

Demographic Influences on Why Academic Self-Initiated Expatriates Work in Saudi Universities

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٢٠١٩/١١/١١ م

تاريخ استلام البحث :

٢٠١٩/١١/١٨ م

تاريخ قبول البحث :

ABSTRACT

In today's global economy, the continuing expansion of international trade and the need for specialized expertise have demanded an increase in the expatriates moving abroad for work in the private and public sectors of developing economies. This article aims to understand the self-initiated expatriation (SIE) experience by examining the influence of demographics on SIE reasons to work in Saudi Universities. Quantitative survey data were obtained from 300 respondents, who were academic SIEs employed at Saudi Universities. An analysis identified a statistically significant difference in SIEs' reasons to relocate across the demographic variables of language, nationality, and seniority. Gender and previous experience were not significant differentiators. There are gaps in the extant expatriation literature on academic SIEs living and working in host developing countries (HDCs). Understanding the impact of demographics on SIEs' motives helps human resource managers develop improved strategies for recruitment, performance, and retention of academic SIEs.

KEYWORDS

Academic, demographic, self-initiated expatriate, Saudi university, host developing country

FUNDING

This research was supported by Ministry of education in Saudi Arabia, the Saudi Arabian Mission in Australia

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive world, an increasing number of workers are choosing to become self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) by deciding to embark on international work assignments themselves. This trend affords many advantages to both the SIEs and the organizations. However, the rationale behind a person deciding to become an SIE is not well understood, nor is there an in-depth understanding of the SIE experience, particularly in host developing countries (HDCs). Therefore, employers may miss opportunities to leverage SIEs, and SIEs may not be able to maximize their experience. Currently, a predominant issue is the worldwide shortage of talent (Dowling, Festing, & Engle, 2013; Manpower, 2010; Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010). Therefore, many managers of universities employ SIEs to fill the gap in skilled academic allocations, as many scholars have stated that SIEs may provide an alternative to assigned expatriates (AEs) (Doherty, Richardson, & Thorn, 2013; Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010; Peltokorpi & Froese, 2009). Some researchers have argued that international human resource managers consider SIEs highly suitable for employment since they are willing to travel to other countries and use their substantial knowledge and abilities to further their careers (Hu & Xia, 2010; Jokinen, Brewster, & Suutari, 2008). International labor mobility is often seen by SIEs, who are frequently highly qualified, as an opportunity to work in any country they desire (Cerdin & Selmer, 2014; Ceric & Crawford, 2016; Ho, Seet, & Jones, 2016). The research concerning SIEs in developing countries has been sparse (Al Ariss & Sidani, 2014; Richardson, 2009). Within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, such as Saudi Arabia, the need for skilled labor, coupled with rapid economic growth, has led to a rise in SIEs (Schoepp & Forstenlechner, 2010; Scurry, Rodriguez, & Bailouni, 2013; Williams, Bhanugopan, & Fish, 2011). Although SIEs hold approximately two-thirds of all private-sector jobs and one-third of all public sector jobs (Forstenlechner & Rutledge, 2011), there is still limited research on the expatriation experience of SIEs in GCC countries.

Thus, this article will shed light on academic SIEs to gain a better understanding of their mobility by examining the influence that demographics have on the reasoning behind academic SIEs expatriation to Saudi Arabia. I raised the following research question: To what extent do demographic factors affect academic SIEs' reasons to expatriate in order to work in Saudi Universities? This question will be investigated by applying a quantitative research approach. Given the importance of SIEs in the global labor market, and in the Gulf region, in particular, the significance of this article may assist organizations to expand their strategies and practices of

recruitment and orientation, which, in turn, may enhance workforce performance and successful adjustments.

The remainder of the article is structured as follows. I will review the literature on the conceptual parts of this investigation and academic SIEs, followed by a literature review regarding the reasons and demographics of SIEs. Then, I will explain the methodology including the population, data collection, sample, and instrument. The article ends with a discussion and conclusion.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the 21st century, expatriation is a global issue as more people travel and move to other countries than in the past. Nearly 4% of the world's total population resides outside of the birth countries of individuals (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2015). In other words, there are approximately 232 million people in the world who are currently living and working in another country. The research literature on expatriation has not produced a universally accepted definition of an expatriate (McNulty & Brewster, 2017). Black and Gregersen (1999) describe the expatriation process as sending people overseas for the right reasons and thereby achieving the required goals. On the other hand, the term expatriation has often been used to refer to managers who have been sent to an international subsidiary of their home office (Andresen & Biemann, 2013; Shaffer, Kraimer, Chen, & Bolino, 2012). In recent times, the concept of expatriation has been comprehensively defined as "the intention of relocating internationally to be engaged in legal employment within the new country" (Trembath, 2016b). The following literature review will focus on the experiences of academic SIEs, their reasons for becoming expatriates, and their demographics.

2.1 ACADEMIC SIES AND THEIR EXPERIENCES

In reviewing the prior literature, many terms have been used in reference to academic mobility, such as "international academics," "foreign academics," and "academic migrants" (Trembath, 2016b). From a review of relevant literature, Trembath (2016b) posits certain criteria for defining academic SIEs, which must entail that the academic expatriate has moved his or her dominant place of residence across national borders and that their employment is legal, time-bound, based in a university, and related to teaching or research.

While much of the previous literature has focused on SIEs employed within multinational corporations (MNCs), these are not the only organizations to feel the pressure of globalization or seek to leverage SIEs. In particular, higher education institutions are increasingly used as part of a national human resource development strategy to position a country within the international marketplace (Austin, Chapman, Farah, Wilson, &

Ridge, 2014). There is an increased focus on the recruitment of international academic faculty members, as many universities employ nearly 25% of their academics from other countries (Top Universities, 2015). The proportion of academic expatriates in a country depends on the treatment and the environment of work. According to the Arab Human Development Report (2003), the demand for academic expatriates in Arabic countries, which are considered developing countries, has risen largely because of the rapid economic growth of these countries since 1970. For example, Wagie and Fox (2005) report that 80% of the academic staff that works in the American University in the Emirates comprises academic expatriates. This is due to the lack of professional skilled labor in the local population (Ryan, 2012).

In many countries worldwide, higher education is expanding its basic education systems to position their country to compete in the international marketplace (Austin et al., 2014). Thus, many universities have applied an internationalization criterion as one of several strategies to attract, support, and retain qualified academic staff. It is important to study academic expatriates because not only are they a critical resource for universities but they also significantly impact the performance of educational organizations (Trembath, 2016a).

In conclusion, there are important gaps in the current research on the SIE experience, particularly that of academic SIEs in developing countries, such as Saudi Arabia. Since a common, concise examination of the academic SIE experience is lacking, there is a need for researchers to further evaluate the influence of SIEs' demographics on their reasons to move to HDCs. It is important to further understand the changing trends, needs of higher learning institutions, and the best ways to change the contract terms of expatriates (Trembath, 2016b).

2.2 THE MOTIVES OF SIES

Considering the fact that SIEs move on the basis of individual agency (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Tharenou, 2015), research has investigated beyond one-dimensional explanations to show that the motivations and reasons for moving abroad are numerous, complex, and multidimensional (Doherty, Dickmann, & Mills, 2011; Thorn, 2009). Thus, the differences in the motivation of SIEs may result from variations in SIE demographics as well as whether the country they move from or to is developed or developing. For example, SIEs of a developing nation may have moved as refugees because of poor living conditions (Al Ariss, 2010; Al Ariss & Özbilgin, 2010).

Academic expatriates have been described similarly to a hero on a journey as they undertake obstacles, overcome challenges, and experience adventure (Trembath, 2016a). In a series of studies, Richardson and colleagues (Richardson & Mallon, 2005; Richardson & McKenna, 2003)

investigated the motives and careers of thirty British expatriate academics who were employed in various countries. The motives for academic expatriates can be divided into four “hero metaphors”: the Explorer, the Refugee, the Mercenary, and the Architect. Similarly, Froese (2012), Selmer, and Luring (2012b) found general support for these categories.

Richardson and colleagues used these four metaphors, and the other redefined metaphors, to capture and classify the five main reasons why SIEs wanted to become “independent internationally mobile professionals”: (1) to travel/explore, (2) financial, (3) career, (4) family, and (5) to change their life. Thus, these five reasons were utilized in this article to understand the experiences of SIEs in HDCs by examining the impact of SIE demographics on these motives.

2.3 THE IMPACT OF SIE DEMOGRAPHICS IN THE DECISION TO EXPATRIATE

Demographic characteristics include personal and individual features that illustrate the differences between groups. These socioeconomic characteristics are statistically expressed (BusinessDictionary.com., 2014) and include acquired and inherent demographics. Inherent features are hereditary and congenital (Quazi, 2003), such as gender, age, and race. Acquired demographics are identified through individual efforts or choices, such as language, religion, nationality, seniority, marital status, and previous expatriate exposure (Selmer & Luring, 2011a).

While some studies have indicated an influence of the demographic characteristics on SIE motives to expatriate (Cerdin & Selmer, 2014; Jackson et al., 2005; Richardson & Mallon, 2005; Selmer & Luring, 2011a; Selmer & Luring, 2010), there remains a paucity of research on the impact of SIE demographics on the reasons SIEs move to HDCs. The reasons for self-initiated expatriation have been differentiated by the demographic traits of SIEs. In this respect, two studies were conducted by Selmer and Luring (2010, 2011b) in relation to earlier studies by Richardson and Mallon (2005) and Richardson and McKenna (2002, 2003). The primary aim was to examine differences in self-initiated expatriation in terms of the reasons to expatriate that were described by Richardson and associates, such as family, financial incentives, career motivations, and interest in travel, and a lifestyle change.

In this article, the demographic characteristics that will be discussed include gender, language, nationality, seniority, and previous experience.

GENDER

There tends to be differences between the motives of women and men to self-initiate their expatriation. For instance, in a study from New Zealand (Thorn, 2009) on highly educated SIEs that were living and working in developed countries around the world, women were found to be highly

motivated by pull factors related to culture, a relationship with a partner from the host country, and travel, while men were highly motivated by push factors related to the political environment, life opportunities, economic considerations, and career motives. Other research has found that male SIEs tend to be motivated by status, money, and opportunities for employment (Selmer & Luring, 2010), whereas research suggests that women may be more concerned than men with family factors, such as how an international move will affect their families. For example, women may be reluctant to move if they perceive that childcare facilities in the host country are inadequate or if their partner has reservations about moving (Inceoglu, Segers, & Bartram, 2012; Tharenou, 2008).

CULTURAL BACKGROUND AND LANGUAGE

Cultural background, including language, has been considered a crucial factor that affects the motivations of an expatriate's decision to move. For instance, people coming from individualistic cultures are shown to be more motivated by money while those from collectivist cultures are shown to be more motivated by interacting with people (Segers, Inceoglu, Vloeberghs, Bartram, & Henderickx, 2008). Employees coming from states that have an individual-oriented ideology, such as India or Germany, are more likely to highly value the comforts of both work and life (Baum & Kabst, 2013). Conversely, employees coming from nations that have a group-oriented ideology, such as Hungary or China, tend to place less value on a work-life balance (Ho et al., 2016). It is crucial to consider the experiences of the expatriate in the decision-making process.

NATIONALITY

Expatriation research has indicated that expatriates from different countries have different push and pull motives for going abroad (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013). For example, SIEs from developing countries may be motivated by factors related to improving their quality of life and living standards, rather than factors related to a sense of adventure and desire to travel (Al Ariss & Jawad, 2011). Conversely, expatriates moving from developed countries to developing economies may be mainly motivated to travel and explore. A study by Selmer and Luring (2011a) on academic SIEs in European and non-European countries examined whether the reasons to expatriate differ according to people's demographics. The study showed that nationality resulted in three different reasons to expatriate: adventure/travel, family, and financial incentives.

SENIORITY

The level of seniority is an important factor of mobility for SIEs because of the differences that may exist concerning the amount of compensation. Thus, an individual's career stage has been shown to influence job attitudes, such as willingness to accept mobility opportunities (Richardson

& Zikic, 2007; Selmer & Luring, 2014). While senior employees prefer security in employment, junior staff often has more favorable attitudes towards risk-taking (Biemann & Andresen, 2010). This is an indication that employees in senior positions may have an emphasis on stability and security, while junior staff may be more focused on advancing their career and financial gain. Selmer and Luring (2011a) suggest that younger expatriates tend to be more motivated by adventure and career advancement, compared with older expatriates, who tend to be more concerned with security and stability.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

The combination of push-pull factors may differ among those moving abroad for the second time, or even among those who have moved three or more times, compared with among those who are moving abroad for the first time (Ho et al., 2016). Tharenou and Seet (2014) suggest that returnees to their home country of China will re-expatriate if they experience problems on re-entry to their home country. This implies that the reasons to expatriate may differ from one experience to another. Ho et al. (2016) suggest that the motivational factors, which serve as the primary pull factors in the host country for the initial expatriation, may be less significant in a subsequent expatriation. For example, the pull factors of employment opportunities and income may be major reasons for the initial expatriation but may not be as important as other reasons that prompt the second and subsequent expatriation experiences, such as family and a higher quality of life (Kraimer, Bolino, & Mead, 2016). Given that re-expatriation is not the first expatriation experience, it is important to consider the previous experiences of SIEs as a part of their decision to re-expatriate.

3. METHODOLOGY

The overall purpose of this article is to explore the SIE experience in HDCs regarding the impact of demographics on an individual's reasons to self-expatriate. I was interested in applying this study on SIE academics working in the developing country of Saudi Arabia because this country has some very specific characteristics (e.g., strict separation of male and female students, an absolute monarchy and a strong government/religious influence in law and daily life). These characteristics may allow the context of this study to be regarded as an extreme example of a developing country. The researcher has been sponsored and financially supported by the government of this country, which, in turn, facilitated the researcher's access to the Saudi universities. These two Saudi universities were selected because they are notable, well established, and they employ a large number of academic SIEs who are currently working and living in Saudi Arabia, compared with other Saudi universities. Also, these two universities are located in different large cities in Saudi Arabia. Thus, it is believed that the

choice of these universities is appropriate for this study. The researcher obtained ethical approval from La Trobe University's Human Ethics Committee. Then, the researcher requested a letter of support from her principal supervisor and from the Cultural Attaché Office at the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Canberra in relation to obtaining permission from the Saudi universities to conduct this study. These two letters included information on the current study, asked to support the researcher, and emphasized that this project had the potential to make a significant contribution to human resource development in the Saudi higher education sector, particularly considering the shortage of professionals in Saudi universities (Al Eisa & Smith, 2013).

Demographic characteristics were examined with 13 questions. The participants were given fixed-response options and were asked to choose the answer that was most relevant to them. The second construct examined the reasons that pushed or pulled the SIE academics to move to work in HDCs. The survey questionnaire for the motives was modified on the basis of the survey proposed by Selmer and Luring (2010), with two items added ("We aspire to a better situation for the family" and "I would like a more secure financial future") to increase reliability and slight modifications to the remaining six items. The five reasons included to explore/travel, career, family, financial, and to escape/change life. Since each reason was measured by three items, there were a total of 15 items designed under this construct. A five-point Likert scale with scale anchors of "strongly disagree," "disagree," "not sure," "agree," and "strongly agree" was used to measure the participants' reasons.

The quantitative data represented in the survey were designed electronically by using the web-survey software package Qualtrics (qualtrics.com.). I began my data collection by emailing the questionnaires to the academics through the administration offices of these two universities, and a reminder was sent one week after the initial email. Through their emails, the administration offices illustrated that non-Saudi academics were the intended sample to complete this survey. The sample yielded 300 completed responses. Completed surveys were removed from the commercial site and downloaded to the researcher's personal computer in a password-protected file. The researcher used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS; v.22) to analyze the obtained data. To explore the influence of SIE demographic characteristics on the reasons, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to analyze the impact of gender, nationality, previous experiences, language, and seniority. Furthermore, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to identify any inter-group differences.

3.1 THE SAMPLE

As Table 1 illustrates, the majority of the participants were male (78%), accompanied by their partners (79%), the sole worker in the household (76%), used Arabic as their primary language (76%), were from developing countries (76%), and had a Ph.D. (70%). Over half of the participants did not have previous experience in expatriation (55%). Almost 40% of the participants had worked over 5 years (38%) and 31% had 3–5 years of working experience. Over one-third of the participants (37%) were assistant professors, and the remaining participants were professors (15%), associated professors (17%), lecturers (14%) and instructors (16%).

Table 1: Demographics

Variable	Response options	Frequency (%)
Gender	Male	234 (78)
	Female	66 (22)
Partner accompanying	Yes	236 (79)
	No	64 (21)
Partner employment	Yes	56 (24)
	No	180 (76)
Language	Arabic	229 (76)
	Non-Arabic	71 (24)
Previous expatriation experience	With no experience	165 (55)
	With experience	135 (45)
Length of time working (years)	<1	22 (7)
	1–2	70 (23)
	3–5	94 (31)
	>5	114 (38)
Nationality	Developed countries	73 (24)
	Developing countries	227 (76)
Current academic position	Full professor	46 (15)
	Associated professor	50 (17)
	Assistant professor	112 (37)
	Lecturer	43 (14)
	Instructor	49 (16)
Highest level of education	Ph.D.	209 (70)
	Master's degree	80 (26)
	Bachelor's degree	9 (3)
	Other	2 (1)

Note: N = 300, N = 236 for partner employment.

3.2 INSTRUMENTS

The survey questionnaire was constructed using two main sources: the literature review (Richardson & Mallon, 2005; Richardson & McKenna, 2002, 2003; Selmer & Luring, 2012b) and previously developed questionnaires (Selmer & Luring, 2010, 2011b). The constructs utilized in the current research survey are demographics and the motives for expatriation.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographic characteristics were examined with 13 questions. The participants were given fixed-response options and were asked to choose the answer that was the most relevant to them. The first question concerned the participant's gender. The second and third questions examined whether the participant's partner accompanied them and worked in Saudi Arabia. Question four identified the participant's nationality through two options, which included either a developed or a developing country, according to their background, and whether the participant had spent most of his or her life in a developed or developing country. Questions five, six, and seven sought to understand the participant's mother tongue and whether they spoke other languages and, if so, what those languages were. Questions eight, nine, and ten examined whether the participant had previous expatriation experience as an academic and, if so, their number of experiences. Question eleven addressed the length of time the participant had worked in Saudi Arabia. They were provided with four period options to choose from that ranged from less than 1 year to more than 5 years. Question twelve identified the participant's current academic position at the university. There were five options: full professor, associate professor, assistant professor, lecturer, or instructor. Question thirteen identified the participant's highest level of education and included four possible options: Ph.D., master, bachelor, or other.

REASONS TO EXPATRIATE

The second construct examined the reasons that pushed or pulled the SIE academics to move in order to work in HDCs. The survey questionnaire to obtain the reasons was modified on the basis of the survey proposed by Selmer and Luring (2010), with two items added ("We aspire to a better situation for the family" and "I would like a more secure financial future") to increase reliability and with slight modifications to the remaining six items.. The first component was to explore and travel (e.g., I want to see more of the world). The second component involved their career (e.g., I want to enhance my career prospects). The third component was related to their family (e.g., The entire family was involved in the decision to expatriate). The fourth component concerned financial motives (e.g., I hope to save a large amount of money). The fifth component was to escape and change lifestyles (e.g., I wanted to escape from my previous situation). A five-point Likert scale with scale anchors of "strongly disagree," "disagree," "not sure," "agree," and "strongly agree" was used to measure the participants' reasons.

4. RESULTS

The research question of this study is "To what extent do demographic factors affect SIEs' reasons to expatriate?" MANOVA was used to examine

whether there was a relationship between the reasons for expatriation to developing countries and individuals' varying demographics. These demographics include gender, nationality, language, previous experience, and seniority. If the results of the omnibus MANOVA were significant, a series of one-way ANOVAs were conducted to identify which dependent variable the demographic variable had a significant impact on.

4.1 DIFFERENCES BY GENDER

Table 2 shows the mean and the standard deviations of the reasons to expatriate by gender and the test results of both MANOVA and the ANOVAs. The results of MANOVA show that there was no statistically significant difference in the reasons to expatriate by gender. As a result, no further tests were conducted as there was no evidence to suggest that reasons to expatriate varied by a participant's gender.

Table 2: MANOVA and ANOVA for reasons to expatriate by gender

	Male	Female	Multivariate test statistic (Wilks's lambda)	Univariate F-ratio
			1.84	
Explore/travel	3.82 (0.83)	3.81 (0.85)		
Career	3.85 (0.96)	3.95 (0.98)		
Family	4.17 (0.73)	4.14 (0.71)		
Financial	3.99 (0.71)	3.73 (0.77)		
Escape/change life	3.02 (0.86)	3.02 (0.81)		

Note: N = 300 (male = 234, female = 66). Means and standard deviations (in parentheses) are presented.

4.2 DIFFERENCES BY LANGUAGE

Table 3 shows the mean and the standard deviations of the reasons to expatriate by language (Arabic/non-Arab) and the test results of both MANOVA and the ANOVAs. The results of MANOVA show that there was a statistically significant difference in the reasons to expatriate by language (Wilks's lambda = 2.833, $p < 0.05$). A series of one-way ANOVAs were conducted to identify the reason to expatriate that language had a significant impact on. The results of the ANOVAs suggest that family was a statistically significant and stronger reason for Arabic expatriates ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 0.68$) than for non-Arabic expatriates ($M = 3.99$, $SD = 0.82$; $F(1, 298) = 5.46$, $p < 0.05$). Also, escape/change life was a statistically significant and stronger reason for Arabic expatriates ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 0.82$) than non-Arabic expatriates ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 0.93$; $F(1, 298) = 5.47$, $p < 0.05$). There was no statistically significant difference in the reasons concerning explore/travel, career, or financial matters between Arabic and non-Arabic expatriates.

Table 3: MANOVA and ANOVA for reasons to expatriate by language

	Arabic	Non-Arabic	Multivariate test statistic (Wilks's lambda)	Univariate F-ratio
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	2.83*		
Explore/travel	3.79 (0.85)	3.91 (0.78)	1.16
Career	3.87 (0.97)	3.89 (0.93)	0.02
Family	4.22 (0.68)	3.99 (0.82)	5.46*
Financial	3.98 (0.73)	3.80 (0.73)	3.39
Escape/change life	3.08 (0.82)	2.82 (0.93)	5.47*

Note: N = 300 (Arabic = 229, non-Arabic = 71). Means and standard deviations (in parentheses) are presented. * $p < 0.05$.

4.3 DIFFERENCES BY PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

Table 4 shows the mean and standard deviations of the reasons to expatriate by previous experience and the test results of both MANOVA and the ANOVAs. The results of MANOVA show that there was no statistically significant difference in reasons to expatriate by previous experience. As a result, no further follow-up tests were conducted, as there was no evidence that reasons to expatriate varied by participants' prior expatriation experience.

Table 4: MANOVA and ANOVA for reasons to expatriate by previous experience

	No previous experience	Previous experience	Multivariate test statistic (Wilks's lambda)	Univariate F-ratio
				0.643
Explore/travel	3.77 (0.82)	3.87 (0.85)		
Career	3.91 (0.93)	3.83 (1.00)		
Family	4.18 (0.68)	4.13 (0.77)		
Financial	3.95 (0.71)	3.92 (0.77)		
Escape/change life	3.02 (0.84)	3.02 (0.87)		

Note: N = 300 (no previous experience = 165, previous experience = 135). Means and standard deviations (in parentheses) of the factor scores are presented.

4.4 DIFFERENCES BY NATIONALITY

Table 5 shows the mean and the standard deviations of the reasons to expatriate by nationality and the test results of both MANOVA and the ANOVAs. The results of MANOVA show that there was a statistically significant difference in reasons to expatriate by nationality ($F = 2.410$, $p < .05$). Follow-up ANOVAs were conducted to identify the reason to expatriate that nationality had a significant impact on.

The results of the ANOVAs suggest that career was a statistically significant and stronger reason for expatriates from developing countries ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.97$) than expatriates from developed countries ($M = 3.66$, $SD = 0.91$; $F(1, 298) = 5.09$, $p < 0.05$). Also, family was a statistically significant and stronger reason for expatriates from developing countries ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 0.69$) than expatriates from developed countries ($M = 3.99$, $SD = 0.81$; $F(1, 298) = 5.61$, $p < 0.05$). There was no statistically significant

difference in the reasons concerning explore/travel, escape/change life, or financial matters between expatriates from developed countries and those from developing countries.

Table 5: MANOVA and ANOVA for reasons to expatriate by nationality

	Developed countries	Developing countries	Univariate F-ratio
Multivariate test statistic	2.410*		
Explore/travel	3.84 (0.88)	3.81 (0.82)	0.09
Career	3.66 (0.91)	3.95 (0.97)	5.09*
Family	3.99 (0.81)	4.22 (0.69)	5.61*
Financial	3.82 (0.81)	3.97 (0.70)	2.29
Escape/change life	2.98 (0.78)	3.03 (0.87)	0.17

Note: N = 300 (developed countries = 73, developing countries = 227). Means and standard deviations (in parentheses) of the factor scores are presented. * $p < 0.05$.

4.5 DIFFERENCES BY SENIORITY

Table 6 shows the mean and the standard deviations of the reasons to expatriate by seniority and the test results of both MANOVA and the ANOVAs. The results of MANOVA show that there was a statistically significant difference in reasons to expatriate by seniority (Wilks's lambda = 2.215, $p < .05$). Follow-up ANOVAs were conducted to identify the reason to expatriate that seniority had a significant impact on.

The results of ANOVAs suggest that there was a statistically significant difference in the aggregated scores of family among the five levels of seniority ($F(4, 296) = 4.31, p < 0.05$). The mean aggregated scores of family for the five levels of seniority are presented in Table 6. Student–Newman–Keuls post-hoc tests suggest that instructors had significantly lower scores than professors, associate professors, assistant professors, and lecturers. There was no statistically significant difference among professors, associate professors, assistant professors or lecturers. There was no statistically significant difference in the reasons concerning explore/travel, career, escape/change life, or financial matters among the five levels of seniority.

Table 6: MANOVA and ANOVA for reasons to expatriate by seniority

	Full professor	Associate professor	Assistant professor	Lecturer	Instructor	Univariate F-ratio
Multivariate test statistic	2.215*					
Explore/travel	3.74 (0.78)	3.57 (0.97)	3.93 (0.82)	3.73 (0.72)	3.97 (0.81)	2.24
Career	3.61 (1.02)	3.72 (1.05)	3.98 (0.98)	4.09 (0.73)	3.86 (0.91)	2.14
Family	4.18 (0.59)	4.16 (0.80)	4.29 (0.65)	4.21 (0.65)	3.80 (0.86)	4.31*
Financial	3.91 (0.76)	4.01 (0.63)	3.94 (0.77)	3.90 (0.80)	3.91 (0.69)	0.18

Escape/change life	3.19 (0.78)	3.01 (0.86)	3.04 (0.81)	3.12 (1.05)	2.74 (0.76)	1.96
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Note: N = 300. Means and standard deviations (in parentheses) of the factor scores are presented. * $p < 0.05$.

Data analysis shows the mean and the standard deviations of the reasons to expatriate by five demographics and the test results of both MANOVA and the ANOVAs. The results of MANOVA show that there was no statistically significant difference in the reasons to expatriate by gender or previous experiences, but there was a statistically significant difference in reasons to expatriate by language (Wilks's lambda = 2.833, $p < 0.05$); nationality ($F = 2.410, p < .05$); and seniority ($F = 2.215, p < .05$).

The results of the ANOVAs suggest that family was a statistically significant and stronger reason for Arabic expatriates ($M = 4.22, SD = 0.68$) than for non-Arabic expatriates ($M = 3.99, SD = 0.82; F(1, 298) = 5.46, p < 0.05$). Also, escape/change life was a statistically significant and stronger reason for Arabic expatriates ($M = 3.08, SD = 0.82$) than for non-Arabic expatriates ($M = 2.82, SD = 0.93; F(1, 298) = 5.47, p < 0.05$). There was no statistically significant difference in explore/travel, career, or financial motives between Arabic and non-Arabic expatriates.

The results of the ANOVAs suggest that career was a statistically significant and stronger reason for expatriates from developing countries ($M = 3.95, SD = 0.97$) than expatriates from developed countries ($M = 3.66, SD = 0.91; F(1, 298) = 5.09, p < 0.05$). Also, family was a statistically significant and stronger reason for expatriates from developing countries ($M = 4.22, SD = 0.69$) than for expatriates from developed countries ($M = 3.99, SD = 0.81; F(1, 298) = 5.61, p < 0.05$). There was no statistically significant difference in the reasons concerning explore/travel, escape/change life, or financial matters between expatriates from developed countries or those from developing countries.

The results of the ANOVAs suggest that there was a statistically significant difference in the aggregated scores of "family" among the five levels of seniority ($F(4, 296) = 4.31, p < 0.05$). The mean aggregated scores of "family" for the five levels of seniority are presented in Table 5.11. Student-Newman-Keuls post-hoc tests suggest that instructors had significantly lower scores than all professors, associate professors, assistant professors and lecturers. There was no statistically significant difference among professors, associate professors, assistant professors, or lecturers. There was no statistically significant difference in the reasons concerning explore/travel, career, escape/change life, or financial matters among the five levels of seniority.

5. DISCUSSION

The overall aim of this research is to obtain a better understanding of the self-initiated expatriation experience in HDCs. In particular, this study

examines the expatriation experience of academic SIEs who currently live in Saudi Arabia and work in two of its universities. The research question that addresses this issue asks, “To what extent do demographic factors affect academic SIEs’ reasons to expatriate to HDCs?” To answer this question, this section explores the findings regarding whether SIE reasons to expatriate differ in terms of demographics. These demographic features include gender, nationality, language, previous experience, and seniority. These demographics demarcate SIEs and may alter their reasons to expatriate. They are interesting to examine because they represent a virtually limitless variety of personal features. Therefore, these demographics may also potentially represent a more varied outcome in differentiating SIEs’ reasons to expatriate, particularly to HDCs. A set of five motives for SIEs was investigated: to explore/travel, career, family, financial, and to escape/change life.

The results of the quantitative analysis showed that gender and previous experience, as demographic characteristics of academic expatriates, did not make a significant difference in SIEs’ reasons to expatriate. In the case of language, nationality, and seniority, the motive concerning family was the main reason to expatriate for most of the respondents. The following figure (Figure 1) shows the quantitative results for the relationship between the reasons and demographics. These five demographics will be discussed in this section.

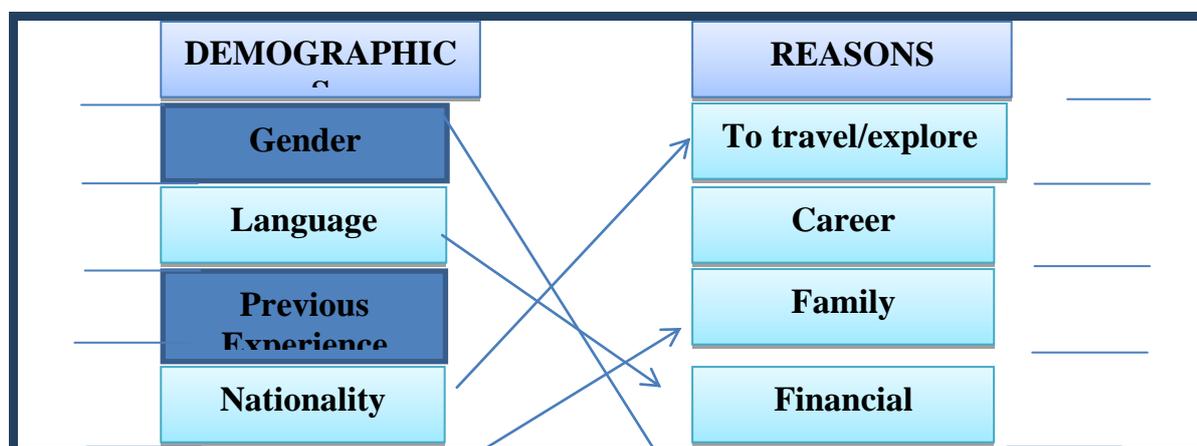




Figure 1: Relationship between reasons and demographics

5.1 GENDER

In the current sample, 78% of the SIEs were male and 22% were female. The findings of this study suggested that the mobility of academic SIEs to Saudi Arabia in traditional expatriation appears to be male-dominated. This finding is not consistent with a number of previous studies, such as Jokinen et al. (2008), Napier and Taylor (2002), Suutari and Brewster (2001) and Tharenou (2010). These authors found that the number of female SIEs is usually close to that of male SIEs. However, a study presented by Selmer and Luring (2012a) supports the findings of the current study. Women have less motivation for mobility (Inceoglu et al., 2012) than men because women may be reluctant to move because of family factors, including inadequate childcare facilities in the new location or their partner's unwillingness to move abroad (Tharenou, 2008). The study results may be context-specific, however, and explained by not only the restrictions placed on women's work but also the conservative environment in Saudi Arabia, in general. Furthermore, most Saudi women work in the education sector, as compared with other sectors, which may reduce the opportunities for SIE women within that sector.

A significant finding in this study was that there was no relationship between gender and the reasons to expatriate to developing countries. However, the results did not support past research that men are more risk-taking and motivated than women in terms of their reasons to expatriate (Sexton & Bowman-Upton, 1990). This finding is also not in line with the only extant study that examines the impact of gender on SIEs' reasons to expatriate (Selmer & Luring, 2010). These authors found that the motives concerning financial matters and escape/change life are differentiated by the gender factor. This study's results show that there is no statistically significant difference in the reasons to expatriate according to the expatriate's gender. Recently, female expatriates have been mobilizing more based on their professional development initiatives and formal qualifications, which may lead to a balance between expatriate reasons for females and males.

5.2 LANGUAGE

In this study, the majority of the participants (76%) spoke Arabic, while 24% did not. This result is not surprising, as the majority of expatriates in Saudi Arabia come from neighboring Arab countries, which generally accounts for the percentage of Arabs working in Saudi Arabia. Language is a key issue for expatriates (Selmer & Luring, 2011a), however, the impact of the language factor on SIEs' reasons to expatriate has not been

examined. The quantitative findings of this study showed that there was a statistically significant difference in reasons to expatriate by language. More specifically, there was a statistically significant difference in the aggregated scores of family reasons and escape/change life reasons between Arabic expatriates and non-Arabic expatriates. Compared with non-Arabic expatriates, Arabic expatriates had stronger reasons, in terms of both family and to escape/change life, to improve living conditions for themselves and their families. This may be explained by the turbulent situation in some Arab countries because of the recent uprisings which pushed them to leave their countries to improve their family's living conditions. This finding was also supported by qualitative findings as the majority of participants mentioned the importance of language in their decision to expatriate. The reasoning was either to escape from a society that was different from their own culture or to move to a country that would suit their families' culture, including their language. These results are in line with two recent studies by Vaiman, Haslberger, and Vance (2015) and Dickmann and Cerdin (2014) that demonstrate the importance of location attractiveness including the provenance of the academic SIE's original language.

5.3 PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES

Among the survey participants, 55% had no prior expatriate experience. This result is somewhat consistent with the findings of Jokinen et al. (2008) and Suutari & Brewster (2001), who found that SIEs had two or more previous international experiences. However, in this study, the percentages of those who had expatriation experience and those who had no prior experience appear closer to those of Thorn (2009). Another interesting result in this study is that there was no statistically significant difference in the reasons to expatriate by previous experience. In other words, among all of the reasons to expatriate, respondents with previous expatriate experience did not differ from those with no previous experience. The absence of a relationship between previous experience and SIEs' motives suggests that respondents' reasons might have changed during the period of employment in the host country because of unexpected problems. Therefore, it is possible that the respondents might not have accurately remembered their initial reasons and instead discussed the later changed reasons.

This finding is not consistent with the findings of Selmer and Lauring (2011b), who found that previous experience is positively associated with family and financial reasons. In addition, the finding that no relationship existed between the factor of previous experience and decision-making is not in line with a number of earlier studies, such as Morrison and Brantner (1992) and Tesluk and Jacobs (1998). These authors report the importance of past experience in affecting the motives of expatriates and helping the employees to cope with issues. Moreover, this quantitative finding is not in

accordance with the qualitative analysis because a third of the interviewees mentioned that their various previous experiences motivated them to travel and explore more countries.

5.4 NATIONALITY

This study was consistent with most of the international studies that found that expatriates from different countries have different reasons, representative in push-pull factors, for going abroad (You, O'leary, Morrison, & Hong, 2000). This research found that SIEs' reasons to expatriate differed in terms of their nationality demographic. Participants were asked which countries they had spent most of their lives, and the results showed that 75.7% of the expatriates had mostly lived in developing countries with only 24.3% who responded that they predominantly lived in developed countries. Moreover, a number of those who indicated that they came from developed countries were from an Arabic background, as their families had lived in developed countries for long periods for a variety of reasons.

In this study, the results showed a significant difference between the nationality groups of academic SIEs. It was found that expatriates from developing countries moving to a developing country had stronger reasons, in terms of career and family, than those from developed countries who were moving to an HDC. The qualitative findings were also in accordance with the finding of a relationship between the nationality factor and the reasons to expatriate. These findings can be explained through recent situations in most neighboring Arab countries because of the uprisings or what is called the "Arab springs." These conditions pushed academic expatriates to look for an improvement in their quality of life, career, and a better living standard for their families.

In regard to the significant relationship between the nationality factor and family reasons, this research is consistent with the findings reported by Selmer and Luring (2011b), who found that nationality is positively associated with the explore/travel and financial reasons, which did not appear in this study. Conversely, the findings of this study are in line with what has been reported regarding the importance of the degree of distance from the country of origin and the extent of cultural and religious closeness, which can influence the decision to work abroad (Crowley-Henry, 2007; Tanure, Barcellos, & Fleury, 2009).

5.5 SENIORITY

In this study, there were roughly equal numbers of academic expatriates who held the positions of professor (46 or 15%), associate professor (50 or 17%), lecturer (43 or 14%), and instructor (49 or 16%), whereas the number of participants (112) who were assistant professors was much greater, comprising more than one-third (37%) of the sample. The level of

qualification is considered an important factor of mobility for SIEs because of the differences that may exist on the level of compensation.

Regarding the impact of the seniority factor on SIEs' reasons to expatriate, a statistically significant difference was found in the reasons to expatriate by this demographic characteristic through the quantitative analysis of this study. The existence of this relationship between seniority and SIE reasons is consistent with many previous studies, such as Kanfer and Ackerman (2004), Kanfer and Ackerman (2004), Noe, Noe, and Bachhuber (1990), Selmer and Luring (2011b), and Wong, Siu, and Tsang (1999). In this study, there was a statistically significant difference in the aggregated scores of family reasons among the five levels of seniority, however, instructors had significantly lower scores than professors, associate professors, assistant professors, or lecturers. However, there was no statistical difference among full professors, associate professors, assistant professors, or lecturers in explore/travel, career, escape/change life, or financial reasons. In contrast, Selmer and Luring (2011b) found that SIEs with junior positions were more motivated by the explore/travel reason than by a sense of security and stability.

6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The current study has limitations indicating that the findings cannot be generalized for all expatriates. First, the sample of this study is academic SIEs. Given the consensus by many researchers that SIEs are a heterogeneous population, it is clear that these findings may not relate to other types of SIEs. Further, the extreme case of Saudi Arabia suggests that the results probably do not relate to other HDCs, such as Morocco, Pakistan, or Vietnam.

Second, the scale that was used in this study to measure the reasons for expatriation may not include all of the motives for either academic SIEs or SIEs, in general. Importantly, the survey did not ask about religious/cultural reasons. It should be noted that this reason was not included in the survey because the motives section was based on questions from prior research (Selmer & Luring, 2010, 2011b), which has typically not focused on this possibility.

Third, nearly two-thirds of the participants had been working in Saudi universities for more than 5 years. Both the priority of reasons and the level of a motive's importance are likely to be affected by the length of time the SIEs have worked in the current host country. Therefore, the findings in regard to the initial reasons to expatriate to HDCs may have been clouded by time and the SIEs' actual current experience.

7. IMPLICATIONS

The conclusions drawn from the research questions posed in this study were interesting. It was found that gender and previous experience, as demographic characteristics of academic expatriates, did not make any

difference to the reasons for SIEs to expatriate to HDCs, while language, nationality, and seniority factors were significant differentiators. The family reason, however, was the main motive to expatriate for most of the respondents. These quantitative findings show that SIEs' reasons to expatriate are likely to be different in terms of their demographic characteristics (Selmer & Luring, 2010, 2011b; Thorn, 2009). Thus, as SIEs are suggested to be a heterogeneous population, further studies may find that there is a changeable framework of relationships between demographics and SIEs' reasons to expatriate.

Another recommendation is that recruiting universities in HDCs should be reminded that academic expatriates from developing countries appear more career conscious than those from developed countries. Arabic expatriates, compared to non-Arabic expatriates, are more motivated by reasons concerning family and the opportunity to escape/change life to improve their living conditions. In addition, SIEs in senior positions place more emphasis on family reasons. Thus, universities need to place a higher priority on family candidates, particularly if they hire SIEs from developing countries, and candidates working in senior positions.

Since this study focused specifically on academic SIEs in two Saudi universities, it might be appropriate to mention two important matters, which is that Saudi Arabia is a specific context and SIEs are considered a heterogeneous population. By keeping this in mind, future studies may focus on another type of SIE, such as SIEs in business firms, as the results may either validate or contradict the findings of this investigation. Further, the findings of this study might have been different if the study had been conducted in another HDC with a different socio-cultural context.

Furthermore, it may be useful to gather more background details and demographic characteristics on the SIEs to provide a clearer understanding of this important group of expatriates.

8. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to develop a better understanding of the SIE experience by asking the main research question, "To what extent do demographic factors affect academic SIE reasons to expatriate to HDCs?" It is the first study to examine this specific topic and context in HDCs. The set of five SIE reasons in this study's survey was based on a large-scale quantitative survey extended by Selmer and Luring (2010, 2011a). These reasons were identified by Richardson and associates. The demographic characteristics of gender and previous experience did not make any difference regarding the reasons for SIEs to expatriate to HDCs. In the case of the reasons concerning language, nationality, seniority, and family, the latter motive of family was the main reason to expatriate for most of the respondents. The findings of this research may support the paucity of researched literature on academic SIEs in HDCs. This study contributes to

the international human resources literature concerning the relationship between demographics and the reasons to expatriate. It will help firms to be more effective in their recruitment, orientation, and support of SIEs to improve retention and performance. The more that is known about SIEs' experiences, the more aspects that will need to be investigated, as there are different groups of SIEs moving in various contexts, and they all have different demographics.

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