses given by the respondents (Chan, 2015, p. 117; Fox, 2009). All transcriptions were double-checked for accuracy by the study supervisor, and an English language expert academic researcher who is also a native English speaker.

#### *2. Coding of all the transcripts in the margin (the coding was created following the determinants of cross cultural adjustment)*

Content analysis is carried out once the audio recordings are transcribed (Cohen et al., 2007). At this stage of the analysis, the researcher coded all the transcripts in the margin. In qualitative inquiry, a code is most often a word or short phrase that emblematically allocates a summative, important, significance-capturing or suggestive attribute for a part of interview transcripts (Saldana, 2009, p.3). Saldana (2009) further adds that in order for one to codify, it

is imperative to place things in a systematic order or categorise (Saldana, 2009, p.8).The coding was created based on the framework of this study (see section 2.3.2). For example:

- *It was a big eye opener. When I first came there was a driver who brought me around and did everything with me, help me get my mobile phone, showed where to even buy my furniture. I was in a hotel, he would bring me and I would call him if I wanted to go shopping in the evenings. I was shocked of how good he was. I was surprised it wasn't as strict I was expecting it to be. I was expecting to be treated differently. However, I came back to the country last March, the hotel that I was put in wasn't very nice, it wasn't suitable for a family. I had an 18 month old at the time and it really wasn't a nice hotel and there was a lot of anti-social behaviour going on in the hotel and I moved out. I just think that I was left to my own devices and I am not the only one because I know the people who just started working in the institution at the same time and there weren't happy at all. Other academics who joined the organisation the same time that I did weren't happy at all. (INCA-GENA)*

In order to follow the cross-cultural adjustment model, this quote echoes the general adjustment that is associated with in-country adjustment. Hence was coded as “INCA-GENA”.

*B. I've got a lot of travel experience. I have been to Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand, lots of Asian countries, so I had idea of what it would be like, so I wasn't really shocked at all. (ANTICI-PREVE)*

In order to follow the cross-cultural adjustment model, this quote echoes previous cross-cultural experience associated with anticipatory adjustment. Hence was coded as “ANTI-PE”.

#### Figure 4- 1 Interview data analysis code and category

I = Interviewer

AC = "AC" is pseudonym for a specific respondent

**I: Please, tell me about yourself. Where are you from? How long have you been living and working as an academic staff in the UAE?**

AC: So I am from Ireland. I have been living and working in the UAE. I have been in the middle east for 7 and half years but two of those years were spent in Bahrain so after that I worked in the HCT in Al Ain, then I left and came back last year so I have been teaching the whole time since 7 and half years teaching - so in this is my third college basically in the middle east that I have worked in.

**I: What encouraged you to work as an academic staff in the UAE?**

AC: I think for me it was just the experience. I wanted to do something different I've been teaching and working in academics in Ireland and i just wanted to try something different. I wanted to travel but I didn't want to stop working so the UAE seems like a good solution. We can for a year and lasted 7 and a half and we are still here.

**I: What was your previous occupation before you came to the UAE.**

AC: I've been teaching and working as an academic staff in Ireland, however before coming to the UAE I worked in Bahrain for two years as an academic staff.

**I: How did you feel when you first arrived in the UAE?**

- Can you describe your first impression?

AC: It was a big eye opener. I had previously been here to visit. I had been on holidays to visit my brother so I understood a little bit but that was Dubai and I ended up in Al Ain. In Al Ain I was nervous because i didnt know what I was supposed to do and dress and you read horror stories on the internet so I was a little bit anxious. I didn't know what was acceptable and what wasn't when I first landed in here in the airport so it was a huge eye opener for me. You kind of forget now after you get so used to the country but it was it definitely was...the first couple of weeks I always spent the whole time asking myself "is this okay? ...is that okay?" and making sure that I was being respectful to the culture.

Source: Author

#### 3. Tabulation of the codes, key categories, and subcategories

According to Grbich (2007), codifying allows for the data to be "segregated, grouped, regrouped and relinked in order to consolidate meaning and explanation" (p.21) followed by the third stage of the qualitative analysis. During this stage all interview data were tabulated with codes, key categories, and subcategories (Saldana, 2009, p.8). Researchers use classification reasoning plus tacit and intuitive senses to determine which data "look alike" and "feel alike" when grouping them together (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p.347). At this stage, short summaries of each quote are written, and categorised quotes are placed into the table. For example (Table 4.6):



**Table 4.6 Interview data analysis code and category-1**

Table 4.6 Interview data analysis code and category-1			
Key Category	Subcategory	Code	Quote Summary
Anticipatory adjustment	Previous experience	ANTI-PE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have been in the Middle East for 7 and half years but two of those years were spent in Bahrain so after that I worked in the HCT in Al Ain, then I left and came back last year.</li> <li>• This is my third college basically in the Middle East that I have worked in.</li> <li>• I've been teaching and working in academics in Ireland.</li> <li>• I had previously been here to visit. I had been on holidays to visit my brother so I understood a little bit but that was Dubai</li> </ul>
In-country adjustment	General adjustment	INCA-GENA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was a big eye opener. When I first came there was a driver who brought me around and did everything with me, help me get my mobile phone, showed where to even buy my furniture. I was in a hotel, he would bring me and I would call him if I wanted to go shopping in the evenings. I was shocked of how good he was. I was given a nice apartment.</li> <li>• I was surprised it wasn't as strict. I was expecting it to be. I was expecting to be treated differently.</li> <li>• However, I came back to the country last march, the hotel that I was put in wasn't very nice, it wasn't suitable for a family. I had an 18 month old at the time and it really wasn't a nice hotel and there was a lot of anti-social behaviour going on in the hotel and I moved out.</li> <li>• I was not assisted or helped in finding any housing; I had to do my own search for accommodation, and I what I found was either too expensive or not decent enough. i just think that I was left to my own devices and I am not the only one because I know the people who just started working in the institution at the same time and there weren't happy at all. Other academics who joined the organisation the same time that I did weren't happy at all.</li> </ul>
	Working adjustment	INCA-WKA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think maybe students knew. I was new. I was quite young at the time and they tried a little bit to test the water.</li> <li>• I was quite nervous.</li> <li>• The staff were quite good and it was a smaller team.</li> <li>• The level of the students was a lot lower than what I expected.</li> <li>• I kind of felt more like an English teacher at first than a content teacher.</li> </ul>
	Interaction adjustment	INCA-INTA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I didn't know what was acceptable and what wasn't.</li> <li>• It just took me time to understand what was acceptable and what wasn't.</li> <li>• First couple of weeks I always spent the whole time asking myself "is this okay? ...is that okay?" and making sure that I was being respectful to the culture.</li> <li>• I do have Emirati friends. We kind of meet in the evenings or whatever or at social events.</li> <li>• It is easier to know Emirati people in Al Ain than in Abu Dhabi. In Abu Dhabi, I haven't really .. and the guy we know here at the moment was actually from Al Ain.</li> </ul>

4. Rereading of all the codes, breking down of the subcategories into more specific variables, reorganising the quotes and refining the codes

At the final stage of the qualitative analysis, the researcher re-read all the codes, broke them down into subcategories, into more specific variables and reorganised the quotes. During the qualitative inquiry, the researcher needs to pay meticulous attention to language and reflect on the emerging patterns, themes and meanings of the participants’ experience. Having a more attuned perspective enables proper recoding which in turn enables a better review of the data (Chan 2015). Categories become more refined as researchers code and recode (Saldana, 2009, p.10). For example (Table 4.7):

**Table 4.7 Interview data analysis code and category-2**

Table 4.7 Interview data analysis code and category-2				
Key Category	Subcategory		Code	Quote Summary
<b>IN-COUNTRY ADJUSTMENT</b>	<b>GENERAL ADJUSTMENT</b>	<b>Organisational support</b>	<b>INCA-GENA-OS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was a big eye opener. When I first came there was a driver who brought me around and did everything with me, help me get my mobile phone, showed where to even buy my furniture. I was in a hotel, he would bring me and I would call him if I wanted to go shopping in the evenings. I was shocked of how good he was.</li> <li>• However, I came back to the country last march, the hotel that I was put in wasn’t very nice, it wasn’t suitable for a family. I had an 18 month old at the time and it really wasn’t a nice hotel and there was a lot of anti-social behaviour going on in the hotel and I moved out.</li> <li>• When I came back in March, I was not assisted or helped in finding any housing; I had to do my own search for accommodation, and I what I found was either too expensive or not decent enough.</li> <li>• I just think that I was left to my own devices and I am not the only one because I know the people who just started working in the institution at the same time and there weren’t happy at all.</li> </ul>

		<b>Hotel and Housing conditions</b>	<b>INCA-GENA-HHC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• However, I came back to the country last March, the hotel that I was put in wasn't very nice, it wasn't suitable for a family. I had an 18 month old at the time and it really wasn't a nice hotel and there was a lot of anti-social behaviour going on in the hotel and I moved out.</li> <li>• I was not assisted or helped in finding any housing. I had to do my own search for accommodation, and I what I found was either too expensive or not decent enough.</li> <li>• Other academics who joined the organisation the same time that I did weren't happy at all.</li> </ul>
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In order to facilitate the validation of the data obtained from the interview and check how reliable the findings are, all the categorisations were re-checked by an English language expert academic researcher who is also a native speaker who had been working as an expatriate English teacher in Kuwait for eight years. Before the final categorisations were deawn up, all the disagreements were discussed.

### **Maintaining Rigour**

Rigour in analysis was realized through continuous discussion of the coding between the researcher, a study supervisor, and a fellow researcher. By combining data from the quantitative phase with the interview data, the researcher was able to provide a more comprehensive picture of the research findings (Gaither, 2009).

### **Validity and Reliability**

The interpretations of validity and reliability differ in qualitative research when compared with those from positivist research since it focusses on attaining trustworthiness of the research data and findings (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Trustworthiness in qualitative research comprises of confirmability, dependability, and credibility. In interpretive models, credibility is the equivalent to the internal validity of positivistic methods (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

External validity is substituted by applicability as it denotes the degree to which the data and the design of a study are applicable across groups (Chu, 2009). Positivist definitions of reliability as replicability and consistency are therefore replaced by dependability. Lincoln and Guba (1985) similarly suggested that the conventional notion of objectivity be referred to as confirmability within a non-positivist context.

With regards to the validity of the qualitative phase of this study, construct validity was established by guaranteeing that the main constructs of cross-cultural adjustment were ingrained in the literature (Cohen et al., 2007, p.138). This “ingrainment” was such that the main issues in the literature supported commonly acknowledged constructs of what those main issues were and what they consisted of. The use of probes enabled the key issues to be covered in depth and breadth, thereby addressing the issue of content validity, and making sure that all the interview questions were delved into and commented on by the respondents (*ibid.*, p.137). Cultural validity, according to Cohen et al. (2007), “is a predominant concern in cross-cultural, intercultural and comparative kinds of research, where the aim is to shape research so that it is suitable to the culture of the researched ... cultural validity involves an appreciation of the cultural values of those being researched’ (p.139). This thesis purposely and exclusively concentrated on the participants’ cultural values, and how they reacted to a new cultural environment, therefore cultural validity was at the centre of this thesis.

In qualitative research, reliability refers to the dependability of the data, honesty and openness, credibility, richness, genuineness, accuracy, conformity to real life, inclusiveness, detail, depth of response, and relevance to the respondents (Cohen et al., 2007, pg.149). In this thesis, the interviews explicitly concentrated on the actual experiences of the respondents, allowing them to freely talk about their real-life experiences. The researcher used respondent validation to ensure that the researcher’s understanding and interpretation of

the participants' response were accurate. Additionally, the issues of authenticity and depth of response were addressed by the researcher when the respondents were able to discuss sensitive and deeply felt issues such as the lack of expatriate academic cross-cultural orientation programs, pedagogical culture shock, and unfamiliar management styles in institutions of higher education. The researcher also used probes in order to seek "thicker descriptions", therefore giving more reliability to the data. Reliability of the analysis was also addressed by keeping thorough records and detailing the analysis process.

In this research, the interviews were conducted in an environment that was chosen by the participants. By conducting the interviews in a convenient environment, the researcher was able to ensure that issues of anonymity and non-traceability were addressed and guaranteed. The intention to create a conducive interview environment for the participants was to minimise any feelings of threat or risk (for example, other expatriate academic or management officials ease dropping and listening to what the respondent is saying), in order for the respondents to feel at ease, to be honest and in depth when speaking. In addition, the researcher minimized interference from personal biases and values during the interviews so as to ensure that the respondents expressed their actual feelings and opinions.

The researcher obtained the permission of each respondent before the interview was audio-recorded. The audio-recordings were transcribed after the interview, and the transcriptions were the exact words of the respondents during the interviews. After transcribing, the researcher emailed each transcribed interview to the respective participants for verification purposes (respondent validation) (Cohen et al., 2007, p.149). In order to enhance the validation of the data analysis, the interview scripts were first verified by the respondents. By involving the respondents, the researcher was able to construct a more accurate depiction of their experiences. By means of "member checking", the researcher was able to increase the

trustworthiness of the data. The respondents' feedback and suggestions allowed the researcher to make relevant corrections to the transcribed scripts. In order to reclaim responsibility for reliability and validity, the qualitative researcher should implement verification strategies (Morse et al., 2002).

The researcher carried out the procedures carefully in order to establish the trustworthiness of the data and results. Initially, the data were tested to affirm their credibility by checking to see if it accurately reflected the many aspects of the research topic (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) which is analogous to content validity (as previously discussed). By conducting member checks for the emerging themes and data and allowing extensive time and discussion with the respondents and the data, the researcher was able to establish credibility for his study (Creswell, 1998). In order to avoid the seeping in of participants' biases, the researcher sought the opinions of the respondents after the phases of data collection and analysis. The researcher used "member checks" in this study with the aim of validating the data and the theoretical scheme.

According to Marshall and Rossman (1995), transferability can be defined as a theoretic boundary of a study and the ability to apply the findings of the research in another setting. In this thesis, the researcher tried to offer very detailed explanations regarding the nature of the research, its purpose, methodology, the participants in the study, the research results and findings, and the suggested emerging theory. Based on the information provided in this study, it would be possible for future researchers to conduct another study of similar objectives in other settings; hence transferability was achieved in this study (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

With the context of qualitative research, dependability can be attained by making sure that the data correctly epitomizes and describes the differing states of the phenomena under study (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Therefore in this thesis, the researcher obtained the permission from the respondents before the interviews were recorded and had each interview transcribed immediately after each interview. The transcribed scripts were emailed to the respondents for checking and correction. Furthermore, for each interview (before data analysis) the researcher also made notes on the atmosphere, the respondent's attitude, and the researcher's reflection during the interview session to make sure that there was an accurate description and interpretation of the data.

#### **4.6 Role of the researcher**

Research is a dynamic process in which the researcher plays an active role. It is not unusual in research to provide the reader with details regarding the role of the researcher. According to Carter and Hurtado (2007), "the role of the researcher is important, but should not be privileged or overemphasized at the expense of the important research questions that merit careful and rigorous examination" (p. 33). The role of the researcher can impact the way he or she interprets the emerging findings (Creswell, 2003). He adds that researchers need to systematically reflect on who they are in the inquiry and be sensitive to their "personal biography". This introspection and acknowledgement of biases, values or interests (or reflexivity) typifies research today. The personal self becomes inseparable from the researcher self. (p. 182). The role of the researcher, then, necessitates the identification of personal values, assumptions and biases at the outset of the study. Meyrick (2006) tries to establish what constitutes quality research and finds that objectivity can be assisted by defining the researcher's proximity through reflexivity. She believes that researchers may focus on aspects of a topic that resonate with their own experience, thereby shaping their

findings, which should be acknowledged (p. 804). Through this study the researcher wished to accommodate both insider and outsider perspectives while exploring a relatively unexplored area. Therefore there was a double hermeneutic or dual interpretation process at play. As stated by Smith and Osborn (2003), “the participants are trying to make sense of their world; the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world” (p. 51). These processes are necessary in order to make sense of that “other” personal world through the process of shifting positionality.

In order to establish rigour, as required by Meyrick (2006), a brief account of the researcher’s relationship to the data is given here. He can be described as a middle-aged, Ghanaian, African male living and working in the UAE. As established in the opening chapter, having been brought up and educated in a multinational environment, and living and working in the UAE for eleven years in a teaching capacity and in HE management enables the researcher to speak about the research topic with “some authority” (Crossley and Watson, 2003, p. 26) the researcher himself possesses considerable insider knowledge. He has gained work experience as an educator in the UAE and he has worked with other educators and administrators from different countries and cultures. He also taught students from different countries and cultures and is thus able to make observations on the issues related to the research topic and from a number of different perspectives. Hence, for this study, not only could the researcher draw from the interpretations of the data from his subjects’ perspectives (Kvale, 1996), but also from his personal experience in cross-cultural adjustment as an expatriate academic staff in the UAE, in addition to the observations shared by his friends and colleagues. The researcher believes that his own experience as an expatriate academic has helped to adequately assess and evaluate the participants’ responses (Creswell, 2003; Liao, 2010).



#### **4.6.1 Pre-established Rapport With the Participants**

In this thesis, the researcher's insider positionality gave him pre-established rapport (in most cases) with the participants of his study and allowed him to build a trusting relationship with them, which increased the quality of the data (Marshall and Rossman, 2016). Many participants considered the researcher as an "insider", for reasons that relate to the participants' profession, status, and expatriate experience. The participants perceived the researcher to share their professional identity, understand their viewpoint, identify with the challenges they are facing, and to articulate their views, emotions and experiences truthfully. These perceptions led the participants to trust the researcher and provide more in-depth information.

#### **4.6.2 Access to information**

Issues of positionality remained active throughout the data collection process. Possessing the insider's knowledge, the researcher was aware of his respondents' endeavour to present him with an ideal "reality" which did not match the one generated on the basis of his own personal experience. In search of the "truth", the researcher had to take the initiative by repeatedly probing for more honest, in-depth information related to the research questions. The researcher's insider status provided a more profound and critical understanding of the socio-cultural, linguistic, cognitive, emotional and psychological precepts of the research participants as well as the historical and practical day to day events in the study area (Chavez, 2008).

However, the researcher's advantage of being an insider also has its downside. According to Marshall and Rossman (2016), being an insider may lead the participants to withhold or not share experiences preferring to keep mutual boundaries. Here, the researcher may take his

insider positionality for granted and attempt to engage expatriate academics in issues related to cross-cultural adjustment shaped by his own personal experience. The researcher's role as an insider "expert" in cross-cultural adjustment theory, an outsider (in terms of not being their employee), and the fact that the authorities at the respective HEIs were aware of his research initiative may have had an effect on power relationships (Mercer, 2007). These power relationships may have led some HEIs to deny the researcher access to their site. However, since the investigator worked in the study area as an expatriate academic, a few HEIs were forthcoming and granted their permission to collect the data. Two of the HEIs involved in this study decided to cooperate with the researcher in the research process, and one HEI was interested in the research findings to improve their own recruitment and adjustment process.

During the qualitative phase of the study, the researcher expected that all the respondents would be non-reticent and fully engaged during the interviews but this was not always the case. Many respondents were quite cautious when expressing their experiences and views related to their respective HEIs. This reaction was contrary to the researcher's expectation. The researcher expected that being an insider would serve as an advantage in terms of connecting with the respondents and making them feel comfortable in expressing their experiences and opinions. Perhaps one potential answer to the participants' reluctance was their concern of job security. During the data collection phase, the UAE was experiencing an economic downturn due to the low global price of oil. This economic downturn led to budget cuts in the public and private sector resulting in lay-offs of the universities' non-academic and academic staff. This in turn created an atmosphere of fear and reservedness on part of the participants as the researcher was an insider who could potentially leak their opinions to their superiors. This perception might have eliminated any trust that would have been based on the

shared sameness (being an insider). Being mindful of the sentiment of give and take that was developing during the interviews, and wishing to keep on building trust on part of the participants, a few respondents demanded a verbal reassurance that their responses would be kept strictly confidential.

Characteristics related to the background of the researcher such as place of work, ethnicity, nationality, religion, and gender were in most cases different from the interviewees, which made the researcher an outsider (Sands, Bourjolly, and Roer-Strier, 2007). During the interview process, the researcher became aware that his outsider status was especially perceived by the female interviewees. Especially when explaining aspects related to gender and cross-cultural adjustment that they had experienced or were experiencing, the women often started their stories with sentences like, *“You may not see this...”* or *“You may not understand but women...”*. The researcher realised that as a man he was excluded from that particular element of their experiences. (Merriam, Ntseane, Lee, Kee, Johnson-Bailey, and Muhamad, 2000). Also, being an African expatriate academic, the researcher became more aware of his outsider positionality in terms of race. For example, when commenting about her experiences with Nigerian students, Nancy from South Africa paused and asked the researcher which country he was from. When being told that he was from Ghana, she continued with relating her experiences with Nigerian students. The impression was that she wanted to be sure that I was not from Nigeria in order not to offend him. This question posed by highlights issues to address in considering my positionality. The Caucasian female expatriate academics, on the other hand, made the researcher aware of his own presumptions and stereotypes. Contrary to his expectation, most of the European female expatriate academics loved the climate in the UAE and named it as one of the reasons for coming to the country in the first place. As an expatriate academic studying the experiences of expatriate

academics, the researcher perceived himself as an outsider when interviewing female expatriate academics.

During the course of this research, the researcher became more aware of his role. As an expatriate academic, each aspect of this research was being mediated by who the researcher was, his identity serving as the lens through which he viewed the world. The way in which the researcher interacted with the participants was based in his own lived experience as an expatriate academic his perception of the issues related to the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics. As the researcher analyzed the data and tried to identify the emergent themes, he did so with the eyes and ears of an expatriate academic. The researcher was able to draw upon his professional experience as an expatriate academic, his personal experiences living in different cultural environments and among people of different national and cultural backgrounds. Lastly, familiarity also helped the researcher make meaningful interpretations and analysis due to his informal interactions such as those that occurred in daily conversations and informal observations of other expatriate academics. Being an expatriate academic himself, this could have affected his critical reflection of the experiences of expatriate academics in the study area. However, due to his knowledge of the effects of positionality, the researcher was cautious to avoid his influence in the research process and remained conscious of his role and the role of the respondents in the study. Furthermore, the use of previous related literature and detailed interview guides helped ensure that the in-depth data were collected during the data collection, which reduced researcher's involvement in the construction of meanings in the study.

#### **4.7 Ethical Considerations**

The main ethical concern in this study was to protect the privacy and secrecy of the participants (Cohen et al., 2007). The participants were also made aware of the purpose and structure the research and given the right to withdraw or not answer particular questions during the survey and the interview. The issue of “informed consent” was addressed (Cohen et al., 2007). The research was approved by the British University in Dubai’s Ethics Committee. The researcher also obtained the approval from the respective authorities of the universities involved in the study. Prior to participating in the survey and interviews, the respondents signed an informed consent form that had been approved by British University in Dubai’s Ethics Committee. All the interviews were on a one-to-one basis and took place at a venue chosen by the participants. A few expatriate academics appeared to be quite reluctant to share all of their experiences unwilling to offend their institution’s management or the government.

## **Quantitative Results**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the results and statistical analysis of the study in line with the research questions. This chapter is organised into four sections. It starts off by presenting the response rate and demographic representations of the sample and a justification of their relevance to the study followed by the demographic representations of the sample. The third section presents the data and analyses of research questions whilst the fourth section discusses the results of data analysis.

### **5.2 Initial data exploration**

An initial data exploration was carried out in order to determine if any data were missing. According to Zuur, Ieno and Elphick (2010), it is necessary to clearly separate initial data exploration from hypothesis testing. This involves an examination of the collected data in order to determine the response rate, missing data, response bias, absence of outliers, and the required tests of statistical assumptions and descriptive statistics (Swift, 2007; Techtargot.com, 2016). The initial data exploration helped to increase the statistical conclusion's validity for the tests in the thesis (Swift, 2007). Initial data exploration enabled the researcher to avoid applying inappropriate analysis on the dataset and thus avoid having to reanalyse the data and rewrite the thesis (Zuur, Ieno and Elphick, 2010).

### **5.3 Response Rate**

As previously mentioned in this thesis, three higher education institutions (HEIs) were involved in this study, a public HEI in Abu Dhabi and two private HEIs in Dubai. The actual number of respondents at the time of data collection was 409, 63.6% ( $n = 206$ ) of them being

expatriate academics working in the public HEI and 36.4% (n = 118) in the private HEIs resulting in a total of 324 responses.

Out of the 409 questionnaires administered, 346 were completed representing a response rate of 84.59%. However, 22 (6.35%) invited respondents did not complete their questionnaires whilst other questionnaires contained errors in answering that could not be included in the analysis. This reduced the total number of questionnaires used for analysis to 324 indicating a response rate of 79.21%. This response rate was considered appropriate based on scholars like Babie (1998) who argue that a 50% response rate is appropriate in internet surveys.

#### **5.4 Demographic Characteristics of Participants**

The demographic characteristics of the participants were analysed using descriptive statistics. The distribution of the participants based their demographics on gender, age, marital status, place of work. The results are presented in Table 5.1, Table 5.2, and Table 5.3 below.

The summary in Table 5.1 show that the majority of the participants (n = 196) representing 60.49% were from Western countries (i.e. the United States, Great Britain, Australia, Germany, Ireland, Canada, New Zealand, Denmark, Austria, Poland, Romania, Greece, France, Italy, Spain, Hungary), while 17.28% (n=56) were from Arabic speaking countries (i.e. Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen). The Asian participants (n = 40) were from the Philippines, Thailand, India, Korea, Pakistan, and Turkey and made up 12.34% of the total population, and another 7.72% (n = 25) were from South Africa. The rest of the participants (n = 7) representing 2.16% were from Benin, Congo-Brazzaville, Colombia, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico and Nigeria.

*Table 5.1 Country of Origin and Languages of Participants*

Country	# of participants	%	Native Languages	M	%	F	%
<b>United States of America</b>	68	20.99%	English, Urdu, French, Arabic, Russian	31	20.95%	37	21.02%
<b>Australia</b>	21	6.48%	English, Polish, German	12	8.11%	9	5.11%
<b>Austria</b>	1	0.31%	German	0	0.00%	1	0.57%
<b>Benin</b>	1	0.31%	French	1	0.68%	0	0.00%
<b>United Kingdom</b>	57	17.59%	English, French	22	14.86%	35	19.89%
<b>British/Algerian</b>	1	0.31%	English, Arabic, French	1	0.68%	0	0.00%
<b>Canada</b>	13	4.01%	English, French, Turkish, Akan	5	3.38%	8	4.55%
<b>Congo-Brazzaville</b>	1	0.31%	French	0	0.00%	1	0.57%
<b>Egypt</b>	10	3.09%	Arabic	8	5.41%	2	1.14%
<b>Philippines</b>	10	3.09%	Filipino, English	4	2.70%	6	3.41%
<b>Colombia</b>	1	0.31%	Spanish	1	0.68%	0	0.00%
<b>Denmark</b>	2	0.62%	Danish	2	1.35%	0	0.00%
<b>France</b>	1	0.31%	French	0	0.00%	1	0.57%
<b>Germany</b>	2	0.62%	German	0	0.00%	2	1.14%
<b>Greece</b>	2	0.62%	Greek	2	1.35%	0	0.00%
<b>Hungary</b>	1	0.31%	Hungarian	1	0.68%	0	0.00%
<b>India</b>	23	7.10%	Tamil, Urdu, Marathi, Bengali, Hindi, English, Malayalam, Konkani	6	4.05%	17	9.66%
<b>Iraq</b>	2	0.62%	Arabic	1	0.68%	1	0.57%
<b>Ireland</b>	5	1.54%	Irish, English	2	1.35%	3	1.70%
<b>Italy</b>	1	0.31%	Italian	1	0.68%	0	0.00%



<b>Jamaica</b>	1	0.31%	English	0	0.00%	1	0.57%
<b>Jordan</b>	7	2.16%	Arabic	5	3.38%	2	1.14%
<b>Kenya</b>	1	0.31%	Kikuyu	1	0.68%	0	0.00%
<b>Korea</b>	1	0.31%	Korean	1	0.68%	0	0.00%
<b>Lebanon</b>	7	2.16%	Arabic	4	2.70%	3	1.70%
<b>Mexico</b>	2	0.62%	Spanish, English	1	0.68%	1	0.57%
<b>New Zealand</b>	14	4.32%	English, Kiwi, and 3 Indian, Hindi, Bengali, Telugu	10	6.76%	4	2.27%
<b>Nigeria</b>	1	0.31%	Igbo	1	0.68%	0	0.00%
<b>Palestine</b>	14	4.32%	Arabic	6	4.05%	8	4.55%
<b>Pakistan</b>	1	0.31%	Urdu	0	0.00%	1	0.57%
<b>Poland</b>	2	0.62%	Polish	2	1.35%	0	0.00%
<b>Romania</b>	4	1.23%	Romanian	1	0.68%	3	1.70%
<b>South Africa</b>	25	7.72%	English, Afrikaans	3	2.03%	22	12.50%
<b>Spain</b>	1	0.31%	Spanish	0	0.00%	1	0.57%
<b>Sudan</b>	3	0.93%	Arabic	1	0.68%	2	1.14%
<b>Syria</b>	7	2.16%	Arabic	6	4.05%	1	0.57%
<b>Thailand</b>	1	0.31%	Thai	1	0.68%	0	0.00%
<b>Tunisia</b>	4	1.23%	Arabic	4	2.70%	0	0.00%
<b>Turkey</b>	4	1.23%	Turkish	0	0.00%	4	2.27%
<b>Yemen</b>	1	0.31%	Arabic	1	0.68%	0	0.00%

			<b>M</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Total of Number Participants =</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>Breakdown (Male and Female) =</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>176</b>

The results in Table 5.2 demonstrate that more women (n = 176) representing 54.3%, about 9 % more than males (n = 148, 45.7%) participated in the study. The age distribution indicates

that majority of the participants were middle-aged (35-54) compared to those who were in their mid-twenties to thirties (25-34 years) (n = 5, 1.5%) or older (55-64 years) (n = 53, 16.4%). The proportion of those who were married (n = 264, 81.5%) greatly exceeded those who were either divorced (n = 41, 12.7%), single (n = 14, 4.3%), separated (n = 3, 0.9%) or widowed (n = 2, 0.6%). The majority of the married respondents were accompanied by their spouses (n = 250, 77.2%), about 35% more than those who did not (n = 41, 12.7%) and those who found this item inapplicable (n = 33, 10.2%). A great majority (n = 283, 87.3%) had at least one child compared to those who had none (n = 41, 12.7%).

**Table 5- 2 Age and Marital Status of Participants**

Variables	Frequency	Percent
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	176	54.3
Male	148	45.7
<b>Age</b>		
25 to 34	5	1.5
35 to 44	116	35.8
45 to 54	150	46.3
55 to 64	53	16.4
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single, never married	14	4.3
Married	264	81.5
Widowed	2	.6
Divorced	41	12.7
Separated	3	.9
<b>Spouses living in the UAE</b>		
Yes	250	77.2
No	41	12.7
Not Applicable	33	10.2
<b>Children</b>		
Yes	283	87.3
No	41	12.7

**Source: Survey Data, 2016**

Table 5.3 shows that that the majority of the participants (n = 227, 70.1%) had their child/children living with them in the UAE while 20.4% (n = 66) did not, and 9.6% (n = 31) found this item not applicable. A slim majority of the participants (n = 171, 52.8%) had

worked in countries other than their home country prior to their employment in the UAE while 47.2% (n = 153) did not. More than half of the participants (n = 206, 63.6%) worked in public HEIs while 36.4% (n = 118) were employed in private HEIs. A majority (n = 206, 63.6%) worked in Abu Dhabi while 36.4% (n = 118) worked in Dubai. Concerning the number of years participants planned to stay in the UAE before coming, the proportion of those who planned to stay for two to three years was greater (n = 190, 58.6%) than those who planned to stay for one to two years (n = 69, 21.3%), three to four years (n = 41, 12.7%), and as long as possible (n = 24, 7.4%). In relation to the item “how many more years participant planned to stay in UAE?”, the largest number intended to stay for three to four years (n = 155, 47.8%), those who were planning to stay as long as possible (n = 140, 43.2%), two to three years (n = 14, 4.3%), 1-2 years (n = 12, 3.7%), and less than one year (n = 3, 0.9%). An interesting feature of their views is that the percentage of those who had planned to remain in the UAE prior to their arrival had dropped significantly.

**Table 5. 3 Demographic Characteristics of Participants**

Variables	Frequency	Percent
<b>Is/are your child (children) in the U.A.E?</b>		
Yes	227	70.1
No	66	20.4
Not Applicable	31	9.6
<b>Prior to your employment in the U.A.E., have you worked in any other country or countries besides your home country?</b>		
Yes	171	52.8
No	153	47.2
<b>Is your current place of work government, semi-government or private?</b>		
Government	206	63.6
Private	118	36.4
<b>In which Emirate do you work?</b>		
Abu Dhabi	206	63.6
Dubai	118	36.4
<b>In which Emirate do you live?</b>		
Abu Dhabi	203	62.7
Dubai	107	33.0
Sharjah	14	4.3
<b>How many years did you plan to stay in the UAE before you</b>		

<b>came here?</b>		
1-2 years	69	21.3
2-3 years	190	58.6
3-4 years	41	12.7
As long as possible	24	7.4
<b>How many more years do you intend to stay in the UAE?</b>		
Less than 1 year	3	.9
1-2 years	12	3.7
2-3 years	14	4.3
3-4 years	155	47.8
As long as possible	140	43.2

Source: Survey Data, 2016

### 5.5 Descriptive Analysis (Cross-Cultural Adjustment Results)

The expatriate academics' cross-cultural adjustment survey consisted of several variables. Their socio-cultural adjustment was measured by a scale of 26 items divided into three subscales: general (nine items), interactional (eight items) and work (nine items). In order to determine the mean for each sub-scale, the scores of the items were divided by the number of items in each sub-scale. The maximum mean score obtained from the respondents was 7.0, while the minimum score was 1.0. Scores considered in the high level of adjustment had a mean ranging from 5.02 to 7.0, those in the moderate level a mean ranging from 3.01 to 5.01, and the low level scores ranging from 1.0 to 3.0. The descriptive analysis of the cross-cultural adjustment scale offers important information in support of the expatriate academics' general adjustment, interactional adjustment, and work adjustment. The overall cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics produced a mean score of 4.97, which is considered to be a moderate level of adjustment. This was interpreted to mean that expatriate academics' adjusted at a moderate level as the majority were from mostly Anglo-American countries.

Table 5.4 indicates that the general adjustment sub-scale mean was 5.50, which is a value within the high level range of adjustment. On the other hand, the interactional adjustment and work

adjustment sub-scale means were 4.90 and 4.53 respectively, which fell within the moderate levels of adjustment.

**Table 5.4**  
*Means and Standard Deviations of the Socio-cultural Adjustment Sub-scale*

<b>Adjustment scale</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>General adjustment</b>	<b>5.50</b>	<b>1.10</b>
<b>Interactional adjustment</b>	<b>4.90</b>	<b>1.24</b>
<b>Work adjustment</b>	<b>4.53</b>	<b>1.12</b>
<b>AVERAGE MEAN</b>	<b>4.97</b>	

### 5.5.1 General adjustment variables

Further descriptive analysis is presented in Table 5.5 regarding the means and standard deviations of the respondents self-reporting in the general adjustment sub-scale items.

**Table 5.5**  
*General Adjustment - Minimum, Maximum, Median, Mean and Standard Deviations*

<b>Adjustment scale</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>Weather</b>	1.00	7.00	5.00	4.18	1.93
<b>Cost of living</b>	1.00	7.00	5.00	4.48	1.40
<b>Housing conditions</b>	2.00	7.00	5.00	4.44	1.39
<b>Entertainment/recreation facilities and opportunities</b>	2.00	7.00	6.00	5.79	1.03
<b>Transportation</b>	2.00	7.00	6.00	5.96	0.97
<b>Health care facilities</b>	2.00	7.00	6.00	5.79	0.84
<b>Shopping</b>	2.00	7.00	6.00	6.26	0.78
<b>Living conditions in general</b>	2.00	7.00	6.00	5.85	0.74
<b>Food</b>	3.00	7.00	7.00	6.51	0.62

The analysis of general adjustment of expatriate academics included nine items. Most of the general adjustment sub-scale items scored a mean at the moderate level of adjustment, except for the “food” item which had a mean score of 6.51, a high level of adjustment. Both “entertainment/recreation facilities and opportunities” and “health care facilities” had a mean scored of 5.79. Moderate level adjustment scores were in “cost of living”, “housing conditions”, and “weather”, with a mean score of 4.48, 4.44, and 4.18 respectively. None of the items in the general adjustment sub-scale had a low level of adjustment.

### 5.5.2 Social/cultural/interaction adjustment variables.

Further descriptive analysis is presented in Table 5.6 regarding the means and standard deviations of the respondents on interactional adjustment sub-scale items. Most of them scored a mean at the moderate level of adjustment. The computed mean of sub-scale items such as “interacting with Emirati students (if any)”, “interacting with host nationals on a day-to-day basis at work”, “interacting with host nationals outside of your organization”, and “socializing with host nationals” was 4.89, 4.53, 3.57, and 3.17 respectively.

**Table 5.6**  
**Social/cultural/interaction adjustment variables**

<b>Adjustment scale</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>Interacting with host nationals outside of your organisation</b>	1.00	7.00	3.00	3.57	1.73
<b>Interacting with other nationalities outside of your organisation</b>	3.00	7.00	6.00	5.69	0.83
<b>Interacting with host nationals on a day-to-day basis at work</b>	1.00	7.00	5.00	4.53	1.80
<b>Working with employees from other nationalities or ethnic background or religions</b>	3.00	7.00	6.00	5.71	1.10
<b>Socializing with host nationals</b>	1.00	7.00	2.00	3.17	1.82

<b>Interacting with Emirati students (if any)</b>	2.00	7.00	5.00	4.89	1.21
<b>Interacting with non-Emirati students (if any)</b>	3.00	7.00	6.00	5.71	0.70
<b>Relationship with immediate line manager</b>	2.00	7.00	6.00	5.54	0.73

The sub-scale items “working with employees from other nationalities or ethnic background or religions”, and “interacting with non-Emirati students” had a mean score of 5.71 each which is a value in the high level of adjustment. However, the items “socializing with host nationals” and “interacting with host nationals outside of your organization” had a low level of adjustment with a mean of 3.17 and 3.57 respectively.

### **5.5.3 Workplace adjustment variables**

Further descriptive analysis is presented in Table 5.7 regarding the means and standard deviations of the respondents self-reporting from the participating HEIs concerning the work adjustment sub-scale items. The computed mean of 5.99 for the “the physical conditions in the classroom” item was the highest in the adjustment level. Another item with a high level of adjustment was “availability of resources for teaching and learning” with a mean score of 5.03. However, noticeably, most means were within the moderate level of adjustment such as “creating the right classroom atmosphere” and “supervisory responsibilities” which was 4.97 and 4.95 respectively indicating a moderate level of adjustment. The other items at the moderate level were “research opportunities, creative scholarly activities, allocated time for research”, and “teaching hours, administrative duties, faculty committees, and community outreach” with a mean score of 4.37 each. The computed mean for the “institution's management style” item was 4.17 also indicating a moderate level of adjustment. On the

lower end, sub-scale items “job security”, and “performance standards and expectations” was 3.33 and 3.59 respectively, thus indicating a low level of adjustment.

**Table 5.7**  
**Workplace adjustment variables**

<b>Adjustment scale</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>Research opportunities, creative scholarly activities, allocated time for research</b>	1.00	7.00	5.00	4.37	1.45
<b>Performance standards and expectations</b>	1.00	7.00	3.00	3.59	1.32
<b>Supervisory responsibilities (if applicable)</b>	1.00	7.00	5.00	4.95	1.41
<b>Teaching hours, administrative duties, faculty committees, and community outreach, etc.</b>	2.00	7.00	5.00	4.37	1.26
<b>Creating the right classroom atmosphere</b>	2.00	7.00	5.00	4.97	1.05
<b>Job security</b>	1.00	6.00	3.00	3.33	1.13
<b>The physical conditions in the classroom</b>	4.00	7.00	6.00	5.99	0.24
<b>Availability of resources for teaching and learning</b>	2.00	7.00	5.00	5.03	0.85
<b>The institution's management style</b>	1.00	6.00	5.00	4.17	1.34

#### **5.5.4 Intention to stay in the HEI or in the UAE (before arrival)**

In questionnaire item 17 (see table 5.8), out of the 324 participants in this study, 58.64% indicated that their pre-arrival plans were to stay in the UAE for two to three years, while only 7.41% intended to stay in the UAE for as long as possible. 12.65% indicated that they had initially planned to stay in the UAE for three to four more years, and 21.30% indicated



that their pre-arrival plans were to stay in the UAE for one to two years. None intended to stay in the UAE for less than a year.

**Table 5.8 Intention to stay in the HEI or in the UAE (before arrival)**

With regard to question #17			
#	Answer Choices	Responses	Percentage of Responses
1	Less than 1 year	0	0%
2	1-2 years	69	21.30%
3	2-3 years	190	58.64%
4	3-4 years	41	12.65%
5	As long as possible	24	7.41%
	<b>Total</b>	324	

### 5.5.5 Intention to stay in the HEI or in the UAE (after arrival)

In questionnaire item 18 (see table 5.9), out of the 324 participants in this study, 43.21% indicated their intention to stay in the UAE as long as possible, while only 0.93% indicated that they wanted to stay in the UAE for less than one year. 47.84% indicated that they wanted to stay in the UAE for three to four more years. The total percentage of expatriate academics (in this study) who intended to stay in the UAE for one year to an indefinite period was 99.07%.

**Table 5.9 Intention to stay in the HEI or in the UAE (after arrival)**

With regard to question #18			
#	Answer Choices	Responses	Percentage of Responses
1	Less than 1 year	3	0.93%
2	1-2 years	12	3.70%
3	2-3 years	14	4.32%
4	3-4 years	155	47.84%
5	As long as possible	140	43.215
6	I would like to leave this organisation but stay longer in the UAE	0	0.00%
	<b>Total</b>		<b>324</b>

### 5.5.6 Intention to stay or leave your current HEI (employer)

With regards to question 19 (see table 5.10), out of the 324 participants in this study, 90.74% indicated that they were reluctant to leave their current employer to seek a new job and that they would only do so if they secured a better job or were asked to leave (termination or non-renewal of contract). 3.70% indicated that they plan to stay in their institutions until retirement. On the other hand, 2.78% indicated that they planned to leave their current employer after serving their resignation notice period. The same percentage indicated that they planned to leave their institution (employer) at the end of their contract period regardless of not having another job offer elsewhere.

**Table 5.10 Intention to stay or leave your current HEI (employer)**

Table 5.10 With regards to question #19			
#	Answer Choices	Responses	Percentage of Responses
1	I plan to leave this university as soon as possible (i.e. after my notice period).	9	2.78%
2	I plan to leave this university at the end of my contract - regardless of not having another job offer.	9	2.78%
3	I would be reluctant to leave this university. (i.e. only if I have secured a better job, or only if I am asked to leave).	294	90.74%
4	I plan to stay in this university till retirement.	12	3.70%
	<b>Total</b>		<b>324</b>

### 5.5.7 Factors that encourage EAs to stay in the UAE

One of the factors that influence expatriate adjustment and their intention stay longer is their initial motivation to expatriate (e.g. Austin et al., 2014; Chapman et al., 2014; Clark, 2015; Inkson et al. 1997; Kreber and Hounsell, 2014; Lehn, 2016; Richardson and Mallon 2005; Sanderson; 2014; Selmer and Luring, 2012). The factors encouraging expatriate academics (EAs) to stay longer in the UAE was measured by a scale consisting of 10 items. The

minimum and maximum score obtained was 1.0 and 5.0 respectively. The analysis is presented in Table 5.11. Strong factors had a mean ranging from 3.68 to 5.00, moderate motivating factors had a mean ranging from 2.34 to 3.67, while the weak factors had mean ranging from 1 to 2.33. The findings reveal (shown in Table 5.11) that there were diverse factors that motivated the respondents to stay longer or leave the UAE. In questionnaire item # 34, on a 5-point Likert (1 for “strongly disagree” and 5 for “strongly agree”), participants were asked to select the factors that encouraged them to stay (intention to stay) in the UAE. Further descriptive analysis is presented in Table 5.12 regarding the means and standard deviations of the respondents self-reporting on the factors that motivated them to stay longer. The analysis of the factors that motivated expatriate academics to stay longer or leave the UAE included ten items sub-scale items.

The items considered to be the strongest motivating factor encouraging expatriate academics to either stay longer or leave the UAE were “salary and other financial incentives”, “UAE's multicultural society and social life (e.g. comfortable place to live, to a raise a family)”, and “international academic experience.” with a computed mean of 4.93, 4.78, and 3.92 respectively. However, noticeably, “professional development, research opportunities and support for conference attendance”, “promotion opportunities”, and “being in at the "start of something big" (e.g. building the nation)” with a computed mean of 1.74, 1.55, and 1.55 respectively were considered as weak motivating factors. The items “to live closer to family here or within the region”, “working environment (e.g. workload, students, engagement in decision-making processes)”, “starting a "new life" (e.g. professionally or personally)”, and “job Security” served as moderate motivating factors that encouraged them to stay longer in the UAE with a computed mean of 3.56, 3.48, 3.47, and 2.69.

**Table 5.11****Factors that encourage you to stay or leave the UAE (intention to stay in the UAE)**

<b>Adjustment scale</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>Salary and other financial incentives</b>	4.00	5.00	5.00	4.93	0.26
<b>Professional development. research opportunities and support for conference attendance</b>	1.00	5.00	2.00	1.74	0.72
<b>International academic experience</b>	1.00	5.00	4.00	3.92	1.03
<b>To live closer to family here or within the region</b>	1.00	5.00	4.00	3.56	1.52
<b>UAE's multicultural society and social life (e.g. comfortable place to live, to a raise a family)</b>	1.00	5.00	5.00	4.78	0.54
<b>Being at the "start of something big" (e.g. building the nation)</b>	1.00	5.00	1.00	1.55	0.67
<b>Promotion opportunities</b>	1.00	5.00	1.00	1.55	0.44
<b>Starting a "new life" (e.g. professionally or personally)</b>	1.00	5.00	4.00	3.47	1.30
<b>Job security</b>	1.00	4.00	3.00	2.69	0.67
<b>Working environment (e.g. workload, students, engagement in decision-making processes)</b>	1.00	5.00	4.00	3.48	0.77

In summary, the majority of the participants indicated salary and other financial incentives as a key factor encouraging them to stay longer in the UAE. The total weighted average for this selection was 4.93. With regards to the item “UAE's multicultural society and social life” 96.92% of the participants indicated that they regarded it as a significant factor that encouraged them to stay in the UAE. Only 0.93% considered this item as rather discouraging. With regards to the item “international academic experience”, 69.14% of the participants felt that it was a significant factor in their decision to stay. Additionally, the item “starting a new life” was chosen by 56.79% of the participants as a reason to stay in the UAE, as opposed to 25.93% who considered it as a disincentive. The total weighted average was for this selection was 3.47.

### 5.5.8 Factors discouraging expatriate academics from staying longer in the UAE

With regards to the participants views on the factors that discouraged them from staying longer in the UAE as presented in Table 5.12, 90.12% of the participants indicated that the lack of professional development, research opportunities and support for conference attendance was a major discouragement. Only 1.86% of the participants identified professional development, research opportunities and support for conference attendance as a reason to stay longer in the UAE. The total weighted average was for this selection was 1.74. With regards to the item “lack of promotion opportunities”, only 4.32% of the participants identified promotion opportunities as a reason to stay longer in the UAE while 89.2% indicated that the lack of promotion opportunities was a major discouragement for them. The total weighted average was for this selection was 1.55. In addition, 60.80% of the participants remained neutral on their choice as to whether job security (the lack of it or the presence of it) was a reason to stay longer in the UAE. However, 93.52% of the participants considered job security issues as a major discouragement for staying longer in the UAE with a weighted average of 2.69.

*Table 5.12 Factors discouraging expatriate academics from staying longer in the UAE*

<b>Questionnaire item# 34</b>							
<b>Scale</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Weighted Average</b>
Salary and other financial incentives	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	7.10% 23	92.90% 301	324	4.93
Professional development, research opportunities and conference attendance support	38.89% 126	51.23% 166	8.02% 26	0.93% 3	0.93% 3	324	1.74
International academic experience	1.85% 6	8.95% 29	20.06% 65	33.9% 110	35.19% 114	324	3.92
Family life (e.g. to live close to family here or in the region)	12.04% 39	21.30% 69	10.49% 34	10.80% 35	45.37% 147	324	3.56

Multicultural society and social life (e.g. comfortable place to live, to a raise a family)	0.31% 1	0.62% 2	2.16% 7	14.51% 47	82.41% 267	324	4.78
To learn more about the culture of the UAE	12.35% 40	47.22% 153	29.63% 96	9.57% 31	1.23% 4	0	2.40
Being at the "start of something big" (e.g. building the nation)	12.35% 40	47.22% 153	29.63% 96	9.57% 31	1.23% 4	324	2.40
Promotion opportunities	61.11% 198	28.09% 91	6.48% 21	3.09% 10	1.23% 4	324	1.55
Starting a "new life" (e.g. professionally or personally)	9.88% 32	16.05% 52	17.28% 56	30.56% 99	26.23% 85	324	3.47
Job security	4.94% 16	27.78% 90	60.80% 197	6.48% 21	0.00% 0	324	2.69
Working environment (e.g. workload, students, engagement in decision-making processes)	0.31% 1	10.49% 34	36.11% 117	47.53% 154	5.56% 18	324	3.48

## 5.6 Inferential Analysis

The results of the analysis are presented based on the research questions reported in the previous chapter. In order to obtain the most accurate results, SPSS was used for analysis. Before testing for answers to the research questions, the researcher sought to investigate the applicability of Black et al.'s (1991) model of cross-cultural adjustment to the selected group of expatriate academics in the UAE. Based on Black et al.'s (1991) conceptualization, cross-cultural adjustment encompasses general environment, social interaction with host country nationals, and work environment. In order to ascertain the factor structure of cross-cultural adjustment in the context of the UAE, a principal component factor analysis was conducted through SPSS (version 20). In order to extract the dimensions, the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was employed where Varimax orthogonal rotation was carried out during the EFA

procedure. Initial data exploration revealed that there were no missing data, which satisfied a requirement for factor analysis.

The sample size of 324 was adequate for factor analysis as it exceeded Pallant’s (2001) recommendation that a minimum sample size of 150 is appropriate. Furthermore, Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) suggested that the correlation coefficients among the variables to be factor analyzed should be greater than 0.3. The results of Pearson correlation to determine the inter-correlation among the variables are presented in Table 5.13. The results in Table 5.13 revealed that the correlation between general environment and social adjustment ( $r = 0.440$ ), general environment and work adjustment ( $r = 0.314$ ), and social adjustment and work adjustment ( $r = 0.386$ ) exceeded the 0.3 cutoff point.

**Table 5. 13 Correlation Matrix for the Variables**

		General Environment	Social Adjustment	Work Adjustment
Correlation	General Environment	1.000	.440	.314
	Social Adjustment	.440	1.000	.386
	Work Adjustment	.314	.386	1.000

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

The factorability of the data was further checked using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and the Bartlett's test of sphericity, and the results are illustrated in Table 5.14.

**Table 5. 14 KMO and Bartlett's Test Results**

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.641
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	130.763
	df	3
	Sig.	.000

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

Scholars like Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) indicated that the Bartlett's test of sphericity should be significant ( $p < .05$ ) and the KMO index should be at least 0.6 for factor analysis to be deemed appropriate. Table 4.14 reports that the Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant ( $X^2 = 130.763$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p < .000$ ), and the KMO is 0.641 which confirmed the suitability of data for factor analysis.

In extracting the factors, Kaiser's criterion of retaining factors with eigenvalues of 1 or greater was used. Table 5.15 has shown that all the three factors recorded eigen values greater than 1 (1.762, 1.692, 1.546) and also explained large amounts of variance. Therefore, all the three factors were retained for factor rotation.

**Table 5.15 Results of Factor Extraction**

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.762	58.743	58.743	1.762	58.743	58.743
2	1.692	23.059	81.803			
3	1.546	18.197	100.000			

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

The three factors were rotated using Varimax orthogonal rotation where the suppression of loadings was set at 0.4 to help make the interpretation of factors easier. The results are shown in Table 5.16.

**Table 5. 16 Varimax Rotated Factor Loading Matrix and Total Variance Explained**

	Components			Variance Explained (%)	Cumulative variance explained (%)
	1	2	3		
Work Adjustment	.973			33.446	33.446
General Environment		.967		33.385	66.832
Social Adjustment			.958	33.168	100.000

Source: Fieldwork, 2016



The results of the Varimax orthogonal rotation disclosed that based on the loading on each factor, the components were identified as work environment, general environment, and social adjustment. The results also indicated that work adjustment explained 33.446% of the variance whilst general environment and social adjustment explained 33.385% and 33.168% respectively. Based on these results, it can be concluded that Black and colleagues' (1991) model of cross-cultural adjustment is relevant to the expatriate academics in terms of their general environment, social interaction with host country nationals and work environment in the UAE.

### **5.6.1 Research Question One**

*Which factors contribute to the expatriate academics' cross-cultural adjustment across three dimensions (the general environment, social interaction, and work environment) in the UAE?*

The study investigated the factors that contributed to the expatriate academics' cross-cultural adjustment across three dimensions (the general environment, social interaction, and work environment) in the UAE. The effects of the factors in this question are presented in the following sub-sections.

#### **Age and Cross-Cultural Adjustment**

In order to determine the extent to which age contributed to the expatriate academics' cross-cultural adjustment for the three dimensions (general environment, social interaction, and work environment), one-way between groups ANOVA results in Table 5.17 revealed that there were no statistical significant differences in the participants' perception of the general environment [ $F(3, 320) = 1.742, p=0.158$ ], social adjustment [ $F(3, 320) = 0.342, p = 0.795$ ], work adjustment [ $F(3, 320) = 1.318, p = 0.268$ ] as well as the overall cross-cultural adjustment [ $F(3, 320) = 1.025, p = 0.382$ ] at 0.05 alpha level across the age groups. Based

on these results, it could be concluded that age did not contribute to the expatriate teachers' cross-cultural adjustment for the general environment, the social interaction, the work environment as well as the general cross-cultural adjustment in the UAE.

**Table 5.17 Mean, Standard Deviation, and ANOVA Results for Age and Cross-Cultural Adjustment**

		Mean	Std. Deviation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
		5.78	.87	2.361	3	.787	1.742	.158
General Environment	25 to 34							
	35 to 44	5.36	.65	144.557	320	.452		
	45 to 54	5.42	.62	146.918	323			
	55 to 64	5.58	.83					
	Total	5.43	.67					
Social Adjustment	25 to 34	5.10	.77	.511	3	.170	.342	.795
	35 to 44	4.94	.68	159.420	320	.498		
	45 to 54	4.89	.69	159.931	323			
	55 to 64	4.85	.80					
	Total	4.91	.70					
Work Adjustment	25 to 34	4.88	.93	1.480	3	.493	1.318	.268
	35 to 44	4.48	.62	119.759	320	.374		
	45 to 54	4.46	.57	121.239	323			
	55 to 64	4.60	.67					
	Total	4.50	.61					
Overall Cross-Cultural Adjustment	25 to 34	5.25	.63	.797	3	.266	1.025	.382
	35 to 44	4.93	.50	83.013	320	.259		
	45 to 54	4.92	.46	83.810	323			
	55 to 64	5.01	.65					
	Total	4.94	.51					

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

### Gender and Cross-Cultural Adjustment

The influence of gender on the expatriate academics' cross-cultural adjustment showed no statistically significant differences even though the independent samples t-test results in Table 5.18 disclosed that -- except in social adjustment where there was a statistically significant difference in the perception of males and females [ $t(322) = -2.197, p = 0.029, 2$ -tailed] -- there were no statistically significant differences in their perception of the general

environment [ $t(322) = 0.509, p = 0.611, 2\text{-tailed}$ ], work adjustment [ $t(322) = -.016, p = 0.987, 2\text{-tailed}$ ], and the overall cross-cultural adjustment [ $t(322) = -.787, p = 0.432, 2\text{-tailed}$ ] due to gender at 0.05 alpha level. Even though the effect of gender on the social adjustment was significant, the result showed that the effect size was small as recommended by Cohen (1988), namely that 0.01 is small effect, 0.06 is moderate effect, and 0.14 is large effect. Therefore, it can be concluded that gender did not contribute to expatriate teachers' general environment, work adjustment, and overall cross-cultural adjustment whilst it did for social adjustment. In relation to social adjustment, the results showed that the female expatriate academics were less culturally adjusted than male expatriate academics.

**Table 5. 18 Mean, Standard Deviation, and T-test Results for Gender and Cross-Cultural Adjustment**

	Variables Gender	Mean	Std. Dev.	t		df	p	$\eta^2$
General Environment	Female	5.44	.685	.509		322	.611	
	Male	5.41	.663					
Social Adjustment	Female	4.83	.625	-2.197		322	.029	0.015
	Male	5.00	.779					
Work Adjustment	Female	4.50	.573	-.016		322	.987	
	Male	4.50	.659					
Overall Cross-Cultural Adjustment	Female	4.92	.471	-.787		322	.432	
	Male	4.97	.552					

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

### **Marital Status and Cross-Cultural Adjustment**

The one-way between groups ANOVA was employed to determine the effect of the marital status on the expatriate academics' cross-cultural adjustment. The results in Table 5.19 established that except for social adjustment where there was a statistically significant difference [ $F(4, 319) = 2.744, p = 0.029, \eta^2 = 0.033$ ], no statistical significant differences for general environment [ $F(4, 319) = 1.723, p = 0.145$ ], work adjustment [ $F(4, 319) = 0.422, p = 0.792$ ] and the general cross-cultural adjustment [ $F(4, 319) = 1.816, p = 0.125$ ] were found

across the various marital status at 0.05 alpha level. However, the effect size for social adjustment ( $\eta^2 = 0.033$ ) was small. These results implied that marital status was a determinant of the expatriate academics' social adjustment whilst it did not account for the other dimensions of cross-cultural adjustment.

**Table 5. 19 Mean, Standard Deviation, and ANOVA Results for Marital Status and Cross-Cultural Adjustment**

		Mean	Std. Deviation	F	P	$\eta^2$
General Environment	Single, never married	5.69	.81	1.723	.145	
	Married	5.42	.66			
	Widowed	5.38	.56			
	Divorced	5.44	.68			
	Separated	4.58	.94			
	Total	5.43	.67			
Social Adjustment	Single, never married	5.04	.95	2.744	.029	0.033
	Married	4.95	.68			
	Widowed	4.33	.65			
	Divorced	4.66	.69			
	Separated	4.13	.50			
	Total	4.91	.70			
Work Adjustment	Single, never married	4.48	.61	.422	.792	
	Married	4.51	.61			
	Widowed	5.00	.48			
	Divorced	4.45	.69			
	Separated	4.19	.23			
	Total	4.50	.61			
Cross-Cultural Adjustment	Single, never married	5.07	.61	1.816	.125	
	Married	4.96	.50			
	Widowed	4.90	.65			
	Divorced	4.85	.53			
	Separated	4.30	.42			
	Total	4.94	.51			

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

### **Accompanying Spouse and Cross-cultural Adjustment**

The study investigated whether the fact that the spouses were accompanying the respondents in the UAE contributed to the latter's cross-cultural adjustment or not. The independent samples t-test results in Table 5.20 revealed that whereas there was no statically significant

difference in the perception of males and females in relation to work adjustment [ $t(289) = 0.008, p = 0.994, 2\text{-tailed}$ ], there were statistically significant differences in the participants' perception of the general environment [ $t(289) = 1.745, p = 0.082, 2\text{-tailed}, \eta^2 = 0.010$ ], social adjustment [ $t(322) = 2.673, p = 0.008, 2\text{-tailed}, \eta^2 = 0.021$ ], and the overall cross-cultural adjustment [ $t(289) = 1.988, p = 0.048, 2\text{-tailed}, \eta^2 = 0.013$ ] at 0.05 alpha. Furthermore, the results revealed that the effect sizes for all the significant outcomes were small. The inference can be made that the company of thre spouses was critical in determining the expatriate academics' cross-cultural adjustment. Those whose spouses were accompanying them to the UAE achieved a higher degree of adjustment concerning their overall cross-cultural adjustment, general environment, and social adjustment. However, the findings established that whether spouses live in the UAE or not did not contribute to the expatriate academics' work adjustment.

**Table 5.20 Spouse Lives and Cross-Cultural Adjustment**

Variable	Spouse Living in U.A.E?	Mean	Std. Dev.	t	Df	p	$\eta^2$
General Environment	Yes	5.43	.65	1.745	289	.082	0.010
	No	5.24	.68				
Social Adjustment	Yes	4.97	.69	2.673	289	.008	0.021
	No	4.66	.62				
Work Adjustment	Yes	4.50	.61	.008	289	.994	
	No	4.50	.58				
Overall Cross-Cultural Adjustment	Yes	4.97	.50	1.988	289	.048	0.013
	No	4.80	.49				

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

### **Child/children and Cross-cultural Adjustment**

In order to ascertain whether having a child or children influenced the expatriate academics' cross cultural adjustment, the independent samples t-test was carried out. The results in Table 5.21 indicated that there were statistically significant differences in the among the

participants for the general environment [ $t(322) = -2.431, p = 0.016, 2\text{-tailed}, \eta^2 = 0.018$ ] and the overall cross-cultural adjustment [ $t(322) = -2.144, p = 0.033, 2\text{-tailed}, \eta^2 = 0.014$ ] whilst the differences in social adjustment [ $t(322) = -1.094, p = 0.275, 2\text{-tailed}$ ] and work environment [ $t(322) = -1.407, p = 0.160, 2\text{-tailed}$ ] were not statistically significant. With these results, there is evidence that expatriate academics having a child or children influenced their adjustment to the general environment and the overall cross-cultural adjustment, yet not their social and work adjustment.

**Table 5. 21 Mean, Standard Deviation, and T-test Results for Child(ren) and Cross-Cultural Adjustment**

	Have a child or children?	Mean	Std. Dev.	t	df	P	$\eta^2$
General Environment	Yes	5.39	.636	-2.431	322	.016	0.018
	No	5.66	.870				
Social Adjustment	Yes	4.89	.662	-1.094	322	.275	
	No	5.02	.943				
Work Adjustment	Yes	4.48	.587	-1.407	322	.160	
	No	4.62	.761				
Overall Cross-Cultural Adjustment	Yes	4.92	.469	-2.144	322	.033	0.014
	No	5.10	.718				

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

### **Child(ren) in UAE and Cross-cultural Adjustment**

To investigate whether children living in UAE together with the respondents was contributing to their cross-cultural adjustment, the independent samples t-test was employed. The results in Table 5.22 indicated that except work environment where the differences in the perception of the groups was not statistically significant [ $t(291) = 1.314, p = 0.190, 2\text{-tailed}$ ], there were statistically significant differences for the general environment [ $t(291) = 2.028, p = 0.043, 2\text{-tailed}, \eta^2 = 0.014$ ], the social adjustment [ $t(291) = 3.187, p = 0.002, 2\text{-tailed}, \eta^2 = 0.035$ ], and the overall cross-cultural adjustment [ $t(291) = 2.978, p = 0.003, 2\text{-tailed}, \eta^2 = 0.030$ ] at 0.05 alpha level. Nevertheless, the effect size of all the significant results was small. These results

confirmed that whether or not children living with expatriate academics in the UAE contributed to their cross-cultural adjustment dimensions excluding their work environment.

**Table 5. 22 Mean, Standard Deviation, and T-test Results for Child/children and Cross-Cultural Adjustment**

	Child (children) in the U.A.E?	Mean	Std. Dev.	t	df	p	$\eta^2$
General Environment	Yes	5.42	.611	2.028	291	.043	0.014
	No	5.24	.675				
Social Adjustment	Yes	4.94	.647	3.187	291	.002	0.035
	No	4.66	.658				
Work Adjustment	Yes	4.50	.587	1.314	291	.190	
	No	4.39	.569				
Overall Cross- Cultural Adjustment	Yes	4.95	.448	2.978	291	.003	0.030
	No	4.76	.498				

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

### **International Work Experience and Cross-cultural Adjustment**

Whether participants had already worked in other countries or not and its influence on their cross-cultural adjustment was investigated. The independent samples t-test results in Table 5.23 showed that concerning work adjustment where there was no statistically significant difference [ $t(322) = 1.087, p = 0.278, 2\text{-tailed}$ ]. There were, however, statistically significant differences in the perception of the general environment [ $t(322) = 4.951, p = 0.000, 2\text{-tailed}, \eta^2 = 0.076$ ], social adjustment [ $t(322) = 5.394, p = 0.000, 2\text{-tailed}, \eta^2 = 0.090$ ], and cross-cultural adjustment [ $t(322) = 5.116, p = 0.000, 2\text{-tailed}, \eta^2 = 0.081$ ] at 0.05 alpha level. The effect size for each significant result was moderate. It could be concluded that except for the

work environment, the expatriate academics' international work experience contributed to the other dimensions of cross-cultural adjustment.

**Table 5. 23 Mean, Standard Deviation, and T-test Results for having Worked in other Countries and Cross-Cultural Adjustment**

Worked in other countries?		Mean	Std. Dev.	t	df	p	$\eta^2$
General Environment	Yes	5.60	.734	4.951	322	.000	0.076
	No	5.24	.544				
Social Adjustment	Yes	5.10	.756	5.394	322	.000	0.090
	No	4.69	.570				
Work Adjustment	Yes	4.53	.647	1.087	322	.278	
	No	4.46	.572				
Cross-Cultural Adjustment	Yes	5.08	.538	5.116	322	.000	0.081
	No	4.80	.432				

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

### **Work Place and Cross-cultural Adjustment**

The independent samples t-test was used to examine the contribution of place of work on cross-cultural adjustment. The results in Table 5.24 revealed that whilst there were no statistically significant differences in between those who worked in the government and the private sector in relation to the social adjustment [ $t(322) = 1.916, p = 0.056, 2\text{-tailed}$ ] and overall cross-cultural adjustment [ $t(322) = -.637, p = 0.525, 2\text{-tailed}$ ], there were statistically significant differences between the groups in respect to the general environment [ $t(322) = 1.916, p = 0.056, 2\text{-tailed}, \eta^2 = 0.011$ ], and work adjustment [ $t(322) = -2.816, p = 0.005, 2\text{-tailed}, \eta^2 = 0.024$ ] representing small size effects. Therefore, it could be concluded that the



work place is vital in the general adjustment and work adjustment dimensions of cross-cultural adjustment, but not for the social adjustment and the overall cross-cultural adjustment.

**Table 5. 24 Mean, Standard Deviation, and T-test Results for Place of Work and Cross-Cultural Adjustment**

	Place of Work	Mean	Std. Dev.	t	df	p	$\eta^2$
General Environment	Government	5.48	.674	1.916	322	.056	0.011
	Private	5.33	.667				
Social Adjustment	Government	4.88	.730	-.786	322	.432	
	Private	4.95	.656				
Work Adjustment	Government	4.43	.607	-2.816	322	.005	0.024
	Private	4.62	.605				
Overall Cross-Cultural Adjustment	Government	4.93	.530	-.637	322	.525	
	Private	4.97	.473				

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

### **Emirate of Work and Cross-cultural Adjustment**

The effect of the Emirate in which the academics work on their cross-cultural adjustment was explored. The results in Table 5.25 showed that except for the work adjustment where there were differences in the scores [ $F(2, 321) = 2.302, p = 0.102, \eta^2 = 0.052$ ] with small effect size, there were no significant differences in the views of participants for general environment [ $F(2, 321) = 2.302, p = 0.102$ ], social adjustment [ $F(2, 321) = 1.689, p = 0.186$ ], and the overall cross-cultural adjustment [ $F(2, 321) = 2.917, p = 0.056$ ] at 0.05 alpha level. Based on these results, it could be inferred that the specific Emirate in which the expatriate academics worked influenced their work adjustment but not the general environment, social adjustment and the overall cross-cultural adjustment of the academics in UAE.

**Table 5. 25 Mean, Standard Deviation, and T-test Results for Emirate of Work and Cross-Cultural Adjustment**

		Mean	Std. Deviation	F	P	$\eta^2$
General Environment	Abu Dhabi	5.48	.678	2.302	.102	
	Dubai	5.31	.665			
	Sharjah	5.47	.621			
	Total	5.43	.674			
Social Adjustment	Abu Dhabi	4.88	.732	1.689	.186	
	Dubai	4.91	.614			
	Sharjah	5.24	.874			
	Total	4.91	.704			
Work Adjustment	Abu Dhabi	4.42	.609	8.851	.000	0.052
	Dubai	4.56	.586			
	Sharjah	5.08	.531			
	Total	4.50	.613			
Overall Cross-Cultural Adjustment	Abu Dhabi	4.93	.533	2.917	.056	
	Dubai	4.93	.442			
	Sharjah	5.26	.573			
	Total	4.94	.509			

Survey Data, 2016

### **Number of Years Originally Planned to Stay and Cross-cultural Adjustment**

The study examined the extent to which cross-cultural adjustment was influenced by the number of years the expatriate academics had planned to stay in the UAE before arrival. The one-way between groups ANOVA results in Table 5.26 revealed that whilst there was no statistically significant difference in the groups for the work adjustment [ $F(3, 320) = 2.022, p = 0.111$ ], the results indicated that the differences in the scores for general environment [ $F(2, 320) = 2.789, p = 0.041, \eta^2 = 0.025$ ], social adjustment [ $F(2, 320) = 2.737, p = 0.044, \eta^2 = 0.025$ ], and the overall cross-cultural adjustment [ $F(2, 320) = 3.088, p = 0.027, \eta^2 = 0.028$ ] reached statistical significance at 0.05 alpha level. These findings established that except for the work environment, the number of years the expatriate academics had planned to stay in the UAE before their arrival contributed to their cross-cultural dimensions.

**Table 5. 26 Mean, Standard Deviation, and ANOVA Results for Number of Years Planned to Stay and Cross-Cultural Adjustment**

Yrs intended to stay		Mean	Std. Deviation	F	P	$\eta^2$
General Environment	1-2 years	5.54	.663	2.789	.041	0.025
	2-3 years	5.34	.668			
	3-4 years	5.52	.688			
	As long as possible	5.63	.662			
	Total	5.43	.674			
Social Adjustment	1-2 years	4.83	.721	2.737	.044	0.025
	2-3 years	4.86	.702			
	3-4 years	5.13	.613			
	As long as possible	5.13	.736			
	Total	4.91	.704			
Work Adjustment	1-2 years	4.55	.596	2.022	.111	
	2-3 years	4.44	.621			
	3-4 years	4.69	.596			
	As long as possible	4.45	.583			
	Total	4.50	.613			
Cross-Cultural Adjustment	1-2 years	4.98	.476	3.088	.027	0.028
	2-3 years	4.88	.519			
	3-4 years	5.11	.476			
	As long as possible	5.07	.513			
	Total	4.94	.509			

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

### Actual Years Intended to Stay and Cross-cultural Adjustment

In order to measure the effect of the number of more years the expatriate academics intended to spend working in the UAE on their cross-cultural adjustment, the one-way between groups ANOVA test was conducted. The results in Table 5.27 illustrated that whereas there were statistically significant differences in the scores for the social adjustment [F (4, 319) = 0.001,  $p = 0.001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.058$ ] and the cross-cultural adjustment [F (4, 319) = 3.383,  $p = 0.010$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.041$ ], there was no significant differences among the groups for general environment [F (4, 319) = 1.741,  $p = 0.141$ ], and the work adjustment [F (4, 319) = 0.573,  $p = 0.682$ ] at 0.05 alpha level. The number of more years the expatriate academics intended to spend working in the UAE contributed to their social and overall cross-cultural adjustment adjustment, yet not to their general environment and work adjustment.

**Table 5. 27 Mean, Standard Deviation, and ANOVA Results for Number of Years Intended to Spend and Cross-Cultural Adjustment**

		Mean	Std. Deviation	F	P	$\eta^2$
General Environment	Less than 1 year	5.42	1.377	1.741	.141	
	1-2 years	5.29	.862			
	2-3 years	5.48	.857			
	3-4 years	5.34	.707			
	As long as possible	5.53	.571			
	Total	5.43	.674			
Social Adjustment	Less than 1 year	4.40	.634	4.980	.001	0.058
	1-2 years	4.76	.862			
	2-3 years	4.61	.425			
	3-4 years	4.79	.702			
	As long as possible	5.09	.675			
	Total	4.91	.704			
Work Adjustment	Less than 1 year	4.44	.892	.573	.682	
	1-2 years	4.52	1.018			
	2-3 years	4.44	.454			
	3-4 years	4.45	.631			

	As long as possible	4.55	.559			
	Total	4.50	.613			
Cross-Cultural Adjustment	Less than 1 year	4.75	.897	3.383	.010	0.041
	1-2 years	4.86	.821			
	2-3 years	4.84	.359			
	3-4 years	4.86	.520			
	As long as possible	5.06	.449			
	Total	4.94	.509			

Survey Data, 2016

### 5.6.2 Research Question Two

*What influences the expatriate academics' anticipatory adjustment, including previous cross-cultural experience, cross cultural training and their intention to stay in the UAE?*

This research question sought to examine the extent to which the expatriate academics' intention to stay in the UAE was influenced by their anticipatory adjustment which included previous cross-cultural experience and cross cultural training. In order to answer this research question, Pearson Product Moment correlation and multiple regression were employed. Statisticians like Pallant (2007) and Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) argue that multiple regression requires a linear correlation between the independent and dependent variables. Therefore, bivariate linear correlations were conducted using Pearson correlation, and the interpretation of the strength of the correlation coefficients was based on Devore and Peck's (1993) suggestion that in assessing resultant correlation coefficients, coefficients less than 0.5 represent a weak relationship, coefficients greater than 0.5 but less than 0.8 represent a moderate relationship, and coefficients greater than 0.8 represent a strong relationship.

The Pearson correlation results in Table 5.28 revealed a weak but statistical significant positive relationship between cross-cultural experience and intention to stay ( $r=0.112$ ,  $p=0.044$ , 2-tailed). There existed a weak and negative relationship between cross-cultural training and intention to stay ( $r = -.118$ ,  $p = 0.034$ , 2-tailed). The negative relationship

between anticipatory adjustment and intention to stay was not significant ( $r = -.049$ ,  $p = 0.376$ , 2-tailed).

**Table 5.28 Pearson Correlation Matrix for Anticipatory Adjustment and Intention to Stay**

		Mean	Std. Dev.	1	2	3	4
1	Cross-Cultural Experience	3.55	.411	1			
2	Cross-Cultural Training	.17	.739	-.038 (.493)	1		
3	Anticipatory Adjustment	1.86	.416	.460** (.000)	.869** (.000)	1	
4	Intention to Stay	3.25	.287	.112** (.044)	-.118** (.034)	-.049** (.376)	1

Fieldwork, (2016) \*\*Correlation is significant at  $p < 0.05$  (2-tailed) Note: P-values are in parentheses and below their respective r values

The multiple regression results in Table 5.29 showed that the anticipatory adjustment accounted for 2.5% in the expatriate academics' intention to stay which was proven to be statistically significant [ $F(2, 321) = 4.197$ ,  $p = 0.016$ ] at 0.05 alpha level.

**Table 5. 29 Multiple Regression and ANOVA Results for Anticipatory Adjustment and Intention to Stay**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	$\beta$	t	p
1	Regression	.680	2	.340	4.197	.016			
	Residual	25.990	321	.081					
	Total	26.669	323						
(Constant)								21.689	.000
CCE							.108	1.953	.052
CCT							-.114	-2.064	.040
R	.160								
R <sup>2</sup>	.025								
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	.019								
Std. Error	.285								

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

The results implied that the anticipatory adjustment serves as a good predictor of the expatriate academics' intention to stay, while the other factors not included in this study

contributed 97.5% to their intention to stay. The model performed quite well in explaining the expatriate academics' intention to stay in the population value with 0.6% shrinkage. It was observed that the cross-cultural training variable made a significant unique contribution ( $\beta = -.114, p = .040$ ) whilst cross-cultural experience ( $\beta = .108, p = .052$ ) did not contribute significantly to their intention stay. Even though the anticipatory adjustment contributed to the expatriate academics' intention to stay in the UAE, the critical variable was cross-cultural training.

### 5.6.3 Research Question Three

*What influences the expatriate academics' cross-cultural adjustment in terms of their intention to stay in the UAE?*

The Pearson correlation results in Table 5.30 revealed a weak but statistically significant positive relationship between overall cross-cultural adjustment and intention to stay ( $r = 0.168, p = 0.002, 2$ -tailed). A weak yet statistically significant positive relationship was observed between the social adjustment and the intention to stay ( $r = 0.216, p = 0.000, 2$ -tailed). However, the information established a weak yet positive relationship between the general environment and the intention to stay ( $r = 0.073, p = 0.193, 2$ -tailed) and the work environment and the intention to stay ( $r = 0.073, p = 0.193, 2$ -tailed), neither of them reaching statistical significance.

**Table 5.30 Pearson Correlation Matrix for Cross-cultural Adjustment and Intention to Stay**

		Mean	Std. Dev.	1	2	3	4	5
1	Intention to Stay	3.25	.287	1				
2	General Environment	5.43	.674	.073	1			

				(.193)				
3	Social Adjustment	4.91	.704	.216**	.440**	1		
				(.000)	(.000)			
4	Work Adjustment	4.50	.613	.091	.314**	.386**	1	
				(.103)	(.000)	(.000)		
5	Overall Cross-Cultural Adjustment	4.94	.509	.168**	.770**	.809**	.717**	1
				(.002)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	

Fieldwork, 2016

\*\*Correlation is significant at  $p < 0.05$  (2-tailed)

Note: P-values are in parentheses and below their respective r values

The multiple regression results in Table 5.31 disclosed that collectively cross-cultural adjustment contributed to 4.8% variance in the expatriate academics' intention to stay which was assessed to be statistically significant [ $F(3, 320) = 5.325, p = .001$ ] at 0.05 alpha level. There was noted a 0.9% reduction in the population value which suggested that the regression model performed relatively well in delineating the expatriate academics' intention to stay in the population. Furthermore, the social adjustment contributed significantly to the expatriate academics' intention to stay ( $\beta = 0.224, p = 0.000$ ) whereas the general environment ( $\beta = -.030, p = 0.622$ ) and the work adjustment ( $\beta = 0.014, p = 0.230$ ) did not individually contribute to intention to stay.

**Table 5.31 Multiple Regression and ANOVA Results for Anticipatory Adjustment and Intention to Stay**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	$\beta$	t	p
1	Regression	1.268	3	.423	5.325	.001			
	Residual	25.401	320	.079					
	Total	26.669	323						
(Constant)								18.370	.000
GE							-.030	-.493	.622
SA							.224	3.533	.000
WA							.014	.230	.818



R	.218	
R <sup>2</sup>	.048	
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	.039	
Std. Error	.282	

Survey Data, 2016

Based on these results, it could be concluded that the degree of cross-cultural adjustment generally contributed to the expatriate academics' intention to stay in the UAE, and that the social adjustment served as a determinant of their intention.

#### **5.6.4 Research Question Four**

*What are the participants' opinions on the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for expatriate academics to successfully adjust to working and living in the UAE?*

The answers to this research question are answered in both the quantitative and qualitative phases of this study. For the sake of this thesis, this section answers this question from the quantitative perspective while in chapter six will be provided the answers to this question on a qualitative basis.

Item # 33 in the survey provided the answers to this research question. The participants were asked to list the competencies, skills and abilities essential for their successful adjustment to working and living in the UAE. The questionnaire used open-ended questions in order to ensure that the respondents were not restricted to a set of fixed choices. By using open-ended

questions, the researcher was able collect a rich pool of genuine opinions from the respondents regarding the fifth research question.

By using Survey Monkey's Categorize feature, the researcher was able to carry out a "text analysis". By conducting a "text analysis", the researcher categorized and analysed the participants' responses to item # 33, thereby not only providing a detailed picture of *what* their opinions were (in their own words), but also knowing *how many* participants felt that way. The Survey Monkey's text analysis tool has proven to be a effective tool for creating and coding open-ended items in a survey (Nelson, 2016; Patterson, 2016; Vaughn and Turner, 2016). In order to codify and theme the participants' responses, the researcher assigned alphabetic symbols to the responses. These letters represented the themes emerged during the content/text analysis and consisted of "P" for professional and academic qualities, "I" for individual personality, "S" for social and intercultural abilities and skills, "K" for knowledge of country, "E" for previous experience. The respondents considered the competencies, skills and abilities as essential for any expatriate academic in order to successfully adjust to working and living in the UAE.

The Survey Monkey's Categorize analysis results in Table 5.32 revealed that the majority of the participants (n = 317) representing 97.839% were of the opinion that social and intercultural abilities and skills were the most important skills required for expatriate academics to successfully adjustment in the UAE, while only 69.753% (n = 226) perceived professional and academic qualifications to be an important criterion for the expatriate academics' successful adjustment.

The second most important ingredient perceived by 93.827% participants (n = 304) was individual personality, followed by 91.975% of the participants (n = 298) who were of the

opinion that knowledge of country was important. 79.938% of the participants (n = 259) were of the opinion that previous relevant experience was important for expatriate academics to successfully adjust to working and living in the UAE.

<b>Table 5.32 - Participants' opinions on the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for expatriate academics to successfully adjust to working and living in the UAE</b>		
<b>Themes</b>	<b>Percentages</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>
Professional/Academic qualifications	69.753%	226
Individual Personality	93.827%	304
Social & Intercultural abilities and skills	97.839%	317
Knowledge of Country	91.975%	298
Previous relevant experience	79.938%	259

In summary, social and intercultural abilities and skills, individual personality; and knowledge of the country were considered to be the most important knowledge, skills, and abilities required for expatriate academics in order to be able to successfully adjust to working and living in the UAE, while previous relevant experience had the least relative significance to the respondents.

### **5.6.5 Research Question Five**

*What were the recommendations given by the expatriate academics for improving the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics?*

This research question aimed at soliciting for suggestions from incumbent expatriate academics on how the cross-cultural adjustment rate of expatriate academics could be improved. Due to the nature of the research question, its answers were derived solely from the qualitative phase of this study. Therefore, the answers to this research question will be discussed in the next chapter.

### **5.6.6 Summary**

The quantitative aspect of this study highlighted the issues that predominantly affect the expatriate academics and some of the cross-cultural differences that might impact their intention to stay in the UAE. In terms of their general adjustment, expatriate academics seem to have more difficulties when it came to living cost, housing conditions, and the climate. None of the items in the general adjustment sub-scale showed a low level of adjustment. In respect to the work adjustment, their greatest difficulties were experienced with the institution's management style, job security, and performance standards and expectations. The expatriate academics expressed their concerns in relation to research opportunities, creative scholarly activities, allocated time for research, and teaching hours, administrative duties, faculty committees, and community outreach. In terms of social interaction, socializing with host nationals and interacting with host nationals outside the organization were their greatest challenges. The results from the quantitative aspect of this study showed that the level of work adjustment and social interaction had the greatest effect on the expatriate academics' overall cross-cultural adjustment. However, it did not seem to strongly contribute to their intention to further their stay in the UAE or their current jobs.

## **Qualitative Results**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the interview data, analysis and discussion pertaining to the research objectives and research questions. The demographic characteristics of the interview participants are followed by a categorisation of the interview data using content analysis in order to understand the expatriate academics' subjective interpretation of their cross-cultural adjustment. A comprehensive view developed of the cross-cultural experiences of expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE and their adjustment to the general environment, work, and social interaction. This lends itself well to the research questions set out in the introductory section of the thesis. Cross-cultural adjustment was a noteworthy feature of the experiences of expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE and contributed to the development of a model that explains the process of cross-cultural adjustment of the expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE. Having analysed the results of the questionnaire, some of the respondents agreed to an additional face-to-face interview. The analysis of the interviews was thus used to support the survey findings. Content analysis was carried out on the interview data in order to identify the emerging themes, which enabled the researcher to gain more insight into the subjective interpretation of cross-cultural adjustment by the expatriate academics.

As pointed out in Chapter 1, the objectives and the research questions were examined by both the quantitative analysis of the survey and the qualitative analysis of the interviews. Interviewing constitutes a valuable data collection technique, particularly when a person's role as an active respondent, and the respondent's personal experiences, interpretations and meanings are critical to answering the research question or addressing the research problem (Hirsjarvi and Hurme, 2000). Berg (1998) further maintained that through qualitative study

the researcher is able to share in the understandings and opinions of other people and is able to explore how these people structure and give meaning to their daily lives. This study focuses on the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics in selected higher education institutions in the UAE, hence the expatriate academics' personal experiences and interpretations related to their adjustment to the general environment, work environment, interaction, and in general cross-cultural adjustment is very important. Therefore, in order to capture these personal experiences and interpretations, interviewing expatriate academics from selected higher education institutions in the UAE was considered to be a sensible choice for data collection.

At the end of the survey, the respondents were asked whether they were willing to participate in a follow-up interview, and if so provide their contact details. A total of 117 out of 324 participants (36.11%) agreed to participate in a follow-up interview. Although an attempt was made to contact all those who volunteered to be interviewed, but only 57 participants (48.71%) were readily and actually available at the time. These 57 participants were expatriate academics of different nationalities, and all the participants were expatriate academics working in higher education institutions in the UAE when the interviews were conducted. Pseudonyms were given to all participants in order to protect their identities. Each respondent was interviewed individually. The interview period was from 5th February to 15th August 2016. All the interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of the respondents. The recording time for each interview was between 45 minutes to 1 hour 20 minutes. All the interviews were conducted in a convenient environment in order to ensure that a relaxed and friendly atmosphere was created that would motivate and to make the participants feel comfortable in talking about their own cross-cultural experiences. During the interview, the expatriate academics were repeatedly reassured that any information they provided was confidential and that their names and their place of work would not be disclosed.

## **6.2 Analysis of interview data**

Qualitative data analysis is a systematic and transparent way of making sense of and deriving meaning from the data collected (Punch, 2005). All interviews were carefully transcribed by listening to the audio recording and then translating them verbatim into text. As previously mentioned, this study analysed the qualitative data using the content analysis approach. By using content analysis, the researcher was able to focus on organising data into themes typically derived from predetermined theoretical constructs, areas of interest created in advance of the analysis (pre-ordinate categorisation) such as the research questions and objectives (Chan, 2015; Cohen et al., 2007, p.475). The researcher used the general inductive approach as [part of the content analysis to analyse the data, which is a combination of both reflection and interaction (Thomas, 2003). By using this approach, the patterns or common themes were analysed and further understandings and contradictions were explored arising from the data and consequently developing meaningful information (Thomas, 2003). The content analysis approach to analysing qualitative data has been used in various studies on cross-cultural adjustment (Chan, 2015; Chu, 2009; Li, 1999; Liao, 2010; Merilainen, 2008; Tahir and Ismail, 2007). Pseudonyms were given to all participants in order to protect their identities.

### **6.2.1 Demographic Characteristics of Interview Participants**

Before presenting the findings on the main themes of the interview data, a brief introduction to the background of the expatriate academics involved in this study is given. This background information helps understand the subjective experience of each expatriate academic working and living in the UAE. As discussed in Chapter 4, pseudonyms were given in order to preserve the anonymity of the respondents. In total, 57.89% of the respondents (n = 33) were expatriate academics working in public HEIs, while 42.11% (n = 24) were

working in private HEIs. In respect to their age, 43.86% of those interviewed (n = 25) were between the age of 45 to 54, 31.58% (n = 18) were between the age of 35 to 44, and 24.56% (n = 14) were between the age of 55 to 64. Tables 6.1 and 6.2 present a brief background summary. Table 6.1 presents the background information of the respondents from the two private higher education institutions (HWU Dubai and BUiD) and Table 6.2 presents the background information of the respondents from the public HEI.

Out of the 24 participants (see Table 6.1) working at the private HEI, 58.33% (n = 14) were female and 41.67% (n = 10) were male. 54.17% of those interviewed (n = 13) were between the age of 45 to 54, 33.33% (n = 8) were between the age of 35 to 44, and 12.50% (n = 3) were between the age of 55 to 64.

**Table 6.1** Background information of participants (in private HEI) for interview (all names are pseudonyms).

<b>Table 5.1 Background information of participants (in private HEI) for interview (all names are pseudonyms).</b>						
#	Pseudonyms	Gender	Age	Country	Total time spent living and working in the UAE	Type of Higher Education Institutions
1	Kobey	Male	45 to 54	Ghana	5 years	Private
2	Aisha	Female	35 to 44	Turkey	3 years	Private
3	Nancy	Female	45 to 54	South Africa	9 years	Private
4	Reggie	Male	45 to 54	India	4 years	Private
5	John	Male	45 to 54	United Kingdom	2 years	Private
6	Maggie	Female	45 to 54	United States	4 years	Private
7	Alfonso	Male	55 to 64	Mexico	7.5 years	Private
8	Juliana	Female	45 to 54	New Zealand	2.5 years	Private
9	Robert	Male	35 to 44	United Kingdom	15 years	Private
10	Nicole	Female	45 to 54	New Zealand	7.5 years	Private
11	Edward	Male	45 to 54	Philippines	5 years	Private
12	Mary	Female	55 to 64	Australia	1 year	Private
13	Thomas	Male	45 to 54	Ireland	3.5 years	Private
14	Helen	Female	35 to 44	Australia	11 years	Private
15	William	Male	45 to 54	United States	13 years	Private



16	Michelle	Female	45 to 54	United States	3 years	Private
17	Debra	Female	35 to 44	Philippines	8.5 years	Private
18	Donna	Female	45 to 54	United States	11 years	Private
19	Sharon	Female	55 to 64	New Zealand	5 years	Private
20	Erica	Female	45 to 54	Australia	5.5 years	Private
21	Amy	Female	35 to 44	Australia	9 years	Private
22	Sean	Male	35 to 44	Australia	5 years	Private
23	Michael	Male	35 to 44	Ireland	11 years	Private
24	Sarah	Female	35 to 44	United States	9.5 years	Private

Out of the 33 participants (see Table 6.2) working at a public HEI, 51.52% (n = 17) were male and 48.48% (n = 16) were female. 36.36% of those interviewed (n = 12) were between the age of 45 to 54, 33.33% (n = 11) were between the age of 55 to 64, and 30.30% (n = 10) were between the age of 35 to 44.

**Table 6.2** Background information of participants (in public HEI) for interview (all names are pseudonyms).

<b>Table 5.2 Background information of participants (in public HEI) for interview (all names are pseudonyms).</b>						
#	Pseudonyms	Gender	Age	Country	Total time spent living and working in the UAE	Type of Higher Education Institutions
1	Riya	Female	45 to 54	India	7 years	Public
2	Linda	Female	45 to 54	Ireland	20 years	Public
3	Jason	Male	55 to 64	Canada	11 years	Public
4	Karen	Female	55 to 64	United States	17 years	Public
5	Prisha	Female	45 to 54	India	12 years	Public
6	Keith	Male	55 to 64	United Kingdom	7.5 years	Public
7	Fadia	Female	45 to 54	Lebanon/Palestine	20 years	Public
8	Kevin	Male	55 to 64	Hungary	15 years	Public
9	Mark	Male	45 to 54	United States	16 years	Public
10	Kimberly	Female	35 to 44	United Kingdom	5 years	Public
11	Lilly	Female	55 to 64	United Kingdom	20 years	Public
12	Frank	Male	45 to 54	Denmark	6 years	Public
13	Doris	Female	55 to 64	United Kingdom	21 years	Public
14	Maria	Female	55 to 64	United Kingdom	23.5 years	Public
15	Charles	Male	55 to 64	United Kingdom	3 years 7 Months	Public

16	Vikas	Male	45 to 54	New Zealand	15.5 years	Public
17	Alexandru	Male	35 to 44	Romania	2 years	Public
18	Kofi	Male	45 to 54	Ghana	3.5 years	Public
19	Stella	Female	45 to 54	United States	2.5 years	Public
20	Kate	Female	55 to 64	United Kingdom	13 years	Public
21	George	Male	35 to 44	United Kingdom	6 years	Public
22	Richard	Male	55 to 64	United States	1.5 years	Public
23	Gary	Male	35 to 44	New Zealand	14 years	Public
24	Walter	Male	35 to 44	United Kingdom	7 years	Public
25	Ruth	Female	45 to 54	Canada	12 years	Public
26	Alice	Female	35 to 44	France	6.5 years	Public
27	Patrick	Male	35 to 44	United States	4 years	Public
28	Alan	Male	35 to 44	United States	3 years	Public
29	Laura	Female	35 to 44	Spain	8.5 years	Public
30	Sandra	Female	35 to 44	Australia	7 years	Public
31	Irene	Female	55 to 64	United Kingdom	11 years	Public
32	Donald	Male	45 to 54	United Kingdom	4.5 years	Public
33	Fred	Male	45 to 54	Australia	6 years	Public

## 6.2.2 Anticipatory adjustment

Anticipatory variables are considered the initial set of inputs to expatriate adjustment (Ang and Van Dyne, 2008; Black et al., 1991) consisting of the issues that exist before the expatriate academic leaves his or her home country (Black et al., 1991; Li, 2015). As previously discussed in the literature review, these variables allow the expatriate to set better expectations, to experience less stress upon arrival, and improve in-country adjustment (Sims and Schnieder, 2004). The paragraphs below presents the interview data obtained on the expatriate academics' anticipatory adjustment.

### 6.2.2.1 Motivation for coming to the United Arab Emirates

As discussed in the literature review, there exists a link between an expatriate academic's motivation to expatriate and his or her work outcomes and overall cross-cultural adjustment (Lauring et al., 2014; Selmer and Lauring, 2013). According to Trembath (2016), the

motivation to move overseas constitutes one of the precursors of cross-cultural adjustment and is of great interest in this particular field of research. Therefore, the precursors of expatriate adjustment comprise yet are not restricted to the incentive to expatriate and have been of significant importance in expatriate academic research. For this reason the researcher investigated the respondents' motivation for coming to the UAE.

On the question of why the participants took the decision to move to the UAE and work as an academic, the majority stated that they were ready for a new challenge, to be closer to their family, to live in a relatively safe environment suitable to raise a family, to escape political unrest, to start a new life, to earn a higher salary, to live in a warmer climate, to have the opportunity to be involved in research and to make career, or to start a new life. However, five of the most prominent motivators for the participants were salary and other financial incentives, multicultural society and social life, international academic experience, family proximity, and starting a new life. According to Altbach (2003), Austin et al., (2014), Chapman et al., (2014), Lehn, (2016), Kreber and Hounsell (2014), and Miller (2009, 2010) the most notable "pull" factors for expatriate academics include salaries and working conditions. This view was echoed by some of the respondents during the interview. Among the factors captured during the interviews were for example:

*"To be honest with you, money was one of the major factors, but don't get me wrong. I mean I love my job as an academic but financial incentives will always be a factor to consider before accepting an overseas job. There could be also other reasons such as gaining international experience and research opportunities, but when you have a family or dependents, then money becomes an important contributing factor". (Sean, Australia)*

*"Actually, I was in Japan. I had left my jobs to pursue some other interests for a couple of years and my wife said, okay you need to go back to work, we need money, and the situation in Japan at that time was not so good economically. Actually, we had been in Kuwait*

*previously, a number of years ago, so we were kind of familiar with the Gulf and we knew that there are always jobs available". (Mark, United States)*

*"The salary and benefits were very attractive. It was an opportunity to make some financial savings." (Gary, New Zealand)*

The responses above indicate that financial incentives function as a major pull for expatriate academics, which is confirmed by the findings of Clark (2015), Inkson and Myers (2003), and Sanderson (2014) who stated that work and career are almost certainly secondary motivators (at least in the beginning) when deciding to expatriate. Some respondents cited a mixture of financial, economic, political, and social reasons as the key motivating factors that encouraged them to come and work in the UAE. For example, Nancy and Thomas stated that:

*"Financial incentives, circumstances at home, escaping violent conditions, and looking for better opportunities. I don't know if you are familiar with South Africa, but we have a lot of politics and crime and affirmative action is not favourable to people of colour". (Nancy, South Africa)*

*"We took the job because the package was great and we thought that it would be a nice experience for the children to travel to other countries within the region." (Thomas, Ireland).*

For other respondents, the opportunity to travel and see other parts of the world was a key motivator to accepting an academic job in the UAE. According to Lehn (2016), Miller (2009, 2010), and Selmer and Luring (2013) academics often indicate the desire to travel and to experience "something new" as key drivers in taking up an overseas academic appointment. Some of the respondents shared that "seeking an adventure" and "to experience something different" as significant motivators to leave their home country behind. For example;

*"It was an opportunity for my wife and daughter to travel outside Hungary and experience other parts of the world. I had travelled to over 30 countries. The financial package was also very attractive." (Kevin, Hungary)*

*“I started my ESL professional career tutoring an Emirati student in the US, and he told me about the UAE and where it was located. I had also worked in Egypt in the Sinai region, my ex-husband was from that region. I was always fascinated about life in the desert, the Bedouin society, and that kind of ethics. So that’s where it started from”. (Karen, US)*

*“I was looking for change outside my country to come and teach, and then I got this call from one of the universities, so I just thought that I would give it a try”. (Prisha, India)*

*“I think for me it was just the experience. I wanted to do something different. I’ve been teaching and working in academics in Ireland and I just wanted to try something different. I wanted to travel but I didn’t want to stop working, so the UAE seems like a good solution. (Linda, Ireland)*

The wish to go in search of adventure and pursue something new or a change are all related to the geographic distance but also, significantly, to the notion of challenge. However, some of the respondents indicated marriage and or family related reasons as being the major reason for coming to the UAE. Such reasons were captured during the interviews, for example:

*“I was just coming out of a divorce which had really taken a toll on me. I needed a place to escape, a place to start a new life” (Patrick, United States)*

*“My wife is from the Philippines and I am from the United Kingdom, so an academic job in the UAE was an excellent opportunity for us to be closer to the Philippines and the UK. The UAE is more or less like central to these two countries. And, of course, that the financial benefits were comparatively better”. (Robert, United Kingdom)*

*“Indeed it was not planned. I was working in Lebanon, I was teaching. But I came here with my parents and then I applied for private schools and then I moved to this institution.” (Fidia, Lebanon/Palestine)*

*To be honest, unlike the UK where there's limited support or sort of "good things" so to speak for mothers that work, the UAE provided better opportunities for working mothers. So the reason I chose education was to make sure that my holidays were in line with my son's holidays. So that's the only reason that I came to the UAE and got into academia. Though I also like research, my priority was my son, making sure that I was with him, had time for him rather than him being with a maid or being alone. (Kimberly, United Kingdom)*

The above findings are generally consistent with the findings of Chapman et al., (2014), Clark (2015), Lehn (2016), Richardson (2005) and Richardson and Mallon (2005), Sanderson (2014), and Selmer and Lauring (2013) in the sense that family-related issues exert a positive influence on the decision to expatriate. Other respondents also highlighted research opportunities, international experience, and career growth as the key "pull" factors that brought them to the UAE. For example:

*"During my job interview, I was told that they wanted experienced academics with a strong research background and that they needed people like me to come and help create and develop the research culture here. So, I considered it as an opportunity to gain academic experience in the Middle East, especially in academic research." (Alexandru, Romania)*

*"I basically came to start a department in marine engineering in this institution. This is something the country never had. So, the people who wanted to start this got in touch with me because I had been part of the start-up in New Zealand for Marine Engineering and that was nine years ago. So, I have a track record of start-ups which is quite different from joining an on-going system where there's momentum and you just fit in, whereas in a start up its completely green field. So, my motivation to come here is to start something that the country never had". (Vikas, New Zealand)*

The above views are found to be in alignment with the findings of previous studies such as Altbach (2003) who indicates that some academics are motivated to take up overseas jobs as they want to be part of the opportunity to be at the centres of world science and scholarship. Clark (2015), Lehn (2016), Miller (2008, 2010), Richardson (2005), and Sanderson (2014)

also add that career mobility is a major concern when considering expatriation. Although the desire for adventure, looking for a change, and family-related issues are significant reasons to expatriate, some respondents regarded international experience as key to obtaining a distinct advantage in the academic marketplace (Richardson and Mallon, 2005).

As previously indicated in the literature review, there exists a link between an expatriate academic's motivation to expatriate and his or her overall cultural adjustment. This link makes it evident that the expatriate academic's motivation could either lead to positive or negative overall cultural adjustment outcomes. For example, Nancy (from South Africa) cautioned future expatriate academics with peculiar motives of coming to the UAE. She said:

*“You cannot come to fix a broken marriage here. You cannot come and fix your rebellious daughter here ... If you are single, don't have illusions that you might find your husband here. I think a lot of them come here and say, 'I'm gonna marry a rich guy' ... I have met a lot of pretty females that are disillusioned thinking that this is the country of men of all sorts and flavours.”*

Nancy observed that expatriate academics may experience disappointment or regret if their expectations do not match the reality in the UAE. In another statement, Vikas (from New Zealand) suggested that prospective expatriate academics seeking to work in a result-oriented and healthy organisation should be cautious when joining an organisation which is undergoing huge changes. He stated that:

*“Avoid joining this organisation in the next two or three years because they are going through a metamorphosis. The “butterfly has not yet emerged” and so give it some time. It's ugly when you look at the larva, the pupa going through that stage. So, if you want to be part of this and you like that kind of challenge, then fantastic, but it can be quite frustrating. You won't see results; you are just part of the process. But if you really want to see something healthy, then you will need to wait for the butterfly to stage to come in”.*

Vikas' statement further echoes the need for perspective expatriate academics to consider their intentions (motivations) for accepting the international job and see if those intentions match the organisation. It should be noted that Vikas resigned because he felt that there was a mismatch between the state at which the organisation was in and his intentions or motivation for coming work in the UAE and that organisation (in particular). Alexandru from Romania also expressed similar dismay with regards to a mismatch between his motives for coming to work in the UAE as an academic and the actual job. Alexandru's motives were to help create and develop the research culture in his respective HEI. He stated that:

*“However I have been disappointed so far because academic research has never been supported since I've joined, especially when over 80% of our workload is teaching.”*

On advising future expatriate academics, Lilly (from Great Britain) also added, *“I would tell them to not come here with the view that they are on holiday”*.

Overall, it can be concluded that the general findings under “motivation for coming to the UAE” appear to confirm the previous studies. In this study, the respondents also confirm that the expatriate academics have moved to the UAE for personal and professional reasons. As mentioned in the literature review, money is not the main motivator for the majority of the expatriate academics. Clark, (2015), McNulty and Selmer (2017), and Sanderson (2014) share the view that considering the breadth and complicated nature of the push and pull factors that motivate academics to expatriate, it is clear that these factors must be examined and assessed on an individual basis.



### 6.2.2.2 Influence of Overseas Experience

The data obtained from the interview affirm the findings of previous studies that expatriates academics with previous cross-cultural experience tend to be more prepared for expatriation and more successful in their cross-cultural adjustment. Such cross-cultural experiences were captured during the interviews, for example:

*“I was prepared. I was really prepared for anything because of what I had read and heard. Also because of my previous work experience in Thailand. Even though Thailand and the UAE have different cultures, the coping strategies used and the need to be flexible are the same... I was prepared for the worst. So for me things were not that bad in terms of cultural shock. I was able to sort of just open up. I was sort of more positive than most. I was really prepared for anything goes and any kind of chaos. I think when you've lived somewhere else and you've tried something that is really different to you, in my case Thailand, and then you come here - it helps a lot. People that we know that have come straight from their home country, who never been to this region or Asia or Far East or had any cross cultural travel experience - it's tough for them.” (Frank, Denmark)*

*“I am actually trained as a geography teacher, so I am kind of very interested in different cultures, different countries and travelling, and I had already done a bit of travelling as well mainly in Europe and sort of the Far East. ... So, I was a bit prepared for the expatriate experience. And I read a lot also. For example because I was at the women's college, and there were certain things that I think I was made aware of that. For example, just being aware of what is culturally insensitive in terms of dress code for example.” (Lilly, Great Britain)*

Although many of the respondents claimed that their previous cross-cultural experience had a positive impact on their cross-cultural adjustment in the UAE, a few respondents claimed that despite their previous cross-cultural experience, they still experienced a great deal of culture shock. Mary's travel experience was extensive, yet she still experienced a great deal of culture shock in the UAE. Mary, an Australian national and a chemical engineering lecturer

has been living in the UAE for only one year but had lived and worked in five different countries before, thus having immense experience in different cultures. She, however, stated that she had never worked in a Middle Eastern country, and the UAE was her first Middle Eastern job assignment. If she had made cross-cultural experience in countries that have almost the same culture as the UAE, it probably would have prepared her better. Mary's culture shock not only impacted on her ability to adjust to life in the UAE but it also took a toll on her job performance. She shared that she was not going to renew her contract at the end of her three-year term. She added that the students' low academic level and the style of the management adopted by the institution were two of the reasons why she wanted to leave. She stated:

*“Despite my vast international experience working as an academic in Germany, Vietnam, China, Thailand, and Kenya, I expected that or I would say that I was overconfident that I could adjust easily to living and working in the UAE. This was my first time in the Middle East. Yes, I’ve transited in Dubai a couple of times but that’s way different from living and working in the country. I’m really not happy at all. My family isn’t happy either”.* (Mary, Australia)

Other respondents also claimed that their previous cross-culture experience did not have a positive impact on his cross-cultural adjustment in the UAE. George stated that:

*“I have worked in several East and West European countries but none of that international experience adequately prepared me for my academic position in the UAE. It’s a totally different ball game; you have to be in it to be prepared for it. It was very difficult for me initially but eventually I persevered and survived”* (George, United Kingdom)

*“Despite my vast academic experience in Europe, I still experienced some level of cultural shock. My expectations were not met in many ways. Not all international experience can prepare you for an academic job in this country. Your international experience must be culturally similar in order for it to be an advantage”.* (Alice, France).

*“Being here, I realise that one needs to have some GCC experience in order to be better prepared for an academic job in the UAE. Despite my vast academic experience in Europe, I still experienced some level of cultural shock. My expectations were not met in many ways”.*  
(Sarah, United States)

Other respondents revealed the significance of previous cross-cultural experience that was either relevant or similar to that of the UAE and their current place of work. According to them, such relevant or similar cross-cultural experience made them more prepared for living and working in the UAE. For example:

*“I had previously worked in Oman, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Bahrain, so I was quite familiar with the regional culture and the culture of the youth in this region. This pretty much prepared me for the UAE job but, you know, each country is unique and even though there are similarities, there are also differences. So, I still had some amount of cultural shock but they were like pulses or small spikes – nothing overwhelmingly shocking. (Edward, Philippines)*

*“I really didn’t face any challenges with regards to the general environment or interaction. My experience in Saudi Arabia and Qatar prepared me well for this job. My only major challenges or sources of stress were with the organisation and the way things were ran.”*  
(Ruth, Canada)

*“I have travelled and worked in GCC countries except Bahrain so I wasn’t really shocked at all. I had an idea of what it would be like in the UAE.” (Walter, United Kingdom)*

*“I’d worked in Kuwait previously, so I was kind of familiar with the culture – I mean the regional culture... So, I knew a little bit about what to expect. I wasn’t hugely disappointed; I suppose I mean I am still here. I think people who are hugely disappointed, they leave right away. (Mark, USA)*

The respondents’ experience in adjusting to similar cultures is in alignment with the previous work of Black et al (1991), Isakovic and Whitman (2013), Miller (2009, 2010), and Takeuchi, Wang, and Marinova (2005) who have all emphasised that previous experience of the same or similar culture offers the best basis on which accurate expectations are formed. According to Tanova, and Ajayi (2016) and Miller (2009, 2010), an expatriate is likely to have a better founded expectation based on a similar cultural experience than a dissimilar cultural experience (pg.54). However, contrary to the above, a few respondents revealed that their perceived relevant or similar previous cross-cultural experience did not necessarily translate into a smoother cross-cultural adjustment in the UAE. For example:

*“Before I arrived, I thought I was prepared but it turned out that I was wrong. I had previously done some academic work in Lebanon, Spain, and Morocco but none of that previous experience was really helpful to me. The first year in the UAE was a learning curve for me but I love it here” (Alfonso, Mexico).*

Other respondents highlighted the negative impact of not having any cross-cultural experience at all. The need for relevant cross-cultural experience was also highlighted.

*“Yes, I faced several challenges in regards to adjusting to the general environment and work environment. This is my first time out of Ireland. It has been a learning curve for me and my family. Every day was something new for us. We almost packed up and went back to Ireland but we couldn’t because we had rented our home in Ireland and taken the kids out of their schools in Ireland”. (Thomas, Ireland).*

Overall, it could be concluded that the general findings under “influence of previous overseas experience” appear to confirm previous studies (e.g Aycan, 1997b; Isakovic and Whitman, 2013; Masgoret, 2006; Miller, 2010; Parker and McEvoy, 1993; Shaffer et al., 1999; Winkelman, 1994) that the more relevant cross-cultural experience an academic has, the greater the ease of his or her adjustment in future cross-cultural encounters. As previously identified by Takeuchi, Wang, and Marinova (2005) and mentioned in this thesis, some respondents stressed that need for previous relevant (culturally similar) international experience rather than just any previous international experience.

The above responses also indicate that the cross-cultural experience of the expatriate academic or the extent of the international awareness taking into account factors such as ethnic background, prior relevant expatriate job skills in language and travel experience, affect the candidate’s ability to adjust to a new environment. The success of the expatriates is more certain if they have a culturally similar international orientation. Although many of the respondents claimed that their previous cross-cultural experience had a positive impact on their cross-cultural adjustment in the UAE, a few respondents claimed that despite their previous cross-cultural experience, they still experienced a great deal of culture shock in the UAE. This negative impact is also confirmed by previous studies which states that previous international experience does not always lead to improved adjustment (Black and Stephens, 1989; Guðmundsdóttir, 2015).

### **6.2.2.3 Pre-departure training**

Pre-departure cross-cultural training is an important aspect of an expatriate's acculturation process and can impact the job productivity (Mizzi and O’Brien-Klewchuk, 2016). Cross-

cultural training in general has been found to be one of the most effective methods to improve expatriate adjustment (Black and Mendenhall, 1990; Black et al., 1991; Isakovic, and Whitman, 2013; Kivrak, Ross, Arslan, and Tuncan, 2009; Miller 2008, 2010). Littrell et al. (2006) reviewed 25 years of cross-cultural training research and revealed that it was effective in enabling successful expatriate adjustment. However, in this study, out of the 324 respondents who participated in the survey only 6.17% (n=20) confirmed that they received some form cross-cultural training or orientation. The author included these quantitative data from the survey as the lack of training (pre-arrival and/or in-country) was reflected in the interview responses, for example:

*“We never received any form of pre-arrival cross-cultural training. The information given to us during the recruitment and interview processes were not also enough and clear. Much of the information that we gathered ourselves was pretty much anecdotal and often conflicting”. (Thomas, Ireland).*

*“I did not receive any form pre-arrival cross-cultural training. I was interviewed, offered the job, and then I arrived in the UAE.” (Aisha, Turkey).*

Overall, it could be concluded that the responses under “pre-departure training” appear to confirm previous studies that states that even though several studies have demonstrated the significance of cross-cultural orientation and training (pre-arrival and/or in-country), many organizations still neglect it (e.g. Black and Mendenhall, 1990; Caligiuri, 2000; Deshpande and Viswesvaran, 1992; Johnson, Lenartowicz and Apud, 2006; Krishna, Sahay and Walsham, 2004; Miller 2008, 2010; Tung, 1981, 1982)

#### **6.2.2.4. Organizational Selection Mechanisms**

According to Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991) and Miller (2008, 2010), the organisation also plays an important role in the expatriates' process of adjustment. Miller (2008, 2010) highlighted the importance of the mechanism and criteria for selecting expatriates as an important component of the anticipatory stage. Concurring views were captured during the interviews, for example:

*“Organisations need to ensure that the prospective academic not only has the academic or professional qualification and experience, but he or she should also have skills, abilities, and experience to be able to work within a different cultural environment and working with people from other cultural backgrounds. (Juliana, New Zealand)*

*“Expatriate academics just like seamen should be selected based on a predefined expatriate profile that matches the nature and culture of the organisation, and the culture of the host country. You cannot just recruit and select any expatriate to come and work here” (Alexandru, Romania)*

*“People responsible for recruitment and selection should remove this notion that an expatriate academics' success in a previous international job will equate success in their new international academic job” (Nancy, South Africa)*

*“Some expatriates should just not be recruited to work here or in any HEI in the first place. Organisations need to analyse the motives for expatriation of the prospective expatriate academic and based on that, assess if such motives are in line or fit the needs or the organisation” (Gary, New Zealand)*

According to Sparrow, Brewster and Harris (2004), the common mistake made by some organisations is that they assume that an expatriate's skills are common across the board and can be universally applied. The researcher of this thesis supports Sparrow, Brewster and Harris' (2004) view because the job requirements of an expatriate

academic greatly differ from that of a traditional expatriate (Trembath, 2016). There is also the general presumption that “teaching is teaching” (Getty, 2011) and therefore it is assumed that the success achieved by an expatriate in one country means he or she will be successful in another country. Some respondents stressed the need for HEIs to be honest during the recruitment and selection process. For example:

*“HEIs should be honest and frank about the nature of the job and select only those who are willing to accept the true nature of the challenge. Unfortunately, this is not happening. Beautiful pictures are presented by recruitment agencies and during interviews. What I was told during the interview and what I experienced when I started working were two totally different scenarios” (Hellen, Australia).*

*“There should be brutal honesty during the recruitment and selection process. If I had known what I know now before, I might ask one of us to come here first to explore before the others came”. (Nancy, South Africa)*

Overall, it can be concluded that the above findings under “organisational selection mechanisms” appear to confirm the findings of Black et al, (1991), Miller (2008, 2009; 2010), and Parker and McEvoy (1993) who have stated that if the selection process is done in the correct manner, it can go a long way to lower the problems associated with the cross-cultural adjustment of the individual. The findings also suggest that HEIs like any other organisation should not neglect salient competencies like cross-cultural skills and abilities of relations (Black et al., 1991; Tung, 1981).

### **6.2.3 In-country adjustment**

Once an expatriate arrives in a new country, there are factors that affect his or her cross-cultural adjustment process (Clark, 2015; Isakovic and Whitman, 2013; Miller, 2008, 2009; 2010; Palthe, 2004; Sanderson, 2014). As previously discussed in the literature review, the



in-country adjustment of an expatriate is influenced by a number of factors including cross-cultural training (Black et al., 1991; Miller, 2009, 2010).

### **6.2.3.1 In-country training**

As previously mentioned in the literature review and in section 2.8.2, cross cultural training has been found to be one of the most effective methods to improve expatriate adjustment (Black and Mendenhall, 1990; Black et al., 1991; Kivrak, Ross, Arslan, and Tuncan, 2009; Littrell et al., 2006; Miller, 2009, 2010). However, in this study, out of the 324 respondents who participated in the survey only 6.17% (n = 20) confirmed that they received some form cross-cultural training or orientation. And only five out of the 20 respondents rated their cross-cultural training or orientation as very satisfactory and above. The researcher brings this quantitative data from the survey as the lack of training was reflected in the interview responses, for example:

*“I was only given a little bit of cultural training for an hour and then they assumed that I was ready to teach but there was no kind of induction or training on the culture of the organisation or about the country or the customs”. (Linda, Ireland).*

*“The only induction given involved a brief talk on the institution, its policies, and the HR requirements. We were also given a tour of the campus. This sort of induction did not assist me in any way; I had to fend for myself. I strongly recommend that new faculty should not be allowed to commence their work without a proper induction and cross-cultural training. A lot is required for new faculty to adjust. This is my recommendation to the institution” (Kofi, Ghana).*

*“I came on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the next day on the 4<sup>th</sup> I was in the classroom directly which I think shouldn't be done that way. Here every day counts and every day is money over here, maybe*

*that's why they don't want to waste time. The students were okay. Students are the same everywhere; they were not ready to learn as much as I could give" (Prisha, India)*

*"The orientation provided by HR didn't help at all. I was left to sink or drown. I had to figure things out for myself. The institution looked great on the outside but the inside was a different story. Students are more interested in getting an "A" grade rather than learning something". (Laura, Spain)*

The responses above indicate that those who received any form of cross-cultural training felt that it was either insufficient or unsatisfactory. Other respondents also suggested that HEIs should implement inductions and training programs for new expatriate academics. They also indicated that the current lack of it led to maladjustment issues for expatriate academics. For example:

*"Well, there should be inductions, all sorts of inductions. Induction can be for one day or for three months - all depending on your HR policy. What I have seen is "You've decided to be here, so learn to adjust. No proper training or orientation was given to me... It is assumed that if I am a self-directed expat, then I have done my homework. I've made the decision, so everything is dealt with and I as an organisation don't have to deal with that - and I think that's a complete disillusion". (Nancy, South Africa)*

Despite the lack of the cross-cultural training or absence of it, expressed by the respondents, one participant expressed satisfaction in the cross-cultural training received by the employing HEI. Lilly from the UK stated: *"The induction program was quite helpful at the time. It did have a positive impact on my adjustment here"*.

In summary, it can be concluded that the above findings under "in-country adjustment" appear to confirm previous studies that even though the respondents acknowledged the importance of pre and post-arrival training, the majority of them did not receive any such training or orientation. This finding confirms what has been previously research that states

that even though several studies have demonstrated the significance of cross-cultural training, many organizations are still neglecting it (Black and Mendenhall, 1990; Clark, 2015; Miller, 2009, 2010; Sanderson, 2014). The findings of the interview also revealed that those who received some sort of training or orientation saw it as inadequate. This inadequacy highlighted by the respondents is also in alignment with previous research that showed that inadequate organizational support and inadequacies in the “provision of suitable preparation, induction, and training provided was the major cause of expatriate cross-cultural issues (Cole and Nesbeth, 2014; Miller, 2009, 2010; Selmer, 2005).

#### **6.2.4 General adjustment to the United Arab Emirates**

According to Reegard (2011), general adjustment is the degree of comfort the person finds within the general living conditions of a new environment. Forming part of general adjustment to the foreign culture and conditions of living abroad are aspects like food, housing, shopping and health care. The dimension of general adjustment lies between job and interaction adjustment (Torbiorn, 1982). When the respondents were talked about their first impressions of the UAE, the majority expressed some sort of shock or disorientation. According to Hall (1959), culture shock refers to the state of having lost the familiar cues encountered at home and substituting them for other cues which seem strange. In addition to culture shock, many of the respondents expressed feelings of anxiety and disorientation which confirms the initial findings of Oberg (1960) who stated that the anxiety and disorientation that sojourners go through in cross-cultural transition is part of the culture shock. Lundstedt (1963) describes culture shock as how one reacts to stress in an environment where being satisfied on essential physical and psychological demands come with uncertainty and are mostly unforeseeable. Such sentiments were captured during the interviews, for example:

*“I felt homesick. I felt disoriented. The whole process of finding accommodation, opening a bank account, getting utility services, and renting a car was all linked to my residence visa, this was frustrating and I just couldn’t understand the process”. (Helen, Australia)*

*“It reminded me a bit of being in a video game but it still does” (Frank, Denmark)*

*My first year was a blur, it was a tremendous adjustment. It was a lot of stress in the sense that I came with my family and the additional pressure on succeeding was tremendous. (Nancy, South Africa)*

*I arrived at Abu Dhabi Airport and I think that the airport was undergoing renovations so there was chaos. To be honest with you, I’m accustomed to the kind of hubs like Singapore, hubs like Singapore are very organised places you know – you don’t have to wait. ... Abu Dhabi was a bit of a shambles in the sense that it took me quite a bit of time to go through passport control, the procedure of finger printing and whatever, even with the assistance of someone from the institution, it was still a shamble.” (Vikas, New Zealand)*

*“The first thing I felt was the heat. I didn’t like the weather”. (Kimberly, Great Britain)*

The responses above indicated that the respondents experienced some level of culture shock. Naturally this is the result of having to reposition oneself to an entirely new environment and culture, the customs, language, and norms of a foreign society, in addition to the unfamiliar physical surroundings. The symptoms may include feeling irritable, anxious, and psychological discomfort. Feelings of isolation can lead to stress, particularly as the expatriate perceives that the business environment as something unknown and experiences the first difficulties (Clark, 2015; Katz and Kahn, 1978; Miller, 2009, 2010; Sanderson, 2014). In addition, some of the participants complained about the high cost of housing, the children’s school fees, and the living conditions in the UAE. They complained about the stress involved in finding housing, the documentation and payments required, and the time it took to obtain documents (e.g. Emirates ID, residency visa, opening a bank account, utilities,

driver's license, renting a car or accessing the internet) that were related to their successfully settling down.

*"I said to myself, 'Oh, to where is it that I have come?' when I was landing and coming out of the airport. Everything was different. It was not so developed like this in those days. The rent prices were shocking. The whole process of opening a bank account, registering for utilities, Emirates ID was a bit confusing. So it was like 'oh', that feeling." (Prisha, India)*

*"I felt frustrated about the internet and the way things were done in the country. I kept complaining: 'Why can't I get internet connection?'. I was desperate to get internet connection to be able to communicate with my friends and family back in the US. I kept saying to myself and other colleagues, 'Why can't they do their internet like we do back home?' I think that was the initial frustration." (Karen, United States)*

The respondents' feelings of anxiety and disorientation confirmed the initial findings of Bock (1970), Kreber and Hounsell, (2014), Miller (2009, 2010), and Sanderson (2014) who stressed that the feeling of being disoriented and helpless emanating from being exposed to a foreign society is very disturbing and is part of the culture shock experience. However, even though some participants experienced some level of cultural shock when they arrived in the UAE, others also stated that the transition was relatively smooth, for example:

*"If I go back four years, I was used to the Middle East because I had done work in Kuwait but I found it was far more tolerant and open than I had expected. My expectations were certainly exceeded." (Keith, United Kingdom)*

*"I experienced no culture shock at all. Right from the airport to my hotel room to moving into my apartment was very smooth. The people were so welcoming and nice. People were just willing to assist me. I was excited to be here and eager to learning more each day. It was nothing like the negative experiences expressed on forums, blogs, and social network sites." (Sandra, Australia)*

*“To be quite honest, I was quite well vested in the UAE because I had lived in Kuwait, I had lived in Oman. I would also frequently visit Dubai as a visitor, so the place was not a strange place or a new place for me.” (Reggie, India)*

Generally, participants’ responses to questions related to the “general adjustment to the UAE” appear to confirm the findings of previous studies on expatriate adjustment. The responses also prove that differences in culture existing between their country of origin and that of the UAE coupled with the generally new environment presented itself as a considerable challenge the newly arrived expatriate academics had to face and overcome.

### **6.2.5 Work Adjustment in the United Arab Emirates**

The expatriate’s work adjustment has been found to have an effect on an array of work outcomes, especially organisational commitment and job satisfaction, which has the potential to affect the expatriate’s work performance (Miller, 2009, 2010; Thomas and Lazarova, 2006; Selmer and Luring, 2013). During the interview, the respondents’ highlighted several work related challenges. The following interviews responses capture some of these challenges:

*“One major frustration for me in most cases was that the curriculum content was not contextualised to suit the cultural context. The system adopted by institution was quite confusing, the textbooks are American, the structure of the university system seems British, the person who heads teaching and learning is Australian –implementing the Australian style of education. There were no local case studies; I had to give examples from western countries.” (Sharon, New Zealand).*

*“In all my years of working as an academic, I’ve never come across such a misalignment between the curriculum content and the academic level of the students. Curriculum content is not culturally or contextually relevant to the UAE. The examples and case studies are all foreign based, there is very little that the students could or can relate to” (Keith, Great Britain)*

The response above confirms previous studies that curriculum related issues are one of the major issues that led to workplace frustrations and challenges for expatriate academics. According to Clarke (2013), and Sanderson (2014), the lack of country specific examples and case studies often made teaching difficult, particularly at the start of taking up their academic position. Halicioglu (2015) also adds that the extent of difficulty faced with regards to the curriculum and the HEI's philosophy depends to a large extent on the previous experience of the expatriate academics and their readiness to learn and adapt. Another issue highlighted by the respondents was regarding the differences between students in the UAE and students in their respective home countries.

*“Even though I’m American, Japan is my home. Teaching in Japan for a long time and then teaching here in the UAE, I always said in either situation you can never ask the class a question because here everybody wants to talk at the same time but in Japan nobody talks, so you always have to nominate somebody ... In some ways, I feel closer to my students here than I would in Japan but in other ways I feel further apart. It’s kind of a mixed bag. There are limits to how far you can go and how far you can talk about things. Whereas in Japan, that is less so but the Japanese tend to be more reticent or reserved so that’s kind of harder to break through while students here are very outgoing and friendly. It’s easy to talk to them”. (Mark, United States)*

*“I think here you are more of a mentor, mother, and a friend, and a sister. You have to be everything to them, whereas at home you're purely their teacher and that's it. If they've got an issue, they come to you whereas here they come to you for everything. You are everything here but you are just a teacher at home.” (Linda, Ireland)*

*“Back home they hardly approach you or blame you for anything that goes wrong. So, I think a sense of ownership is higher back in South Africa than here. But there is also more respect for authority over here ... They are very much more demanding but not in a valid sense of this ... In general, I think students are much more independent, respect for authority, take ownership back home than here, but over here you have to guide them and also try to install a sense of ownership. (Nancy, South Africa)*

*“... I think the students here see education as something that is done to them, they don't see it as a process in which they are actively involved. So, therefore, if they are not doing very well its largely because they ... they see it as they haven't been taught well. They don't take responsibility for their own learning ... They don't remember things; they don't transfer information from one subject to another. They learn in a box and it's almost as if they learn in that box and the lid never comes off again and they are unable to transfer those skills and that information from one context to another.” (Lilly, United Kingdom)*

The interviewees also commented about issues related to the students' attitudes towards education, their English language level, negotiating for marks, and bypassing the usual protocols when complaining about an academic. For example:

*“I was amused at the student low English language ability. I mean, how do you teach the complex mathematical concepts when students lack the basic foundations in English language? This is a huge frustration for me. On one hand, you have these international accepted standard- wise learning outcomes, beautifully written, and then you have the reality. We academics are stuck in the middle” (Walter, United Kingdom)*

*“Sometimes you would find that students would go behind the teacher's back a little bit, you know, if they don't like the answer that you give them. They are not used to you saying no and if they don't like the answer or if you don't change their grade, they will go or they'll be like 'Who can fix it?', they want to know. 'Tell me the name of the person who can fix it or who can give me what I want?'" (Linda, Ireland)*

Another issue highlighted by the respondents was the issue of incompatibility with the management and leadership implemented by their respective HEIs. Such sentiments were captured in the following responses:

*“I think the biggest problem with the management is the lack of communication. A lot of problems could be solved just by communication openly as soon as possible instead of waiting for rumours, and rumours create a lot of problems. (Mark, US)*



*“...I think it’s too hierarchical, there’s too many people and nobody can give an answer and there seems to be a disconnection between the staff and the management. The teachers are the people doing the day to day work but the decisions that affect their jobs and their lives are being made by people who don’t go into the classroom, have never taught and don’t understand the challenges that expats teachers make or anything.” (Linda, Ireland)*

*“There was more concern with ‘saving face’. Also, the institution was very sensitive to their image and didn’t want anything that would tarnish it. While this is understandable, it can have a negative effect. I witness academics being fired without properly investigating the incident. All levels of management were ‘scared’ of student complaints and often left the academics dry in case there was an issue. The management did not support academics in times of student-faculty conflicts. The students’ views were often taken as final.” (Maria, United Kingdom)*

*“It’s completely top-down transactional, and a great sense of ‘denialism’. There’s no theory for that leadership theory but it’s completely transactional. In ‘denialism’, you signed a contract, so you should be happy. You live in a wonderful building, so you should be happy. You are here everyday, so nothing is wrong. Your computer works fine, it’s not an out-dated company, it doesn’t matter... So, for me it’s typically transactional it about ‘bums on the sits’, it’s about student numbers, it’s about making a surplus profit although we are a non-profit organisation.” (Nancy, South Africa)*

According to Hofstede’s (1980), Schwartz’s (1999), and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner’s (1998) cultural dimensions, the style of management in Middle Eastern countries has to do with decision structures which are more centralised and more centred on authority. Perhaps this explains why the expatriate academics involved in this study encountered challenges related to the management style implemented in their respective institutions, specifically when it comes to decision making. The responses also confirms Clark (2015), Kreber and Hounsell (2014), Sanderson (2014), and Soylu’s (2007) findings that the powerlessness becomes a stronger cause of stress for employees of foreign origin as they

perceive that they are not being included in the inner part of making decisions that may hamper their job security and eventually compel them to leave the country. For example:

*“The style of management is different; academics are not consulted even though they are implementers of such policies. I could not understand how and why students could be so bold to negotiate for marks without making an effort for it. The salient instruction is to do as you are told and not ask questions. In most cases, answers were provided to the questions asked”.*  
(Debra, Philippines)

*“Employee engagement is very low. Upper management makes decisions without consulting faculty. It’s like we teach the students something or a best practice but we don’t practice it. We don’t practice what we preach.”* (Alexandru, Romania)

*“There was also a high level of job insecurity felt by academic staff. More academic staff were totally demotivated, and this atmosphere had a great influence on me. I kept asking myself if I had made the right decision to work here.”* (Sharon, New Zealand).

In addition, the respondents’ sentiments on the management style at their respective HEIs confirm that problems emerge when the management style differs from what the expatriate academics expect (Clarke, 2013; Kreber and Hounsell, 2014, Sanderson, 2014). Other issues faced by new expatriate academics (particularly in the UAE) include inadequate available time to undertake research work (Clarke, 2015; Fielden and Gilard, 2011). This perception was expressed by some respondents in this study, for example:

*“Another issue was the lack of research in the institution. You see, in my previous institution, research had always been a significant part of my career but over here it’s not like that*  
(Alexandru, Romania)

*“There is more emphasis on teaching rather than research ... I kept asking myself if I had made the right decision to work here.”* (Sharon, New Zealand).

*“One of the work related challenges or should I say frustrations that I still face today, has to do with the lack of research opportunities at my current institution. So much emphasis is place non-academic related duties, duties that should be assigned to non-academic staff”*  
(Prisha, India)

*“A major frustration for me now which will greatly influence my intention to stay is the high emphasis on teaching and less focus on research. Don’t get me wrong, I love teaching and I am not saying that teaching shouldn’t be part of our job as academics, but you have to realise that without ample time for research, academia never fulfil their true purpose.”*

*“One shock that I experienced was the amount of teaching load. Almost 80% of our time as academics is spent on teaching and non-academic duties. I feel that I’m not developing as an international academic”*

Many of the respondents also related to the challenges they faced working with other expatriates from other cultures. Some respondents commented on the lack of collegiality among the expatriate academics. According to Miller (2010), Shaw (2001), and Ward et al. (2001), cultural heterogeneity within an academic environment can negatively influence its performance.

*“There's still a lot of sexism that you would think is preposterous, that we have moved beyond that. There's still typical notion that someone that should stand in for someone on a temporal basis or someone who has to take the lead, it has to be a man. I find that appalling, I find it very difficult for men to take advise from me because I'm in a managerial position. For them not to adhere to, that I find it sad, frustrating that evolved through the centuries. And by working in a cosmopolitan scenario where we are multicultural extremely diverse that we are still fixated to our typical cultural roots which shapes us, but it doesn't make us flexible following a route of compromise and accommodation. That's for me sad. So, yes, as much as we are cross-cultural and my culture states that I would wish that professionalism will prevail and not multicultural propensities, but that's not the case. (Nancy, South Africa)*

*“At that time it was a very good situation. Back then in 2009, people were very accommodating then they were like very happy to have you here. Now it seems a lot less so. So, at that time, I felt very looked after and everything was provided and if I needed anything someone would help. So, I experienced very little work related adjustment issues”. (Donna, United States)*

*“Another thing that bothered me was the lack of collegiality among faculty which was really strange. No higher education institution can grow without collegiality.” (Alexandru, Romania)*

Despite the several challenges expressed by many respondents in this study, a few of them indicated minimal challenges and frustrations. For example:

*“No, I didn't have any serious difficulties. I think maybe students knew I was new and I was quite young at the time and they (students) tried a little bit to test the water but nothing serious. When I first started about seven and a half years ago, staff were quite good and was smaller”. (Linda, Ireland)*

*“Because of my extensive travels, I was a bit prepared for the expatriate experience. And I read a lot also. For example because I was at the women's institute, there were certain things that I think I was made aware of such as for example just being aware of what is culturally insensitive in terms of dress code, for example. I mean I knew it but I think it became more important since I started working in the institute.”*

Despite the several challenges expressed by some respondents, many of them expressed satisfaction in their job as an expatriate academic. For example:

*“I'm really close, I like my students (respondent speaks in a soft and passionate tone). They have my phone number, my email, they can call me anytime they like. My relationship with my superiors is very good, excellent!” (Lilly, Great Britain)*

*“I like my students. They are very polite and friendly. I have never had any conflict or problem with them. We always treat each other with respect.” (Frank, Denmark)*

*“My work colleagues are excellent. I think I am very fortunate here. I work with some great people, I have a huge respect for everybody and I think I could sit in the lunch room and talk to anybody - that's one of the things I really enjoy and particularly trying to meet people from other faculties. (Lilly, United Kingdom)*

In summary, on the issue of work adjustment, the management style of the institution, low entry standards of English language, lack of research culture and funding, difficulty to impose rules as an academic staff, the lack of localised and contextualised teaching and learning material, poor academic performance of students, a high level of job insecurity (lack of tenure) seem to be some of the main issues affecting expatriate academics. Despite the many challenges that were shared, many respondents still expressed some level of satisfaction with their job.

### **6.2.6 Social Interaction Adjustment**

Interaction adjustment is related to how confident the individual feels when interacting with the host nationals at work and outside work (Mendenhall and Oddou, 1985; Reegard, 2011). Scholars such as Church (1982), Masgoret (2006), and Ward and Kennedy (1993) emphasize the significance of a positive relationship between expatriates and intercultural interaction in the HCNs. For example:

*“In the beginning I didn't understand some of the expressions (of the Emiratis) even though we are all Arabs and we speak Arabic but they have different words, different dialects so it's different but now I understand everything. There were difficulties understanding the way they deal with each other and understanding how to deal with them, how to approach them but now I know. In the beginning I had difficulties approaching them, how to talk to them, how to start dealing with them” (Fadia, Lebanon/Palestine).*

*“As a Canadian national in the UAE, I found it hard to integrate with the locals because of the huge cultural difference. However, as you are aware, the majority of the people in the UAE are foreigners, especially in this institution, so interaction is not only about Emiratis but it’s also about interacting with people from different nationalities. You have to have a positive interaction with both Emiratis and people from different countries. In my case, I have a closer interaction with people and colleagues from other countries, so I was not that isolated here. It was easier to interact with people from different countries than with Emiratis”.* (Ruth, Canada)

*“I don’t really ever find myself in the situation to make friendships with Emiratis. They keep themselves to themselves. The only people I come into contact with are the people at work or students and you wouldn’t have friendships outside work with students. And the Emirati staff are not approachable”.* (Doris, United Kingdom)

*“The language barrier made it difficult to make Emirati friends. They were, however, friendly and respectful when you get closer to them. I think we have these preconceptions before coming to the country and this plays in our minds when we meet Emiratis. It was initially difficult to get closer to the host country nationals”.* (Michelle, United States)

Black et al. (1999) defines interaction adjustment as the facet adjustment which involves the ease attained in interacting with host nationals in work and non-work situations. Their study was originally within the context of expatriates moving into a country with a majority population of host nationals. The UAE, however, presents a different national demographic environment as around 90% of its population and 95% of its workforce is made up of expatriates. This makes it the ethnically most diverse country in the Middle East (*The Economist*, 2014). Consequently, expatriate academics not only have to be comfortable interacting with host nationals but also and more importantly with other expatriates from approximately 202 different countries (*Khaleej Times*, 2006). Hence, due to the nature of the UAE population, it was appropriate for the researcher to include interview questions that covered the interaction with non-host country nationals. In fact, the respondents in this study

highlighted the significance of being able to build positive intercultural relationships with other expatriates, for example:

*“I think for anyone considering working in the UAE, it is important to realise that you would not only be interacting with HCNs but also peopling from different countries. In fact, a bulk of your interaction might be with people from other countries rather than HCNs”. (Mary, Australia)*

*“My work colleagues are excellent, I think I am very fortunate here. I work with some great people, I have a huge respect for everybody and I think I could sit in the lunch room and talk to anybody - that's one of the things I really enjoy, and particularly trying to meet people from other faculties”. (Lilly, Great Britain)*

*“It was a bit challenging working with colleagues from other cultures. It is a great experience but it requires a lot openness and flexibility”. (Mark, United States)*

The respondents also indicated that communication between the expatriate academics from different countries was limited and sometimes restricted. According to the responses, expatriate academics created their own communication circles by mostly communicating with their own fellow “countrymen”. For example:

*“Not all expatriates were friendly. In my opinion there was minimal communication between expatriates. Most expatriates kept to themselves or communicated most with other expatriates from the same country or similar cultural backgrounds”.*

*“There were many cases when I would greet a fellow expatriate and he or she would either not respond or would give me a cold response. This was shocking to me because I come from an academic environment where a very lively and collegial atmosphere exists among academics.” (Alexanderu, Romania)*

*“Most of my friends are Westerners; I've got Australian, South African, New Zealand, a couple of American friends. Most of my friends, to be fair, are British. I would say the other ones are more peripheral friends - they are more work related. (Lilly, Great Britain).*

*“As an expatriate from an Arabic country and a Muslim, I experienced initial challenges when interacting with other expatriates from non-Arabic countries, especially non-Muslims. (Keith, Great Britain)*

On the contrary, not all respondents expressed major challenges or frustrations interacting with people from other countries aside HCNs. For example:

*“The interaction with colleagues is positive with all nationalities. (Doris, Great Britain)*

*“I get on quite well with them. I would like to think that I get on quite well with my colleagues. I have a professional relationship with them but I do enjoy, you know, socialising with them. I respect them and I support them as well and I suppose I kind of think of all of us as a team because we are all in it together. When things aren't going great, certain things, new policies or whatever, I think that merely made the team closer. But our campus, we have quite a nice team out there.” (Lilly, Great Britain)*

In terms of interaction with students, some participants stated that student interaction was high, despite the fact that most of the students had low English language abilities. For example:

*“The students are very friendly and respectful when compared to students in other countries where I have taught” (Charles, Great Britain)*

*“The students appreciate it a lot when you treat them with respect and have time to listen to their opinions.” (Ruth, Canada)*

*“It is very cordially and professional and friendly” (Juliana, New Zealand).*

*“I have a very positive relationship with students, they are great guys”. (Sean, Australia).*



*“I like my students. They have phone number, my email, they can call me anytime they like”.*  
(Sharon, New Zealand).

*“The level of student interaction is really high despite the learning challenges that they exhibit. This interaction mainly because students like to get feedback on their assessments and question why they got a certain mark”* (Amy, Australia)

*“I have a good relationship with my students. I love them. They are a bunch of good kids”*  
(Maria, Great Britain).

Despite the positive portray of student interaction by some of the respondents, others emphasised the need for caution when interacting with them:

*“Students seem to have the upper hand. The student is always right, and this is something that never happens in my country. It is always difficult to communicate with local students. I was warned to be mindful of the comments that I made or the way that I expressed my opinion. I was told to stay away from issues related politics, and religion, and even though I never discuss these issues in any of my lectures, it still made me very nervous”.* (Alan, United States)

*“I had to be mindful of how, when, and where I gave feedback to students. I realised that students felt offended when I spoke to them about their work in public”.* (Jason, Canada)

*“Sometimes you would find that students would go behind the teacher's back a little bit. You know if they don't like the answer that you give them. They are not used to you saying no and if they don't like the answer or if you don't change their grade, they will go or they'll be like ‘Who can fix it?’, they want to know. ‘Tell me the name of the person who can fix it or who can give me what I want?’”.* (Linda, Ireland)

On the issue of interacting with people in authority at the workplace, a significant number of the participants were seen to work under managers who are expatriates themselves and other HCNs. Some respondents expressed their sense of caution when interacting with people in

authority. In some instances, their interaction with other expatriates and those in authority at work was strictly professional or was non-existent at all. For example:

*“Just accommodating, try to work on my facial expressions. I don’t have a lot of respect for many” (Nancy, South Africa)*

*“There is very little two-way communication between us and the management” (Kevin, Hungary).*

*“Management only communicates to us when a policy has to be implemented. We’re never consulted on issues that concern us” (Kate, Great Britain).*

*“The best way to survive in this environment is to simply do as you are told, do not question or criticise anything. Keep your thoughts to yourself” (William, United States).*

During the interview, some participants were hesitant to comment in depth on issues related to their interaction with those in the upper management (beyond their line manager). Hence, it was difficult to investigate further into this subject. However, a number of the participants said that they did have positive interactions with their bosses. For example:

*“I have a very cordial relationship with my line manager. The interaction is great”. (Alfonso, Mexico)*

*“She’s more approachable, there’s more communication” (Linda, Ireland)*

*“My immediate boss is very friendly and communicative” (Jason, Canada)*

*“I also have a very open relationship with my immediate boss, I can more or less say anything I want to and he will listen to me.” (Doris, Great Britain)*

In terms of the respondents’ social life in the UAE, most of them expressed their satisfaction:

*“I have a much better social life here even as a mother with a small child than I would do at home because a lot of the household chores are taken from me and it gives me more time to spend with my child in the evening, weekends. You know, I would meet friends, go to the pool. I have kind of embraced expat life to a certain extent. At the moment now, because we do have a toddler, my life does kind of revolve around family things and pool trips but we do our things like go out on weekends and things. We have quite a nice yeah” (Linda, Ireland)*

*“My social life in the UAE is so relaxed. I have less stress here where I’m right in the middle of all the hotspots in the city, so I love it” (Sarah, United States)*

*“There are a lot of fun things to do. You can never run out of things to do. I have a very active social life. I love it here”. (Walter, Great Britain)*

*“It’s a great social life. I love my weekends. I have tons of friends here. I feel more happy here than I would do back home”. (Sandra, Australia)*

*“The UAE is one of the best places to have a great social life, meet people from different cultures. I mean, there are so many things you could do that would keep you really busy. I have relatives in Dubai, Sharjah, and Abu Dhabi, so the UAE feels like my second home” (Reggie, India)*

Lilly presents a mixed bag of opinions on her social life in the UAE. She expressed having experienced quite an enjoyable social life when she was single. According to her:

*“It’s changed a lot because I was obviously single when I first came to the UAE. At the moment, because of the financial climate my husband unfortunately doesn’t work in the UAE anymore and I think that’s common to quite a number of people and he comes back at weekends. So, we try to condense our social life into two or three days of the weekend.” (Lilly, Great Britain)*

Even though many respondents’ expressed enjoying the quality of their social life in the UAE, a few of them did not think they had a social life at all:

*“I live alone. My wife and kids are in the UK, so it’s really boring out here. My routine is simply go to work and go back to my apartment. It’s a very lonely life. It’s depressing sometimes. I am only here because we need the to help pay the bills back home” (Robert, Great Britain)*

*“My social life is non-existent. My husband and I - we are best friends and without any nanny that can look after the kids although they are bigger now but it’s non-existing. I don’t try to socialise with my colleagues, I try to avoid that. ..., it’s very structured, everything is linked to paying a lot of money, we don’t do this whole social life e.g. brunches, or go to this restaurant. We can’t survive if we do that because again the school fees are tremendously high. We miss all the greenery back home” (Nancy, South Africa)*

*“We used to go out a lot when we first arrived but now we don’t. We spend most of our time indoors; I must say it’s getting quite boring these days” (Frank, Denmark)*

*“I find it difficult to get the right crowd to hang out with. There’s so much gossiping within certain expatriate circles so I tend to keep to myself” (Doris, Great Britain).*

In summary, it can be concluded that the above findings under “social interaction” suggest that the respondents experienced language barriers, felt that their HCNs were not approachable, and felt that there was a lack of interaction with other expatriate academics from different countries. The findings also revealed that any communication among expatriate academics seemed to take place mostly with those from the same country of origin. Some expatriate academics only talked to colleagues from other countries if they had to meaning when the job required it. These overall findings confirm that one of the most difficult dimensions of adjustment is interacting because different cultures come with different rules to guide the proper function of individuals within their various societies (Black et al., 1992; Mendenhall and Oddou, 1985; Miller, 2010).

### 6.2.7 Job satisfaction

Parker and McEvoy (1993) suggest that job satisfaction must be considered as an integral factor in cross-cultural adjustment. Cross-cultural adjustment is related to job satisfaction, commitment to organisation and the intentions to exit the assignment (Hechanova et al., 2003). Khattak et al. (2013) and Williams et al. (2001) identified expatriate stress and job satisfaction as having a negative relationship. Lee and Liu (2006) indicated that foreign nationals who find satisfaction with their jobs in the host country are likely to manage cross-cultural adjustment effectively. For the above reasons (although not included in the research objectives and questions), the researcher had to investigate the respondents' job satisfaction in respect to their academic jobs. Many of the respondents expressed their job satisfaction, and a great number of them expressed their joy of teaching students, despite the many challenges and frustrations that they encountered. For example:

*"I like it here, I enjoy it here. I feel like the UAE is my home. Really, I enjoy working here."*  
(Fadia, Lebanon/Palestine)

*Yes, I am absolutely satisfied with my job and living here as well. It's been little over five years now but its still fun and a bit of an adventure. I enjoy teaching and I enjoy the students. That's the main plus of working here – it's the interaction with the students although that was a challenge before.* (Frank, Denmark)

*"Yes, of course, I'm quite satisfied. You know, it may sound strange but I do like seeing the students move on graduating. I'm quite amused by students who come to the prep program and then you look at them and say 'My god, what a waster' and they end up getting a bachelor's degree, getting a job. That's the inspiring thing".* (William, United States)

*"I do enjoy working in the UAE. I've very much got the mentality that I don't let things annoy me. Some of my colleagues have left because they thought the place was unprofessional, they weren't getting support from staff, they didn't like things but for me I think there's more positives than negatives about my life and I'm quite happy to just say 'I don't make the decision's here' and don't let it stress me".* (Linda, Ireland)

Although many respondents expressed satisfaction with their academic positions, some of were dissatisfied, especially with the management, the non-existence of funding and opportunities for research, or the teaching part of the job. For example:

*“Not satisfied. It’s based on the lack of organisational citizenship, lack of organisational culture, the lack of research, the lack of academic collegiality, the lack of abilities to be part of research projects of the country, the lack of the ability to go and do actually conferences. Funding is also an issue. Back home we had a very easy system - it worked somehow. The UK people like to complicate things and nothing happens. The lack of strong leadership - operational leadership, its unbelievable. ... I think, most of us have reached a level in which we say I think we are willing to go now and not go for a UK based university ... Very disappointing. I mean for reasons already discussed in this interview. But I must say that I’m very glad to have a job and contract at least”. (Nancy, South Africa)*

*“My expectations have not been met because when I came here I thought I was going to start something and start from scratch and build a team and hire people from around the world because the nature of the industry is international ... When I was called in as program chair, I was told that I would not be teaching and then the policy changed and then we were asked to do six credit hours – that’s two courses. I have personally found that there have been a huge number of changes that have happened in a very short span of time, but when I first came the mood was buoyant. It was very supportive and that’s one of the reasons why I came here - it was much better than anticipated. However, this changed in due course due to structural changes in the organisation. So in my opinion, they are very nice changes, but will they generate the desired results internationally? My answer is distinctly no”. (Vikas, New Zealand)*

The participants’ responses in relation to their job satisfaction indicate that satisfaction derived from one’s job is one of the foretold results of cross-cultural adjustment (Lee, 2005; Miller, 2009, 2010; Shaffer and Harrison, 1998;). The findings also confirm that cross-cultural adjustment is related to job satisfaction, commitment to organisation and the intentions to stay (Hechanova et al., 2003).

### 6.2.8 Intention to stay

Generally, most participants had taken the decision to work in the UAE with the initial plan was to live and work in the UAE for two to three years. However, a majority of them extended their stay. The participants attributed their extended stay in the UAE to the relative perceived stress free lifestyle, security, salary and benefits that prevails in the country. Others expressed satisfaction in their academic jobs, escaping political unrest in home country, family commitments, financial obligations, and the lack of job opportunities in their home countries. One of the probably reasons for their intention to extend their stay might have been due to the economic downturn (low oil prices) which has lowered job opportunities worldwide and increased the need to hold on to their current job. For example:

*“I’m glad to have a job and a contract – it could be a lot worse but I’m truly happy with my job and the way things are managed here? No. The stress levels are too high and its not a healthy work environment, but I don’t have any other job offer at the moment and I have bills to pay, so I’ve got to toughen up and accept what I have now” (Thomas, Ireland)*

A majority of participants stated that they had decided to stay longer in the UAE because the salary package enabled them to achieve certain priorities in life (e.g. children’s education, buy a house, save for pension, etc.). Such sentiments were captured during the interviews, for example:

*“I like living in the United Arab Emirates and I enjoy my job although sometimes it gets really frustrating, but the financial incentives are much more. This is the best place to be, its safe and its closer to home”. (Edward, Philippines)*

*“I am not particularly happy with my job but it pays the bills. I would leave if I got a job with a better organisation but now this is not the time to quit jobs especially when you have a family.” (Alice, France)*

*“Yes, I intend to stay longer. First of all, the neat clean environment that one enjoys. Secondly, a relatively good stable organisation with some set values which is very very important.” (Patrick, United States)*

*“Yes, I intend to stay longer. I think so, yeah ... I considered going home and I thought about what my life would be like for me as a working mother in Ireland. My husband, he works long hours. He is in Saudi most of the week so I’m here on my own. And most of the week, I do have a nanny but I just thought about how my life would be at home. I thought about it a lot lately and in Ireland I would have to be getting up in the morning and trying to get a child to school early and then I would be driving to Dublin, and I would just be coming home late. I started to get anxiety attacks about the issue of going back to Ireland. I would like to stay in the UAE for a few more years. I think for us - my daughter is 2 and a half and its perfect now. When she gets a bit older in school, then we will think about going back to Ireland. But for now, we’re here for the next three to five years. (Linda, Ireland)*

Other respondents cited the lack of better job opportunities elsewhere as one of the major reasons to stay longer in the UAE and with their current employer. For example,

*“This is not the time to change jobs. I have a family and bills to pay, so I need to hold on to my current job as long as possible.” (Charles, Great Britain)*

Some respondents cited family reasons as a motivating factor to either stay in the UAE or leave. For example,

*“My intention to stay in the UAE depends on my kids. My kids don’t want to go and study in South Africa, so if they have to go and study here. Then they will probably stay here but I think we’ve given ourselves three years to say ‘This is it’. I miss culture, I miss creativity, I miss South Africa ... I don’t like this environment. But on the other hand, I like the bubble*



*that I created. I don't have to care about politics; I don't have to care about crime because I'm relatively safe here. And what I like about this, my kids are brought up and race no longer counts.” (Nancy, South Africa)*

*“I'm leaving for personal reasons. I've got family circumstances that I can't change. The organisation is not going to support and give me any kind of guarantee, so I have to leave. The organisation couldn't provide the stability that I needed”. (Vikas, New Zealand)*

*“My ability to stay longer in the UAE all depends on my wife's job. At the moment, major restructuring and downsizing is taking place at her place of work, so we are not certain if she will still have a job in the next few jobs. (Keith, Great Britain)*

In summary, when it comes to the issue of the intent stay in the UAE, there appears to be a link between the expatriate academic's reasons for coming to the UAE, job satisfaction, personal circumstances, socio-political conditions in home country, family commitments, and their intent to stay. The participants' responses also indicated that their perceived job satisfaction as an essential element that could affect the intent to stay longer in the UAE. Some cross-cultural adjustment factors in the literature review as well as the result of the earlier studies were confirmed in general terms by the data obtained from the interview. Generally, the participants' responses to the intent to stay suggest that the widespread employment of expatriate academics on three-year contracts (although renewable) could impede the progress and growth of the institution, and negatively impact institutional loyalty or commitment (Chapman, Austin, Farah, Wilson, and Ridge, 2014).

#### **6.2.9 Respondents' opinions on the knowledge, experience, skills, and abilities needed for expatriate academics to successfully adjust in the UAE**

Researchers (e.g. Black and Mendeanhall, 1990; Ruben and Kealey, 1979) also highlighted the significance of certain knowledge and skills for positive cross-cultural experiences. The expatriate work differs from domestic work because it requires different skills, abilities, and

demands certain personality requirements in order to acclimatise to differences in culture (Shin, Morgeson and Campion, 2003). Based on the strong evidence and argument presented in previous literature on the topic, the researcher of this thesis considered this segment very significant to his study. Alexandru and Vikas (respondents) also emphasized on the need for expatriate academics to have specific knowledge, skills, experience, and abilities.

*“Expatriate academics just like seamen should be selected based on a predefined expatriate profile that matches the nature and culture of the organisation, and the culture of the host country. You cannot just recruit and select any expatriate to come and work here”*  
(Alexandru, Romania)

*“To me the cultural dimension is important without that you can’t facilitate knowledge transfer. See, the environment has to be conducive ... You might not be a fantastic teacher you might not have a huge amount of knowledge in your subject but you might be very good at getting across to students and the students will love you for what you say. So, reception and acceptance are very key to this job in this country. You cannot succeed in this country as an expatriate academic if you don’t have the required knowledge, skills, experience, and abilities”. (Vikas, New Zealand)*

The following were some of the responses concerning the knowledge, skills, experience, and abilities that expatriate academics perceived to be essential for successfully adjust to the workplace and life in the UAE:

#### **6.2.9.1 Stress management**

Many respondents expressed the view that expatriate academics need to be able to handle the stress related to working and living in the UAE. For example:

*“Stress management - learn to management things. Don’t let them get to you. Learn to deal with stress. Have stress mechanisms”. (Nancy, South Africa)”*

*“You have to be able to cope with stress”. (Gary, New Zealand).*

*“It is important that all expatriate academics are able to manage stress well because out here you encounter several situations that require stress management”. (Linda, Ireland)*

The above sentiments confirm the findings of Hofstede (2001) and Miller (2009, 2010) that acculturation stress is the major result of culture shock. Black (1988) also argued that expatriate employees usually meet a greater amount of stress compared to domestic employees, and sometimes their workload is comparatively higher. Hence, some respondents also expressed the need to be able to manage stress due to the differences in the work and living environment that the expatriate might be used to, for example:

*“Many expatriate academics experience stress, frustration and disorientation when they first arrive. They get stressed up because they expect things to be like their home countries. They expect things to be like their home countries. They transfer the standards and expectations in their home countries and expect to see them here and if they don’t then the problems begin”. (Nicole, New Zealand)*

*“Your ability to handle stress and cope with culture shock is very important. I think much of the challenges and frustrations originate from both personal and the workplace. At a personal level, you have to go through a whole of processes, for example, the visa process, securing accommodation, finding a good school for your kids, getting internet at home, driver’s licence and so on. These processes alone are stressful, let alone in a country that you are new to. At the same time you have to cope with the demands of your new job. Your chances of failure will be higher if you can’t handle it”. (Alice, France)*

The responses also confirm the findings of Clark (2015), Miller (2009), and Sanderson (2014) who argued that the stress and uncertainty that expatriates undergo are the main cause of failure in cross-cultural assignment.

### **6.2.9.2 Knowledge of the country, the local culture and Islam**

The respondents highlighted the need for expatriate academics to have some knowledge of the UAE, the local culture, and Islam. Such suggestions confirm the findings of Tsang (2001) who stated that knowledge is imperative for new expatriates because it will reduce the level of uncertainty in the new environment and therefore help them. In this research, expatriate academics highlighted that knowledge of the UAE, the culture and Islam, for example:

*“The expatriate academic should have at least basic knowledge of Islam and other religions represented in the class”. (Gary, New Zealand)*

*“It is important to have an awareness about Emirati culture, especially the values and beliefs that shape our society or the laws and regulations. You have the ability to identify and avoid the use culturally insensitive teaching and learning resources”. (Edward, Philippines)*

*“It would really help a lot if future expatriate academics had at least some basic knowledge of Islam and its values. This helps prevent doing things that might be considered religiously offensive”. (Reggie, India)*

*“You need to have the ability to understand different cultural contexts. The expatriate academic should also have at least basic knowledge of Islam and other religions represented in the class”. (Gary, New Zealand)*

According to Brett (1980), fluency in the host country’s native language has the potential to increase levels of interaction adjustment since expatriates with adequate host country language abilities are able to gain information about their new environment, and hence reduce the uncertainty. Although mastering Arabic was not a significant factor that impacted their adjustment, some expatriate academics perceived it as an advantage. Support for some basic ability to speak Arabic is shown in the following responses:

*“I think being able to speak Arabic is really helpful, at least at the very basic level. You can survive in the UAE without Arabic but if you can learn a bit of Arabic, it will help you fit in a lot more, especially when interacting with students. Students would appreciate the fact that you care about their language and about them as well”.* (Edward, Philippines)

*“Ideally it would be great for an expatriate academic to have some ability to speak Arabic. The ability to speak Arabic helps minimise the feeling of isolation that comes with expatriation”.* (Patrick, United States)

The above responses support previous evidence that learning the local language according has benefits for work (Chang, 2008). The respondents also expressed the need for expatriate academics to be also experts in their teaching areas. Such views shared by the expatriate academics provided some support to previous findings establishing that technical competence for overseas assignment is a major expatriate cross-cultural adjustment factor (Clark, 2015, Miller, 2009, Sanderson, 2014). Support for technical competence was shown in the following responses:

*“In terms of knowledge, they need to have their own subject knowledge and in many cases I would imagine that that is over and above what they will need.”* (Lilly, Great Britain)

*“You have to be an expert in your subject because your students will look to you as a source of knowledge. You will lose respect if your students perceive that you are not an expert in your field”.* (Alice, France)

*“It is important for an expatriate academic to have some amount of international knowledge –or general knowledge about the world and global economy. He or she must have sufficient information about the conditions in a specific country”.* (Donna, United States)

The above responses confirm that expatriate academics perceived that having specific knowledge about the national, cultural, teaching area, and the workplace environment would help improve adjustment. The above views confirm the findings of Kreber and Hounsell

(2014), Miller (2009, 2010), Scott and Scott (1991), and Ward et al., (2001) who emphasize that expatriates need to have culture-specific knowledge and skills in order to have the foundation for effective intercultural relations that enables psychological adaptation to the new sociocultural environment. In general, respondents felt that it was important for all expatriate academics to be self-prepared.

### **6.2.9.3 Previous international experience**

Aycan (1997a), Black (1988), Parker and McEvoy (1993), and Selmer (2001b) emphasized that prior international experience of the expatriate positively impacted on their adjustment. The responses provided by expatriate academics in this study provided some support to the finding also, for example:

*“It’s very useful to have had some kind of culture shock somewhere else. It’s like I said before if you have come from a specific culture and let’s say you are from the United States and you’ve never been outside your state and you come to the UAE, it would be tough very tough. So, the previous experience of being thrown into another culture and having adapted to it is very helpful”. (Frank, Denmark)*

*“I think it helps a lot if you have had some travel experience. I mean, if you have worked in other countries, especially in countries that are very culturally different from your home country. This is what helped me a lot. It helped me have a more realistic expectation of my academic job here, the shock and stress wasn’t really that much”. (Jason, Canada)*

*“Some sort of previous international experience would be really helpful, perhaps experience in working in the GCC region. It helped me have a more realistic expectation, so I think every expatriate academic ought to have that kind of previous experience”. (Helen, Australia)*

The responses provided by the expatriate academics participating in this study offer some support to the finding of Shaffer et al. (1999) who discovered that previous international assignments constituted a regulating factor in how the expatriates saw and worked with their co-workers and supervisor support. In addition, their responses showed that previous international experience provided greater realistic expectations (Louis 1980).

#### **6.2.9.4 Personality**

Black and Gregersen (1991) delved into the effect of job, personal and general factors on three facets of cross-cultural adjustment and identified that expatriates who adjusted well had certain personality characteristics. According to Caligiuri (2000b) and Miller (2009, 2010), personality characteristics needed for social interactions are of utmost importance since their effect is felt in both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of social interactions research. In the end, they influence cross-cultural adjustment. Most of the respondents of the interview highlighted the need for expatriate academics to adopt attitudes that are flexible and open-minded. For example:

*“And I think they should be very open-minded about arriving here and being expected to behave in ways that perhaps are quite alien back in their home countries. I think they need to be patient and be prepared that it will take time, and to realise they’re probably not the most important people here. So, in general, open-mindedness, a willingness to learn and adapt to fit in. Not bigoted or biased to any nationality and you see that so much here it’s such a shame”. (Doris, Great Britain)*

*“You have to be flexible, and be able to see the big picture”. (Fadia, Lebanon/Palestine)*

The above characteristics suggested by the respondents indicate that the inclusion of open-mindedness as an important personality characteristic for expatriate academics. Such views are in line with the views of Clark (2015), Haung et al. (2005), Kreber and Hounsell (2014),

Mount and Barrick (1995) and Sanderson (2014) who have stated that expatriates open to experience are generally those who have an open-mind, are curious, think originally, are intelligent, and have non-judgemental traits. These characteristics ensures that they remain actively engaged with their environment. They continue to learn and adapt to the work and non-work related aspects in a new cultural environment. The need for flexibility is in line with Tsang (2001) who stated that expatriates ought to be able change their behaviour according to the reality around them.

#### **6.2.9.5 Intercultural Relations**

The expatriate academics in this study emphasized the importance of learning how to reflect on one's self and the world around them through the eyes of the foreigner. The responses provided by expatriate academics in support of this were as follows:

*“Stay true to yourself but still focus on your career. Don't get side-tracked with the small things ... Just be professional, and if you are professional, irrespective of your culture, you will be courteous and accommodative. That's my personal view. Be prepared for no safety mechanism “. (Nancy, South Africa)*

*“Should be able to effectively picking up on nonverbal cues and be able to work with people from different cultures”. (Gary, New Zealand)*

The expatriate academics in this study also emphasized the importance of intercultural competence which enabled the future expatriate academics to communicate successfully and appropriately with people of other cultures. Examples of such views are:

*“This is a unique country. Over 80 per cent of the population are foreigners, and so this translates into the workplace. So, in order to successfully function as an expatriate in the workplace and daily living in the UAE, you must have the ability to work and live with people from different cultures”. (Mark, United States)*



*“I don’t know if these qualify as KSAs but it’s important the expatriate academics try to integrate you in the local community as soon as possible. Ensure that your family is motivated and prepared for the time of the assignment”. (Helen, Australia)*

Also related to the ability to build positive intercultural relations is social skills. Expatriate academics in this study expressed the need for future expatriate academics to have the social skills necessary to facilitate interaction and communication with HCN and other expatriates. Social skills are very important human traits for cultivating healthy and strong relationships with others (Kreber and Hounsell, 2014; Kumar Sharma and Mehra, 2016; Sanderson, 2014). Examples of such views are:

*“I don’t know if these qualify as KSAs but it’s important the expatriate academics try to integrate you in the local community as soon as possible. Ensure that your family is motivated and prepared for the time of the assignment”. (Helen, Australia)*

*“Expatriate academics should also be sociable and be able to work with and fit in the culture of the local team”. (Maria, Great Britain)*

*“The most important ability, in my opinion, is to be able to forge a social bond with your students and colleagues. Such a bond should be based on mutual trust and respect. This is important especially when dealing with students. You know to understand the social dynamics and respect it. Your battle is half won if you are able to win the hearts of your students socially”. (Vinod, India)*

The responses above revealed that developing positive intercultural relations are related to the personality-based studies that have shown that cultural flexibility and tolerance have strong positive effects on three facets of adjustment (Black, 1990; Kraimer et al., 2001; Selmer, 2001b).

### **6.2.9.6 Conclusion**

Generally, participants' responses to questions related to the respondents' opinions on the knowledge, experience, skills, and abilities needed for expatriate academics to successfully adjust in the UAE appear to confirm previous literature that an expatriate's job requires "greater worker requirements in order to better adapt to the new and unfamiliar cultural settings" (Shin, Morgeson and Campion, 2003, pg.27).

### **6.2.10 Respondents' opinions on the role of HEIs in improving the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics**

The expatriate academics interviewed had been working in higher education institutions ranging from one year to 24 years. As insiders, they can offer valuable suggestions to human resource specialists, HEIs, and future expatriate academics on how to improve cross-culture adjustment. The feedback given by the participants varied and mainly focused on orientation and cross-cultural training programs and organisational support. The data obtained from the interview covered certain HEIs recruitment practices. Some respondents highlighted that they were presented with "one thing" during the recruitment stage of their employment, yet upon their arrival they realised that the actual situation on the ground was entirely different from what had been presented to them.

#### **6.2.10.1 Present an "honest" picture of the job during the recruitment and selection process**

Some respondents expressed the need for HEIs to be frank and honest during their recruitment and selection of prospective expatriate academics. They indicated that many of the culture shock, stress, and frustration that occurred originated from the differences between what they were told during their interviews and the actual reality in the UAE. Such sentiments were expressed as follows:

*“There should be brutal honesty during the recruitment and selection process. If I had known what I know now before, I might ask one of us to come here first to explore before the others came ... HR departments should deliver on what they've promised, they shouldn't treat recruitment issues with a "ticked box" approach. And be honest - they should not lure people here on false pretence. For example a lot of schools for kids, housing allowance, no, don't need a car. There should be brutal honesty. If I had known what I know now before I might ask one of us to come here first to explore before the others came”.* (Nancy, South Africa)

*“HEIs should be honest and frank about the nature of the job and select only those who are willing to accept the true nature of the challenge. Unfortunately, this is not happening. Beautiful pictures are presented by recruitment agencies and during interviews. What I was told during the interview and what I experienced when I started working were two totally different scenarios”.* (Hellen, Australia).

Such opinions are in line with the findings of Clark (2015), Kreber and Hounsell (2014), and Sanderson (2014) who have all stated that the gap between the information given to expatriate academics before arrival and what they experienced after arrival was a major contributory factor to the culture shock and disappointment that they experienced.

#### **6.2.10.2 Have a selective recruitment strategy**

Many of the respondents advised the HEIs to be very selective in their recruitment of academics. The respondents observed that expatriation was simply not for everyone. Such sentiments were expressed as follows:

*“It is important that HEIs recruit expatriate academics based on relevant international experience. I have seen many expatriate academics who have never travelled outside their home country or even outside their home state, come to the UAE and find it challenging to adjust”.* (Debra, Philippines)

*“Organisations need to ensure that a prospective academic not only has the academic or professional qualification and experience but he or she should also have skills, abilities, and experience to be able to work within a different cultural environment and working with people from other cultural backgrounds. (Juliana, New Zealand)*

*“Expatriate academics, just like seamen, should be selected based on a predefined expatriate profile that matches the nature and culture of the organisation and the culture of the host country. You cannot just recruit and select any expatriate to come and work here”. (Alexandru, Romania)*

Such opinions are in line with the findings of Clark (2015), Kreber and Hounsell (2014), and Sanderson (2014) who have all stated that the expatriate academics require specific skills in order to successfully adjustment and organisations should be aware of this.

### **6.2.10.3 Proper orientation or training programs**

With regards to orientation and cross-cultural training programs, the expatriate academics involved in the interview acknowledged the importance of orientation and cross-cultural training programs to help them adjust in a new cultural environment. Their suggestions for orientation and cross-cultural training programs were as follows:

*“I think they need to have a better induction program that doesn't just stop after one week. It needs to be at different times even as things come up like somebody's first Ramadan or Iftar. Just explaining things to them, you are told about it in the induction but just having more of an on-going thing - support even something social outside. Let them know about different sports facilities and there's more life after work. They don't really tell you about life outside work. You need to know what's going on, you need to have some sort of where to go and get things done, and none that is really available”. (Linda, Ireland)*

*“Well, they could have an orientation process but I mean, to the best of my knowledge, this institution does not have a formal orientation process. An orientation process*

*should involve cultural sessions, sessions with existing staff that have been around a long time and who can share their experiences". (Doris, Great Britain)*

Higher education institutions should provide orientation and continuous cross-cultural training. The initial orientation should be for at least two to three days, onsite and offsite, and the follow-up training should be continuous throughout the expatriate's tenure. It should be organised and facilitated by both Emiratis and expatriates. Emirati input and involvement in developing and implementing the training is very important. However, Frank (from Denmark) presented a view contrary to other respondents. He felt that such orientation and cross-cultural training programs would not completely or adequately prepare the expatriate academic for the job at hand. Frank's comments were:

*"Not sure! Even if you do give them some sort of orientation and say that 'This will prepare you' but it really won't because the work environment and they, the institution, as it is and the classroom is nothing you can learn beforehand. You just have to experience it first hand in order to be prepared for it". (Frank, Denmark)*

Such scepticism is not unfounded. In fact, Black and Mendenhall (1990), Litlrell and Salas (2005), and Selmer (2005) also stated that evidence of the effectiveness of orientation and cross-cultural training programs on expatriate assignment is still inconclusive due to the lack of sufficient empirical support.

Regardless of Frank's scepticism, most of the expatriate academics who were interviewed acknowledged the importance of orientation and cross-cultural training programs to help them adjust to a new cultural environment. The respondents' favour for orientation and cross-cultural training programs confirms previous studies by Black et al, (1991), Masgoret (2006), and Miller (2009, 2010) who viewed cross-cultural training as having the potential to contribute to the expatriate's cross-cultural adjustment. The respondents' support for

orientation and cross-cultural training programs is further cemented by Black and Mendenhall (1990) who reviewed the empirical literature on cross-cultural training and concluded that cross-cultural training enabled sojourners to develop skills and fulfil cross-cultural assignments. In conclusion, the feedback given by the expatriate academics confirms that preparing expatriates enhances their capability to deal with a foreign environment (Zakaria, 2000). Furthermore, preparing the expatriate adequately may reduce or hinder failure in the expatriation process (Giacolane and Beard, 1994). Despite the declared benefits (by the interview respondents) of orientation and cross-cultural training programs, the interviews showed that most expatriate academics either did not receive any proper orientation and cross-cultural training or were not provided any kind of cross-cultural training at all.

#### **6.2.10.4 Deliver the promises made during the recruitment and selection process**

A few respondents emphasized the need for HEIs to deliver on the promise and the good impression they had given during the recruitment and selection process. Such sentiments were expressed as follows:

*“I basically came to start a department in marine engineering in this institution. This is something the country never had. So, the people who wanted to start this got in touch with me because I had been part of the start-up in New Zealand for Marine Engineering and that was nine years ago. So (that) I have a track record of start-ups which is quite different from joining an on-going system where there’s momentum and you just fit in, whereas in a start up its completely green field. So, my motivation to come here is to start something that the country never had. I’m leaving because I’m not doing what I was brought here to do”.*  
(Vikas, New Zealand)

*“During my job interview, I was told that they wanted experienced academics with a strong research background and that they needed people like me to come and help create and*

*develop the research culture here. So, I considered it as an opportunity to gain academic experience in the Middle East, especially in academic research. However, I have been disappointed so far because academic research has never been supported since I joined, especially when over 80% of our workload is teaching". (Alexandru, Romania)*

According to Clark (2015), Kreber and Hounsell (2014), Lazarova (2015), and Sanderson (2014) failure of the assignment can be due to the management process of HR practices or lack thereof, and not valuing the expatriates' work abroad.

#### **6.2.10.5 Organisational support**

Organisational factors play an essential role in the successful cross-cultural adjustment of the expatriate (Black et al., 1991; Clark, 2015; Miller, 2009, 2010; Sanderson, 2014). Organisational support reduces the stress that the expatriate may encounter (Aycaan, 1997b; Miller, 2009, 2010). Some of the suggestions given by expatriate academics who were interviewed focused on the introduction of social support mechanisms that can help provide new expatriate academics a smoother transition. Some suggested that HEIs ought to have regular meetings with new expatriate academics in and out of the institution.

*"To have a lunch styled or cafe styled informal meeting for a month to meet with them and find out how they are faring and the challenges they are facing. Because just by talking you can meet other people who might have suggestions or solutions to your problem, sometimes things cannot always be covered in a booklet. These meetings will help provide info on car rentals, internet and phone issues, kid's school enrolment, driver's licence, and social tactics. Encourage expats to join societies, for example the Iranian society, Irish society, meet people, and the organisation should support these programs. There's also a need to socialise outside the office. Provide staff rooms, provide communal areas to eat. It used to be the largest of all venues but now it's the smallest". (Nancy, South Africa)*

*"I think they need to assist new expatriate from day one with transportation, informing them about the time frames". (Keith, Great Britain)*

Some suggested opening social clubs or social committees for the new arrivals.

*“I think it would be good if we had some kind of social club, social committee. And when people first arrived, there would be a welcome function for those staff and they would get to know everyone because the chances of you getting on really, really well with somebody in your faculty are much less than you getting on really, really well in the entire institution”.*  
(Lilly, United Kingdom)

Mark commented on the capability of the HR department at his institution. He was of the opinion that his institution did not recruit qualified HR personnel that could assist new expatriate academics.

*“The organisation should care for them but right now it’s not too good because the people that they are hiring for HR are incapable of doing just the basic stuff, let alone looking after people. It doesn’t mean that they are calling them every day, it just means that there’s someone there to check with them. Or even have a buddy system, a system whereby the buddy can provide all the necessary support required by the new staff”.* (Mark, United States)

Mark and Doris also suggested a buddy system in which old and experienced expatriate academics could assist the new arrivals during their transition period. He stated that:

*“Or even have a buddy system, a system whereby the buddy can provide all the necessary support required by the new staff”.* (Mark, United States)

*“I think a good thing is to buddy people up with long standing staff to help get them settled”.*  
(Doris, Great Britain)

Vikas (from New Zealand) had some sort of staff engagement program in mind whereby expatriate academics (old and new) were involved in several UAE cultural and religious events. He stated that:



*“The organisation should have some sort of ... staff engagement program ... For example, during the holy month of Ramadan, invite the staff for iftar or encourage them to fast for a day, this will increase the appreciation of the host country. For example, when staff are encouraged to fast, they appreciate and understand what students go through during the holiday month. And when students know that you are fasting too, you win their respect and acceptance”. (Vikas, New Zealand)*

Doris (from Great Britain) suggested that institutions appoint an HR specialist who can assist new expatriate academics in securing all the necessary documents from government agencies. She stated that:

*“And there should certainly be support on the side of interacting with government departments and getting tenancy contracts and electricity contracts and all that sort of stuff sorted. We get very little help with that and you basically muddle through”. (Doris, Great Britain)*

Doris also added that HEIs should support expatriate academics through their exit procedures. She stressed that currently, that aspect was being left out by most HEIs. Her sentiments on this issue were expressed as follows:

*“Not only do we need support at the beginning but at the end as well, you know I'm going through that process now and there's no help. You are basically given a checklist and off you go. There's nobody that tells you that 'Well, this takes five days' and 'Should do this before you do this' and 'You need to do that'. People just learn from going through it and they get very frustrated and they are very stressed anyway and it becomes a bit of a problem. So, there should be an exit orientation as well”. (Doris, Great Britain)*

### **6.2.11 Summary**

In general, the interview data confirms that that expatriate academics face widespread difficulties during their expatriation. The interview responses also confirm that an expatriate academic's previous international experience can help them adjust in all three facets of adjustment (e.g. general, work, and interaction). The interview data confirms the link

between work adjustment and job satisfaction. The responses also underlined how the students, the curriculum, the institution's management style, and the lack of research conflicted with the expectations of expatriate academics. The interview responses did not show a direct link between the expatriate academics' general cross-cultural adjustment and their intention to stay in the UAE but there were other factors that led to their extension of stay. The interview data also showed that most expatriate academics planned to stay in the UAE either for a few more years or leave when their contracts expired. Most expatriate academics stated that their intentions to stay longer in the UAE depended either on family circumstances, their institution's willingness to renew their contracts, the institution's attitude towards academic staff, or the institution's attitude towards research. No expatriate academic had the intention to stay permanently in the UAE since it is not legally possible. Several respondents felt that even though their academic contributions were valued and sometimes respected by their employing institutions, at the same time they felt that these institutions saw them as transient and easily expendable. In general and on the basis of the literature review, all the above highlighted issues were anticipated.

## **Discussion and Recommendations**

### **7.1. Introduction**

The examination of the findings of the research and the indication to which extent they support the existing body of research is carried out in this chapter. The major findings are discussed revisiting the research questions and answering them. The discussion centres on the following: the areas of the findings that support or contradict the literature, extend or refine those points already made in previous studies, validate the theory, and add nuance to the suggestions. The study's implications to practice, theory and research are also presented in this chapter.

### **7.2. Study Overview**

In consequence of the globalised nature of the activities carried out by many business and organisations, the international mobility of professionals has considerably increased. One of the major developments associated with this international trend is the quest of professionals in different areas to leave any career position they occupy in their respective home countries and move to another country or even continent. This trend is observable at two fronts. First, the demand created by governments and HEIs seeking to embark on international recruitment as a result of inadequate local resources or aiming at attracting most talented and skilled manpower to gain a competitive edge. The second front is based on availability and supply since an increasing number of individuals are seeking overseas career opportunities, either in order to gain international experience, to be closer to other family members, to enjoy better working conditions, to advance their career, earn higher salaries or take up a challenge.

The literature review provided this empirical study with a theoretical basis by discussing the major ideas, suggesting which methods to adopt, and pointing out the different aspects within

the area of cross-cultural adjustment. On this theoretical foundation the empirical study could built its investigation of the cross-cultural adjustment experiences of a selected group of expatriate academics living and working in the UAE. The need for this thesis is driven by three motivators. The first motivator is UAE's vision 2021, its motto "unity in knowledge" and the role that expatriate academics play in achieving this vision. The second motivator is the UAE's high dependence on expatriate academics in the HEI sector and in fact in the entire education industry. The third motivator is the limited research available on the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE, with the intention to offer a deeper insight into the issues that are rooted in cross-cultural adjustment theory. Having conducted the empirical research, the thesis seeks to defend the need to address issues related to the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics due to their evident role in enabling the UAE to achieve its national and international goals (Vision 2021). The researcher suggests that the country's ambition to become a "knowledge economy" can be negatively affected if the existing issues related to the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics are not sufficiently addressed and resolved. It is also argued that the neglect of issues related to the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics has the potential to undermine the achievement of UAE's vision 2021 and its broader educational and economic goals and also undermine the performance of the HEIs. Beyond the context of the UAE, this study holds far-reaching inferences for HEIs around the world who perceive the dependence on expatriate academics as a prudent strategy.

The findings described in this thesis pertain to only one group of expatriates, namely the expatriate academics (EAs). Recently, there has been a rapid increase (globally) in the mobility of expatriate academics. This on-going phenomenon is a result of the rising demand of the various HEIs in the UAE actively searching for talents in the academia and the lack of

HCNs in the academia. Due to this rising demand level and shortage, many academics have taken the decision to accept employment offers in foreign HEIs (Carr, Inkson & Thorn, 2005; Richardson, 2006; Selmer and Luring, 2009). However, the recruitment of expatriate academics presents challenges to both the expatriates and the employers. According to Peltokorpi and Froese (2009), one of the many factors that determines the success or failure in employing an expatriate academic depends heavily on the expatriate academic's ability to adjust to the new workplace as well as the general environment in the new country. This thesis seeks to address particular adjustment aspects (work, general environment, and social interaction) of expatriate academics, with specific application to expatriate academics working in HEIs in the UAE. Hence, in this thesis, a questionnaire and interviews were conducted on the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE; with the purpose of finding out the factors that influence their adjustment and the challenges that they face in their new environment.

In addition, this thesis advances the argument that early measures must be put in place in order to address issues related to the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics in the UAE. The thesis suggests that such interventions be made during pre-arrival, the initial phases of their arrival, and throughout their stay in the UAE. The researcher further argues that stakeholders should not only be attentive to the adjustment of expatriate academics but also their respective host HEIs. Orientation programs have to be provided during the early stages of the arrival of expatriate academics, and HEIs and HCNs need to be sufficiently prepared in order to receive and better accommodate expatriate academics. The closing chapter of this thesis addresses these points.

### **7.3 Answers to research questions**

In the section that follows, the research questions will be addressed based on the results of the analysis presented above.

#### **7.3.1 Key findings**

The main question of this study concerns the adjustment experiences of expatriate academics living and working in the UAE. Altogether five research questions (see chapters one and three) were established:

- a) Which factors contribute to the expatriate academics' cross-cultural adjustment across three dimensions (the general environment, social interaction, and work environment) in the UAE?
- b) What influences the expatriate academics' anticipatory adjustment including previous cross-cultural experience, cross cultural training and their intention to stay in the UAE?
- c) What influences the expatriate academics' cross-cultural adjustment in terms of their intention to stay in the UAE?
- d) What are the participants' opinions on the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for expatriate academics to successfully adjust to working and living in the UAE?
- e) What were the recommendations given by the expatriate academics for improving the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics?

In order to answer the research questions above, a questionnaire was administered and in-depth interviews were conducted with selected expatriate academics working HEIs in the UAE. The research questions and data collection tools were designed in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of the expatriate academics' adjustment to work, adjustment to the

general environment, and adjustment to interaction in the UAE. Based on a summary of the main points from the questionnaire and the interviews, the researcher provided the answer to each research question. The study explores the fundamental issues and experiences of expatriate academics in the UAE, predominantly through the lens of cross-cultural adjustment. The section below provides a detailed report on the answers to the research questions.

### **7.3.1 Research question 1:**

*Which factors contribute to the expatriate academics' cross-cultural adjustment across three dimensions (the general environment, social interaction, and work environment) in the UAE?*

#### **7.3.1.1 Age**

The relationship that exists between age and the expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment has been examined in the existing studies. Some findings have indicated that younger expatriates have more social contact with host nationals compared to expatriates who are older, while other studies indicate that older expatriates encounter difficulties in adapting to a new culture (Church, 1982; Furnham and Bochner, 1986; Mamman, 1995). In a sharp contrast, Parker and McEvoy (1993) have suggested that job satisfaction must be considered as is an integral factor in cross-cultural adjustment as younger employees tend to be less satisfied with their current job than older employees. However, in this study, the age of the expatriate academics do not contribute to their cross-cultural adjustment in regards to their general environment, social interaction, work environment as well as their overall cross-cultural adjustment in the UAE. This finding contradicts previous findings in this area (e.g. Hechanova et al., 2003; Stahl and Caligiuri, 2005) establishing that individual factors such as age influence cross-cultural adjustment.

### **7.3.1.2 Gender**

Some studies indicate a relationship between the gender of a traditional (non academic) expatriate and his or her cross-cultural adjustment (e.g. Caligiuri and Lazarova, 2002; Mendenhall and Oddou, 1985; Thal and Cateora, 1979; Thomson and English, 1964; Torbiorn, 1982). Such a relationship is also found in the results of this study, which revealed that gender does contribute to the expatriate academics' social interaction, however not to the general environment, work adjustment or the overall cross-cultural adjustment. This confirms that irrespective of gender, one of the most significant contributing factors of cross-cultural adjustment extensively agreed upon by scholars is social interaction (Adelman, 1988; Aycan, 1997a, 1997b; Black, 1990; Black et al., 1991; Briody and Chrisman, 1991; Church, 1982; Feldman and Bolino, 1999; Fontaine, 1986; Furnham and Bochner, 1986; Rogers and Ward, 1993; Searle and Furnhan, 1987). In addition, the results of this study also showed that the female expatriate academics were less culturally adjusted (irrespective of nationality) than the male expatriate academics. This confirms the findings of previous studies establishing that although male and female expatriates share similar predictors of cross-cultural adjustment, the context for women is not the same (Adler, 1984a, 1984b, 1984c; Caligiuri and Cascio, 1998; Myers and Pringle, 2005; Napier and Taylor, 1995; Punnett et al., 1992; Taylor and Napier, 1996). These findings imply that the HEIs must provide the necessary support (e.g. training, buddy system, etc.) in order to assist female expatriate academics, building positive social interaction patterns in and outside their work environment.

### **7.3.1.3 Marital Status and Family Situation**

As already discussed in the literature review, challenges that arise from the expatriate's family have been identified as a major reason of failure for expatriates. There is sufficient evidence suggesting that cross-cultural adjustment of the family or spouse considerably



affects the expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment (Black, 1988; Black and Stephens, 1989; Harvey, 1985; Mendenhall and Oddou, 1991; Miller, 2009, 2010; Naumann, 1992; Tung, 1982). According to Singh (2010), the expatriate adjustment is linked to the two individual variables of the expatriate's marital and family status and the expatriate's individual and family's inclination to acculturation. According to Crowley-Henry (2007), these challenges can be attributed to the improper adjustment of families or the lack of adjustment to facilities such as transportation, food, health care and education found in the host country. In this thesis, the spouse and family situation refers to a combination of variables such as marital status, location of spouse, child(ren), and location of child(ren).

The results also showed that those expatriate academics whose spouses are accompanying them to the UAE achieve a higher degree of adjustment in terms of their overall cross-cultural adjustment, general environment, and social adjustment. However, this overall cross-cultural adjustment is dependent on the spouse and family's willingness to adjust or their intention to stay in the country. In regard to the relationship between the location of the child(ren) (living in UAE) and cross-cultural adjustment, the results indicated that the location of the child(ren) contributes to the parents' cross-cultural adjustment dimensions excluding their work environment. Expatriate academics that had a supportive family accompanying them are in a better position to adjust cross-culturally. According to Selmer (2002), the adjustment is made easier when the family is around to offer support to the expatriates given that they jointly adjust to the new country's way of living. A good family adjustment provides the expatriate with social support and may contribute in coping with the stress of expatriation (Aycan, 1997b; Naumann, 1992).

In conclusion, the findings of this study suggest that by providing all-inclusive support, HEIs foster a smoother cross-cultural adjustment for expatriate academics and their families in the

UAE. The researcher further proposes that future research be conducted to investigate possible expatriate support systems needed to guarantee better cross-cultural adjustment.

#### **7.3.1.4 Language Proficiency**

The findings from this research showed that a significant difference exists between the expatriate academics' overall cross-cultural adjustments when the respondents were clustered into two groups (Arabic and non-Arabic speakers). This goes to support the view that proficiency in the local language improves the cross-cultural adjustment process (Masgoret, 2006; Miller, 2009, 2010; Ward and Kennedy, 1993). In regard to expatriates working and living the UAE, AlMazrouei and Pech (2015) observe that the lack of knowledge of the Arabic language has been singled out as a major factor that makes it difficult to deal with the Emiratis directly. The findings of this research also indicate that the ability to successfully communicate with the members of the host country helps the newcomers adjust more easily and enables them understand the culture of the host country. However, it should be noted that language proficiency may not always lead to better cross-cultural adjustment (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2004; Caligiuri et al, 2001). The surveyed expatriate academics who are Arabic native speakers have shared that even though they understand Arabic, they still experience challenges. In conclusion, the findings to this research with regards to language is expected to bear significant practical implications on part of the HEIs in the UAE, which ought to provide Arabic language training and introductions into the local Emirati culture to expatriate academics at least a basic level (basic conversational ability). The researcher suggests that HEIs might also consider recruiting expatriate academics that are competent in Arabic, especially in public universities.

### **7.3.1.5 Prior International Experience**

As already discussed in the literature review, many studies have shown that previous cross-cultural experience helps expatriates in coping with cross-cultural adjustment. The research findings from this study confirm that the majority of the expatriate academics who have worked in other countries were better prepared and equipped to adjustment in the UAE. In short, they had acquired “stronger shock absorbers”. However, some respondents stressed the need for “relevant” international academic experience rather than “any kind” of international experience. The respondents’ use of the word “relevant” referred to international academic experience that was obtained from a country that was culturally similar to that of the UAE. The need for relevant international academic experience has since been supported by Black et al. (1991) who insisted that previous international experience should be the same or similar (in culture) to the one that the individual is entering. This provides better preparation for expatriation and expectations during expatriation. The HEIs in the UAE are advised to consider recruiting expatriate academics with the relevant international academic experience, for example, expatriate academics who have worked in the Middle East.

### **7.3.1.6 Type of Higher Education Institution**

In this study, the place of work refers to the ownership of the institution - whether the expatriate academic works in a public or a private HEI which also impacts the organisation’s culture and style of management. According to Black et al. (1991), organisational culture constitutes one of the many factors that influence in-country adjustment. Initial studies involving organisational culture and higher education used culture to prove the unique differences between higher education institutions (Riesman, Gusfield and Gamson, 1970). According to Yousef (2000), the Emirati organisations are significantly influenced by Islamic work ethics. In this study, the overall finding is that the place of work was vital to the general

adjustment and work adjustment dimensions of the expatriate's cross-cultural adjustment, yet not for social adjustment and the overall cross-cultural adjustment. The findings in this study indicated that some of the challenges and frustrations encountered by the expatriate academics are issues related to the general and the work environment caused by the HEI's style of management. They also indicate that these challenges negatively impact the expatriate academics' academic role, which confirms that the cross cultural adjustment of expatriate academics is influenced by the nature of the academic role (Clarke, 2015).

### **7.3.1.7 Location of Work**

In this study, the location of work refers to the particular emirate in which the expatriate academic works, Based on the findings, it can be said that the emirate in which the expatriate academics work affects their work adjustment, yet not the general environment, social adjustment and well as the overall cross-cultural adjustment. The reason for this finding may lie in the cultural variations that exist among the seven emirates. The UAE has a diverse society. As already discussed in the literature review, it comprises of seven emirates, and each emirate constitutes a political entity that is ruled by a dynastic monarch-styled emir. The ruler of each emirate decides on the economic policy and strategy of his emirate and other local interests. Although the official local language in the UAE is Arabic, each emirate has its own unique dialect, cultural characteristics, laws, and populace, hence the cultural challenges faced by expatriate academics and expatriates in general might be different from emirate to emirate. The existence of cultural differences within a particular country is not unique to the UAE. Selmer (2006) compared the adjustment of expatriates in mainland China to that of those in Greater China and found that expatriates in Greater China adjusted much better than the expatriates in mainland China. This present study focuses exclusively on expatriate academics working in only two of the seven emirates, Abu Dhabi and Dubai. The

findings in respect to the location of work suggest that since each emirate should have its own characteristics, orientation, training, and social support programs for its own expatriate academics. They should be contextualised to match and address the specific challenges of living and working in that particular emirate. Although the researcher has not aimed at comparing the cross-cultural adjustment between the expatriate academics in Dubai and Abu Dhabi; this can be suggested for future research.

#### **7.3.1.8 Planned Duration of Stay**

In this study, the intention to stay refers to the expatriate academic's intention to live and work in the UAE for a particular period of time before arrival and their intentions after arrival. Earlier research (Cavanagh and Coffin, 1992; Price and Mueller, 1981; Van Breukelen, Van Der Vlist, and Steensma, 2004; Weisman, Alexander and Chase, 1981) suggests that an individual's intent to stay is a significant predictor of employee turnover. Employee turnover can be detrimental for any organization owing to the loss in productivity, and the cost and time involved in hiring, training, and maintaining new staff (Nedd, 2006). Price and Mueller (1981) defines the intent to stay as an individual's view on the "estimated likelihood of continued membership in an organization" (p. 546). In this study, "intention to stay" refers to variables such as the number of years planned to stay before arrival and number of years planned to stay after arrival.

The findings in this study has established that except for the work environment, the number of years the expatriate academics planned to stay in the UAE before coming contributes to their cross-cultural dimensions. In terms of the years intended to stay after the expatriate academic has arrived in the country, the results indicate that the number of *more* years the expatriate academics intend to stay in the UAE reflected their social and overall cross-

cultural adjustment, yet not their general environment and work adjustment. The general conclusion here is that the expatriate academics' cross cultural adjustment positively correlates with their intentions to stay (Black and Stephens, 1989). Responses to this research question highlighted the significance of social adjustment, general adjustment, and the overall adjustment, which is a confirmation of Tharenou and Caulfield (2010) who applied the theory of "job embeddedness" to expatriates and found that expatriates are pulled to remain and have less intentions to return to their respective home countries when they are intensely embedded in the host country. The findings of this research indicates that social interaction and general adjustment play a significant role in the expatriate academic's pre-arrival intention of extending their stay in the UAE. Work adjustment does not play any role in the pre-arrival intention to stay longer since the expatriate academics have not yet arrived in the country and are not yet affected by work adjustment issues in the UAE. However, after the expatriate academics have arrived in the UAE, their decision to extend their stay is significantly influenced by their overall adjustment. In conclusion, the findings to this research question are expected to have significant practical implications for the HEIs. They are advised to adopt effective practices and policies that can attract and retain expatriate academics.

### **7.3.2 Research question 2:**

*What influences the expatriate academics' anticipatory adjustment including previous cross-cultural experience, cross cultural training and their intention to stay in the UAE?*

The findings from this research established that even though anticipatory adjustment generally contributes to expatriate academics' intention to stay in the UAE, it is cross-cultural training that is critical to determine intention to stay. These findings confirm previous studies (e.g. Black and Mendenhall, 1990; Kivrak, Ross, Arslan and Tuncan, 2009; Litrell and Salas,

2005; Miller, 2009, 2010; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998) that have found that the most effective method to improve expatriate adjustment is cross-cultural training (CCT). However, despite the known benefits of cross-cultural orientation and training, some of the respondents have not received any. Additionally, although some respondents had not received any cross-cultural orientation and training, they were still willing to or had stay(ed) longer in the UAE.

Even though cross-cultural experience does not contribute significantly to the expatriate academics' intention to stay, it does exert some influence. This "little influence" means that international work experience may also have an effect on their intention to stay in the UAE. Some expatriate academics with international academic work experience (including in the GCC) intend to extend their stay in the UAE. Black (1988) found that previous overseas work experience helps expatriates to better adjust at work, however, not in terms of their overall adjustment. In agreement with previous literature, the research findings from this study showed that in most cases, the majority of the expatriate academics who have worked in other countries are better prepared to adjust in the UAE.

The respondents add that expatriate academics need to possess "relevant" international academic experience rather than "any kind" of international experience, specifically the international academic experience made in a culturally similar country. The need for relevant international academic experience is supported by Black et al (1991) who observed that previous international experience should be the same or similar to the one that the individual is about to enter. Expatriates with international experience have greater realistic expectations which regards international assignments (Louis, 1980). It must be noted that despite the many challenges and frustrations the expatriate academics are facing, many of them are willing to

stay longer initially planned. This finding is consistent with the findings of Miller (2009) who found that despite the challenges faced by OTT in London, many held on to their jobs.

### **7.3.3 Research question 3:**

*What influences the expatriate academics' cross-cultural adjustment in terms of their intention to stay in the UAE?*

According to Hechanova et al. (2003), and Black et al, (1991) cross-cultural adjustment is related to job satisfaction, commitment to organisation and the intentions to exit the assignment. In this study, the results from the quantitative section of the study indicate that social adjustment contributes significantly to the expatriate academics' intention to stay, yet not the general environment and the work adjustment. Based on this finding, it can be concluded that cross-cultural adjustment generally contributes to the expatriate academics' intention to stay in the UAE, and that social adjustment is a determinant of their intention to extend their stay. The qualitative aspect of the study also confirms the results of the quantitative aspect, in the sense that the expatriate academics are more prone to leaving their jobs when they, their spouse or child(ren) are not socially adjusted to the UAE. The findings of the study also show that marital status, family situation factors and financial factors act as the strongest determinants of the expatriates' academic's cross-cultural adjustment and their intention to stay. The perception of isolation increases when the expatriate academics' and their families feel socially disoriented.

In regard to work adjustment, most expatriate academics indicate that they enjoy their job, like their students, and are satisfied with the financial rewards that come with the job. They also express the desire to stay longer if their contracts are going to be renewed. Despite experiencing several cross-cultural adjustment challenges, many expatriate academics still



want to stay longer in the UAE, which is consistent with Miller (2009, 2010) who found that despite the challenges faced by OTT in London, many remained in their jobs. This may be linked to the expatriate academics' original motivation for coming to the UAE in the first place, which positively affects their cross-cultural adjustment. For example, if an expatriate academic comes to the UAE to earn money to pay for his or her child's education or the mortgage on the house at home, this can act as a strong motivator to keep on working in the UAE regardless of the extent of cross-cultural challenges.

#### **7.3.4 Research question 4:**

*What are the participants' opinions on the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for expatriate academics to successfully adjust to working and living in the UAE?*

Expatriates require certain knowledge and skills in order to succeed in their cross-cultural experiences (Black and Mendeanhall, 1990; Clark, 2015, Kreber and Hounsell, 2014; Miller, 2009, 2010; Ruben and Kealey, 1979; Sanderson, 2014). The expatriate work differs from domestic work because it requires different skills, abilities, and demands certain personality requirements in order to acclimatise to differences in culture (Clark, 2015; Kreber and Hounsell, 2014; Sanderson, 2014). Aspects of cross-cultural adjustment encompass knowledge, skills, attitudes, and experiences which are completed by the values that one possess when interacting with a given social group (Byram et al., 2001). The findings of this study indicated that the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and experiences fell within the following categories; "Profession-Specific", "Demographic", "Individual Personality", "Social and Intercultural", "Organisation-Specific", and "Country-Specific". These categories are discussed in futher detail in section 7.5, however, this study confirmed the need to provide incoming and current expatriate academics with the required set of competencies in order to successfully adjust to their new environment.

### **7.3.5 Research question 5:**

*What were the recommendations given by the expatriate academics for improving the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics?*

The data obtained from the questionnaire and the interview show that cross-cultural adjustments are in fact an important element in the eyes of the participants. The respondents emphasised the need to make sure that expatriate academics are properly prepared when it comes to what to expect and how to deal with cross-cultural challenges that may arise. Participants in this research stated that HEIs should not address cross-cultural adjustment issues as a “one-off” approach in form of a short orientation program, but rather as a dynamic and constant reviewed process which requires the support from all stakeholders. The findings from the study also reveal that the challenges faced by new expatriate academics (culture shock) are far different from those experienced by those expatriate academics (e.g. the process of adapting themselves to the institution) who have been in the country for a longer time. However, the findings reveal that new expatriate academics and incumbent expatriate academics both face issues associated with pedagogy and andragogy, procedures of assessment, and the work environment.

Data from this research further indicate that each expatriate academic had his or her own story to tell, and every story is different. Certain common themes (e.g. culture shock, disorientation, etc.) emerged. In essence, the study shows that the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics is an individual affair. The findings of this study also show that the challenges related to cross-cultural adjustment are two-fold. First, the expatriate academics confirm that either no or inadequate training has been provided. Secondly, they also state that many of the expatriate academics were not properly prepared and some were unprepared to change or adjust to the new environment. The study showed that many HEIs have

unofficially or unintentionally adopted a “sink or swim” approach in respect to expatriate academics. The study shows that this approach poses a challenge to expatriate academics who are being left to their own devices. It has also been found that HEIs are not transparent when it comes to the transition and cultural accommodation of their expatriate staff. The successful cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics depends on all stakeholders (important parties) who must work together to develop and implement the policies and strategies that can ensure a smoother cross-cultural adjustment. The findings derived from this study imply that HEIs need to be open to recognise and address the concerns of the expatriate academics. Most participants wish that their respective HEIs would regard them as professionals and not simply as functionaries or resources that are easily replaced.

Training, development and continuous support for expatriate academics are supposed to be developed, planned and delivered on a personalised or customised basis. Most respondents suggest that their respective HEIs should establish a special unit or department responsible for the affairs of expatriate academics. Such an initiative would acknowledge the fact that the cross-cultural adjustment issues of expatriate academics are more than just simple administration matters. They constitute personal and individual matters that need to be addressed on a daily and continuous basis.

### **7.3.6 Summary**

In summary, the questionnaire results and interview data affirm to a large extent the findings of the existing studies discussed in the literature review. The overall result points to the fact that the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics is a multifaceted issue, which must be approached as such. By answering the research questions, the researcher has been able to

explore the main issues related to the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE more deeply.

## **7.4 Synthesis of Results: A Cross cultural Adjustment Model for Expatriate Academics in HEIs in the UAE**

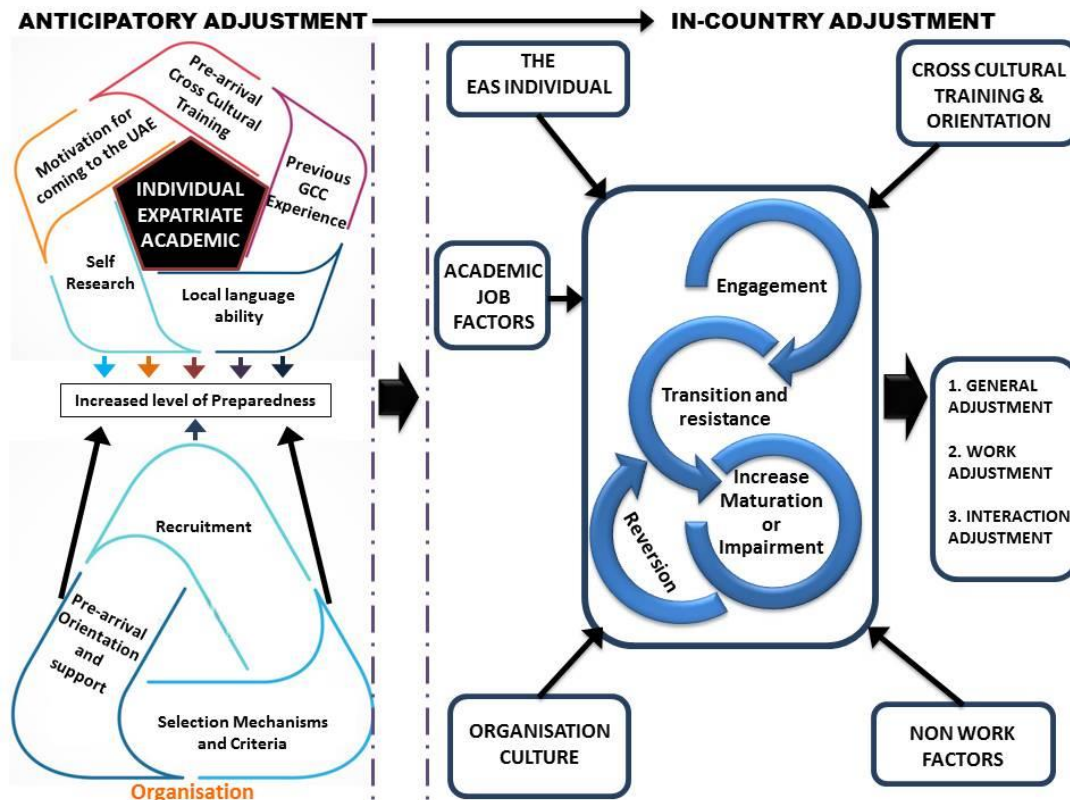
### **7.4.1 Introduction**

This section fulfils the major purpose of this study, which is to develop a model of the process of cross-cultural adjustment within the context of expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE. The purpose of developing a model of cross-cultural adjustment (CCA) for expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE is to provide HEIs, expatriate academics, and researchers with a comprehensive picture of the factors which may affect the expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment and their desire to stay in the UAE.

The proposed model of the cross-cultural adjustment based on this research work depends largely on Black, Mendenhall and Oddou's (1991) cross-cultural adjustment model, and Miller's (2009) identity development trajectory model. The former model, however, is based on the data collected from expatriate business executives while the latter model is based on the data collected from Caribbean OTTs. Based on the findings of this study, these models are modified to represent the expatriate academics based on the three evidential sources of the literature review, theoretical framework, the questionnaire data, and the interview data obtained in this study. Hence, the cross-cultural adjustment model which is developed by the researcher fills the gap existing in the cross-cultural and expatriate adjustment literature focusing on expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE. On the basis of these three sources, a new model is being proposed, which has been developed to explicitly address the problems encountered by expatriate academics that come to the UAE to work in HEIs. This suggested cross-cultural adjustment model covers two key stages: anticipatory adjustment and in-

country adjustment, which affects the expatriate academics' identity development trajectory process and in consequence their adjustment to work, social interaction, and the general environment (see Figure 7.1).

Figure 7.1: A Cross-Cultural Adjustment Model for Expatriate Academics in HEIs in the UAE



Source: Author

### 7.4.2 Anticipatory variables

As previously discussed in the literature review, anticipatory variables are considered to be the initial set of inputs to expatriate adjustment (Ang and Van Dyne, 2008; Black et al., 1991). These issues are relevant before the expatriate leaves his or her home country (Black et al., 1991; Liu and Wu, 2015). These variables allow the expatriate to set better expectations, to experience less stress upon arrival, and improve in-country adjustment (Black et al., 1991; Sims and Schnieder, 2004). As mentioned earlier, Black et al. (1991)

showed that anticipatory adjustment comprises of three dimensions: pre-departure training, previous overseas experience, and organizational selection mechanisms. These components have been empirically found to predict expatriate adjustment (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). According to the Black, Mendenhall and Oddou's model (1991), the individual and the organisation constitute the two major factors important in the anticipatory adjustment phase. In order to modify Black, Mendenhall and Oddou's model (1991) to suit the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE, the author makes two major modifications within the anticipatory adjustment phase. The individual component comprises of the demographic background of the expatriate academic, his or her prior cross-cultural experience, cross-cultural training and motivation and reason for coming to the UAE. The organisation component focuses on the role that HEIs play in the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics in the UAE. In the paragraphs below are explained the variables related to the individual component and the organisation component within the anticipatory adjustment phase.

#### **7.4.2.1 First modification**

The first modification to Black et al.'s (1991) model is done to the label "accurate expectation" within the anticipatory adjustment phase. According to the Cambridge English Dictionary (2016), the word "accurate" means: correct, exact, and without any mistakes. In referring to someone entering a new culture, La Brack (1993) states, "Just as you can't really describe the taste of a hot fudge sundae to someone who has never experienced one, it is difficult to actually convey just how disorienting entering another culture can be" (pg. 251).

La Brack's analogy implies that there is no such thing as "accurate expectation". Given the kind of data collected, the researcher is of the opinion that it is very difficult for an incoming

expatriate academic to have a correct and exact expectation of his or her job. There is always a certain percentage of surprise. It is thus difficult to have an accurate expectation of upcoming international academic job, especially if the incoming expatriate academic is a first-timer to the country and the organisation. Even if the expatriate academic is not new to the country, organisations differ from one another in terms of organisation culture. The proverb “The proof of the pudding is in the eating” mirrors the fact that we do not really know how something feels or taste like until we have actually tried or experienced it.

In this study, the researcher concludes that previous cross-cultural training, pre-arrival training, and international experience can only increase the incoming expatriate academic’s level of preparedness or in other words increase the “thickness of the cushion” or provide “better shock absorbers” for what lies ahead rather than providing accurate expectations of the new academic job. According to Jenkins and Mockaitis (2010), a future expatriate academic’s expectations about country differences are not always accurate. Evidence from this research shows that even when an expatriate academic possesses international experience, it does not guarantee that he or she will have an accurate expectation of his or her upcoming international academic job. For example, an expatriate academic who has had previous international experience in the UK, Germany, Romania, Australia, Thailand or India will not necessarily have an accurate expectation of his or her future academic job in Saudi Arabia or the UAE. Previous experience in one country or more countries does not equate to a full understanding of the culture of a completely different country. Even if the expatriate academic has undergone cross-cultural training (CCT), it may not be effective in ensuring accurate expectations of the upcoming academic job. For example, previous cross-cultural training received by expatriate academics prior to their academic job in Ghana, Colombia, New Zealand or China does not guarantee that he or she would have accurate expectations

when they take up a new job in Nigeria, Japan, or Kuwait. No amount of previous training and previous experience can guarantee the accurate expectation of what one will encounter in the new host country. CCT is case-specific and depends on the actual population and situation (Tung, 1979). According to Forster (2000), although cross-cultural training and language training are necessary, it is often relegated to the background by the organisations eager to deploy the expatriates. He concluded that training does not always adequately prepare the expatriate academic, hence does not always provide an accurate expectation of what he or she may encounter in the new host country. Blue and Haynes (1977) observed that another identifiable lapse of many companies lay in their inadequate training.

The above analysis shows that accurate expectation can only be achieved once the expatriate academic has actually experienced the new culture or organisation. For this reason, in the researcher's modified model of cross-cultural adjustment (Figure 7.1), the phrase or term "accurate expectations" is replaced with "increased level of preparedness" with the assumption that the anticipatory factors enable the expatriate academic to form a more realistic expectation of his or her international academic job. Sussman (2001) and Rogelberg (2006) support this assumption by stating that anticipatory expectations are associated with the notion of preparedness for the upcoming assignment. Preparedness comprises expecting an event and generating tangible strategies to cope with that event (MacDonald and Arthur, 2005; Miller, 2010). When an event is foreseeable, the expatriate has the opportunity for anticipatory preparation and enacting coping strategies (Wang and Takeuchi, 2007). Once proper pre-emptive adjustments have been made, real adjustment is smoother and work performance facilitated (Black, 1992). Nevertheless, there are exceptions, for example in the case where the expatriate academic has already lived in the UAE and worked in the same HEI before.



#### **7.4.2.2 Second modification**

Based on the three evidential sources, the literature review, the questionnaire data, and the interview data obtained in this study, the second modification made to Black et al.'s (1991) model is the addition of three other anticipatory variables, notably self-research efforts, motive for coming in the UAE, and local language ability. Besides pre-departure training and personal overseas academic experience, there are other variables that can increase the level of preparedness of an expatriate academic and help him or her improve anticipatory adjustment. These variables are not new to expatriate research, yet were not included in Black et al.'s (1991) model. Variables such as self-research, motivation for coming to the UAE, and local language ability have already been empirically tested and proven (as discussed in the literature review) and found to be linked to increased level of preparedness of the expatriate and anticipatory adjustment. These variables fall under the category related to the individual expatriate academic within the anticipatory adjustment phase.

The author argues that expatriate academics are able to develop a more realistic expectation and is thus better prepared for in-country adjustment once he or she has done extensive research on the country, the institution, and the new job, has at least some basic competence (even a few words or phrases) of the local language, and has self-reflected on his or her reasons for coming to the UAE. By adding these three “new” variables to the two originally included in the anticipatory adjustment phase of Black et al.'s (1991) model, the researcher presents a total of five specific variables or factors in the anticipatory adjustment phase. In the next section are explained the five specific factors/variables related to the individual expatriate academic within the anticipatory adjustment phase.

### 7.4.2.3 Five specific Factors Related to the Individual Expatriate

Based on the data collected from the participants involved in this study and the literature review, the researcher developed five specific factors/variables related to the individual expatriate academic are:

- i. Self-research efforts
- ii. Motivation for coming to the UAE
- iii. Cross-culture experience
- iv. Local language ability
- v. Pre-arrival cross-cultural training

Figure 7.2: Five specific Factors Related to the Individual Expatriate



Source: Author

\*A modified version of Black, Mendenhall and Oddou's (1991) original model

#### i) Self Research

Prior to accepting an international position or any other job (be it local or international), it is important to reflect on a host of factors to ensure that the job is the right fit (Black et al., 1991; Miller, 2009). In this research, the researcher argues that when an expatriate academic does as much research or groundwork as possible about the country, the institution, and the

new job, then there is higher possibility that they positively improve their level of preparedness which in turn leads to a smoother anticipatory adjustment. Being curious is crucial, and curiosity in approach must begin long before the signing of a contract so that the expatriate academic comes more prepared for the expatriate move (Cushner and Brislin, 1996). This includes showing interest to learn the new language, which not only facilitates adjustment to the culture but indicates a positive attitude toward the host culture. This view is echoed by many of the respondents during the interview (in this research), for example Fadia (from Lebanon/Palestine) stated that:

*“I advise them to read about the culture of the UAE. There are many books, there are many publications on websites and in books. By doing this, they would understand how to deal with people and how to approach the students. They could read for example articles on the problems that the students are facing in the UAE and how to solve these problems. They need to read about the values, the culture. This is the most important for them”.*

Frank from Denmark added that:

*“It’s very important that the new expatriate does their research about the country and organisation – check forums, it helps. Even though reading about it doesn’t fully give you the whole picture because of biases, however it does prepare you in some way. At least it opens your mind to what could be possible”.*

Walter from the United States recounts how he prepared himself for expatriation to the UAE, he states that:

*“I did a lot of reading about the company and the organisation, so at least I had some sort of knowledge about what to expect”.*

The findings in this research indicated that contextual skills and knowledge constitute the mediating variables strongly linked with employee performance (Miller, 2010; Motowidlo, Borman and Schmil, 1997). Therefore, access to information about the country, the institution, and the new job could increase the expatriate academic’s contextual skill and

knowledge, thereby resulting in more realistic expectations and improved anticipatory adjustment. Seeking information (culture-specific and non-culture specific) improves the expatriate's level of confidence in regards to being successful in the upcoming overseas job (Ang and Van Dyne, 2008; Miller, 2009). According to Johnson et al. (2002), expatriates adjust themselves faster in a foreign culture when they gather information about their jobs and the way of life in that foreign country from social networks.

For example, extensive research on the country and the organisation can throw substantial light on how strong the match is between the expatriate academic's interests, the organisation, and the country. The academic can also research on the national culture, standards of living, medical care and coverage, housing and lifestyle, besides connecting with other expatriates in the host country, HCNs, future colleagues, expatriates who have worked or are working in that country or that organisation (Farh et al., 2010; Hattingh et al., 2012; Ong and Ward, 2005; Shaffer and Harrison, 2001). These research efforts can provide a deeper understanding of the host country's societal values, norms, and traditions, thereby reducing the level uncertainty that accompanies the expatriation process (Chen et al., 2011; Miller, 2010; Yang et al., 2005). For example, in a study conducted by Christensen and Pristed Nielsen (2012) involving expatriates living in Denmark, it was revealed that 68% of participants had used social media and other online applications to learn about the Danish culture and learn about cultural events and other activities in the area. Questions related to housing allowance, clothing, food, and schools are some of the major concerns of the spouse and family members of expatriates (Baker and Roberts, 2006).

Despite the known benefits of such self research efforts, it should be noted that not all sources of information are factual. Sundar (2008) concurs this view by stating that due to the extensive range of sources of information, assessment of the reliability of these sources is

often more complex. Carr (2010) and Keen (2007) claim that internet and online social media platforms have the potential to negatively impact our thinking. Many online platforms allow its owner/s to share their information, knowledge, experiences, opinions, comments, in short to communicate their own personal views. Hence in many cases, these accounts are very subjective and lack fact checking. For example, Linda from Ireland expressed the need to filter and be selective when it comes to this kind of information. She said:

*“Don’t just believe anything that they’ve read online, it isn’t always true. You know when I first came, everything I read about how strict the place was and even about drinking and what you wear and everything was not entirely true or correct”.*

Vikas (a respondent from New Zealand) also added that most of the information posted on these internet and online social media platforms were anecdotal and historic (the past and not the present). He stated:

*The country is going through a huge change, so the anecdotal references that you come across in webs and blogs and whatever (great sources of information), huge source of information that people shared very openly – they are historic because I would say it’s a “BC AD” situation. Now with the drop in oil prices it’s a new world. It’s AD now, so what people talked about in the past, you know, this was nice and this was good, sorry, it’s not there anymore”.*

The participants’ statements above highlight the need of incoming expatriate academics to be cautious in their self research efforts. According to Meriläinen (2008), false information can create false preconceptions which may negatively affect the expatriate academic’s adjustment (Meriläinen, 2008; Miller, 2010). In spite of this, there is no doubt regarding the positive effects when expatriate academics do as much research or groundwork as possible before they arrive in the country. In this study, the researcher suggests further studies into the

relationship between the sources of information (e.g. the internet, online social media platforms) and the expatriate academics' expectations in HEIs in the UAE since there is no empirical evidence available on this subject.

*ii) Motivation For Coming to the UAE*

There is an established the link between an expatriate academic's motivation to expatriate and his or her work outcomes (Lauring et al., 2014; Selmer and Lauring, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013). According to Trembath (2016), the motivation to expatriate is one of the precursors of work adjustment and is of great interest to researchers of expatriate academics. Froese (2012) found numerous links between an individual's motivation to expatriate and cross-cultural adjustment. Motivation is a multidimensional concept that "comprises of (a) factors that stimulate an individual to action; (b) choice of behaviour made by the individual; and (c) choices about the persistency and intensity of the individual's behaviour" (Beardwell, 2004, p. 85). Haines, Saba and Choquette (2008) found that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation influenced many reasons for the decision to expatriate. Pinto et al. (2012) state that due to extrinsic factors such as the perceived financial rewards and career prospects, individuals are motivated to pursue an international assignment. On other hand, Haines et al. (2008) found intrinsic motivation to be positively linked to the readiness to expatriate and acclimatise to a foreign culture. They further add that intrinsic motivation is negatively related with the anticipations of challenges abroad while extrinsic motivation is positively linked with the anticipations of more difficulties. A review of previous literature on expatriate adjustment appears to make the presupposition that the individuals' motives for expatriation are consistent with the organisation's interests (Moodley, 2014), however, this is not always the case. Larsen (2004) argued that an individual's decision to expatriate is an indication of the interdependency and balance of power between both parties rather than the supposed

mutual interests between the individual and the organisation. For example, Dickmann et al. (2008) offered evidence that organisations appear to overemphasize the monetary and family motives of skilled professionals and underestimate career and work–life balance concerns expectations of skilled professionals. Organisations recruit expatriates for a host of reasons which might include skills and knowledge transfer, and management development (Bolino, 2007; Bonache and Fernandez, 1997) and there is the possibility of a mismatch between the organisation's interests and the individuals' motives for expatriation. Hence, due to the findings from the literature review, the questionnaire and interview data, the researcher decided to include expatriate academic's motives for coming to the UAE as one of the factors linked to the individual expatriate within the anticipatory adjustment phase.

In this study, the expatriate academics' intentions fall under the following categories: the interest in a new advantage, to be closer to other family members residing in the region, to live in a relatively safe environment for raising a family, to escape political unrest, to start a new life, to earn an attractive salary, to enjoy a warmer climate, to be involved in research, to advance one's career, or to start a new life. However, the five of the most prominent motivators for expatriate academics involved in this study were: salary and other financial incentives, the UAE's multicultural society and social life, international academic experience, family proximity, and starting a new life. The researcher concludes that it is important to consider the expatriate academics' motives for coming to the UAE as they potentially affect their anticipatory and in-country adjustment. For example, Hayden (2006, p.75) opined that many overseas academic jobs are advertised as an opportunity to escape from difficulties at home. Hence, an expatriate academic with this impetus may experience more difficulties than others whose relocate as part of a definite career plan. Walsh (2007) provides empirical evidence that supports the inclusion of "expatriate academic's motives for coming to the UAE" as one of the anticipatory factors. She discovered that many young British academics

who worked in Dubai had intentionally decided to come to the UAE in order to experience a “new” and “different” life style. According to Halicioglu (2015), such motives are good as long as the expatriate academic has not created an unrealistic image of what he or she might experience in that foreign country. In addition, the interview responses also confirmed the findings of Arthur and Bennett (1995) which showed that flexibility and motivation had a great influence on expatriate success. The motivations of the expatriate academics are regarded as another salient factor to foretell their desire to stay in the UAE and their desire towards being integrated into the local society. As a result, the expatriate academics’ motivation for coming to the UAE may have a direct influence on their cross-cultural adjustment, which embodies the three dimensions of general adjustment, working adjustment and interaction adjustment.

### *iii) Cross-cultural Experience*

Based on the findings in the literature review, the questionnaire data and the interview data, it was revealed that relevant culturally similar cross-cultural experience plays a significant role in the anticipatory adjustment of expatriate academics. According to Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991), cross-cultural experience plays a role in the anticipatory adjustment of expatriates. Previous studies such as Black et al. (1991) showed that the more previous cross-cultural experience the expatriate had, the more accurate his or her expectations were going to be, thereby reducing the level of culture shock. However, the quantitative phase of this study does not show any significant effect of the expatriate academics’ previous experience in cross-culture on their cross-cultural adjustment and their intention to stay in the UAE. The reason may be due to one or both of the following reason: a) most of the expatriate academics involved in this study have previous cross-cultural experience in countries that are not culturally similar to that of the UAE, and b) the UAE rarely grants permanent stay status or citizenship to expatriates, hence the latter will eventually have to rrelocate. They are aware



that their status in the country is only temporary. However, the evidence gathered in this research indicates that some of the expatriate academics are willing to extend their stay if their contracts are renewed.

In respect to the participants' cross-cultural adjustment in the UAE, data from the interview in this study indicated the frequent assertion that their previous cross-cultural experience has contributed greatly in their cross-cultural adjustment in the UAE. This finding supports previous literature (e.g. Church, 1982; Masgoret, 2006; Parker and McEvoy, 1993; Winkelman, 1994) on this subject. However some respondents also advocated the need for an in-coming expatriate academic to have the relevant cross-cultural experience, which confirms the findings of Takeuchi, Wang, and Marinova (2005) and Tanova, and Ajayi (2016) who emphasized that previous experience in a similar cultural setting to the host country leads to improved adjustment in the current host culture. According to Tanova and Ajayi (2016), an expatriate is likely to form a better expectation based on his or her experience of a similar culture (pg. 54). Generally, the responses from the interview responses reveal that a relationship exists between relevant cross-cultural experience and successful adjustment. Therefore, for expatriate academics working in the UAE, relevant previous cross-cultural experience can positively influence their cross-cultural adjustment.

#### *v) Pre-arrival Cross-cultural Training*

In this research, the result of the quantitative analysis depicts that cross-cultural training exerts a significant effect on the cross-cultural adjustment of the expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE. The interviewees also highlighted the importance of cross-cultural training and institutional orientation programs in enabling a smoother cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE. Cross-cultural training and institutional orientation

programs normally takes into consideration host country's general knowledge, communication skills and the ability to overcome culture shock. The respondents showed that cross-cultural training can contribute to a smoother cross-cultural adjustment transition, enhance the ability to handle culturally challenging situations and minimize cultural shock. Based on the findings in the literature review, the questionnaire data and the interview data, it can be observed that cross-cultural training is critical in determining the intention to stay longer in the UAE. The findings indicate that those expatriate academics who have undergone cross-cultural training before or after their arrival in the UAE experience much less cross-cultural challenges than those who have not.

Additionally, the interview data also affirm that those expatriate academics who have acquired knowledge about the host country experience less of a culture shock and are better prepared for expatriation. In this study, the quantitative and qualitative data show the positive relationship between cross-cultural training and cross-cultural adjustment. Therefore, cross-cultural training constitutes another essential element which facilitates the cross-cultural adjustment of the expatriate academics in HEIs the UAE. For HR practitioners and cross-cultural consultants and trainers, it is necessary to provide orientation on the local culture, living conditions, healthcare facilities, and communication skills, particularly for the general work and interactive adjustment of the expatriate academics. The researcher suggests further research into the relationship between cross-cultural training and cross-cultural adjustment of the expatriate academic in HEIs in the UAE. Further research into the kind of content required to be included into cross-cultural orientation and training programs is also recommended.

#### *iv) Local Language Ability*

The findings derived from this research show that proficiency in the Arabic language can significantly prepare the expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE for anticipatory and in-country adjustments. In earlier studies conducted by Church, (1982), Masgoret (2006), and Ward and Kennedy (1993), it was revealed that language proficiency positively affects daily activities and interactions in a cross-cultural environment. In this thesis, the data analysis suggests that expatriate academics proficient in Arabic experience a major positive impact on their day-to-day activities and social life inside and outside work. The participants also state that the language barrier can bring about communication challenges with HCNs, which in turn negatively impacts their work and social life outside work. Those expatriate academics who are proficient in Arabic encounter less problems in their daily activities in and outside work. According to Selmer (2006) and Masgoret (2006), language barriers can result in increased social isolation, homesickness and lack of confidence, thereby effectively increasing communication problems with the locals.

The research findings reveal that those expatriate academics who make the attempt to learn Arabic or are able to speak some Arabic signal to HCNs that they are willing to embrace the local mentality and culture. When HCNs perceive that the expatriates are willing to embrace the local language and culture, the expatriates signal their willingness to integrate. Although Emiratis are generally very hospitable and accommodating towards foreigners, proficiency in the Arabic language and showing an interest in Emirati culture fosters better relations. Proficiency in the Arabic language is significant in building social networks with local people and facilitates friendly relations with the host nationals, to the extent that difficulties associated with cross-cultural adjustment are decreased. Local language acquisition benefits the social life of the expatriate academics in and outside of work.

### **7.4.3 In-country adjustment**

In the proposed cross-cultural adjustment model, in-country adjustment consists of six parts: the individual expatriate academic, academic job factors, organisation culture, non-work factors, cross-cultural orientation and training and the degree of adjustment in the UAE. Here, no modifications were made to Black, Mendenhall and Oddou's (1991) original model.

#### **7.4.3.1 Academic job factors**

Based on the findings of the study, the factors related to the expatriate academic's job have a significant effect on the expatriate academic's cross-cultural adjustment. Many of the expatriate academics are frustrated about issues such as lack of research opportunities, lack of recognition, lack of employee involvement/participation, and the academic level of students (lack of English ability). These findings are in alignment with Miller's (2009) Identity Development Trajectory model that states that after the academic's efforts to engage in the new environment, he or she's behaviour is characterised by the feeling of a loss of professional status. As already indicated by Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991), some of the job factors are role clarity, role discretion, role novelty, and role conflict. For example, in this thesis, some expatriate academics complained about the complications related to their role because they have to assume the role of parent, friend, mentor, and counsellor to their students which goes far beyond their perceived (from home country) role as an academic. Other expatriate academics also expressed their frustrations over the increased administrative duties imposed on them and they perceived this as not being part of their academic job. According to Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991), this role conflict and role novelty may increase the uncertainty, resistance, loss of identity, and culture shock associated with expatriate academics' work adjustment. These experiences could in either or in both the "engagement" and "transition and resistance" phases. At the transition and resistance phase,

due to the “newness” of the academic job, they might experience confusion, personal resistance or rejection from their environment and or acculturation as they begin to gain more localised professional and country knowledge. At the maturation phase, the interaction between the characteristics of the academic job and the expatriate academic, will lead to either “increased maturation” or “impairment”. In this study, increased maturation occurred because they had become more imbued with professional form (and other forms) of localised knowledge. However, when “increased maturation” failed, the expatriate academic experienced “impairment” that resulted in decreased maturation or a reversion to more confusion, personal resistance, external rejection, and or eventual decision to quit their jobs. The findings of this research show that role ambiguity and role conflict occur when the expatriate academic is given incompatible and or conflicting information concerning what is expected of them (Selmer and Fenner, 2009), and such conflicts lead to negative emotional reactions to due perceived inability to be effective on the job. Also, much of the work-related frustration originates from the conflicting demands of the supervisor and the pressure to get along with other expatriate academics (Ivancevich et al, 2008). The researcher is of the opinion that factors such as role clarity and role discretion need to be addressed when managing the cross-cultural process of expatriate academics.

This study also shows that when role ambiguity is relatively high, cross-cultural adjustment transition is difficult (Harvey, 1982; Miller, 2009; Misa and Fabricatore, 1979; Pinder and Schroeder, 1987). In other words, role ambiguity and job stress are positively related (Khattak et al., 2003), hence could influence the expatriate academics’ experiences as they go through the phases of “engagement”, “transition and resistance”, and “maturation”. These findings also confirm those of Kahn et al. (1964) who found that greater degrees of role ambiguity lead to increased tension, anxiety, fear, and hostility, decreased job satisfaction and

loss of self-confidence, thus often affecting workplace productivity. The researcher concludes that the expatriate academics' academic job factors can greatly affect their cross-cultural adjustment and depends on the culture of the organisation.

#### **7.4.3.2 Organisational Culture**

Organisational culture can be described as a collection of solutions to problems that have been consistently proven to be successful in a particular setting and are taught to new members as the right way to do things (Schein, 1985). Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2005, p.157) distinguish three structural aspects that determine organisational cultures, namely the relationships between employees and the organisation, the hierarchical relationships between subordinates and superiors and the employees' view regarding the corporation's objectives and future. Initial studies involving organisational culture and higher education used culture to demonstrate the unique differences of higher education institutions (Clark 1970; Riesman, Gusfield, and Gamson, 1970). Recent studies positively linked higher education institutional culture with organizational success (Chaffee and Tierney, 1988).

As previously highlighted in this thesis, all the HEIs involved in this study and HEIs in the UAE have a culturally diverse work environment. Results from the study showed that relationships between employees and the organisation, the hierarchical relationships between subordinates and superiors and the employees' view regarding the HEI's objectives and future influenced expatriate academics' cross-cultural adjustment. According to Oerlemans and Peeters (2010, p.460) such multifarious interactions are influenced by the culture of this pool of diverse employees. According to Punnett (1997), culture shock is influenced by the degree to which the expatriate perceives and experiences organisational support. Kawai and Strange (2014) and Kraimer et al. (2001) also found that expatriates felt more committed to

the organisation and experienced a positive adjustment to work, general and interaction adjustment when they perceived organisational support at an expected level. Hence, the proposed model suggests that the HEI's culture can greatly influence expatriate academics' the level culture shock, uncertainty, isolation, loss or gains in professional status, resistance, confusion, impairment, increased maturation, and acculturation of the expatriate academic, as they go through the phases of engagement, transition, and resistance and maturation. The assumption is that the greater the gap of organisational culture between the home country or previous experience and the host country, the higher the difficulty to adjust (Mendenhall and Oddou, 1985).

#### **7.4.3.3 Non-work Factors**

Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991) identified the non-work factors of cultural novelty, family and spouse adjustment. Expatriates with different cultural backgrounds tend to establish different social networks and achieve different adjustment levels (Wang and Kanungo, 2004). Ward and Kennedy (1999) also confirmed that ethnicity and similarity with the host culture reduces the socio-cultural problems encountered in the adaptation process. The findings from the study confirm that the differences between the host culture and the expatriate's own culture have a great effect on their cross-cultural adjustment and can influence expatriate academics' "journey" through engagement, transition, and resistance and maturation. The bigger the gap between the two cultures, the more difficulties the expatriates experience in the cross-cultural adjustment process (Church, 1982; Mendenhall and Oddou, 1985; Miller, 2009). This was seen therefore as one of the salient factors in the expatriate academics' experiences through engagement, transition, and resistance and maturation, and their overall cross-cultural adjustment. There is empirical evidence that shows the cross-

cultural adjustment of the family and spouse considerably affects the expatriate's cross-cultural adjustment (Black, 1988; Black and Stephens, 1989; Harvey, 1985; Mendenhall and Oddou, 1991; Naumann, 1992; Tung, 1982). The researcher is of the opinion that a good family adjustment helps the expatriate in terms of social support and in coping with stress (Aycaan, 1997b; Naumann, 1992), hence enables a "smoother" journey through the expatriate academic's phases of engagement, transition, and resistance, and maturation or impairment.

#### **7.4.3.4 Organisational Support (CCT) and Cross-Cultural Orientation (CCO)**

The findings indicate that factors such as organisational support, cross-culture experience, institutional orientation, cross-cultural training, continuous communication and support, and socialisation are considered by the participants as vital forms of support that can influence expatriate academics' "journey" through engagement, transition, and resistance and maturation, and either facilitate smoother or deter the cross-cultural adjustment process. These organisational support factors consist of social and logistical assistance. These factors can to some extent, affect the cross-cultural adjustment process of the expatriate academics. It also affects their intent to stay in the organisation or the UAE and enables them to perform better in their job. The proposed model suggests that the kind and extent of organisational support given to expatriate academics' can influence the level culture shock, uncertainty, isolation, loss or gains in professional status, resistance, confusion, impairment, increased maturation, and acculturation of the expatriate academic, as they go through the phases of engagement, transition, and resistance and maturation.

#### **7.4.3.5 Individual Expatriate Academic Factors**

In this study, the respondents perceived the expatriate academics' personal characteristics as one of the significant factors that influenced expatriate academics' "journey" through



engagement, transition, and resistance and maturation, and overall in-country adjustment. Many respondents stressed the need for expatriate academics to have certain personality traits in order to “survive” in the UAE, this survival strategy is what Miller (2010) describes as “survival from within.”. The obtained data also prove that the expatriate academics’ sensitivity to cultural differences is significantly related to job performance (Miller, 2009; 2010; Speitzer, McCall and Mahoney, 1997).

#### **7.4.4 Summary**

According to the proposed model, the anticipatory factors and the in-country factors affect the expatriate academics’ level of engagement, transition and resistance, and maturation (increased maturation or impairment) which in turn determines their level of adjustment to general, work, and social interaction. As the expatriate academics become more imbued in their new environment, they become more confident about their status and position, thereby increasing their level of cross-cultural adjustment. However, if increased maturation fails, the expatriate academic experiences impairment, which can result in decreased maturation or a reversion to phase two. In summary, the issue of expatriate academic cross-cultural adjustment is a very complicated topic involving matters of socio-cultural and psychological well-being. It is thus a problem worth measuring and examining further. As this study constitutes the first empirical study examining the cross-cultural adjustment processes of the expatriate academics in the UAE, additional research work would greatly contribute towards expanding the scope of this model since not all of the factors indicated in this study have been tested. However, given the strength of the available data, this study represents valuable research in the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academic in HEIs in the UAE.

## **7.5 Result Synthesis: A suggestive Expatriate Academic Profile (EAP) in HEIs in the United Arab Emirates**

### **7.5.1 Introduction**

Several “researchers argue that companies have failed to pay attention to screening, selection and training of potential expatriate staff and the non-technical skills they should possess” (Forster, 2000, p.63). Garton (2000) poses a question as to whether an expatriate academic who goes abroad to work should possess specific characteristics and qualities that are different from their HCN counterparts. Black et al. (1991) and Porter and Tansky (1999) also observed that most companies make the mistake of selecting a candidate that has succeeded in his or her home country or previous international assignment. Cross-cultural challenges have been found to be primarily caused by mistakes made during the hiring process (Adler, 1981; Arthur and Bennet, 1995; Chew, 2004; Lazarova, 2015). Comments made by several respondents in this study resonated issues related to the recruitment and selection of expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE. For example, Alexandru from Romania stated: “Institutions don't seem to look for competencies, skills, and abilities that are aligned to the positions that they are hiring for, unfortunately” Nancy from South Africa commented, “We constantly see people recruited who have no cross cultural experience, people who think they can implement practices that are not culturally or educationally appropriate in this country”. Sean from Australia stated that “there are many academics that are just not culturally fit to be here, overseas work is not everyone”. Institutions must be mindful of the people they recruit. In addition, Maggie from the United States also added that “working as an expatriate academic is just about teaching, it entails a lot and organisations should be aware of this”. Lilly from the United Kingdom presented a broad picture of the features to look for when hiring an expatriate academic:

*“I think HEIs need to recruit expatriate academics that have a specific profile. In terms of knowledge, they need to have their own subject knowledge and in many cases I would imagine that that is over and above what they will need. In terms of skills, I think they would need to be technologically up-to-date because I think things are quickly happening here in terms of technology. So, I think that you might need to up skill your technology, particularly in the software used by the organisation that you are going to work for. Abilities, you need to be flexible, I think you need to be open minded. I have seen people over the years and you know that they are not gonna last in this institution”.*

Based on these and other comments, it becomes clear that it is important for HEIs to select the right expatriate academic for the job. The differences between expatriate academics and business expatriates gives it more reason for education researchers and HR practitioners in HEIs in the UAE to conduct further research in order to uncover such potential differences and identify suitable selection criteria. There is no doubt that technical competence increases the self-confidence of the expatriate (Aycan, 1997a; McPhail and Fisher, 2015), however, according to Pokhare (2016), an overemphasis on technical competence and disregard of other necessary attributes during the HR selection process is one the many causes of expatriate failure. Moulik and Mazumdar (2012) further add that “it is well accepted that in order for an expatriate to be successful, he or she should be technically competent as well as possess the ability to adapt to the foreign culture and new work environment where he or she has been assigned” (p.61).

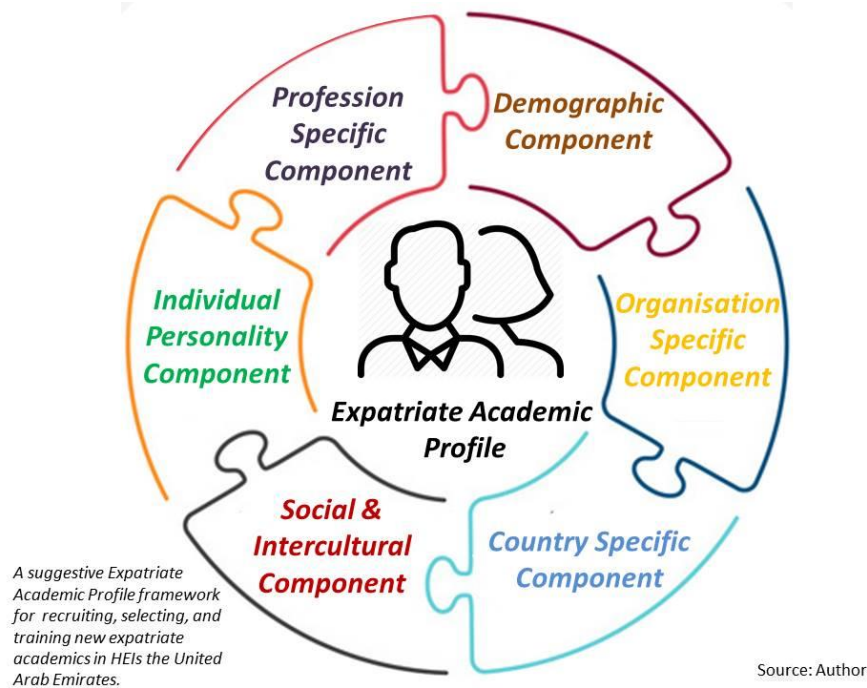
The findings also imply that the expatriate academics’ professional qualifications and successes in previous overseas jobs are not a guarantee that they will be successful in a HEI in the UAE. Hence, a selection that is solely based on the professional credentials and previous work achievements may not be effective enough. The findings also reveal significant relationships between adjustment, performance and the skills, knowledge,

abilities, experiences and personality characteristics. According to Graf (2004), implementing an effective selection procedure plays a significant role in increasing the success of an expatriate. Hence, by applying a more comprehensive selection process, it can be ensured that a person-environment fit is achieved. Such a fit in turn guarantees a better match between the employee's knowledge, skills, abilities, previous experiences and other attributes, and the demands of the job (Ployhart, Schneider and Schmitt, 2006). A person-environment fit results in positive outcomes in terms of performance, turnover for employee and the organization, employee satisfaction, and employee commitment (Gilbreath, Kim and Nichols, 2011; Kristoff, 1996; Lauver and Kristof-Brown, 2001; Ostroff and Schulte 2007; Schneider, 2001; Sekiguchi, 2004b).

### **7.5.2 Expatriate Academic's Profile (EAP) Model**

Perhaps one of the reasons for the lack of definite selection criteria for expatriate academics in HEIs all over the world is due to the fact that academic identity itself is ductile and can easily change (Romanowski and Nasser, 2014). Based on the data collected from the participants involved in this study and the literature review, the researcher developed an expatriate academic profile (see Figure 7.4). This profile fills the gap in the existing studies on expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE. It also improves the selection process of future expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE, thereby ultimately increasing their performance and reducing the level of cross-cultural challenges encountered when they first arrive in the UAE. It should be noted that the objective is not to develop a static or rigid or a "one-size fits all" model but rather a working model that is dynamic and flexible. Avril and Magnini (2007) described the need for a holistic approach when selecting and training expatriates. The development of an expatriate academic profile (EAP) can form the theoretical basis for further empirical study in order to validate this model.

Figure 7.4: A suggestive Expatriate Academic Profile framework for recruiting, selecting, and training new expatriate academics in HEIs the UAE



In this case, the profile is developed based on the premise that the expatriate academics need to adjust their behaviour to predicted parameters in the organisation and the host country. It should also be noted that the mentioned components within this model are dynamic and suggestive, interrelated and often overlapping. The following components make up the suggestive “Expatriate Academic Profile (EAP)” for expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE:

1. Professional Specific Component
2. Demographic Component
3. Individual Personality Component
4. Social and Intercultural Component
5. Country-Specific Component
6. Organisation-Specific Component

In the paragraphs below are discussed the various components in the EAP model.

#### **7.5.2.1 Profession Specific Component**

This component focuses on the expatriate academic staff's technical competence which comprises of his or her academic and professional qualifications, work-related skills, and work-related experience. The interviewees mention these criterion as a standard traditional requirement for recruiting any professional worldwide. These technical competences are central to the academia and thus more or less universal. Within the context of academia, the principal criteria for working in higher education is a master's degree and or a some sort of professional qualification (e.g. PGCertHE, ACCA, CIMA, CFA, CIPD etc.), a doctorate, a collection of publications, a list of conferences attended. This view is echoed by most respondents who participated in the interview. Jason from Canada mentions that besides the standard academic and professional requirement, expatriate academic staff has to have certain skills. The findings show that these technical competencies are aligned with the institution's performance expectations of the prospective expatriate academic staff and the organisation's strategic goals. Studies (e.g. Aycan, 1997a; McPhail and Fisher, 2015) have shown that technical competence increases the self-confidence of the expatriate. Hence the significance of technical competence must not be underrated (Johansson, Oleni and Fridlund, 2002).

Another aspect of the professional component is the element of academic work experience. Within this context, work experience refers to academic, research, and industry experience that the expatriate academic has gained while working in a particular field, occupation, or industry. Apart from a good academic background, higher education institutions value soft skills such as research, data analysis, communication, academic writing

and research publication, curriculum development, assessment development, moderation, student supervision, and public speaking. It is significant to have practical experience in areas that are in high demand. It is extremely improbable that any expatriate academic is able to secure an academic job, irrespective of their qualifications, without at least some track record of working in the sector.

#### **7.5.2.2 Demographic Component**

Similar to the individual factors within the anticipatory variables, this component lays emphasis on the need for certain demographic variables to be considered when recruiting and selecting expatriate academics for HEI jobs in the UAE. The demographic component includes variables such as gender, marital status, family size, and nationality. According to Ólafsson (2009), the socio-biographical background is an important factor that can impact the expatriate's intercultural effectiveness. Mendenhall and Oddou (1985) and Torbiorn (1982) explain that a greater percentage of female expatriate experiences isolation than their male counterparts. There is also evidential proof that cross-cultural adjustment of family and spouse considerably affects the expatriate's cross-cultural adjustment (Black, 1988; Black and Stephens, 1989; Harvey, 1985; Mendenhall and Oddou, 1991; Naumann, 1992; Tung, 1982). Reynolds and Bennett (1991) observed that the divorce rate among expatriate couples is higher than average, and in that sense a marriage can be put more at risk by moving abroad. Although there exists no empirical evidence on the divorce rate among expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE, there is anecdotal evidence (from personal observation) that many expatriate academics have had to either cancel their contracts or abscond their jobs due spouse related issues. Another significant justification lie in the findings of McNulty (2012) which revealed that 99% of the participants were of the view that "a strong and stable marriage" is a significant ingredient for successful expatriate adjustment. McNulty's (2012)

study involved 264 trailing spouses in 54 locations worldwide. Regarding expatriate academics with children of school-going age, moving abroad poses more challenges than advantages (Zilber, 2005). In this study, Maggie from the United States stated:

*“Successful adjustment depends greatly on how your spouse feels about the new environment. I can still remember how much my children cried during the first few months of our arrival to the UAE. Those months were very stressful for me. I had to struggle with work related issues and family related issues at the same time”.*

A good family adjustment helps the expatriate with social support and may contribute in coping with the stress of the assignment overseas (Aycan, 1997a; Naumann, 1992). Some scholars (Caliguiri and Colakoglu, 2007) have suggested the involvement of the employee’s family in the expatriation process in order to prevent maladjustment issues.

### **7.5.2.3 Individual Personality Component**

As previously discussed in this thesis, the selection of expatriates should go beyond technical skills and take into consideration the individual’s personality traits and other competencies. Baruch et al. (2002) and Bonache and Zárraga-Oberty (2008) and reinforced this argument by concluding that expatriates are more effective knowledge senders if they are selected based on certain additional factors, such as personality traits. According to Geertz (1973), possessing the knowledge of how culturally different people are, think, and or act does not guarantee that one can successfully think and act like them. Mamman (1995) stresses that in order to be successful in such an environment; one should possess good personality traits. McCrae and Costa (1989) define personality as the enduring emotional, interpersonal, experimental, attitudinal, and motivational style that explains an individual’s behaviour in many other situations.



In this suggested EAP model, the individual personality component refers to the individual personal traits or relational abilities of the expatriate academic. This component includes variables that have been found to contribute to successfully guide the selection process, and enable or disable success at the workplace (Black et al., 1991; Caligiuri et al., 2001). Therefore, expatriate academics that have the fitting personality traits for a given position are most likely to perform better in their jobs compared to those expatriate academics who do not (Caligiuri et al., 2001). In this study, the respondents mention the following as individual personality elements for expatriate academics:

- i. Open mindedness
- ii. Extravert
- iii. Adventurousness
- iv. Curiosity
- v. Flexibility and adaptability
- vi. Ability to cope with stress
- vii. Interpersonal skills
- viii. Readiness for new experiences
- ix. Self-efficacy
- x. Self-confidence

Personality traits are considerably static characteristics of individual dispositions and environments and have to do with what is available to them for cross-cultural adjustment (Van der Bank and Rothmann, 2006). The character of an individual is important for expatriate selection as it is important for intercultural adjustment (Bell and Harrison, 1996; Black et al., 1991, Bjokman and Schaap, 1994; Hechanova et al., 2003; Selmer 1999, 2001, 2005). Caligiuri (2000b) adds that personality characteristics are of utmost importance as they are needed in social interactions and in the end influence cross-cultural adjustment. The

ability of an individual to be open to new experiences seems to be a personality trait that depicts the person's habitual desire to try new ideas, tolerate ambiguity and dissonance, and in general show curiosity and eagerness towards learning (Barrick and Mount, 1991). Being imaginative, cultured, curious, original in thought, open minded, broad-minded, intelligent, non-judgemental and sensitive artistically are the traits that are connected to openness according to Barrick and Mount, (1991) and Digman,(1990). The participants in this study indicate that expatriate academics are likely to experience a smoother cross-cultural if they possess the above individual qualities.

#### **7.5.2.4 Social and Intercultural Component**

An increasing number of HR practitioners use cross-cultural capability as a key selection criterion for expatriate recruitment (Harris and Kumra, 2000). The social and intercultural component overlaps with the individual personality and the profession specific component. This component centres on the intercultural social skills of the expatriate academic. According to Bakel, Gerritsen and Oudenhoven (2014), this is an essential aspect for anyone who lives and works abroad or for anyone who works with people from different cultural backgrounds. Byram (2000) defines the social and intercultural element as "the ability to see relationships between different cultures – both internal and external to society – and to mediate, that is interpret each terms of the other, either for themselves or for other people" (pg. 9). Mamman (1995) stresses that in order for an expatriate to be successful in an intercultural or a cross- cultural environment, he or she should possess first and foremost social skills. The respondents in this study emphasise the need for expatriate academics to be socially and interculturally competent.

Based on the data from the questionnaire and interviews, the respondents highlighted the following as social and intercultural elements:

- i. Awareness about Emirati culture (e.g. values and beliefs that shape the society or the laws and regulations);
- ii. Ability to identify and avoid the use culturally insensitive teaching and learning resources (e.g. films, books, internet);
- iii. Broad-based sociability - ability move out of close expatriate circles and form ties with all kinds of locals;
- iv. Cultural sensitivity - ability to understand the culture in which they are living and working, and to integrate;
- v. Flexibility - willingness to try new ways of doing things (adaptability and flexibility);
- vi. Open mindedness - ability to look at their new environment with a desire to learn about and understand it and an interest in seeing things differently;
- vii. Ability to establish close friendships with host nationals and people of different nationalities;
- viii. Ability to find local activities to substitute for the ones offered at home;
- ix. Interpersonal skills - (to foster communication about norms);
- x. Non-judgmental in interpreting actions of locals and people of other nationalities;
- xi. Ability to build social relationships based on respect and trust;
- xii. Being culturally aware that you are in a different country with a different culture;
- xiii. Effectively picking up on nonverbal cues;
- xiv. Ability to work with people from different cultures;
- xv. Willingness to embrace technology in the classroom.

This dimension is very relevant to the expatriate academics adapting to the social and cultural environments in the host country which may vary from those that they are familiar with. In a

recent study, Koveshnikov et al. (2014) showed that socio-cultural resemblances enable the expatriate academic to adjust smoothly to the general environment and interaction with HCNs and nationals from other countries. Ólafsson (2009) explained that this component is “not only about relationships between different cultures, it is also the ability to work with them, translate them and adapt” (p.5). The ability of an individual to deal effectively with intercultural encounters is premised on the personality of the individual (Huang et al., 2005; Shaffer et al., 2006; Van der Zee and van Oudenhoven, 2013). Hence, the personal characteristics of the expatriate academics prove to be a problem if it hinders them in their cross-cultural adjustment. In HEIs in the UAE, social and intercultural competence can be the key to successful student engagement; it can build positive relationships with students, thus making the academic job much enjoyable. Some students are not motivated to learn if they think that the expatriate academic does not care about them or their culture. An expatriate academic possessing social and intercultural competence is non-judgmental in interpreting actions of HCNs and people of other nationalities, being culturally aware that they are in a different country with a different culture, and have the ability effectively pick up on non-verbal cues.

The respondents in this study also mention that many expatriate academics only socialise with other expatriates, and this often leads to not being able to understand the broader cultural and social environment that they are living in. For example, Lilly from Great Britain shares:

*“... after 20 odd years, are you ever fully adapted? I mean, for example, last night I went to an iftar in an Emirati’s house and that’s only the second time in 22 years that I have actually entered an Emirati’s house and that is part of the culture that I still don’t really fully understand. Many of the stresses and misunderstandings that many expatriate academics have had, had been in the area. We hardly interact with HCNs. We are so comfortable interacting with people of similar cultural backgrounds”*

Lilly's statement indicates the expatriates' deficiency in this area, and how important it is for them to be competent in this area. They need to have the ability move out of close expatriate circles and form ties with the locals. They should be able to understand and appreciate the culture in which they are living and working and be a part of it. Additionally, they should be able to establish close friendships with HCNs and people of different nationalities. They also need to find local activities to substitute for the ones they are used to from home. Being curious is crucial, and curiosity in approach must begin long before the signing of the contract, so that the teacher comes prepared for the move (Cushner and Brislin, 1996). This includes showing interest to learn the new language, which not only facilitates adjustment to the culture but indicates a positive attitude toward the host culture.

#### **7.5.2.5 Country-Specific Component**

This component overlaps with the social and intercultural and the demographic component. The elements within the country-specific component include nationality (ethnicity) and language proficiency. This component focuses on the cultural distance between the expatriate academic and the host country's culture. The component relates to cultural novelty, which is defined as the distance in culture between the person's own culture and that of the host culture (Church, 1982). Cultural distance is known to be negatively correlated with the adjustment of expatriates (Zhou and Qin, 2009). Ward and Kennedy (1999) also indicate that ethnicity and similarities in cultural contribute to reducing socio-cultural problems of adaptations. This component is significant to the EAP model and enables HR practitioners (in HEIs) in their recruitment and selection. Cross-cultural adjustment becomes more difficult to achieve with higher cultural novelty (Black, 1990; Black and Stevens, 1989).

Nationality (ethnicity), according to earlier studies, seems to have a relationship with cross-cultural adjustment. The assumption is that the extent of the contrast between the host country and the home country has an influence on the cross-cultural adjustment of the sojourners. In an opinion expressed by Church (1982), Miller (2009, 2010), and Parker and McEvoy (1993), the wider the differences between the two cultures, the difficulty in cross-cultural adjustment. In the light of this, nationality may serve as a tool for comparing the distance between the home culture and the host culture and can be factored in the cross-cultural adjustment process. HEI may want to consider resorting to the recruitment of expatriate academics from the GCCC and other Middle Eastern countries due to their similarities in religion, language, and other aspects of culture.

Learning the local language, according to Chang (2008), has benefits for work. As already indicated earlier, proficiency in the local language takes an essential stage in the cross-cultural adjustment process. The participants in this study shared that the interaction between the expatriate academics and the members of the host country goes a long way to help the sojourners adjust easier socio-culturally while making them understand the culture of the host country better. They also mentioned that the expatriate academics' ability to meet their work objectives is enhanced greatly by acquiring the local language. According to Selmer (2006), language barrier leads to homesickness, social isolation and lack of self-confidence. Language ability serves as an essential factor for the expatriates academics' cross-cultural adjustment. HEI may wish to consider resorting to the recruitment of expatriate academics' who are competent in Arabic.

### **7.5.2.6 Organisation-Specific Component**

Some HEIs may require that its academic staff meet certain requirements or attain a specific qualification after they have joined them. This dimension refers to the organization requirements imposed by the institution itself or its regulatory agencies. It is often advantageous to meet these organisation-specific requirements in advance before joining as it eases the stress involved in obtaining or meeting these requirements while still trying to adjust to the new environment. New expatriate academics need to be aware of this and prepare themselves accordingly. The requirements include the attestation and equalisation of all academic, professional, and vocational qualifications. Expatriate academics working in higher education institutions are required to have all their academic qualifications attested, a process that requires that all certificates be “attested by the ministry of foreign affairs at the country issuing the qualification and the UAE embassy in that country or at the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs” (MOHESR, 2016). However, academics working in public higher education institutions are required to acquire an additional authentication called “equivalency” from the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The equivalency process requires that the attested qualifications are equivalent to the UAE qualifications. Professional or vocational qualifications need to be given recognition by UAE’s National Qualification Authority through Dubai’s Knowledge and Human Development Authority. This organisation-specific component is linked to the expatriate academic’s employment and contract renewal in HEIs in the UAE. It should also be noted that this requirement may only apply to HEIs and not to other institutions. Also, one of the respondents working at one campus branch stated that she was required by the home campus to have a postgraduate certificate in higher education and a fellowship from the Higher Education Academy (HEA,UK) because this is mandated by some UK universities.

In regard to this finding, it is essential that the HEIs ensure that their expatriate academics and also their local academic feel that such organisation-specific requirements are relevant to their productiveness in the institution and also their lifetime employability through improving your knowledge and skills.

### **7.5.3 Summary**

The findings derived from this study show that the job of an expatriate academic requires “greater worker requirements in order to better adapt to (or adjust themselves to) the new and unfamiliar cultural settings” (Shin, Morgeso and Campion, 2003, pg.27). Developing an expatriate academic’s profile can serve as the turning point for any HEI and help reduce expatriate adjustment issues. The EAP model can serve as a strong basis for an efficient expatriate academic recruitment and selection design, process, and implementation. This model enables HEIs to select expatriate academics who meet the job requirements and also have the ability to adapt to environmental changes. They are thus more likely to stay longer in the organization and the country. The researcher is of the opinion that selecting the “right” expatriate academic is one of the means of increasing the chances for a smoother cross-cultural adjustment.



## **Conclusion**

This chapter draws conclusions from the study and presents the strengths and weaknesses of the outcomes of this research with regards to the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE.

### **8.1 Introduction**

Academic mobility has become a widespread phenomenon, particularly in the UAE since its education policies are aimed at advancing higher education throughout the country. The government has injected massive capital in the creation of new HEIs, the expansion of the existing ones, and encouraging foreign universities to open branch campuses in the country. In addition, the UAE also seeks to be one of the leading destinations in educational tourism (Antiado, Castillo, and Tawadrous, 2017). For the above reasons, the UAE is experiencing a boost in the higher education sector which goes hand in hand with an increased demand for expatriate academics. The success of those recruited expatriate academics must not be impeded by cross-cultural adjustment issues, and it is for this reason that this thesis bears such acute significance.

Only limited research has been done on the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE. This study contributes to knowledge in this field by using quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection on selected expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE and answering five research questions to explore the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE.

## **8.2 Theoretical Implications**

This stage of the thesis offers the practical grounds towards implementing the findings and the conclusions that are drawn as a by-product of undertaking the research. This part concerns itself with the discussion of the implications of the research work so as to enhance the present theories and study framework, particularly in regards to Black et al.'s (1991), Miller's (2009) Identity Development Trajectory, and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (1998) model frameworks.

### **8.2.1 Applicability of Black et al.'s (1991) model on EAs in HEIs in the UAE**

One of objectives of the analysis included in this present research is to come to an empirical conclusion on the applicability of the model developed Black et al. (1991) in its existing form. Another objective is to explain the socio-cultural adjustment experiences of expatriate academics employed in selected high education institutions in the UAE. Based on the findings from this study, it is concluded that Black et al.'s (1991) model of cross-cultural adjustment is relevant to expatriate academics in terms of the general environment, social adjustment, and work environment in the UAE. However, in regard to the individual factors (discussed in research question two), the results show that not all the factors in Black et al.'s (1991) model of expatriate adjustment have an effect on the cross-cultural adjustment of the expatriate academics living and working in the UAE.

Although factors such as age have already been identified to influence on the cross-cultural adjustment of traditional expatriates (Aycan, 1997b; Black et al, 1991; Church, 1982; Hechanova et al., 2003; Parker and McEvoy, 1993; Stahl and Caligiuri, 2005), in this research age does not contribute to the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics in terms of the general environment, social interaction, work environment as well as the overall cross-cultural adjustment. Based on the findings related to research question one, the

researcher advances that Black et al.'s (1991) model may require some expansion in order to cover additional predictive potential factors. According to Reynolds (2005), the effect of some factors on the Black et al. (1991) model of expatriate socio-cultural adjustment may require re-consideration when explaining the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates. The outcomes of the current research do not always support the general findings of the previous studies. For example, the effect of previous international work experience depends on the host country. In this study, the researcher makes no attempt at analysing the data in terms of where the expatriate academics have gained their international experience. Some form of acculturation has occurred if the international experience was acquired in a country with a similar culture. This can explain why no strong correlation is found between the previous international experiences of expatriate academics and cross-cultural adjustment.

Black et al.'s (1991) model was developed largely from data on the acculturation of expatriates from discordant cultures, for example, the experiences of Western expatriates when relocating from 'low context' to 'high context' environments. However, in this research, the researcher analysed data on the adjustment of expatriates across Western and non-Western cultural contexts. With regards to the challenges faced by expatriate academics HEIs in the UAE, it is found that Black et al.'s (1991) model is applicable and suitable. This conformity suggests some commonalities between the expatriate academics in this research and the Western expatriates originally studied in the Black et al.'s (1991) model.

The findings in this study also support the conclusion that some of aspects of the expatriate academics' experiences differ from those of traditional expatriates. These differences call for further study, particularly in the case of expatriate academics. There seems to be a higher variance in the individual characteristics of expatriate academics as well as in the role played

by those characteristics in their cross-cultural adjustment experiences. It seems advisable to determine if other factors (e.g. organisation support, individual factors, etc.) presently included in the model may offer further insight into the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics in the UAE.

Ultimately, the findings of this research add to the body of knowledge on traditional expatriate adjustment and expatriate academic literature in regard to the applicability of Black et al.'s (1991) model in a non-Western context. The study revealed that not all expatriate academics go through the same level culture shock in a new cultural environment and not all expatriate academics experience symptoms of culture shock. Some reportedly suffer from loneliness, sadness, and homesickness while others have an entirely positive experience and no culture shock whatsoever. The findings in this study also indicate that the patterns of their cross-cultural adjustments differ considerably. Some may follow a Miller's (2009) curve; others may move from a low point to a high point, and some may follow a horizontal line from a high point to another high point. In short, there exists no simplified general patterns of adjustment that fits all, and adjustment is a matter of individual mediation.

The participants describe their everyday life (general environment) as being relatively easy, in spite of a few isolated negative incidents. However, adjusting to the work culture in the UAE is perceived as a very different matter. Most participants experience some cause of frustration and conflict at work, either in the initial stage upon arrival or throughout their stay. The results reveal that these adjustment problems persist in the workplace in contrast to the general environment. These essential findings suggest that institutional orientation programs and cross-cultural training should centre on issues related to all three facets (i.e.

general, work, and social interaction) rather than being limited to the general and social interaction aspects of the host culture.

Additionally, the findings of this study show that the outcomes of cultural contact can be extremely complicated. The relationship of expatriate academics with the host country is different at different times, most commonly adopting a mode of hybrid culture (Berry, 1992; Martin and Nakayama, 2007). They may assimilate, yet also try to maintain a distance from the locals. They assimilate economically in terms of their employment status, yet remain apart in their social and private lives.

Many of the challenges faced by the expatriate academics involved in this study require both types of problem-focused and emotion-focused endurance. The expatriate academics should adopt a combination of strategies in order to deal with the cross-cultural changes, barriers or differences. The results of this research support the findings of previous studies; in situations where the expatriates feel in control, they are able to adopt problem-centred methods, and if they be unable to match their behaviour, they rely on emotion-centred methods. In terms of their coping strategies, no significant differences are found in regard to gender. However, more female expatriate academics express the need for more social support and cross-cultural assistance.

According to Selmer (1999, 2001), emotion-centred coping strategies such as expatriate escapism and expatriate refuge have a negative link to adjustment in one or more facets. In this thesis, emotion-centred endurance such as ignoring the reality, accepting the reality as it is, finding an escape or taking a holiday break help the expatriate academics release their stress thus creating an enabling environment for themselves. In this study, it appears that both

emotion-focused and problem-focused means of coping can pave the way for the smoother cross-cultural adjustment of the expatriate academics. This, however, is contingent on the situations in which these coping strategies are being employed.

### **8.2.2 Dimension of Cross-Cultural Adjustment**

As already discussed in the literature review, the three distinct dimensions of adjustment are work adjustment, interaction adjustment, and general adjustment (Black and Stephens, 1989; Black 1990a, 1990b). Work adjustment refers to adjustment to the new job requirement, general adjustment to the degree of comfort the person finds within the general living conditions of a new environment, and interaction adjustment to how convenient the individual feels when interacting with the host nationals at work and outside work.

In this study, the responses of the expatriate academics centre on adjustment at work, interaction, and their everyday life. They have acquired work experience naturally in the institutions where they have been teaching before. Even though they have varied individual feelings towards their work life, they share some common observations when it comes to working in the UAE. For instance, they affirmed the lack of their involvement in the decision-making process, the absence of a research culture, overemphasis on teaching and administrative duties (70 to 80% of the workload), low English language entry standards, lack of an effective institutional orientation program, lack of cultural awareness training, and lack of a localised curriculum and context-based teaching and learning materials. According to the respondents, these experiences are in sharp contrast with the work culture in the HEIs in their home country or in their previous experience. The majority of the respondents say that they need to accept the local way of working and teaching in the UAE in order to overcome the barriers and challenges and achieve a sense of satisfaction from their work. A

few respondents realize that their survival in the institution depends on how well they accept the status quo ( “do what you are told”). The expatriate academics feel treated as outsiders by the management in their respective HEIs rather than as valuable partners. However, they are grateful of the job opportunities for expatriate academics in the UAE, which allows them to obtain external and internal rewards from their work in terms of their monetary returns. Most expatriate academics are willing to stay longer in their respective HEIs despite expressing low job satisfaction.

In regard to their daily life (non-work factors), the expatriate academics refer to elements related to the physical and social environment. They enjoy their everyday life in the UAE, especially in terms of living in a multi-cultural society, a religiously tolerant environment, a warm climate, relative safety, good food and entertainment, convenient availability of facilities, and travel opportunities. Aycan (1997a) and Searle and Ward (1990) identified these areas as falling within the dimensions of psychological and sociocultural adjustment. The results from this study also lend support to the findings from previous studies which pointed out stressors such as role ambiguity, role conflict, and role novelty as having a negative relationship with the work adjustment of expatriate academics. However, these do not have any impact on general and interaction adjustment (Black et al., 1991). Generally, the findings in this study show that one of the major problems encountered by the expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE has to do with their respective institutions not giving them enough preparation before their arrival and insufficient assistance after their arrival.

The differences associated with personality and dissonances between the state of affairs in the expatriate academics’ home country and that of the host culture may affect the ease in which they adjust in the UAE. Even though there are many practices which are different between

the expatriate academic's home country and the UAE, some respondents identify some similarities. The expatriates from Arabic speaking countries find it much easier to communicate with HCNs and understand some of the local practices. The research findings reveal that many expatriate academics view their work life and everyday life in the UAE as two different aspects of adjustment. They perceive that it is easy to adjust to living in the UAE in terms of daily activities, irrespective of certain minor setbacks or undesirable and isolated incidents. However, adjusting to the work culture in the UAE they consider a different matter. The expatriate academics involved in this study experience frustration and conflict at work, either upon arrival or throughout their stay. The frequency of adjustment challenges occurs more regularly in the workplace than outside.

In summary, the cross-cultural adjustment as discussed in the literature review is found to be reflected most accurately in the combination of several theories instead of a single theory. Just as cross-cultural adjustment possesses a number of different dimensions, its comprehensive understanding requires a range of different theories used and applied simultaneously.

### **8.3 Implications for practice**

This part of the study offers a practical application of the findings and conclusions that are obtained. In this section are discussed the implications that this research brings for different stakeholders, specifically the expatriate academics.

The following points represent the results of this study. The respondents suggested that expatriate academics from Arabic countries are more likely to experience a higher degree of socio-cultural adjustment. Thus, it is of great importance to the HEIs participating in this study to optimize the job conditions of the non-Arabic expatriate academics they employ. If



HEIs in the UAE wish to remain attractive to their most qualified academic staff, their socio-cultural adjustment necessitates that they are offered the best and appropriate assistance within the context of the effective and efficient management of their human resources. Forstenlechner (2010) explains that the performance of expatriate academics who feel that the host country environment is hostile and unjust, is negatively affected. If they decide to quit their job and leave, the HEI's turnover rate is prone to rise resulting in aggravated recruitment costs. In the future, less and less experienced and qualified academics may accept overseas job assignments after learning of the negative experiences of their colleagues shared on online forums, blogs, social media.

### **8.3.1 Expatriate Academic Profile (EAP)**

It is also recommended that HEIs hire and retain expatriate academics who seek to implement best-fit strategies which ensure the growth of the organisation as opposed to trying to replicate policies and strategies that have been successful in their previous overseas post (in a different country). In this capacity, the development of the EAP constitutes a turning point for any HEI in the UAE. Also, by recognizing the various components of the EAP, increased retention of expatriate academics can be achieved. By developing a suggestive EAP model, the researcher hopes to inform HR practitioners and all those involved in the recruitment and selection of expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE on the unique characteristics of expatriate academics and to minimise the assumption that success in the previous overseas job equates to future success in the UAE.

The suggested EAP model can also improve recruitment and selection approaches, reduce the uncertainty of expatriate academics, improve in-country adjustment of expatriate academics, and increase the intention to stay longer in the organisation and the country. HEIs in the UAE need to realise that the success of an expatriate academic in his or her previous overseas

academic job does not guarantee success in the UAE. EAP will enable HEIs to carefully recruit expatriate academics to ensure that they are adequately aware of their job requirements, the work culture, the organization and its pedagogical approach before agreeing to live and work in the UAE.

### **8.3.2 Preparation of HEIs to Receive Expatriate Academics**

In order for cross-cultural adjustment to be successful, the host institution and the government of the UAE have an important role to play in the area of preparing and supporting the HEIs where the expatriate academics are situated. Programs need to be developed that prepare induct and provide continuous support to expatriate academics. Such programs may be similar to the program implemented for expatriate teachers in London and Hong Kong (Chan, 2015; Chau, 2009; Miller, 2009). Hoyle (1975) uses heart transplant as basis of analogy. He explains that if a donor heart (expatriate academic) is implanted into the body of the unprepared recipient (the HEI), it is likely to result in tissue rejection. In this case, it is important for the HEIs to be ready to receive expatriate academics. HEIs should have comprehensive intercultural training programs for HCNs and current expatriate academics in order to receive and work with new expatriate academics. According to Feng et al., (2009), organizations and individuals who are interculturally competent and able to meet challenges involved in cross-cultural adjustment are those who appreciate the importance of intercultural knowledge and skills and take initiatives to develop them (p.72). HEI should also have sufficient and ongoing support structures, avenues and activities for expatriate academics that offer advanced social, material, administrative, and personal one-on-one support; guidance and counselling on all issues of cross-cultural adjustment, in addition to matters of finance, pedagogy, school organization, administration, social, and day-to-day matters.

### **8.3.3 Preparation of Host Country Nationals (HCNs)**

Scholars such as Paik et al. (2008), Toh, DeNisi, and Leonardelli (2012), and Vance et al., (2009) agree that successful adjustment of expatriate academics cannot take place without the participation of HCNs (Paik et al., 2008; Vance et al., 2009). Therefore, in addition to the suggestion given above (section 8.3.2), and in order to further facilitate the successful adjustment of expatriate academics, the following is also suggested.

First, like expatriate academics, HCNs should receive training on cross-cultural communication, sensitivity, and management (Vance & Ring, 1994; Toh & DeNisi, 2005), such skills will enable them to successfully interactions with their expatriate counterparts (Toh, DeNisi, and Leonardelli, 2012). Involving HCNs will enable them to be more aware of the challenges that expatriates academics face, hence be will able to help or provide suggestions on the best ways to support them (Toh, DeNisi, and Leonardelli, 2012).

Secondly, HEIs should reward HCNs for socializing expatriate academics. HCNs may not be fully willing to act as effective socializing agents, because the apparent socio-cultural distance between them and expatriate academics (Javidan et al., 2005; Toh & DeNisi, 2005). HEIs in the UAE ought to be cognisant that HCNs are important socializing agents and that they “need to be motivated to play this role, as it is often not in their job descriptions nor are they formally rewarded for it” (Toh, DeNisi, and Leonardelli, 2012, pp. 239). In order to ensure that socializing between HCNs and expatriate academics, HEIs redefine the roles or job descriptions of receiving HCNs to include buddying or mentoring arriving expatriate academics, and rewarding them for fulfilling this role, (Toh, DeNisi, and Leonardelli, 2012).

### **8.3.4 Induction and Cross-Cultural Orientation and Training Programs**

Cross-cultural training allows prospective expatriate academics to learn about the host environment and the requirements of the new job. It enables them to form accurate expectations and acquire the skills required to behave appropriately (Harrison and Hopkins, 1967; Kealey and Protheroe, 1996; Lobel, 1990; Miller, 2009; Paige, 1993; Tolbert and McLean, 1995). The expatriate academics involved in this study agree that institutional orientation programs and continuous cross-cultural training programs help adjust in the new environment. However, most expatriate academics have not been provided continuous cross-cultural training. All expatriate academics report that they have received an institutional orientation that superficially provided information about the job and the new environment, yet inadequately. 93.83% expatriate academics indicated that they have either not received any induction or cross-cultural training prior to arrival at all or one that has been not helpful. Evidence from the literature review shows that providing induction or cross-cultural training can positively affect cross cultural adjustment (Miller, 2009). In this study, the expatriate academics have found themselves confronted with a myriad of unexpected issues at work and outside work, for example low student ability, the lack of adequate research support, and authoritative leadership style. The induction and cross-cultural training programs are supposed to eliminating such surprises. However, even though some sort of induction is provided, it proves to be inadequate. The more effort is invested in improving the induction and cross-cultural training programs and ongoing support, the more effective they are. HEIs should encourage senior expatriate academics to become involved in the development and facilitation of institutional induction programs and cross-cultural training programs. According to Fleming (2003, p.98), they need need to be allowed to take an active part in these programs through role-play, reflection and analysis of certain key situations before offering their response, so that they have the ability to apply their interpretations, suggestions,

previous experience and creativity in dealing with novel cultural situations and contexts. According to Kramsch (1993), there are opportunities for transformation when different cultures make contact. Hence, in order to improve the content and effectiveness of institutional induction programs and cross-cultural training programs, different types of activities need to be employed including counselling that encourages those attitudes that are appropriate and practicable in cross-cultural adjustment.

In regard to the development and facilitation of institutional induction programs and cross-cultural training programs, HCNs should be involved in the development and facilitation of orientation programs and cross-cultural training for expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE. This view is supported by Caligiuri and Lazarova (2002), Toh and Denisi (2005), and (Toh, DeNisi, and Leonardelli, 2012) who regard social support from HCNs as a significant factor in the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates. HCN facilitators present the expatriate academics with actual life examples that can “provide stimulation for reflecting on the motives and the paths of intercultural interaction” (Guilherme et al., 2009, p.208; Toh, DeNisi, and Leonardelli, 2012; Vance et al., 2009), which enables them to familiarize with situations that they are likely to encounter in the future.

### **8.3.5 Advice for Prospective Expatriate Academics**

As stated earlier, various factors like personal situation, workplace and environment affects the way and manner in which expatriate academics react to their new cultural environment. Concerning this study, significant factors have been identified that affect their response, which include attitude, marital status, personal cultural background, perceived cultural distance, culture-related skills and knowledge.

### 8.3.6.1 Intention for Coming to the UAE

As previous discussed in this thesis, there exists a link between the expatriate academic's motivation to expatriate and his or her work outcome (Lauring et al., 2014; Selmer and Lauring, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013). According to Trembath (2016), the motivation to expatriate is one of the precursors to successful work adjustment. The frustrations and disappointments are caused by the mismatch between the expatriate's intentions for coming to the UAE and the reality he or she finds on the ground. According to Ben Glickman, the chief executive of Footprints Recruiting, "firms have difficulty finding teachers who want to go to the UAE for the right reasons ... Some teachers are attracted by the image of the UAE, particularly Dubai, as a 'fun in the sun' destination ... They view it as a holiday and not a job" (The National, 2015). Glickman's view reflects that of pur participant Lilly from Great Britain who advised future expatriate academics "not come here with the view that they are on holiday". Nancy from South Africa also cautioned future expatriate academics:

*"You cannot come to fix a broken marriage here. You cannot come and fix your rebellious daughter here ... If you are single, don't have illusions that you might find your husband here. I think a lot of them come here and say, 'I'm gonna marry a rich guy' ... I've met a lot of pretty females that are disillusioned thinking that this is the country of men of all sorts and flavours".*

Based on the findings of this research, it is clear that incoming expatriate academics should consider their motives for coming to the UAE and make sure that their motives match the reality. In addition, the interview responses also indicated that the initial motive for coming to the UAE has an effect on the desire to stay longer. The researcher believes that the right intentions for coming to the UAE sets the premise for the right attitude to succeed cross-culturally in the UAE.

### **8.3.6.2 Right Attitude**

Studies on personality advocate that personal characteristics (e.g. being health-conscious, willing to communicate, flexible about learning a new culture, positively affective, and being tolerant) have a strong positive effect on three dimensions of adjustment (Black, 1990; Kraimer *et al.*, 2001; Selmer, 2001b). In addition, Taft and Steinkalk (1985) found that difficulties of psychological adjustment are often a result of an authoritarian personality that eventually negatively affects the entire job satisfaction. There seems to be an abundance of work-related challenges facing academics that are new to working abroad (Halicioglu, 2015). In order to cope with these challenges, the expatriate academic has to first have the right attitude.

The starting point towards overcoming these challenges is first accepting the fact that these challenges exist and second adopting a flexible approach towards addressing them. In addition to this, the expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE need to be good learners (Leask, 2006). They cannot make any assumptions with regards to their academic job in the UAE based on their experience elsewhere (Hayden, 2006). Unlike business employees, most expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE do not receive any cross-cultural training that would adequately equip them with the tools needed. The surveyed expatriate academics emphasise the need to have the 'right attitude towards living and working in a different cultural environment. They need to be open-minded, willing to respect and accept the local culture, be accessible, have a positive attitude, be flexible, able to take things easy, be prepared for change, eager to learn, and have a good sense of humour.

The ability of an individual to deal effectively with intercultural encounters is premised on the personality of the individual (Huang *et al.*, 2005; Shaffer *et al.*, 2006; Van der Zee and van Oudenhoven, 2013). Hence, the personal characteristics of the expatriate academic prove to

be problematic if they are not conducive to helping him or her make the adjustments required to the move overseas. Being curious is crucial, and curiosity in approach must begin long before the signing of a contract, so that the teacher comes prepared for the move (Cushner and Brislin, 1996). This includes showing interest to learn the new language, which not only facilitates adjustment to the culture but indicates a positive attitude toward the host culture. If an expatriate academic does not have “a tolerance for ambiguity” (Cushner and Brislin, 1996, p.271), then he or she will encounter a lot of challenges.

As culture is an inevitable aspect of teaching in classrooms everywhere in the world, it is essential to have the skills to move through cultural conflict (Palmer, 2013). Intercultural competence describes the set of skills employed to overcome difficulties “when the producers and receivers of a message belong to different cultures” (Dogancay-Aktuna, 2005, p. 100). Because “there is a universal tendency for people to put their own culture in a central position,” the utilization of intercultural competence in classrooms is a skill that may not come naturally (Muhammad, 2005, p. 354). Therefore, incoming expatriate academics should be aware that the cultural gap between them and their students can be bridged through strong intercultural competence without impacting negatively on the quality of teaching. expatriate academics who develop good skills in the area of intercultural competence are likely to become better academics overall. The cross-cultural adjustment may also be needed in other areas such as school management and adjustment to the general environment, which influences their intention to stay and their motivation to teach (Palmer, 2013).

### **8.3.6.3 Relevant Experience and Appropriate Expectations**

In the literature review was mentioned the need to have knowledge and understanding of a host country prior to arrival, and some studies established that realistic expectation may make adjustment easier (Averill, 1973; Hawes and Kealy, 1981) and mention the positive impact of



realistic and exact information before the event of stress-provoking experiences (MacDonald and Kuiper, 1983; Weissman and Furnham, 1987). The participants of this research stress the importance of acquiring relevant experience and forming appropriate expectations. A cross-section of the expatriate academics were surprised by the absence of research culture, the management style of the institution, the lack of engaging employees in decision making, low ability students, and how long it took accessing basic services. These examples reflect their unpreparedness for the situation. Prospective expatriate academics must acquire the relevant work experience prior to taking up position in the academia in the UAE and be sufficiently informed of what to expect on the ground before signing any contract. Also, several of them state that they have been clueless in terms of managing their classroom, especially when their respective HEIs would not offer enough advice, practical support or training.

In this study, some expatriate academics share that it is very stressful and challenging to teach students who lack the motivation to learn and struggle with the English language. Having acquired teaching experience in a similar cultural context and having formed reasonable expectations regarding teaching in the HEIs in the UAE, the expatriate academics are in a much better position to cope with work adjustment. Some have been told during their job interview that they were going to be “agents of change” and that the university depended on their vast knowledge and experience, while in fact they had no intention of involving them in the formulation of policies. When the expatriate academics later question or criticise a policy, they are quickly reminded of their expendability.

#### **8.3.6.4 Family and Friend Support**

Relationship skills consist of communication skills and sociability and exhibit strong effects on the general and interaction adjustment (e.g., Caligiuri, 2000b; Gregersen and Black, 1992;

Selmer, 1999, 2001). The lack of social support is linked with the increased probability of physical and mental illness during the course of cross-cultural adjustment (Biegel et al., 1980; Hammer, 1987; Lin et al., 1979;). In this study, relationship skills are reflected in being able to fall back on a support network consisting of family relations, friends, and colleagues. The expatriate academics involved in this study mention the need to have family members or friends of similar cultures since this provided an opportunity to share experiences, find support and greater mutual understanding. They suggest to have both local and non-local friends in order to strike a social balance.

The expatriate academics find the role of friends to be significant in offering practical and emotional support. When they receive social support it gives them information and extra resources to decrease uncertainty and therefore increase their satisfaction with their lives and work (Black, 1990). It also gives them the avenue to release their psychological load and reduce the feeling of isolation. Friends provide practical and emotional support, and friends with a similar cultural background understand each other better and relate to each other more easily.

All the respondents viewed family variables as very much associated with the success or failure during expatriation (Aycan, 1997a; Harvey, 1982, 1985; Tung, 1981, 1982). In this study, most of the respondents are married and have children and have the spouse and children accompany them to the UAE. Some stress the importance of family as they offer social support while others cite the difficulties of having the family with them. Experience has taught them that it is more convenient if the expatriate academic comes to the UAE first before the rest followed. Despite these differences, all married expatriate academics confirm the significance of family support. Social support is seen as a salient ingredient for the prediction of both psychological adjustment (Adelman, 1988; Fontain, 1986) and physical

health (Schwarzer et al., 1994) in the process of cross-cultural transitions. The absence of it often means the increased possibility of physical and mental illness during cross-cultural sojourns (Hammer, 1987). Having friends who are members of the host culture is linked with reduced psychological problems in immigrants (Furham and Li, 1993), and having good relationships with host nationals has a positive relation to their psychological well-being (Klineberg and Hull, 1979; Searle and Ward, 1990; Stone *et al.*, 1990; Ward and Kennedy, 1993a). The findings of this study and earlier studies confirm the importance of social support in cross-cultural transition. The comments of the expatriate academics indicate that social support provides the necessary information and resources for decreasing uncertainty and thus increasing their satisfaction with their life abroad (including their families) and work (Black, 1990).

#### **8.4 Policy Implications of the Study**

There has been a steady growth in the knowledge of the important role education plays in ensuring human and economic development in the Arab world (Yamani, 2006). Also, there is increased awareness of the contribution of quality education towards economic development and general growth (Barro and Sala-i-Martin, 2003). The information gathered from the present research work affects the policy level of government. Currently, practices concerning employment and policies regarding expatriate academics influence the type of result anticipated by the UAE government. In regard to the expatriation process of academics, the government can play a critical part in its success. The researcher views that the critical role played by expatriate academics in the socio-economic well-being and scientific development of the UAE, makes it paramount for the government of the UAE to make deliberate efforts towards crafting desirable policies and programs to attain the maximum benefits that expatriate academics are able to offer the country.

Among the implications of this study are that in order for the UAE to truly benefit from the added value that the expatriate academics can bring, the government needs to initiate major changes in the services and support offered. Government agencies must offer encouragement to HEIs to cooperate and bring to the fore cross-cultural challenges and issues that expatriate academics living in the country are presently facing. Improper organisation and communication between government and HEIs may constitute one of the principal reasons that prevent the successful cross-cultural adjustment. Government agencies may also play an important part in the management of the adjusting process of expatriate academics towards supporting productivity at the workplace and to motivate them to extend their stay.

The following recommendations for policy direction serve to improve the expatriate academics' contribution and tap fully into the knowledge and expertise that they bring along with them. Therefore, the authorities governing education in the UAE should take into consideration the following policy recommendations:

1. Adequate investment in research to study how present policies concerning employment affect expatriate academics;
2. Better conditions for expatriate academics workers including long term contracts and various avenues for professional development;
3. Improved status of all academic staff (both national and expatriate) within HEIs so that their contributions to the national systems of education are recognised as they are invested in their students' and their host country's development.

The summary of the findings derived from this research work indicates that the policies for expatriate academics in the UAE cannot function properly on the ground due to inadequate attention to issues of cross-cultural adjustment. The Ministry of Education has not paid

serious attention to the development of cross-cultural training and development programs. There is further argument that the HEIs in their role as recruitment and employment centers have not made adequate preparation to receive and accommodate the expatriate academics from cross-cultural view-points and other issues relating to matters of organization and pedagogy.

### **8.5 Implications for research**

This study has made significant contributions to the body of knowledge focusing on expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE, however future research work must be undertaken.

First of all, the researcher proposes that further research on the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics in HEIs in all of UAE's seven emirates be undertaken, perhaps comparing the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics among the emirates or comparing cross-cultural adjustment in private and public institutions. This may help to investigate the function of the factors in terms of locational differences relating to the adjustment of expatriate academics. There are shortcomings associated with this study, therefore by extending the study; it may be possible to broaden the spectrum of recommendations that ensures a smoother adjustment process for expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE. The qualitative approach may be the concentrated area of future study. Future research can also investigate additional issues that have not been included in this research. A separate study can also be conducted on the reasons why expatriate academics leave their job and terminate their contracts. This study offers evidence supporting the incorporation of additional factors into the present model. These additional factors could be useful not only in providing further insight into their cross-cultural adjustment, but also developing the predictive nature of the traditional expatriate adjustment model.

In this study, the researcher developed a expatriate academic profile which shows the ideal characteristics of an expatriate academic for HEIs in the UAE. This proposed profile is the reflection of the findings obtained in previous studies and the current study. However, this study does not actually measure these expatriate academic's characteristics in relation to the adjustment of expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE. In other words, while previous studies and the findings from the current study have established that there is a relationship between skill, ability, and personality features and their adjustment or performance, it has not empirically tested the level significance to expatriate academics and their cross-cultural adjustment. Also, previous studies have not measured how much of each characteristic must each expatriate academic actually possess in order successfully adjust and perform well in the new environment and whether these characteristics are similar to those required by HCN employees who work with expatriate academics.

The initial plan for this study was to include HR staff, line managers, and HCNs in selected HEIs, recruitment consultants, and cross-cultural training specialists. However, when it got to the time of data collection, none of these specialists were willing to participate in the study. For this reason, the researcher suggests that further research should include the above mentioned specialists in order to provide deeper insight into the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics. The current study is limited to expatriate academics, hence only their views were recorded and evaluated. Widening the sample in order to include the parties mentioned above can provide a more balanced and well-rounded view of expatriate adjustment. The data obtained from a broader sample that includes different stakeholders may be compared with the outcomes of this research, identifying the differences and similarities and analysing them.

The findings in this study confirm the importance of providing training to expatriate academics in order to equip them with the required knowledge and skills needed for adjustment in the host environment and assist them in forming realistic expectations (Kealey and Protheroe, 1996; Paige, 1993; Tolbert and McLean, 1995;). Knowledge of the culture of the host country and the host organisation before departing can have a positive effect on overall adjustment (Black, 1988; Florkowski and Fogel, 1999; Takeuchi et al., 2002a). In this study, expatriate academics suggest that it is necessary to receive extensive and effective institutional orientation and continuous cross-cultural training programmes immediately after arriving in the UAE. They also insist that the occasional workshops, one-time training, or superficial institutional orientation programs currently offered are a wasted effort since it does not adequately address many challenges and problems that expatriate academics experience. Further research can investigate into the appropriate timing and venue for training sessions that ensure maximum effectiveness of institutional orientation and continuous cross-cultural training programs for expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE.

Finally, this study confirmed the need to prepare expatriate academics to raise their own cross-cultural and intercultural awareness by giving them support in this development. However, the amount and extent to which support is needed must be further explored. It is also important to conduct further research to study the attitude of HCNs towards offering organisational support and preparation.

In summary, more research work is imperative in order to broaden the scope of the current study, expand the sample to embody various parties or stakeholders, and make use of various methodologies for data collection thereby exploring the topic in further detail and expanding

the range of issues discussed in this thesis. Further research should take into consideration the different sections within the adjustment of expatriate academics and also institutional induction and cross-cultural training programs. By moving away from a “one-off” type of study to a more comprehensive and continuous type of study, researchers will be able to investigate deeper into the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics over an extended period of time.

## **8.6 Strengths and Limitations of the Research**

As it is with any other research work, this study has its strengths and weaknesses.

### **8.6.1 Strengths of the research**

This study presents a comprehensive picture of the cross-cultural adjustment experiences of expatriate academics in selected HEIs in the UAE. With the use of an in-depth literature review, questionnaires, and interviews, this study reflects their experiences. A mixed method approach has been adopted due to the nature of the research problem. The data from the questionnaires were analysed using the appropriate statistical tests and the results compared to the existing literature in terms of agreement or disagreement. Within the qualitative phase, the recorded interviews were transcribed and the typed transcripts were handed back to the respondents for verification so as to increase trustworthiness of the data (member checking). Hence, an honest interpretation of the cross-cultural adjustment experiences of the participants was represented by this research work.

The researcher consistently sought advice from scholars experienced in the research topic and in quantitative and qualitative methodology in the planning, developing and implementing this study. The researcher read extensively on the mixed method approach, which enabled



him to design, implement and evaluate the study. The researcher remained as neutral as possible throughout the entire length of the interviews in order to appreciate the significance of the study to all expatriate academics in general, in spite of the limited number of HEIs involved in the study.

Even though the researcher himself is an expatriate academic working at a HEI in the UAE, he did not know the respondents personally prior to the research work. The purpose and objective of the research was explained in detail to the representatives of the respective HEIs and the participants prior to the initial data collection. These steps were taken in order to guarantee confidentiality. The researcher adopted a friendly but unbiased/neutral position in order to facilitate an honest, open and unbiased exchange.

This study provides insights into the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE, the cultural differences they experience and how they react to them. The expatriate academics encounter differences in several aspects in their work and life, which includes the general environment, nature of the academic job, the organisation's culture, the local culture, their interactions with locals and fellow expatriates. They observe the similarities and differences of cultures, which reflects the multifaceted nature of cross-cultural contacts in today's globalization era. A significant implication found here is that it may be unproductive to develop typologies of responses or to typecast responses.

The findings from this study indicate broad variations in the degree, mode, and patterns in the adjustment of expatriate academics to a different culture. The study also identified the many factors that contribute to the success or failure of the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics.

With globalization intensifying in the 21st century, the workforce is becoming more and more culturally diverse. The intensification of globalisation, internationalisation, and the increase in international labour migration has provided several opportunities for the local workforce to working with people of different cultures. In view of these changes in the global economy, businesses, including education, are increasingly depending on expatriates to help support the process of globalization (Ronen, 1989; Scullion, 1991; Tung, 1987). There can be complexity in the outcome of cross-cultural contacts. In spite of the the significant resources invested in higher education in the UAE and in the hiring of expatriate academics in the UAE, only a few studies have been carried out in the UAE on expatriate academics. However, none of these studies examined the cross-cultural adjustment and responses of expatriate academics in the light of cultural changes. Although there are extensive studies that investigate intercultural adaptation and cross-cultural adjustment in a Western context, there are relatively few studies that investigate cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics in the UAE. For academics, the UAE is taking the centre stage of being an extremely important choice of destination for higher education jobs; therefore this study intends to add to that the limited but growing body of research. This research contributes to the limited discussion on the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academic in HEIs in the UAE, GCC region, and in the Middle East in general and also establishes the importance for further research. Further research needs to be conducted in order to comprehend the intricacy of the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academic in HEIs in the UAE.

This study also benefited the respondents of this study themselves. Prior to the data collection or afterwards, most expatriate academics said that the survey and or the interviews offered them the opportunity to express how they felt, share their experiences and expectations, and

offer their own suggestions. Many respondents stated that they had never been asked about their experiences in such an in-depth manner. According to them, the survey and the interviews provided a platform for them to reflect on aspects of their lives and experiences. Some added that they were able to reflect on their experiences in a more objective manner. It is their hope that the HEIs will review their recruitment, selection, induction, and support policies and processes.

In conclusion, the key claim of the thesis is the need to identify areas where interventions are necessary in order to improve the situation of expatriate academics and the overall contribution that they could make in order for the UAE to achieve the goals it has set for higher education by carefully preparing, inducting, and providing on-going support services for expatriate academics. Recommendations of this nature require a major change in policy for HEIs in the UAE whose support of the expatriate academics is supposed to go beyond the administrative and become more expatriate-centred, personalized and continuous. This thesis can serve as a pre-pilot for a further extensive research to be conducted on HEIs in the UAE on a larger scale.

### **8.6.2 Limitations of the research**

As with any other study, this research has some limitations, some of them being expected and others not. The initial design (at the proposal stage) of the research was to involve four HEIs (two public and two private) in this study, yet only three (one public and two private) HEIs eventually participated in the study, which was not anticipated.

The initial design was also to include HR staff, line managers, and HCNs in selected HEIs, recruitment consultants, cross-cultural training specialists/consultants, business executives,

however, none of these specialists/participants were willing to participate. These occurrences were considered limitations because previous literature indicates that it is better to collect data from multiple sources, including various stakeholders, in order to obtain a deeper interpretation of expatriate adjustment. This study relied on the data from one particular sample population, namely expatriate academics, which, however, offered a comprehensive understanding of the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE. Future studies must take into consideration a wider view for the examination of these predictors.

Another limitation is related to the target population as it was limited to three HEIs in the UAE, two in Dubai and one in Abu Dhabi. Although, the purpose of this study was not to provide generalization, a larger population of expatriate academics from other emirates of the UAE would have been a limitation worth resolving in order to test the study on a larger population. The majority of the participants in this study were Westerners, and the results may have been more significant if the sample was evenly split between Westerners and non-Westerners.

Although the quantitative phase was commenced after almost eight months waiting for approval, and the quantitative data were gathered, some items (e.g. religion, educational level) had to be removed from the questionnaire because the concerned institutions felt that those items were too sensitive. The institution with the largest number of expatriate academics in this study requested to remain anonymous.. The researcher also planned to perform a document analysis in order to gather data on the content and nature of orientation and induction programs, yet access was denied. The researcher also intended to include focus groups in his study, which did not materialize.

Interview responses rely strongly on the subjective interpretations and abilities of expatriate academics in recalling their cross-cultural experiences. Therefore, the reliability of their responses depended on their own recollections, and although the interviews took place while expatriate academics were still in employment, they may have omitted some of their initial cross-cultural experiences or already forgotten. This is a common shortcoming of data collection using interviews (Bryman, 1988). Interview responses are data records of their memories, which may not have been recorded in a factual, correct, or comprehensive manner. However, it was not possible to verify the responses of the participants, for example by their colleagues and supervisors, friends, family and relatives. In future research, respondents can be given the invitation to keep diaries or produce letters, emails or other documents to serve as an additional source of data enabling more objective investigation of the questions. According to Bryman (2001), these written materials may either come as the primary source of data or applied as supplementary data. The adoption of a longitudinal framework would have enabled the researcher to track the participants. Moreover, it would be significant to collect the opinions of significant others for instance the students, managers, HCNs, the families and friends of expatriate academics.

According to the literature review, the first six months of an expatriate's initial stay in the new environment is the most significant period of the cross-cultural adjustment process. However, at the time when the data were collected, all the respondents had been staying in the UAE for one year or more. For further study, it is suggested that more data are obtained from expatriate academics that have been in the UAE for six months or less.

### **8.6.3 Conclusion**

Cross-cultural adjustment demands great effort and competence in order to endure the challenges that accompany it. For this reason, this study has come forth with suggestions on how to address the challenges encountered during the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics and for managers in HEIs in the UAE. In order to decrease the turnover rate of expatriate academics and in a quest to assist HEIs towards retaining its world class expatriate academics, tap into their immense experience and knowledge, and to facilitate effective knowledge transfer, HEIs must not only prudently select these expatriate academics based on a specific set of criteria but also provide adequate support in order to assist them in the process of cross-cultural adjustment.

Expatriate academics must be sufficiently prepared before they arrive in the UAE in terms of general knowledge of the host country, institution, and the nature of the academic job. This helps decrease the level of culture shock upon arrival. For in-country adjustment, prior preparation is also of immense help in overcoming the challenges encountered during the cross-cultural adjustment process. Proper preparation plays a significant role in reducing the level of stress. The findings also support the significance of factors such as cross-cultural training and relevant previous cross-cultural experience.

In summary, the major findings of this study were as follows: Firstly, expatriate academics coming from countries similar to the UAE, particularly Arabic countries, are more likely to experience less cross-cultural adjustment problems or challenges in HEIs in the UAE. Secondly, previous international experience, cross-cultural training, marital status and family situation are found to have a significant correlation with the cross-cultural adjustment. Thirdly, cross-cultural adjustment generally contributes to their intention to stay in the UAE.

Black et al's (1991) model was an appropriate research model when applied to the expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE. His model can be used to measure expatriate academic adjustment across similar cultures as well as different cultures.

The primary purpose of any research is to solve problems. Therefore, based on the findings gained in this research; the researcher was able to gain an insight into the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate academics in HEIs in the UAE and the need for HEIs to positively contribute to their smoother cross-cultural adjustment. The information obtained from this study can assist all stakeholders in making valuable changes in order to benefit both the HEIs and their respective expatriate academics. Although implementing such changes will take time, they are definitely necessary and will be beneficial.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1- Online Consent Form and Questionnaire

Exit this survey  
EDIT  
**Expatriate Faculty Adjustment**

**CONSENT FORM**

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in an online survey on your cross-cultural adjustment experiences at your institution in the U.A.E. This is a research conducted by David Quansah, a doctoral candidate at the British University in Dubai. The purpose of the study is to develop a model of the process of cross-cultural adjustment within the context of expatriate academic staff in UAE's higher education sector. The results of this study will be used for scholarly purposes only (as partial fulfillment) of the researcher's doctorate degree at the British University in Dubai.

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. All information will be kept confidential. To help protect your confidentiality, this survey will not request for any information that will personally identify you or the organisation you work for. You may refuse to take part in the research or exit the survey at any time without penalty.

At the end of the survey you will be asked if you are interested in participating in an interview. No names or identifying information would be included in the interview transcripts. Your participation and responses to the interview will remain confidential.

*If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher's supervisor, Dr. Abdulai Abukari via email at [abdualai.abukari@buid.ac.ae]. You may also contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, British University in Dubai (BUID) Block 11, 1st and 2nd floor, Dubai International Academic City. P.O. Box: 345015, Dubai/UAE. Tel: 00971 4391 3626 Fax: 00971 4366 4698*

Researcher's contact details: Email: quamegyan@yahoo.com

**1. Please select the "Agree" option if you have read the above information and voluntarily agree to participate in this survey.**

***If you do not wish to participate in the research study, please decline participation by selecting the "Disagree" option.***

1

## Expatriate Faculty Adjustment

### PART A

**\* 2. What is your age?**

- 18 to 24
- 25 to 34
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 54
- 55 to 64
- 65 to 74
- 75 or older

**\* 3. What is your gender?**

- Female
- Male

**\* 4. What is your nationality?**

**\* 5. What is/are your native language/languages?**

**\* 6. Marital Status**

- Single, never married
- Married
- Widowed
- Divorced
- Separated

**\* 7. If married, is your spouse living with you in the U.A.E?**

**\* 8. Do you have a child or children?**

**\* 9. If yes, is/are your child (children) in the U.A.E?**

**\* 10. How long have you been working in the U.A.E?**

## Expatriate Faculty Adjustment

**\* 11. Prior to your employment in the U.A.E., have you worked in any other country or countries besides your home country?**

**12. If Yes, please list the country or countries and the number of years you have worked there. For example; Australia (3 years), Singapore (7 years) etc.**

**\* 13. Is your current place of work - Government, Semi-Government, or Private?**

**\* 14. In which Emirate do you work?**

- Abu Dhabi
- Dubai
- Sharjah
- Ajman
- Umm Al Qaiwain
- Ras Al Khaimah
- Fujairah

**\* 15. In which Emirate do you live?**

- Abu Dhabi
- Dubai
- Sharjah
- Ras Al Khaimah
- Umm Al Qaiwain
- Ajman
- Fujairah

**\* 16. Rate your Arabic ability**

	Good	Fair	Poor
Speaking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reading	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**\* 17. How many years did you plan to stay in the UAE before you came here?**

- Less than 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 2-3 years
- 3-4 years
- As long as possible

**\* 18. How many more years do you intend to stay in the UAE?**

- Less than 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 2-3 years
- 3-4 years
- As long as possible

**\* 19. Please indicate your intent to stay or leave your current university (employer)**

- I plan to leave this university as soon as possible (i.e. after my notice period).
- I plan to leave this university at the end of my contract - regardless of not having another job offer.
- I would be reluctant to leave this university. (i.e. only if I have secured a better job, or only if I am asked to leave).
- I plan to stay in this university till retirement.

## Expatriate Faculty Adjustment

### PART B - General adjustment variables

\* 20. Please indicate how unadjusted or adjusted you are to the following U.A.E general adjustment variables.

	1 Very unadjusted	2 Unadjusted	3 Somewhat unadjusted	4 Neutral	5 Somewhat adjusted	6 Adjusted	7 Completely adjusted
Food	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health care facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Entertainment/recreation facilities and opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cost of living	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shopping	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Housing conditions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Weather	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transportation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Living conditions in general	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Expatriate Faculty Adjustment

### PART C - Social/cultural/interaction adjustment variables.

\* 21. Please indicate how unadjusted or adjusted you are to the following U.A.E social/cultural/interaction adjustment variables.

	1 Very unadjusted	2 Unadjusted	3 Somewhat unadjusted	4 Neutral	5 Somewhat adjusted	6 Adjusted	7 Completely adjusted
Interacting with host nationals outside of your organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interacting with other nationalities outside of your organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interacting with host nationals on a day-to-day basis at work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working with employees from other nationalities or ethnic background or religions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Socializing with host nationals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interacting with Emirati students (if any)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interacting with non Emirati students (if any)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relationship with immediate line manager	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



## Expatriate Faculty Adjustment

### PART D - Workplace adjustment variables

\* 22. Please indicate how unadjusted or adjusted you are to the following U.A.E workplace adjustment variables.

	1 Very unadjusted	2 Unadjusted	3 Somewhat unadjusted	4 Neutral	5 Somewhat adjusted	6 Adjusted	7 Completely adjusted
Research Opportunities, Creative Scholarly Activities, Allocated time for research.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Performance standards and expectations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervisory responsibilities (if applicable)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teaching hours, Administrative duties, faculty committees, Community Outreach etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creating the right classroom atmosphere	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job security	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The physical conditions in the classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Availability of resources for teaching and learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The institution's management style	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Expatriate Faculty Adjustment

### PART E - Teaching the UAE

Please tick your view about each of these statements (1 = strongly disagree; 2= tend to disagree; 3=neutral; 4 = tend to agree; 5= strongly agree), as they apply to your current teaching in the UAE.

**\* 23. Please tick your view about each of these statements (1 = strongly disagree; 2= tend to disagree; 3=neutral; 4 = tend to agree; 5= strongly agree), as they apply to your current teaching context in the UAE.**

	1= strongly disagree	2= tend to disagree	3= neutral	4= tend to agree	5= strongly agree
The teacher should know all the answers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Religion is important in my daily life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
What my family wants for me is more important than what I want for myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The classroom should be a formal place.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It's OK to use materials in class that show a different viewpoint, even if this viewpoint contradicts many students' personal values.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teaching in the UAE is different from what I expected	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feedback on academic work should be worded appropriately for the host culture.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students will learn best if they pay attention and take notes from what the teacher says	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students should take responsibility for their own learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**24. Kindly provide details, if your rating for the statement "Teaching in the UAE is different from what I expected" above is either "4" or "5".**

## Expatriate Faculty Adjustment

### PART F - Cross Cultural Training

\* 25. Are cross cultural /expatriate adjustment programs important?

26. If your answer to question #25 is No, please explain why.

\* 27. Did you receive any pre-departure expatriate adjustment training, orientation or preparation program before commencing your current employment?

28. If yes, please list the topics that were covered during the training/program.

\* 29. If your answer to question# 27 is Yes, please rate the training, orientation or preparation program that you received.

Unsatisfactory/  
dissatisfied      Somewhat  
satisfied      Good/ satisfied      Very satisfied      Excellent      Not Applicable

Please rate your  
training, orientation or  
preparation experience

30. Did the training, orientation or preparation enable you to adjust successfully to life/work in the U.A.E?

\* 31. Based on your experience, please list the topics that should be included in any cross-cultural training/adjustment orientation program.



Promotion opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Starting a "new life" (e.g. professionally or personally)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job Security	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working environment (e.g. Workload, Students, Engagement in decision-making processes)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p><b>35. Do you have any other comments regarding your adjustment experience as an expatriate faculty? Please type your comments in the space below.</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div>					

**Expatriate Faculty Adjustment**

PART H - Other information

**\* 36. Would you be interested in participating in an interview to supplement your questionnaire responses?**

Yes

No

If yes, then kindly provide your CONTACT DETAILS (e.g. your phone number or email address).

All information will be kept confidential. To help protect your confidentiality, the interview transcripts will not contain information that will personally identify you or the organization you work for.

**Expatriate Faculty Adjustment**

Thank you

Thank you for completing the questionnaire.

## Appendix 2- Consent to Participate in an Interview

### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERVIEW (For Expatriate Academics)

**Title of the study:** Cross-Cultural Adjustment of Expatriate Academics in Selected Higher Education Institutions in the UAE.

**Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of the study is to develop a model of the process of cross-cultural adjustment within the context of expatriate academics in UAE's higher education sector. The results of this study will be used for scholarly purposes only (as partial fulfillment) of the researcher's doctorate degree at the British University in Dubai.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because during the online survey you indicated interest in participating in an additional interview.

**Confidentiality:** All information will be kept confidential. All data is stored in a password protected electronic format. To help protect your confidentiality, the surveys will not contain information that will personally identify you or the organization you work for. The results of this study will be used for scholarly purposes only and as partial fulfillment of the researcher's doctorate degree at the British University in Dubai.

*Please read the information below, and ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether or not to participate.*

1. My participation in this project is voluntary. I have the right not to answer any question, or to withdraw and discontinue participation at any time for any reason without penalty. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation.
2. The interview will last approximately 30-45 minutes. Notes will be written during the interview. An audio tape of the interview will be made. The research will not record this interview without your permission. I have the right to revoke recording permission and/or end the interview at any time.
3. I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name or the name of my employer in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies which protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions.
4. Faculty and administrators of the British University in Dubai will neither be present at the interview nor have access to raw notes or transcripts of this interview. This precaution will prevent my individual comments from having any negative repercussions.
5. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
6. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

Name of Participant \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Subject \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Principle Investigator \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

For further information, please contact the Principle Researcher: David Kwame Quansah,  
Email: quamegyan@yahoo.com

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may also contact the Principle Investigator's supervisors, Dr. Abdulai Abukari via email at [abdulai.abukari@buid.ac.ae].

You may also contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, British University in Dubai (BUID) Block 11, first and second floor, Dubai International Academic City. P.O. Box: 345015, Dubai/UAE. Tel: 00971 4391 3626 Fax: 00971 4366 4698

## **Appendix 3- Interview Guide and Interview Questions**

### **Interview questions and potential probes**

#### **A. PERSONAL BACKGROUND AND GENERAL ADJUSTMENT:**

1. Please, tell me about yourself. Where are you from? How long have you been living and working as an academic staff in the UAE?
2. What encouraged you to work as an academic staff in the UAE?
3. What was your previous occupation before you came to the UAE.
4. How did you feel when you first arrived in the UAE?
  - Can you describe your first impression?
5. In terms of living in the UAE, how would you compare your expectations when you first arrived and now?
  - Have your expectations been met?
6. How would you describe your life in the UAE?
7. Are there differences between your life in the UAE and life in your country?
  - If yes, please explain.
8. How long did it take for you to settle down or adapt to the life in the UAE?
9. What difficulties have you experienced in the UAE?

#### **B. WORKING ADJUSTMENT:**

1. Did you experience any work related difficulties when you first joined this institution?
  - If yes, please explain.
2. Do you still experience these work related difficulties?
  - If yes, please explain why.
  - If no, please explain how you addressed them.
3. What are the differences between students in the U.A.E. and students in your country?
4. How would you compare the interaction between academic staff and students in your country and in the UAE?
5. How would you compare the teaching methodology here and in your country?
6. How would you describe your job as an academic staff in the UAE?
7. How would you describe your students in the UAE?
8. In terms of your job as an academic, how would you compare your expectations on your arrival and now?
  - Have your expectations been met?



9. Do you think culture has an effect on the learning that takes place in the classroom?

- If yes, could you kindly explain?

- If no, could you kindly explain?

[Interviewer may need to define the term verbally.] [*Culture is a way of life of a group of people - the behaviours, beliefs, values, and symbols that they accept*].

10. Have you ever experienced a conflict in the classroom that you think was related to culture?

- If yes, then, tell me more about what happened.

- How did you feel?

- What did you do to resolve the situation?

11. How could one develop intercultural competence?

[Interviewer may need to define term verbally.] [*Intercultural competence is the ability to interact and communicate effectively and appropriately with people of other cultures*].

12. Do you think students and teachers should know about each other's culture before they enter the classroom?

- If yes, could you kindly explain?

- If no, could you kindly explain?

13. What do you think about your organisation's management style?

14. If you were in charge (upper management), what would you do better?

15. In general, do you enjoy working in the UAE?

- Are you satisfied with your job as an academic staff?

### **C. INTERACTION ADJUSTMENT:**

1. How would you describe your social life (life after work hours) in the UAE?

2. Do you have any Emirati friends?

3. Do you have any friends who are from different cultural backgrounds?

4. How would you describe the interaction between you and your colleagues?

5. How would you describe the interaction between you and your students?

6. What is the relationship like between you and those in authority (e.g. academic coordinators, program chair, HR etc).

### **D. INTENTION TO STAY IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES:**

1. Do you intend to stay longer in the UAE? Why or why not?

- If yes, - have you ever considered leaving the UAE and going back to your country?  
Why/why not?

#### **E. NEW EXPATRIATE ACADEMIC STAFF**

1. What advice will you have for new expatriate academics that are planning to come to live and work in the United Arab Emirates?
2. What knowledge, skills, and abilities should they have in order to successfully adjust?
3. What can organisations in the UAE do to make it easier for expatriate academic staff to successfully adjust to living and working in the United Arab Emirates?

#### **F. CLOSING QUESTION**

1. What other things would you like to tell me regarding your cross cultural experiences here and the ways you have handled the changes?