

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

THE CULTURAL CHALLENGES THAT FEMALE TEACHERS
FACE UPON THEIR TRANSITION TO TEACHING IN THE
KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

by
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AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

THE CULTURAL AND SOCIETAL CHALLENGES THAT
FEMALE TEACHERS FACE UPON THEIR TRANSITION TO
TEACHING IN THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

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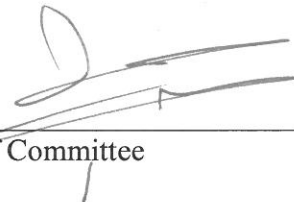
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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Title: The Cultural and Societal Challenges that Female Teachers Face upon Their Transition to Teaching in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Culture differs among communities. It differs by its values, customs, traditions, and beliefs. Schools have their own organizational cultures as well, influenced by the community culture (Dimmock & Walker, 2000; Schein, 2010). Accordingly, research indicates that all teachers teaching in a new culture experienced all the cultural shock phases and face challenges adjusting to the new working environment. Studies found that language and coping with cultural issues, such as: lifestyle, curriculum, evaluating their certificate, taboos, and customs were major challenges for teachers to deal with in the new host culture (Chang, 2011; Cho, 2010; Fee, 2011; Garson, 2005; He, 2002; Lowe, Hwang, & Moore, 2011). Moreover, the cultural mismatch between the teachers and the students negatively impacts students' academic performance (Ogbu, 1987; as cited in Phuntsog, 1999). This highlights the importance of understanding the nature of the challenges teachers face in a new cultural context and exploring its impact on the teachers' and the students' performances. The phenomenon of having teachers from different cultures is predominant in the Arab countries especially in the gulf region (Scotsman, 2011). Accordingly, this study is conducted in Saudi Arabia as one of the countries whose educational system has been characterized in the last decades by the presence of a large number of non-national teachers (Scotsman, 2011). Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative study is to explore those teachers' perspectives on the challenges they encounter while teaching in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Riyadh, and to examine their views on the impact this is having on their work performance. This study is a multiple case study that used the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis as its main methodological approach. The results indicate that there are societal and cultural challenges that the teachers face upon their transition from their home country to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; all of which affected their work experience by lowering their motivation to teach, hindering their creativity, and lowering their job satisfaction. However, there were certain organizational and personal factors that helped them overcome the challenges that they faced. Moreover, this study reveals the nature of the challenges where the practices and beliefs of the society are unlike that of the teachers. The study recommends that school administrators design training programs and enhance work conditions while fully taking into consideration the challenges attributed to the teachers' cross-cultural transitions. Recommendations for research included examining the results in a larger sample and in relation to additional variables like gender and the level of commitment of the teachers.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	v
ABSTRACT.....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xiii
LIST OF TABLES.....	xiv
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
A. Research Problem and Rationale.....	2
B. Purpose and Research Questions.....	7
C. Significance of the Study.....	7
II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....	10
A. Conceptualizing Culture.....	10
1. Organizational – School – Culture.....	11
2. Conceptual Framework.....	13
a. Elements of the organizational culture.....	14
b. Elements of the societal culture.....	16
c. Levels of culture.....	20
B. The Conceptual Framework for this Study.....	23
C. Cultural Shock.....	30
1. Stages of Cultural Shock.....	31
2. Causes and Symptoms of Cultural Shock.....	34
3. Getting Over Culture Shock.....	36

D. Challenges that Teachers Face in a New Cultural Context.....	39
1. The Challenges.....	40
E. Teachers' Preparatory Programs through Culturally Responsive Teaching.....	45
F. Culturally Responsive Teaching.....	46
G. Conclusion.....	48
III. METHODOLOGY.....	50
A. Research Design.....	50
B. Context of the Case Study.....	52
C. Study Site and Participants.....	53
D. Data Collection Procedures.....	58
1. Individual Interviews.....	59
2. Individual Interviews Aimed at Member-Checking.....	60
3. Documents.....	60
E. Data Analysis Procedure.....	61
F. Trustworthiness Criteria.....	63
1. Credibility.....	63
2. Transferability.....	64
3. Dependability.....	65
4. Conformability.....	65
G. Limitations.....	66
IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS.....	68
A. Challenges Related to the Societal Culture.....	69
1. Restrictive Norms and Policies.....	70

a.	Loss of independence.....	71
b.	Segregation based on gender.....	74
c.	Lack of fairness of the terms of the work permit.....	74
2.	Unfamiliar Dialect.....	75
3.	Different Language.....	76
4.	Difficult Weather Conditions.....	79
5.	Lack of Prioritization of School Attendance.....	81
6.	Parents' Over-sensitivity to Critical Feedback.....	81
7.	Unrealistic Expectations Parents Held for their Children.....	82
8.	Discrimination and Racism in the Work Place.....	83
B.	Challenges Related to the Organizational Culture.....	84
1.	Culturally Irrelevant Curriculum Content.....	86
2.	Absence of Curriculum Material.....	87
3.	Religious Restrictions Imposed on the Curriculum and Instructional Design.....	88
a.	Pressure to modify the curriculum based on the requirements of the religious authority.....	88
b.	Imposed limitations on teaching approaches.....	89
4.	Absence of Clear Discipline Policy.....	90
5.	Excessive Parental Interference in School Decisions.....	92
6.	Lack of Parental Involvement in Promoting Student Learning... ..	93
7.	Lack of Support for Professional Development.....	95
8.	Lack of Orientation for Newcomers.....	97
9.	Unsupportive Administrative School Policies.....	100
10.	Absence of Job Security.....	101
C.	The Effect of the Challenges on Teachers' Effective Teaching.....	102
1.	Loss of Motivation.....	102
2.	Loss of Creativity.....	104
3.	Lack of Job Satisfaction.....	104
D.	Factors that Helped Teachers Overcome the Challenges.....	106
1.	Organizational Factors.....	107
a.	Family support benefits.....	107
b.	Support from more experienced peers.....	107
c.	Supportive school climate.....	108
d.	Resources and instructional materials.....	108
2.	Personal Factors.....	109
a.	Support from family and friends.....	109
b.	Resilient personality.....	110

c. Work as a community of support.....	111
d. Information learnt about the country prior arrival.....	115
E. Conclusion.....	116
V. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION.....	119
A. Discussion of the Results.....	120
1. Comparative Analysis of the Challenges Based on the Theoretical Framework.....	120
2. Societal Culture.....	124
a. Laws and policies.....	124
b. Daily activities.....	125
c. Language.....	127
d. Religion.....	128
3. Organizational Culture.....	129
4. Overlooked Challenges.....	134
5. The Cultural Shock Journey.....	135
B. Effects of Cultural Transition on the Quality of Teaching.....	138
C. Factors that Support Overcoming Cultural Shock.....	140
D. Conclusion.....	143
E. Recommendations for Practice.....	145
1. In-Service University Programs.....	146
2. School Induction Programs for Teachers.....	147
3. Enhancing Work Conditions.....	149
4. The Expatriate Cross-Cultural Training Program as Prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants.....	150
5. Recommendations for Research.....	151

Appendix

I. INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS.....	152
--------------------------------------	------------

II. DOCUMENT CHECKLIST.....	155
REFERENCES.....	156

FIGURES

Figure	page
1. Schein's (1985) model of culture.....	12
2. Dimmock and Walker's model.....	16
3. Terpstra and Sarathy's model.....	18
4. Model of Schein's Concept.....	21
5. The Conceptual Framework for this study.....	24
6. Enlargement for the cultural layers, dimensions, and element of the conceptual framework.....	25
7. Enlargement for the Cultural Layers, Dimensions, and Element of the Conceptual Framework.....	123

TABLES

Table	Page
3.1. Teachers' background information. New = Newcomers Old=Old timers.....	5
3.2. Summary of teachers background information: Average and range of participants.....	58
3.3. Summary of data collection methods, participants and research sites used in the study.....	59
4.1. Frequency of teachers' responses regarding the societal challenges per Newcomers and Old timers, Arab and non-Arab teachers'.....	70
4.2. Frequency of Newcomers and Old timers, Arab and Non-Arab Teachers' Answers Regarding Organizational Challenges.....	85
4.3. Frequency of Newcomer and Old Timers, Arab And Non-Arab Teachers' Answers Regarding the Effect of the Challenges on Teachers' Effective Teaching.....	102
4.4. Frequency of Newcomers and Old Timers, Arab and Non-Arab Teachers' Answers Regarding the Factors that Helped Teachers Overcome the Challenges.....	106

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Culture is a hard concept to define. There are multiple conceptual definitions for culture that will be discussed throughout the study. For this study, the word ‘culture’ will be used in its varied meaning: (1) societal culture; (2) organizational culture; (3) sub-cultures within each of these two cultural layers. Cultures differ in their beliefs, customs, values, and traditions from one group of people to another. The group of people can be at any of the two cultural layers: societal and organizational. Societal culture differs among communities. Schools have their own organizational cultures as well, influenced by the community culture (Dimmock& Walker, 2000; Schein, 2010).

With globalization, researchers are giving more attention to the cultural aspects due to the increased diversity that is more likely to be found within a school, its community and national context. Hofstede (2006) developed a framework based on his research to highlight and understand the cultural context of every setting and identify its unique cultural characteristics. Accordingly, this shows his belief that if the lights are to be shed on understanding diverse cultures, people’s acts would then be justified and understood.

In today’s culturally interconnected societies, researchers are more interested to understand cultural differences and their impact on organizational functioning in order to build effective interaction and communication among the individuals within the school across these cultural differences (Hofstede, 2006; 2008). Thus, researchers agree on

considering culture one of the important elements to study and understand in order to enhance school climate and student performance (Gay, 2002).

Research Problem and Rationale

The Arab Gulf area has its own system when it comes to the functioning of all of its private sectors in its diverse fields (educational, business, etc.). Work opportunities (teaching and otherwise) in Saudi Arabia have been in a state of increase ever since the discovery of oil, gas, and natural resources in 1938. This discovery put Saudi Arabia back on the map as other countries such as the United States of America suddenly started to take interest in it (Quandt, 1981). This interest created the need for introducing new services and for raising the standards of existing ones. The educational sector was one of many that were impacted. Many schools were opened to cater to the heightened demands of the expatriates who were attracted by the booming economy job market, and also of the locals who were looking to receive the services of those expatriates as a way to acquire skills needed in a country leaping into the modern age.

Gulf countries, in general rate high in the presence of non-nationals hired to work due to the lack of national professionals in many fields of expertise (Gonzalez, 2008). Moreover, in these countries, expatriates are more likely to be generously compensated receiving attractive benefits and treatment both in the public and private sector compared to their original countries (Gonzalez, 2008). As a result, the rate of the nationals' labor force is lower than the non-nationals (Gonzalez, 2008). More specifically, within the educational sector, schools are hiring large numbers of non-national teachers (Scotsman, 2011) due to the lack of qualified national teachers. In Saudi Arabia, teachers from various nationalities, both Westerners and fellow Arabs, had been hired in great numbers (Scotsman, 2011).

Keesing stated in his article that among each community, there are different values, customs, traditions, and beliefs (as cited in Peterson, 1986). Church in his article claimed that the transition between one culture and another force the sojourner – a short term visitor to a new culture (as cited in Jon Byrn, 2008)- to adjust into this new culture if they are to succeed in accomplishing the demands of their new jobs. One way teachers, as sojourner, get introduced to the culture they live in, is by means of their exposure to the school culture. School culture is influenced by the community culture. Scholars contend that school or any organizational culture is not only defined by a set of rules. It is more represented in the way people deal and communicate with each other (Peterson, 1986). Therefore, culture is observable (Peterson, 1986; Schein, 2010) and is “encountered [as] a behavior that we must learn to live with” (Frost, 2007, p. 26). Therefore, in order for teachers to be able to live in the culture of the new host country, they must learn enough about its norms of behavior and the values that underline them. In the case of sojourner-teachers, teachers depend on their exposure to the culture of the school to acquire this knowledge in order to adjust to living in the new culture and consequently succeed in their job. In this process of adjustment, teachers are found to face challenges to understand the context they are in. Many studies characterized these challenges faced during the transition to a new culture as manifestations of experiencing what they call a ‘culture shock’. Oberg (1954) refers to cultural shock by defining its phases: (1) The honeymoon or tourist phase, (2) The crises or the cultural shock phase, (3) The adjustment and gradual recovery phase, and (4) The adaptation phase (Gougeon, 2000; Hachey, 1998, Winkelman, 1994; Xia, 2009). Each of these phases has specific characteristics that sojourners experience. At the very beginning, when the sojourner arrives to the new host country, one could consider it to

be a tourist phase where the sojourner is still getting to know the new country. After a while and when the sojourner starts adjusting to the new place, they would begin to face a cultural shock; otherwise known as the crisis phase. During that phase, the sojourner would either make it to the adjustment phase or would draw back and leave the country to return home. At the third phase, the sojourner starts to get along with the new surrounding and adjusts to the new changes. In the final phase, the adaptation phase, the sojourner becomes an effective member of the community.

Studies state that most of the sojourners experience the cultural shock phases. However, even if a person finds difficulty adapting to the new culture, cultural shock differs from a person to another. The degree, to which culture differs from the home country of the sojourner to the host country, has a major influence on facing cultural shock. Therefore, sojourners might experience variation in the intensity of the cultural shock phases. Thus, the challenges that teachers might be facing in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia might differ due to their cultural background.

A review of research directed me to the presence of only few studies addressing the nature of experience of working in a culturally diverse setting and one that is different than one's own (e.g. Chang, 2011; Cho, 2010; Fee, 2011; Garson, 2005; He, 2002; Lowe, Hwang, & Moore, 2011). Still, these studies seem to agree that most teachers indeed face major challenges upon traveling and teaching in a new culture, and that most sojourners pass through the cultural shock adjustment process upon a cultural or societal transition. The nature of the challenges identified in empirical studies shows that they were mostly the same with minor variations. The major common finding was the challenge of Language (Cho, 2010; Fee, 2011; Garson, 2005; He, 2002; Lowe, Hwang, & Moore, 2011). Language

was an issue that teachers faced as a challenge in all different contexts. Most of the teachers found it hard to understand and deal with the cultural connotation of words and the way they were expected to respond to them. Studies found some teachers to be belittled for being bilingual as opposed to the respect they would have otherwise received from their country where knowledge of more than one language is a mark of sophistication.

The other challenge that studies agreed on was to get familiarized with the customs of a new country and to adjust to their lifestyle (Garson, 2005) in order to be able to interpret the behavior of the students and local staff (Chang, 2011; Garson, 2005; He, 2002). Other cultural issues were dress codes (Garson, 2005) and taboos such as absence of touching in the United States of America in classrooms between the teacher and the students (Fee, 2011). An additional challenge was, having to face the disappointment when reality did not meet their expectations (Fee, 2011; Frost, 2007). Some teachers had to face the challenge of going through additional certification requirement to become qualified teachers in the new host country (Cho, 2010; Fee, 2011). Moreover, teachers had to adjust to a different academic program in the schools of the new host country (He, 2002; Chang, 2011) as well as to different beliefs on which teaching strategies and curriculum implementation approaches are valued (Garson, 2005). Researchers also found that a number of environmental factors that affect them psychologically and physiologically can become a source of challenges during their adjustment process (Frost, 2007).

The available empirical studies pointed out the challenges that teachers face upon undergoing a cultural shock while trying to adjust to the new school and culture. Almost all of the articles, especially the empirical research studies, were recently conducted and published (dated 2002 and above) in the Western countries. I conclude that this is a new

topic that researchers are working on lately. Added to that, the gap in the literature that these studies revealed was the absence of studies that qualitatively described the nature of the challenges faced by teachers while adapting to the new surroundings as well as the effect the cultural shock might have on the effectiveness of their teaching. Moreover, those studies were conducted in the Western context. No similar studies were found examining these experiences in the context of the Arab countries in general and the gulf countries in particular. That is why this research study would be conducted to know the challenges that teachers encounter teaching in the Gulf area: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia [KSA].

My incentive for studying this issue was also triggered by my own experience as a Lebanese teaching in the gulf area. I witnessed many instances of: teachers getting caught in conflict situations with parents and students; teachers feeling de-motivated and helpless as they fail to make sense of those latter behaviors; as well as administrators experiencing the detrimental effect of high turnover in their schools. My observations regarding the challenges numerous expatriate teachers faced, and the difficulties encountered by many teachers, parents, and school administrators dealing with those teachers triggered my curiosity to explore more in depth the nature of these challenges and the manner in which they are hindering the practices of teaching. My study aims at discovering the specific challenges that teachers face working in the Gulf area: Specifically, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and that they attribute to their transition across culture. I chose K.S.A. for the following reasons: (1) there is high number of foreign teachers working in Saudi Arabia, (2) those teachers come from diverse cultural background, (3) the Gulf area, specifically K.S.A. differs in culture in comparison to Western cultures, which makes the nature of cultural factors faced by teachers different than western countries.

Since available research indicates that all teachers teaching in a new culture experienced all the cultural shock phases and faced challenges adjusting to the new working environment. Thus, an in depth study about the experience of expatriate teachers while transitioning into the culture of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will help enrich our collective understanding of this topic.

Purpose and Research Questions

This study aims at identifying and exploring, from teachers' perspectives, the nature of the challenges that those teachers face in a new cultural and societal environment, and that they attribute to their cross-cultural transition, specifically in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It will also inquire into the teachers' perspectives on the nature of the impact these challenges are having on the quality of teaching delivered by those teachers. Therefore, this study will attempt to answer the following questions from the perspective of the expatriate teachers:

- (1) What are the challenges that expatriate teachers face upon the transition into the new cultural and societal context of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and that they attribute to this transition?
- (2) In what ways do these challenges hinder an expatriate teacher's effective teaching?
- (3) What organizational factors seem to be helping those teachers deal with their cultural transition challenges?

Significance of the Study

The study generated a conceptual understanding of the experiences of expatriate teachers that is grounded in the perspectives of those teachers. It also have implications for

school administrators, and teachers as it might inform their attempts to increase the retention of their foreign teachers and the quality of their teaching.

Understanding the nature of the cultural challenges faced by expatriate teachers while transitioning to a new culture and identifying the ones that they attribute to their cross cultural transition will provide the understanding schools' administrators need as they design orientation and training programs. Taking into consideration the challenges of new teachers related to the cross-cultural transition will make it possible for school leaders to provide those teachers with the support they need while adjusting to working in the new cultural context. Teachers would then be given the necessary information not only about the school but also about the culture they are about to experience and the challenges they might encounter to help them adjust with the least amount of challenges (Fee, 2010; Frost, 2007). Informed schools' administrators and teachers could minimize the impact of the cultural shock on the individuals themselves - and consequently- on the teaching process and its effectiveness as well.

More importantly, school administrators can rely on the results of the study as they adjust the organizational factors that might have contributed to those challenges and could provide supportive structures that can enhance the teacher-student relationships.

Furthermore, as for the teachers who are new to the experience of traveling abroad, results of this study can help them prepare for anticipated obstacles that might reduce their effectiveness. As the saying goes: "Experience is the worst teacher: it gives you the test before preparing you for the lesson." Hence, preparing teachers ahead of time and notifying them of all the difficulties they might face would greatly reduce the cultural shock effects

experienced upon the transition to a new country and help them perform at their expected level of effectiveness.

In addition to schools orienting the teachers, the results of this study can also inform universities intending to refine their teacher training programs in order to help prospective teachers anticipate and face the challenges they are most likely to encounter while undergoing a cross cultural transition. This would greatly reduce the negative effects of the culture shock experienced upon the transition to a new country.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In our evolving global world, societies are getting to be more open to each other where people are facing challenges due to their different cultural context. These challenges occur since each society has its own set of aims and values (Ottaway, 1962) that make it hard for an individual to know, understand, and adjust to them. The focus of this study is to understand expatriate teacher's perspectives of the challenges that they face upon the transition into a new societal and cultural context. This chapter presents a review of the literature and covers the following: (1) conceptual framework; (2) culture; (3) cultural shock; (4) challenges that teachers face in a new cultural context; and (5) teachers' preparatory programs.

Conceptualizing Culture

Researchers differ in their definition of 'culture'. Some researchers, such as in Keesing's article defines culture as "a common set of ideas shared by group members; a theory held by individuals of what their fellows know, believe, and mean" (as cited in Peterson, 1986, p.13). Therefore, culture is what the community members understand and value as well as what they communicate to others. Organizations have their own culture that in turn, reflects the community culture or the dominant group.

Other researchers define culture as a set of conscious and unconscious practices acquired by the community to form a system, called habitus. Bourdieu (as cited in Cho, 2010) argues that "schools choose to use, and, therefore, to value, certain kinds of language and materials, which reflect the values, tastes and interests of the dominant group" (p.1).

Thus, schools are organizations that inherit and reflect the culture of the community. Culture is represented as a dimension of schools as social systems in a larger community (Hoy, 2011). This dimension encompasses beliefs, values, habits, and customs; all viewed to affect and are affected by other school dimensions to shape organizational behavior (Hoy, 2011).

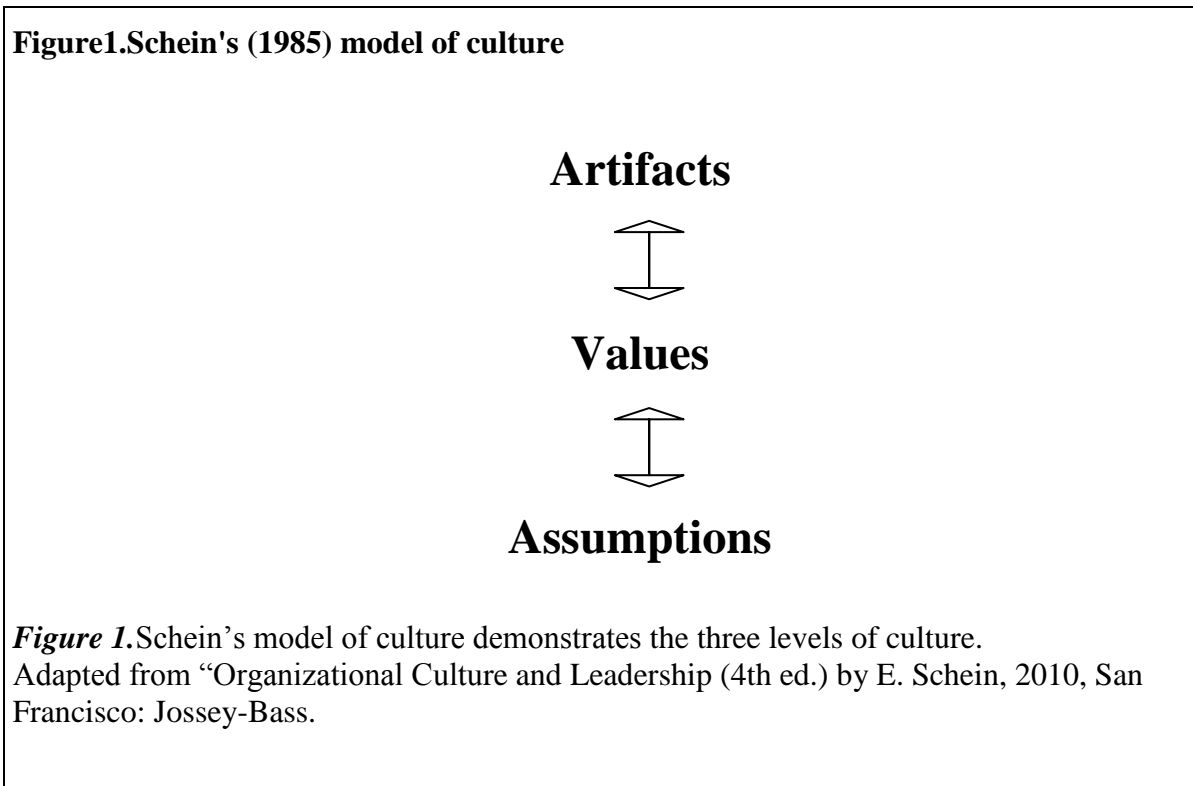
Schempp (1989) discovered through his empirical research, that the knowledge a person acquires from the school comes from two sources: formal culture and informal culture. He gives examples of the knowledge gained from formal culture (such as the school policies and the job requirements he is informed about at the beginning of his work). This kind of knowledge is provided by principals, coordinators, or even the government unlike the knowledge from the informal culture that is handed down by teachers, students, and staff. Knowledge from the informal culture is communicated through casual conversations and meetings.

Schein (2010), in his model, is able to combine both definitions, the one that believes culture is a set of ideas, and the other that believes culture is a set of behaviors. This was defined in his model by the three levels of culture: “Artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and basic underlying assumptions” (Schein, 2010, p.24). Schein’s (2010) model will be defined and elaborated on in the next section.

Organizational – School- Culture

Schein discusses three basic levels needed for studying culture: “Artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and basic underlying assumptions” (Schein, 2010, p.24). Schein’s (1985) model is considered one of the most influential conceptual models of the organizational culture dynamics offered.

Artifacts are the observable level that could be detected in an organization. Culture is manifested at that level through several elements. Some examples of the artifacts include language, products, and artistic creations (Schein, 2010). These artifacts can only be interpreted by means of researchers studying them in relation to the other two levels: espoused values and basic assumptions. The values could be defined in reference to how people describe their role as well as based on how things run in an organization. However, at that level, people's actions may not always correspond to their initial beliefs. It might be a projection for future aims. As for the shared basic assumptions, they are the-for-granted issues that people act upon in a specific community. Assumptions are the unconscious beliefs that constitute the essence of culture. Below is a figure of Schein's (1985) model (as cited in Hatch, 1993).



Accordingly, Schein's (2010) model is one of the models underlying the conceptual framework used in the study. In the following section, organizational culture and societal culture are both discussed, along with the elements that will help the researcher to observe culture. Moreover, the researcher will find the values and beliefs behind the challenges that teachers face upon their transition into the new host country: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Conceptual Framework

Organizations are currently conceived of as open systems (Hoy, 2003; 2008; 2011) consisting of subsystems that are interdependent interacting with each other and the environment. As social systems, schools are characterized by the following: They are goal oriented, peopled, have cultures, structure, norms, etc. Most importantly, as 'open systems', schools are open to external influences from society and constantly interacting with their environment. They take an input from the environment only to provide an output back to the environment: educated individuals.

Researchers have been trying to study and understand organizational behavior in schools since 1950s. Getzels and Guba(Hoy, 2011) developed a model representing social system as an interaction between two dimensions: the organizational (nomothic) dimension and the personal (idiographic) dimension. Hence, the outcome is the observed behavior as the individual attempts to cope with the environment and play his role at the institution according to patterns of expectations for his behavior while at the same time taking into consideration his own independent patterns of needs.

The researchers kept developing their model of the school as a social system where several dimensions were added gradually. In 1960, Getzel published his final model where he conceived of organizational behavior as being the product of the interaction among

multiple dimensions- adding to the institutional and personality dimensions an anthropological, organizational climate and biological dimensions as well. The organizational climate dimension- as representing culture- will be the focus of this research.

In order to (1) find out the challenges; (2) study the effects of those challenges on teaching; and (3) know the practices, factors, and actions that seem to help teachers avoid or overcome the challenges, a framework was developed for this study to guide the data collection and analysis process. The framework conceived of the school as an open social system and is based on the works of three models: (1) Dimmock and Walker's (2000) cross-cultural comparative model; (2) Terpstra and Sarathy's (2000) cultural framework; and (3) Schein's (2010) conception of the three levels of culture. Moreover, the empirical studies discussed earlier informed for the construction of this framework. Since the study is investigating the challenges that result upon the transition of a teacher from a certain culture to another, the framework focuses on identifying the elements that can guide the researcher while investigating the challenges rooted in cultural differences. Dimmock and Walker's (2000) cross-cultural comparative model constituted the foci of the constructed model and will be presented first.

Elements of the organizational culture. Dimmock and Walker's (2000) model proposes a multi-layered model of culture with three main cultural layers: (1) organizational; (2) national/societal; and (3) regional-local. Their model is also designed to allow studying the influence they have on each other. For the purpose of this study, the focus will be on the organizational culture and its elements. The organizational culture consists of four elements of schooling within the school at the organizational level, which influences and is respectively influenced by the other two layers. These four elements are:

(1) organizational structures; (2) leadership and management; (3) teaching and learning; and (4) curriculum.

The first two elements of school organizational culture are (1) organizational structures; and (2) the leadership and management. The elements of organizational structures include eight aspects: (1) physical and technological resources; (2) financial resources; (3) curriculum frameworks; (4) time; (5) students; (6) staff; (7) guidance and counseling; and (8) decision-making structures (Dimmock & Walker, 2000). As for the leadership and management it includes: (1) position, role and power of principal; (2) leadership style and orientation; (3) level of collaboration and participation; (4) motivation; (5) planning; (6) decision-making processes; (7) interpersonal communication; (8) conflict resolution; (9) staff appraisal (Dimmock & Walker, 2000).

The other two schooling elements are: curriculum and teaching and learning. Curriculum includes: (1) goals and purpose; (2) breadth; (3) depth; (4) integration; (5) differentiation; (6) relevance (Dimmock & Walker, 2000). The teaching and learning element refer to “nature of knowledge, teacher/student relations, teacher/home relations, generalist vs. subject specialist, learning outcomes, and guidance and counseling” (Dimmock & Walker, 2000, p. 151).

Therefore, Dimmock and Walker (2000) present the organizational culture along with the elements that manifest it. Hence, these elements will guide the researcher in designing data collection tools that probe for challenges along these elements and will also assist her while organizing and interpreting the data.

Figure 2. Dimmock and Walker's model

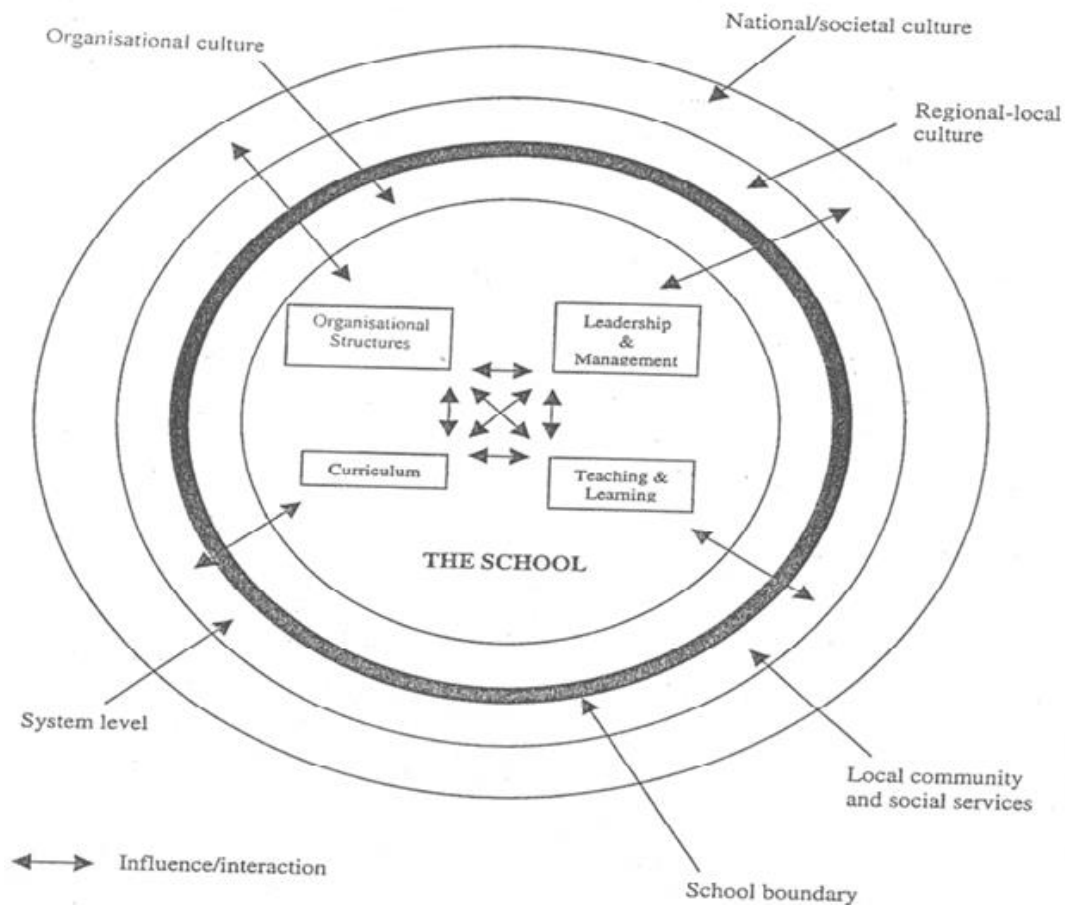


Figure 2. Dimmock and Walker's model that shows the different levels of culture that affects the different elements in schools. Adapted from "Developing Comparative and International Educational Leadership and Management: A cross-cultural model, *School Leadership & Management*," C. Dimmock and A. Walker, 2000, *Formerly School Organization*, 20(2), 143-160.

Elements of the societal culture. Dimmock and Walker's (2000) framework discusses the three layers of culture: (1) organizational; (2) regional; and (3) societal. Yet it only provides elements for the organizational culture. However, for the sake of this study, it

is important to find elements for the societal layer as well. Therefore, the researcher will refer to Terpstra and Sarathy's (2000) framework that offers eight elements for the societal culture.

Terpstra and Sarathy's framework. Terpstra and Sarathy's (2000) framework includes eight elements of culture in order to examine culture in several contexts. It is true that this framework was developed for international marketing but several educational studies (e.g. Friesner & Hart, 2004) have adopted the framework in order to study the societal culture within a given context. The societal culture consists of these eight elements: (1) Language; (2) Education; (3) Attitudes and Values; (4) Aesthetics; (5) Social Organization; (6) Religion; (7) Law and Policies; and (8) Technology and Material Culture (Terpstra & Sarathy, 2000) (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Terpstra and Sarathy's model



Figure 3. Terpstra and Sarathy's model shows the elements of culture. Adapted from "International Marketing," V. Terpstra and R. Sarathy, 2000, Dryden Press.

The previously mentioned criteria are described according to Terpstra & Sarathy's (2000) definition of these elements within their societal culture framework:

Language. Terpstra and Sarathy (2000) define language as the verbal and nonverbal method of communication that people of a specific society use to interact with one another. In every culture, language is used according to the societal context. Terpstra and Sarathy (2000) also point that a person has to consider the hidden idiom of a foreign culture being studied as well.

Educational system. Terpstra and Sarathy (2000) also explain the educational system element by the transformation of skills, knowledge, and cultural ideas for a specific community or culture. They claim that studying the educational system of a certain culture (such as: higher education, vocational, adult education, e-learning, etc) could help a researcher infer the values and norms of this culture.

Attitudes and values. Terpstra and Sarathy (2000) define attitudes and values as the “national attitude towards time, achievement and work, wealth and material gain, change and risk perception”.

Aesthetics. Is the degree to which the studied culture values art, music, drama, and dancing.

Social organization. Terpstra and Sarathy (2000) describe the social organization as being the relationship of families and individuals within a certain context. Thus, it refers to the way a national society is organized.

Religion. Terpstra and Sarathy (2000) consider religion as being part of the societal culture since it reflects the community’s practices and values. It frames the community’s preferences regarding what is good and what is bad or what is forbidden and what is accepted. Moreover, religion affects values, motivations, and attitudes, and that is why Terpstra and Sarathy (2000) believe it is necessary to study religion within a given context.

Laws and politics. Laws and politics according to Terpstra and Sarathy (2000), denotes the political philosophy of a certain country which directly affects the traditions and beliefs of that country. Therefore, it is the political factor that affects the operations or decision making of an organization.

Technology & material. Terpstra and Sarathy (2000) define technology and material element as being the extent to which specific country uses technology. Taking China as an example, it forbids social media websites, international channels, etc, in order to protect itself from the impact of globalization (Hart, 2004).

For this study in particular, Terpstra and Sarathy's model offers elements for the societal culture. Thus, the two cultural layers (organizational culture and societal culture) consist of elements that would help the researcher in determining what to observe and look for in the data collection and analysis process.

Levels of culture. This study investigates the challenges that teachers face within the new societal and cultural context that can be attributed to the cultural transition they are going through. Therefore, the inquiry for this study will target factors at two layers of culture: the organizational and societal layers. Elements for each cultural layer were specified for this purpose. However, it is important to define the concept of culture that will be adopted for this study and to break it into its elements as well. For this reason, the study will adopt Schein's conception of culture and the analysis will take place based on the three levels of culture that he offers: (1) artifacts; (2) espoused beliefs and values; and (3) basic underlying assumptions (Schein, 2010).

Schein's definition of culture. Schein (2010) considers culture as an abstract concept. He explains: "if an abstract concept is to be useful to our thinking, it should be observable yet increase our understanding of a set of events that are otherwise mysterious or not well understood" (p. 14). Therefore, Schein (2010) defines culture as consisting of three levels: (1) artifacts; (2) espoused beliefs and values; and (3) basic underlying assumptions (see Figure 4.). Each of these levels represents the "degree to which the cultural phenomenon is visible to the observer" (p.23).

Figure 4. Model of Schein's Concept



Figure 4. Model of Schein's Concept that shows the three levels of culture. Adapted from *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. (4th ed.), E. Schein, 2010, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Figure 4 above represents a visualization of Schein's (2010) model. Artifacts can be considered as being the observable level of a culture, including all what the senses could discover, see, hear and feel. Therefore, they include the "visible products" of a culture namely: "its physical environment; its language; its technology and products; its artistic creation; its style, as embodied in clothing, manners of address, and emotional displays; its myths and stories told about the organization; its published lists of values; and its observable rituals and ceremonies" (p.23). Artifacts are observed easily yet are difficult to interpret or decipher since they might hold symbols that help interpreters reach deeper levels of understanding until they arrive at the final stage: assumptions.

Espoused beliefs and values are negotiable. They usually start as individuals' original beliefs and values until they are tested through a succession of successful experiences. Then, they would become organization's way of solving a problem or attaining a goal. The organizational goals or strategies might be considered as being within that level of a culture "in that there may be no way of testing it except through consensus because the link between performance and strategy may be hard to prove" (p.27). Hence, and based on the tested practices, people would tend to adopt common practices or beliefs thus, resulting in a social validation. Consequently, anyone who would not practice such beliefs would be considered as an outsider.

In order to understand a certain culture deeply, Schein (2010) contends that one should reach the third level: Basic Underlying Assumptions. He describes culture as being "a set of basic assumptions [that] defin[e] for us what to pay attention to, what things mean, how to react emotionally to what is going on, and what actions to take in various kinds of situations" (p.29). That is why changing one's culture is considered really hard since people when born become gradually "programmed" to function in accordance to specific cultural code. Thus, by moving to a new culture they need to break many of these codes and acquire new ones in order to situate themselves within a certain culture, and know how to handle themselves and others.

As a conclusion, for a person to understand a certain culture, she has to go into the deeper levels of culture, from observing culture into interpreting and analyzing the abstract beliefs and values needed for reaching the assumptions. Therefore, this study will interpret its findings following Schein's framework and will attempt to reach the deeper levels of understanding the nature of the challenges that teachers face in Saudi Arabia.

The Conceptual Framework for this Study

This study explores the challenges that expatriate teachers face upon the transition into a new cultural and societal context. Therefore, the researcher should refer to the different layers of culture, and their elements, discussed earlier (Dimmock & Walker, 2000; Terpstra & Sarathy, 2000).

This conceptual framework is designed in order to guide the researcher through the data collection and analysis process. Therefore, it represents the two cultural layers: (1) organizational culture; and (2) societal culture (Dimmock & Walker, 2000). Each layer consists of one or more dimension (considered as artifacts) that would help the researcher categorize the challenges that teachers face in the new cultural and societal context: KSA. Moreover, each dimension includes certain elements that would help the researcher determine what the researcher should be looking for during the data collection process. Furthermore, in order to clarify the nature of the challenges that teachers face in a new context, the interview questions will be designed based on Schein's three levels of culture. In this study, the dimensions of school as a social system and those of the societal culture will be considered the artifacts. Thus, during the interviewing and analysis process, the researcher will dig beyond the observable artifacts in order to gather insights that will allow her to infer the espoused values (Schein, 2010). Therefore, the researcher would then know the underlying values and beliefs behind the challenges that teachers are facing. As a result, assumptions will be formed. Hence, once the researcher knows the challenges and understands the values and beliefs behind each challenge, she would then be able to propose recommendations that would help teachers avoid or overcome such challenges. To illustrate, the figure below presents the conceptual framework adopted in this study.

Figure 5. The Conceptual Framework for this study

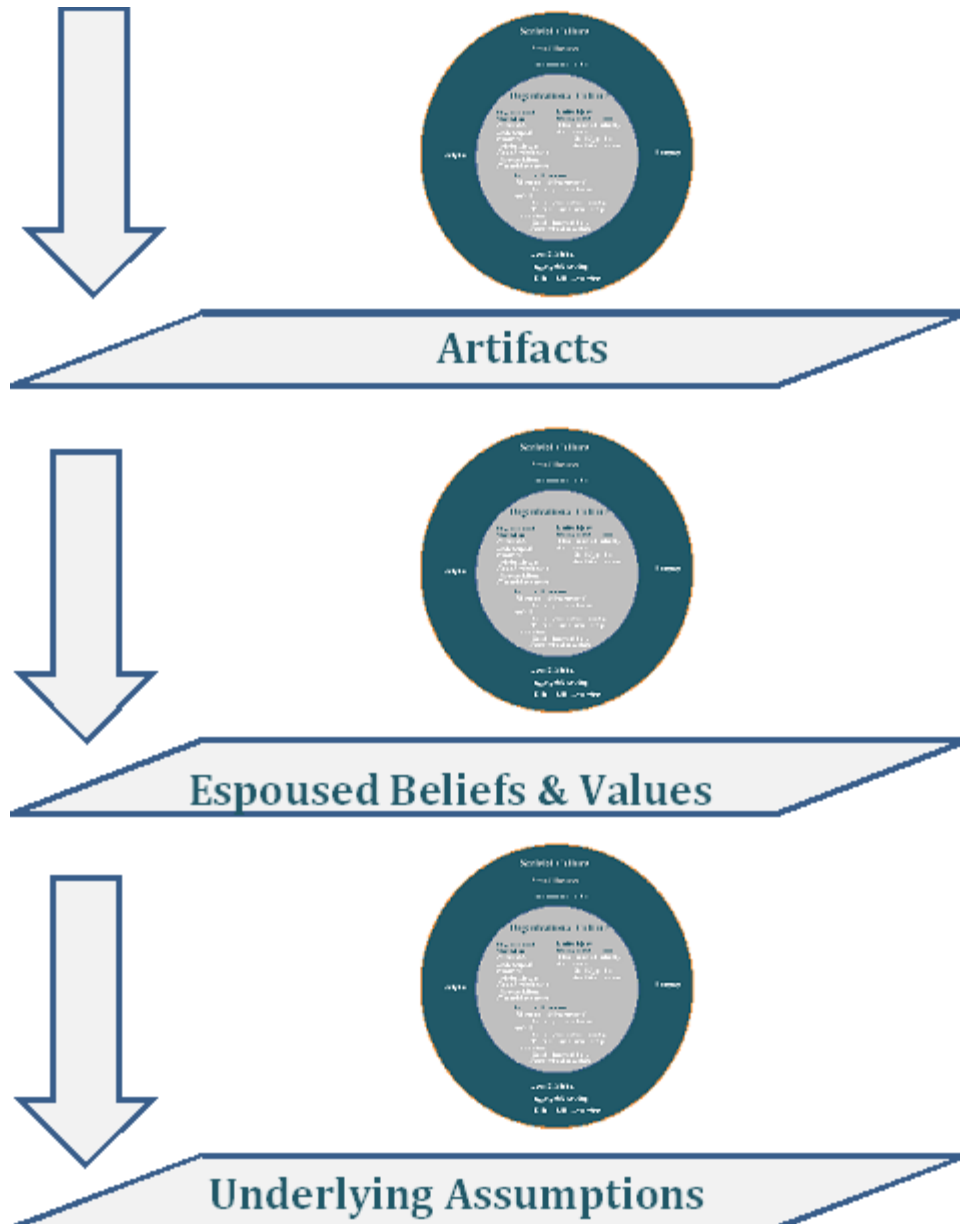


Figure 5. The Conceptual Framework of this study shows how the societal and organizational culture could be interpreted based on the three levels of culture. Adapted from figures 2.3. & 2.4.

Figure6. Enlargement for the cultural layers, dimensions, and element of the conceptual framework



Figure 6.Enlargement for the cultural layers, dimensions, and element of the conceptual framework. Adapted from figures 5.

The framework includes two cultural layers: (1) organizational culture that represents school as a social system; and (2) societal culture (Dimmock & Walker, 2000) that represents society. Within each layer specific dimensions guide the researcher to the variables that she needs during the data collection procedure and data analysis. In this study, the elements of school as a social system include: (1) the organizational dimension; (2) the leadership and managerial dimension; and (3) the technical dimension (Dimmock & Walker, 2000). Additionally, the societal dimension is part of the societal culture and consists of several elements. These four dimensions will help the researcher categorize teachers' challenges within the organizational culture. Each of the dimensions consists of elements and sub-elements that would guide the researcher through the interview questions and analysis.

- Organizational dimension: the distribution, control, and coordination of the roles, power, authority, and responsibilities. Therefore, the elements are:
 - Physical and technological resources: the technology found and used in the school and its system (Dimmock & Walker, 2000) such as: computers, item banking, the use of school website for interaction between students, parents, administration and teachers. Moreover, the school architecture and size are the physical resources that could affect learning, such as: number of students in a class, the segregation of boys from girls, etc.
 - School relationships (organizational chart): the organizational chart representing the flow of information, power, and authority within a school.
 - Job description: the roles and responsibilities of teachers as defined within the school.

- Laws and regulations: the laws and regulations that guide teachers' practices within the school.
- Financial resources (Dimmock& Walker, 2000): the budgeting and financial resources as set by the school.
- Leadership and management processes dimension: the leadership practices within a school, mainly representing the leadership practices related to teachers.
 - Distribution of authority: the degree to which the power and authority is delegated to teachers.
 - Supervision:
 - Staff appraisal (Dimmock& Walker, 2000): staff appraisal might differ from a country to another. Therefore, the expectations regarding who is qualified as a teacher (Cho, 2011) might differ from one culture to another.
 - Staff development (Professional development) involves developing teachers' skills, knowledge, and practices. Some of the professional development examples include: beginning teacher assistance programs, skill development programs, teacher leadership, individually planned professional development, etc. (Glickman et al., 2007)
- Technical dimension: the curriculum, instructional and educational practices within the school.

- Curriculum: the curriculum framework found in the school and set by the government (Dimmock& Walker, 2000).

- Curriculum guidelines (Dimmock& Walker, 2000): the curriculum goals and objectives.
- Instructional materials: the tools, objects, and devices used by teachers during a lesson facilitating students' learning by making the lesson easier to the learner. (such as: charts, radio, television, projector, boards.)

- Educational and Instructional: the educational differences in classroom conceptions of teaching and learning within the new context: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Cho, 2010) and the relationships that could indirectly or directly affect the learning process.

- Teaching approaches and methods (Dimmock& Walker, 2000): the modification of certain teaching practices, strategies and methods for the sake of best suiting the educational context (Cho, 2010) of the culture being studied.
- Teacher/student relations (Dimmock& Walker, 2000; Cho, 2010): the various kinds of acceptable interactions between teachers and students. (In some societies teachers can be friendly while in others, teachers are supposed to be tyrannical figures of authority.)

- Teacher/parent relations (Dimmock& Walker, 2000): the teacher-parent relationships that might differ from one cultural context to another.
- Societal Dimension:
 - Religion (Tepstra & Sarathy, 2010): the degree to which religion affects the adaptation process of teachers (law and policies, ways of living, and the educational system) (Tepstra&Sarathy, 2010).
 - Laws and policies (Terpstra & Sarathy, 2010): the laws and policies of a certain context put by the government for a certain country: KSA. These laws and policies might even affect/deal with everyday activities, lifestyles, and services.
 - Appropriate clothing (Fee, 2011; Garson, 2005)
 - Daily activities and services (Fee, 2011; Garson, 2005; Chang, 2011) (such as banking services, driving, and entertainment activities like cinemas and coffee shops.)
 - Language (Cho, 2010; Fee, 2011; Frost, 2007; Garson, 2005; He, 2002; Lowe, Hang, & Moore, 2011; Terpstra&Sarathy, 2010): the difference in the language or dialect adopted by the host country and the expatriate teachers.
 - Environmental dimensions (Frost, 2007): the environmental dimensions that affect people newly settling in. For example: the consistent foggy weather in the United Kingdom would affect the adaptation process psychologically and physically of expatriates (it would make them prone to getting the Seasonal Affective Disorder. Therefore, the uniqueness of the context this study is taking place in might be a challenge for expatriate teachers (desert weather, high temperature, and dust).

As a conclusion, the analysis will take place on three levels: artifacts, values, and assumptions. Referring back to how Schein defines artifacts, in this study the dimensions of school as a social system and those of the societal culture are considered as being the artifacts. In order to clarify the nature of the challenges that teachers face in a new context: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, questions are designed based on these artifacts in order to be able to analyze at a deeper level. Therefore, the questions that will be used to collect data will be based on the elements of the conceptual framework and Schein's (2010) three levels of culture.

This model includes the two layers of culture, and the four dimensions consisting of elements and sub-elements, which are analyzed based on the three levels of culture. The framework will thus help the researcher reach an in depth understanding of the nature of the teachers' challenges and determine the kinds of practices and actions the school needs to offer teachers in order to help them overcome or avoid challenges.

Since every culture has a unique set of beliefs, values, assumptions, and practices, the transition from one culture to another could result in a cultural shock for the individual trying to adapt to the new culture (Winkelman, 1994). Cultural shock will be defined and elaborated on in the next section.

Cultural Shock

Bock claims that cultural shock happens when an 'outsider' is trying to understand a given situation based on his own interaction with his own social system (as cited in Frost, 2007). Frost (2007) also states the analysis of Craig Storti (1989) concerning the adjustment of an individual in a new cultural and societal context. He claims that the

individual needs to get integrated into the new culture by getting used to a “new job, a new community, and a new country” (p. 25); this causes stress resulting in a cultural shock.

A person gets familiarized with his surroundings (Oberg, 1954); thus, Hachey (1998) states that cultural shock occurs to people when they have to deal with the stress caused by the changes happening in their lives. Hence, they suffer from frustration (Oberg, 1954), psychological confusion, and emotional discomfort due to the inability to adapt to the new situation. Taft claims that due to the lack of previous cultural experiences sojourners suffer from cultural shock upon facing new culture (as cited in Frost, 2007). The following section is going to discuss the cultural shock characteristics, phases, symptoms and causes, and the different ways of dealing with cultural shock and overcoming; both, individually and with the help of the organization.

Stages of Cultural Shock

The literature contains several models describing the phases of cultural shock that sojourners pass through. However, this section describes two of the most referred to models. Other models are considered extensions of those theories.

Yet, Oberg (1954) is given credit for presenting the first model of the cultural shock phases. Oberg’s (1954) model is considered to be a transformational change model. The literature (such as Hachey, 1998; Gougeon, 2009; Winkelman, 1994; Xia, 2009) states the four stages of cultural shock under several different names; however, yet they all correspond to the following phases (Oberg, 1954):

- 1- The honeymoon or tourist phase
- 2- The crises or the cultural shock phase
- 3- The adjustment and gradual recovery phase

4- The adaptation phase

The honeymoon phase happens usually during the first few days, weeks, up to six months; it varies according to the circumstances. This stage is full of positive energy and feelings; the person experiences and visits new places enthusiastically. However, once the sojourner has to seriously cope with the changes and surroundings as a resident, this phase ends. The second phase, the cultural shock, is where homesickness, boredom, and compulsive behavior manifest itself and gets associated with unfriendly and aggressive attitudes toward the new country. Oberg (1954) states in his article, that the sojourner either overcomes this stage to stay in his new surrounding, or he leaves before encountering the nervous breakdown stage. By the third stage, the person starts adjusting her/himself into the new situation. At that stage, the person starts to bond with his surrounding (mostly through language) and the negative attitudes decrease, rebuilding positive feelings towards the new experience through understanding, accepting, and adapting. In the fourth stage, adaptation to the new culture and situation happens. The person affects and gets affected positively by the culture. Even when he goes for a visit back home, a person may take many things from the new culture and even miss it if the person were to leave the country for good.

No matter how many theories emerged after Oberg's theory, he is still considered the prime author of the cultural shock model. The U-curve model could be used to show the effect of Oberg's theory on such a different model; as will be explained in the following paragraph.

Lysgaard (1955) was able to categorize the 200 Norwegians who participated in his study, into two time line groups. Sojourners who have been settled less than six months and those who have been settled for more than 18 months were categorized as in a good state of

adjustment to the new culture. On the other hand, sojourners who had been settled for more than six months and those who had been settled for less than eight months seemed to be adjusting poorly. From here, Lysgaard (1955) came out with the U-curve model representing sojourners' adjustment phases. In the first stage –similar to Oberg's (1954) model- sojourners consider the initial time spent at a new culture, enjoyable. However, what Oberg (1954) was criticized about in his model, Lysgaard (1955) reconsiders in his own model: the importance of developing relationships and their effect on sojourners in the cultural adaptation process. Lysgaard called those relationships: “accidental, superficial, and segmental” (1955, p.50). As Oberg (1954) described the end of the honeymoon phase, and the beginning of the crisis phase, Lysgaard (1955) asserted that all sojourners at their intermediate level of adjustment fall into the crisis stage (represented by the bottom U-curve). Nonetheless, Lysgaard (1955) emphasized the important role language plays at that level in helping sojourners to overcome their crisis level; through communication and socialization. The third final phase is where the sojourners find their way back to ‘good’ adjustment. As it can be noticed, Lysgaard (1955) draws a strong correlation between duration and adjustment. Eventually, all sojourners fall into the U-curve model of cultural shock. As time passes they descend from a ‘good’ adjustment state, to a ‘poor’ adjustment state, then climb right back up to the ‘good’ adjustment state.

Furthermore, Gullahorn and Gullahorn article, asserted that the sojourners do not only pass through the U-curve model while adjusting to a new culture but also when they go back to their home environment; it could happen to those who change their place of living within the same country as well (as cited in Frost, 2007). Wedin (2010) conducted a research on those who were coming back to their home environment. He found out that

even when sojourners return to their home country, they still faced cultural shock. Therefore, cultural shock happens when the environment changes and the person has to learn to readapt to it again. They argued that sojourners' previous cultural experiences would help them throughout the cultural shock (Frost, 2007). Gullahorn and Gullahorn asserted Lysgaard's (1955) claim that there was a direct relationship between adjustment and socialization (Frost, 2007).

The models have been on trial for more than fifty years and critics have been calling for refinement of those "curve" models. The refinement of the old models, must reflect the variability among sojourners' responses to the host country (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001). Despite the fact that this model is an old model, the literature review shows extensive reference to these theories. That being said, this empirical claim will be adopted in this study and will be used in the selection process of the participants. However, it will be held provisionally. Its applicability to the context of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will be re-examined and discussed based on the results in the final chapter.

Causes and Symptoms of Cultural Shock

Regardless of the models presented in the literature and the different definitions that researchers currently attribute to cultural shock, they all agree upon one level of the cultural shock process: the crisis phase. This common ground helps us describe just what culture shock does to the sojourner which categorizes it as a crisis phase.

Oberg (1956) listed symptoms that sojourners feel or experience during the cultural shock – the crisis stage- some include: loneliness, helpless, desperation, stress, tension, as well as confusion in roles, values, and self-identity. Xia (2009) considered that the feeling of anxiety and aggression results in negative attitudes in getting to know the culture; which

hinders the sojourner's attempt to overcome the crisis period easily (and in a shorter period of time).

Winkelman (1994) categorized the causes of cultural shock into four headlines: "Stress reactions, cognitive fatigue, role shock, and personal shock" (p.123). He claimed from the literature that exposing a person to a new environment results in stress. The stress reactions that he mentioned are related to the nervous and immune systems; in which accordingly it affects the person physiologically and psychologically. Kohls stated that cultural shock could result in illness and pain due to stress (as cited in Winkelman, 1994). Another result of stress is cognitive fatigue Gurthrie's article (as cited in Winkelman, 1994). Extra cognitive efforts are required from the sojourner in order to be able to understand the culture and interpret "new language meanings and new nonverbal, behavioral, contextual, and social communications" (Winkelman, 1994, p. 123). Winkelman (1994) discussed draws back such as experiencing headaches and becoming socially isolated due to the cognitive fatigue or environmental reasons as Frost (2007) stated. One example of environmental reasons is moving into a cold and cloudy country which leads to isolation and exhaustion. Byrnes (1966) stated that upon the experience that sojourners go through, a "change of social roles and interpersonal relations affect well-being and self-concept" (as cited in Winkelman, 1994, p.123), resulting in cultural shock and the loss of social relations and roles. Winkelman (1994) assured that losing the person's own support system would result in a grieving stage similar to that experienced during a loss of a dear person. Kohls stated some of the symptoms or new habits a person would exhibit include: excessive sleeping, eating, hostility, family tensions, and loss of efficiency at work (as cited in Winkelman, 1994). Pausing on efficiency, Oberg (1954) assured that a person would not be

able to complete her/his role fully in the community or organization until having achieved a satisfactory adjustment. As a result, organizations would have to take cultural shock into consideration to help the sojourner overcome it successfully in order to become effective workers.

Oberg (1954) asserted that once a person realizes that the cultural shock s/he is undergoing is due to his inability to connect to the new culture and people, he would recognize that all what it takes to pass this shock is understanding the new culture which happens through communication. As the person does so, the cultural shock will disappear. Guy and Patton, asserted that “acquiring linguistic proficiency” (as cited in Lowe, Hwang, & Moore, 2010, p. 32) is considered to contribute in the adjustment of the person to cultural shock. Tung stated that “lack of relational abilities and lack of time and effort spent in developing these cultural competencies” (as cited in Lowe, Hwang, & Moore, 2010, p. 32) are considered reasons for cultural shock. Moreover, she argues that researchers associate personality types, and their ability to cope, with cultural shock.

Getting Over Culture Shock

Researchers had offered ways to deal with cultural shock. They also presented tips to overcome cultural shock or even avoid it. The solutions were classified into two clusters: 1-Recommendations for the individuals - sojourners; 2- Recommendations for the organization. Hachey (1998) suggested strategies to help a person overcome the cultural shock experienced throughout the culture shock phases. The following is a list of strategies he proposed:

- 1- Attempting to learn about the new community by socializing.
- 2- Lessening his criticism of people’s behaviors and habits

- 3- Getting to know the language and idioms and practicing it through numerous conversations
- 4- Idolizing a local person and considering him a mentor or supporter
- 5- Keeping his curiosity
- 6- Doing something typically of the culture he is in; every now and then
- 7- Staying in connection with family and friends back home
- 8- Finding creative ways to avoid confrontation without provoking the local people
- 9- Lowering perfectionist expectations of the new potential job aboard
- 10- Coming to terms with the fact that things might not work out as planned.

Upon the societal and cultural change a person might notice basic changes in the way he perceives himself (Gougeon, 2000). Gougeon (2000) stated that a person needs to follow that strategy, “to lower personal expectations, be patient, and therefore be more open and accepting to differences” in order to be able to overcome the cultural shock easily. Frost (2007) explained five step plan from Bunz (1997) and Wilson (1995):

First, find out as much as you can about the new culture...Second, try to learn the basics of the culture’s language...Third, observe carefully once you have arrived in a new culture...Fourth, tolerate differences...Fifth, develop the flexibility to try something new. (p. 39)

Winkelman (1994) pointed out that ‘pre-departure preparation’ is a helpful preparation where a sojourner must make sure that he is aware of the problems encountered when it comes to living in a new place. A sojourner must be aware of the cultural shock phases that he would go through. Gougeon (2000) argued that when professionals are aware of the cultural shock stages, it helps them pass through the phases more effectively.

Winkelman(1994) stressed that adjustment is mostly based on the awareness of the cultural shock and the use of skills that helped the person get out of the crisis stage. Therefore, researchers proposed training sessions to be held at both a university and organizational level.

At a university level, Frost (2007) recommended the pre-service detailed training that Samuel Mungo (1981) suggested. Pre-service teachers would be placed in diverse schools for nine months in order to prepare diversity. Thus, they would be ready to encounter the cultural shock stress that they would face afterwards. In doing so, students had already established a close relationship with the surrounding atmosphere. At the end of that proposed model, Mungo (1981) stressed the importance of developing sessions to receive feedback from the director of the program. Pre-service teachers would have the chance to discuss their experience and analyze it.

At an organizational level, Marx (1999) found out in his study that International managers using social support systems face less challenges resulting in cultural shock than those who do not (as cited in Frost, 2007). Winkelman (1994) also emphasized the importance of social support for overcoming cultural shock. Bochner and Furham (1990) proposed several ways of training teachers with different ways of handling cultural shock (as cited in Frost, 2007). Training sessions could be established to discuss certain cross-cultural issues by giving information to sojourners about the new culture and preparing them. Black and Mendenhall asserted through research, the importance of cross-cultural training and specific cultural orientation about the new culture (as cited in Winkelman, 1994). They noted that it would help teachers understand the new culture, and accordingly, reduce the effort put in trying to adapt and interpret it. Those training sessions could also

include social interaction rules such as behavioral and social communication that Winkelman (1994) quotes from Casse. Harris and Moranin their research, proposed establishing ongoing sessions where teachers would be “describing, analyzing, and identifying the problem from both cultures’ point of view [...] and performing a multicultural assessment of effectiveness” (as cited in Winkelman, 1994, p.125).

As a conclusion, cultural shock seems to be more than just a process an individual undergoes (Lowe, Hwang, & Moore, 2010). It includes “identity, self-expression, and a variety of defensive and coping mechanisms through which sojourners deal with changes in identity due to their shift in environment” (Lowe, Hwang, & Moore, 2010, p. 32).

A sojourner faces cultural shock upon trying to adapt to the new cultural customs and lifestyles. Moreover, if a sojourner is employed into a new organization in a new culture, then adapting to the new processes and procedures in the new work environment becomes another challenge. Thus, the question arises here, what does the literature say about the challenges that teachers face during the social and cultural transitions? This question shall be answered in the following section.

Challenges that Teachers Face in a New Cultural Context

Teachers misinterpret and misunderstand meanings of verbal or non-verbal communication due to the assumptions they – as well as the new culture - maintain Gordon’ article (as cited in Frost 2007). Examples on those assumptions are: roles, relationships, and communication styles. Gordon’s article asserts that actions and words cannot be interpreted except by means of the study of the context where the action is happening; due to the different cross-cultural codes (as cited in Frost, 2007). Yet, is communication the only challenge that teachers face? To know more about the challenges

that teachers face upon a cultural transition, listed below are a few summaries of the research studies that tackle this issue.

The Challenges

Fee (2011) conducted a research on school districts in the United States of America on the 31 foreign educated Latino teachers recruited at the schools. The purpose of the research was to study teachers' challenges and the support they needed to succeed. The 31 bilingual immigrants and teachers (twenty six females and five males) represented the Latino population: Mexican, Puerto Rican, Columbian, and Spanish. Fee (2011) interviewed each teacher formally and had informal conversations with them as well. Upon data collection, the results revealed challenges that teachers were facing. The data was analyzed and grouped into three clusters: "personal, professional, and academic" (p. 394). The personal area covered numbers of fronts- the discomfort of settling in a new place, the shock of diminished expectations, the unanticipated lack of respect for those speaking with a Spanish accent, and adjusting to the varied Spanish and English dialects of their students. (Fee, 2011, p. 396)

On the personal level, teachers' challenges were mostly related to what universally immigrants deal with upon changing their living place: "housing, furniture, transportation, driver's license, social security, children's schools, banking, doctors, stores, and even appropriate clothing" (Fee, 2011, p.397) . However, a person from the district was assigned to meet them at the airport and help them settle in. The teachers greatly appreciated this kind of help. They felt better due to the support they received from their surroundings. Teachers even described the challenges they had with the new surrounding and the different systems of the new culture: "new driving regulations, different medical systems, different

schools for the children, changed holidays, absent family and friends” (Fee, 2011, p.395). It was noted that teachers were surprised upon seeing the new place as it did not meet their expectations. They had anticipated the country to be more of a dream-land as shown in the movies.

The 31 teachers reported to have been surprised as to how the society viewed multilingual people. In their countries talking more than one language “showed education and promoted respect” (Fee, 2011, p.395) yet, in the new country- United States- a multilingual person was underestimated and rejected. Teachers were laughed at because of their accent. Some had to be careful with the use of words since the meaning of the words varied across countries. Teachers could have misunderstood certain words due to the different dialects; students could use bad words without the teacher’s notice.

In the professional area, teachers suffered from several issues related to the profession and the school. All teachers, especially those with no experience, had hard time adjusting to a “new profession and a new country” (Fee, 2011, p.396). Many teachers found it surprising to separate students in classes (based on their) languages; which accordingly resulted in several negative attitudes towards the bilingual teachers and students. Teachers found “differing parental expectations and student behaviors among Spanish speakers” (Fee, 2011, p.400). Other challenges that teachers faced in the professional areas, were cultural issues; as an example: the absence of touching. Additionally, mostly all teachers had challenges meeting the expectations of the standardized tests due to the different requirements needed to be classified as a qualified teacher between a country and another.

Regarding the last area that Fee (2011) discussed, teachers found a hard time evaluating their teaching certificates since every country has different educational standards

and requirements needed to accept teachers into the profession (such as standardized tests like the GRE). Teachers did not have advisors available to help them through these difficult challenges. There are several other researches that were carried out to uncover the challenges that teachers face in a new culture. Some of these researches were narrated (written by the teachers themselves) and others were conducted by others. Below is a brief of each study.

He (2002) conducted a research regarding three Chinese women teachers and the challenges they faced traveling “back and forth between Eastern and Western cultures and languages” (p. 323). Her paper studies the teachers’ “lives in Canada with a particular focus on their enculturation (acquisition of first culture) and acculturation (learning of second or additional culture) processes” (p.323). The paper is written by one of the three Chinese teachers. They all consider themselves half Chinese and half Canadian after their integration into the new culture. They consider their lives “filled with revolutionary changes, fundamental challenges” (p.326). The challenges or tensions that they faced were: “cultural, linguistic, and educational differences and strangeness” (p.339). The music teacher, Shioa, had a hard time creating her lesson plans to suit the new culture and grab the students’ attention. The tensions that Shioa went through had her trapped between “modern China and traditional China, tensions between her Western educational beliefs and modern Chinese education, and tensions between her students and the educational authorities who make the curriculum and govern society” (p.329). Wei’s tension was different; she was worried about her son being “Canadianized” since she wanted him to maintain the Chinese tradition in his personality and lifestyle. Ming Fang He (2002), the author, had suffered from several tensions: “between curriculum guidelines/national

examinations and being creative in teaching, tensions between respecting senior professors who were resistant to change and being innovative in lesson-planning and classroom teaching” (p.340). She even had a hard time adjusting to her Chinese traditional way of knowing, thinking, and doing research. Moreover, they all suffered at the beginning of the adjustment process due to a loss of identity.

Cho’s (2010) research on immigrant Canadian teachers came out with a set of challenges they faced in a community that had a set of expectations regarding who qualified as a teacher. Cho (2010) stated that the challenges that the five female immigrant teacher (Indian, Egyptian, Syrian, and Chinese) candidates in Canada faced, were “the three crucial junctures: first, securing entrance into competitive Bachelor of Education programs; second, experiences of discrimination in the university and practicum placements; and, third, obtaining employment post-graduation” (p. 2). In order for the teachers to face those challenges, they still had to overcome other tensions such as: modifying teaching practices that they had learned and used in their home country, proving that they are able to transmit the Canadian culture, hiding their exhaustion due to the extra efforts invested in attempting to hide their cultural shock, and facing linguistic tensions. There were also many other “unknowns: knowledge of songs, stories and rhythms particular to Canadian culture, differences in classroom conceptions of learning and teaching, and fears regarding student-teacher relationships” (p.12).

Garson (2005) tells her story of working overseas in a prestigious university in Cairo, Egypt. She narrates about how she undergoes the cultural shock and challenges she faced coming from the United States of America and immersed in a new culture. She faced cultural challenges such as adapting to: language, customs, dress codes and other daily

activities like sitting at a coffee shop alone or attending cinema alone. However, most importantly she had to get accustomed to: the change in curriculum implementation and teaching strategies.

Another narrative story was by Chang (2011) who talks about the culture difference she experienced in traveling from Taiwan to the United States of America to finish her Doctorate studies. Chang explains how the doctoral program was harder than she expected it to be in the US. She describes how the classroom culture differed than the one she was used to, in Taiwan. Chang (2011) concluded her article by explaining how it was hard for her to make friends. Yet, once she started socializing, this helped her adjust to the new culture more easily.

A related research investigated the challenges that workers face upon traveling to a new culture. Lowe, Hwang, and Moore (2011) studied sojourner adjustment through “a case study of two female Korean entrepreneurs (selected from interviews with 10 Korean sojourners) to best differentiate their cultural adjustment from ‘culture shock’ in the UK” (p. 31). The case study of the two Korean sojourners in London assured that language and discourse were essential to the sojourner adjustment. Moreover, it suggested that the “identity, strategic self-presentation, sense making, and network development” (p.44) were linked to sojourner adjustment.

Frost (2007) proposed a couple of challenges that sojourners could be facing upon moving into a new culture: “Environmental factor and reality shock” (p. 56). Explaining the environmental factor, Frost gives an example of moving into a country with a cold climate and gloomy sky; accordingly, it would negatively keep the sojourner isolated and lack enthusiasm and energy. The reality shock would be the expectations of the sojourner/

teacher on the first day of class, regarding how things would go. Moreover, he mentions the social factor whereby host nations would treat the sojourner differently after every visit to his home country, giving subconsciously the feel of the attitude ‘I cannot wait to leave and go back home’. When it comes to language and the tension it creates; it may even leave them behind adjusting to the culture.

Teachers’ Preparatory Programs

In our globalized world, schools accommodate multicultural student bodies. Accordingly, researchers call for the need to support teachers with skills and strategies to become culturally responsive teachers. Culturally responsive teaching is a type of teaching which takes into consideration this diversity in the student body i.e. students’ different backgrounds and cultures. Sometimes a teacher may face challenges in being a culturally responsive teacher specifically when s/he is working with students different than their own culture. It is expected that the teachers in this study will be facing challenges in their own adjustment process in the school and community. Moreover, they are teaching students belonging to that new culture as well as other cultures. Thus, to what extent would culturally responsive teaching be an aid for effective teaching in such conditions?

Nowadays, researchers are aware of the cultural diversity taking place particularly in schools and classrooms. This phenomenon has been the subject of several studies in the United States of America after the noticeable increase in the number of culturally diverse students in schools (e.g. Hodgkinson, 1996; National Center for Education, 1994).

According to Brenda L. Martin the research found out that the cultural diversity among the students is not the issue; the way teachers “respond to it positively or negatively” impacts “the self-esteem and academic success of students from varied cultural backgrounds” (as

cited in Phuntsog, 1999, p.2). Therefore, this led researches to call for restructuring teacher's preparation programs in order to have the skills and attitudes to meet the challenges of teaching in a cultural diverse school environment (Phuntsog, 1999).

Culturally Responsive Teaching - have been a response in order to prepare teachers to teach in a culturally diverse school.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Researchers assume if teachers were prepared to teach in a culturally diverse environment, then students' achievement will improve (Phuntsog, 1999). Culturally Responsive Teaching enhances students' performance by finding the teaching methods and strategies that help culturally diverse students achieve the lesson objectives (Phuntsog, 1999).

Several researchers who studied the culturally responsive pedagogy suggested steps towards a successful culturally responsive teaching. Wlodwski and Ginsberg (1995) suggest the following four motivational conditions: (1) establishing inclusion; (2) developing attitude; (3) enhancing meaning; and (4) engendering competence. Jackson (1994) proposed seven steps to establish culturally responsive teaching which are essential in preparing teachers to effectively meet their students' needs: (1) build trust; (2) become culturally literate; (3) build a repertoire of instructional strategies; (4) use effective questioning techniques; (5) provide effective feedback; (6) analyze instructional materials; and (7) establish positive home-school relations. Novick had a different approach in building culturally responsive teaching. She started by emphasizing the importance of teacher's self-reflective analysis of the attitudes and beliefs about teaching culturally diverse students (as cited in Phuntsog, 1999). Gopal (2011) asserted the importance of

training teachers to explore their cultures, individual identity, and ways of thinking prior traveling to teach in a new cultural context. This would respectively, help teachers understand students' diverse ways of communicating, understanding, and thinking. Moreover, Novick lists commitments and competencies that teachers should have to ensure the improvement of students learning in a culturally diverse situation:

(1) high expectations for all students; (2) a commitment to learn from and about children; (3) building on the strengths and experiences children bring to school; (4) giving wider choices and power to teachers; and (5) developing schools as a caring community. (as cited in Phuntsog, 1999, p.6)

Hudson, Bergin, and Chrysthowever, developed a framework for pre-service teachers that would enhance their cultural experiences it included:

(1) building the cultural knowledge base; (2) a reciprocal socio-cultural model, (3) practicing models of culturally responsive teaching; and (4) cross-cultural field experiences supervised by mentors. (as cited in Phuntsog, 1999, p.8)

This framework would help pre-service teachers become ready to face culturally diverse environments.

Furthermore, Hemmings (1994) observed through an ethnographic study of teacher behaviors, that culturally responsive teachers showed: (1) sensitivity to students' previous life experiences; (2) alignment in the curriculum to match the students' home cultures; (3) planning learning activities based on the student's social interaction styles; (4) interest in listening to students to know more about their lifestyles and social identities.

The holistic framework that Phuntsog (1999) proposed links culturally responsive teaching to the three different culture levels which justifies the need to align the curriculum

with that of the students' home culture by being sensitive and listening to students' experiences and lifestyles.

To sum up, the main aim of the cultural responsive teaching is to overcome the challenges students are facing in a culturally diverse classroom (Phuntsog, 1999). Researchers emphasize the need to prepare teachers for such classes to provide students with a better learning environment (Phuntsog, 1999).

However, how can the teacher accommodate for the students if he himself is undergoing cultural shock and suffering from the challenges that teachers encounter in a new cultural context?

Conclusion

Researchers Lofstrom and Eisenchmidt (2009); McAllister and Irvine (2002) point out the need for teachers to first recognize and understand their own worldview, attitudes, and beliefs to understand the worldviews of others. Moreover, organization culture affects a teacher's engagement and learning process (Cherubini, 2009). Hence, that is why schools have to develop programs providing teachers with support to help them understand and get involved in the culture of the school (Gopal, 2011; Hellsten, Prytula, & Ebanks, 2009; Huang, 2009; Keengwe, 2010). Anthony, Haigh, and Kane (2011) call for the need for induction programs for all teachers, regardless of their years of experience. Therefore, expatriate teachers have to be supported by special induction programs that highlight the cultural aspect of the school and the host-country (Anthony, Haigh, & Kane, 2011; Cherubini, 2009; Gopal, 2011; Huang, 2009; Keengwe, 2010; Lee & Feng, 2007; Williams, Prestage, & Bedward, 2001), and not only deal with the "intellectual, social, emotional, and material sources" Ingersoll and Kralik's article (as cited in Anthony, Haigh & Kane, 2011,

p. 1) aspects of the school. Teachers have trouble adjusting to the school environment with no collaborative approach from the previous expatriate teachers which would have helped in giving them what they needed to know in order to accommodate the new culture with more ease (Clandinin& Connelly, 2000; Howe, 2006; Keay, 2009; Williams, Prestage, &Bedward, 2001).

However, before designing special induction programs for expatriate teachers, the school should be aware of the nature of the challenges that those teachers encounter. Therefore, this thesis will study the expatriate teachers' challenges upon their transition from their home-country to teach in a host-country's new cultural context; in this case: the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Hence, the following section will identify the foundation for the framework that the research will be using for data collection and analysis.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This study explored the nature of the challenges that the teachers faced in a new cultural and societal environment, specifically in the Gulf area: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This chapter presents the methodology that this study relied on and is organized as follows: section one deals with research design; section two presents the context of the case study; section three describes the study site and participants; section four elucidates the data collection procedures; section five details the data analysis procedures; and finally, section 6 lists the trustworthiness criteria.

Research Design

A case study design was the research method used in this study. A case study “investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 1994; as cited in Merriam, 1998, p.27). Accordingly, the researcher studied, in depth, a chosen phenomenon in order to fully understand it and “uncover the interaction of significant factors and characteristics of the phenomenon” (Merriam, 1998, p.29). Therefore, a case study is a research design which studies a phenomenon in a particular context.

Merriam (1998) outlines a case study as being: (1) particularistic; (2) descriptive; and (3) heuristic. A case study is particularistic since it addresses a particular phenomenon by studying a specific problem occurring with a specific group of people. In this regard, the descriptive case study becomes one that is rich in the description of the phenomenon being studied. Lastly, the heuristic case study gives readers a full understanding of the case being

studied by explaining, evaluating, summarizing, and concluding the investigative process and its results.

The multiple case study design is a type of case study where the researcher explores a certain phenomenon in-depth by collecting and analyzing data from multiple cases (Merriam, 1998; Schwandt, 2001). This gives the researcher the ability to study the phenomenon from different perspectives within a given context. For the purpose of this research, and the time assigned to finish the Master's study, the researcher selected two schools in order to develop a case for each and reach conclusions based on comparing these two cases.

The nature of the research problem and the research questions addressed in this study, suited well the case study research design. Case studies result “in rich and holistic account of a phenomenon” (Merriam, 1998, p.41). Accordingly, this qualitative case study aimed at understanding the challenges that expatriate teachers faced upon their transitions into a new cultural and societal context: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (K.S.A). Therefore, in order to further study this phenomenon, qualitative data collection methods were used: (1) open ended individual interviews conducted in three sets. The first round was conducted with twelve expatriate teachers as set one of the interviews. As for the second and third sets of interviews eight expatriate teachers were interviewed for each set (the first and second sets interviewed teachers who had been settled in KSA from 6 to 18 months, the third set targeted teachers who had been settled in KSA for more than two years); (2) member check for the second and third set of interview; and (3) examination of school documents. The collected data were then analyzed, interpreted, and constructed into themes in order to

identify the challenges that the expatriate teachers faced in Saudi Arabia in their first 1-2 years of teaching.

This case study was representative of the researcher's and participants' perspectives respectively (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2005). The participants' perspectives were reflected through the challenges reported by the teachers' while they were teaching in KSA -- the new cultural context -- from their own perspectives and using their own words as much as possible. As for the researchers' perspectives, they were reflected through the analyzed data.

Context of the Case Study

The study took place in an Islamic Arabian context: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh. The influence of religion was expressed directly in the cultural issues of the country. Accordingly, the Saudi ordinance is the Quran and the law is the Sharia (Al Sadan, 2010). Therefore, Arab Islamic education was considered to be the major influencing essence of the educational system. Moreover, the Islamic culture affects and influences people's characters, customs, lifestyles, and traditions. Thus, it comes as no surprise that the schools' cultures were highly shaped by the Islamic Saudi culture. All Muslim students were to attend Islamic classes several times per week (it reached up to 9 periods per week). Education was obligatory for both males and females. However, segregation was a must in all schools and at all school levels. Education was available to locals and expatriates through their public and private schools. The following was the Ministry of Education's (1970) general objective for education in Saudi Arabia and it shows the influence of the Saudi culture on the implementation of the goals in the educational system, and within this

educational system, the main goal was that Saudi students should be taught in a way that ensured the following:

Islamic creed [was] planted and spread... and that student[s][were] furnished with Muslim values, teachings and ideals. The students [were] to be equipped with the skills and knowledge, which [were supposed to] enable him to contribute constructively to the development of the Saudi Arabian society economically, socially, and culturally having been fully prepared to become [...] useful member[s] in the building of [their] community (as cited in Al Sadan, 2000, p.146).

Therefore, all types of schools follow this general objective of the Saudi Arabian education, which accordingly affects the schools' curriculum even if private schools adopt a foreign one. In private schools high numbers of expatriate teachers -- varying between Western and Arab -- are found (Scotsman, 2011). Those teachers deal with a new culture and society. Therefore, in order for those teachers to acclimate to life in Saudi Arabia they have to get accustomed to their special customs, traditions, and lifestyle.

Study Site and Participants

Expatriate teachers newly teaching in Saudi Arabia constituted the population for this study. The sample that was selected was guided by the purpose of the study and attempted at identifying "information-rich cases" (Merriam, 1998, p.62). Therefore, the selection of participants in this qualitative research involved purposeful sampling. Schools and teachers were chosen based on set criterion as well as on purposeful sampling.

Since the study required studying the nature of the challenges that the teachers faced while they worked in a new societal and cultural environment, K.S.A., then the schools that the teachers were selected from had to fit certain criteria in order for the teachers to qualify

as an “information-rich case” (Merriam, 1998, p.61). Literature shows that expatriate teachers face challenges in the host country due to the new cultural and societal context. Since expatriate teachers in Saudi Arabia were more likely to be hired by private schools, teachers participating in this study were selected from private schools. These schools exposed the teachers to many cultural elements that were different from their own (such as: different educational system, students with different backgrounds). Namely, the chosen schools had to necessarily meet the following criteria:

- 1- The private school had to be following the educational system of the host country. Thus, expatriate teachers dealing with a new curriculum they were not yet adapted to were more likely to face the cross-cultural transition challenges; hence, serving the purpose of the study.
- 2- The private school had to have a high number of Saudi students (over 75%). This ensured that the expatriate teachers were being exposed to students from a culture different from their own.
- 3- The school had to include a high number of expatriate teachers in order for the researcher to be able to investigate in depth, and from different perspectives, the challenges that the teachers encountered.

To sum up, the school had to be a private school and had to have: (1) a Saudi educational system; (2) a high number of Saudi students [over 75%]; and (3) a high number of expatriate teachers [half of the staff]. These criteria ensured that the participants selected would be a rich source of data for this study.

Moreover, the selection of the teachers participating in this study took into consideration the following:

- 1- Expatriate teachers for this study were considered as foreign teachers, and the participants selected covered the two categories of expatriate teachers found in schools in KSA: (1) from Arabic-speaking countries (nineteen Arab teachers); and (2) from non-Arabic-speaking countries (nine non-Arab teachers). Non-Arabs will be coded as (F) .
- 2- All the participating teachers were female teachers. This ensured feasibility and accessibility to schools, making it easier to interview and follow-up with the teachers; if the need arose (given that the researcher is a female).
- 3- Maximum variability was attempted while selecting participants to have a wide representation based on the subject matters they taught.
- 4- Lysgaard's (1955) study showed that sojourners settled in the host country for less than six months were categorized as being in a good state of adjustment (similar to an initial "honeymoon" period) where the sojourners were busy exploring the country and just enjoying its novelty. This experience was found to be very much in contrast with those who had been settled for more than six months but less than eighteen months who were in turn categorized as being in a poor state of adjustment. Therefore, since this study attempted to capture the challenges that the teachers faced in a new cultural context before they adjusted to their host country- The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia-teachers selected to participate in this study included those who had been in the country for a period ranging from six to eighteen months and were referred to as the newcomers.

Therefore, all of the teachers participating in the first and second set of individual interviews were those who had been settled in Saudi Arabia for a time period ranging between six to eighteen months.

As for the third set of individual interviews conducted in each school, teachers were selected based on a different time settlement range. The teachers chosen were those who had been in the country for a period exceeding two years, (mainly in the same school) which were referred to as the old timers. Those teachers, based on Lysgaard's theory, would have reached the adaptation phase. Thus, they would be able to reflect on the cultural shock phase they had been through and give feedback on what helped them overcome it.

To sum up, a total of twenty-eight teachers (fourteen from each school) were selected at the start of the study and provided the main source of data for the study through individual interviews. Twenty teachers (ten from each school) followed the above criteria that included a settlement ranging from six to eighteen months. The other eight teachers (four from each school) followed the same criteria except for the last criterion where the teachers had been settled for more than two years in KSA.

However, exact numbers about the population of the school (students and expatriate teachers' numbers) were not available for the researcher. The school refused to give such information to use in the study. Nonetheless, it was clear after the visits and conversations with the principal and the interviewed teachers that the schools have a high percentage of expatriate teachers due to the fact that most of the Saudi teachers are mostly hired to teach religion, History and Arabic language. Thus, expatriate teachers teach other subject matters. For the same reason, none of the interviewed teachers teaches Arabic or religion.

Table 3.1.

Teachers' background information. New = Newcomers Old=Old timers.

School	Teacher state	Code	Nationality	Subject Matter	Educational Background	Experience in Saudi	Experience in total	Age	Reason for transition
A	New	AATN1	Jordanian	Science	Chemistry	1 year	14 years	38	marriage
		AATN2	Syrian	French	French	1st year	7 years	36	marriage
		AATN3	Lebanese	Science	Medical Lab	1 year	4 years	28	marriage
		AATN4	Lebanese	French	Social Studies	1 year	3 years	31	marriage
		AFTN5	Philippino	Homeroom	Education & Child Psychology	1.5 year	30 years	54	marriage
		AFTN6	British	Math	Math & Physics	1 year	4 years	37	marriage
		AATN7	Lebanese	English	Computer & Communication Engineering	1st year	1 year	30	marriage
		AFTN8	Pakistani	Math	Mechanical Engineering	1 year	2 years	29	marriage
		AATN9	Lebanese	Math & Science	Education	1 year	3 years	26	marriage
		AATN10	Lebanese	Math	Mathematics	1 year	5 years	27	marriage
	Old	AATE11	Jordanian	Chemistry	Chemistry	9 years	12 years	39	marriage
		AATE12	Lebanese	Biology	Education	6 years	9 years	32	marriage
		AATE13	Egyptian	Sciences & Chemistry	Pharmaceutical Sciences	5 years	5 years	32	marriage
		AATE14	Lebanese	Math	Education	8 years	8 years	29	marriage
B	New	BATN1	Lebanese	Homeroom	Business Administration	1 year	1 year	36	marriage
		BATN2	American	Homeroom	Interior Design	1st year	1 year	45	marriage
		BATN3	Lebanese	Science	Nutrition	1 year	2 years	30	marriage
		BATN4	Lebanese	Homeroom	Education	1st year	3 years	30	marriage
		BFTN5	British	English	Music	1 year	10 year	56	marriage
		BFTN6	British	English	Education	1st year	10 years	34	marriage
		BATN7	Lebanese	Science	Computer Science	1 year	3 years	32	marriage
		BATN8	Lebanese	Math	Communication Engineering	1 year	3 years	28	marriage
		BATN9	Jordanian	Science	Pharmacy	1st year	1 year	36	marriage
		BATN10	South African	Homeroom	Education	1 year	35 years	58	marriage
	Old	BFTE11	Pakistani	English	Linguistic & Literature	8 years	8 years	32	marriage
		BATE12	Lebanese	Science & Biology	Biology + Teaching Diploma	9 years	9 years	32	marriage
		BATE13	Sudanese	Science, Chemistry,	Veterinary Science	6 years	6 years	37	marriage

BATE14	Lebanese	Social Studies English	English Literature & Biology	7 years	13 years	31	marriage
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Teachers' background information. New = Newcomers Old=Old timers.

Table 3.2.

Teachers' background information. Average and Range of Participants

School	The Average of the Participants' age	The Range of the Participants' age	The Average of the Years of Experience	The Range of the Years of Experience
A	33.4	28	7.6	29
B	36.9	30	7.4	34
Total	35.17	32	7.5	33

Teachers' background information. Average and Range of Participants

Data Collection Procedures

The qualitative data collection methods that this study used were: (1) individual interviews generating the main source of data for the study; (2) individual interviews aimed at member-checking; and (3) collected documents from the school regarding policies related to orientation or induction.

Table 3.3.

Summary of data collection methods, participants and research sites used in the study

Site	Data Collection Tools	Participants
School A	Individual Interviews	6 expatriate teachers
	Individual Interviews + member check	4 expatriate teachers
	Individual Interviews (with teachers who have been settled in KSA for more than 2 years)+ member check	4 expatriate teachers
	Documents	
School B	Individual Interviews	6 expatriate teachers
	Individual Interviews + member check	4 expatriate teachers
	Individual Interviews (with teachers who have been settled in KSA for more than 2 years + member check	4 expatriate teachers
	Documents	

Note. Adapted from the current study.

Individual Interviews

Individual interviews were conducted for this study in order to explore the participants' perspectives regarding the challenges that the teachers faced and attributed to their transition into the new cultural context of Saudi Arabia. The semi-structured interview helped uncover the researcher's purpose by enabling her to ask follow-up and probing questions for the sake of obtaining more clarifications (Rossman & Rolls, 1998) on the research questions already stated in Chapter one (see appendix A).

Interviewing produces the kind of data that allows the researcher to view things from the other person's perspective (Merriam, 1998). It is important and necessary when the researcher "can't observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around

them” (p.72). Merriam (1998) assures that interviews are mostly used when the researcher is interested in past events. As a result, interviews were a rich source of data for this case study. Twenty-eight teachers -- fourteen from each school -- were interviewed. The interview questions were prepared by the researcher and guided by the research probes and conceptual framework carefully constructed for this study (see appendix A). However, the researcher started the interview with the general questions and used the probes only when it was necessary.

Individual Interviews Aimed at Member-Checking

In order to resolve discrepant findings, the researcher made sure to collect data from different sources so as to ensure triangulation. The original plan was to collect data by forming four focus groups. Focus groups were planned to solicit the participants’ reactions on the emerging results that were obtained from the individual interviews. However, the researcher faced the challenge of scheduling a focus group sessions due to the teachers’ busy schedules. Member checking was then done by conducting sixteen individual interviews (sets two and three of the individual interviews as described before) took place. Moreover, after the individual interviews were documented, the participants were asked to provide their feedback about the results that were generated from the first set of individual interviews.

Documents

Documents are considered useful sources of data in qualitative studies. They contain information that is helpful for the research; just like the data of the interviews or observations. For this study, these documents included: (1) teachers’ handbooks ;(2) planned professional development sessions for new teachers;(3) orientation and induction

program documents; and (4) website information for teachers who were willing to move to Saudi Arabia. Each teacher's handbook was supposed to inform new expatriate teachers about the culture of the school in particular, and about the atmosphere of the school and country in general. Similarly, the planned professional development sessions for new expatriate teachers was supposed to inform them about preparatory sessions designed to allow them to get more familiarized with their new environment. Lastly, the orientation and induction program documents was supposed to help the researchers know just exactly which induction programs were introduced to the new teachers. Accordingly, a document checklist was created (see Appendix B).

Ethnographic content analysis was used to analyze documents in qualitative studies (Altheide, 1996). The emphasis was on the discovery and the description of underlying meanings, patterns and processes (Altheide, 1996). This qualitative document analysis followed a sequential process, category construction, data collection, data analysis and interpretation (Merriam, 1998). During the process of analyzing the documents, information was clarified through theoretical sampling and constant comparison in order to highlight patterns and thematic emphases.

Data Analysis Procedure

The main methodological approach that was used to analyze the collected data in this study was the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis which aims at justifying how a person makes sense of a phenomenon in a certain context (Merriam, 1998). Moreover, an interpretive study gives a deep and rich description in order to analyze and interpret the case chosen to study. Furthermore, researcher develops categories and themes in order to

“illustrate, support, or challenge theoretical assumptions held prior to the data gathering” (Merriam, 1998, p.38).

The data collected through interviews, and documents were analyzed following the procedural guidelines for the constant comparative method by: (1) collecting and analyzing data concurrently; and (2) comparing segments of the data with the cases and the literature. The data was collected from several cases and later on analyzed. As the researcher investigated each case on its own, a cross-case analysis was carried out in order to conceptualize the data. That was done by categorizing the outcomes found across many cases in order to develop a deeper understanding of the phenomenon (Merriam, 1998). Furthermore, the analysis used Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) method of organizing and analyzing qualitative data based on the two analytical procedures: (1) Open coding; and (2) Axial coding -- in order to develop theoretical propositions grounded in the data being collected. Open coding is the process of “breaking data apart and delineating concepts to stand for blocks of raw data” (Strauss & Corbin, 2008, p.195). Therefore, it is “breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing and categorizing data” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.61). Axial coding “is a set of procedures whereby data are put together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories. This is done by utilizing a coding paradigm involving conditions, context, action/interactional, strategies and consequences” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 96). Thus, in other words, axial coding simply means relating concepts to each other (Strauss & Corbin, 2008).

Hence, the above stated procedures enabled the researcher to analyze and construct themes. As a result, the researcher was able to: (1) identify the challenges that the expatriate teachers encountered upon their transition to a new cultural context; and (2)

document the perceived impact that these challenges had on the effectiveness of their teaching practices.

Trustworthiness Criteria

Trustworthiness is defined as “that quality of an investigation (and its findings) that made it noteworthy to audiences” (Schwandt, 2001, p. 258). Hence, the trustworthiness criteria consist of ensuring the: (1) credibility; (2) transferability; (3) dependability; and (4) conformability of the research being conducted (Schwandt, 2001).

Credibility

Credibility is analogous to internal validity; the degree to which the researcher understands and represents the participants’ perception accurately (Shwandt, 2001). Since the purpose of the qualitative research is to investigate and understand the phenomena being studied from the participants’ point of view, the research can enhance credibility through: (1) triangulation; (2) member checks; (3) long term observation; (4) peer examination; (5) participatory or collaborative modes of research; and (6) the researcher’s biases (Merriam, 1998). As for this study, the research mainly relied on only three procedures:

- Triangulation: The three sets of data (3 sets from individual interviews, member checks, and documents) increased the credibility of the results (Merriam, 1998).
- Member checks: Member checks are usually done in studies when the researcher refers back to the participants with the results in order to get their feedback (Merriam, 1998). However, for this study, the researcher carried out member checks at the end of each interview by summarizing the participants’ answers. This gave the participants a chance to comment on what they said, hence

maintaining professionalism and accuracy. Moreover, the researcher also conducted member check interviews by the end of the last two sets of the interviews in order to verify the validity of the data obtained from the individual interviews.

Researcher's biases: As recommended by Merriam (1998) the researcher's assumptions, worldview, and theoretical orientation at the outset of the study" were elaborated as part of the theoretical framework that the researcher constructed in chapter one and two (framework) .

Transferability

Transferability is analogous to external validity; it represents the extent to which the findings of the study are generalizable to contexts beyond those that the study was conducted in (Merriam, 1998; Shwandt, 2001). The literature proposes three procedures in order to enhance transferability: (1) rich and thick description; (2) typicality or model category; and (3) multisite designs (Merriam, 1998). The research in this study relied on two of those procedures:

- Rich and thick description: The researcher thoroughly described the context that the study was taking place in, and the criteria based on which the participants were selected, hence facilitating the transferability of the findings (Merriam, 1998).
- Multisite design: The researcher conducted data collection for several cases reflecting several other cases of the phenomenon (Merriam, 1998).

However, due to the limited scope of this study the research acknowledges the limitation of the transferability of the results study and considers it an opportunity to conduct further research on a larger scale.

Dependability

Dependability, which denotes reliability, Shwandt (2001), refers to the quality of the inquiry process. It also indicates the extent to which this process is “logical, traceable, and documented” (Shwandt, 2001, p. 258). The three procedures that the literature relies on for enhancing dependability are: (1) the investigator’s position; (2) the triangulation strategy; and (3) the audit trail. The research in this study used two of the three above-mentioned procedures:

- The researcher’s position: The researcher provided a description of the underlying assumptions and theories behind the study, and shared her position just as the research recommends (Merriam, 1998).
- Triangulation: (As explained earlier).
- Audit trial: The research provided a detailed description about how the data were collected, and how the researcher later constructed themes and categories (Merriam, 1998).

Conformability

Lastly, conformability is the degree of accuracy with regards to the data collected vis-à-vis the participants’ perspectives, and not the researcher’s biases. The literature provides two procedures based on which objectivity can be assured in the research (Shenton, 2004). Both of these strategies were used by the researcher:

- Triangulation: (as discussed earlier).

- Audit trail: (as discussed earlier).

To sum up, in order to meet the criteria in this research study, the researcher relied on several procedures: (1) triangulation; (2) member checks; (3) rich and thick description; (4) multisite design; (5) the researcher's position; and (8) audit trial.

Limitations

This study faced a number of challenges especially during the field work stage which resulted in the following limitations:

- The study took place at the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh, which is unique in its social, cultural, and educational system aspects. Therefore, this could constrain the generalizability of the findings to other countries because of its focus on a very specific context. The same can be said regarding to the generalizability of the findings to other regions in Saudi Arabia given the variety within the country, especially when it comes to the strictness of implementing the religious laws. Riyadh is perceived by Saudis as one of the more conservative cities when compared with Dammam and Jeddah for example. These differences might impose or reduces the challenges faced as found in this study.
- Gender is another limitation that could affect the findings of the study. Since all the participants in the study are females due to the fact that it is simply more accessible to interview female teachers by a female researcher.
- Since the study is a qualitative study, the number of participants is limited. However, the focus of the research was to understand in depth - and in the natural context - the challenges that few expatriate teachers face upon the transition into a new cultural and societal context of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, rather than to

know, at a surface level, the various challenges of a large representative sample of teachers.

- The limited sources of data are another limitation for this study. The researcher collected data from the twenty eight individual interviews and the member check method due to the unfeasibility to collect data from focus groups and and as a result of the lack of relevant documents in the school.
- All of the challenges that teachers pointed out revealed explicit behaviors that did result due to the cultural clash that they encountered. In other words, the challenges that the teachers reported were challenges that are
- Due to the fact that the researcher is Lebanese, the interviewed Lebanese teachers disclosed more trust than other teachers. They shared more details about their experience which might have skewed the results to reflect their perspective at the expense of the other participant representing expatriate from different nationality.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This study aims to understand expatriate teachers' perspectives of the challenges they face upon the transition into a new societal and cultural context and examine their views on the impact this has on their work performance. The purpose of the study is to examine from the perspective of the teachers: (1) the challenges that the teachers face in a new cultural and societal context; (2) the impact of the challenges on the teachers' work effectiveness; (3) the organizational factors that help those teachers deal with their cultural transition challenges.

This chapter reports the findings of the study which can be categorized under six main headings: (1) the societal challenges that the teachers reported; (2) the organizational challenges that the teachers indicated; (3) the effect of these challenges on teachers' effective teaching; (4) the organizational factors that seemed to help those teachers overcome the challenges; (5) personal factors that seemed to help those teachers overcome the challenges; and (6) the conclusion that summarizes the main results of this study.

Analysis of the results in the tables show that in most cases there are no noticeable variation between the responses of the newcomers and that of the old timers. Most of the responses regarding the societal challenges were the same; however, more newcomer teachers highlighted the unrealistic expectations held by parents for their children and lack of prioritization of school attendance for their children as a challenge than the old timers. As for the responses regarding the organizational factors, there was a noticeable variation in response between Arab teachers and non-Arab teachers. More Arab teachers stated

religious restrictions imposed on the curriculum and instructional design, culturally irrelevant curriculum content, and lack of parental involvement in promoting student learning as challenges than non-Arab teachers. Moreover, more newcomer teachers stated culturally irrelevant curriculum content as a challenge than old-timers. Regarding the effect of the challenges on teachers' effective teaching, more Arab teachers seem to report loss of motivation for teaching, hindered creativity, and lack of job satisfaction as challenges than non-Arab teachers. As for the last section, the responses of the factors that helped teachers to overcome the challenges were almost the same across all aspects.

Challenges Related to the Societal Culture

The challenges that expatriate teachers faced upon the transition into a new societal and cultural context are reported in the following section. For the majority of the participants the reason behind their decision to work in KSA was to join a spouse that works there. The responses of the participants revealed that they identified the following challenges: (1) restrictive norms and policies; (2) unfamiliar dialect; (3) different language; (4) difficult weather conditions; (5) lack of prioritization of school attendance; (6) parents' over-sensitivity to critical feedback; (7) unrealistic expectations held by parents for their children; and (8) discrimination and racism in the work place.

Table 4.1.

Frequency of teachers' responses regarding the societal challenges per Newcomers and Old timers, Arab and non-Arab teachers'

Titles	Newcomer Teachers(6-18months)			Oldtimers Teachers (2years & above)		
	Arab (out of 12)	Non-Arab (out of 8)	Total out of 20	Arab (out of 7)	Non-Arab (1)	Total out of 8
Societal Challenges						
Restrictive Norms and Policies						
<i>Loss of independence</i>	12	8	20	7	1	8
<i>Segregation based on gender</i>	12	8	20	7	1	8
<i>Lack of Fairness of the terms of the Work Permit</i>	12	8	20	7	1	8
Unfamiliar Dialect	12	-	12	7	-	7
Different Language	-	8	8	-	1	1
Difficult weather Conditions	12	8	20	7	1	8
Lack of Prioritization of School Attendance	9	1	10	3	1	4
Parents' oversensitivity to Critical Feedback	10	5	15	4	-	4
Unrealistic Expectations Held by Parents for Their Children	7	2	9	2	-	2
Discrimination and Racism in the Workplace	3	2	5	6	2	8

Note. Adapted from the current study.

Restrictive Norms and Policies

All of the twenty-eight teachers pointed out that the laws and policies in Saudi Arabia constitute a big challenge for them because they are drastically different from the laws in their home country. New comers and oldtimers' teachers alike expressed that many of the challenges they faced emerged directly from the restrictive norms and policies pertaining to the lifestyle of female teachers. There were no noted differences neither based on years of experience in the country nor based on being an Arab on a non-Arab teacher. All teachers pointed out that the feeling of loss of independence was a major challenge that female teachers faced upon their transition to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Moreover

teachers pointed out that the segregation based on gender and the lack of fairness regarding the terms of the work permit constituted major challenges as well. These sentiments did not seem to subside as all the oldtimers also highlighted these policies as source of challenge.

Loss of independence. All of the twenty-eight teachers revealed that they found difficulty accepting and adapting to the laws and norms of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Newcomers and oldtimers, Arabs and non-Arabs equally pointed at this as a challenge. One old-timer Sudanese teacher (BATE13) shared that she realized that the laws and policies need to be taken seriously as they constitute the means by which people in Saudi Arabia judge appropriate and inappropriate behaviors and strictly hold foreigners accountable for following their mandate. She (BATE13) asserted:

I came to understand how people think here and how I should behave in order to be accepted in the society. The laws reflect the acceptable behavior and determine how a person will be judged if s/he did not abide by them.

All of the teachers expressed that the reason expatriate teachers find it hard to obey the laws and policies of KSA is because of the intrusive and restrictive nature of these laws – especially in the manner they dictate what behaviors are deemed moral and immoral. While many acts that are deemed acceptable in the teachers’ countries of origin, they are judged immoral and unacceptable in KSA. Although the restrictive rules in KSA are extensive and cover a wide range of societal expectations, participating teachers mentioned the following examples that they found to be the most problematic. For instance, in KSA: (1) women are not allowed to drive;(2) women are not allowed to go out in public without wearing a veil that covers their head at all times and without wearing the *abaya* – the long

black robe that is typically worn over a woman's everyday outfit in order to cover her body and conceal her basic figure;(3) women are not allowed to go out without their *mahram*— a male escort (typically either the husband or a relative);(4) women are not allowed to smoke in public, etc; (5) there are laws that enforce closing all shops during prayer times, and others that forbid everyone from doing activities such as: cinemas, biking, etc; there are special police force to oversee the abidance by the moral code who are feared because of the strict measures they take to enforce abidance by the country's laws. All of the teachers expressed that it would have been easier for them to adapt to the laws of the new country had the laws and policies been not that restrictive and different from those of their home country. A newcomer Jordanian teacher (AAT1N) affirmed:

Policies related to transportation and the daily activities are the hardest to accept and adapt to: first, females are not allowed to drive, and at the same time it is very hard to find drivers to trust, and taxi(s) make use of the situation and ask for high fees. Also when it comes to daily activities, there is nothing to do other than go to a mall or a restaurant. Even when I go out, I stay tense; scared from facing a *motawie*¹, and being blamed for not covering my face for example. Once, a *motawie* stopped me for wearing a black abaya with little colors in it.

Moreover, the repercussions individuals have to deal with if they inadvertently transgress some of these laws made teachers, at the beginning of their settlement, live stressfully in constant fear. An old-timer Syrian teacher (AATE12) shared her experience:

¹Motawie: is a religious man who is responsible for applying religious laws in public places

When I first came here, I heard about the consequences of any behavior that would violate the Saudi laws. I was scared, and so I feared going out. I used to be attentive in the mall all the time, scared of meeting a motawie.

A new non-Arab American teacher (BFTN2) shared her first shock after arriving at the airport of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:

It was Adha Holiday at the time when I arrived to the airport of KSA. I was shocked by what the people were wearing. My first thoughts while seeing the natives were: Why am I here? How will I be able to live here? Once I learned that people wear specific clothes for Hajj, the shock became less, and I started getting used to habits and traditions of this country.

The change that female teachers experienced as a result of their move to the KSA, and the loss of freedom that resulted from that change, affected the teachers' social life greatly. Teachers, as new expatriates in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, were unable to play an active social role in the community. Many struggled trying to find a way to visit friends or join an organization. This was due to the fact that women were not allowed to drive and had no alternative method of transportation since the husbands would probably be at work and taxis would be hard to trust or afford. Teachers related that there only resort was to find alternative means for socializing, by using social media. An Arab Lebanese teacher (AATN4) added:

Being unable to drive and not finding an alternative for easy and safe transportation affected my social life and the activities that I can do being a housewife. My social life is limited. I cannot visit or go out with friends except when my husband is free to drop and pick me up.

A non-Arab British teacher (BFTN5) explained:

Being in a new country and culture where I knew absolutely no one was definitely hard on me. However, being married to an Arab man made it somehow easier since at least I had some kind of circle of friends to start with so that helped me socialize in a smoother way.

Segregation based on gender. All of the teachers considered segregation based on gender a challenge for them, especially as teachers and mothers. As teachers, they all agreed on the idea that the class loses its balance when the students are segregated. “The boys’ class is so loud and active while the girls’ class is quiet and organized. Teachers pray not to be placed in the boys’ section” as one Arab Lebanese teacher (BATN1) remarked.

Moreover, all of the teachers who have children (eighteen out of twenty teachers of the newcomers, and all of the oldtimers) considered this a challenge for them as mothers. They feared that segregating children since such a young age would make them eventually lack the necessary social skills needed to succeed in life. An Arab Jordanian teacher (AATN1) added:

I try my best to help my children find friends that would allow us to live and experience a social life as similar as possible to the one we had back in our home country. I neither want my son to be shy/afraid around girls, nor do I want him to become so arrogantly confident and open once we return to living in an un-segregated environment.

Lack of fairness of the terms of the work permit. All of the teachers faced a challenge regarding a new national policy on the subject of residency (work permit).

Teachers in Saudi Arabia usually work while using the same residency of that of their

husbands. Last year, the government had decided to change the law: teachers had to have their own work permit through the school rather than stay in the country using the same residency as that of their husbands. However, most of the teachers in KSA refused to acquire a new residency. Accordingly, the law was then made less strict and required that teachers only go through one single interview at the Ministry of Education -to make sure that those teachers had a Bachelor degree in order to grant them the work permit. All of the teachers were relieved when this happened since all confirmed that they would not have switched their residency to that of the school anyway. The reason is because they found the entire work permit situation/procedure unfair. Teachers believed that they would lose some of their power and privilege if the law were to be applied. One teacher added:

I would never transfer my residency to have one affiliated with the school. This would only put the school in a greater position of power. They would take away my passport. I heard many stories of teachers who wanted to visit their home country -- whether over the weekend or in case of emergencies -- and yet in both cases, were denied their passports when they asked for them back.

To sum up, all of the teachers considered loss of independence, segregation of gender, and lack of fairness regarding the terms and conditions of the work permit were major challenges that affected their ability to adapt to the host country.

Unfamiliar Dialect

Twelve Arab teachers out of a total of twenty newcomer teachers, and seven Arab teachers out of a total of eight old timers emphasized that although they shared the same language (Arabic) with the Saudi citizens, their dialect was still a major challenge as they reported finding difficulty understanding it. However, some of the oldtimers' respondents

added that they were somehow able to overcome the dialect barrier within a short period of time. An old-timer Lebanese teacher (BATE4) gave the following example to show how her unfamiliarity with the local dialect was problematic:

Once the students held up their corrected exams chanting and screaming: ‘Miss, we got eid!. I told them ‘wow, that is great!’ They started laughing because they knew I did not understand what they meant. So they explained that the word ‘eid’ meant that they received a zero. I was surprised and clarified how in my own culture the word ‘eid’ was related to happiness (farha).

Old timers reported that at times, students taught them some words from their local dialect. Eight out of twenty newcomer teachers and four out of eight oldtimers mentioned that to overcome the dialect barrier, they sometimes incorporated words in their lesson plans that they had learned from their students, and other times, taught their students some words from their own native culture so as to reduce the cultural divide and render any awkward situation humorous.

All of the Arab teachers participating in this study considered dialect a persistent challenge that they were able to manage once they started communicating with local people of the host country.

Different Language

All of the nine non-Arab teachers who participated in this study, considered language a challenge they encountered for three reasons: (1) their inability to communicate with their colleagues; (2) their need for a translator while meeting with the parents of the students; (3) their inability to understand the school memos. They considered the language barrier a challenge that persisted for them as they reported facing major difficulty in

understanding it and/or using it at school or even in their daily lives. Teachers did not find it very hard to communicate with sales men/women, or read signs since most of them speak English and post signs with both languages, Arabic and English. However, they found that it constituted a barrier and made it hard for them to socialize with a group of Arab people and even with different faculty and staff members at school. They also pointed it out as a barrier for communicating with parents. Moreover, teachers expressed feelings of discomfort as they tried to explain how the language barrier increased their feeling of isolation and prevented them from mingling with their colleagues or to forge friendship with them. A non-Arab Pakistani teacher (AFTN8) reflected:

I should really have learned to speak Arabic. Teaching is a lonely profession – although you are in a classroom, working with people all the time, you are completely isolated from your peers. Chatting to colleagues takes on a whole new level of importance in this profession. And that is what I have missed here. It’s no one’s fault. People have been very kind and welcoming but I have not forged friendships here.

A non-Arab Pakistani teacher (BFTE11) commented: “The biggest problem for me working here was that everyone speaks Arabic except when they were directly addressing me. I don’t blame them; I am the outsider here. Sometimes I feel I should have learned the Arabic language”.

Another non-Arab British teacher (BFTN5) expressed: “Language was a main challenge for me until I learned formal Arabic. I am not able to open up and understand conversations yet, I am not that fluent”.

Moreover, all of the nine non-Arab teachers also noted that they encountered another language related challenge while communicating with the parents. All of them needed a translator in order to communicate with the parents. A non-Arab South African teacher (BATN10) noted that: “It is hard to communicate with parents having no language in common. I always need a translator in order to communicate effectively with them, especially during parents meeting”.

The third challenge that all of the non-Arab teachers faced because of the language barrier was the communication between the administration and the teachers. All of those non-Arab teachers considered communication within the school a challenge that they could not adapt to. The school memos and letters to teachers were always written in Arabic. Thus, teachers faced problems while trying to understand the memos, which led them sometimes to experience embarrassing and frustrating moments. One new teacher (AFTN6) explained: “The school memos were all sent out in Arabic, which is obviously a problem for me. There was only one day that I turned up at school, only to find that it was unexpectedly closed for the day”.

As a conclusion, the dominance of the Arabic language as the officially used language for communication that takes place between the school administration and the teachers was considered by all of the non-Arab newcomers and oldtimers an essential concern that needs to be dealt with very carefully. Moreover, teachers considered that communication between the school administration and the teachers is an important asset needed for maintaining clarity, organization, and work efficiency in the school setting – all of which were lacking in their views. As a result, those nine non-Arab teachers pointed out that they struggled greatly due to the language barrier.

Difficult Weather Conditions

All of the twenty-eight teachers expressed that the country's weather (and overall climate) constituted yet another challenge for expatriates living in Saudi Arabia that seemed to persist. They all complained about the dry, hot and dusty weather. The teachers also expressed difficulty adapting to such an environment. Moreover, they confessed that they often felt lethargic and exhausted as a result of the stifling weather.

One non-Arab British teacher (AFTN6) described her experience as follows: "During my first year in Riyadh, I found the heat overpowering. The increase in temperature during daytime makes it unbearable sometimes".

All of the teachers seemed to prefer the winter season (November till March) over the summer season (March till October) simply because of the inconvenience of the intense heat. Hence, many teachers preferred traveling back to their home country during summer.

One Arab Syrian teacher (AATN2) remarked that:

I stayed in Saudi Arabia last summer and couldn't travel to my home country. It was too difficult for me to adapt and live normally. I realized how although it's been quite a while since I last moved to the country, I was still unable to adapt to the dry weather of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Moreover, seventeen out of twenty newcomer teachers and four out of eight oldtimers reported experiencing health problems due to the climate, including: skin and respiratory allergy, asthma, sinus infections, consecutive sicknesses, influenza type symptoms, fever, and eye problems. One non-Arab Pakistani teacher (AFTE8) lamented: "My eyes got infected due to the dry weather. Since then I have been using medical eye drops to prevent the infection".

Another non-Arab Filipino teacher (AFTN5) described how the environment affected the health of her family:

We have all had more illnesses here in KSA than we were used to having back home. These illnesses span for a longer time too, like for example a cough or a runny nose here spans weeks. Also, I notice that we often get ill when it has been particularly dusty.

Some teachers (fourteen out of twenty newcomer teachers and all of the eight oldtimers) reported having to dedicate time and energy to learn some practical techniques that helped them protect themselves and their families from being sick almost all year long. Many shared their experience with regards to finding ways to protect themselves from sicknesses that may be caused due to the environment. An Arab Lebanese teacher (AATN3) explained:

I spent my entire first year in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia sick. I think it is because I was constantly moving back and forth from a cold environment (air-conditioned house/office) to a really hot one (the weather outdoors) and vice versa. Now, I follow preventive measures in order not to be sick. So, I'm always using a humidifier, a purifier, and even nasal drops as soon as I'm exposed to changing temperatures.

To sum up, the climate in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was considered a challenge that they had trouble adjusting to for all the newcomer teachers and the old timers whether they were Arabs or non-Arabs. As a result, teachers tried their best to take preventive measures in order to deal with – or avoid entirely – the types of sickness they were subjected to as a result of the harsh weather conditions.

Lack of Prioritization of School Attendance

Ten out of twenty newcomer teachers and four out of eight old timers complained about some parents withdrawing students from their classes all of a sudden or extending their weekends or holidays. Moreover, some students were absent for several days after the weekend or holiday without giving any prior notice or excuse to the teacher. Twelve out of these 14 teachers are Arab teachers. All teachers who reported this challenge proclaimed that this distracted the students and kept them behind schedule in terms of their learning as they missed many lessons and chapters covered in class.

All of these teachers reported that the parents considered that they had the right, at any time, to ask for their children and take them out of school, and then to ask the teachers to treat their children in a special way. Teachers complained that parents asked teachers to re-explain all the material all over again for an absent student even if that particular student did not have a valid excuse for having skipped class that day. This made the teachers feel both pressured and frustrated.

Four newcomer teachers reported that the parent's behavior made them feel disrespected as individuals and professionals. They noted that they felt that their profession itself was undervalued especially when they were asked to make exceptions (like tutoring a student who missed many classes) for families and kids who did not abide by the school attendance requirements.

Parents' Over-sensitivity to Critical Feedback

Fifteen out of twenty newcomers and four out of eight old timers considered parents' resistance to hear negative comments about their children a major challenge that negatively impacted teaching. They were mostly Arab teachers. They reported their

observations that whenever parents resisted hearing unflattering remarks about their children, those students then became more irresponsible and lazy. An Arab Lebanese teacher (BATE14) explained: “When parents deny that their children could have a negative attitude or behavior, an implicit message is sent to the student who immediately starts thinking: ‘I can do whatever I want; nothing will stop me’”.

Moreover, these teachers attributed the parents’ behavior to a cultural norm. According to the teachers, receiving criticism related to one’s child is an offensive act that most KSA parents take personally. Teachers explained that rather than finding in the parents supportive partners with whom they can work to improve student’s behavior, the teachers’ critical remarks angered the parents and put them on the defensive.

Unrealistic Expectations Parents Held for their Children

Nine of the newcomer teachers and two out of eight of the oldtimers believed that parents were setting unrealistic expectations from the school and the teachers by asking that their children achieve at levels of performance higher than what they actually could reach. These teachers were mostly Arabs. They considered this a major challenge since parents complained about their children’s academic performance without actually having a clear understanding of their children readiness, needs, and potential. Parents often fail to follow up with their children overall progress and behavior. Moreover, some teachers (two newcomer teachers and one Arab old timer teacher) pointed that parents came to blame them and accuse them of not pushing the students hard enough or evaluating their work fairly. An Arab Lebanese teacher (BATN1) explained how she felt disrespected and considered this a major challenge:

After the students received their corrected exams, a mother came to see me. She was angry and blamed me for not taking care of her child. She claimed that her son deserved a better grade but when I showed her the homework assignments he had completed, and tried to explain to her that it is the best we should expect from him at this point. She could not accept the fact that this was the best that her son could do. She ended up punishing him for a whole month by forbidding him from playing his favorite game.

Moreover, it was generally observed that the parents seemed to indeed care a lot about the achievement of their child but for all what teachers considered “the wrong reasons”: They cared more about his/her rank and superiority to his/her friends, than his/her actual learning and cognitive and social development. This made the challenge of giving critical feedback bigger for the teachers. They reported that they often felt trapped and not at ease to share negative feedback with the parents, as they felt that some parents will harshly punish their children purely for selfish reasons, like being able to boast about their kids achievements and showing it off.

Discrimination and Racism in the Work Place

One newcomer non-Arab Philipino teacher (AFTN5) reported discrimination and racism as a societal challenge. She described her experience when her students treated her with disrespect and refused to accept her as their teacher because she belongs to a racial group of expatriate that are predominantly hired as household help. She spoke of the prevalence of racism against certain nationalities in the Saudi society as the root cause of the students’ reaction to her. Thus, class management for her was a major challenge. It took her a lot of effort to finally gain their trust and respect.

Four newcomer teachers and eight oldtimers asserted that teachers from certain nationalities were discriminated against by both students and parents. Those teachers, especially the oldtimers, pointed at the prevalence of this phenomenon and the problems it created and revealed stories they had seen or heard from students discriminating against teachers from certain nationalities. An Arab old-timer Lebanese teacher narrated

(BATE12):

The school hired a teacher holding a master's degree in education. However, both the parents and the students were not able to accept her as a serious faculty member at the school, and even disregarded the fact that she came from a successful and qualified background simply because she was from a certain nationality. However, once they got to know her well, after a few years, they finally started trusting her and she stayed for quite a few years at the school.

As noted, five out of twenty newcomer teachers mentioned discrimination as a personal challenge whereas all of the eight old timer re-pointed out that discrimination against teachers from specific nationalities, is quite prevalent among many students and their parents and agreed that it is a source of challenge to adjusting to the cultural context of the country.

Challenges Related to the Organizational Culture

Teachers reported challenges related to the culture of the organization as well. They are directly related to the organizational aspect, such as: curriculum and school policies. Some of the themes generated from their explanations also reflected the beliefs and norms of the society in general, such as: religious beliefs and parenting acts. The following section discusses the organizational challenges that the teachers faced: (1)

culturally irrelevant curriculum content; (2) absence of curriculum material; (3) religious restrictions imposed on the curriculum and instructional design; (4) absence of clear discipline policy; (5) excessive parental interference in school decisions; (6) lack of parental involvement in promoting student learning; (7) lack of support for professional development; (8) lack of orientation for newcomers; (9) unsupportive school policies; and (10) absence of job security.

Table 4.2.

Frequency of Newcomers and Old timers, Arab and Non-Arab Teachers' Answers Regarding Organizational Challenges

Titles	Newcomer Teachers (6-18months)			Oldtimers Teachers (2years & above)		
	Arab (out of 12)	Non-Arab (out of 8)	Total (out of 20)	Arab (out of 7)	Non-Arab (1)	Total (out of 8)
Organizational Challenges						
Culturally irrelevant Curriculum Content	10	2	12	3	1	4
Absence of Curriculum Material	2	-	2	-	-	-
Religious Restrictions imposed on the Curriculum and instructional Design						
<i>Pressure to Modify the Curriculum based on the Requirements of the Religious Authority</i>	4	1	5	4	1	5
<i>Imposed Limitations on Teaching Approaches</i>	6	1	7	1	-	1
Absence of clear discipline policy	12	5	17	5	1	6
<i>Manipulative Students</i>	8	-	8	3	-	3
Excessive Parental interference in School Decisions	12	5	17	5	-	5

Lack of Parental involvement in promoting student learning	11	4	15	6	-	6
Lack of Support for Professional Development	12	8	20	7	1	8
Lack of Orientation for Newcomers	12	8	20	7	1	8
Unsupportive administrative School Policies	11	5	16	6	1	
Absence of Job Security	-	1	1	-	-	7
						-

Note. Adapted from the current study.

Culturally Irrelevant Curriculum Content

Twelve out of twenty newcomer teachers (mostly Arabs) and four out of eight old timers believed that the curriculum the schools adopted was problematic because it did not accurately reflect the Saudi culture. The majority of these teachers were Arabs. From their perspective this constituted an additional challenge to them as teachers. More specifically, as teachers they were forced to use foreign books where the setting of the material (i.e. the place, time, and general conditions) for low-grade levels (especially for the English Language and Science classes) was not similar to the setting of the Saudi culture. A Lebanese teacher who teaches English (BATN4) explained:

The setting of the story and the names of the characters used in the story are not relevant to the Saudi culture. Even if they know the mountain for example, they would not know how the life on the mountain is like.

All of the teachers that pointed at this challenge believed that if the curriculum content were more reflective of the Saudi Arabian societal and cultural context, students would be more attentive, involved, and interested. Accordingly, as the British teacher (BFTN5) suggested, they would be able to: “Learn about things around them and know the words of things they use”.

Absence of Curriculum Material

Only two newcomer French teachers reported facing a challenge in preparing the curriculum. They explained that the school did not provide them with documented learning outcomes, activities, textbooks or worksheets. Accordingly, they talked about the challenge of having to put extra work to create their own curriculum and to set single handedly the class objectives. Both of the teachers related that they used many books back from their home-country in order to be able to successfully complete their lesson-plans and that these efforts were taken for granted by the school administration and not compensated as extra work.

Moreover, both teachers expressed feeling stressed and isolated while planning and teaching the curriculum. They were not able to receive help from anyone in school. An Arab Syrian teacher (AATN2) described:

I was so tensed throughout the entire process of planning the curriculum and teaching it. My main concern was taking into consideration the objectives for each grade level. Therefore, I referred to the objectives of other curricula back in my home country just to make sure that I was on the right track.

The reason these teachers ended up referring to their own source material was because their subject matter, French, was not considered a main language in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. So, even in the largest bookshops, French instructional materials were not found. There were no efforts from the schools to assist in this matter.

Both of the teachers asserted that it was a huge responsibility they suddenly had to deal with. They had to decide, on their own, not just what to teach, but also how. Therefore,

the absence of the curriculum was considered one of the main challenges that these teachers encountered within the organizational setting.

Religious Restrictions Imposed on the Curriculum and Instructional Design

Some of the newcomers and the oldtimers reported facing challenges regarding how they had to adapt the content of the curriculum and the teaching strategies to abide by the religious rules and norms of the country. The following section reports two challenges the teachers struggled with: (1) the pressure to modify the curriculum based on the requirements of the religious authority; and (2) the imposed limitations on the teaching approaches.

Pressure to modify the curriculum based on the requirements of the religious authority. Five newcomers (mostly Arabs) out of twenty, and five out of eight oldtimers, faced a challenge regarding the relation between designing the curriculum and religion. An Arab Jordanian teacher (AATN1) remarked:

What students had to be taught in school was basically what the religious authorities considered had to be taught in the school.”

She described that she faced a challenge at the first school she taught in. She was told she had to include religion in all of her science lessons. She found that to be greatly difficult and time-consuming for her to constantly find a way to relate all of the science concepts and ideas to religion. She explained:

While teaching the ‘force’ lesson for my students, I had to be clear enough that it is not only the force that makes things move, it is God’s will.

In her home country (and at the school she was working at the day she was interviewed) science was a core subject that was never related to religion. She added:

“Although I am a religious person, I never thought of science in such a way. It made me lose interest while teaching due to all those restrictions I had when it came to connecting things together”.

An Arab Sudanese teacher (BATE13) explained how she created a new version of student textbooks specifically customized to align with the religious restrictions: “I had to eliminate texts discussing other religious views, texts that mentioned behaviors or norms that were considered unacceptable in KSA, and even pictures that were deemed inappropriate according to Saudi Arabian culture”.

All of these teachers related that they felt pressured to modify the curriculum based on the requirements of the religious authority. Some of the teachers highlighted that it would have been less challenging for the teachers if the governmental authorities come up with their own curriculum modified based on the requirements of the religious authority. This way, the teachers would not be overwhelmed with work they are not totally sure how to handle, and at the same time, the governmental authority would have chosen what they deemed appropriate to teach the students.

Imposed limitations on teaching approaches. Seven out of twenty newcomer teachers (mostly Arabs) and one Arab old-timer found it hard to apply all of the teaching approaches they had in mind due to certain religious restrictions. With the exception of one new comer all these teachers were Arabs. They all gave music as an example. Music was not allowed in schools in KSA. Teachers wanted to include music and songs in their explanations by incorporating them into their lesson plans. However, because they were not allowed to do so, both Arab and non-Arab teachers complained about this harsh restriction. Moreover, they explained how they were always careful while choosing the relevant videos

that they needed to use for their respective lesson plans. These teachers also argued that the amount of time that they needed to dedicate for the selection process was both unnecessary and overwhelming. This is because videos chosen as class source material must not mention non Islamic religious words or holidays, and people in the video have to be wearing appropriate clothing and acting in an ethical way representative of the moral norms and cultural code of the country. A newcomer Lebanese teacher (BATN7) gave an example of how the video had to include acts that did not contradict with any of the religious views:

I chose a video very carefully keeping in mind the religious restrictions that I had to follow. However, I did not notice certain acts in the video that were not exactly common practice in KSA. The video included a scene where a young woman went out with a young man in the car to visit a museum. Once the students saw this scene, some of them started saying: ‘How did they go out together if they are not married yet?’ So instead of focusing on the objective of the video, the students were busy criticizing irrelevant details.

Newcomer teachers reported that they respected the religious restrictions but found it hard to comply with all of them. They also believed that getting familiarized with the culture and the beliefs of Saudi Arabian people would make it easier for them to understand how locals perceive the world around them. In fact most oldtimers admitted that they were finally able to understand just what it is that KSA citizens consider right and wrong (only one Arab old timer teacher reported this as a persisting challenge.)

Absence of Clear Discipline Policy

Seventeen out of twenty newcomer teachers and six out of eight old timers reported that the lack of clarity and consistency in the enforcement of the school discipline policy is

creating challenges that persisted beyond their adjustment period. These teachers believed that the prevailing organizational norms of acceptable students' behaviors, gave the voice of the "local" students the upper hand with respect to that of the teachers, especially the expatriate teachers. According to the teachers, these norms encouraged the students to be manipulative, and subjected the teachers to the mischief of this manipulative behavior. Eight out of twenty newcomer teachers and three out of eight experienced teachers, all Arab teachers, talked of many instances of this manipulation. Whenever there was a problem in class or in the playground, students were very quick to distort the events of that incident in order to avoid getting in trouble with the school. These teachers indicated that the students would typically be able to influence their parents and the administration with their version of the story that they would create. This made the educators very uncomfortable since they felt that no matter what they said, the students would always escape accusations guilt-free, and the blame would inevitably be placed on the teachers. A Lebanese teacher (BATN4) explained:

It is hard to know what classroom management strategy to follow taking into consideration the fact that the students and parents voice is the one heard and taken into consideration by the administration. Once I punished some students for their disrespectful behavior. Ironically, I was the one who ended up at the principal's office discussing what happened with both the parents and the student herself present. I was the one who was blamed and then warned about my decision although I am still convinced that what I did was right.

Teachers explained that as a result managing their classes became a major challenge due to the undisciplined students. Teachers complained about how the school

administration was not clear about the measures that would be taken when a student misbehaves. This in return gave the students the flexibility to become even more manipulative and unmanageable.

Excessive Parental Interference in School Decisions

Seventeen out of twenty newcomer teachers and five out of eight oldtimers teachers, mostly Arab teachers, believed that parents have excessive power when it comes to their influence on the decision made by the school administration as said by teacher (AFTN6):

A decision could be changed after a phone call from a parent... Teachers attributed this to the fact that the school is a private school mainly supported by for local students (a school that is supported wholly by the payment of fees). Thus, satisfying the parents was one of the school's main aims.

However, the influence that the parents had on the school's management resulted in the teachers becoming overly cautious about the way they interacted with the parents. One Lebanese teacher (AAT10) reported how a colleague of hers/his was terminated – despite her good reputation – after the parents' complained about her to the administration.

Moreover, teachers narrated how parents act as one big gang. They gathered themselves to support each other in any decision one single parent had. A Lebanese teacher (BATN3) gave an example of how parents united to complain about one teacher:

The parents of every grade level created a group on the whatsapp app to stay in touch with each other and discuss any complaint their children had against the teachers. Once, a student complained about a teacher to his mother. So she gathered the parents using the whatsapp application and talked to the administration. This actually resulted in getting the teacher fired.

This challenge was mostly mentioned by new comers. Old timers reported that they were able to overcome this challenge with time. They reported that they learned how to deal with parents the longer they stayed in the school. Once they were able to approach parents with confidence, they overcame this challenge. An old timer Lebanese teacher (AATE14) explained:

At the beginning of my career in KSA, I did not know how to deal with the parents. After a couple of years, I learned that in order for me to avoid any confrontation with the parents, I should only mention positive comments about their children. If by any chance I had to tell them something negative, I had to phrase it in a very positive way. In other words, even the negative comment had to be delicately stated and sugar-coated.

In sum, all of the twenty-eight teachers complained about how the administration always supports the parents and students, at all times. Teachers felt that it was almost as though within the school administration's practices there was a hidden message, which boldly stated: parents and students are always right.

When the teachers were asked why the school operated this way, they all seemed to respond with the same answer: They believed that this was a private school attracting local citizens. In other words, the main concern of the school was to maintain their successful reputation and keep their business running.

Lack of Parental Involvement in Promoting Student Learning

Fifteen out of twenty newcomer teachers and six out of eight old timers complained about the parents' lack of involvement in promoting their children's learning and supporting their overall work and progress. The literature defines parental involvement as

the act of constantly following-up on the child's homework, attending meetings with teachers, attending different kinds of student activities, and being involved in the most minor and major of events related to the child in school.

Sixteen newcomer teachers and six old timers, all Arabs, teachers noticed that although the parents exercise excessive influence to influence the school in a manner that guarantee their children's receive high marks on their academic performance, they do not really follow-up on their effort and overall progress. Nine newcomer teachers and two expatriate teachers also believed that the reasons behind the lack of involvement by the parents were: (1) the young age of the mothers who were still studying themselves; (2) the high socio-economic lifestyle in Saudi Arabia, which affected their interest in education. The teachers who reported this challenge believed that the parents' lack of active involvement in the learning process of their kids is a result of their privilege life style. The teachers' believed that parents, who themselves grew up in privilege do not have a sense of urgency for education as a conduit of better quality of life and are caught only in the appearances. A Lebanese teacher (AATN4) explained:

My students were discussing what they want to do when they grow up. One of the students told her friends that her father promised her that when she turns eighteen, he will buy her the luxurious car that she wants. In return, she must continue her education. However, she personally does not see any benefit to learning. She said that she has everything she wants so studying seems useless and unnecessary to her.

Eleven out of twenty newcomer teachers and six out of eight old timers reported that the parents were not being involved in promoting their child's learning – even at home.

Most of the parents hired private tutors for their children whether they really were in need of extra help or not. Teachers believed that this encouraged students to become irresponsible and careless. An Arab Lebanese teacher (BATN3) explained how hiring private tutors affected the students' behaviors and attitudes:

The student would not pay attention in class and would start distracting his/her friends knowing that at home s/he has a private tutor. As a teacher, I would not be able to evaluate the student's understanding of the lesson by correcting his/her homework since I would always doubt that the tutor might have helped the student complete his/her assignment.

Fourteen newcomer teachers and seven expatriate teachers expressed their surprise with the fact that some parents send their nannies to attend the parent meetings. A Lebanese teacher (BATN4) noted: "I always feel shocked when I see nannies at the parent-teacher meetings. I start to wonder: Aren't the parents even the least bit curious to know how their children are doing at school?"

Moreover, these teachers reported that parents do not drop their children off at school. They send them with a driver and a nanny who holds their bags and bottles. Teachers believed that this encourages students to become more dependent and irresponsible. They believed so since students were not showing potentials of taking responsibility. On the contrary, students were dependent on their nannies and parents in their acts and behaviors.

Lack of Support for Professional Development

All of the twenty-eight teachers critically commented that many of their challenges emerge from the instructional supervision process at their school. They pointed out that

teachers' appraisal is rarely followed by constructive feedback or opportunities to grow and develop professionally. Sixteen newcomer teachers and three expatriate teachers considered the absence of follow up after the appraisal a challenge that they faced. All of the twenty-eight teachers reported that the lack of staff development were challenges that they encountered.

All of the teachers complained about the absence of follow-up after the appraisal, which would otherwise have supported, and taught teachers new strategies that would have helped them better deal with the students and the material. After assessing the teacher's performance (appraisal), the coordinator meets with the teacher in order to discuss her strong and weak points in teaching. However, there was no follow-up to check on any progress. A non-Arab American teacher (BATN2) gave an example explaining what she means by the follow-up after the appraisal:

During the appraisal, the coordinator told me that I have to change my classroom management strategies. However, I did not really know how to do that especially since it was my first year. She did not help me. So I had to research everything on my own and mainly refer to my more experienced colleagues for assistance and guidance.

Furthermore, all of the twenty-eight teachers were not satisfied with what the school offered them in terms of workshops, trainings, and professional development(PD) sessions. They all mentioned they were having a hard time trying to find a way to improve their teaching skills or figure out the technique the school required for lesson-planning. All of the PD sessions they attended were training them on how to introduce new material or technology to the school. All of the teachers hoped for more professional development that

included learning techniques, results of new studies, etc. Moreover, all of the teachers believed that the amount and length of the professional development sessions varied from teacher to teacher depending on what subject matter they were teaching. They all pointed out the case of the Arabic teachers as an example. (Arabic teachers are not participants in the research since they are all Saudis). Arabic teachers were offered more professional developmental opportunities. This is due to the fact that the ministry is directly responsible for the Arabic department. As for the French teachers, they had none planned since they were the ones responsible for their subject matter. A Lebanese teacher (AATN4) explained:

There are no developmental sessions for French teachers. This is because the French teachers themselves are the ones who plan the curriculum. Thus, there are no coordinators or any other leaders and/or people with authority who could take over and be responsible for this particular task.

All of the teachers aimed for more professional development sessions that keep them up-to-date with the new teaching strategies and techniques in order to develop their teaching skills.

Lack of Orientation for Newcomers

All of the twenty-eight teachers reported strongly feeling confused and lost at the beginning of their teaching career in KSA. They reported challenges related to figuring out their responsibilities, getting familiarized with the school's way of functioning (and its different sectors and divisions), and executing their job description.

All of the teachers in both schools A and B reported facing many challenges while communicating with the school administration, especially at the beginning of the year. They neither had enough information about the school nor about how they could use the

school's different facilities to get their work done (printing, photocopying, etc.). They reported that they did not get the chance to learn what duties they had, understand where the school sections were, or meet with their colleagues. Moreover, they insisted that the administration was not as collaborative as it should have been due to the lack of time at the beginning of the year. Ten out of twenty newcomer teachers and three out of eight old timers explained how they only understood their duties and responsibilities, and the way that school is run, once they referred to their older and more experienced colleagues. They all recommended that the school set well-prepared orientation sessions in order to introduce the teachers to the new working setting and regulations. A non-Arab teacher (BFTE11) recommended some changes for what the school offers teachers, she explained:

Non-Arab teachers should be given workshops or sessions about the Saudi culture, its beliefs and norms. It can help in tackling cultural differences along with the language barrier. Moreover, notifications translated into English can be a lot of help as well to make it easier for non-Arabs to follow up with their duties.

Another Arab Lebanese newcomer (AATN10) teacher recommended that:

The organization must address the regulations and rules of the school through orientation sessions in order to get familiar with the school culture. It could also include sessions that explain the nature of the parents and students in order to know ahead of time how to deal with them. Moreover, the school must provide a proper job description and responsibilities regarding the subject teachers. Teachers should have class management training sessions in order to have an idea about the organizational environment of school as a whole and students in particular.

Moreover, teachers reported that they had to work hard to figure out and identify their job description. They pointed out that there were some duties they did not expect. Thirteen newcomer teachers and six old timers found it a challenge to complete their job objectives without having been properly prepped for them in advance the way that they would have been back in their home country. Some of those duties included: (1) recess and dismissal duties; (2) planning the curriculum; and (3) writing tests.

Thirteen newcomer teachers and seven old timers perceived recess duty and dismissal duties as a challenge since first of all, they were not responsible for these kinds of duties back in their home country. Second of all, the climate of the country contributed to making it a challenge due to the hot dry weather being in an open space during recess time.

Two newcomer teachers expressed that planning the curriculum for their subject matter was not within their job description back in their home country. Accordingly, this made them tense while trying to adapt and carry out their job effectively.

One British teacher (BFTN6) expressed her exasperation while trying to write her own tests. She narrated:

When I discovered how many tests (“quizzes”) the students have to do, I was really shocked. I had to write them all. It is unbelievably frustrating writing tests week after week when I would instead much rather prefer spending my time planning and assessing students in a more meaningful way. In my home country, important tests are written by external bodies or teachers with special management responsibilities (and pay/time allocated), not the teachers themselves.

In addition, nine out of twenty newcomer teachers and two out of eight old timers admitted that they faced challenges while trying to find suitable teaching approaches due to

the lack of teaching experience on both academic and technological grounds. These teachers majored in fields that had nothing to do with education such as: Engineering, Pharmacy, etc. Seven of those eleven teachers had no teaching experience in their home country. All of the eleven teachers asserted that they needed help throughout their first year of teaching. However, the school did not support or prepare them for that prior to their first day of class.

Moreover, all of the teachers considered that having to deal with technology was a major challenge for them. The technological facilities like smart-boards, projectors, and other special software's were very advanced in KSA, unlike those at the schools the teachers taught at back in their home countries. However, in order to learn how to use and integrate them within their lesson plans effectively they took the initiative to attend workshops in the middle of the year on their own terms.

To sum up, the lack of orientation for newcomer teachers resulted in feelings of confusion and loss at the beginning of the school year. All of the teachers believed that a well-planned orientation program would have made it easier for them to figure out their responsibilities, get familiarized with the work setting, and practice their job description.

Unsupportive Administrative School Policies

Sixteen out of twenty newcomer teachers and seven out of eight old timers considered some of the laws and regulations at the school level a source of the challenges that they encountered once they started working. These included: (1) the long working hours; (2) the need to regularly refer to the coordinator; (3) the dress code.

All of the teachers admitted that they faced a challenge regarding the long working hours. Teacher meetings and parent meetings are always after school hours, in the late

evening (from five till eight). One Lebanese teacher (BATN7) added: “It is true that I can leave my child in the school nursery during meetings but I arrive home late and the next day I have to attend school. It is always hectic after attending meetings in the afternoon”.

Furthermore, seven out of twenty newcomer teachers and four out of eight expatriate teachers explained how hard it was to adapt to the idea of constantly having to refer to the coordinator in any and all matters concerning the students’ learning. They all believed that in their home country, teachers have more freedom when it comes to taking certain decisions related to students. A Lebanese teacher (BAT1) gave an example: “Sending a note to the parents is a decision that I can make on my own in my home country unlike here”.

The dress code is another challenge that twelve out of twenty newcomer teachers and five out of eight experienced teachers encountered. Some considered the dress code a burden, while others believed that it took away from their authority and professionalism as students were quick to notice that teachers, too, had to follow a dress code, just like them. The teachers felt that it was difficult for them to abide by the dress code that they were not used to.

Absence of Job Security

One non-Arab British teacher (BFTN5) added that the absence of job security was another challenge. She believed that at any time the administration could ask a teacher to leave the school without prior notice. This would be especially problematic for teachers hired from overseas, as they would need to finish all their work quickly before leaving the country within a short period of time. Once the teacher is terminated from her job, her exit

papers are ready. She must leave the country as soon as possible. That is why it is hard to feel settled and secure.

The Effect of the Challenges on Teachers' Effective Teaching

One of the purposes of the study was to find out the teachers' perspective on the nature of the impact that the challenges had on the quality of their teaching. The analyzed data showed that many teachers believed that their teaching was negatively impacted by the challenges they faced, and that this negative impact was manifested in: (1) loss of motivation for teaching; (2) hindered creativity; and (3) decreased job satisfaction.

Table 4.3.

Frequency of Newcomer and Old Timers, Arab And Non-Arab Teachers' Answers Regarding the Effect of the Challenges on Teachers' Effective Teaching

Titles	Newcomer Teachers (6-18months)			Old timers Teachers (2years & above)		
	Arab (out of 12)	Non-Arab (out of 8)	Total out of 20	Arab (out of 7)	Non-Arab (1)	Total out of 8
The Effect of the Challenges on Teachers' Effective Teaching						
Loss of Motivation for teaching	8	1	9	4	1	5
Hindered Creativity	3	1	4	2	-	2
Lack of Job Satisfaction	10	1	11	4	1	5

*Note.*Adapted from the current study.

Loss of Motivation

Nine (mostly Arab teachers) out of twenty newcomer teachers and five (mostly Arab teachers) out of eight old timers believed that the challenges they faced decreased their motivation for teaching. These teachers revealed that the challenges they faced upon the transition from their home country to KSA played a role in negatively affecting their

motivation as teachers. They all pointed out that the first couple of months at work were a tough experience for them. Half of the old timers interviewed talked about the challenges leaving them de-motivated despite the passage of time. They all expressed that they felt like wanting to quit their job several times within the first few months. Those teachers started working within the first couple of weeks upon their arrival to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. They believed that facing the societal and organizational challenges at the same time made the experience to accept and adapt to the challenges that are regularly faced by new comers to teaching much harder. A Lebanese teacher (AATN3) explained:

Now when I look back at that period of my life I realize how it really was a tough experience since everything was new to me: I was in a new country, I had a new job, and was also a newly married woman trying to handle all of my new responsibilities. Thus, the challenges that I faced from all of these factors greatly affected my motivation as a teacher. All of this pressure made me consider quitting my job several times during the first couple of months in KSA.

Three newcomer teachers and four old timers attributed their lack of motivation to challenges they faced with their students. According to them, the students' lack of discipline led to their low motivation for teaching. Teacher (BAT7) explained: "At the beginning of my working experience in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, I resigned three times in two months. I was not able to handle the chaotic and undisciplined student".

A newcomer non-Arab American teacher (BFTN2) considered the novelty of the context and the demands of adapting to its demands a reason behind her low motivation for teaching. "It is a new culture, new system, everything is new," she added. As for non-Arab British teacher (BFTN5), she indicated that the payment scale that unfairly discriminates

against locally hired teachers as one of the reasons for her low motivation. She pointed out that because she signed her contract after residing in KSA, she was paid less for doing the same job that overseas hired staff would do.

Loss of Creativity

Four out of twenty newcomer teachers and two out of eight old timers, all Arabs, claimed that the challenges they faced affected their creativity in teaching. One newcomer teacher and two old timers indicated that the high load of work was one factor affecting their creativity as it drained their energy to think and search for new ways of teaching or being creative. Moreover, two newcomer teachers confessed: “Since the students’ performance remains the same whether we are creative or not, why should we bother to take the hard way out?”

Lack of Job Satisfaction

Eleven out of twenty newcomer teachers and five out of eight old timers, mostly Arab teachers, shared that the challenges they faced resulted in low job satisfaction. According to them, having to deal with the societal and organizational challenges faced while working in a new setting, took a lot of effort to adjust themselves to the new cultural setting. Teachers had to deal with parents, students, and societal challenges by trying to adapt to norms and beliefs that are different than theirs. An Arab newcomer teacher (BATN3) added:

It was really difficult to interact with parents and students and still feel that I am satisfied practicing my job. I had to get along with their practices that made me face major challenges on the job. An example on that is: parents getting their children absent every now and then. This resulted in a delay in the curriculum and extra work and effort as a teacher to help this child achieve and perform as should.

Moreover, some teachers attributed the loss of job satisfaction to the fact that their choice of teaching as a career was forced by the limited job opportunities for expatriate especially the females. They applied for a teaching job despite the fact that their academic background and training were for another profession and career path. Analysis of the interview responses revealed that they associated their low job to two main reasons: (1) this was not their profession; and (2) it was not the job they were aiming for.

Ten newcomer teachers and two old timers expressed their disappointment in how they ended up working in a profession they do not intend to have. They reported that they wished they could find job in KSA, and if there were any, the working hours did not suit the teachers due to the responsibilities that the teacher had abroad. Many teachers explained that they were teaching while waiting for a job that offers a similar package when it comes to working hours and holidays. An Arab Jordanian newcomer teacher (BATN9) expressed:

My Bachelor is in Pharmacy. However, finding a job in that field in KSA is very difficult. For that, I had to choose education as my new career in order to spend time efficiently in this country until I find a job that corresponds to my profession path.

Among the respondents who have chosen willingly teaching as a career, two newcomer teachers and three old timers also pointed out their lack of satisfaction with the job. They explained that with their training and expertise they would have been capable of delivering a higher quality performance, yet with the challenges that they faced, they were unable to do so.

Factors that Helped Teachers Overcome the Challenges

One of the purposes of the study was to find out the organizational factors that helped teachers overcome the challenges they had encountered upon their transition to KSA. However, upon analyzing the data, it was revealed that there were personal factors that helped them as well to overcome the challenges. This section will discuss both factors: (1) organizational factors; and (2) personal factors.

Table 4.4.

Frequency of Newcomers and Old Timers, Arab and Non-Arab Teachers' Answers Regarding the Factors that Helped Teachers Overcome the Challenges

Titles	Newcomer Teachers (6-18months)			Old timers Teachers (2years & above)		
	Arab (out of 12)	Non-Arab (out of 8)	Total out of 20	Arab (out of 7)	Non-Arab (1)	Total out of 8
Factors that Helped Teachers Overcome the Challenges						
Organizational Factors						
Family Support Benefits	10	1	11	7	1	8
Support From Experienced Peers	12	8	20	7	1	8
Supportive School Climate	12	8	20	7	1	8
Resources and instructional Materials	12	8	20	7	1	8
Personal Factors						
Family and Friends Support	12	8	20	7	1	8
Resilient Personality	12	8	20	7	1	8
Work as a Community of Support	12	8	20	7	1	8
Information about the Country Prior to Arrival	9	1	10	4	-	4

Note. Adapted from the current study.

Organizational Factors

Family support benefits. Ten out of twenty newcomer teachers and all of the eight old timers considered being able to take their children to the school nursery as a great job benefit that balanced the extra effort needed to overcome the social challenges they were facing. Having a nursery at the school for their children gave teachers the opportunity to work and not worry about their children while doing so. Teacher (BATN7) added: “As an expatriate, being able to take my child with me to school was an advantage. Otherwise, I would not have been able to work”.

Support from more experienced peers. All of the twenty-eight teachers mentioned how the experienced teachers at the school were a major source of support that helped them overcome the challenges they were facing at the beginning of their work experience in KSA. The experienced teachers expressed how grateful they are for having had their experienced peers provide them with the support they needed as newcomers. They believed that this support helped them grow more resilient faster in the school, through understanding the laws and policies of the school, getting acquainted with the background of the students, and learn how to deal with the parents. As a result, the latter group now followed in the footsteps of the former group and themselves became mentors for the recently hired newcomer teachers.

All of the teachers explained how the experienced teachers had answers for all of the new teachers’ concerns. They supported them professionally and psychologically. Experienced teachers showed them how tasks are managed at the school and gave them various tips about maneuvering around restrictive rules and regulations. Experienced teachers supported the new teachers psychologically by sharing their experiences and

helping them deal with the challenges they were encountering. The British teacher (AFTN6) said: “The math coordinator has been supportive and so has a colleague of mine. I used to ask them about anything that I have a question about”.

Supportive school climate. All of the twenty-eight teachers stressed the importance of having good relations between the teachers and the administration. They believed that being in a school atmosphere where teachers and administration staff get along makes it easier to overcome the many challenges that teachers could face within the organization and the society. A Jordanian teacher (AATN1) for example, related that did not get the support she should have at the previous school she was teaching at. As a result, she had low motivation as a teacher until she changed schools. A Pakistani teacher (AFTN8) added: “Having colleagues that are considered friends, help us, as expatriates, in facing the challenges by sharing each other’s’ stories. The administration would as well help, understand, and support us by all means to overcome the challenges we encounter”.

Resources and instructional materials. Twenty-six teachers (except for the French teachers (AATN2) and (AATN4) considered the resources and instructional materials found at the school as valuable tools that supported their teaching techniques and strategies, thus alleviating the pressure they were under because of the cultural transition. Since they were able to refer to those relevant materials and resources, the teachers were able to deliver their information in a more efficient and effective way. An Arab Lebanese teacher (AATN3) added: “In KSA, I got the chance to be introduced to technological tools and aids that could be integrated in lesson plans. I was able to use new techniques to facilitate students’ learning”.

Personal Factors

There are factors that the teachers believed were a source of support to overcome the challenges they faced that was directly related to the uniqueness of the cultural setting. All of the teachers considered the encouragement, listening, and understanding of the husband and friends a major support. Moreover, all of the teachers admitted the need for certain personality traits in order to face the challenges and overcome them.

Analysis of the interviewee responses resulted in the following factors: (1) support from family and friends (2) resilient personality; (3) work as a community of support; (4) information learnt about the country prior to arrival.

Support from family and friends. All of the twenty-eight teachers reported being grateful for having had the support from their husbands and friends during those trying times. They all agreed that they would not have been able to overcome all the challenges that they had encountered, had it not been for their great support system. The teachers explained that the husband played an important role especially in a country where women are forced to be dependent on men; as is the case withes. Being in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia encourages the husband to take on several roles, all at once: “He is the father, mother, friend, husband, and every single person you had in your life before”, as one teacher, (AATN2), put it. All of the twenty Arab teachers considered the simple fact that their husbands understood their need to work as being a major supportive detail in of itself. An Arab Egyptian old timer teacher (AATE13) added: “I understand how much my husband tried to always put me on his priorities. He would take permission to leave work in order to take me to a relative or a friend”.

Teacher (AATN3) believed that she could not have made it without her husband. Another non-Arab Filipino teacher (AFTN5) considered her husband as a friendly advisor. As for teacher (BATN3), she expressed: “My husband is the reason I am here. Without him by my side, I would have never accepted the lifestyle here”.

Another teacher (AATN1) admitted that her husband helped her get used to (and eventually accept) the country and the school during her first year of teaching. She explained:

My husband was truly my support system. He was the one who helped me adapt to the lifestyle of this country. He also helped me plan the curriculum; a task that was quite challenging for me at the time. And since I was used to the English curriculum and not the Arabic one, he used to translate the lessons for me while I prepared the lesson plans.

On the other hand, all of the nineteen Arab teachers highlighted the important role that their friends played in helping them overcome the challenges that they were facing while they listened, comforted, and shared their experiences. One Arab old timer teacher (BATE14) explained:

My friends, who have been teaching in the country for a while, gave me a lot of support. They shared their experience regarding the challenges they faced at the beginning and their feelings throughout the process of overcoming them. They also helped me in some tips and ways to overcome the challenges I was encountering.

Resilient personality. All of the twenty-eight teachers explained how some of the personal qualities were assets that helped them overcome the challenges that they were

encountering. They all asserted that for a person to succeed in that context, there are certain characteristics or personality traits that he/she must possess in order to handle the challenges that they may face. They pointed out, that for a teacher to succeed, she had to be: (1) patient; (2) courageous;(3) determined;(4) flexible; (5) friendly;(6) intelligent; (7) positive; (8) open to other cultures; and (9) realistic. Additionally, all teachers pointed out that understanding the nature of change and being able to embrace what it takes to adapt to the unique context of KSA are crucial characteristic that a teacher needs to have if she is to succeed. A non-Arab American teacher (BFTN2) related her experience:

I used to compare the two cultures. I should not have done this. I guess this was one of the main reasons it took me a long time to accept that I was in a new environment. It made trying to adapt to it all more difficult.

A non-Arab Pakistani teacher (BNTE11) described the personal characteristics that, in her opinion, would be helpful for every new expatriate to have: “Every person has to be intelligent and flexible in order to adapt in a much easier way. Being an intelligent person would help her in figuring out ways to face the challenges, think positively, and adapt to the surrounding”.

Work as a community of support. Having access to a work context itself was a factor that contributed to the teachers ‘resilience and ability to overcome the challenges they faced in the new cultural context. All of the twenty-eight teachers emphasized that working in Saudi Arabia was an essential step they needed to take so as to be able to survive life in the new country. They all asserted the major role that work played when it came to their acceptance and adaptation process to the host country. Most of the teachers interviewed came to Saudi Arabia because they had to relocate due to their husbands’ work.

As a result, they indicated that they chose to work to mostly fill their time and gain professional experience.

However, and despite the challenges they faced in this restricted social context, holding a job constituted a refuge for many of the expatriate women. All of the teachers tried to adapt to the restricted social life their efforts, passion, and focus became directed towards having a job. Work helped them get introduced faster to the new community they live in, meet new people, and feel valuable and affective. A Lebanese teacher (BATN3) asserted:

Most of the expatriate ladies work. I believe they all passed through what I went through. The feeling of boredom and uselessness made me think of working as soon as possible. Work has helped me spend quality time and initiate a circle of acquaintances and friends.

All the teachers considered work as an effective way to escape the societal challenges that they faced. Teachers reported that their workplace became like a second home to them; a place where they meet and get to socialize with people without being afraid of being punished for it. Twenty Arab teachers asserted that the socializing at the school was a main support for them. The school gave them the opportunity to create a circle of friends in a new country. They all stressed the importance of good school relations where the school atmosphere would be calm, comfortable, and home-like. They believed that socializing and creating good relationships with colleagues was what made them feel that they are capable of overcoming the adversity that living in KSA presented them with. An Arab Lebanese newcomer teacher (BATN4) expressed: “My job gave me the chance to meet people who were experiencing the same challenges. It was even a starting point to

socialize and meet new friends. By time, my colleagues became my supportive friends in KSA”.

There are three main reasons that teachers gave to explain why work gave them high levels of motivation for teaching; namely the ability to: (1) go out; (2) gain experience; and (3) prove themselves. The motivation that the teachers had after having the chance to work filled their lives with the energy they needed to face all the challenges they faced to overcome both the societal and organizational challenges. This opportunity to build a community was sufficient justification for them to want to guarantee their stay at work. The transition from being home all the time to having a full-time job made teachers enthusiastic and patient when it came to dealing with challenges. One teacher (AATN2) expressed confidently:

Staying six months at home at the beginning of my transition to Saudi Arabia greatly motivated me to finally break the rut and find a job. Once I became a working woman, I appreciated and valued myself more. My priority in KSA became my work so no matter what obstacles I faced, I always tried to stay strong and do my best to overcome the hurdles in order to keep my job.

Despite the fact that teachers shared different experiences about their motivation levels while teaching, they still had a common motive: overcome the harshness of the societal challenges they encountered, which led them to work in the first place or to keep their job under any condition. Some teachers (seven newcomer teachers and four old timers) expressed that had they had to drop working, they would definitely leave KSA and head back to their home countries. One Syrian teacher (AATN2) explained: “If I had to leave work and not go back

again due to governmental laws, I would directly go back to my country given that the political situation in my country is horrible”.

Furthermore, all of the twenty-eight teachers agreed that working at the school helped them learn more about the country, understand people’s different mentalities, accept the cultural differences, and adjust to the new environment. Teacher (BATN1) elaborated: “Once I started working, I was able to accept my life in KSA. I started to like my daily routine. I started loving the country”.

For the all of the twenty-eight teachers work means “managing to live a normal life” in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Three of the newcomer teachers were not satisfied with their working conditions and contracts during the first year. Nonetheless, they tolerated this shortcoming and kept their job. Teacher (AATN4) explained: “Although I was not satisfied with the job, I did not quit. I believe that no matter what the working conditions are, they are more acceptable than actually having to stay home”.

On the other hand many new teachers pointed out that they saw their job as an opportunity to add a much needed professional experience on their professional resume. They noted that the need to gain experience in teaching motivated them to be more patient, creative, and ambitious. They did not only want to impress the management and administration; they also mainly wanted to impress themselves too. Most of the teachers (twenty-seven out of twenty-eight) were driven and wanted to prove themselves so they could show others that they were capable of facing the challenges and becoming effective teachers despite the barriers they had to overcome.

Despite all of the organizational challenges teachers face in their work settings, teachers still admitted that work played a very important role in helping them accept and

adapt to the new country. All of the respondents stressed that their schools were the places where they made the most meaningful contributions towards the community, and where most of their daily activities unfolded.

Information learnt about the country prior arrival. Ten out of twenty newcomer teachers and four out of eight experienced teachers who had received information about the country prior to arriving to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia reported that it was helpful. These teachers admitted that knowing information about the country prior to their transition helped them a great deal while adapting to the new context. They noted that it helped them get familiarized with their surrounding through the stories they heard from others about certain places. However, they all asserted that it was still not sufficient to overcome the challenges they faced. A Lebanese teacher (AATN3) explained:

My sister lived for seven years in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. She told me lots of things about living in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, mostly everything about it. Yet, I still faced the challenges as if I did not know they existed.

Another Lebanese teacher (BATN7) added: “I heard about places and malls my relatives used to go to. This made these places familiar to me once I got to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia”.

As for the Philipino teacher (AFTN5), she attended training sessions about the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia prepared by the department of foreign affairs back in her home country. She claimed that she was coached how to behave and accept cultural differences in KSA. Accordingly, she believed that these sessions did help her avoid facing societal challenges since she knew the customs of the place that she was headed to and was taught how to deal with the diversity she would witness. She described: “Attending the sessions

made me understand as clear as snow the place that I was heading to. I left my country and I was totally convinced with what and how I will be living”.

On the other hand, some teachers who heard about Saudi Arabia from relatives, friends, and the media shared that the idea that they had in mind about the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was alarmingly erroneous; it could not be further from reality. They believed that the information they received prior to their transition was exaggerated. Thus, once they arrived to the host country, they felt it was much easier than they thought since it was not as they expected it to be. An Arab newcomer teacher (AATN2) expressed:

Prior my arrival to KSA, I knew lots of information about KSA from media, friends, and books. I felt it would be really hard for me to adapt in such a country for all what I heard about it. However, once I arrived and got to know the country, it was not as I imagined. I found out that I had an exaggerated idea for all of the challenges that I might face.

Therefore, according to those teachers who knew about the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia prior to their transition, they believed that gathering information about the country prior to moving there helped them directly or indirectly to get prepared to deal with challenges that they ended up facing.

Conclusion

To sum up, the results showed two main types of challenges that teachers face: societal and organizational challenges. The societal challenges that the teachers faced due to the new cultural context they were living in, reflect directly the culture of the host country, their beliefs, their laws and regulations, their mentality (how they view things), and their overall lifestyle. These challenges were: (1) restrictive norms and policies; (2)

unfamiliar dialect; (3) different language; (4) difficult weather conditions; (5) lack of prioritization of school attendance; (6) parents' over-sensitivity to critical feedback; (7) unrealistic expectations held by parents for their children; (8) discrimination and racism in the work place.

As for the organizational challenges the data analysis revealed that the challenges that the teachers faced due to the differences in values, customs and beliefs between those of the home-country and those of the host-country. Those challenges were: (1) culturally irrelevant curriculum content; (2) absence of curriculum material; (3) religious restrictions imposed on the curriculum and instructional design; (4) absence of clear discipline policy; (5) excessive parental interference in school decisions; (6) lack of parental involvement in promoting student learning; (7) lack of support for professional development; (8) lack of orientation for newcomers; (9) unsupportive administrative school policies; (10) absence of job security.

Moreover, these challenges affected the teachers' effective teaching abilities by: (1) lowering their motivation; (2) restricting their creativity; and (3) negatively affecting their overall job satisfaction.

The results showed as well the organizational factors that helped the teachers overcome these challenges: (1) family support benefits; (2) support from more experienced peers; (3) supportive school climate; (4) resources and instructional materials.

Moreover, the results revealed unique factors that also helped those teachers better overcome the challenges that they faced. The unique factors reflected the unique setting and what the teachers valued and believed. Those factors can be listed as: (1) support from family and friends (2) resilient personality; (3) work as a community of support; (4)

information learnt about the country prior to arrival. As a conclusion, the results indicated that there are societal and cultural challenges that the teachers faced upon their transition from their home country to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; all of which affected their work experience. Some teachers admitted that having to deal with challenges related to the host society and the organization they belong to resulted in lowering their motivation to teach, hindering their creativity, and lowering their job satisfaction. What caused this were the practices and beliefs of the society unlike that of the teachers. However, there were certain organizational and personal factors that helped them overcome the challenges that they faced.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study aimed at generating a conceptual understanding of the experiences that expatriate teachers go through grounded in the perspectives of expatriate teachers. The study has three purposes: (1) to identify and explore, from teachers' perspectives, the nature of the challenges that expatriate teachers face in a new cultural and societal environment (in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia); (2) to inquire about the teachers' perspectives on the nature of the impact that these challenges have on the quality of teaching delivered by those teachers; and (3) to indicate the organizational factors that helped those teachers deal with their cultural transition challenges.

Overall teachers indicated what Lowe, Hwang, and Moore (2010) termed the 'cultural shock' and described as being the "identity, self-expression, and [...] variety of defensive and coping mechanisms through which sojourners deal with changes in identity due to their shift in environment" (p.32). As a brief conclusion, the teachers reported experiencing strong feelings of home-sickness, boredom, and compulsive behavior associated with unfriendly and aggressive attitudes towards the new country. The teachers' states can be explained by a number of societal and organizational challenges that they faced upon arriving in KSA. For them, societal challenges were the hardest to adapt to. Interestingly, teachers reported that the husbands and friends of the teachers were their main support system helping them deal with the challenges that they faced. Mostly, as they all agreed, the school itself was the major support system assisting them to overcome this phase of the adaptation process. Although teachers indicated several challenges that they

encountered within the school, being in an organizational setting was by itself a support for them as it helped them accept and adapt to the country.

This chapter presents the discussion of the results of the three research questions, followed by the conclusion, and the recommendations. The last two parts highlight the uniqueness of the cultural setting of the study and conclude with recommendations for practice and further research.

Discussion of the Results

This part discusses the results of the study under the following four sections. The first section compares the challenges generated from the analyzed data to the theoretical profile and reveals a deeper understanding for some of the challenges. The second section discusses the adjustment phases of the teachers and compares them against Lygaard's cultural shock theory. The third section discusses the effects of cultural transition on the quality of teaching. The fourth section highlights the supportive factors needed for overcoming cultural shock.

Comparative Analysis of the Challenges Based on the Theoretical Framework

Every society has its own norms, values, beliefs and assumptions which determines the way people judge what is acceptable and what is not, ultimately shaping the way people look, act, and deal with others (Hoy, 2011). Schein's model provides us with a theoretical lens that sheds light on three levels where culture is manifested: artifacts, norms and underlying assumptions and beliefs (Schein, 2010). His theory also emphasizes that challenges encountered are better understood if they are examined through a lens that takes into consideration these cultural layers including the surface artifacts, the underlying norms and the foundational assumptions that unconsciously direct people's theory in use,

decisions, and behavior. Moreover, scholars (Dimmock & Walker, 2000; Schein, 2010) agreed that the cultural milieu surrounding any individual is multileveled and consist of an organizational culture nested in a national and societal one. Therefore, the results of this study were examined through a theoretical framework based on Dimmock and Walker's (2000) cross cultural model that provided the dimensions for the organizational culture layer. The researcher adopted Terpstra and Sarathy's framework to provide the framework with dimensions for the societal culture. In addition, the researcher adopted Schein's conception of culture to bring an in depth analysis into the three levels of culture: (1) artifacts; (2) espoused beliefs and values; and (3) basic underlying assumptions (Schein, 2010). Therefore, the theoretical framework that accounted for multiple dimensions within both the societal and organizational culture domains guided the researcher while she examined the challenges connected to these dimensions and their elements as they manifested in the three levels advanced by Schein. The newcomer and oldtimer teachers shared their experience with regards to living and teaching in a new cultural and societal context. They stated the societal challenges they faced upon their transition into a new country and highlighted the organizational challenges they had encountered while teaching in a new society. It is worth noting that the responses of the participants varied in the extent to which they addressed all three levels while speaking of a certain challenge, as well as in what levels their discourse focused on. So while some of the respondents spoke of behaviors and practices, others pointed at norms and beliefs.

The purpose of the interpretive stage of the data analysis was to use the emerging understanding of the nature of the challenges as perceived by the respondents to construct a theoretical understanding of the nature of culture chock they experienced at all three layers

that combine the emic and etic perspectives that emerged from this study. Thus, the theoretical framework of this study, which combines Dimmock and Walker's cross-cultural model, Terpstra and Sarathy's framework, and Schein's cultural concept, were used to understand the nature of the challenges that the teachers encounter during their transitional change as well as unveil the underlying cultural beliefs that might give rise to them.

Most of the challenges identified in this study seem to originate from the clash between the practices, norms and/or the underlying assumptions of the expatriates and that of the schools embedded in the KSA culture where they are currently working. These challenges fall under the elements and dimensions of both societal and organizational cultures.

All of the teachers participating in this study reported challenges regarding both societal and organizational domains.

Figure7. Enlargement for the Cultural Layers, Dimensions, and Element of the Conceptual Framework



Figure 7 Enlargement for the cultural layers, dimensions, and element of the conceptual framework. Adapted from figure6

Societal Culture

The following section discusses the results through the lens of the societal dimension of the framework. Namely, analysis of the teachers' responses revealed challenges that are related to these factors: (1) laws and policies; (2) daily activities (3) language; and(4) religion.

Laws and policies. In the framework, laws and policies are a key dimension that shapes a societal culture. Several of the societal challenges identified in this study seem to have originated from a clash in the practices, norms and assumptions related to the adopted policies and norms. All participating teachers, Arabs and non-Arab, newcomers and old timers described many of the societal policies and norms as restrictive and considered them a main challenge in adapting to the country. Those participants' characterization of these laws and policies as restrictive is strongly linked to the apparent clash between incompatible underlying religious beliefs. Expatriate teachers who come from different societal cultures than that of the host country shared that it was very difficult for them to adjust to the norms of the new culture due to what they described as "its uniqueness"; even after spending long period of time living there. As experienced, following or breaking these policies becomes a matter of "right and wrong" rather than a matter of a simple ability to follow certain prescribed rules. Moreover, comparing the responses of the old timers and new comers on this challenge seem to imply that the culture shock resulting from the clash between what the respondents called "unique" culture of KSA and their culture of origin has persisted despite the passage of time. While Oberg (1954) and Lysgaard (1955) assert that time helps in overcoming the challenge and adapting to it accordingly, the results of

this study suggested the possibility that when the difference in the underlying belief system is big, certain challenges might actually never fade away.

Daily activities. Another dimension shaping societal culture consists of the daily activities that people engage in and view as normal. Participants pointed at parents' behaviors and underlying norms in relation to their role at the school.

First, teachers pointed at parents behavior related to enforcing school attendance, and their response to negative feedback. Indeed, teachers seem to have experienced a cultural shock while observing these practices. They deemed them surprising and unique when compared with what they have witnessed in their home country.

When teachers reported that many KSA parents took their children on vacations making them miss school at random times throughout the year and without prior notice, they could not understand the parents' behaviors and interpreted it as disrespectful to schooling and teachers. Despite the fact that teachers noted that parents pressured their children a lot to excel and achieve high grades, they still characterized it as a manifestation of the lack of prioritization of school attendance.

Another example of parent behavior that was and deemed unsatisfactory is what teachers viewed as parents' oversensitivity to critical feedback. Teachers reported that the parents could not accept any mention of negative comments/complaints about their children. This made it difficult for the teachers to discuss students' progress with their parents. However, the differences between the responses of the newcomer teachers and those of the old timers 'responses showed a decrease in the frequency of this challenge among old-timers'. This decrease might be indicative of the fact that old-timer teachers were able to adjust and overcome this challenge.

In sum, most teachers spoke of KSA parents pushing their children beyond their capabilities to earn high grades, but described these same parents as not caring and irresponsible. While parents viewed the path to high academic achievement as solely the responsibility of the teachers, teachers' professional beliefs led them to blame the parents for not doing their part through enforcing regular school attendance. Therefore, the challenge teachers experienced seems to have originated from a clash with what teachers upheld as norms of professional practice. This discrepancy between the professional beliefs and norms of the teachers, and the practices and habits of Saudi parents were at the source of the culture shock teachers reported as a challenge.

Interestingly, further examination of the results showed a difference in the frequency Arab and non-Arab teachers reported the challenges related to parents' behavior. While most Arab teachers reported these challenges, less than half of the non-Arab teachers mentioned it. This could be because most non-Arab teachers intentionally moved to KSA to take the job. As for Arab teachers, they all moved to KSA by marriage to follow their husbands or families moved their job to the host country. This could have affected their tolerance and the way they respond to the difference they find between their culture and that of the KSA.

Another contentious value laden clash of norms emerged with teachers labeling as racist the observed disrespectful behavior of students toward teachers belonging to a specific racial group and the resulting problems in managing the classroom. Saudi students and parents held a degrading stereotype about certain nationalities judging them as unqualified to become school teachers and only good for performing house help tasks. Although only one teacher reported being insulted because her nationality happened to be

the common nationality for most women working as nannies in KSA, others especially non-Arab teachers agreed that this was part of their experienced culture shock. All teachers seem to agree that facing up for the “normalization” of what they characterize as racist behavior, clashed with their value system consisting of respect, tolerance and acceptance of diversity.

Language. Most respondents identified language differences as a barrier to effective communication. All expatriate teachers considered it a challenge in this study. The difficulties they described revealed that knowing the language was not the only problem they faced. Rather, understanding the expressions and the cultural connotations of the language was what they reported as a challenge. This result seems to align with the relationship researchers found (Caligiuri, 1997; Slemer, 2006) between the expatriates’ proficiency in the language of the country they moved to with their general adjustment to performance at work. While describing this challenge respondents pointed only at the practice level manifestations of this challenge. They reported that despite the fact that the schools employ a considerable number of expatriates who do not understand the Arabic language, most communications between the administration and the teachers were done in Arabic. Moreover, there were no attempts from the school administration to provide formal assistance to the Arab teachers when it comes to preparing them to understand the dialect of their students. Rather, teachers were left to learn by trial and error and to depend on their own students to point out the missteps that resulted from the teacher’s ignorance of their local dialect. Though none of the respondents explicitly shared their views of the norms or beliefs that lay behind these practices, their responses helped the researcher to infer the theory in use underlying these practices. The local school administration seems to consider

it the responsibility of the new comers rather than that of the locals to put the effort to bridge this language divide. Their decisions as an administration seem to be rooted in an assumption that views KSA as a homogenous society where all inhabitants speak one language and dialect.

Religion. Another dimension of the societal culture considered in the theoretical framework is religion. Interestingly, none of the respondents directly pointed at religion as a challenge. However, analysis of their responses revealed that it is indeed a major element underlying many of the societal and organizational challenges they pointed at. The results of the study reflected the uniqueness of the KSA situation when it comes to this dimension of its societal culture. Many of the challenges that the teachers described were related to religion which was not the case when it came to other studies in the west. Teachers complained about how: (1) they had to wear a veil and a *abaya* at all times; (2) they could not go out alone without a *male escort*; and (3) how the school policies had to follow all religious restrictions regarding several aspects, such as the: dress code, curriculum, segregation law, teaching approaches, and activities. The teachers described all of these aspects as challenges that they encountered. Their accounts and examples suggest that the main source of these challenges is the assumption in the Saudi culture that it is acceptable that these religious guidelines dictate what is right or wrong and mandate what needs to be practiced both at the societal and organizational levels. Moreover, it is assumed that it is acceptable that these guidelines dictate all those living in that society whether they are locals or expatriates member show they should live, talk, and act. Accordingly, these religious laws and practices were considered as restrictions that would, if broken, make the person responsible for the consequences of his/her transgressions.

Moreover, the discrepancy between Arabs and non-Arab teachers responding to the religious restrictions imposed on the curriculum and instructional design is worth noting. More Arab teachers considered this a challenge that they had encountered than non-Arab teachers. The reason behind this variation could be the difference in the teachers' educational backgrounds. Most of the non-Arab teachers have received pedagogical training, unlike Arab teachers. Therefore, those non-Arab teachers are more likely to possess and elaborate repertoire of teaching methods that they can resort to plan their lessons. Under the imposed restrictions, the trained teachers are less likely to face less frustration in their work.

Organizational Culture

The following section discusses the results through the lens of the organizational dimension of the framework. Namely, analysis of the teachers' responses revealed challenges that are related to the technical and organizational dimensions.

Examinations of the results in light of the technical dimension shows that expatriate teachers face challenges regarding the teacher-student relationship. Some Arab teachers reported that their students were very manipulative. They complained about the students' ability to change the facts so the parents and administrator can blame the teacher instead of the student. Moreover, what is worth highlighting is that none of the non-Arab teachers considered this as a challenge. Perhaps this was the case because they were not aware of it. Students often manipulated/changed facts using the Arabic language, which most non-Arab teachers are not familiar with.

Parental involvement at the school is one of the challenges that expatriate teachers pointed out, and that is rooted in the organizational culture. They reported it in both

observed behavior as well as statements implying the belief that parents did not view that they had to play an active role in their students' schooling. Teachers have argued this point by means of examples for this lack of parental involvement in the school. These included but were not limited to: (1) nannies picking up/dropping off students from/at school; (2) nannies showing up to parent-teacher meetings instead of parents; and (3) private tutors following up with the children's studies instead of the parents. From the teachers' perspectives (who come from different backgrounds and belief systems), these practices were interpreted as a lack of parental involvement. However, seen through the prevailing norms in KSA, these observed behaviors are nothing but evidence to parents concern about their kids' well-being. Their behaviors are reflection of their caring for their children's academic achievements and their version of being involved in their schooling. On the other hand, teachers' views on this issue are very much shaped by the dominant professional beliefs about the forms and the effects of parental involvement. In fact, many researchers (Nero, 2010; McWayne, Hampton, Fantuzzo, Cohen, & Sekino, 2004) assert that parental involvement – or lack thereof – greatly affects a child's academic performance. Therefore, teachers who reported this as a challenge had professional beliefs that were different from the beliefs of parents in KSA. Accordingly, this clash of perceptions resulted in stereotypes that are indicative of a culture shock, which the teachers considered a challenge.

Moreover, and based on the teacher responses, it seems that Arab teachers, rather than non-Arab teachers, were more likely to consider lack of parental involvement as a challenge, although, strangely enough, most of the non-Arab teachers came from countries where parents were expected to be visibly involved in their children's lives and were repeatedly encouraged to continue doing so. The only explanation as to why the non-Arab

teachers did not consider the lack of parental involvement a challenge could be the fact that they had higher tolerance of the parents' cultural habits and consider it part of their role to promote this involvement. Especially since non-Arab teachers are more respected by the local parents and get higher salary than Arab teachers. This could have enhanced their motivation and enlarge their ability to accept the culture and work harder to share the professional views with the parents. Moreover, it could also be that they have given up on it completely given the language barrier.

In the framework, curriculum, within the technical dimension, is a key to shaping the organizational dimension. Curriculum stands for the curriculum guidelines: the objectives, goals, and instructional materials available for facilitating students' learning. The science teacher who reported she faced a challenge while integrating religion into science lesson plans explained how she felt there was a clash between her professional beliefs and those of the society she found herself in. The main challenge was that she had to professionally do what was undoubtedly culturally valued, but regrettably not in alignment with her own set of professional beliefs and convictions. The same applied for yet another challenge, which was the curriculum. The teachers had to review the curriculum and eliminate certain materials the authorities believed they should not be taught while the teachers believed it should be taught. This made them find the process of reviewing and teaching the curriculum to be challenging.

Additionally, staff development is a key dimension that shapes an organizational culture. Teachers pointed out the lack of orientation for newcomers and the lack of support for professional development as practices resulting in major challenges that they struggled with. All of the teachers gave instances that pointed at the following challenges: (1) lack of

orientation programs; and (2) lack of assigned mentors. They all agreed that teachers, especially new comers are left on their own on their first day in school. Teachers reported feeling confused and lost at the beginning of their teaching career due to their lack of knowledge about their duties, responsibilities, and school policies overall. Analyzing the results reveal a dominant organizational norm that considers that it is the responsibility of the teachers themselves to work to navigate the system. Though the school hires a large number of new Arab and non-Arab teachers each year, the schools' administrations did not take action or try to help them adjust in their new setting. This might lead to the interpretation that these school administrations consider it the responsibility of the newcomers (rather than that of the school) to exert the effort needed to know their responsibilities, duties, and school policies. The absence of any induction or orientation program in the school documents reinforces the view that the school norms do not consider orientation programs a necessity for newcomers. This was mostly evident in the responses of the newcomer teachers. In fact, examination of these responses indicates that some of the challenges they face are similar to that of the novice teachers in contexts dominated by the sink or swim mentality. A study conducted on novice teachers identified the challenges concerning: (1) teachers' relationship with their students; and (2) teachers' relationship with students' parents (Hashem, 2013). Many scholars point out that the difficulty an expatriate faces while trying to adjust to a new profession and a new country (Fee, 2011) become interwoven. As a result, many research studies (Main, 2008; Anthony, Haigh, & Kane, 2011) assert the need for induction and orientation programs designed to help beginning teachers acquire professional teaching knowledge.

Moreover, looking at the same challenge from the administrator's perspective, a different interpretation could be inferred. Most of the teachers work in school while relying on their husband's residency. This act frees them from any legal commitment while working at the school. Rare are the teachers who accept working on a school sponsored working permit. Therefore, since most of the teachers keep their husbands as their sponsors, they have the unique ability to leave the school at anytime during the year. So, there could be a high teacher-turnover rate during the year. Thus, the administration might consider orientation and induction programs as being time consuming for them since most of these teachers might leave the school at any time. In addition, due to the turnover rate of teachers, many teachers who might join the school during the year might not get the chance to participate in the orientation programs -- if any existed.

Another challenge that is rooted in the organizational dimension is school relationships. School relationships represent the flow of power and authority within a school. In this study, teachers reported behaviors that they considered challenging to adjust to as they are practice differently in their home country. Teachers observed power dynamics that contradicted with their professional beliefs. They reported as excessive the power granted to parents who are able to strongly influence school decisions including firing incompetent teachers. Teachers' professional beliefs place the power rather in aligning decisions with the mission and vision of the school. This difference in the belief system resulted in a shock that made the teachers consider parental-influence excessive and a challenge.

Moreover, it is worth noting that mostly all Arab teachers considered excessive parental interference in school decisions as a challenge though only some of the non-Arab

teachers did so. The main reason for this discrepancy might be language. Non-Arab teachers might not know what is going on if teachers tattled about a certain issue, or they might not understand the different views if they faced certain problems. Moreover, due to the differential of appreciation and trust that parents give for non-Arabs, Arab teachers might feel frustrated and pressured as they are more likely to be challenged by the parents.

From the responses of the teachers, it can be inferred that they were facing issues related to the distribution of authority. The distribution of authority is the degree to which power and authority are delegated to teachers. Many teachers complained about how: (1) parents affect school decisions; (2) how students' manipulation intimidates teachers; and (3) how religious regulations contradict with some of their beliefs. All of these norms and beliefs practiced by the society were considered as power distributed to parents, students, and people responsible for setting regulations. Thus, all this leaves the teachers with minimum authority and power. This practice is aligned with the large power distance that Hofstede (1983) found in Arab countries and talked about in his research. Power distance is defined by Hofstede as the degree to which the authority is centralized. Therefore, it could be inferred that the act of the school not delegating power to teachers is a reflection of the autocratic society in KSA.

Overlooked Challenges

One key challenge that is often mentioned in the literature as part of the organizationally rooted challenges, is the challenge of the financial resources. The schools participating in this study in KSA had a generous budget arranged in order to ensure the latest technologies and materials for the school and for the teaching and learning process. Students in both schools come from an elite socioeconomic background. Thus, the schools

try their best to maintain and constantly upgrade their up-to-date labs and classrooms in order to equip teachers with all the tools and aids necessary for facilitating the students' learning in order to obtain the students' and parents' satisfaction regarding the opportunity the school is giving them to learn.

In sum, this study showed that an expatriate teacher faces challenges upon the transition into a new societal culture which falls under two cultural levels: societal and organizational culture. It also revealed an understanding for the nature of the challenges reported. Hence, it was concluded that those challenges originated from a clash between the practices, norms and/or the underlying assumptions of the expatriates and that of the schools embedded in the KSA culture. Taking into consideration that this clash could differ from a country to another by the different practices, beliefs, and assumptions, then it could be concluded that the deep source of the challenge might differ from a society to another. Therefore, understanding the nature of the challenge would help in identifying ways, strategies, and practices to help reducing these challenges.

The Cultural Shock Journey

Cultural shock according to Lysgaard 's (1955) U-curve model, occurs during a person's societal and cultural transition. Sojourners who have been settled for less than six months and those who have been settled for more than eighteen months can be categorized as being in a good state of adjustment to the new culture. As for those who have been settled for more than six months and those who have been settled for less than eighteen months, Lysgaard's theory postulates that they are usually in a poor adjustment phase. Poor adjustment phase is mostly revealed by hostile and emotionally stereotyped attitudes toward the host country and inability to accept the new culture. According to Lysgaard,

after six months of settlement, the sojourner would fall into the crisis phase or the cultural shock phase. By eighteen months of settlement, the sojourner would overcome the cultural shock and go back to the adjustment phase.

Unexpectedly, all of the teachers in this study reported different timing in falling into the cultural shock and different sequence of the phases than that of the theoretical model. Teachers in KSA reported being in a poor state of adjustment within the first six months of settlement; mostly in the first couple of weeks. All of the teachers reported falling into the crisis stage at the beginning of their transition without passing through a good adjustment stage (honeymoon phase) as the literature declared. This might be caused by the exceptionally unique aspects of the cultural context on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The strong contrast between the culture of Saudi Arabia and the culture of the teachers' home country might have extended their period of adjustment or hindered its successful completion all together. Teachers' lifestyles are not as they used to be back in their home country. The laws and regulations of the country left the teacher dependent and unable to maintain the same lifestyle she used to have in a new country and culture. Accordingly, teachers seemed to fall violently into the crisis stage of the cultural shock in just the first couple of weeks.

Another difference from the theoretical model is that even after eighteen months, teachers were not able to overcome all of the challenges that they faced. Out of twenty-two challenges that the teachers in this study reported, eleven of these challenges seemed to have persisted with the majority of both newcomers and old-timers' teachers. Those teachers, who had been settled for more than two years in KSA, seemed to report the same challenges that the newcomers reported regardless of the years spent in the host country.

Old timer teachers explained how with time they were able to adapt to the host country but were not able to accept and adjust to the new culture. In other words, they were able to adapt to a point, which helped them move on with their lives but not to the extent of them being able to accept the way they needed to adjust to be able to live in a new culture. It might be inferred that as opposed to what Lysgaard states, an expatriate might experience cultural shock and be unable to overcome it. The results of this study show an overlap of the cultural shock phases. Oldtimers 'seemed to report the same challenges that the newcomer teachers reported regardless of the years spent in the host country, this might be an indication that they have never managed to overcome their cultural shock.

Taking into consideration the overlapping of the phases (cultural shock and the adjustment phase), teachers reported different time durations with regards to overcoming the challenges they encountered and experiencing the beginning of the adaptation phase. Most of the teachers claimed to be in a good adjustment phase in less than six months of their settlement. Some reported that it took them between six to eighteen months to overcome the challenges they faced. Few of the teachers reported a good state of adjustment after more than eighteen months of settlement. Respectively, the first group reported that they started work immediately after their arrival to KSA or within a maximum of two months. Most of the second group stated that they started work seven months to one year after their arrival to KSA. As for the last group of teachers, they reported having started work after an average of a year and a half of settlement in the new country. Hence, it could be inferred that there is a relationship between starting work and their ability to adapt to the country. Adjustment phase seems to be triggered and accelerated by getting a job. Teachers reported their strong attachment to work and connected it to their ability to live in

the new country. For those teachers, work offered them the community they accepted, adjusted and adapted to. Accordingly, these teachers showed signs of adaptation to the country.

Based on the above discussion, it can be inferred that Lysgaard's theory was not supported in the KSA culture. What can be learned, therefore, is that a theory has to be tested in all cultures in order to prove its transferability across cultural context. Within the unique context of this study, the results indicate that sojourner teachers pass through a short violent culture shock that seems to last around two months, then move into a long adjustment phase plagued with challenges that seem to prevent a large number of teachers from moving out of this adjustment phase toward the closure of the cycle that Lysgaard's theory describes as culminating in full adjustment. Even for teachers who self-described as "adjusted" to their new country of residence still display signs of "culture shock," holding many stereotypes and failing to "understand" or "accept" the locals' behavior within its cultural context.

Effects of Cultural Transition on the Quality of Teaching

In this study, teachers' responses indicated how the challenges they faced upon transition to the new country, and the difficulty to adjusting to the demands of its cultural context hindered their effective teaching. Arab teachers were more likely to show loss of motivation for teaching, hindered creativity, and lack of job satisfaction than non-Arab teachers. This discrepancy can be explained based on the variations in teachers' backgrounds especially when it comes to teaching professional qualifications. Non-Arab teachers are more likely than their Arab colleagues to have been trained as teachers and to have credentials that prepare them as teachers to work with a diverse group of students and

families. The fact that they had the skill set needed to respond to a variety of teaching challenges could have influenced them positively to keep their motivation, creativity, and job satisfaction high.

Teachers reported that the challenges they faced affected their teaching negatively. Upon the cultural transition, teachers in this study faced several societal and organizational challenges, which led to: (1) low motivation levels; (2) hindered creativity; and (3) low job satisfaction. Many researchers correlated high stress levels to low work performance (Blase, 1986) and job satisfaction (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005). It was indicated that if stress were kept at a minimum level, a person would remain motivated on the job (Czubaj, 1996). Hidi's article as cited in Wijnveen, Stes, and Petegem (2014) showed how the quality of teaching is affected by motivation. Arifin (2015) found out in his study that motivation affected a teacher's overall job satisfaction. In other words, high motivation levels resulted in high job satisfaction levels and vice versa. Expatriate teachers who in this study expressed having low motivation due to the challenges they faced were probably also unsatisfied with their job experiences. Interestingly, some teachers reported they had lost their motivation but not their sense of creativity, leaving one to wonder whether the fact that teachers are operating on what they considered challenging conditions has switched them into a "problem solving mode" that demanded them to be creative as mere survival rather than as a reflection of their deep commitment to their profession and job.

On the other hand, Sansone and Harackiewicz (2000) pointed out the direct link between motivation for work and creativity for performance. For the teachers who indicated in this study that they had experienced a loss of creativity, they could have had low motivation, which was most likely what resulted in the loss of creativity. In fact this

was iterated by one of the teacher's as she noted: "Since the students' performance remains the same whether we are creative or not, why should we bother to take the hard way out?" Overall, teachers participating in this study seem to agree on the negative impact the challenges they face had on their motivation and job satisfaction. Their answers indicate that they do perceive a connection between the challenges triggered by their culture shock and their effectiveness as teachers. This seems to resonate with what Arifin (2015) showed in his study. According to him, high levels of teacher-satisfaction are important for achieving better teacher performances. Consequently, the results point at the fact that the lack of adjustment of the sojourner teachers, and their perception that challenges persist in their work context could be a reason for school administrators to worry about their teachers' job satisfaction and consequently their effectiveness and job performance.

Factors that Support Overcoming Cultural Shock

The study aimed to find out the supportive organizational factors that seemed to be helping teachers deal with their cultural transition challenges. All of the teachers were asked a general question regarding what they considered helped them overcome the challenges that they faced. Teachers' answers fall under two broad categories: Organizational factors and personal factors. The organizational factors turned out to be: (1) individual support from more experienced peers; (2) family support benefits; (3) supportive school climate; and (4) resources and instructional materials.

All of the teachers emphasized how experienced peers helped them deal with their challenges. This indirect mentoring proved to be greatly helpful for them. Old timers' were practicing the role of mentors by actually becoming guides, trainers, protectors, and overall supportive and friendly colleagues by helping the new teachers deal with any issue they

found themselves struggling with. Research assured the importance of mentoring in such cases, which helped new teachers find the right path in society and the work field. Thus, although there was no formal mentoring, teachers managed to informally engage in mentoring relationship, providing support to each other to face the challenges of their transition to the new culture (Anthony, Haigh, & Kane, 2011).

All of the teachers stressed the personal support they received as a main source of help to overcome their challenges. There was agreement across national origin and years of experience when it comes to the following supportive factors: (1) personal support from the husband and friends; (2) useful personality traits; (3) work as a distraction to fill the void and help overcome societal challenges; and (4) information learnt about the country prior to arrival.

Worth noting is that many of the supportive factors that teachers reported were indeed reported by researchers working on this issue. Many researchers had offered tips to help the expatriates deal with them in order to lessen or completely obliterate the cultural shock.

According to Hachey (1998), teachers implemented several practices to overcome the challenges as Hachey suggested: (1) All of the teachers attempted to get acquainted with the new community by socializing; (2) some got to know the language and idioms and practiced it through numerous conversations; (3) most of the teachers idolized a local person or an old resident and considered him a mentor or supporter; and (4) all of them stayed in connection with family and friends back home.

All of the participants expressed the importance of having a job in their case. It helped them accept and adapt to the new culture. Through work, they socialized, which is

considered an important way of helping a person deal with cultural challenges (Hachey, 1998). The teachers in the study considered socializing a necessity and found that having a job is a critical venue towards securing opportunities to meet people and become a member of a community. Moreover, all of the teachers mentioned that their friendships played a major role in helping them overcome the societal and organizational challenges that they faced. This resonates with the result of Marx's (1999) research: those who have social support networks face fewer challenges than those who do not. The Arab teachers for example, who were well-supported, were better able to overcome some of the challenges than those who were not as supported: the non-Arab teachers. This was demonstrated by the ability to socialize and learn more about the country and some adaptation skills.

Furthermore, all of the teachers stressed that having certain character traits helped them overcome the challenges that they faced. Some of the characteristics that the teachers mentioned were also proposed by Gougeon (2000). Gougeon (2000) mainly noted the importance of being patient, open-minded, and accepting of other people's differences.

Also, several teachers expressed that developing familiarity about the host country through research and meeting others who have visited it helped them overcome some of their challenges. As Winkelman (1994) predicted, teachers who had attended training sessions prior to transitioning faced less challenges than other teachers. The familiarity they developed helped them reduce the effort they had to exert while trying to adapt and interpret the new lifestyle of the host country.

In conclusion, it can be inferred that in most cases, teachers did not receive outside support to orient them to the needs of the transition. Rather, they depended on personal efforts and characteristics to develop strategies of coping with the cultural transition that

they experienced. All things considered, those teachers proved that a determined person could find his/her own way out simply by practicing the right strategies intuitively.

Conclusion

This study explored teachers' perspectives on the challenges they encountered, and also examined the impact these obstacles had on their work performance. The study used the interpretative phenomenological analysis in order to provide a description of the phenomenon in context.

Upon analyzing the data, it can be concluded that the challenges were mainly a result of the cultural clash between the teachers' beliefs and assumptions both professional and personal and those of the host society, and vice versa. It can also be concluded that expatriate teachers seem to experience a prolonged adjustment period that goes beyond what the literature reports with no clear closure. Expatriate teachers, including those who were working in KSA for extended period of time, have to navigate in addition to the regular challenges of their profession a plethora of conditions that are closely connected to the countries' cultural norms. The unique cultural setting of KSA intensified the negative impact of those challenges on teachers since some of the customs and beliefs were perceived by most as extreme. Surprisingly and within this challenging context, teachers reported that they received little to no organizational support to help them manage these additional challenges. This could point out that the school management is lacking the existence of organizational challenges. Cross-cultural knowledge regarding the new cultural customs, beliefs, and habits would have greatly helped in minimizing the challenges and overall cultural shock that teachers might face upon their transition to a new country.

Oberg (1954) asserted that once a person realizes that the cultural shock s/he is undergoing is due to his/her inability to connect to the new culture and people, s/he would recognize that all what it takes to overcome this shock is to understand the new culture; a simple initiative which begins with the art of communication. This realization seems to have been reached by most expatriate teachers, yet remains short from impacting the institutional arrangements of the schools. Most participants' accounts of coping with their reported challenges included attempts to connect to members of the local community. They reported improved understanding when they managed to learn about the cultural norms of the host country by communicating and socializing with old timer expatriates and with locals.

The most interesting finding is the conflicting characterization teachers accorded to the organizational context as both a major source of challenges and the main source of support. Despite the fact that teachers enlisted a number of challenges rooted in the organizational culture of their schools, they all agreed that the mere access to these schools and the communal feeling they provide is their main source of support. While some of the school policies and practices were described as unfair, and biased in favor of students and parents and not the teachers, remaining a member of the school community was praised as a key source of support that alleviate the challenges created by the societal restrictive rules and regulations. Teachers spoke of being at the school as a way to sustain their livelihood since it allowed them to: (1) have a stable income; (2) maintain their residency permit; (3) experience an active social life ; and (4) feel independent. Though the literature mentions that a sojourner faces a great deal of difficulty while trying to adjust to a “new profession and a new country” (Fee, 2011, p. 396), all of the above might have motivated teachers to

work efficiently in order for them to be able to stay in the host country, and empowered them to overcome the negative impact of all the challenges they faced.

Work, as it could be concluded, had an added value in KSA. Despite the challenges they faced within the organization, the societal challenges in particular motivated teachers to stay at work and remain dedicated and determined in their jobs. Work played a major role in the adaptation process for every teacher. This was inferred by the correlation found between the time teachers started working and the duration it took them to adapt to the host culture.

To sum up, culture plays a major role in society or any other organization. It affects people's behaviors, beliefs, habits, and customs. The clash of cultural beliefs and assumptions between the teachers and the respective society they find themselves in undoubtedly results in numerous challenges similar to those that the teachers in this study encountered. As a result, culture has to be studied by expatriates in order to minimize the amount of challenges that they might face upon a cultural transition.

Recommendations for Practice

This study revealed the challenges that a female expatriate teacher faces upon her transition to a new culture and society. It showed as well the effect of those challenges on the teacher's teaching effectiveness. Moreover, it pointed out the organizational factors and other personal factors that supported these teachers during their cultural transition. These results might help in practice by informing: (1) universities intending to refine their teacher training programs through several strategies that the research asserts; (2) school administrators planning how to best design orientation and training programs while fully taking into consideration the challenges attributed to the teachers' cross-cultural transitions;

(3) school administrations working on enhancing work conditions; and (4) collaborating with the ministry of foreign affairs and emigrants aiming at developing expatriate cross-cultural training sessions in order to introduce teachers to the new host culture so as to minimize the challenges that they might face upon their transition.

In-Service University Programs

This study recommends that colleges of Education in universities incorporate multicultural educations part of their in-service training services. Educators at the university level can offer special sessions and workshops for schools with expatriate teachers. These workshops and sessions could be designed in such a way that they would help expatriate teachers anticipate and face the challenges they would most likely encounter during their cross-cultural transitions.

A major technique that would prepare teachers to teach in a diverse community or a different culture that the research discusses is self –reflective analysis. Before teachers implement multicultural education they must first recognize and understand their own cultural background, attitudes, and beliefs. By understanding their own world views, they would then understand the world views of others. This mostly occurs through self-reflective analysis (reflective practices) that the researchers McAllister and Irvine (2002); Phuntsog (1999); Novick (1996) all recommend. School practices (such as mentoring, induction, and designed programs of culturally responsive teaching) assert the importance of self-reflective analysis especially with regards to how they prepare teachers for cross-cultural responsiveness. Researching culturally responsive teaching, McAllister and Irvine (2002); Novick (1996), noticed that thinking reflectively and critically about a teacher's own practices enables him/her to understand and become aware of his/her own cultural

backgrounds. This would then help him/her better interpret others' practices by attempting to get to know them through their cultures. Self-reflective analysis develops learners that would help teachers become effective teachers. Only by that, would teachers become effective for their own learners - students (Lee & Fung, 2007). As a result, a learning community would be developed within the school.

School Induction Programs for Teachers

The results of this study calls schools to provide special programs to help beginning teachers acquire professional teaching knowledge. Moreover, both experienced as well as new teachers, need to get familiarized with the school culture and structure during their first couple of years at the school (Anthony, Haigh, & Kane, 2011). For these reasons, researchers e.g. Main's article asserts the importance of having special programs at the school in order to help novice teachers get familiarized to the school system and to provide them with professional development (as cited in Lee & Feng, 2007).

In order to get introduced to the school structure and administrative-related work, teachers are to attend an orientation day or week. Moreover, newly hired teachers are offered an induction program that has two objectives: (1) get familiarized to the school, (2) develop teachers into becoming better professional learners and teachers.

Induction programs are necessary in general and in the case of expatriate teachers in particular since it help teachers promote their instructional methods and create a united learning environment through the transition from pre-service to in-service teacher (Hellsten, Prytula, & Ebanks, 2009). This opportunity would allow these novice teachers to adapt easily to all school practices, hence avoiding the challenges that pre-service teachers usually face (Lee & Feng, 2007). Induction programs include "mentoring, professional

development, and support to novice teachers in order to significantly affect teacher attrition” Guarino, Santibanez, and Daley; Ingersoll; Weiss and Weiss articles (as cited in Cherubini, 2009, p. 185). In an induction program, multicultural education can be introduced providing teachers with strategies and skills needed for their implementing of the new practices and knowledge in their classrooms.

Moreover, induction programs also allow teachers to feel a sense of satisfaction when they improve professionally and develop; thus encouraging them to remain in their domain (Cherubini, 2009). Accordingly, by hindering the challenges that a teacher might face upon her transition, this will affect her teaching positively.

Mentoring is considered to be one of the important factors in the induction process that helps novice teachers (Anthony, Haigh, & Kane, 2011). This is because of the strong influence that the experienced teachers have on those mentees (novice teachers) (Keay, 2009). Studies (e.g. Howe, 2006) found out that the most effective induction programs are those who assign expert mentors and thorough in-service training. Mentoring is used in an induction program as one of the support structures for the new qualified teachers recruited at the school (Lofstrom&Eisenschmidt, 2009).

Mainly, the support being given to teachers is categorized into two areas: instructional related support and psychological support (Lee & Feng, 2007). The first includes skills, knowledge, and methods needed to become an effective and successful teacher (Lee & Feng, 2007). The psychological support happens through boosting self-esteem and confidence by leading the teacher towards effective teaching Gold’s article (as cited in Lee & Feng, 2007). Mentors play several roles in directing teachers towards instructional and administrative issues (Lee & Feng, 2007). According to Gold’s article, a

mentor is a facilitator, “teacher, coach, trainer, positive role model, and developer of talent, protector, opener of doors, sponsor, and successful leader” (as cited in Lee & Feng, 2007, p.244).

Enhancing Work Conditions

This study supports the notion that an expatriate’s ability to adapt to the host country is connected to their success in finding a job. Work, for all of the teachers who participated in this study, was crucial as it allowed the teachers to adjust to life in the new culture. Even teachers who had been settled for more than two years in the host country, considered work as a necessity in order for them to be able to continue living in KSA. Moreover, teachers noted the important role that the school played in their lives. The school is the community that teachers belong to. It is the place where they (1) are socially active; and (2) create an identity for themselves. Therefore, noting that, schools can consider this as a strength point to ensure job commitment that they already lack. Teachers’ turnover rate throughout the year could be reduced if the school tried to become more of a community that the teachers belonged to instead of an organization they worked in. Given the context of KSA, teachers needed to feel like they belonged to a society they could become socially active in. Ma and MacMillan (1999) found out that workplace conditions positively affected teacher satisfaction on the job, especially organization culture. All the teachers who participated in this study stressed the need to belong to a community. On the other hand, researchers point out that collaborative culture promotes satisfaction and “feelings of professional involvement of teachers” Leithwood, Leonard, and Sharratt’s article (as cited in Ma & MacMillan, 1999). Therefore, it is recommended that the school builds new facilities and initiates multiple activities in order to help the teachers adjust to the societal

culture and promote their commitment. By creating a community where all teachers would feel secure, active, and more 'at home' teachers would become more committed to the school. As a result, both the school and the teachers would be benefiting.

Moreover, for teachers to feel they are professionally involved, the school could plan sessions that would help teachers feel like effective members of the society they live in. One way to do so could be by raising awareness and letting the parents know about the professional beliefs teachers hold, such as: the importance of parental involvement, the importance of attending classes daily, etc. As a brief conclusion, by ensuring a collaborative culture and enhancing work conditions, the school would be helping teachers overcome several societal challenges that they face and assure job satisfaction, which leads to job commitment.

The Expatriate Cross-Cultural Training Program as Prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigrants

Who else would be more responsible for people traveling to work in a host country other than the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants? It could design training sessions that would help all those who are traveling abroad: (1) become more knowledgeable about the country they are heading to; and (2) be better equipped with coping strategies crucial for their adaptation process during their cultural transition. This study highlights the cross-cultural challenges faced by female expatriates in general, and teachers in particular. Therefore, the challenges could help the ministry understand what it ought to include in these training sessions.

Preparing individuals or families psychologically and mentally for their move to the host country would greatly help them better understand and get familiarized with the host

country. It might even reduce their stress and maximize their motivation and excitement. Moreover, cross-cultural training sessions could even be considered as a source of support for the teachers since they would ease the settling-in process for the expatriate teacher.

Recommendations for Research

This study contributes to add to the contextually grounded knowledge base in the Arab region. It explores a common phenomenon in the Gulf region where schools are highly dependent on expatriate teachers. The results of the study show the challenges that Arab and non-Arab female teachers face upon their transition to KSA. However, further research is required to expand on this study. That research might: (1) use the results of this study to check its transferability across larger samples and different settings (different regions of KSA and other countries) through a quantitative research to see if it is representative for the population; (2) use different school criteria (size, curriculum, and different faculty body) to distinguish any difference in the results between this study and any new research; (3) include only male participants in order to point out any difference between males and females; (4) choose a different unique setting in order to check the transferability of the results comparing it to the theory of Lysgaard's theory; or (5) conduct research on the level of commitments of expatriate teachers to the schools and the factors that can enhance it.

APPENDIX A

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

The twelve expatriate teachers will be chosen based on the criteria defined earlier. Those teachers will be interviewed individually following the semi-structured questions addressed below (in addition to the probes and follow-up questions to be raised throughout the interview).

Questions:

From your experience, what are the challenges that you are facing in your work that you attribute to the fact that you are teaching in a different cultural context than your own?

Probes:

- What are the challenges you faced dealing with parents?
- What are the challenges you faced dealing with students?
- What are the challenges you faced dealing with curriculum, teaching approaches, and instructional materials?
- What are the challenges dealing with leadership authority?
- What are the challenges you faced concerning supervision: staff appraisal and staff development?
- What are the challenges you faced in identifying and practicing your job description?
- What are the challenges you faced concerning laws and regulations/.
- What are the challenges you faced concerning physical, technological, and financial resources?

- What are the challenges you faced concerning school relations?
- What are the challenges you faced from the society?
 - o What are the challenges you faced dealing with laws and policies for the country (such as: appropriate clothing, daily activities and services)
 - o What are the challenges you faced dealing with the country's language/dialect?
 - o What are the challenges you faced while adapting to the country's environment (such as: the dry, hot, and dusty weather)?
- From your experience, what kind of impact are the challenges you are facing having on your effectiveness as a teacher?

Probes:

- How do you think the challenges you are facing affect your motivation as a teacher?
- How do the challenges affect your teaching strategies and creativity?
- How do the challenges affect your relation with students?
- How do the challenges hinder your job satisfaction?
- What do you think helped you overcome/ supported you in passing through/overcoming these challenges?

Probes:

- What school services helped you overcome the challenges you are facing (example: induction, mentor, orientation)?

- What leadership practices helped you overcome the challenges you are facing?
- What information/ knowledge about the country and its culture was given to you and helped you overcome the challenges you are facing?

APPENDIX B

DOCUMENT CHECKLIST

Available	Not available	Document	Searching for:
		Teacher's Handbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide information about the Saudi Arabian culture. - Provide policies supporting professional development sessions and induction program to help new and expatriate teachers in their adaptation process.
		Planned professional development sessions	Professional development sessions designed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - support expatriate teachers with skills and knowledge to overcome the challenges and the cultural shock they face. - provide local teachers and those who settled from a long time in Saudi Arabia with strategies and ways to deal with the new and expatriate teachers.
		Orientation and induction program documents	Orientation and induction programs that prepare teachers to the new societal and organizational culture by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -providing teachers with the organizational rules and regulations related to the societal culture. - supporting expatriate teachers with the information needed about the Saudi Arabian culture that is communicated through the students and parents.
		Website information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -information about the country for the teachers to read about prior their transition. -rules and regulations of the schools influenced by the community such as: segregation, dress code, curriculum, etc.
		Others:	
		Others:	

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